

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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February 26, 2016
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: MARGARET S. CHIN
Chairperson

CARLOS MENCHACA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Karen Koslowitz
Deborah L. Rose
Chaim M. Deutsch
Mark Treyger
Paul Vallone
Mathieu Eugene
Daniel Dromm
Peter A. Koo
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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External Affairs
NYC Department for the Aging, DFTA

Karen Taylor, Assistant Commissioner
Community Services
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Howard Shih, Director
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Mohammed Razvi
Muslim Senior Center, Brooklyn

Karen Schwab, Director
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Faye Levine, Director
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Edith and Carl Marks Jewish Community House

Lakshman Kalasapudi, Director
India Home

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2 [sound check, pause, background comments]

3 [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good morning.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Good morning.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And welcome. I'm

7 Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair of the County--

8 Council's Aging Committee. I'd first like to thank

9 Chair Menchaca and the member of the Immigration

10 Committee for holding this important hearing with us.

11 Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities better

12 known as NORCs play an important role in allowing

13 older New Yorkers to age comfortably and with the

14 supportive services necessary to promote independent

15 aging. NORC's support--supportive services programs

16 NORC SSP, provide health and case management

17 services, and are especially tailored to the

18 residents of the particular community. Among the

19 services provided by NORC are home visits, social

20 work services, wellness activity, educational

21 programs, and opportunity for socialization. NORCs

22 have been a central part of New York City Senior

23 Services since the country's first NORC program was

24 developed in 1986 at the Penn South Houses right here

25 in Manhattan. Last year the Council provided \$1.59

3 million to enhance for traditional NORC programs, and
4 \$1.9 million for Neighborhood NORC in need of
5 additional resources. I strongly urge the
6 Administration to increase funding for the City's
7 NORC programs and allow even more of our seniors the
8 opportunity to benefit from these programs. Despite
9 the vital services they provide, many communities
10 particularly those with significant immigrant senior
11 populations are underserved by the city's NORCs. The
12 Center for an Urban Future has noted that population
13 density requirements under existing NORC definitions
14 makes it difficult to establish NORC in areas with
15 lower residential density, but where the immigrant
16 senior population is significantly increasing. Many
17 NORCs are located in high density, moderate income or
18 public housing developments that are less likely to
19 house immigrant seniors especially those who have
20 recently moved to the United States due to low
21 turnover and long waiting lists. We would like to
22 hear from DFTA, how they will take these factors into
23 account in the future development of NORC RFP
24 criteria. Furthermore, we will hear from DFTA about
25 how existing NORC programs serve our immigrant senior
population through providing significant language

3 access and culturally competent services. It is
4 essential that proper resources be available to all
5 our senior communities to allow them to age in place
6 in a healthy independent way. Before we begin, I'd
7 like to thank the staff of the aging committee, Eric
8 Bernstein, committee counsel; Brittany Morrissey and
9 Dohini Sompura from the Finance Division, and I will
10 introduce the council member on the Aging Committee
11 when they arrive because we have other hearings going
12 on. Now, I'm going to turn it over to Chair
13 Menchaca.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you--thank
15 you, Chair, and Buenos Dias [speaking Spanish]. I'm
16 Carlos Menchaca. I'm the Chair of the New York
17 City's Council Immigration Committee. Before going
18 any further, I want to make sure that we thank our
19 Committee on Aging Chairperson Margaret Chin for
20 facilitating today's hearing. When she came to us
21 with the idea, we know that we had already about this
22 for--for such a long time, and that passion is not
23 only--not only did you hear that passion, but the
24 coalition here in the City Council is strong and
25 alive, and we're ready to take some real steps
forward on this topic. Generally, you now,

3 immigrant seniors live on significantly lower incomes
4 and have fewer savings than their native born
5 counterparts. While tax credits and entitlement
6 programs for seniors may help ease economic burdens,
7 many immigrant seniors, especially those with limited
8 English proficiency are unaware of these programs or
9 find them difficult to navigate on their own. As a
10 result, immigrant seniors are forced to depend on
11 family, community centers and government funded
12 programs to provide guidance and support, and many
13 seniors don't even have access to some of those I
14 just listed. In order to be effective, supportive
15 services must be available in the immigrant senior's
16 primary language and be culturally appropriate.
17 Furthermore, the services must be easily accessible.
18 In addition to connecting immigrant seniors with
19 health care resources and providing public benefits,
20 the City of New York must ensure that we foster an
21 environment where our senior immigrant communities
22 can play an active role and will be--not be isolated
23 socially or culturally. We want them to participate.
24 NORCs have traditionally enabled seniors to age in
25 place independently as well as stay connected to city
resources and their communities. We must ensure that

3 immigrant seniors can benefit from NORCs in the same
4 way. In the past hearings, advocates have stated
5 that existing NORCs are often not located in high
6 immigrant areas. Representatives of the Department
7 for the Aging will be testifying today about how
8 NORCs address the specific needs of immigrants, our
9 immigrant seniors, and whether the current
10 programming and services address the unique
11 challenges that immigrant seniors face in the
12 culturally appropriate ways. We will also hear from
13 what steps, if any, the Department of Aging is asking
14 to increase the number of immigrant seniors that
15 benefit from NORCs and similar initiatives.
16 Community based organizations and advocates, and many
17 of you are here. So thank you for being here. You
18 will want--you will provide suggestions on how the
19 city can support their work in immigrant senior
20 community. Advocates will also testify about
21 underserved immigrant neighborhoods that could
22 greatly benefit from a NORCs designation and
23 programming. Our committees, the entire Council, we
24 are committed to ensure that immigrant seniors in New
25 York City Receive the support the support they need
to lead healthy and independent lives. Healthy and

3 independent lives, and also civic lives. When we
4 talk about participatory budgeting, and IDNYC, these
5 are communities, our seniors, anyway need to
6 participate in the things that we're bringing to them
7 from the City. So I'm really looking forward to the
8 testimony today, and making sure that we really build
9 those bridges, and really push the envelope anywhere
10 we can. I'm looking forward to hearing about that.
11 [Speaking Spanish] Oh, and I want to make sure that
12 I also acknowledge the members that are here from the
13 Immigration Committee. From Brooklyn, Mathieu
14 Eugene, from Queens Danny Dromm, Peter Koo, and thank
15 you. I'll hand it over to the Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. We're
17 joined by Council Member Vallone, Chair of our
18 Subcommittee on Senior Centers, and he wanted to
19 recognize some of the students who have joined us
20 today. Council Member Vallone.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: VALLONE: Thank
22 you, Madam Chair, and to the Co-Chairs, a special
23 day. You know, one of the things that we can always
24 be proud of is when our students take up our
25 challenge, and what we've done in Northeast Queens
and in District 19 is create an Academic Ambassador

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3 Program where juniors of the high school can prepare
4 for college by getting involved in forms--all forms
5 of civic government. And today our academic
6 ambassadors chose wisely our Aging Committee, co--co-
7 chaired today by Carlos Menchaca on the importance of
8 NORCs in aging and immigration in our city. So today
9 I have from Holy Cross High School Daniel Bosco and
10 Joshua Santos. From Bayside High School, one of our
11 largest, Habas Hussein, Honjo Choi, Jennifer Ken,
12 King Givens, and from World Generals (sic) and WJPS
13 Erica Donas and Yolanda Haines. Thank you very much,
14 guys, for making it today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Welcome. Hope you
16 enjoy the hearing today. We're going to call up our
17 first panel, Deputy Commissioner Caryn Resnick, and
18 Assistant Commissioner Karen Taylor from the
19 Department for the Aging, and the counsel will swear
20 you in. Thank you. [pause]

21 LEGAL COUNSEL: Can you raise your right
22 hand, please.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Yes.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
25 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in

3 your testimony before this committee, and to respond
4 honestly to council member questions?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: I do. Good
6 morning, Chair Person Chin, Chairperson Menchaca and
7 members of the Aging and Immigration Committees. I'm
8 Caryn Resnick, Deputy Commissioner of External
9 Affairs at the New York City Department for the Aging
10 and I'm joined by Karen Taylor, Assistant
11 Commissioner for Community Services, and our in-house
12 NORC expert. On behalf of Commissioner Donna
13 Corrado, I'd like to thank you for this opportunity
14 to discuss serving immigrant seniors through
15 Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities. The term
16 Naturally Occurring Retirement Community describes
17 the demographics phenomenon. It was coined in the
18 1980s by a professor of architecture at the
19 University of Wisconsin when he observed that certain
20 housing communities had evolved into communities with
21 a large concentration of older people. Definitions
22 vary somewhat throughout the country, NORCs as
23 defined in New York City principally through the
24 geographic boundaries and their population of
25 seniors. The City has defined NORCs as residential
locations, single buildings, housing developments or

3 clusters of buildings within a neighborhood that are
4 neither age restricted nor built specifically for
5 seniors. Over time as residents have aged in place,
6 these housing locations have become home to
7 significant concentrations of older adults.

