

**FY27 Preliminary Budget Council Testimony**  
**March 25, 2026**

Good morning, Speaker Menin, Chair Lee, Leader Carr, members of the Finance Committee, and all other members with us today.

My name is Sherif Soliman, and I am the Director of the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

I am joined today by First Deputy Director Tara Boirard, Senior Deputy Director Latonia McKinney, Deputy Director Joshua Goldstein, and Deputy Director Nathan Gusdorf.

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation for the partnership between this institution and the administration in ensuring government works on behalf of New Yorkers. My career in public service has always been guided by collaboration, consensus-building, and mutual respect, and I look forward to working with the city council in the coming months to achieve a fiscally sound budget.

When Mayor Mamdani took office, he asked me to assess the city's finances amidst repeated claims by fiscal monitors that known expenses were not adequately budgeted. After reviewing monitor reports, analyzing major cost centers, and pressure-testing fiscal cliffs with subject matter experts, it was evident that significant underbudgeting had occurred and was prevalent across many areas – social services, education, core operations, and more.

The chronic underbudgeting meant that a gap existed in the current fiscal year, which was reportedly balanced, and that the Fiscal Year 2027 gap was far higher than the \$4.7 billion stated in the November 2025 Financial Plan Update.

Our initial assessment was that the actual budget gaps were in line with what the city and state comptrollers had estimated.

To illustrate the extent of the underbudgeting, consider six areas that had been chronically underfunded by roughly \$7.5 billion across Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027:

cash assistance, rental assistance, shelter costs, due process cases, judgments and claims, and the city subsidy to the MTA.

Specifically, over the two fiscal years:

- Cash assistance was budgeted at \$2.1 billion when known expenses are \$3.1 billion;
- Rental assistance was budgeted at \$1.8 billion when known expenses are \$4.1 billion;
- Shelter costs were budgeted at \$2.6 billion when known expenses are \$4.0 billion;
- Due process cases were budgeted at \$1.1 billion when known expenses are \$2.2 billion;
- Judgments and Claims were budgeted at \$1.4 billion when known expenses are \$2.1 billion; and
- MTA subsidies were budgeted at \$2.2 billion when known expenses are \$3.0 billion.

While confronting underbudgeting in these six areas alone would be a significant challenge, we subsequently identified an additional \$6.7 billion in unfunded cliffs and mandated spending over the same two fiscal years, including health insurance costs, the class size mandate, and Medicaid funding.

In the interest of introducing transparency, certainty, and less risk in the budget process, we took the issue of underbudgeting head-on, which meant that we needed to solve for unprecedented levels of expense.

In total, the Preliminary Budget includes roughly \$14 billion in agency expense changes over the two fiscal years -- a staggering amount for the opening salvo in any given budget cycle. Inclusion of this level of necessary funding left very little room for new programmatic needs. Just 4 percent, or \$576 million, was invested in core agency operational needs – including, for example, an additional \$100 million for the snow budget, \$5 million for warming centers and shelter outreach, almost \$24 million for mobile outreach units to help New Yorkers suffering from mental illness,

and \$54 million to triple baseline funding for HRA's Community Food Connection program.

Expense additions of this magnitude required a multi-faceted approach to fulfill our charter-mandated responsibility to balance Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027.

In addition to recognizing additional tax revenue supported by record high Wall Street profits and in line with the state's revenue projections, the mayor initiated an aggressive savings plan that will generate \$1.7 billion in savings over Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 without risking cuts to services that New Yorkers need and expect.

The savings effort is driven by Executive Order 12, which Mayor Mamdani signed on January 29th. Under the order, every city agency was required to designate a current employee as its Chief Savings Officer who would submit a savings plan to my office and the first deputy mayor by March 20<sup>th</sup>.

As the Mayor announced this morning, agencies submitted their proposals last Friday identifying more than \$1.7 billion in savings, and the City Hall and OMB teams have begun a comprehensive review of these proposals to validate the savings they will produce. The review underway groups savings into five categories: efficiencies in public services; contracting efficiencies; technology modernization; space consolidation and lease management; and financial adjustments and new revenue.

The work of the Chief Savings Officers will not end with this initial submission – this will be an ongoing initiative with savings officers reporting on updates and new proposals every six months.

Also included in the \$1.7 billion in savings initiative is a vacancy alignment exercise which will balance the need for savings with the removal of hiring constraints that had largely been in place since COVID and hampered agency hiring efforts. Many agencies have indicated that they prefer this approach, which supports effective agency operations, over the slow and cumbersome process that had governed hiring procedures for years.

We have also taken several other standard budget actions such as drawing down current fiscal year General and Capital Stabilization Reserves, re-estimating prior year payables, and recognizing small savings in certain areas such as pension administration costs.

State actions have also helped reduce the gap. Governor Hochul’s Executive Budget included additional childcare voucher funding, foundation aid, and decoupling of certain corporate tax provisions from HR.1. As announced the day before we released the Preliminary Budget, the Governor’s 30-day amendments included an additional \$1.5 billion in assistance, including \$500 million in one-time unrestricted aid, a restoration of higher reimbursement rates for public health costs, and a reversal of a sales tax intercept for distressed hospitals. We thank the Governor for this timely assistance and look forward to the inclusion of this much-needed assistance in the enacted state budget.

Yet despite the higher revenue forecast, savings and standard budget actions, and state assistance committed thus far, we still faced a \$5.4 billion shortfall to balance the preliminary budget as required by law.

To address that significant shortfall, we proposed a suite of options for consideration by our state partners including increased taxes on the most profitable corporations, higher transaction taxes on high value properties, and the reversal of various cuts and cost shifts that have reduced state funding over several years.

The options we advanced seek to reconcile the imbalance of payments between New York City and New York State. The mayor has made the case for recalibrating the city/state fiscal relationship, citing that New Yorkers contribute 54.5 percent of state revenue but receive only 40.5 percent back. By “ending the drain,” some of the resources we send to the state would be returned to New York City and used to support critical cash-strapped programs and services.

Conversations with our state partners are ongoing and we are encouraged by the Senate and Assembly one-house budgets, each of which includes a suite of options that equal approximately \$5 billion in additional assistance. We thank both houses for advancing these proposals and look forward to working with them, as well as the Governor and her team, on an enacted state budget that addresses the city’s fiscal challenges.

Now, I would like to share details about the Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget.

The Preliminary Budget presented on February 17th balances Fiscal Year 2026 at \$122 billion and Fiscal Year 2027 at \$127 billion. Outyear gaps are projected to be \$6.7 billion, \$6.8 billion, and \$7.1 billion in Fiscal Years 2028 through 2030, respectively.

To fulfill our charter-mandated obligation to balance Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 with concrete actions, we were constrained to close the remaining \$5.4 billion gap through an additional reserve drawdown, and an increase to the average property tax rate from 12.283% to 13.450%.

To be clear, these gap-closing measures are a last resort, proposals born out of necessity and the type of responsible fiscal stewardship this inherited budgetary challenge requires.

Our administration is committed to rebuilding and maintaining high levels of reserves to ensure that we can weather an economic downturn. Accordingly, the financial plan replenishes the Rainy Day Fund and Retiree Health Benefits Trust in Fiscal Year 2028. Moreover, rather than increase property taxes, our administration wants to finally reform the broken property tax system to make it more equitable, transparent, and rational.

To emerge from these significant fiscal challenges on a more stable financial footing will require the administration and the council to continue to closely engage our state partners and I appreciate the efforts undertaken thus far. It will also require continued collaboration to achieve savings, and we are committed to partnering with you on workable solutions that meaningfully address the budget gaps without reducing service levels New Yorkers depend on.

Turning now to the capital budget, the five-year capital budget totals \$113 billion. The Preliminary Budget makes important capital investments, including increasing livable housing for NYCHA residents and fully funding the renovation and expansion of Bellevue Hospital's Adult Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program. The capital budget also accelerates the Kensico-Eastview connection tunnel construction to improve redundancy in our water supply system.

In conclusion, I look forward to working as partners over the coming months to both address our very real fiscal challenges and take steps to implement an affordability agenda that transforms the way government serves working families.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.



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**Testimony for Committee on Finance  
Budget and Oversight Hearing on The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal  
Year 2027**

**March 25, 2026**

*Board of Directors*

Stuart Appelbaum  
*President, Retail  
Wholesale  
Department Store  
Union*

Thank you to the Finance Committee Chair Council Member Lee for the opportunity to submit written testimony today.

Henry Garrido  
*Executive Director,  
AFSCME District  
Council 37*

My name is Faiza Azam and I am the Climate and Labor Organizer for ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. We bring together labor, climate, and community for a more just and sustainable New York. We co-coordinate the Climate Works for All Coalition—a group of labor, community, student, parent, faith, and environmental justice organizations fighting climate change and inequality in New York City. Our campaigns move us towards an equitable economy, a resilient, livable and healthy climate, and prioritize justice for low income Black and Brown communities across New York City. I am also a former NYC Public School student, an alumni of John Dewey High School which was devastated by Hurricane Sandy in 2012 going under emergency generators for over two years as a result.

Alex Gleason  
*Policy and  
Campaigns/  
Director,  
NYC Central Labor  
Council*

Our school buildings have been underinvested in for years and lack the proper infrastructure to be resilient in our worsening climate crisis. From devastating flooding to extremely poor air quality caused by pollution and greenhouse gases, students, teachers, and faculty are often among those first impacted when climate disaster strikes. This not only interrupts learning, but creates a public safety issue for students, teachers and faculty.

Bernadette Kelly,  
*Consortium for  
Worker Education*

Eunice Ko  
*Deputy Director,  
NYC Environmental  
Justice Alliance*

[Over a quarter](#) of New York City's public school buildings are at risk of extreme flooding and of these buildings about 9.5 percent are located in a 100-year floodplain. However, evidence has shown that as climate change worsens 100 year storms will occur more frequently with [one study](#) suggesting these storms could happen every one to thirty years. From devastating flooding to extremely poor air quality caused by greenhouse gases, students, teachers, and faculty are often among those first impacted when climate disaster strikes. Our school buildings have been underinvested in for years and lack the proper infrastructure to be resilient in our worsening climate crisis. This lack of investment puts our students and workers at constant risk.

Olivia Leirer  
*Co-Director, New  
York Communities  
for Change*

Juanita O. Lewis  
*Executive Director  
Community Voices  
Heard*

Central to ALIGN's work is our Green, Healthy Schools campaign which primarily focuses on decarbonizing public school buildings because we believe

Elizabeth Jordan  
Co-Legal Director,  
Make the Road NY

that NYC 3K-12 students, teachers, parents, and school staff deserve safe and healthy workplaces to work, learn and play regardless of their zipcode. Buildings are the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in New York City so if there is any hope of reaching our ambitious climate goals, we must prioritize building decarbonization.

Moreover, this will save the City millions in climate disaster repairs by being proactive in investments and it will make New York a national leader in the transition to a clean energy economy. Investments in decarbonizing public schools will lower energy costs and provide savings for the city which can be reinvested in schools, create thousands of green, union family sustaining jobs and reduce air pollution which can improve the overall health of students, teachers and faculty.

We strongly urge the City to invest \$2.2B this budget session to support clean energy upgrades beginning with the upgrading and electrifying schools with the schools most in need and centering those in environmental justice communities. This investment will increase the number of schools currently scheduled to be electrified and upgraded in the coming year and simultaneously create thousands of jobs in the process. Additionally, increasing the funds for this fiscal year and annually for the next 4 years will put New York City on a path to electrify and upgrade all 1200 school buildings by 2030, [creating over 320,000 clean energy jobs](#) and a net zero emissions school district by 2040. This is our coalition's long term vision for Green, Healthy Schools.

We are proud to stand with labor on this issue and engage union membership in this plan. We see workers from teachers to nurses to janitors mobilizing for Green, Healthy Schools and the need for more investments because they work in these conditions everyday and deserve to make a living without putting their health at risk. This is an investment in the New York City workforce, New York City students, and New York City families

With more than 1000 buildings in the school district, the City must be proactive and invest in schools to improve infrastructure and create a healthier and more resilient city for the long term. We look forward to working more with the Council to ensure our public school buildings receive the investment and care they deserve.

Over 75 organizations representing over 2 million New Yorkers have signed our budget letter to the Mayor and Speaker Menin with their support for Green, Healthy Schools. We look forward to working more with the Council to ensure our public school buildings receive the investment and care they deserve.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Faiza Azam



## **Asian American Federation**

### **Testimony to the Committee on Finance on the FY 2027 City Preliminary Budget** *March 25, 2026*

#### Written Testimony

Thank you Chair Lee and members of the Committee on Finance for this opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Nat Moghe, Advocacy Coordinator at AAF, where we work with 70 member/partner nonprofit organizations to raise the influence and well-being of 1.5 million Pan-Asian New Yorkers.

In 2026, New York's Asian community faces a fundamentally hostile political and social climate. From a sharp rise in anti-immigrant policies and drastic cuts in federal funding, to the acute targeting of Asian communities, we are facing an unprecedented crisis. In New York State, 24% of unauthorized immigrants are from Asia, and one in seven undocumented immigrants nationwide is Asian. Arrests of immigrants from Asian countries, including China, Bangladesh, Nepal, and India, have increased significantly compared to last year. According to a new analysis by THE CITY, which examined federal records from the Deportation Data Project, there has been a 1,044% rise in arrests of Chinese immigrants and a 1,000% increase in arrests of Bangladeshi immigrants from 2024 to 2025.<sup>1</sup> ICE's indiscriminate tactics have shattered families, instilled fear, and prevented New Yorkers from accessing essential services, such as law enforcement, public benefits, healthcare, and education. From long-term residents who have not adjusted their status, refugees, asylum seekers, individuals with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), special visas, and immigrant families, regardless of when they arrived in the U.S., our communities are on high alert.

Throughout this unstable climate, our member organizations continue to exhibit resilience and courage, leading the way in numerous service sectors and programming organized by the Asian American Federation. Together, we work to amplify our collective voices, secure our seat at the table with policymakers, and champion fairness and justice for low-income, vulnerable Asian New Yorkers. Our ongoing resilience and success are not sustainable without continued support from the City Council.

#### **Direct Services to Address Essential Needs**

63% of Asian New Yorkers being foreign-born and 24% of New York State's undocumented residents come from Asia. Many of our community members live in mixed-status households and face rising immigration enforcement, fear of deportation, and barriers to essential services. Despite these mounting needs, Asian-led and Asian-serving direct service providers remain chronically underfunded and overstretched. In response, AAF builds institutional capacity,

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<sup>1</sup> Chu, H., & Hogan, G. (2025, July 14). NYC Immigration Arrests Just Shot Through the Roof, New Data Shows. THE CITY - NYC News. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/07/14/ice-migrant-arrests-trump-administration-deportations-data/>

strengthens advocacy, and delivers the culturally responsive programs needed to serve New York's rapidly growing and overlooked Asian communities.