8 Throughout the last two decades, a number of NORCs
9 have received funding from city and state programs
10 and private foundations to provide supportive

11 services to senior residents. These programs are
12 called NORC Supportive Service Programs, SSPs or NORC
13 Programs. DFTA funded NORC programs are structured
14 to promoted shared responsibility and participation
15 in program design and operation through a partnership
16 among senior NORC residents, the NORC Housing entity,
17 a Social Services provider, and a healthcare

18 provider. Housing is a primary concern for seniors
19 in New York City. Most older New Yorkers prefer to
20 continue living in their present homes and

21 communities as they age in place. As the population
22 of older New Yorkers continues to increase, homes and
23 communities become more and more important in the
24 aging process as well. Ready access to a range of
25 coordinated support services and opportunities is
essential to successful aging in place. NORC SSPs

3 are among the full range of DFTA funded services that
4 address the preference of seniors to age safely in
5 their own homes and communities, and respond to their
6 consequent support needs. The NORC SSP movement
7 began right here in New York City. Throughout the
8 '80s and '90s, the need for services in NORCs became
9 more and more apparent as residents and housing
10 management in a number of New York City housing
11 developments began to realize the older resident
12 population in their communities was growing, and that
13 some senior neighbors needed assistance with daily
14 activities. Some of the early efforts to address
15 this growing concern included on-site volunteer
16 program that gained a strong foothold in the housing
17 community before public funding was available.
18 Collaborations between forward thinking housing
19 managers and service providers also emerged, which
20 often received needed support from philanthropic
21 funders, and in 1986--Boy, am I getting old because I
22 remember all of this. [laughs]--a consortium of UJA-
23 Federation agencies established the first NORC SSP in
24 the nation, the Penn South Program for Seniors. In
25 all cases, however, housing providers as invested
partners have become, and continue to be fundamental

3 to the success of on-site supportive service
4 programs. These early efforts thrived and grew
5 rapidly, and in FY 2000, the City appropriated
6 funding for a New York City NORC initiative. One of
7 the essential hallmarks of the NORC program model is
8 a match requirement. So public dollars leverage
9 private funding, and contributions from a number of
10 committed stakeholders, including the housing entity,
11 healthcare providers, and the philanthropic
12 community. This support has been critical in
13 allowing NORC SSPs to flourish, enhance services, and
14 complement city funding. There are five primary
15 objectives to DFTA funded NORC programs. All NORC
16 programs should provide supportive environments that
17 allow seniors independence as they age in place,
18 engage residents and facilitate linkages within the
19 community, assess the needs of senior residents, and
20 offer supportive services based on assessments and
21 build strong and meaningful communities that
22 cultivate new roles for community members. To
23 strengthen the NORC network in providing supportive
24 services and facilitating community engagement, DFTA
25 issued a Request for Proposals, an RFP, in June 2013
to serve buildings or housing developments with the

3 senior population of 350 or more in which 40% or more
4 of the households include a senior; a housing
5 development with 1,500 or more seniors regardless of
6 the percentage of households they occupy. DFTA
7 continues to fund the current NORC program model
8 described earlier in my testimony, which is referred
9 to as Classic NORC. In addition, under the RFP DFTA
10 expanded the NORC model to include the option of a
11 hybrid NORC in which a classic NORC establishes a
12 formal relationship with the DFTA funded senior
13 center located within the NORC property. The purpose
14 of formalizing this partnership was to facilitate
15 services coordination between the two programs and to
16 allow the NORC and the senior center to benefit
17 mutually from resources such as expanse--space, staff
18 and programming.

19 In January 2014, DFTA awarded 28 NORC
20 contracts in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and
21 Queens for a term that began in July 2014. The DFTA
22 budget for these NORC programs is \$6.5 million.
23 These communities are located in public housing, low
24 to moderate income co-ops and low to moderate income
25 private rentals. The NORC contract awards include
funding to enhance services such as case management

3 for homebound and non-homebound seniors, assistance
4 with accessing public benefits, and increased
5 emphasis on wellness, chronic disease, risk
6 assessments and healthcare management. Of the
7 approximately 1.4 million older New Yorkers, more
8 than 750,000 or 55% are immigrants. For 45% of New
9 York City's ethnically diverse seniors English is not
10 the primary language. Primary language that is
11 spoken by older New Yorkers include Spanish, Chinese,
12 Russian, Italian, French Creole, French, Greek, and
13 Yiddish, among others. Immigrant seniors also
14 comprise 65% of all seniors living in poverty given
15 that they receive far fewer benefits, such as Social
16 Security and other entitlement programs. Central to
17 DFTA's mission is to meet the broad and wide ranging
18 needs of New York City's larger and diverse older
19 population. While NORCs in New York City are defined
20 primarily by their geographic boundaries, and the
21 significant concentration of older people that has
22 evolved through aging in place, the majority of DFTA
23 funded NORCs, 23 out of the 28 programs do serve
24 communities that have high concentrations of
25 immigrant older New Yorkers. These programs cover
census tracts and attached to each of your testimony

3 are maps that show by census track the immigrant
4 populations. These programs cover census tracks in
5 which 400 or more residents are immigrants who are
6 age 60 or older. DFTA funded NORC programs serving
7 neighborhoods with the greatest number of immigrant
8 seniors include JASA Co-op City in the Bronx, JASA
9 Coney Island Active Aging, JASA Trump United and
10 Spring Creek in Brooklyn; Hamilton Management House
11 Knickerbocker in Chinatown; Isabella Geriatric, Fort
12 George, Vistas in Washington Heights, Union
13 Settlement Franklin Plaza in East Harlem, Forest
14 Hills Community House and Self-Help Community
15 Services Fresh Meadows in Queens, Samuel Field Y
16 Clearview Gardens in White Stone and Self-Help
17 Community Services Big Six Towers in Woodside. The
18 maps are appended to my testimony, and they show both
19 DFTA funded and discretionary NORC programs with
20 census tracked data on the number of immigrant
21 residents age 60 and older.

22 DFTA requires culturally sensitive
23 programming and staffing within all of our sponsored
24 programs including or NORC programs. NORCs have
25 appropriate staffing to meet language access needs,
organize cultural activities that interest various

3 groups, and coordinate programs geared towards
4 immigrant seniors such as English for speakers of
5 other languages, and citizen classes, and legal
6 services. For example, Isabella Geriatric - Fort
7 George, Vistas in Manhattan holds weekly meetings
8 called Cafe con Leche and Russian Tea Time, which are
9 geared toward Latino and Russian senior residents.
10 From these meetings participants avail case assist--
11 avail of case assistance and activity and support
12 groups that serve Spanish and Russian speaking older
13 adults. Spring Creek in Brooklyn has a patient
14 navigation program in both Russian and English to
15 assist NORC residents who have difficulty accessing
16 and navigating the healthcare system. Staff at
17 Spring Creek are fluent in Russian, Ukranian, Polish,
18 Spanish, Mandarin and several Chinese dialects.
19 Educational activities at Spring Creek also include
20 English language classes. [coughs] Self-Help
21 Community Services Fresh Meadow in Queens offers
22 educational and recreational programs such as coral
23 group and coffee hour, which are targeted to Korean
24 residents. As a growing number of older adults age
25 in place, and in response to broad based community
efforts to meet the needs of this population, NORC

3 models continue to develop and evolve. We are
4 pleased and grateful that the Council allocated a
5 total of \$3.8 million in the adopted budget for
6 FY2016 to fund NORC services. Many NORC programs
7 funded through Council discretionary allocations are
8 also located in areas with high concentrations of
9 immigrant seniors such as the Shorefront Y of
10 Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, Isabella Geriatric River
11 Terrace in Washington Heights, VNS of New York,
12 Chinatown in Manhattan, Grand Street Settlement Best
13 in the Lower East Side. Self-Help Community
14 Services, Northridge and Jackson Heights, and
15 Rockville (sic) Village in Queens. Vista looks
16 forward to the continued partnership with the Council
17 to support the overall NORC capacity, and its
18 capacity enhance the lives of seniors and, of course,
19 the immigrant populations. Thank you again for this
20 opportunity to testify on serving immigrant seniors
21 through the NORC programs, and we are pleased to
22 answer any questions that you may have this morning.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you
24 for your testimony. I want to start off with when
25 you were giving an example about 23 out of 20--its
programs, the NORC programs serve communities that

3 have a high concentration of immigrant older New
4 Yorkers. So are these seniors living in public
5 housing in the subsidized developments or are they--
6 are they the majority in these situations?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Yes. those
8 23 out of 28 are serving very large immigrant
9 communities, and it's the confluence of having--you
10 know, the NORC model is really defined by the numbers
11 of seniors that are aging in place in a particular
12 development. So in that way it was not targeted
13 looking for the immigrant population, but the senior
14 population. So in those 23 out of 28, there is also
15 a very sizeable immigrant population.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But then you also have
17 a large immigrant population that are not in--

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
19 [interposing] Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --the public housing,
21 and that isn't the subsidized housing because they're
22 on waiting lists or they've been here only in the
23 last few years. So what would apply--

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
25 [interposing] So therein lies some of--of the issue
of--of this hearing today that, you know, by

3 definition the NORC is looking at the actual housing
4 and the numbers of older people. And so, it's
5 really--you know, it's defined by the geography and
6 not by looking at the immigrant population, but more
7 and more immigrant seniors are living in
8 neighborhoods that are aging.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Now, so going forward,
10 I know that in your testimony you're also talking
11 about, you know, the hybrid NORCs (sic) working
12 together with the NORC and the senior center. Now,
13 we also have Neighborhood NORCs that are not funded
14 by the city.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: That's
16 right.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But--but the Council
18 we have allocated funding to supplement them just
19 like the Visiting Nurse Services, the ones visiting
20 the NORC in Chinatown. And that is like a model in
21 terms of serving in the population for immigrant
22 seniors in the community that they might be in the
23 low-rise building or in a tenement building. So I
24 guess going forward, and Karen you talk more about
25 how can we maybe focus in expanding our new types of

3 models that we can reach these senior pop--immigrant
4 senior population.

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I think
6 one of the challenges is inherent in the NORC model,
7 which makes it so successful is that it is a
8 community organizing model with a built-in
9 partnership. It's not just government saying here's
10 money. Go start a program. So I think one of the
11 challenges here is, you know, how we reach
12 communities with large populations of immigrants who
13 perhaps do not have organizations that are already in
14 place and, you know, ready to respond to RFPs or to--
15 to have programs sort of ready to go. Most of our
16 NORC programs and proposals for NORC programs come
17 from a provider who has already formed a partnership
18 along with the seniors in the community, and has
19 really worked with that. So I think that's one of
20 the challenges. The--the classic model, as you say,
21 is limited to specific housing development types, and
22 the Neighborhood NORC model, which currently is
23 funded at the State level, and through the
24 discretionary funds has a much more broader def--
25 definition, and can bring together some of those
other kinds of communities where there's not one

3 housing provider covering the whole NORC community.

4 So I think that's one area definitely that we need to
5 be looking at more.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, because I
7 remember in last year's budget negotiation, and
8 discussion in the City Council my colleague was very
9 excited about NORC. Everybody was saying hey I want
10 one in my district. We said, good. Support our
11 initiative. And I know that--I'm sure that Council
12 Member Koo and Council Member Dromm, they're in the
13 neighborhood that it was cited in the Center for
14 Urban Futures 2013 Report. That there are large
15 immigrant populations in Flushing and in Elmhurst.
16 and those are the areas. Well, how do you see going
17 forward to help us develop some NORC program in those
18 neighborhoods as we underserve now the large senior
19 populations? (sic)

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: [off mic]
21 Do you want to take that?

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Okay.
23 [laughs] Well, as I said, I--I think looking more
24 closely at that Neighborhood NORC model, but I also
25 think it's important to take a look at what the needs
of the real--of the community really are, and whether

3 a NORC program is what will address those needs, or
4 is it some other type of service model that--that
5 would be more effective? Different communities and
6 different groups of immigrants have different
7 cultural and, you know, lifestyle preferences that
8 may not fit into a NORC model, and maybe there's
9 something--maybe there's another model to look at.
10 So I think going into communities and really getting
11 a deeper look at what those needs are in the
12 communities is the first step, and then seeing if a
13 NORC--a Neighborhood NORC or even a classic NORC
14 could--could be built in that community.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So can DFTA help with
16 that effort? Because I remember last year we did
17 some--

18 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:
19 [interposing] Uh-huh.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --feasibility studies.

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:
22 [interposing] Uh-huh.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --with Staten Island,
24 and also for Far Rockaway.

25 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Right,
yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So can you sort of
4 help us, you know, shape some of those studies so
5 that we can apply to other districts and other
6 neighborhoods, and really encourage council member to
7 sort of do that kind of survey to really understand
8 is this the right model for them.

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Where I
10 think through the generosity of the Council funding
11 we were able to tackle some of that work in Far
12 Rockaway, in Queens and in Staten Island, and
13 hopefully to some extent this year in Bay Ridge, but
14 it's--you know, it does take--

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
16 [interposing] You know, I was just answer that that,
17 you know, in addition to funding, of course, which is
18 always needed, you know, the development of a NORC or
19 whatever might serve those particular communities is
20 very much an organic--I think Karen mentioned it's a
21 community organizing effort, which is how the
22 majority of these programs you're going to hear from
23 the community that helped to organize. So very much
24 I think working in partnership with local community
25 groups that are in those communities serving those
communities to help really do the grassroots

3 organizing, develop partnerships and, you know,
4 ultimately the funding to--to shape around that but a
5 lot of this has to come organically out of the
6 community. And Karen is right. It might be a NORC
7 model, but it might be other services. Maybe it's
8 younger or older adults that have, you know, it's
9 more employment or, you know, a whole variety of
10 issues other than, perhaps, you know, case management
11 type services. But yes, we can help with doing needs
12 assessments, and--and surveys.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good. Thank you. I'm
14 going to pass it on to my Co-Chair to ask some
15 questions, and then we'll going to open it up to
16 other council members. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you Chair
18 Chin, and again thanks for--for being here, and--and
19 continuing the conversation. I'm got add a couple--a
20 couple things to the table with the first round of
21 Q&A, and come back again. I want to--I want to just
22 pick up where you left off that you do want to help
23 with survey, and I want to ask two questions
24 branching out of that willingness to continue to work
25 together. One is I understand you do want to help,
but how--how can you do that? And so, really just

3 dive a little bit deeper. So now we can hear you
4 want to help. How? And really with an emphasis on
5 community organizing. You mentioned, you know, this
6 is an organic process, but if you want to--if you
7 want to take that analogy, this needs resources.
8 This needs water to grow. We have the seeds in the
9 community, but we need water to help grow these NORCs
10 or other things in support for our immigrant
11 communities. Where are you right now helping
12 organize through fueling with resources and fueling
13 our non-profits and our organizers on the ground.
14 So, one, generally, how can you help us, and more
15 specifically how are you helping us organize that?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: So with the
17 generosity of the Council we were able to do--working
18 with consultants--needs assessments and working
19 towards development of a NORC in Staten Island, and
20 that was a very specific need and request and, you
21 know, again we can't do this alone. So there are
22 many resources in this room today and, you know, it's
23 that public-private partnership piece. So I think
24 also calling upon the resources of the philanthropic
25 and other communities to sit at the table together,

3 and help do some of that work. And we can help play
4 role in that coalition work that does exist.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So it's a
6 convenient role?

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yeah, I
8 was just going to add that we have been approached by
9 some organizations, and have been able to link them
10 with our existing DFTA programs to see what synergies
11 can be developed between. I know we have one group
12 in Brooklyn who was linked to a DFTA senior center,
13 and I believe there's still--they still have a
14 relationship to see how they could possibly partner
15 on expanding services for the immigrant community,
16 and I'm--so there are some partnerships out there and
17 linkages out there that we can certainly do. And
18 that we can do with the--under the existing without
19 additional funding, but to move forward--

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Yes, so I
21 think that convening--

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:
23 [interposing] Yes.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: --and the
25 mentoring. I mean we have so much--

3 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:

4 [interposing] Uh-huh.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: --expertise
6 that I think, you know, developing mentorships would
7 be a wonderful way to go of being able to have one
8 community help another to develop organically.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. So,
10 again, I--I--I just want to point to a really--a
11 repositioning for DFTA, and I think what this--what
12 we're doing here today is really helping--helping
13 enforce that. Beyond the fact that the Council is
14 doing our own process with 51 members trying to
15 allocate out of our discretionary ability for
16 something like this, that's--that's us especially to
17 do that. And you bringing your--your minds to this--
18 to the table, but we're really asking for a
19 repositioning for DFTA, yourself, how you work, how
20 you do your thing inside the agency in coming to us
21 with a whole fresh perspective. And--and--and
22 speaking of fresh perspective, I'm thinking a little
23 bit about what you said on whether or not immigrant
24 communities feel like this is a good fit for NORCs.
25 Maybe it's something else. Where are you getting
that data and that analysis, and is that something we

3 have on--on information, or is that--is that
4 anecdotal? How are you coming to that conclusion?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: No, we
6 don't--it--it's--it's not a data--data driven
7 comment. I think that because the NORC model is, you
8 know, has been at least what it is, it takes a lot of
9 time to build a very successful NORC program, and as
10 we said before, it does take organic interest on the
11 part of the community, and community organizing. And
12 even though we can definitely help with that, there
13 are lot of other partners that are needed to--in
14 this, in this kind of program. As the testimony
15 referenced the Classic NORC programs for instance has
16 a match requirement, and that may not be something
17 that's realistic at this point for some immigrant
18 communities. So, I--I think given the way that the
19 successful NORC programs have unfolded over the
20 years, we see that as a response to and sort of an
21 urgent response to a growing immigrant need in the
22 city. This might be something to think about long
23 term, and maybe to start building, but it may not be
24 the immediate solution. So, you know, it's not based
25 on other scientific data.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, and I--I
4 just think that the urgency is real.

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:
6 [interposing] Uh-huh.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We don't have a
8 lot of time in so many ways.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
10 [interposing] Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --to really affect
12 communities that need today, and so I just want to--
13 I--I get it. Its--it's--

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
15 [interposing] Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --difficult. But
17 finally, I just want to add another layer within our
18 immigrant community and our aging population, and
19 really think about our LGBT community that is coming
20 out at higher rates than ever before. The City, the
21 State and the federal government have all been
22 affirming our LGBT community, and as we think about
23 this, now we're adding a whole new layer of com--
24 complex to--to creating NORCs that are really truly
25 inclusive not just to the immigrant community but to
our--our LGBT community.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

4 [interposing] Uh-huh.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And so I want to
6 make sure that--that that becomes another back to
7 repositioning how you all as an agency come to us, go
8 to the Mayor, ask for resources from OMB, and work
9 with our committees to make that all possible. And
10 that is a big challenge, but I think that our
11 advocates as we--this is not the first time we've had
12 this conversation--our advocates are giving us ideas
13 and putting the seeds in the ground. We just have to
14 make it grow. How--how do we do that, and I--I just
15 want to make sure that we--we put all of that in our
16 urgent--urgent box of--of work to do. I don't know
17 if you want to respond to that or let your assistant
18 do it. (sic)

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

20 [interposing] No, I agree with everything you're
21 saying. I think that forums and hearings like this
22 are a wonderful way to exchange ideas, and to help
23 enlighten us about, you know, RFPs as we move
24 forward. So yes there's room for us to reshape the
25 model in the future.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And--and I think--
4 so we're aligned on--on--we're aligned?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That--that's
7 helpful.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: [laughs]

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It's the first
10 step.

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I'd like--can I
12 add something?

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes, please.