For years, Asian-led and Asian-serving direct service providers have diligently met the basic needs of our community members during ever-evolving times of crisis. They have delivered a wide range of culturally responsive services, including essential social services, mental health programming, congregate meals, and food deliveries. They have also provided information on anti-violence measures to help community members understand their rights and keep their communities safe, along with training in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Throughout the threats under the current administration, amidst the rise in anti-Asian and anti-immigrant hate, these providers have engaged in life-saving work while acknowledging the strength of our diverse cultures and the many languages we speak. Under the steady leadership of AAF, they have remained united in their mission: to help our neighbors and support our most vulnerable members.

### **The Asian Languages Worker Cooperative**

The Asian American Federation (AAF) is closing the language access gap for New York City's Asian immigrant communities through the Language Justice Collaborative, a partnership with the New York Immigration Coalition, Masa, African Communities Together, Haitian Americans United for Progress, and the Immigrant Advocates Response Collaborative.

With 34% of Asian New Yorkers identifying as limited English proficient, the need for community-driven solutions is urgent, especially amid federal rollbacks of language access protections. In response, AAF is building long-term language equity infrastructure by creating the Asian Languages Worker Cooperative, the nation's first interpreter cooperative designed to serve Asian communities while providing stable, worker-owned employment for multilingual immigrants. In FY26, AAF received \$700,000 from the New York City Council to advance this initiative, train interpreters, and develop a sustainable service model. Training focuses on six priority languages: Arabic; Cantonese; Mandarin; Bengali; Urdu; and Korean with participants completing a 40-hour interpreter certification and specialized legal interpretation modules.

In FY27, AAF will formally launch the cooperative and transition from a training model to a sustainable, fee-based structure. Funding will support:

- Interpreter deployment to provide language services in at least five Asian languages for community organizations and residents;
- New cohort recruitment and training, including practicum hours offering interpretation to CBOs at no cost;
- Ongoing education in cooperative governance, business development, and strategic outreach; and
- Partnership expansion with legal, health, and social service providers.

Through this multi-year effort, AAF is transforming both access and opportunity, building a durable model that strengthens language justice, creates economic mobility, and ensures immigrant voices are fully heard in New York City.

Continued City Council investment will allow us to sustain this pipeline and support trainees as they transition into service delivery in FY27. We appreciate the Council's support to date and urge continued funding to ensure continuity for programs that are already in progress. AAF stands with the Language Justice Collaborative in requesting \$5.8 million in funding for the interpreter worker cooperative initiative.

### **Implementing RISE: Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment Program to Protect Vulnerable Asian Immigrants**

AAF's leadership also developed a solid infrastructure to respond to attacks on New York's vibrant immigrant community. Between 2017-2019, AAF built a rapid response network with 10 Asian-led, Asian-serving nonprofits to increase access to immigration legal services for low-income, vulnerable Asian New Yorkers. In FY26, AAF secured critical funding from the New York City Council to strengthen the RISE Network. Building on AAF's proven rapid response model from 2017-2019, which served over 8,000 Asian New Yorkers in more than 12 Asian languages, the initiative now connects immigrant families and seniors to essential legal services, case management, and community education.

In FY27, AAF will deepen and expand this network to work with 12 to 20 Asian-led organizations, delivering urgent support through:

- Immigration case management and legal connections, linking clients to trusted providers while maintaining real-time communication channels to respond quickly to enforcement actions;
- Know Your Rights education and in-language outreach through trainings, community sessions, and targeted media to counter misinformation about immigration enforcement, public benefits, and workers' rights; and
- Policy advocacy to strengthen local protections.

By integrating these efforts, we will create a more robust and coordinated support system for Asian immigrants and the organizations that serve them. To sustain this work, we are requesting **\$3.5 million** in funding for the **Legal Services for AAPI Communities Initiative**. This investment will continue development of RISE—strengthen coordination across providers, maintain and deepen access to critical immigration legal services, and equip trusted community-based organizations with the capacity and tools to respond in real time to rapidly evolving needs.

### **Protecting Immigrant Community Health**

Asian Americans are New York City's fastest-growing population, representing 17% of residents with over 1.5 million people, yet they face a severe mental health crisis. Suicide is a leading cause of death among Asian American youth and young adults. While Asian Americans experience higher rates of depression than White Americans, only 2% report symptoms to a doctor and 62% of those with depression receive no help. The barriers are significant and compounding. Two-thirds of Asian New Yorkers are foreign-born and 44% have limited English proficiency, yet over 80% of psychologists nationwide are White and most therapy is offered only in English. Recent anti-immigrant rhetoric has further heightened stress and anxiety among immigrant families while discouraging them from seeking help out of fear of detention

The Asian American Federation's (AAF) Mental Health Program addresses these gaps through our consortium of six Asian-led, Asian-serving community-based organizations serving Arab, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and Southeast Asian communities. In FY26 alone, with our consortium, we provided 23,000 clinical and non-clinical services to 1,300+ community members in just the first two quarters. In FY 27, funds will support critical infrastructure that enables increased cultural competence in mental health services. This includes:

- Expanding the number of providers in our Mental Health Directory from 700 to 850 culturally competent New York-based therapists who collectively speak over 20 Asian languages;
- Creating 22 new resources in five Asian languages for our online Mental Health Hub used by mental health service providers;
- Convening our Asian American Mental Health Roundtable quarterly to coordinate among partner organizations, advance shared policy priorities, and contribute to our online Mental Health Hub;
- Community education campaigns to reduce stigma, capacity-building workshops, and advocacy efforts, including testimony at 18-20 City Council hearings.

### **Hope Against Hate**

Lastly, the Asian American Federation's Hope Against Hate (HAH) Campaign is a community-centered initiative improving public safety for Asian New Yorkers. Launched in 2021, following a 321% increase in anti-Asian hate crimes, the campaign unites 30+ Asian-led community organizations to deliver culturally and linguistically responsive safety programs. HAH addresses ongoing threats including verbal and physical harassment, online hate, and anti-immigrant sentiment by empowering residents with the tools and support to stay safe. Since its inception, the campaign has: 1) Trained 11,300+ individuals in upstander intervention, de-escalation, and self-defence, 2) Delivered 1,200+ protective accompaniment and safety walk services in Asian-majority communities, 3) Engaged 8,500 youth through anti-bullying and emotional wellness programs, and 4) Referred 6,900+ individuals to mental health and victim support services.

In FY27, requested funds will strengthen our communities safety networks by

- Providing in-language safety workshops and enhancing volunteer-led protective services, e.g. safety walks and escort services, through our "Community Companions" program;
- Providing community education to the general public to highlight the unique challenges the Asian community is experiencing during this continued crisis and spotlight ways to get involved to combat this crisis;
- Distributing in-language safety resources and advocating for increased and permanent supports for Asian New Yorkers;
- Providing victim support, including linking survivors to legal, social, and mental health resources; and
- Convening partners to coordinate real-time responses and share best practices.

Through Hope Against Hate, AAF ensures Asian New Yorkers, especially immigrants, seniors, and low- income residents, can move through their communities with confidence and dignity.

### **Our FY27 Asks**

This testimony encapsulates a glimpse of the work AAF does to serve Asian New Yorkers. Across our programs, we advance initiatives in mental health, civic engagement, language access, aging, and nonprofit capacity building—each addressing critical and ongoing needs in our communities. To sustain and deliver this work effectively, we are requesting the following Citywide investments:

- Speakers Initiative (\$500,000)
- AAPI Community Support (\$400,000)
- Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (\$150,000)
- CUNY Citizenship NOW! Program (\$300,000)
- Hate Crimes Prevention (\$100,000)
- Immigrant Health Initiative (\$100,000)
- Language Services Worker Cooperatives (\$700,000)
- Legal Services for AAPI (\$700,000)
- Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (\$150,000)
- Neighborhood Development Grant Initiative (\$20,000)
- Support funding for the AAPI Community Support Initiative at **\$7.5 million**. AAF requests a budget allocation from this Initiative of **\$400,000** to support our research initiatives and advocacy for Asian American Communities.
- Continue to fund the Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund at **\$7.5 million**. AAF requests a budget allocation from this Initiative of **\$150,000** to support our technical assistance work.
- Fund the development of a worker cooperative for Asian language interpretation (**\$700,000**). We also ask, in partnership with African Communities Together, Masa, and New York Immigration Coalition, for **\$5.8 million** for the Interpreter Bank and language services worker cooperatives.

Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity. We look forward to working with you to provide critical services to our most vulnerable populations. If you have any questions, I can be contacted at [nat.moghe@aafederation.org](mailto:nat.moghe@aafederation.org).



**New York City Council Committee on Finance**  
Preliminary Budget Hearing  
March 25, 2026

Submitted by:  
Gloria Kim  
Director of Policy, Research, and Impact  
Human Services Council of NY

**Introduction**

Good morning, Chair Lee, and members of the New York City Council Committee on Finance. My name is Gloria Kim, and I am the Director of Policy, Research, and Impact at the Human Services Council (HSC), a membership organization representing 180 human services providers in New York. HSC serves our membership as a coordinating body, advocate, and intermediary between the human services sector and government. We take on this work so that our members can focus on running their organizations and providing critical direct support to New Yorkers. These are the nonprofits that support our city's children, seniors, those experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, individuals who are incarcerated or otherwise involved in the justice system, immigrants, and individuals coping with substance abuse and other mental health and behavioral challenges. We strive to help our members better serve their clients by addressing matters such as government procurement practices, disaster preparedness and recovery, government funding, and public policies that impact the sector.

**Late Contracting Issues**

Human services organizations operate on tight margins. Unlike many private-sector contractors, we do not have large reserves or access to flexible capital. Yet we are expected to deliver essential, often life-sustaining services every day, regardless of whether payments from the City arrive on time. When contract payments are delayed by months, as is too often the case, we are forced into an impossible position: either reduce services or take on financial risk to continue operating. Providers have to delay payments, draw on lines of credit, delay vendor payments, and in some instances, make difficult staffing decisions. These are not abstract administrative issues—they directly affect the sector's ability to provide consistent quality care, maintain experienced staff, and meet the needs of millions of New Yorkers.

Compounding this issue are contracting delays and administrative burdens. Although we are grateful to the City Council for legislating advances for human services contracts, these advances are only a short-term solution because nonprofits continue to incur substantial costs for service delivery before they are paid. Reimbursement processes can be complex, inconsistent, and slow, further extending the time between service delivery and payment. These systemic issues create instability across the human services sector. Smaller organizations, in particular, are at risk of closing their doors, reducing access to critical services in the very communities that rely on them most.

## **Support the #JustPay Campaign and Wage Equity for Human Services Workers**

We are proud members of the [#JustPay campaign](#), which is a racial equity and gender justice campaign committed to ending the government exploitation of human services workers by demanding sector employees under contract with the New York City and State be paid fair wages for their labor. Each year you hear from providers who are struggling due to the crisis of compounding underfunding of the human services sector as City budgets are balanced on the backs of low-income neighborhoods and BIPOC communities. Government is the predominant funder of human services through government contracts that have resulted in poverty-level wages for human services workers, who are predominantly women and people of color.

To address these challenges, we ask that you support Int 0452-2026, which would introduce a comprehensive new wage requirement system for human services workers, aimed at ensuring equitable compensation in line with civil service titles. Nonprofit workers make 30% less than government workers for the same job. With a City COLA secured for three years, we were able to pivot to fight for systemic policy change to tackle this wage disparity in the long-term. By supporting this legislation, it is a significant step towards ensuring that human services workers receive equitable pay comparable to their City counterparts, recognizing the critical role they play in delivering vital services to our communities. By establishing a clear wage requirement system, this legislation promotes transparency in compensation, ensuring that every worker is paid solely on their qualifications and experience. By guaranteeing just wages and benefits, the sector will continue to attract but, most importantly, retain skilled human services workers, contributing to a more stable and effective workforce that can better serve our communities. According to a budget brief by the Center for New York City Affairs, it would only cost an estimated \$965 million to \$1.35 billion to provide salary parity for the nonprofit human services workforce.

## **Conclusion**

Human services providers are proud partners with the City. We are committed to delivering high-quality services and improving outcomes for residents. But we cannot continue to serve effectively under a system that places disproportionate financial strain on the very organizations tasked with caring for our communities. Addressing late payments and contracting inefficiencies is not just a matter of administrative reform—it is essential to ensuring stability, equity, and continuity of care for those who depend on these services.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to strengthening the human services sector.

Gloria Kim  
Director of Policy, Research, and Impact  
Human Services Council of NY  
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## **COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NETWORK**

**Testimony for the New York City Council  
Committee on Health  
Executive Budget Hearings  
March 23, 2026**

To Chairperson Schulman and Members of the Committee on Health,

My name is Fernando Valerio I am the Hep C Navigator at Community HealthCare Network. We are part of the NYC Council's Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative, which provides the most innovative and effective hepatitis B and C treatment, prevention, and linkage to care, and education programs in the country.

Approximately 314,300 NYC residents are estimated to be living with chronic hepatitis B and C. Given these high rates of infection, it is crucial to sustain and expand the Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative to safeguard the health of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, and to provide a model and beacon of hope for similar initiatives across the nation and the world.

In the latest NYC Department of Health surveillance report, in 2023 there were 6,947 people newly reported with chronic hepatitis B, an increase of 26% from 2022. There were 2,375 people newly reported with chronic hepatitis C in NYC.<sup>i</sup>

For comparison, there were 1,686 new HIV diagnoses in NYC in 2023.<sup>ii</sup> This means that in 2023, not only was there a sharp increase in newly reported chronic hepatitis B cases, but there were more than four times as many people newly reported with hepatitis B in NYC in 2023, when compared to HIV. Given the high disease burden for hepatitis B and C in NYC, the low investment in the City's viral hepatitis response is putting the health of New Yorkers at risk.

As the sole Hepatitis C Navigator for Community Healthcare Network, I manage all HCV care across 12 clinics in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, drawing on nine years of experience and a proven record of guiding more than 400 patients to successful cure. Since 2017, CHN has been a committed partner in New York City's Viral Hepatitis Initiative, delivering free testing, community education, and culturally responsive navigation services to individuals living with chronic infection. The majority of our patients come from immigrant, low-income, uninsured, or limited-English-proficiency backgrounds, communities that face the greatest barriers to care and the highest risk of being left behind. Continued and strengthened City Council funding is essential to sustaining this work, expanding access, and ensuring that the most underserved New Yorkers receive the lifesaving treatment and advocacy they deserve.