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I also
15 want to add that even, you know, we contract with
16 hundreds and hundreds of organizations to--to do
17 programming in senior centers as well as NORC
18 programs and other kinds of services. And our
19 programs even without our telling them to do so
20 [laughs] have done amazing things, and incorporating
21 and addressing new population needs. I mean it, you
22 know, what's happening in East Harlem for instance
23 used to be almost totally English, Hispanic, and now
24 there's a huge Asian population growing in our
25 programs. Without us building in anything
legislatively, our programs have adapted, and--and

3 have been reaching out, and I think that to continue
4 to encourage them to do that, and to try to give them
5 some more resources and tools to do that is also a
6 good way to go.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, and my final
8 question position or point--pointing, if we look at
9 places like Elmhurst and Flushing where these have
10 the highest populations of--of aging population and--

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

12 [interposing] Immigrants, yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --immigrants, and
14 when we look at the NORCs the models are not
15 accessible to them. They--they are in co-ops with
16 low to--or mid to high-income community center areas.
17 And so, as we anticipate because one we have the
18 urgency of the people who we need to serve today, but
19 looking at--at new immigrant communities that are
20 coming in at higher--higher rates, we will--we will
21 one day be needing these services as well. And--and
22 so--so we have an urgent issue and then a long-term
23 issue to anticipate as well. Okay, I'll pause here.
24 Thank you.
25

3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, we've also been
4 joined by Council Member Koslowitz. Council Member
5 Koo has a question.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Thank you and
7 good morning. I have a NYCHA NORC in my district,
8 the Forest Hills Community House, and I was
9 wondering, they're going to go to another entity.
10 It's not going to be NYCHA. They're looking to move
11 over. It's a co-op. How will that affect the NORC
12 there?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: It
14 shouldn't affect it at all. Our--our con--the NORC
15 has operated by the Queens Community House. As long
16 as whoever has the property continues to allows us to
17 operate in that property, we'll be there.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Now, how do we
19 get other NORCs in a community? I have a lot of
20 senior citizens in my community living in the
21 buildings. How can we get them together to form a
22 NORC?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Well, as we
24 were saying earlier, we--well, of course, there's
25 always the RFP process, which I know is not the kind
of answer that you're probably looking for, but the--

3 there are--we would be happy to sit down with anyone
4 in the community if it's a community organizing
5 service model. If there are buildings or areas that
6 have--that the community has identified needs this
7 sort of service or would--maybe has even started
8 providing some services informally, and would like to
9 come and talk with us about other possibilities,
10 we're certainly open to that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay. Also, I
12 have one more question. What percentage of seniors
13 are utilizing NORCs and NYCHA programs are of--were
14 born outside of the United States?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Senior
16 utilizing NORCs in NYCHA? Do we have that data?

17 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I don't
18 think we have--I don't think we have that data.
19 Well, we don't have it today.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: And we can
21 follow up on it.

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We'll
23 follow up on it.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: We didn't
25 specifically pull out the NYCHA Housing piece, but--

3 but, you know, in our maps we have it by census
4 tracked data.

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I think
6 NYCHA would probably have that, too.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: And you--

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: We'll
9 follow up with NYCHA because they probably have that
10 information.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay, I'd
12 appreciate that, and I have--

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
14 [interposing] I would guess that it's very high.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Uh-huh. The
16 languages spoken in the NORC, I have a very large
17 Bukharan community in Forest Hills and Rego Park, and
18 Kew Gardens. Are there people that can related to
19 these people, speak to them and answer their
20 questions?

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes,
22 every NORC program senior center, any program we fund
23 is required to have language access for any person in
24 the community. So there should be, you know, and if
25 it's a significant part of the program already, they

3 should have staff, and the ability to serve anyone in
4 their own language.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay, thank
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member Koo.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you, Chairs
9 Chin and Menchaca and thank you Commissioners for
10 coming. I'm the council member representing
11 Flushing, Council District 20, which has very high
12 concentration of Asian-Americans. In fact, my area
13 is the number area in terms of foreign born Asian
14 immigrants in the district--in the whole city. Yes,
15 65% of our population are Asian-Americans now. So,
16 I--I'm here but in relationship to this--your
17 testimony, and it's a rather good concept helping
18 seniors in our area. But I'm always wondering how
19 come we only have one NORC in the whole Flushing
20 area? We have thousands and thousands of seniors,
21 and can you explain to me why there's only one NORC
22 in our area, and even in my neighborhood, which is
23 endless, which is really underserved and there's only
24 one or two. How can we encourage formation of more
25 NORC centers in these two neighborhoods?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: So partly,
4 of course, it's driven by funding and the constraints
5 of our RFP process, which was even already several
6 years ago. So that really limits us and you for
7 opportunities for new programs to come on board. And
8 I think that's the crux of the hearing today is how
9 we can help besides dollars to help organize in those
10 communities, and again, you know, I think it's
11 working not only with our support, but with local
12 support from the community boards, from the residents
13 in those communities. I mean many of the NORC
14 programs that were founded had very active seniors
15 that helped to organize within those buildings.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [interposing] Uh-
17 huh.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: So I think
19 working together to begin to identify housing
20 projects or facilities where there are both high
21 incidents of seniors, and immigrants is the way to
22 start.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So can you identify
24 there is someone in your department who can help like
25 community groups to form a NORC, and who--who do we--
who do they call?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Well, they
4 can call me. [laughs] I mean what I can provide is
5 information. We can talk with them and kind of get
6 an idea of what their needs are, what their--what
7 kind of community they're talking about. We have
8 good relationships with a number of other entities
9 throughout the City that also support NORC programs,
10 and that have done--you know, that have partnered
11 with us in the past. So we can sort of take it from
12 there, but I'd be happy to be--I'd be happy to
13 receive those calls--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: All right, thank
15 you.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: --and Karen
17 Taylor. [laughs]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Council
19 Member Koo. One thing that popped up, you know, that
20 the Council is also very concerned about that in
21 immigrant neighborhoods it's because we don't have
22 these government funded, you know, well run NORC
23 programs, or senior centers. We've got all these
24 pop-up social adult daycare programs--

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
[interposing] Hmm.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --that's popping up
4 all over immigrant community, and it's sort of like
5 filling the needs, right. But not the best use of
6 government funding. So I think that, you know,
7 really getting our community to understand how do--do
8 a neighborhood NORC or how--how do you get services,
9 and--and to meet the needs. We really need DFTA's
10 help on that, and maybe we can convene some
11 neighborhood meetings with organizations, and see how
12 they could at least start this process, and really
13 get some of these good programs that have been proven
14 to establish now in our community. If not, then what
15 we're getting are these pop-ups social adult daycare
16 programs. Council Member Dromm.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you, Council
18 Member Chin and Chair Menchaca as well for holding
19 this hearing. It is an issue of major importance to
20 me. As you know, Deputy Commissioner, my NORC was
21 one of the NORCs that was cut out the last time
22 probably I think two years ago, two budget cycles or
23 so ago. That's the Northridge, Southbridge Burlene
24 (sic) NORC run by South Health, and it wasn't because
25 of the quality of the program, but it was because the
money wasn't there allegedly. And that time, your

3 department as well mentioned that that was one of the
4 ones that was I guess more convenient or a greater
5 possibility of closing because there were senior
6 centers nearby. And that argument also is--to me not
7 really true because, you know, there are senior
8 centers within about a 12 to 15-block walk. But if
9 you're talking about seniors who are disabled, that's
10 not really a possibility, and these NORCs serve a
11 vital service to the seniors who live in that area.
12 And as I'm looking at the map here, to reiterate
13 something that Council Member Koo said, is that
14 Community Boards 3 and 4 and 7 seem to be the areas
15 where we have the most immigrant communities, the
16 largest number of immigrants. And I'm going to
17 challenge Council Member Koo to say that you may have
18 65% Asian, but I have 68% immigrants [laughter] from
19 all around the world in Jackson Heights. And so, you
20 know, the Council is now funding the NORC in my
21 district. And we cannot afford to lose that, and on
22 top of that, the Elmhurst Jackson Heights Senior
23 Center on Broadway is threatened with closure as
24 well, and there has been no resolution on that
25 because the landlord, the new landlord is--is--and
will begin construction on a new building very, very

3 shortly. he came to visit me a few weeks ago. So
4 there's an urgency, a real urgency in my district in
5 District 25--the 3 and 4s. If you just look at this,
6 the--the darker shaded areas in terms of immigrants
7 to provide senior services. So I'm hoping that as we
8 move forward in the budget negotiations that the
9 Administration--I'm going to demand that the
10 Administration look at this area for additional
11 senior services, and--and as well to--to pick up the
12 costs for these NORCs. I believe that the three
13 NORCs that were not included the last time were one
14 in my district, one in Council Member Will's district
15 and one in the Speaker's district. And minimally I
16 think that the department should be picking up those--
17 those NORCs. But particularly in my district
18 because as we talk about immigrants, they're set to
19 lose a whole host of services. My district has the
20 highest population of any district in the borough of
21 Queens, 166,801, and we just got a homeless shelter
22 down the block, and the population continues to grow,
23 and that is really what I believe is an undercount,
24 because many of the immigrants in my community did
25 not participate in my opinion in the census. So I
can't emphasize enough how important it is that we

3 get additional services there, that we settle the
4 issue with the Elmhurst Broadway Center--

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

6 [interposing] Uh-huh.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: --and that we deal
8 with the--the NORC situation there as well. [pause]
9 No response? [pause] And it's not funny.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Well, I can
11 tell you--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing] And
13 you know what, this is the response that I get from
14 your--from your department as well, and I don't
15 really think that that's appropriate. Where is the
16 Commissioner today?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: She is
18 preparing for

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing] Has
20 been--

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: --a HUD
22 hearing.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: --for this
24 committee?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Yes, of
course.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Yes, well, I--I
4 want you to take this issue very, very seriously
5 because this is an issue of major importance to our
6 immigrant community, and we're not going to allow our
7 immigrant communities to be short--short changed.
8 And if you don't have an answer to sit there and not
9 even respond is just unbelievable.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: The lack of
11 response is that we are in complete agreement with
12 you and--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing]
14 Well, you could have said that.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Right.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: I can also
17 tell you, although it isn't the subject of this
18 hearing, but we are working very closely with DCAS on
19 another site for the Elmhurst Jackson Heights Senior
20 Center.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing] It's
22 been over a year and a half--

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
24 [interposing] Yeah.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: --for that site,
trying to find a place for that site.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: That's
4 correct, and it's a--as you know, it's a very
5 difficult area. It is--the real estate prices have
6 soared, and this program has over 300 people a day,
7 we have to find a place--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing]
9 Right, at 400 people a day, we give out 400 lunches a
10 day--

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
12 [interposing] Uh-huh.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: --and--and then--
14 then you--you did cut that NORC service. We had to
15 pick that up. So I'm wondering where the commitment
16 is from your department for my district. This is an
17 immigrant rich community, 68% immigrant, and it seems
18 like they're cutting services rather than increasing
19 services.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Well, we're
21 certainly not cutting the senior center services at
22 all, and we can discuss--I can certainly--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing] You
24 cut the NORC. What do you mean you're not cutting
25 services.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: The--that
4 was the result of an RFP process.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And that year we
6 gave you \$900,000, which you took and then put into
7 the--the RFP agreement, and then cut us out of the
8 NORC--of--of getting a NORC. We had to have the
9 Council stand up and put those dollars back in.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: The RFP
11 process is something that we're blocked into, and we
12 award contracts based on what the criteria is.