I ask that you continue to support the Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative in the upcoming fiscal year. We ask for an additional investment of \$2.74 million in the Initiative, for a total investment of \$5 million to increase our hepatitis B and C services: hire more patient

navigators, host more hepatitis B and C testing events, and increase linkage to care and treatment for more New Yorkers.

Not only is sustaining and growing this initiative a comparatively small expense in the larger context of the budget, but the resulting effects will also help drive down the overall financial impact that hepatitis B and C have on our health system every year. Liver cancer is far more costly than early detection, vaccination, treatment and prevention.

I sincerely thank the members of the City Council Health Committee and the other committees here today for supporting the efforts to eliminate hepatitis B and C in New York City and for considering a total investment of 5 million in the NYC Council's Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative this year.

Sincerely,  
Fernando Valerio  
Check Hep C Navigator  
Community Healthcare Network

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<sup>i</sup> [Working Toward a Hep Free N Y C - 2023 Hepatitis A, B and C in N Y C Report](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [HIV Surveillance Annual Report, 2023](#)



**New York City Council  
Committee on Finances**

**FISCAL YEAR 2027  
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING**

**Testimony of the New York Immigration Coalition  
March 25, 2026**

Hola, buenas tardes. Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Chair Lee and members of the Finances Committee, for convening this important hearing.

My name is Vladimir Tlali, and I am an immigrant from México. I am also the Senior Policy Strategist at the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), an umbrella organization representing over 200 immigrant-serving members and partner organizations. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to testify regarding the New York City Preliminary Budget for fiscal year 2026.

Immigration is not an unfamiliar topic for our city: 36% of all New Yorkers are immigrants. Immigrants make up nearly half (44.3%) of New York City's workforce and contribute nearly 37% to the city's total income<sup>1</sup>. However, as immigrant communities face unprecedented attacks from the federal government, New York City can do more. We must respond to this moment by investing in the people who keep this city running.

Immigrant legal services are increasingly important yet remain limited and underfunded. Masked agents in unmarked vehicles detain and separate our neighbors and families without due process, weakening constitutional protections for everyone. To address these threats, NYC must implement strong protections that defend our city's sanctuary policies and oversight authorities. We should move away from punitive systems and invest in community-based solutions that uphold justice, keep families together, and reinforce New York's commitment to immigrant rights.

Meanwhile, the affordability crisis severely impacts immigrant communities, which already face economic marginalization and exploitation. New and shifting eligibility requirements for workforce development programs and childcare vouchers influence job opportunities, pushing our communities into low-wage industries with few protections. It is crucial to protect immigrant workers' rights and provide the support all families need to succeed. This includes access to

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<sup>1</sup> Kallick, David Dyssegaard, and Anthony Capote. "Immigrants in the New York City Economy: Overcoming Hurdles, Yet Still Facing Barriers." Immigration Research Initiative - Understanding Economics, Advancing Policy, Supporting Action, December 18, 2023. <https://immresearch.org/publications/immigrants-in-the-new-york-city-economy-overcoming-hresulting-decline-in-business-due-tourdles-yet-still-facing-barriers/>



quality childcare, English language education, safe working conditions, and fair banking practices.

Similarly, we observe that the federal government has launched a direct attack on the political participation and inclusion of immigrant communities. This attack comprises systematic efforts to redefine and restrict citizenship, eliminate language access, exclude people from the census, and restrict voting rights for millions of Americans. These actions suppress civic engagement, ultimately harming our communities and the city as a whole. Underparticipation in elections dilutes political power. Undercounting in the census reduces population count and political representation, leading to lower budget allocations. NYC must invest in durable civic and census infrastructure, enforce language access as a civil right, and expand pathways to political inclusion.

Health and housing services for our communities are also being systematically dismantled. The new eligibility requirements and funding rule changes caused by HR1 have led to a loss of access to lifesaving programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, and SNAP for thousands of New Yorkers. New restrictions on health, nutrition, and housing programs for mixed-status families threaten to recreate and expand cycles of poverty. Now more than ever, we must ensure access to essential services to build a resilient, inclusive New York City for all.

Finally, we believe that the city should do more to improve schools for immigrant students and protect their safety. Schools must effectively communicate how to respond to federal immigration enforcement with policies and training sessions, addressing strategies for school perimeters, arrival and dismissal times, transportation, off-campus activities, and shelter-in-place procedures in coordination with law enforcement. Additionally, current support for English Language Learners must better incorporate their cultural traditions and culturally responsive instruction. For students to thrive academically, both their safety and educational quality must be prioritized together.

For all of these reasons, the NYIC strongly urges the City Council to stand with immigrant communities and fully fund the services and programs that support our communities, enabling these communities to succeed and contribute to the collective well-being of our city.

### **Protect All New Yorkers from Federal Overreach - \$269 million.**

- **Invest \$85M in funding for immigration legal services** to ensure continuity of services and to help defend immigrants against ongoing aggressive, anti-immigrant policies and the Trump administration's federal attacks on immigrants across the city.
- **Baseline \$3M in funding for the Rapid Response Legal Collaborative**, and **\$40M for the Immigrant Opportunity Initiative (IOI)** to meet the intensifying need of immigrant



communities as NYC's population of immigrants who have been arrested, detained, or are imminently facing deportation rapidly increases.

- **Allocate \$40M in funding for the NY Immigrant Family Unity Program (NYIFUP)** to sustain and support the representation of detained individuals.
- **Establish a \$65M Citywide Family and Loved Ones Fund** to provide travel stipends and other emergency, non-legal support for individuals and families impacted by immigrant detention.
- **Baseline funding at \$121 for the Unaccompanied Minor and Families Initiative** to ensure the continuity of critical legal services for immigrant children and asylum-seeking families.
- **Invest \$15M to create and expand restorative justice programs** in immigrant communities, ensuring immigrant New Yorkers have access to culturally competent, non-carceral solutions that prioritize healing and harm reduction.

### **Advance Economic Justice for Immigrant New Yorkers - \$119 million**

- **Allocate \$50 million to expand ACS's Promise NYC program** to provide childcare to children otherwise ineligible.
- **Invest \$4 million in a new Childcare Immigrant Family Outreach Initiative** to ensure that immigrant families can navigate the complexities of the childcare system and obtain the services they need.
- **Invest \$50 in Adult Literacy and Workforce Development Programs**, given federal budget cuts that will reduce eligibility:
  - Allocate \$20 million to the new [Education for Integration and Equity program](#).
  - Maintain \$12 million for DYCD Adult Literacy RFP contracts, and
  - Raise total funding for adult literacy from \$14.5 million to \$18 million, consolidated under the Adult Literacy Forward Initiative.
- **Allocate \$15 million to establish a citywide Immigrant Workers Task Force** to train and certify employers through Know Your Rights programs, uphold workplace and Fourth Amendment protections, provide rapid legal response during immigration raids, and connect immigrant workers and families with essential services.

### **Ensure Civic and Political Inclusion of All - \$111 million.**

- **Baseline \$5.8M for Language Access Services for Immigrant New Yorkers:**
  - \$3M to sustain the development and operations of the NYC Community Interpreter Bank, and
  - \$2.8M to support the growth of worker-owned language service cooperatives, ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to high-quality interpretation and translation services.



- **Baseline \$3M to fund multilingual emergency communications tools** such as Notify NYC to ensure emergency alerts are accessible across additional languages.
- **Invest \$20M to launch year-round Know Your Voting Rights workshops/programs** in trusted spaces (libraries, campuses, CBOs) with stipended civic apprenticeships, multilingual outreach, and embedded voter registration drives.
- **Baseline \$2.5M for Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and Multilingual Voter Education** so that New Yorkers fully understand NYC’s voting systems and can participate meaningfully.
- **Invest \$60M to launch a “2030 Census City Counts”** outreach and engagement campaign to ensure every New Yorker is counted in the upcoming census.
- **Allocate \$20M to expand staffing and access to naturalization programs**, such as CUNY Citizenship Now!, which provide free legal assistance with citizenship applications and financial counseling to all immigrant New Yorkers.

### **Foster Healthy Communities for All New York Families - \$304 million.**

- **Expand Access Health NYC funding to \$4.5 million** so that CBOs and community health centers can continue educating their communities about health access, coverage, and benefits for immigrants, especially newcomers and asylum seekers.
- **Strengthen NYC Care by doubling its budget to \$200 million**, so that all immigrants—particularly those expected to lose Essential Plan coverage in 2026 and ACA coverage in 2027—can access healthcare services on par with their citizen counterparts.
- **Increase funding for Community Food Connection to \$100 million** to ensure access to healthy food and strengthen the city’s emergency food system, which is facing challenges due to federal budget cuts. This is a necessary investment that will provide life-saving support for vulnerable communities.

### **Invest in Quality Education for Immigrant Students - \$814 million.**

- **Commit \$8 million to create an English Language Learner Instructional Specialist position** to pilot the role in 50 high-need schools, where specialists would ensure access to grade-level instruction, required bilingual or ENL services, and other academic interventions.
- **Fund the Support for Arts Instruction Initiative at \$6M to support partnerships in visual arts, music, dance, and theater in 350+ schools, serving students** with heightened stress and anxiety. Arts education supports students’ emotional well-being and sense of belonging amid increased immigration enforcement.
- **Baseline \$4M in the Immigrant and Family Communications and Outreach Initiative** to strengthen communication with immigrant families through trusted CBO



partnerships, multilingual materials, access to interpretation services, and targeted outreach to

- **Target \$800 million to address urgent health and safety hazards in 400+ school buildings** to improve 400+ public school buildings to reduce absenteeism and improve learning conditions, particularly for Black, Latino, and immigrant students.

These necessary investments in our communities must also be supplemented by meaningful policy solutions, including:

- **Prohibit any transfers and communication between ICE and NYPD [Int. 395](#), and the Department of Correction, [Int. 396](#):** Unless a person is convicted of a violent or serious crime, or a federal judge signs a judicial warrant.
- **Pass the NYC Trust Act [Int. 209](#):** Hold both local agencies and law enforcement accountable and empower New Yorkers who were harmed by these violations to seek justice and not hide.
- **Strengthen sanctuary policies:** Close loopholes to explicitly bar any collaboration between city agencies and federal immigration enforcement entities, including ICE, Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), in immigration enforcement.
- **Abolish the NYPD Gang database:** Pass [Int. 798](#) to ensure that the city ends the use of this discriminatory dragnet tool, and prohibits the creation of future tools that disproportionately target Black and Latino youth in New York City.
- **Facilitate Language Access:** Establish dedicated language access budget lines within relevant agency expense budgets (including HRA, DSS, DOHMH, HPD, and DOE) to contract directly with community-based language services.
- **Invest in Universal Childcare for All:** Prioritize immigrant communities as key beneficiaries of the nation's first universal early childhood care program.
- **Advance Fair Banking Practices:** Submit a Home Rule Request to Albany to enable NYC to operate a full-scale municipal public bank
- **Expand CityFHEPS to all New Yorkers:** City Council, with support from the State, should introduce a bill to expand CityFHEPS to all households, regardless of immigration status. Expanding the program would yield long-term financial benefits for the city, increased shelter capacity, and greater stability for families.



- **Protect immigrant students:** Pass legislation requiring New York City Public Schools to issue expanded guidance and require staff training on how to interact with non-local law enforcement, including shelter-in-place, enforcement activity around school perimeters, during arrival and dismissal, on school transportation, and during off-campus school activities.

Sound investments coupled with bold and effective policy solutions are the best response to the hateful rhetoric from the federal government. NYC is at a crossroads, and we must do more to protect our neighbors and communities. Leadership in the city has a historic chance to do the right thing for all residents regardless of their immigration status.

These issues affect more than just immigrant communities; every time the federal government encroaches on and weakens the due process rights of immigrants, the rights of every person in this country diminish. Every time families are scared away from engaging with our electoral institutions or the census, our democracy weakens, and our political influence and budget diminish.

During a time when the country's economy is struggling, with prices rising far beyond wage growth, access to health, food, and education is at risk. Services and programs that support thriving communities are investments, not expenses.

We invite the Council to stand with us and create the bold, smart, and innovative solutions that only New York City can deliver. We are ready to work with you in creating an inclusive, affordable, and democratic New York City for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Submitted by:

Vladimir Tlali  
Senior Policy Strategist  
New York Immigration Coalition



March 25, 2025

New York City Council

Committee on Finance  
Hon. Linda Lee, Chair

**Testimony of Jimmy Meagher, LMSW, Senior Policy Director, Safe Horizon**

**On the Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Jimmy Meagher, and I am Senior Policy Director at Safe Horizon, the nation's largest non-profit victim assistance organization. Every year, 250,000 people seek safety through our services. Our mission is to stand with those who have experienced violence, abuse, and exploitation. We offer unwavering support and advocate for systemic change. We envision a world where safety is a universal human right.

Whether we are called on to provide expert testimony at an oversight hearing or to assist a constituent in crisis and in need of emergency services, we are proud to partner with the City Council in a collective effort to make our city safer for all. We are here to help you and your staff learn how best to support survivors and connect them to the resources available in your borough and community.

Over many years, the City Council has been a key supporter of our programs helping adult, adolescent, and child victims of violence and abuse. City Council funding fills in gaps where no other financial support exists and allows us to draw down critical dollars from other sources. Moreover, this funding demonstrates the value that you and your colleagues place in helping survivors of all ages access desperately needed shelter, legal assistance, counseling, and wraparound services and supports.

The City Council has also championed the human services nonprofit sector. Our sector desperately needs your continued help to ensure that human services workers across our sector receive the compensation and support we need. To be frank – our sector continues to operate in a perpetual state of crisis. Nonprofit human services organizations are suffering as a result of delayed contracts and payments – preventable and solvable problems.

**Initiative and Discretionary Funding**

Citywide Initiative funding supports the following Safe Horizon programs:

**Domestic Violence and Empowerment (DoVE) Initiative**

Since 2006, the New York City Council's DoVE Initiative has provided critical resources to communities impacted by domestic violence. Recognizing that survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence have varied needs and may not always access the criminal justice system, the City Council partnered with Safe Horizon to create the DoVE Initiative to provide a neighborhood-



based response to survivors and their families. The DoVE Initiative was funded at \$12,010,000 in FY26, with Council Members then allocating funding to local providers in their district.

Currently, 170 organizations across NYC use DoVE funding to address domestic violence in the community by providing legal services, crisis intervention, case management, counseling, support groups, outreach, education, and training. **Safe Horizon oversees and administers this entire project and ensures program compliance.** We provide in-depth training to help organizations stay competitive in future funding environments, as well as networking opportunities to help DoVE-funded organizations learn from each other and coordinate services. DoVE has always been important, but it has literally been a lifesaver for New Yorkers in every neighborhood and every community who continue to navigate these scary times. As we advocate for options for victims and survivors both inside and outside traditional criminal justice responses, DoVE is pivotal. DoVE directs funds to the organizations rooted in community that provide necessary and lifesaving supports to survivors. This is especially critical for survivors who are undocumented and/or LGBTQI+ who may fear seeking help from government systems under this current federal Administration.

We are very grateful to the City Council for supporting the DoVE Initiative for many years. We are seeking **a restoration of \$12,010,000** so our network of CBOs can continue to reach survivors in every neighborhood and every district across New York City.

### **Child Advocacy Centers (CACs)**

Safe Horizon's Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) are at the heart of New York City's response to child abuse. At our CACs, child victims of sexual and/or severe physical abuse receive the help they need quickly and in one location. The police, prosecutors, medical professionals, victim advocates, clinicians, and child protective caseworkers work together under one roof in a child-friendly environment that minimizes trauma and facilitates healing. This allows us to facilitate a swift, comprehensive, coordinated investigation and multi-disciplinary team response that significantly reduces the number of times children must disclose details of their abuse. This coordinated, trauma-informed response to abuse helps to prevent the re-traumatization of the child during each re-telling of the violence that took place. We can connect children and their families to the mental healthcare and services they need to heal.

Prior to the creation of the CAC model, child victims would be asked to repeat their story over and over and relive their trauma and pain. Many child victims were left feeling as if no one believed them and felt to blame for causing disruption to their families. And many would recant their story. This method of investigating incidents of abuse was traumatizing, stigmatizing, and unjust. The CAC model is a gamechanger and the gold standard for investigating reports of child abuse. We are grateful for the Council's continued financial support through the **Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault**.

In FY25, our CACs provided services to over 8,521 children and 3,550 caregivers throughout the five boroughs. We are requesting **a restoration and an enhancement to \$1,000,000** in FY27 to sustain general operations in our CACs across the five boroughs. This will allow the CACs to continue to provide healing and support to child victims and their families. Additionally, we are



seeking for this core funding to be **baselined** to ensure the City's continued investment in the CAC model.

### **Streetwork Project**

Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project provides shelter, showers, hot meals, therapy, service linkage, safer sex supports, case management, and so much more, in a therapeutic harm reduction community serving homeless youth ages 13 to 25. We work with homeless and street-involved young people to help them find safety and stability. Many homeless young people face a day-to-day struggle to survive, which can lead to physical and emotional harm. Homeless youth may have experienced family abuse, violence, rejection, and instability that led to their homelessness. We welcome these young people, help them navigate complex systems, connect them to community, and provide essential resources at our drop-in centers, at our overnight shelter, and through our street outreach teams. Streetwork has been doing this community-based work since 1984, and we will continue to do so for as long as our services are needed. Over the past several years, Streetwork has experienced an increase in the number of migrant young people seeking help who have nowhere else to go.

In FY25, Streetwork Project provided services to 1,139 clients across our drop-in centers and overnight shelter, while our overnight street outreach team engaged in 15,277 contacts with homeless and at-risk young people. The City Council currently supports Streetwork through the **Supports for Persons Involved in the Sex Trade Initiative, LGBTQIA+ Youth Support and Services**, the **Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative**, and a **Speaker's Initiative**.

The **Support for Persons Involved in the Sex Trade Initiative** bolsters Streetwork's ability to provide services and access to housing to young people engaged in the sex trade. With this funding, we have been able to increase our engagement and response to the number of young people both in the drop-in center and on the streets who are in crisis and involved in the sex trade and to connect them to supportive counseling, access to benefits and housing, and primary and mental healthcare. Safe Horizon is seeking a **restoration and enhancement to \$500,000** to continue to bolster our response and offer critical services to this vulnerable population navigating homelessness, violence, racism, and so many other traumas.

**LGBTQIA+ Youth Support and Services** supports Streetwork's work addressing the needs of LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults, including navigating housing options and accessing long term safety. **We are seeking a restoration of \$455,000.**

The **Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative** helps Streetwork increase our capacity to connect potentially Hepatitis C-affected clients to testing, medical care, treatment, and infection control services. We are seeking a **restoration and enhancement to \$50,000** - so we can link runaway and homeless youth to the medical supports they need and deserve.

The **Speaker's Initiative** enhances Streetwork's ability to address the complex immigration and social services needs of undocumented and noncitizen young people seeking out support and assistance when they have nowhere else to turn. Streetwork has experienced an increase in the number of undocumented and migrant young people seeking our support and our assistance. We



believe that when young people are connected to legal assistance, long-term representation, and wraparound services, we help to prevent them from experiencing further exploitation, trafficking, and violence. **We are seeking a restoration of \$250,000.**

### **Immigration Law Project**

Safe Horizon's Immigration Law Project (ILP) provides expert legal advice and representation to victims of crime, violence, abuse, trafficking, and torture. ILP staff help guide their clients through complex immigration proceedings and assist them in VAWA self-petitions, petitions for U nonimmigrant status and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), applications for asylum, adjustment of status and citizenship, as well as in removal defense. ILP receives referrals internally from Safe Horizon's other programs, as well as externally from the immigration courts, law enforcement agencies, other community-based organizations, legislators, and from former and current clients. ILP strives to provide the highest quality services to a very vulnerable population. Clients live in all five boroughs and experience a multitude of victimizations including domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes. As a result of the settling of recent arrivals in New York City and the anti-immigrant policies emanating from Washington, Safe Horizon's ILP has seen an increase of survivors seeking our immediate assistance. In addition, overwhelmed government systems have left countless in tenuous circumstances—food and housing insecure and desperate for work—making them even more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and in need of our support and services.

The Adams Administration prioritized assisting migrants with completing asylum applications, not comprehensive legal screenings and long-term representation and assistance. We were grateful to see that the Council invested heavily in nonprofit civil legal assistance in the FY26 budget, and we urge the Council to continue to do so this year.

In FY25, ILP provided full representation, advice, and consults to nearly 600 clients and provided over 5,100 telephonic information and referral services. The City Council supports ILP through **Immigration Legal Services for Survivors of Violence & Gender Based Harm**, the **Culturally Specific Gender Based Violence Initiative**, the **Protect NYC Families Initiative**, and the **Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI)**.

City Council Initiative funding increases ILP's capacity to assist noncitizen survivors across NYC who have experienced violence here and abroad, including survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, with a wide range of immigration relief. We are seeking **a restoration of \$200,000 in Immigration Legal Services for Survivors of Violence & Gender Based Harm funding**, **a restoration of \$175,000 in Culturally Specific Gender Based Violence Initiative funding**, **a restoration and enhancement to \$50,000 in Protect NYC Families Initiative funding**, and **a restoration of \$20,000 in Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) funding**.

### **Domestic Violence Law Project**

Safe Horizon's Domestic Violence Law Project (DVLP) provides expert legal services and guidance to at-risk New Yorkers seeking relief on family and matrimonial law matters. Our team of attorneys and paralegals help their clients access orders of protection, custody, visitation, child



support, and divorces. In FY25, DVLP provided services to nearly 1,400 clients and offered telephonic helpline services to over 1,600 callers seeking assistance. The City Council supports DVLP through the **Safe Alternatives to Violent Encounters (SAVE) Initiative**.

Our Domestic Violence Law Project utilizes funding through the **Supportive Alternatives to Violent Encounters (SAVE) Initiative** to provide direct legal services to indigent victims of domestic violence in Family, Supreme, and Integrated DV Courts throughout the city. We are seeking a **restoration and enhancement to \$300,000** so our Domestic Violence Law Project can continue to provide survivors with the legal services they require to find safety and healing.

### **Counseling Center**

Safe Horizon's Counseling Center has provided mental health treatment to adult and child victims of violence and abuse since 1988. We provide ongoing support and counseling services during victims' recovery and healing journey. We offer supportive counseling without judgment, and we work with survivors to develop coping strategies. Our Counseling Center is one of the only New York State-licensed mental health clinics focused solely on treating trauma reactions that many victims of crime and abuse experience. Our Counseling Center provided 5,521 therapy sessions to 294 clients and 1,565 intake case management services to 752 clients in FY25. The City Council supports our Counseling Center's work through the **Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative** and the **Children Under Five Mental Health Initiative**. Both initiatives support our mental health work with the youngest survivors of violence and abuse.

The City Council's **Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative** allows us to address the impact of traumatic experiences that are so often at the root of behaviors that precipitate involvement in family court of children and youth aged 7 to 17. Our project involves the enhancement of trauma-informed care for youth by creating and providing training on short-term trauma-focused interventions. We are seeking a **restoration of \$240,000**.

The City Council's **Children Under Five Mental Health Initiative** supports our work with infants and toddlers who are survivors of crime, as well as their families, through training of clinicians and staff in evidence-based treatment. By training a greater number of individuals who come into contact with child survivors to recognize signs of trauma, we can prevent lifelong developmental consequences while providing healing and relief. We are seeking a **restoration and enhancement to \$150,000** to continue supporting young children who have been victims of or witnesses to crime.

### **Community Programs and SafeChat**

Safe Horizon offers a continuum of services for all victims of crime through telephonic, live chat, and/or in-person supports. With sites that serve all five boroughs, our compassionate Community Program staff provide safety planning, advocacy, case management, information and referrals, supportive counseling, and support groups. Safe Horizon's 24/7 SafeChat is a live chat platform that allows victims of all forms of crime and abuse to access Safe Horizon services digitally. Crime victims utilize their computer, phone, or tablet to safely and confidentially engage in a one-on-one chat with trained Safe Horizon Live Chat Specialists by visiting [safehorizon.org](https://safehorizon.org). Live Chat Specialists utilize a best practice, client-centered approach to engage with victims by providing



information and referrals across NYC, supporting victims in fully assessing their safety, and collaborating with victims to develop comprehensive safety plans. In FY25, our Community Programs provided services to 828 clients and assisted 614 client family members. SafeChat responded to 2,522 chats from survivors.

The City Council supports our Community Programs and SafeChat through the **Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations Initiative** and a **Speaker's Initiative**.

The work of the **Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations Initiative** aligns with Safe Horizon's commitment to working with young Black and Brown men who have experienced harm and violence. One of Safe Horizon's main goals is to increase accessibility to needed services for young men of color. Research shows that young men of color are more likely to experience harm, yet boys and young men of color are not accessing our services at comparable rates. This funding increases our capacity to connect community members who have experienced harm, with a particular focus on young men of color, to our continuum of services, including counseling and mental health supports. Our Hotlines and SafeChat serve as first points of contact, linking to Community Programs for ongoing coordination within Safe Horizon and beyond. Our services are offered telephonically, remotely, and in-person at our Community Program offices, ensuring that survivors have options. We are seeking a **restoration of \$150,000** to support this essential healing work.

For several years, the Council has awarded **Speaker's Initiative** funding to support the salary of a SafeChat Live Chat Specialist to enhance our ability to respond in particular to young men of color seeking help. We are seeking a **restoration of \$100,000 in Speaker's Initiative funding** to continue to support SafeChat's operations and the salary of this SafeChat Live Chat Specialist. This support allows us to respond in particular to young men of color seeking help and intentionally build avenues for young men of color to access supportive services and healing.

### **Late Contracting Issues**

We are grateful to the City Council for understanding the systemic late contracting issues that impact the nonprofit human services sector. Late contracts have a detrimental effect on community-based organizations and the communities we all serve. Great progress has been made because of the Council's movement on these issues through legislation to provide advances on contracts (LL156 of 2025, LL11 of 2026). However, much more needs to be done to address the millions still owed to providers across the city.

Frequent government contract payment delays put providers at risk of eviction and worsen deficits by forcing organizations to borrow to pay rent and salaries. Safe Horizon has, on many occasions, been forced to borrow money to sustain service provision to survivors while waiting months or even years for a contract to be registered so that we could receive payment.

The City's delays cost providers real money and jeopardize quality of services by diverting funds away from programs to pay interest on lines of credit, for which we are not reimbursed.



In addition, when nonprofits are owed money, we cannot respond to emergencies effectively because of limited cash flow to meet urgent needs. For example, during the pandemic, we needed to purchase supplies, like masks and cleaning equipment, and were forced to utilize our credit line for that purpose because of the city's payment delays.

As of January 31, 2026, Safe Horizon is owed \$5.1M across 15 contracts through DYCD and DOHMH. Many but not all of these contracts are related to the City Council funding detailed above. As the Council knows, these contracts are frequently registered long after the start date for services.

### **Int. 0452**

Additionally, we urge the Council to support wage equity legislation that will bolster the nonprofit human services sector.

We are grateful for the multi-year COLA investment, which was a major victory for the nonprofit human services sector. There are still challenges, in that the COLA funding is implemented by agencies in ways that are overly restrictive. That investment ends next year so now is the time to push for true wage equity, where nonprofit workers are not paid up to 30% less than their government counterparts. We enthusiastically support Intro 452, which would be a huge step forward.

Government is not just the predominant funder of human services but also the main driver of human services salaries. Government either directly sets salary rates on contracts or does so indirectly by establishing costs for a unit of service along with required staffing on a contract.

New York City has relied heavily on the nonprofit human services sector to house, shelter, safety plan, and provide other critical services for survivors of violence. However, our government partners too often ask our community of nonprofits and community-based organizations to do more with less and to accept the bare minimum. This means that many - too many - nonprofit human services workers, the majority of whom are women and people of color, are barely surviving on the wages paid by underfunded contracts. Because many survivors come into victim services work to help other survivors, government funding for the nonprofit victim services sector is an economic justice issue for survivors. To live up to our shared values of equity, equality, and supporting communities, New York must commit to funding contracts at appropriate levels to allow nonprofits and community-based organizations to offer competitive living wage salaries. Pay equity is a racial justice issue, a gender justice issue, and an economic justice issue.

The human services nonprofit sector is dealing with a sustainability crisis. Organizations across the sector continue to lose staff because wages are not comparable to wages in the government and private sectors. Hiring and staff retention continue to be major issues across the field. Vacancies and staff turnover directly impact our clients – survivors of domestic violence, runaway and homeless youth, and victims and survivors of violence and abuse across New York City. When staff leave for a better paying job in the private, for-profit sector, our programs must reassign cases, which is disruptive to the survivors coming to us seeking safety and healing.



Intro 452 is a significant step towards ensuring that human services workers receive equitable pay comparable to their City counterparts. By establishing a clear wage requirement system, this legislation promotes transparency in compensation, ensuring that every worker is paid solely based on their qualifications and experience.