13 That's not something that--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing] So
15 will you be offering another RFP this year?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Not this
17 year, no because--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing] So
19 what type of additional funding will you provide this
20 year for additional NORCs.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: We don't
22 have additional funding to provide additional NORCs.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing] So
24 then all of the talk about forming communities and
25 getting people to participate in coming to you with

3 ideas about how to get NORCs, there's no intention of
4 any funding?

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, Council Member
6 Dromm, I think part of that is what we have to
7 continue to advocate for, and that's why last year we
8 were successful from a suggestion by the Commissioner
9 that we should look at centers as serving immigrant
10 population, and we were successful in advocating a
11 million dollars to support senior centers that serve
12 the immigrant population.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Of our money?

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, I mean it's--it's
15 a City Council Initiative.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing]

17 Look, I don't know the whole thing.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So in the budget
19 process we are urging everyone. We just have to
20 continue to make the Administration and our Mayor
21 aware that we've got to continue to increase funding
22 for senior services, and NORC is included in there.
23 So I mean our site is, you know, continuous. At any
24 rate, we got to be out there, and we were successful
25 in the last two years. So we've just got to continue
to build on that until we get, you know, the

3 resources that we need to--for all the growing senior
4 population. And that's why they--in my meeting with
5 the Commissioner I mean we want to strategize and
6 work together so that we can convince, you know, the
7 Mayor and OMB that senior services are vital. So we
8 are starting again. I mean last year we were
9 successful, but I didn't see, you know, some of the
10 items, the baseline in the preliminary budget. There
11 is always the executive budget, and it just means
12 that we got a lot of work.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Well, thank you
14 for making the point that I was trying to make as
15 well.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you, Madam
18 Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, so we're always--
20 --we're always out there fighting--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: [interposing]
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --and at the end
24 we're--we're okay. We did good last year.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: We did.

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member

4 Vallone, you have a question.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, now that
6 you guys got all fired up, you kind--kind of jumped
7 in, and I'm usually the one the Sicilian one that's
8 jumping in there.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: [laughs]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So my--my dear
11 Karen, thank you. [laughs]

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: It's
13 different spellings.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, it's the
15 Super Karen. [laughs] So I think what you're
16 hearing from the co-chairs and from the Council
17 Members is something that's--I guess pretty much
18 universal, which is that we support you, and we
19 support this, but there's always a but.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: But we want to
22 see the next evolution, the next step, the next
23 financial commitment beyond organic involvement
24 because it's already there. If I were to guess now
25 as Chair of the Senior Centers and going throughout
the city, and working with our providers who are

3 sitting here today, because--especially our immigrant
4 seniors don't really have that ability yet to tap
5 into these resources, and we were just talking, but
6 where do they go? They don't just sit in the home.
7 They're involved in their community in their own way
8 to get their own information. So the chip--for
9 example, by me I have a very large Korean, Chinese,
10 Asian, South Asian community. They just don't
11 disappear. Where they'll go then it's most often is
12 to their places of worship. They'll go to their
13 church, to their synagogue--

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

15 [interposing] Uh-huh.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: --to their
17 temple. They'll go to--if they're lucky enough to
18 have a senior center, which keeps bringing Kim back
19 with KCS because he's got the Korean--but he's doing
20 it, and he's looking to get help and expand. They're
21 going to places where there's a comfort level, and
22 first and foremost is the language--the non-language
23 barrier. Because our senior immigrants their
24 language proficiency problem is probably the number
25 on challenge. So it falls to the children or the
grandchildren to be their conduit to get to the

3 services. So those seniors more often than not,
4 especially if they wind up in a church or in a
5 private funding pop-up, or some place they're picking
6 up the services. So, the challenge I guess is
7 there's a few. One is the RFP process, right. So
8 the last RFP was in 2013, correct? Not accessing for
9 six years?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Three and
11 a renewal.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: After three
13 years, what is--what are our options? I think it's
14 just any modification to an existing RFP? Because
15 that's happening this year, correct?

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Pretty
17 much a--another three-year--

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
19 [interposing] Right, expense.

20 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It's a
21 renewal for another three years unless there's a
22 significant problem, which we don't anticipate.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So what I would
24 suggest for my fellow council members and all the
25 other committees and--and Chairs Menchaca and Chairs
Chin is--is to really ramp up one thing for the--the

3 next round of RFPs, and make sure that our service
4 providers that are here are involved with where we
5 can grow. I think the outer boroughs especially
6 Queens for us is a perfect example of not fitting
7 into a classic NORC but--but having to deal with
8 Neighborhood NORC and Hybrid NORCs--

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

9 [interposing] Uh-huh.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: --who are always

11 on the cusp of being cut or not meeting the right
12 definition. Did I hear some whispering on the state
13 level that the definition of a Neighborhood NORC is
14 being tinkered with? Do we know? Yes.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

16 [interposing] There's--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: What I'm hearing

18 through my providers--

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

20 [interposing] I think there's some pending
21 legislation. I think you may hear testimony later
22 on--

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

24 [interposing] Yes.

3 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: --with
4 some more detail on that, but there is some.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Do we have any
6 plan on that because that would be a disaster
7 especially one who comes to mind is Self Help, which
8 is another--

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
10 [interposing] You're going to hear---

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I see my head is
12 eagerly shaking in the background/

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Yes.
14 [laughs]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: But that--that
16 would send shockwaves. So could you help me on the
17 State Partnership for Neighborhood NORCs? How--how
18 is their relationship with DFTA and a Neighborhood
19 NORC on a state level?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: The state--
21 the state's program is purely the state's business.
22 It's all funded, you know, they're--and I'm--our
23 program is not funded through the state or dependent
24 on--

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
[interposing] They're parallel lines.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: They're
4 just parallel. Our, you know, as you know, our
5 program is taxed--it has tax levy. What--where it
6 does impact us is that 14 of our current DFTA NORC
7 programs have dual funding. They get some from the
8 city and they have a state contract, and depending on
9 what happens with the state legislation, if that
10 impacts their allocation or their contract, then the
11 whole program, the whole NORC program is, of course,
12 impacted.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And those 14 are
14 what type?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: The
16 Classic NORCs, of the 28 DFTA funded baselined NORC
17 programs.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: They're not the
19 basic NORC?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: They're
21 Classic--Classic NORCs. They're not Neighborhood
22 NORCs.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: It's just the
24 Classic?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Oh, but you
asked about Neighborhood NORCs. The Neighborhood

3 NORC program at the state had--we have no involvement
4 in that except through the Council funding that's
5 provided to help supplement those programs, and we
6 do, you know, we certainly work with that funding and
7 those programs in that regard, but we do not have any
8 other relationship with the state.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So is there any
10 plans for those programs and services for the
11 Neighborhood NORCs to expand or are they just staying
12 up there currently.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: On the
14 state level?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: No for us. You
16 just said that on the city level the Council can fund
17 programs--

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
19 [interposing] We don't have any--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: --within--

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Right, we
22 don't have any Neighborhood NORC funding at the
23 Department for the Aging.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: What about in
25 the programming of it?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: I'm sorry,
4 say gain.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Programs,
6 services at the Neighborhood NORC.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Right,
8 they're currently--they're either funded through the
9 state or through the Council.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, the
11 Council is you, too because you're--

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
13 [interposing] Right, we get that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, but you keep
15 saying no instead of saying yes.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
17 [interposing] That's what we're doing. Yeah, I mean
18 obviously, those--those come through the--through the
19 department, and we work with the programs. I guess
20 I'm--maybe I'm not clear on what your question is.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So what city
22 programs and services are we funding for our
23 Neighborhood NORC?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Those NORC
25 programs provide the same sort of services that the
Classic NORCs do, but on a neighborhood level, which

3 is case management, healthcare assistance, and
4 healthcare management, and health promotion
5 activities, especially relational. (sic)

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing] So
7 we just can't wash our hands and say there's state
8 run. That's my whole point. So we'll say it's a
9 state problem, but it really isn't a state problem.
10 The city is involved also.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Oh, no the
12 City isn't--sure because they're in our city.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing]
14 But that's what took us ten minutes to get to that
15 point.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: [laughs]
17 I'm sorry.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's what I'm
19 trying to say. So, what can we do since the city is
20 involved to look at programming deficiencies or need
21 for expansion especially for immigrants that we can
22 have an impact, which is the most predominant model
23 especially on an Neighborhood NORC model? What is
24 DFTA's vision to maybe getting involved that way,
25 because that's something we can do as a council.
That's something that we can have immediate effect

3 and don't have to work for an RFP. That could be
4 language. That could be case management work. Does
5 it have an immediate language ability to speak, and
6 not use translation. That can be working with the
7 senior center in the neighborhood that's providing
8 the meals that are ethnic-based meals. That's social
9 worker stuff. That's everything that we hear on a
10 daily basis that we can have an impact within three
11 months to get into. So, that's my type of vision
12 that we want you to have that we will jump on, and
13 have our Council Members fund or put an initiative
14 together. So we're going to put an initiative
15 together to support this--our individual Neighborhood
16 NORC. So is there anything that we can do now to
17 think of getting involved with some additional
18 funding or programming for those Neighborhood NORCs?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: As you
19 know--well, I do--I guess because we don't know what
20 the--the legislation is--what the impact is going to
21 be. I am not aware that they are going to be cutting
22 the Neighborhood NORC funding.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, whether
24 they do or no, it doesn't mean we can't increase
25 ours.