### **Conclusion**

As the City Council and the Administration sets the budget for the next fiscal year, it's imperative that our city expand, perfect, create, and invest in programming that provides healing and support to people who have experienced harm, violence, and trauma. When we invest in the safety, healing, and well-being of individual New Yorkers, we invest in the safety, healing, and well-being of New York City as a whole.

And it is essential that the City invest in the nonprofit human services workforce that we collectively rely on to support our safety net. We urge you and your colleagues to listen to providers, our dedicated workforce, and survivors. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony.



**Arab American Family  
Support Center**

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**Serving all five boroughs of NYC**

**TESTIMONY OF THE ARAB AMERICAN FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER BEFORE  
THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**March 25, 2026**

Chair Lee and members of the Committee on Finance, my name is Randy Ali, and I am the Executive Director of the Arab-American Family Support Center, known as AAFSC.

AAFSC is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization established in 1994 to provide culturally and linguistically competent, trauma-informed services to New York City's growing Arab, Middle Eastern, North African, Muslim, and South Asian (AMENAMSA) communities. AAFSC has locations in all five boroughs, with staff that speak over 20 languages, and, last year, provided wraparound services to over 20,000 people.

Over 70 percent of our clients were born outside the United States, many from historically underserved communities. Our work centers on families by helping them stabilize during challenging times, maintain stability, and ultimately thrive. Our services include mental health counseling, domestic violence case management, SNAP and health insurance enrollment, adult education and literacy classes, legal services, cultural programs for youth, and resource distribution.

The federal administration's policies have had an immediate and devastating impact on immigrant communities, particularly those served by AAFSC. There has been heightened immigration enforcement, reduced access to social services, and a rise in fear among community members.

In January 2024, our mental health program saw an 80% increase in referrals, with clinical reports consistently highlighting widespread anxiety about immigration enforcement among clients. AAFSC has implemented security measures and staff training to protect those they serve. Additionally, the federal administration has initiated a federal funding freeze executive order. While currently paused, we can assume some level of loss of funding and/or delay in payments.

With federal funding comprising \$1.2 million of our operating budget, these looming cuts threaten our ability to serve our most vulnerable community members at a time when they will need us most. Without reserves or endowments, AAFSC is seeking private and city funding to sustain its essential work. Additionally, AAFSC is preparing for increased regulatory scrutiny,

which could hinder its operations. They are securing pro bono legal support to navigate audits and compliance challenges. In this critical moment, AAFSC calls for immediate financial support to ensure its survival and continued service to vulnerable communities.

Additionally, along with our partner nonprofits we ask that the City drastically reduce delays in outstanding payments to providers. Nonprofits like AAFSC provide critical services on behalf of the City to its residents, and it is important that the impediments in their way are removed. We would also like to see the City advance more of its contract funding, so that nonprofits are not stuck in a starvation cycle and can make payroll. Additionally, we ask for fair and equitable wages for members of the nonprofit workforce.

Lastly, for us to continue meeting growing demand for our services, we respectfully request:

- \$10 million for the City's First Readers initiative.
- \$70,000 in discretionary funding through City's First Readers for AAFSC's Caregiver-Child Bonding Circle to sustain and expand culturally responsive services for immigrant families.
- \$100,000 in discretionary funding for our Young Adult and Youth Program and \$75,000 for our Young Women Leadership program.
- An increase in Council discretionary funding for adult literacy from \$14.5 million to \$18 million, and the consolidation of all Council adult literacy funding under Adult Literacy Forward.
- \$325,000 in discretionary funding through Adult Literacy Forward for AAFSC's Adult Education and Literacy Program.
- \$250,000 for our comprehensive immigration services, including family reunification, green card and asylum applications, and Know Your Rights workshops.
- \$325,000 in discretionary funding through Adult Literacy Forward for AAFSC's Adult Education and Literacy Program
- \$260,000 for SNAP and Healthcare Enrollment program, which supports immigrant and refugee families.
- Maintaining \$2 million in funding for the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program, or MCCAP.
- Increasing funding for the Access Health NYC initiative to \$4.5 million.
- \$115,355 in Access Health NYC initiative funding for AAFSC.
- \$144,645 in MCCAP initiative funding for AAFSC.

Continued Council investment ensures that New Yorkers of all ages, regardless of language, background, or zip code, have the opportunity to belong and thrive. As immigrants are under attack, these services are vital to their safety.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to New York City residents.



**Submitted Testimony of Con Edison to the New York City Council Committee on Finance on the  
Proposed New York City FY'26-27 Preliminary Budget  
March 25, 2026**

Con Edison appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on Mayor Mamdani's proposed FY 2027 Preliminary Budget for New York City.

Con Edison provides essential electric, gas, and steam services to approximately 10 million people across New York City and Westchester, delivering safe and reliable electric, gas, and steam service to households, small businesses, hospitals, the county's largest transit system, and critical public infrastructure. Our system underpins nearly every aspect of daily life in New York City, from public health and emergency response to housing, transportation, and economic activity.

We welcome this opportunity to reaffirm our *Clean Energy Commitment* as New York advances its transition toward a sustainable energy future. This strategic framework drives our investments in the development and operation of resilient, innovative, and reliable energy infrastructure. At the heart of our mission is a dedication to large-scale electrification for heating and transport and our overall commitment to providing customers with access to 100% clean energy.

**Con Edison's Local Economic Impact and Investment**

Over half of Con Edison of New York's 10,800 employees live in our service territory, and 57% of those employees are union members—a rate nearly three times higher than the industry average. Our commitment to representation is reflected at every level: 59% of our total workforce are people of color, while women and people of color hold 45% and 30% of our leadership positions, respectively.

Con Edison's commitment to helping New Yorkers achieve economic security reaches well beyond its employees, as evidenced by the company's investment in clean energy workforce development programs and partnerships. In 2025 alone, Con Edison awarded grants to organizations that are projected to train 1,800 individuals in clean energy careers. In addition, in August of 2025, Con Edison played a leading role in the foundation of the New York City Energy Efficiency Employer-Led Workforce Coalition, an ambitious initiative aimed at creating long-term career pathways in clean energy.

**NYC Property Taxes, Business Taxes, and Its Direct Impact on Customer Bills**

Under New York City's 4-Class property tax system, utility infrastructure is categorized as Class 3 property and subject to a standalone utility rate. These property taxes are a cost of service and are passed directly to customers through the delivery portion of their utility bills. Consequently, any increase in the Class 3 property tax rate functions as an immediate and proportional surcharge on every customer's bill.

As the single largest taxpayer in New York City, Con Edison has seen the property tax burden on our customers rise at an unsustainable rate. Between 2019 and 2024, these taxes surged by approximately

45%, reaching a total of more than \$2.6 billion in 2025 alone. These sharply escalating costs exacerbate the affordability crisis facing New Yorkers.

In addition to these rising property tax obligations, Con Edison carries a tax burden significantly higher than that of comparable utilities nationwide. Excluding income taxes, industry data shows that Con Edison's tax obligations reached approximately 21% in 2023, nearly double the industry peer average of 12%. While other major utilities in similar jurisdictions operate with tax loads between 5% and 17%, New Yorkers are uniquely burdened by these elevated, tax-driven charges. ***As property taxes imposed on Con Edison flow directly and immediately into customer bills, any increase in these taxes results in higher costs for ratepayers.*** These charges are fixed components of delivery rates and customers have no ability to avoid or reduce them. Every additional tax assessment on Class 3 utility property is reflected in the bills paid by households, small businesses, and essential service providers.

### **Energy Affordability**

Con Edison remains deeply committed to energy affordability, providing \$243 million in total bill discounts to 530,000 eligible customers through our Energy Affordability Program (EAP) in 2025. Building on this success, Con Edison launched the Enhanced EAP (EEAP) in January 2026. EEAP expands access to monthly bill discounts for the first time to moderate- and additional low-income customers not enrolled in the government benefit programs which have traditionally been required to qualify for this assistance.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with elected officials to host customer support days in their respective districts. During these events, we offer in-person assistance with Con Edison accounts, educate and guide customers through enrollment in various programs such as EAP, EEAP and payment plans, and share information about energy efficiency rebate programs. Members of the NYC Council interested in hosting an event can reach out to our Government or Regional Community Affairs teams.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Mayor Mamdani's proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary budget for the City of New York.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please reach out to Sheelah Feinberg, City Government Relations, at [feinbergs@coned.com](mailto:feinbergs@coned.com).



## Testimony to City Council Committee on Education Preliminary Budget Hearing

*Submitted to the City Council Committee on Education on March 27, 2026*

*Prepared by Melinda Wang, Research and Advocacy Manager of Dance/NYC*

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Thank you for your consideration of this testimony, submitted on behalf of Dance/NYC ([Dance.NYC](https://www.dance.nyc.org)), a service organization for the 6,000 individual dance artists and 1,700 dance entities in the New York City metropolitan area. We champion the dance sector by fostering a more just, equitable, and inclusive landscape where dance workers and organizations can thrive. Rooted in research, Dance/NYC engages in advocacy, regranteeing, and knowledge-sharing that works toward establishing dance as a valued form of cultural expression and a common good.

Dance/NYC joins our fellow advocates in support of the **It Starts with the Arts** coalition — calling on our city to prioritize funding and policy changes that improve arts education in NYC and support its robust workforce. We call for the following:

### **ADDRESS COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS FOR ARTS EDUCATION WORKFORCE**

- **Continue reforms to contracting with city agencies**, specifically targeting NYCPS' Multi-Task Award Contract (MTAC) and CASA contracts, to ensure timely contract remittance and payments, accessible processes, and fair per-class rates that reflect the true cost of programming and labor.
- **Launch insurance pilots to support teaching artist affordability.** Aligned with Creatives Rebuild NY and the Center for an Urban Future, NYC can reduce economic precarity for the arts workforce by piloting a freelancers portable benefits program and a pooled insurance program for smaller orgs.
- **Restore and Baseline Funding for the Department of Cultural Affairs (\$30M).** Baselineing this one-time addition supports arts organizations and workers city-wide, offering sector-wide stabilization and preventing further artist displacement.

## PRESERVING & IMPROVING ARTS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

- **Restore and Enhance “Support for Arts Instruction” initiative funding.** Increase allocation from \$4M to \$6M to meet city-wide demand for increased arts learning opportunities.
- **Require NYCPS arts funding be spent on the arts.** Boost the per student arts allocation to \$100 from \$89.76, and require that money be spent on arts education.
- **Ensure Every School Has a Certified Arts Teacher:** Ensure that all schools have at least one certified arts teacher, in part by reviving the successful supplemental arts certification program (\$4M) and funding a PE Works-inspired improvement plan using the already baselined arts education funding.
- **Improve arts education data transparency.** Require mandatory reporting on school-level arts education access, participation, spending, and MTAC procurement (R1129/R1180) via T&C.
- **Update the NYCPS Blueprint for Arts Learning** to define sequential pathways for arts learning that integrate culturally-responsive pedagogy and reflect rapid advancements in media and technology (last updated in 2015).

### The arts are crucial to supporting students across backgrounds

Arts education is not *just* optional enrichment; it is foundational to a well-rounded education that engages students academically, socially, and emotionally. Its benefits extend beyond the arts classroom, improving engagement and success across all subjects. This is especially true for low-income students, who are among the most vulnerable to today’s educational crises. Research shows that low-income students who participate in the arts are five times less likely to drop out and more than twice as likely to graduate from college. They achieve better test scores and are more likely to participate in civic engagement opportunities, like volunteering, student government, and voting in their young adulthood.<sup>1</sup> In this way, arts education acts as a critical defense against larger disinvestment in low-income students and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> Americans for the Arts. [Arts Education Navigator: Facts and Figures](#).

Moreover, art education fosters inclusion and belonging. 88% of NYC schools said arts education was a driver of social and emotional learning.<sup>2</sup> Dance therapy, in particular, supports emotional, cognitive, and physical integration and has proven especially beneficial for people with chronic conditions. According to the National Dance Education Organization, dance also provides immigrant and non-English-speaking students with a nonverbal way to express themselves and maintain aspects of identity that are not always supported in a new culture or language. Similarly, dance creates meaningful opportunities for cognitive development and inclusion for disabled students<sup>3</sup>.

### **Yet, arts students and educators are critically underresourced**

For years, arts educators have been forced to make do with less for their students. 47% of NYC schools reported that funding for the arts is generally insufficient.<sup>4</sup> 379 NYC public schools—that’s about 1 in 5—lack a certified arts teacher.<sup>5</sup> Together, this leaves hundreds of thousands of students without the full support needed for a well-rounded education. Dance education, in particular, has been impacted. Dance educators represent just 12.5% of full-time and 7.2% of part-time certified arts teachers in NYC public schools<sup>6</sup>. This effect worsens over a student’s lifetime: only 76% of public elementary schools, 44% of middle schools, and 21% of high schools offer dance education.

These same educators are not receiving the resources and support they need to sustain a career in arts education. According to our State of NYC Dance 2023 report, 47% of our dance worker constituents work as dance educators. Despite the vital work they do supporting student movement and expression, they earned an average of just \$44,000— 18% less than the NYC living wage that same year.<sup>7</sup> Teaching artists, who make up a large portion of the dance education workforce, face particular

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<sup>2</sup>[Arts in Schools Report, 2024-2025.](#)

<sup>3</sup> National Dance Education Organization. [Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting](#) (2013).

<sup>4</sup> [NYC Public Schools Arts Reporting, 2023- 2024.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Department of Education - Arts Education Report 2024](#)

<sup>6</sup> NYC Department of Education Arts Office, [Arts in Schools Report 2022-2023](#)

<sup>7</sup> [State of NYC Dance 2023 Report](#)

vulnerabilities as freelancers. Only 6% of teaching artists reported receiving health insurance through an employer.<sup>8</sup>

### **Fully funding the larger arts ecosystem is key to supporting students**

Arts education sits at the intersection of two concurrent issues: disinvestment in education and in the broader arts and culture ecosystem. Cultural organizations and workers across the city serve as vital community partners in education. More than 900 arts and cultural organizations partnered with NYC public schools in the 2024-2025 school year. 23% of all reporting schools used external funding provided by these arts and culture organizations.<sup>2</sup> These organizations often serve as employers of the more than 10,000 teaching artists who work in NYC public schools.<sup>8</sup>

Our organizations and workers play a critical role in filling the gaps when educators aren't given the support they need—but we face our own financial challenges. 40% of NYC dance entities report their financial health as weak or very weak, and 58% of dance workers believe they do not earn fair wages. Arts organizations that have been working with schools for decades are waiting up to 28 months for their contracts to be renewed, resulting in lost revenue, disruption to education, and lost income for teaching artists.<sup>9</sup>

For these reasons, we echo our colleagues across the sector in calling not only for full funding of arts education for every student across the five boroughs, but full funding for the educators and organizations that support them. Our students deserve an education that nurtures their humanity, creativity, and sense of belonging, and our educators deserve the resources they need to stay in the field. We look forward to working with the City Council to defend every student's right to learn boldly, learn creatively, and learn the arts.

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<sup>8</sup> [Paying for Professionalism 2025: Teaching Artist Compensation & Employment Report](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Arts in Education Roundtable, MTAC Arts Survey One-Pager](#)



**Testimony from Ella Grace Downs, Deputy Director of Policy & Advocacy Manager  
at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) before the New York City Council Committee on  
Immigration  
March 25, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Lee and Members of the Committee. My name is Ella Grace Downs, and I am the Deputy Director of Policy & Advocacy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE). GGE is a Black feminist, intergenerational Brooklyn-based organization, reshaping culture and policy through advocacy, youth-centered programming, and narrative shift.

As a small, Black, queer and immigrant-led nonprofit doing critical racial, gender and sexuality justice and liberation work in the context of today's hostile world, the funding we receive is imperative to the development and growth of Black girls and gender-expansive youth of color across NYC. We request continued support from City Council for our FY27 youth programming, so we can continue to address the educational needs of young people across all five boroughs during this critical period.

We are facing democratic erosion nationally and the normalization of sexual violence against girls and gender-expansive youth. The lack of accountability for perpetrators in the Epstein files paired with the continual presence of ICE in our communities is impacting the mental health of youth that attend our programs. Young people feel powerless, which our staff has to respond to in real-time by shifting program curricula, increasing 1:1's, updating safety protocols, and developing a whole new organizing arm and campaign to tend to current, real-world needs and re-empower our young people.

Furthermore, attacks against “DEI” and racial justice work have led foundations to steer away from funding our work. This year, GGE is facing decreased funding from across the sector, with funders reducing investment away from gender and racial justice organizations. In response to these challenges, GGE has restructured by reducing staff and scaling back certain programs. This current FY, we are projecting a budget deficit of approximately \$1M, which underscores the urgency of securing multi-year, flexible funding and a stronger partnership with City Council to stabilize operations and sustain impact not just for GGE, but for **ALL** small organizations doing this critical work.

This is why we have formally launched the Alliance on Gender Equity, or AGE, and are requesting \$300,000 in the form of a new City Council initiative to sustain this work. AGE is a youth-led space for political education, civic engagement, leadership development and community-building for Black girls, queer and gender-expansive youth of color. The coalition consists of our GGE youth participants, adult co-conspirators and non-profit allies. We convene with partner organizations on a monthly basis to see how we can support and uplift each other with our unique and shared priorities as we face growing attacks against our work and our communities.

To help build the youth alliance, we held a Town Hall In November 2025 centering young BIPOC girls, gender-expansive and LGBTQIA+ youth from all five boroughs. We heard from them in six priority areas, with many issues coming up that are of direct interest to this Committee, specifically a demand for more funding for after school programs where they can connect with other young people, engage politically, and feel safe and affirmed.

AGE turned these grievances and recommendations into a List of Demands for New York City and State, which is now the School G\*rls Demand campaign, launched this month. We will share our demands and list of city-specific requests in the written submission, to keep this brief.

GGE is continuing to do the work and expanding our reach, despite financial constraints. With \$300k in support from City Council through the AGE initiative, we hope to continue equipping young Black girls, queer and gender-expansive youth to fight for a NYC that is resilient against harmful national forces working against them.

1. \$350,000 towards our Young Women's Advisory Council program funded by Young Women's Leadership Development Initiative (YWLD) for political education and empowerment,
2. \$200,000 towards our Sisters in Strength survivor program funded by the Domestic Violence and Empowerment Initiative (DoVE) initiative to support young survivors,
3. \$100,000 towards the Sports Training and Role Models for Success (STARS) Initiative to promote the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of youth ages 12-24, and
4. \$250,000 in ATI funding to continue our youth organizing work surrounding racial disparities in disciplinary actions and school policies, and promotion of restorative and healing justice measures and Alternatives to Incarceration.

We hope you consider supporting us in these endeavors. Thank you.

**To:** New York City Council, Committee on Finance  
Deputy Speaker Dr. Nantasha Williams  
Chair, Linda Lee

**From:** Candace S. Hill, Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) Organizational  
Development Manager, Just Safe & Scaling Safety

**RE:** New York City Trauma Recovery Centers

**Committee Hearing:** Wednesday, March 25, 2026

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It is with great excitement that we provide testimony to elevate the significant impact of Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs) in helping survivors heal and strengthening community safety. A sincere thanks to the New York City Council for your support in funding TRCs and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of continued funding.

*For survivors of violence, one of the most significant determinants of future victimization is past victimization. Trauma Recovery Centers seek to disrupt this cycle of victimization.*

The [Trauma Recovery Center model](#) costs 34% less than the usual fee-for-service system of care and works to interrupt the cycle of violence by supporting victims of violence in their journey towards stability and healing. TRCs deliver comprehensive care to survivors of violent crime who are grappling with physical and psychological trauma and are unlikely to access mental health and social services. Without support, victims of crime often experience housing and employment instability, substance abuse, mental health challenges, re-victimization, or contact with the justice system. By addressing both the visible and invisible wounds of violence, TRCs help victims and communities heal, which is crucial for interrupting the cycle of harm that can perpetuate violence. Just Safe (formerly known as Alliance for Safety and Justice (ASJ)) advocates extensively to grow the model nationally.

[Just Safe](#) is a national organization that aims to win new public safety priorities in states across the country through its [Crime Survivors Speak](#), [TimeDone](#), and [Alliance for Safety and Justice](#) advocacy programs that advance policies that strengthen public safety, promote healing, and interrupt the cycle of harm that can perpetuate violence in communities that are most harmed and least helped. Our multi-state, non-partisan programs promote effective policy approaches to public safety that are rooted in crime prevention, community health, rehabilitation, and support for crime survivors. Trauma

Recovery Centers (TRCs) address all four areas and deliver high quality, coordinated, cost effective care that costs significantly less than traditional, office-based mental health treatment and reduce over-reliance on social services.

The Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) [model of care began in 2001 with a single location in San Francisco](#), established to serve hard-to-reach survivors of violence who were unable to access traditional victim services. This model has since expanded significantly, with 56 TRCs now operating across the country. To meet the tremendous community need for trauma recovery services for traditionally underserved victims of crime, the [National Alliance of Trauma Recovery Centers](#) (NATRC) was founded. NATRC's mission is to build capacity and provide essential training and technical assistance to TRC staff nationwide.

Sustained funding for Trauma Recovery Centers is vital to disrupting the cycle of violence through healing those most impacted by it. ***We sincerely appreciate your support and respectfully request your continued commitment to funding all existing Trauma Recovery Centers in the 2027 and future city budgets.*** Furthermore, we ask that you support the establishment of additional trauma recovery centers to [scale up safety](#) and adequately [meet the needs of all survivors of violence](#).

Sincerely,

Candace S. Hill  
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# MANHATTAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## TESTIMONY OF JESSICA WALKER

President and CEO, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Finance  
Preliminary Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2027  
**March 25, 2026**

### INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon, Speaker Menin, Chair Lee, and distinguished members of the Finance Committee. My name is Jessica Walker, and I am the President and CEO of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than 125,000 businesses—the vast majority of them small, immigrant-owned, minority-owned, and women-owned. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Mayor’s Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

Let me be direct: we are here today because we are concerned about the fiscal trajectory of this city. Not as partisans. Not as obstructionists. But as the people who sign paychecks, open storefronts, and bet their livelihoods every single day on New York’s future. We want this administration to succeed. We want this Council to succeed. And it is precisely because of that commitment that we cannot stay silent about what we see in this budget.

### THE SPENDING TRAJECTORY IS UNSUSTAINABLE

The proposed FY2027 budget totals \$127 billion—a figure larger than the municipal budgets of Chicago, Los Angeles, and Houston combined. This comes on the heels of a nearly \$20 billion expansion in city spending under the prior administration, driven by underbudgeted programs, asylum seeker costs, and new agency commitments that were never offset by structural savings. At some point, the compounding has to stop. That point is now.

We credit the Mamdani administration for bringing greater transparency and honest accounting to the budget. That candor is welcome and overdue. But honesty about the size of the hole is not the same as a credible plan to fill it. The preliminary budget projects outyear gaps of \$6.7 billion in FY2028, \$6.8 billion in

FY2029, and \$7.1 billion in FY2030, with expenditures consistently outpacing projected revenue growth. This is the fiscal equivalent of driving toward a cliff and arguing about which radio station to play.

New York City does not have a revenue problem. It has a spending velocity problem. And this budget accelerates it. In an environment of growing stagflation risk, persistent federal uncertainty over tariff policy, and a global economy marked by caution rather than confidence, building a budget on the assumption of continued Wall Street windfalls and aggressive revenue projections is imprudent. Even the Comptroller has warned that betting on a continuation of the Wall Street boom is “risky.” The Independent Budget Office has flagged the same concern. The Chamber agrees.

## **OPPOSE THE PROPERTY TAX INCREASE**

The administration has proposed a 9.5 percent increase in the property tax rate as a “last resort.” We urge the Council to ensure it stays that way—a resort that is never visited. This is not a scalpel; it is a sledgehammer aimed at the foundation of an already unequal system.

As the Comptroller has noted, the city’s property tax system is “profoundly unfair and inconsistent.” An across-the-board increase would be regressive—hitting small property owners, seniors on fixed incomes, and neighborhood small businesses hardest. For the thousands of small commercial landlords who also face a proposed rent freeze on stabilized apartments, the combination of higher taxes and frozen income would be devastating, potentially accelerating foreclosures and vacancy in the very neighborhoods this administration wants to revitalize.

Moreover, a 9.5 percent increase would bring the city perilously close to its constitutional property tax ceiling, leaving virtually no fiscal room to maneuver in the event of an actual emergency such as a recession, a pandemic, or a natural disaster. We would be spending our last fiscal bullet in peacetime. The last time the city significantly raised property taxes was in 2003 under Mayor Bloomberg, in direct response to the devastation of September 11th and a genuine recession. That is not the circumstance we face today.

## **OPPOSE NEW CORPORATE AND INCOME TAX INCREASES**

The administration’s preferred path (raising income taxes on high-earners and increasing taxes on the most profitable corporations) is framed as progressive. In practice, it is dangerous. New York City already imposes the highest combined individual, business, and real estate tax burden in the nation. Every incremental increase pushes us further from competitiveness and closer to the point at which our most mobile taxpayers and employers make rational decisions to locate elsewhere.

This is not hypothetical. We are already seeing corporate relocations to cities in Texas, Florida, and other states that offer meaningfully lower tax environments. The pandemic proved that remote work is viable and that physical presence in New York is a choice, not a requirement. Every dollar of additional tax burden we impose on the top earners and large employers is a dollar we are gambling will not walk out the door—taking with it not just the tax revenue from those individuals and firms, but the downstream spending, hiring, and philanthropic investment that flows from their presence.

As the Chamber joined a broad coalition of business organizations in stating last month: “New York City’s business community stands united in strong opposition to tax increases as part of the State budget under negotiations. New York is the highest tax and spending jurisdiction in the country.” We urge Albany to look at the math, not the politics.

## **OPPOSE TAPPING THE RAINY DAY FUND AND RESERVES**

The administration's proposal to draw down nearly \$980 million from the Revenue Stabilization Fund and \$229 million from the Retiree Health Benefits Trust is, in our view, fiscally reckless in the current environment. The Rainy Day Fund was created in 2021 and has never been tapped—not during the migrant crisis, not during the inflationary surge that followed the pandemic. We agree wholeheartedly with Speaker Menin that “the Rainy Day Fund was created to help protect New Yorkers during a true fiscal emergency” and that we are not in such an emergency today.

The Council's own analysis has identified nearly \$1.7 billion in potential savings and additional revenue for the current fiscal year (including debt service adjustments, reductions in long-standing vacant positions, and unrecognized interest earnings) that could close the gap without touching the reserves. We support this approach. Draining the reserves now, during a period of economic uncertainty rather than acute crisis, would send exactly the wrong signal to credit rating agencies. Moody's and S&P are already watching. A downgrade would increase borrowing costs across the board (by an estimated \$120 million a year, according to the Speaker's office) creating the very spiral of rising costs and diminished capacity that the reserves are supposed to prevent.

## **MAXIMIZE SAVINGS: THE \$1.77 BILLION IS A START, NOT A CEILING**

We applaud the administration's creation of Chief Savings Officers at every city agency through Executive Order 12. The concept is sound, and the projected \$1.77 billion in savings across FY2026 and FY2027 is a welcome first step. But it is exactly that—a first step. The savings targets set by this administration, at 1.5 percent of agencies' City-funded budgets in FY2026 and 2.5 percent in FY2027, are modest by historical standards.

For context: Mayor Bloomberg routinely directed agencies to find savings of 3 to 5 percent of their city-funded budgets through the Program to Eliminate the Gap. During the Adams administration, agencies were instructed to cut 5 percent across the board—and even those targets, while sometimes achieved on paper, often relied on vacancy reductions and expense re-estimates rather than genuine operational efficiencies. The Citizens Budget Commission has found that in prior savings rounds, the vast majority of “savings” did not actually reduce costs but instead captured money that was not going to be spent anyway.

We urge this administration to raise its sights. A 1.5 percent target on a \$127 billion budget signals that spending discipline is an afterthought, not a priority. If the city set its savings targets at 3 to 5 percent—in line with what Bloomberg demanded during periods of economic expansion, not just crisis—the additional billions recovered would meaningfully reduce the gap without a single new tax or a dollar drawn from reserves. The Comptroller has noted that operating expenses this year exceed revenues by \$4.5 billion. That is a structural problem, not a rainy-day problem, and it requires structural solutions: consolidating duplicative programs, insourcing where cost-effective, sunseting initiatives that have outlived their usefulness, and subjecting every line of the budget to the simple question of whether it is delivering value to New Yorkers.

## **MAXIMIZE THE CITY'S ASSETS**

Before raising a single tax rate or touching a single dollar of reserves, the city should be maximizing the value of the assets it already owns. New York City controls an extraordinary portfolio of real estate,

infrastructure, franchise rights, and concession opportunities. We urge the administration and the Council to aggressively pursue asset monetization strategies—not fire sales, but thoughtful, revenue-generating approaches such as long-term ground leases on underutilized public parcels, renegotiated franchise agreements that capture fair market value, enhanced revenue recovery from delinquent fines and fees, and leveraging the city’s real property portfolio more effectively.