3 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:

4 Absolutely, and we will. Of course we will.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: And we can
6 work with the advocates on the state level to work
7 word and expansion on the state level, which we would
8 benefit from here in the city.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: We may but
10 that's not something I have a handle on. I have a
11 handle on this. So, my job is to deal with my
12 district and my seniors to do this, and---

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

14 [interposing] Maybe--

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER TAYLOR:

16 [interposing] If--if we had the opportunity to expand
17 Neighborhood NORCs we could work in particular
18 communities like Council Member Dromm and others to
19 try to--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I don't think
21 it's just ours. We happen to be here, but I think
22 every--every community in the city has this issue.
23 If it was that one I wouldn't no we don't have extra
24 resources for seniors and immigrant seniors that we
25 need. They all do, but I mean as we all advocate we
want what we need. So I mean so that's what we're

3 elected for. But what I would like to see is--is not
4 so much a history lesson as to what NORCs are, but a
5 progressive approach as to what we can do this year,
6 next year, long term, that we can work together, put
7 a task force together with our providers that are
8 here, Self-Help, JASA, Samuel Field Y, the ones that
9 have the existing because that's where I get my
10 tutelage is they'll sit and explain to me where--
11 where we're short. And I think that's what we have
12 to do now. That will be my humble suggestion is to
13 be on attack mode budget wise, and be on attack mode
14 for what we can every year going forward. And I
15 think that's why that budget why Chair Chin and I
16 attacked last year's budget was because there was no
17 increase. And so, if there is no increase, how do
18 you deal with a population that's increasing
19 everyday? To me they're meant to cut. So that's the
20 same thing for this year. We--we have to fight to
21 say to the Administration and everyone else our
22 seniors are aging everyday. Therefore, our dollars
23 must increase everyday to address that need. So I
24 actually have a question here from one of our
25 ambassadors. It's interesting and well put. This
one is from Joshua. Joshua asked, These--do these--

3 do these facilities accept undocumented senior
4 citizens or do they have to be citizens?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Yes, they
6 accept anyone who is 60 years of age and older.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: All right, so we
8 have interaction with you commissioners.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: [laughs]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's put away.
11 (sic)

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: Thank you
13 for your question.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So just as a
15 wrap-up, is there anything that you can maybe wrap
16 your heads around now or very quickly to--for the
17 programming. I mean there's--we don't have to
18 reinvent the wheel. We know the program has the
19 funding that's going out now. We can address I would
20 think the language barrier like right now. I mean if
21 were to put a case worker or an additional staff as
22 identified in each one of our council members'
23 districts say if that need is Spanish speaking, if
24 there needs to be Korean, Chinese, you name the
25 language let's get it done. Let's get a price for
it, what that could be for a day or two a week so

3 that then we can start bringing those seniors out
4 from their homes, out from their comfort areas
5 relying on their children and relying on their church
6 or place of worship, and get them to where the actual
7 programs are. That would be the quickest way I would
8 think. What about that? Something we could do?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK: I'm in
10 agreement and, you know, continuing as--as we talked
11 about to do and help with some of the coalition
12 building and working with residents in the community
13 to see what the needs are and start to build the case
14 for enhanced services.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, because
16 I'm looking. I'm trying to find a way to short
17 changed waiting for your next RFP because--

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
19 [interposing] Yeah.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: --so, we may not
21 be here. You may not be here. Who may--you know, we
22 want to be able to do something, and not just say
23 it's always a problem, and we're waiting for an RFP.
24 I want to do something. I want to do it now. So
25 thank you very much, Chairs.

3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. I think--I
4 mean as you're looking forward that we hear from
5 advocates and providers I think we all can agree that
6 the NORC model works, right. And we wanted to be
7 more flexible. That's why the hybrid would sell--

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

9 [interposing] Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --and give our love in
11 the Neighborhood NORC model. So going forward we
12 want to see how we can continue to build these models
13 in all the senior communities with a large population
14 of seniors. Because seniors are growing every day.
15 You know, everybody is going to become a senior
16 whether you like it or not, right. [laughs] It's a
17 natural process. So our number is going to be
18 growing. So if we agree that this is a good model to
19 build on--I mean what I'm seeing in some of the NORCs
20 is that seniors who are homebound or they're not that
21 mobile, but they're getting services. They're
22 getting home visits. They're getting socialization
23 programs. They might not go to a senior center every
24 day, but they're getting help, and--and that's
25 critical. So going forward we have--you know, the
younger senior the one that can travel they have

3 choice. I mean the Commissioner talked about well,
4 we give seniors a choice. They can go to any senior
5 center they want, and some seniors they tell me,
6 Margaret, Monday one say go to this one because of
7 what the meals program they have and Tuesday they say
8 go to this one because of the arts and craft program.
9 That's great, but as the seniors age, they might not
10 be, you know, so mobile--

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

12 [interposing]

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --but they need
14 services. They need help. So we have to make sure
15 that they can age comfortably in place, and these
16 NORC models are really beneficial. So, I think that
17 what we're asking is that DFTA do you really think
18 about in terms of the resources that are necessary to
19 help us to continue to build more NORCs in our city.
20 So what would that take? And so that we can work
21 together to make sure that we can advocate for the
22 funding that can support, right, whether we need to
23 do organizing or feasibility study to start. Because
24 we have a lot of support among my colleagues in the
25 City Council because everybody sees the benefit of
having NORCs in their district. And I think going

3 forward we should really continue the discussion,
4 with providers and advocates, and see how we can
5 continue to grow the NORC programs in our city.
6 Another question?

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I just want to
8 add to that--that sentiment that I think what--what
9 you've heard today, and what we are--this is not the
10 first time we've had this--this style of hearing,
11 this type of hearing, this conversation the numbers
12 are clear. We are--we are in a moment of crisis
13 here, and the structures that we put into place to be
14 as dynamic as possible are not working. And I think
15 we're going to hear that from the advocates next, but
16 I want to make sure that we feel confident, and I
17 don't feel confident, that we don't feel confident
18 right now, that the budget and the policies out of
19 DFTA are aligned with the data that the size and
20 population that's growing from our immigrant
21 community is going to soon move from 46% to over 50%
22 in a few years. And if we're stuck, if we put
23 ourselves in a place where we're stuck, let's get
24 unstuck, and re--and create some dynamic nature to
25 our budget and policies. That we can't just do with
our Council hitting you on the head. We need to

3 really bring your thought and join your power within
4 agencies and your Commissioner and send that back to
5 the Mayor and OMB, and those fights are always
6 difficult. We're trying to prioritize a larger
7 budget, a multi-billion dollar budget, but we can't
8 do that without you period. And so if we don't have
9 you have at the table with real, real force of
10 nature, we're not going to get anywhere, or we're
11 going to have to move to more drastic nature.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:

13 [interposing] Uh-huh.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And we will, we
15 can, the advocates are here, they're going to--we're
16 going to--we're going to organize because you're
17 right, this is all about organizing, but that's not
18 where we want to go. So let's--let's--let's change
19 that conversation. We're sounding the alarm now.
20 The alarm has been sounded--is--is alive and well
21 right now, and we need to build a capacity on our--
22 our local ground to really build whatever it looks
23 like. And I'm less concerned about exactly what it
24 looks like. NORC or maybe something else that needs
25 to be different. And so, I'm really looking forward
to hearing ideas today. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So we look forward to
4 continuing this conversation, and this work--

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RESNICK:
6 [interposing] Absolutely.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --and throughout the
8 budget discussions that NORC will be on the topics.
9 So thank you for being here today. We're going to
10 change up a little bit today. We're going to--
11 actually, we're going to start by calling up the
12 Chinatown NORC to hear about the program that they're
13 doing. They have Rhonda Silverman, Charles Lamb,
14 Mahan Eng, and Maha Ho. [pause, background comments]

15 RHONDA SILVERMAN: Good morning.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: You can start.

17 RHONDA SILVERMAN: Okay, good morning.
18 My name is Rhonda Silverman. I'm from the Visiting
19 Nurse Service of New York. I'm Manager of Program
20 Development, and we would like to thank the members
21 of the New York City Council, who are here today and
22 Margaret Chin the committee Chair on Aging and Carlos
23 Menchaca the committee chair of the Immigration
24 Committee for give us an opportunity to speak on
25 behalf funding for the Neighborhood Naturally
Occurring Retirement Communities Supportive Services

3 Program known as Neighborhood NORCs. Visiting Nurse
4 Service of New York is the lead agency for the
5 Chinatown Neighborhood NORC since 2006, and we are
6 especially grateful that the City Council has
7 allocated discretionary funds this past year to our
8 program as well as other Neighborhood NORC programs.
9 These funds were essential in supporting our efforts
10 to serve those low-income immigrant--immigrant
11 seniors residing within our Chinatown service area.
12 Our NNORC faces tremendous challenges in the funding
13 area, and despite these challenges we do make a
14 difference everyday in the life of the seniors that
15 we serve. Our NNORC covers a discrete territory in
16 the Chinatown area that houses almost 2,000 low-
17 income immigrant seniors. Our funding consists of a
18 2006 grant from the New York State Office for the
19 Aging, which has been extended, but in reduced
20 amounts over the years due to state budget cuts. We
21 also receive some City Council discretionary funds as
22 well as random and short-term foundation funds. Many
23 foundation grants are not accessible to us due to our
24 inability to substantiate sustainability without
25 their continued funding. The residents in this
community are unable to financially contribute to the

3 program, and because it's a Neighborhood NORC, we
4 don't have one particular landlord or a housing
5 entity that participates in the way of the classic
6 NORCs. The residents--needless to say, the cost of
7 providing services have increased, and the need for
8 services has also increased as the program has gained
9 the trust of the community residents. And NORCs
10 provide social work case management, case assistant,
11 recreational services all aimed at promoting
12 successful aging in place. Pursuant to NYSOFA's
13 staffing requirements NNORCs provide nursing services
14 as well. Although such staffing requirements has
15 caused enormous budgetary strains, we view the
16 Neighborhood NORC Nursing staffing requirements as a
17 critical service especially for this community with
18 poor language skills and low literacy. The NNORC
19 nurse is a bridge for seniors to understand how the
20 complicated healthcare system works, to provide
21 access to needy care and to promote healthy aging and
22 wellness, and educate seniors on the appropriate use
23 of healthcare services aimed at reducing the
24 necessity for emergency room care. The
25 interdisciplinary approach, a tenant of the NNORC
model where social workers and nurses work

3 collaboratively on resident health and wellness is
4 critical to the--to the success of--successful
5 community living. The inclusion of community
6 residents has volunteers and members of numerous
7 advisory committees, many who are sitting at the
8 table with me here, provides residents with a voice
9 and keeps them engaged in this important community
10 program that is focused on their needs and
11 aspirations. We believe that NNORCs are effective
12 strategy towards stabilizing the health and wellbeing
13 of residents in immigrant communities, and urge you
14 to consider and advocate for the following:

15 Inclusion of all Neighborhood NORC
16 funding as part of the regular New York City and NORC
17 funding stream to ensure it's continuance for years
18 to come. The funding is not baselined, and so every
19 year we are never whether we're going to get
20 continued funding to be able to support this
21 wonderful program. So increasing the--the base of
22 this funding to allow for adequate funds to pay for
23 the health and social service and educational,
24 recreational services and community developed--
25 development that's provided by the programs, and for
the ever-increasing numbers of residents that we

3 serve, and the expansion of funding to allow for the
4 development of new NORC, NNORC programs particularly
5 in immigrant and low-income and high risk
6 communities. We hope that the Council recognizes
7 that making Neighborhood NORC funding a permanent
8 part of the city funding will provide the necessary
9 assurance that will allow for the development of
10 continued partnerships, programs and services to
11 continue to thrive. Just a little bit more
12 information about our program before some of our
13 members say a few words. We serve--our Neighborhood
14 NORC in Chinatown serves 24 blocks in the Chinatown
15 neighborhood. This community is considered extremely
16 low by HUD standards, and has aged in over the last
17 50 years. Sixty-two percent of our members are over
18 75 years of age, and 25% are over 85 years of age.
19 Of those members surveyed, 71% have a grade score of
20 education or less, and 12% have no education at all.
21 Seventy-five percent--percent do not speak English,
22 and of--and of those who do, 22% do not speak it
23 well. Most speak only Cantonese and 84% cannot read
24 or write English, and 14% cannot read or write
25 Chinese. So needless to say, navigating healthcare
and any services in that community is a real

3 challenge. And the services that we provide and the
4 activities at our center we provide services within
5 our center, and we go into people's homes as Chair
6 Chin has explained. And it's really essential in
7 order to help the people in this community to remain
8 connected. I'm leave it there because I realize I'm
9 out of time, and I want--I do want to give some of
10 our members an opportunity to speak you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, we have your
12 testimony that--that you list all the services. So
13 that's helpful.

14 MAHAN ENG: [speaking foreign language]
15 Thank you anyway.

16 TRANSLATOR: I'm here to do the
17 translation for Ms. Eng. My husband told me that
18 Chinatown and a program is a very good senior service
19 program for elderly people. So when the first day of
20 my retirement came a few years ago, my husband
21 accompanied me to join into this big family. At the
22 beginning I thought it's only a--a senior service
23 center or senior center, but after a few visits to
24 the office, and to participate in the activities, it
25 changed my opinion completely. It's an awesome sort
of service, and health program. Their services are

3 comprehensive. I worked as a nurse in the NYU
4 Kettering nursing student for many months to help me
5 out on the health list and help me understand what
6 the doctor was telling me about. A social worker had
7 helped us a lot as well. They write the government
8 letters, we got in English and helped us apply for
9 entitlements and benefits. After participating in
10 the Costas Educational Workshops and support groups,
11 it really helps me--it really helped my retirement
12 full of life and joy. So please continue to support
13 this program and our retirement life full of
14 wellness. We cannot live in Chinatown without this
15 program. Thank you.

16 MAHA HO: [Speaking foreign language]

17 TRANSLATOR: My name is Maha Ho. My
18 husband and I both agree that that Chinatown and the
19 program is very important for us. It help us a lot
20 such as solving a problem that we had for a benefit
21 program. They write letters we got in English,
22 applied for Medicaid. Without Chinatown and NORC I
23 would not know where to go for getting help, because
24 we both don't understand English. Also, being part
25 of the process at KIPPIES (sic) an educational health
workshops, they make my health better day by day. It

3 makes me feel younger again. Chinatown and NORC is a
4 warm and happy family. We tell our friends about
5 this quick family, and we need this family. Please
6 continue to support the program. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. [speaking
8 Chinese] So I'm very happy to see seniors when they
9 are happy and healthy. Every time I visit a senior
10 center, I say this is the best investment that the
11 government can make because they are going to save us
12 a lot of money in the long run because they're happy
13 and they're healthy. I just have a question. I
14 know that you have to partner with many different
15 organizations to provide different types of services,
16 and I know that recently the Manhattan Legal Services
17 are coming to your center--

18 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing] Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --to provide some
20 legal service on housing and immigration?

21 RHONDA SILVERMAN: Well, what we do is
22 we--we have formed coalitions with all of the
23 different service providers in the China--that
24 service the Chinatown area, and we meet on a regular
25 basis to determine where is the need, what do we need
to bring in, and what kinds of services we need to

3 provide. So, you know, we--any--all of those types
4 of entitlement programs come in regularly to our
5 program. But in addition, we focused on for example
6 as Colon Task Force we realized that there was an
7 increasing number of people who lived in the
8 Chinatown community who were being diagnosed with
9 colon cancer and colon things, and did not go for
10 regular screenings. And so we started a--a
11 collaboration with all of our community partners,
12 health, the hospitals and the clinics in the area,
13 and we did a program, and we got people to go for--
14 for treatment and--and service. We are also right
15 now working on a mental health--health task force
16 where we're looking at some of the issues around the
17 cultural willingness to, you know, mental health
18 services and trying to come with strategies. We're
19 going around and doing workshops around mental health
20 issues. And our focus is on wellness programs. So
21 it's really very welcoming for people to come in and
22 listen and to get connected and we do follow-up. So,
23 we--with our limited resources we really trying to,
24 you know, pull everybody together and do as we can.
25 We work very, very closely with our other partners in
the community. You know, NORC programs are

3 partnership programs, and you have to find your
4 partners, and when we talk about how--building new
5 programs, yes it is a community organizing, you know,
6 thing to--you have to start off by organizing your
7 community, and these people who are sitting at the
8 table are Charles from another organization that
9 works with us from University Settlement, and these
10 other two members are--are volunteers and they go out
11 and they do a lot of work with us, and for us as
12 well. So, it really does take a whole community to
13 make this work, and we're really very, very pleased
14 to be able to do this. But we urge you to make sure
15 that as we fund these programs that they're funded
16 with enough resources so that they can be sustained.
17 The problem of not knowing if your funding is coming
18 put us all in a panic, and we really need to have
19 these funds baselined.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Now, the--the funding
21 from the state has that been consistently cut?

22 RHONDA SILVERMAN: It was cut over a
23 period of time. In other words, when the state was
24 having financial problems, they started to take back
25 percentages at a time. So we are--we now have less

3 money than when we first started and, you know, the
4 program.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And that's why we're
6 able to supplement with the City Council funding.

7 RHONDA SILVERMAN: We--we definitely
8 without the City Council funds we'd be in really big
9 trouble. So we really appreciate the--all of the
10 support from members of City Council, and anything we
11 can do further to--I mean we--our program has 2,000
12 seniors within our area. We've reached 1,100
13 seniors. So we still have many more, but we don't
14 have the physical resources to be able to do it. We
15 need more, you know, we need to--additional staff to
16 be able to service. We service about 700 members,
17 you know, in a given year. So we have--we have a lot
18 of work left to do, and there's--Chinatown is a very
19 large community at--hoping to expand that beyond the
20 2,000. We don't want to turn anyone away, and we
21 don't turn anyone away.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you.

23 RHONDA SILVERMAN: Thank you. Any other
24 questions.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes, thank you and
I just want to thank the whole panel, and really ask

3 a little bit about something we've been talking about
4 today, which is--

5 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing] Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --the levels of
7 funding, and--but not just the levels because there's
8 great need here, but really what are we looking for
9 as--in--in terms of funding, and--and I know that you
10 testified today about the 2006 state grant--

11 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing] Right.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and you've been
13 extended that grant at lower amounts. So you're
14 getting money--

15 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing] But in--
16 -in other words, the--the percentages have been taken
17 off as the state went through when they had their
18 cuts, but the basic grant was--there was a maximum
19 grant. I think it started at \$150,000, and it's been
20 reduced to about \$132,000, and that's been for
21 several years. You know, the--the expenses for the
22 program go up. The costs of, you know, salaries and
23 all of that kind of stuff go--go up. The needs go
24 up. If you need more staff, you know, it can't be
25 stagnant. It has to grow with the growing need. We
know that there--

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

4 Right.

5 RHONDA SILVERMAN: --are 10,000 people
6 turning 65 everyday and--

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

8 Right. And I think we're pointing to that. So
9 that's--that's what I wanted to move and shift
10 towards. The--the state funding is coming in, but
11 it's decreasing over time, expense are going up, the
12 population is going up. The City Council funding is--
13 is hear and we're--we're--we're advocating for it.