Revenue-raising PEG initiatives in prior budgets have demonstrated that the city can meaningfully boost collections through smarter management of existing assets—from mobile telecom franchises to parking revenues to tax audit enforcement. Every dollar recovered through better asset management is a dollar that does not need to come from taxpayers or reserves.

## **DOUBLE DOWN ON TOURISM AS AN ECONOMIC ENGINE**

The Chamber wants to highlight an enormous opportunity sitting right in front of this city that should be central to any fiscal strategy: tourism. In 2025, New York City’s tourism industry generated \$84.7 billion in economic impact, \$55.6 billion in direct spending, \$7.5 billion in tax revenue, and supported 397,000 jobs across the five boroughs. Let those numbers sink in: \$7.5 billion in tax revenue from an industry that asks nothing of the city except to be welcoming, safe, clean, and vibrant.

And the opportunity is about to get larger. The 2026 FIFA World Cup will bring eight matches to MetLife Stadium this summer, with an expected 1.2 million visitors to the region, \$3.3 billion in economic impact, and \$1.8 billion in direct spending. The 250th anniversary of American independence is drawing visitors from around the world. Broadway ticket sales and attendance for the current season are running above last year’s pace. International travel, while down slightly in 2025, is projected to rebound, with domestic travel expected to surpass record 2019 levels.

This is not a moment to cut corners on the things that make tourism work—clean streets, public safety, cultural programming, marketing to international markets, and a welcoming business environment that keeps restaurants, shops, and attractions open and thriving. Tourism is the single most efficient revenue generator the city has: visitors pay taxes, spend money, and support jobs without consuming the full range of city services that residents require. Every dollar invested in making New York a more attractive destination pays back multiples in tax revenue.

And critically, tourism is the economic lifeline for exactly the small businesses the Chamber represents—the restaurants, the hotels, the retail shops, the cultural venues, the tour operators, and the thousands of neighborhood businesses in every borough that depend on foot traffic and visitor spending. These businesses have survived a pandemic, an inflation surge, tariffs, and years of uncertainty. What they cannot survive is a city that raises their taxes, neglects their streets, and treats them as a revenue line rather than a civic foundation.

## **THE MACROECONOMIC MOMENT DEMANDS CAUTION, NOT EXPANSION**

We are not testifying in a vacuum. The national and global economic picture is deteriorating in ways that should give every fiscal policymaker pause. Tariff uncertainty is already raising input costs for businesses across the city. Consumer confidence is fragile. The risk of stagflation (a toxic combination of stagnant growth and persistent inflation) is no longer a fringe concern but a growing consensus among economists and market participants. Interest rate relief, which many had anticipated, has been delayed indefinitely.

The Comptroller has noted that the only job growth in the city in 2025 was concentrated in low-paid home health care positions, with employment in all other sectors dropping by 35,000 jobs. The IBO has cautioned about “economic hesitancy” driven by tariff and geopolitical uncertainty. The Council’s own March forecast projects GDP growth of 2.5 percent—healthy, but far from the kind of boom that would justify \$127 billion in municipal spending.

In this environment, the responsible course of action is fiscal restraint, not fiscal expansion. When households face uncertain income, they tighten their budgets. When businesses face uncertain demand, they preserve cash. When a city faces the most significant fiscal strain since the Great Recession—the Comptroller’s own characterization—it should be building its reserves, not draining them, and reducing its cost base, not growing it.

## CONCLUSION

The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce is not here to obstruct. We are here to be honest. And the honest truth is this: a \$127 billion budget built on aggressive revenue assumptions, proposed tax increases, and the depletion of rainy-day reserves is not a plan for New York’s future. It is a plan that mortgages it.

We urge the Council to hold the line on three principles. First, no new taxes—not property taxes, not corporate taxes, not income taxes. Second, no drawdown of the Rainy Day Fund or the Retiree Health Benefits Trust. Third, real savings—not 1.5 percent, but 3 to 5 percent across agencies, in line with the historical benchmarks this city has met before and can meet again.

And we urge the administration to invest aggressively in the engine that will generate the revenue this city needs without asking anything more of its taxpayers: a thriving, globally competitive tourism and small business ecosystem. Clean the streets. Keep the city safe. Market New York to the world. Support the entrepreneurs and small business owners who make this city what it is. That is the path to fiscal sustainability—not through higher taxes, not through depleted reserves, but through growth, discipline, and a relentless focus on the fundamentals that make New York the greatest city on Earth.

The small businesses of Manhattan are resilient. They have survived a pandemic, an inflation surge, tariffs, and years of uncertainty. What they cannot survive is a government that treats them as a revenue line rather than a civic foundation. We can do better than this budget. We must.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with the Council and the administration in the weeks ahead to ensure the FY2027 budget reflects the fiscal discipline and long-term vision that New Yorkers deserve.

**To: New York City Council, Committee on Criminal Justice**

**Chair: Selvena N. Brooks-Powers**

**From: Janelle Melohn, NATRC Senior Director**

**Stacey Wiggall, NATRC Director of Training & Technical Assistance**

**Re: New York City Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs)**

**Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026**

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Good Afternoon Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of renewing funding for New York City's Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs). As of 2026, there are 56 TRCs across 18 states, working together through the National Alliance of Trauma Recovery Centers (NATRC) to advance equitable, evidence-based services for survivors of violence.

We are here today to speak about the four Trauma Recovery Centers in New York City, established in partnership with the City Council.

Since 2023, the Council has funded four TRCs as part of a citywide initiative to expand access to trauma-focused mental health care, support survivors of violence, and improve public safety. Without renewed investment, these centers will be forced to close at the end of the current fiscal year. This would mean that survivors of violence across New York City—particularly those in the most under-resourced communities—will lose access to critical services that support stabilization, recovery, and long-term healing. This risk is especially acute in the current climate of reduced federal funding for essential programs and services.

New York City's TRCs implement the evidence-based model developed at the University of California, San Francisco. These centers serve survivors of a wide range of violent and traumatic experiences, including gun violence, domestic violence, physical and sexual assault, human trafficking, serious motor vehicle incidents, and traumatic grief following homicide.

TRCs are specifically designed to reach survivors who are least likely to access traditional systems of care. Through assertive outreach and community-based service delivery, they

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work to eliminate barriers such as cost, transportation, and distrust of institutions. Data from New York State TRCs in 2024 (3 in NYC, 1 in Buffalo) demonstrate that these programs are successfully reaching those most in need: 81% of participants were people of color, 48% were Black or African American, 58% were unemployed, and 37% lacked stable housing.

Through multidisciplinary teams, TRCs provide comprehensive, wraparound services that address both immediate safety needs and longer-term mental health recovery. This integrated approach produces measurable outcomes. Among those served, 70% experienced a reduction in PTSD symptoms, 50% saw a reduction in depression, and 67% reported an improved quality of life.

Decades of research show that survivors of violence face elevated risks of PTSD, depression, substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions, as well as economic instability, including job loss, food insecurity, and housing instability. Without timely and effective intervention, trauma can initiate a cascade of long-term negative outcomes—for individuals, families, and communities.

Trauma Recovery Centers interrupt this trajectory. By providing timely, evidence-based care and practical support, they help survivors stabilize, heal, and regain control of their lives. In doing so, TRCs represent not only a public health intervention, but also a strategic investment in violence prevention and community safety.

We respectfully urge the Committee to prioritize continued funding for New York City's Trauma Recovery Centers. Sustaining these programs is essential to ensuring that all New Yorkers who experience violence have access to the care and support they need to recover and thrive.

Thank you for your consideration.



[newyorkedge.org](http://newyorkedge.org)

**NYC Council FY 27  
Preliminary Budget Hearings –**

**Children & Youth Committee  
Hon. Althea Stevens, Chair**

**Education Committee  
Hon. Eric Dinowitz, Chair**

**Health Committee  
Hon. Lynn Schulman, Chair**

*Submitted by Rachael Gazdick, CEO*

On behalf of **New York Edge (NYE)**, thank you for the Council's long-standing support of our mission of bridging the opportunity gap among students in underinvested communities.

**New York Edge is New York City's longest-standing and largest school-based provider of afterschool and summer programming, serving almost 33,000 students across 134 schools in 37 of the 51 Council Districts, including 4 Beacon Centers and 21 Community Schools. We also operate 4 food pantries in Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn. We proudly offer culturally responsive programming rooted in academic enrichment, sports, health & wellness, visual and performing arts, STEM, leadership and college & career readiness – with social emotional learning intentionally woven throughout everything we do.**

**Our testimony today is in support of Universal After-School and in support of our FY 27 citywide funding requests.**

With the city moving forward with Universal Childcare we must also look to implementing Universal After-School as these go hand in hand in helping working families and in providing a true continuum of care and academic supports children of all ages.

For over three decades, the New York City Council has been a vital partner in helping us to fulfill our mission. Council citywide funding has enabled us to enrich and expand our programming throughout the city and has allowed us to develop and implement unique and engaging programs.

**Since 2020, we have tripled in size and have significantly increased the number of students served. Our Council citywide funding, however, has remained flat at \$1M. My team and I ask for your help and support as we seek increased funding in the upcoming budget in alignment with this growth and in alignment with our impact and scale:**

- **\$1.5M under the Council's After-School Enrichment Initiative - an increase of**

**\$500,000 over our FY 26 allocation.**

- **\$250,000 under the Council’s Social & Emotional Supports for Students Initiative. We are, as identified by Mosaic by ACT, the largest afterschool provider in the nation providing SEL supports.**

New York Edge was created 34 years ago at the suggestion of the New York City Council to provide free wrap-around summer camps for youth attending summer school. At that time such camps, which provided sports and arts activities as well as academic help, did not exist. With the Council as its partner, New York Edge was at the forefront of the movement to provide free summer camp programming to our city’s youth.

Our Education Team, comprised of educators with expertise in curriculum, professional coaching, and program development with a focus on leadership, integrated technologies, literacy and STEAM, take learning beyond the traditional classroom walls. **Core components of New York Edge programming include:**

- **STEM Education**
- **Social Emotional Learning and Leadership**
- **Visual & Performing Arts**
- **Sports, Health & Wellness**
- **Academics and College & Career Readiness**
- **Summer Programs**

Through its partnership and support, the Council is helping young New Yorkers discover their interests, their passions, and their joys, building pathways to careers and trades that will provide financial security throughout their lives – and in the process creating connections to each other, to teachers, mentors, and their communities. **Together, we are guiding students so that they grow up healthy, happy and empowered. Together, we are creating the next generation of active and productive community members and problem solvers. Together,**

**we are creating New York City's next generation of doctors, mechanics, chefs, writers, engineers, entrepreneurs and so much more.**

The proof of our success and impact is in our numbers:

- **98% of school principals would recommend New York Edge;**
- **96% of New York Edge parents say that New York Edge programming prepares their child for success;**
- **80% of school principals see stronger SEL behaviors (leadership, decision-making, goal setting) in their students as a result of New York Edge programming.**

Our success is due to the New York Edge Difference:

- **A Whole Child Approach;**
- **Prioritizing Social & Emotional Learning;**
- **High-Quality Curriculum;**
- **Close Partnership with School Leadership and Parents;**
- **Flexibility & Adaptability;**
- **Capacity & Infrastructure;**
- **Experienced, Culturally Competent Staff.**

All of us at New York Edge are proud to serve New York City's K-12 students of all ages, races, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Our offerings are culturally relevant programs, tailored to students' needs and interests, and rooted in social-emotional learning. **SEL is integrated into every element of our programming.**

Our model for aiding social emotional learning includes robust academic and personal wellness support, and trauma-informed strategies. We blend the critical elements that support an appreciation of cultural diversity with the core SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, social capital and decision-making into all academic curriculum and extracurricular activities. **We are, as identified by Mosaic by ACT, the largest after-school provider in the nation offering SEL supports.**

New York Edge school-based programs run before or after the school day, year-round (including Saturdays, over the summer, and holiday periods). City Council citywide funding has enabled New York Edge to enrich and expand our school year and summer programs and provide students with opportunities that expose them to real-world experiences and major stages.

Through this support, students participate in innovative programs such as our award-winning student-led podcast *Formative*, our Book Publishing Program, Read Across New York Edge, our Music Industry Program with **Republic Records**, creative technology experiences through our Animation Studio and Makers Club, our ballet dance program inspired by **Misty Copeland**, and culinary learning through collaboration with **Jamie Oliver** and the Food Explorers program. These are just a few examples of how City Council support allows us to bring high-quality, engaging opportunities to thousands of young people across New York City.

Our programs are designed to put young people on the biggest stages and in real-world environments so they can see what is possible for their future. New York Edge students perform at **Radio City Music Hall** and compete in flag football championships at **MetLife Stadium**. These experiences help our students see themselves as the next generation of leaders, athletes, artists, and innovators, expanding their vision for what they can achieve in school and in life.

Funding under the *Social & Emotional Supports for Students* Initiative will enable us to support our current SEL programming providing high quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning assessments, curriculum and resources to all of our partner schools, the students we serve and their families. At New York Edge, social-emotional learning helps students feel a real sense of belonging and connection. When students feel safe and supported, they are more confident participating in class and in afterschool programs.

Our programs help students build positive peer relationships and learn how to work through conflicts in healthy ways. This creates a more respectful environment where students can focus

on learning. SEL helps students develop self-awareness and emotional regulation, giving us tools to manage stress, frustration, and challenges that can otherwise distract us from our schoolwork. Through our programs, students build motivation and engagement in learning, which leads to better attendance, stronger participation, and improved academic performance.

New York Edge, its students, and families are extraordinarily grateful for the Council's past support. **The time has come, however, where increased funding is vitally needed.** Unlike contracts with DYCD and other agencies, Council discretionary contracts are not (and have never been) eligible for COLA increases. This is making it increasingly difficult for New York Edge to attract and maintain quality staff and to continue to offer the wide array of STEM, SEL, Visual & Performing Arts, Sports, Health & Wellness and College & Career Readiness programs that we are known for.

We are now looking to you to meet the needs of the next generation of young people by supporting our FY 27 citywide funding requests. **These funds will enable us to keep providing youth throughout the city with the edge they need to succeed!**

Thank you.



## The Critical Role of New York Edge at 560M

My name is Aaron Culver and I am an eleventh grade student at City-As School. I am writing to share my experience as a member of the **New York Edge** afterschool family and to tell you why **New York Edge** is an irreplaceable partner to my school.