14 RHONDA SILVERMAN: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, are you
16 getting any city DFTA dollars directly?

17 RHONDA SILVERMAN: No, we're not. We're--

18 -

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: No.

20 RHONDA SILVERMAN: --the money that we
21 get is--

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: What prevents you
23 from getting those funds--those funds?

24 RHONDA SILVERMAN: There--there is no
25 program for Neighborhood NORCs. So what we were
hoping is that this will--the fact that the City

3 Council has funded this and realized that this is a
4 very positive way of meeting the needs of seniors and
5 immigrant seniors in these communities through
6 Neighborhood NORCs, and regular NORCs that the
7 funding would be now hopefully baselined that the
8 City--that the Department for the Aging would take on
9 the--the funding of these programs. That's what
10 we're looking for because again we don't know until
11 you tell if there's money for us.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Yeah,
13 right. Yeah, we've got--that's I think what we've
14 got to face.

15 RHONDA SILVERMAN: We can't be, you know,
16 we can't really be under this pressure every year of
17 not knowing if we're going to be able to continue or
18 not. It's not--you know, we--we--we're there in the
19 community to be a stable force for these people who
20 really need support and assistance--

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
22 Absolutely.

23 RHONDA SILVERMAN: --and if we're not
24 there, and we can't guarantee we're there, we're--
25 it's a--it's not a tenable situation.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So my--and I'm
4 going to ask a series of questions to all the
5 advocates, but a question for you. How are you
6 preparing for the growing number of immigrant seniors
7 as we move into a more than half percentage wise?
8 Over 50% of our--of our seniors will become
9 immigrant, and we just heard testimony today about
10 what is so important for our immigrant communities
11 especially the Chinese community. It's growing in
12 population, and I think we're going to--

13 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing] Right.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --the Chinese
15 community, the Korean community those are next in
16 line, and--and who we're going to see in our senior
17 centers. How are you preparing for that?

18 RHONDA SILVERMAN: We are always trying
19 to understand the needs of our community, and always
20 through a variety of, you know, going out and--and
21 speaking to the people who live in the community,
22 doing service and things like that. Keeping our
23 finger on the pulse of what the needs are, and that's
24 how we are preparing for it, and we applying for
25 monies through City Council and philanthropic
organizations, and trying to find every which way we

3 can to get the needed services that the community
4 needs at any given time.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] So--

6 RHONDA SILVERMAN: We-we--it's not cookie
7 cutter here. Every community has different needs,
8 and at different points in time, and we really need
9 to be respectful of what those needs are. So we are
10 always in that phase of understanding what's going
11 on, and trying to meet that need.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So you're
13 analyzing, you're--

14 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing] Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and you're
16 advocating for more funding and that's kind of
17 preparing--

18 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing]
19 Analyzing, advocating and being very pushy. People
20 don't like to do that.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, good. You
22 need that.

23 RHONDA SILVERMAN: I'm--I'm trying to not
24 take like--
25

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Well,
4 again we're going to--I think we're going to be
5 asking everyone to--

6 RHONDA SILVERMAN: [interposing] Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --to increase the
8 needs (sic) on that.

9 RHONDA SILVERMAN: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much.

11 RHONDA SILVERMAN: Yes, thank you very
12 much for giving us this opportunity to speak today.
13 We really appreciate it.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you for being
15 here. I just wanted to remind you the Preliminary
16 Budget for Aging is next Friday, right, and I
17 encourage you to come because there's a public
18 session right after. So please check the calendar
19 and please come back. [Speaking Chinese] Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: All right, next
21 Friday, we'll see you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [laughs]

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I want to say
24 [Speaking Chinese] Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, next we want to
call up Susanna Levitt from the Shorefront Y and

3 Bella--I'm not sure I go the last name, Artmanchek
4 (sic). Yes, and Boris Brute is going to provide the
5 translation. Sasha Kesler from UJA-Federation; Anita
6 Altman and--oh, okay. Also from UJA-Federation.
7 [pause, background comments] Oh, okay. [pause] You
8 have to press the button, and please identify
9 yourself--

9 ANITA ALTMAN: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --for the record.

11 ANITA ALTMAN: My name is Anita Altman,
12 and I am consultant to UJA-Federation. Good morning,
13 Chairpersons Chin and Menchaca and the members of the
14 Council's Aging and Immigration Committees. I am
15 appearing before you as a consultant, although for
16 over 20 years as UJA-Federation staff person I
17 testified many, many times before the Council on the
18 issue of NORCs. I want to express our great
19 appreciation for the opportunity presented by this
20 joint hearing to shine a light on the needs of the
21 large and rapidly growing numbers of New York City
22 foreign born seniors, and the potential for NORC
23 supportive services programs particularly
24 Neighborhood NORC programs to help address their
25 needs. But first a little history. New York City

3 has a robust, NORC supportive service program because
4 of the leadership provide in 1999 by the Speaker of
5 this City Council Peter Vallone who with the support
6 of his council members and the Mayor included \$4
7 million in the City Budget that established what is
8 now known as the Classic NORC Program. The City's
9 Classic NORC Program currently provides \$6.5 million
10 of funding for supportive service programs where
11 housing has common ownership. And that really is the
12 definition of what the Classic Program is. It's in
13 housing where there is common ownership. Typically
14 those that are under the auspices of New York City
15 Housing Authority, moderate income, limited equity
16 co-ops, and in a few instances large privately owned
17 rental properties like Sarat (sic) City and
18 Parkchester. The Neighborhood or NNORC program model
19 was developed in response to the profound aging in of
20 communities where there was no common ownership of
21 the housing. Namely, communities of privately owned
22 homes and low-rise apartment buildings. Communities
23 with this housing stock are often more challenging to
24 organize since there is no formal boundary defining
25 the community, nor is there a central authority like
a housing management to work with. More than ten

3 years ago, the New York State Legislature established
4 and funded a Neighborhood NORC program. Today, there
5 are seven state funded Neighborhood NORC programs
6 here in New York City, the majority of which serves
7 significant foreign born elder community, a number of
8 which including Chinatown NORC program, and you'll
9 hear from Shorefront, and I know that Besonhurst is
10 here as well, and--and also NORC-WOW out in Northeast
11 Queens. So, you'll be hearing from their on-the-
12 ground experience of what it has meant to be able to
13 organize and operate such programs. Drawing from
14 their success and effectively engaging, organizing
15 and providing critically necessary services to these
16 communities, we are urging that the New York City
17 Council working with the Administration establish and
18 funding a New York City Neighborhood NORC Program of
19 at least \$4 million, which is comparable to what was
20 done now nearing almost 20 years ago. I mean more
21 would be better but, you know, I don't want to be too
22 greedy. We believe that if a New York City NORC
23 Program was established that it has the potential to
24 serve many more aged in communities of foreign born
25 seniors. We know that these seniors who in a short
time will be the majority of New York City seniors

3 are living in even more challenging circumstances
4 than many of our native born, as reflected in the
5 startling facts published by the Center for the Urban
6 Future in their July 2013 report, *The Face of New*
7 *York Seniors*. And I don't know if you want me to for
8 time's sake to go through some of the stats, but they
9 really are eye opening. Currently, I know that
10 City and DFTA said that there--that immigrants are
11 already a majority. But according to this report
12 from two years ago, they make up 46% of the total
13 senior population, but are the fastest growing.
14 You'll see I brought a map of Queens. What we have
15 done over--since actually 1998 were--we were able to
16 commission the--the mapping of census data on map
17 software--the software was developed that enabled us
18 to do this. And so for the last--for the '90 census,
19 the 2000 and 2010, we have produced these maps and I
20 have copies that should accompany my--my testimony.
21 What we decided to do since the focus of this is
22 really on the foreign born is to overlay information
23 on seniors who are foreign born, and they are
24 indicated by those large blue dots. Those are the
25 areas of the heaviest concentration, and it's
overlaid on our north maps, which indicate where

3 there are heavy concentration of seniors. I have
4 copies of maps of each of the boroughs that I will
5 provide to you as well. Then, I think that maps are
6 an incredibly important tool in at least beginning to
7 identify where we need to look for setting some
8 priorities for service programs. So--

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Can you sum up your
10 testimony?

11 ANITA ALTMAN: Yes. So I'm not going to
12 go through all of this, but because you already know
13 that there is such major issues. What the state
14 funded NORC program has been able to organize onsite
15 in communities of densely aged and foreign born
16 elders are programs are both linguistically
17 accessible and culturally appropriate. Community
18 organizing and building partnerships are central to
19 the NORC program model. Professional institutions--
20 professional service agencies working in partnership
21 with the seniors and their communities' cultural,
22 service and religious institutions to identify need
23 as well the community's aspirations for what living a
24 better life looks like. We believe that the existing
25 state funded programs have much that they can share
with other communities wanting to organize their own

3 programs. The current--the Council heard us two
4 years ago when we began discussing the potential of
5 this program model to help address--address the needs
6 and aspirations of New York City's foreign born
7 elders. You provided discretionary funding for some
8 planning studies and operating support for
9 neighborhood programs, which had been ineligible to
10 participate in DFTA's RFP, which was limited only to
11 Classic NORCs. I know that last year additional
12 funds were provided to help support critically needed
13 nursing services at Neighborhood NORCs. We are very
14 grateful for this much needed support, but hope that
15 you will recognize that there are real limitations
16 within annually appropriated discretionary funding.
17 Without knowing if funds will be available from one
18 year to the next, agencies are hindered in their
19 ability to commit resources and build programs. We
20 believe that it is important for the integrity of the
21 program that Neighborhood NORCs Supportive Service
22 Programs become a formal program of DFTA's, which
23 would then be responsible for formulation criteria
24 and standards, issuing an RFP so that funding is
25 awarded on a competitive basis and that agency
oversight and program support is provided. While

3 NORCs Supportive