**New York Edge** afterschool programming is not just for sports, arts and afterschool activities, but an inspiring, ENGAGING programming aimed at giving students like me a place to feel safe, stay motivated, and discover what we're capable of. It is more than just a school partner - it is a lifeline for our community. Its programming and staff provide us with growth that touches every aspect of our school life.

I have participated in New York Edge's **Beacon** program where I learned how to improve my communication skills, and that integrity is important within the community. New York Edge has helped me to learn accountability, strength, time management, honesty, and curiosity. The staff at New York Edge taught me that my voice matters, and that I am welcomed everywhere, no matter who I am and what my background is.

Afterschool programs don't just keep students busy. Programs such as **New York Edge** help us find our passions, build confidence, and make memories that stay with us forever. They also help parents who work late know that their kids are in a safe, positive place instead of home alone or out in the streets late at night.

Investing in New York Edge will help students like me continue to grow and pass our knowledge onto the next generation. Please increase funding to **New York Edge** in the upcoming city budget.

Thank You.

**Aaron Culver**  
**City-As School**  
**11th Grade**



My name is Serenity Dejesus and I'm in 9th grade at the Community School for Social Justice. I am writing to share my experience with New York Edge Community Schools and tell you about how New York Edge has strengthened our school community for the better.

New York Edge is not just an afterschool program for our school, they are an engaging and enriching all-day program that gives promising students like me opportunities to improve our overall attendance, behavior and academics. For example, they launched an exciting attendance initiative called New Year, New Me, that rewards students who improve and maintain their attendance with vouchers to our local deli. Our March Madness Attendance Tournament allows advisory groups compete for a chance to win a pizza party. The PBIS School Store and buck system reinforces positive behavior, good attendance and high grades in a way that also teaches us real-world skills like personal accountability and financial literacy.

New York Edge has also brought in an inclusive and interactive way of approaching our history and culture. As an example, our Black History Month event featured a cuisine-focused activity where we used our literacy and investigative skills to research black-owned restaurants and recipes. I found this experience to be a productive and insightful way of engaging with history not through reading long textbooks, but through learning about tasty, delicious meals from diverse backgrounds.

The New York Edge staff has the sort of presence that would put a smile on my face, even on my worst of days. Every morning, when I come into school I would always be greeted with a good morning and a smile. For holidays like Halloween and Valentine's Day, the staff would always make sure to present a fun atmosphere for students, whether it's putting on costumes for our Halloween parade or spreading the love in red and pink pajamas.

I went from coming to school once a week to everyday. The New York Edge team has motivated me to show up to school more consistently, become involved in school activities and embrace positivity all the way. It is an everlasting joy that I feel should be extended to every marginalized, low-income kid across every zip code in the city. I understand that leaders must make difficult choices regarding funding, but as a high school student from the Bronx, I ask that you consider giving promising students like me a chance to grow and develop into the best young person I can be. Investing in New York Edge means investing in students like me. We are the future of this city, and we must safeguard that future. That is why I humbly request that you increase funding to New York Edge in the upcoming city budget. Thank you.

**Serenity Dejesus**  
**9th Grade**  
**Community School for Social Justice**



*newyorkedge.org*

## **The Critical Role of New York Edge at PS 370X**

My name is Meagen Basnes and I am an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Leaders of Tomorrow. I am writing to share my experience as a member of the **New York Edge** afterschool family and to tell you why **New York Edge** is an indispensable partner to my school.

**New York Edge** afterschool programming is not just sports and arts extracurricular activities but ENRICHING and ENGAGING programming aimed at giving students like me a place to feel safe, stay motivated, and discover what we're capable of. It is more than just a school partner - it is a lifeline for our community. Its programming and staff provide us with extensive support that touches every aspect of our school life. **Core components of New York Edge programming include:**

- **STEM Education**
- **Social Emotional Learning and Leadership**
- **Visual & Performing Arts**
- **Sports, Health & Wellness**
- **Academics and College & Career Readiness**
- **Summer Programs**

I have participated in New York Edge's **afterschool** program where I learned leadership and team work as a student athlete on the girl's flag football team and currently on the volleyball team. New York Edge has helped me understand what it means to support my friends and teammates. My coaches and the afterschool staff are very supportive and are always there if I need anything. The staff at New York Edge have become an important part of my life, encouraging me to excel in school and beyond.

Afterschool programs don't just keep kids busy. Programs such as **New York Edge** help us to find our passions, build confidence, and make memories that stay with us forever. They also help parents who work late know that their kids are in a safe, positive place instead of home alone or out in the streets.

I know funding isn't always easy, but investing in **New York Edge** means investing in students like me. We are the future of this city, and the support we get now will shape the kind of people we become. Please increase funding to **New York Edge** in the upcoming city budget.

Thank You.



**Meagen Basnes**

**Leaders of Tomorrow**

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade**



*newyorkedge.org*

## **The Critical Role of New York Edge at PS 370X**

My name is Bernice Gikunoo and I am a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Leaders of Tomorrow. I am writing to share my experience as a member of the **New York Edge** afterschool family and to tell you why **New York Edge** is an indispensable partner to my school.

**New York Edge** afterschool programming is not just sports and arts extracurricular activities but ENRICHING and ENGAGING programming aimed at giving students like me a place to feel safe, stay motivated, and discover what we're capable of. It is more than just a school partner - it is a lifeline for our community. Its programming and staff provide us with extensive support that touches every aspect of our school life. **Core components of New York Edge programming include:**

- **STEM Education**
- **Social Emotional Learning and Leadership**
- **Visual & Performing Arts**
- **Sports, Health & Wellness**
- **Academics and College & Career Readiness**
- **Summer Programs**

I have participated in New York Edge's **afterschool** program where I learned new and exciting recipes in my cooking class. New York Edge has helped me with my confidence in my cooking skills. The staff at New York Edge have become an important part of my life, encouraging me to excel in school and beyond.

Afterschool programs don't just keep kids busy. Programs such as **New York Edge** help us to find our passions, build confidence, and make memories that stay with us forever. They also help parents who work late know that their kids are in a safe, positive place instead of home alone or out in the streets.

I know funding isn't always easy, but investing in **New York Edge** means investing in students like me. We are the future of this city, and the support we get now will shape the kind of people we become. Please increase funding to **New York Edge** in the upcoming city budget.

Thank You.



**Bernice Giknoo**

**Leaders of Tomorrow**

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade**



## The Critical Role of New York Edge at PS 96Q

My name is Elijah Batson, and I am a fifth-grade student at PS 96Q. I am writing to share my experience as a member of the New York Edge afterschool family and to explain why New York Edge is an indispensable partner to my school.

New York Edge afterschool programming is not just for sports and arts activities — it is enriching and engaging programming that gives students like me a place to feel safe, stay motivated, and discover what we're capable of. It is more than just a school partner; it is a lifeline for our community. Its programming and staff provide us with support that touches every part of our school lives. Core components of New York Edge programming include:

- STEM
- Social Emotional Learning and Leadership
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Sports, Health & Wellness
- Homework Help
- Summer Rising

I have participated in New York Edge's afterschool and Summer Rising programs for a few years, where I learned to keep trying even when something feels hard. It also helped me make new friends and feel more confident speaking up in class. I used to be shy, but now I raise my hand more because my afterschool teachers always encourage me and tell me I can do it. The staff at New York Edge have become an important part of my life, always pushing me to excel in school and beyond.

Afterschool programs don't just keep kids busy. Programs like New York Edge help us find our passions, build confidence, and make memories that stay with us forever. They also help parents who work late feel secure knowing their children are in a safe, positive place instead of being home alone or out in the streets.

I know funding isn't always easy, but investing in New York Edge means investing in students like me. We are the future of this city, and the support we receive now will shape the kind of people we become. Please increase funding to New York Edge in the upcoming city budget.

Thank you.

Elijah Batson

PS 96Q

5th Grade



*newyorkedge.org*

## **The Critical Role of New York Edge at PS66**

My name is Akeelah Benn and I am an 8th grade student at PS66. I am writing to share my experience as a member of the **New York Edge** afterschool family and to tell you why **New York Edge** is an indispensable partner to my school.

**New York Edge** afterschool programming is not just for sports and arts extracurricular activities but **ENRICHING** and **ENGAGING** programming aimed at giving students like me a place to feel safe, stay motivated, and discover what we're capable of. It is more than just a school partner - it is a lifeline for our community. Its programming and staff provide us with extensive support that touches every aspect of our school life. **Core components of New York Edge programming include:**

- **STEM Education**
- **Social Emotional Learning and Leadership**
- **Visual & Performing Arts**
- **Sports, Health & Wellness**
- **Academics and College & Career Readiness**
- **Summer Programs**

I have participated in New York Edge's **afterschool and summer** programs where I learned Dance, Cheer, Cosmetology, Musical Theater and even became a captain of the Step team. New York Edge has helped me by exposing me to different activities that have allowed me to grow as a person and showcase my talents on a larger scale through school performances and competitions across New York City. This program has also helped me academically by offering assistance with my homework, extra time to complete classwork and guiding me in project

completion. The staff at New York Edge have become an important part of my life, encouraging me to excel in school and beyond.

Afterschool programs don't just keep kids busy. Programs such as **New York Edge** help us to find our passions, build confidence, and make memories that stay with us forever. They also help parents who work late know that their kids are in a safe, positive place instead of home alone or out in the streets.

I know funding isn't always easy, but investing in **New York Edge** means investing in students like me. We are the future of this city, and the support we get now will shape the kind of people we become. Please increase funding to **New York Edge** in the upcoming city budget.

Thank You.

**Akeelah Benn**

**PS66**

**8th Grade**



*newyorkedge.org*

## **The Critical Role of New York Edge at PS66**

My name is Aniya Boyce and I am a 7th grade student at PS66. I am writing to share my experience as a member of the **New York Edge** afterschool family and to tell you why **New York Edge** is an indispensable partner to my school.

**New York Edge** afterschool programming is not just for sports and arts extracurricular activities but **ENRICHING** and **ENGAGING** programming aimed at giving students like me a place to feel safe, stay motivated, and discover what we're capable of. It is more than just a school partner - it is a lifeline for our community. Its programming and staff provide us with extensive support that touches every aspect of our school life. **Core components of New York Edge programming include:**

- **STEM Education**
- **Social Emotional Learning and Leadership**
- **Visual & Performing Arts**
- **Sports, Health & Wellness**
- **Academics and College & Career Readiness**
- **Summer Programs**

I have participated in New York Edge's **afterschool and summer** programs where I learned Dance, Cheer, Cosmetology, Musical Theater and Chorus. New York Edge has helped me by exposing me to different activities that have allowed me to grow as a person and showcase my talents on a larger scale through school performances and competitions across New York City. This program has also helped me academically by offering assistance with my homework and

extra time to complete classwork. The staff at New York Edge have become an important part of my life, encouraging me to excel in school and beyond.

Afterschool programs don't just keep kids busy. Programs such as **New York Edge** help us to find our passions, build confidence, and make memories that stay with us forever. They also help parents who work late know that their kids are in a safe, positive place instead of home alone or out in the streets.

I know funding isn't always easy, but investing in **New York Edge** means investing in students like me. We are the future of this city, and the support we get now will shape the kind of people we become. Please increase funding to **New York Edge** in the upcoming city budget.

Thank You.

**Aniya Boyce**

**PS66**

**7th Grade**



Good Afternoon, members of the City Council. My name is **Chelsea Toussaint**, I am **13** years old, and I am a **7th** grade student at Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts. I am here today representing New York Edge at **285k in Brooklyn**.

I have been a part of New York Edge for **2** years. During my time in the program, I've participated in **STEM, Dance, Literacy, Leadership, Theatre, and Sports**. New York Edge isn't just an after-school program for me; it's a place where I feel supported and challenged. It's like my second home.

Before I joined New York Edge, I **struggled with not being able to keep up with all my activities including my school work due to time constraints**. But because of the mentors and the programs here, I've been able to **really focus on academics and my extra curriculars**. It gives me a productive place to be and helps me stay focused on my future. It comes with the bonus of making more friends allowing me to expand my social circle. It has shown me that I can be a leader in my community, and wherever I may be.

I am just one of many students whose lives have been changed by this program. I am asking the New York City Council to increase funding for New York Edge so that more students in my neighborhood and across the city can have these same amazing opportunities. Please invest in our futures. Thank you for your time.

Chelsea Touissant  
Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts  
7th Grade

To: New York City Council, Committee on Finance  
Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026  
Subject: Testimony Regarding Funding for Feral Cat Care and Spay/Neuter Services

To Chair Justin Brannan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christine Trott. I have been a Brooklyn resident for 10 years and I am a dedicated educator for the New York City Department of Education. I am writing to testify regarding the desperate need for increased, permanent funding for animal welfare and community cat management in the neighborhoods of Crown Heights and Brownsville.

For years, I have been personally managing the feral cat crisis in my neighborhood, often visiting colonies three times a week. I do this because I see their suffering and have been left with the task after our local rescue groups disbanded or left the state due to a lack of support.

I want to emphasize the following points to the Council:

**The Personal and Financial Burden:** Individual citizens like myself are currently subsidizing a public service out of our own pockets. I pay for food and basic care for these animals while also managing a high-stress career in our public schools. It is unsustainable and causes immense personal distress.

**The Medical Crisis:** I am an educator, not a medical professional. I cannot treat or diagnose the diseases spreading through these colonies. Because of the limit on city funding and the high cost of private vet care, I have watched multiple cats pass away before the new year because I could not get them the treatment they needed in time.

**A Public Health Issue:** In Crown Heights and Brownsville, the lack of spay/neuter funding has led to exponential breeding. This is a public health and quality-of-life issue that cannot be left to individual volunteers to solve alone.

**The Lack of Support:** When I have reached out to larger organizations for help, I have frequently encountered condescension and a lack of support. Rescuers are already overwhelmed, with many of us sheltering numerous cats in our own homes. We are being left to handle a citywide crisis with almost zero infrastructure.

While I appreciate the recent \$500,000 pilot program for spay/neuter services, it is not enough. I urge the Council to significantly increase this funding, establish permanent medical clinics for community cats, and provide direct, respectful support to the individual rescuers who are doing the City's work on the ground.

Thank you for your time and for recognizing the suffering of both these animals and the residents who care for them.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Trott  
Brooklyn, NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Debra McInry Seshu Goldie

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joshua Goldstein

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCOB

Address: 255 Greenwich

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patrick D. Stefan

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC OMB

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nathan Gusdorf

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OMB

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jarvis McHenry

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OMB

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joshua B. Goldstein

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OMB

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shawn Solomon

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OMB

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steve Boudreau

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OMB

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms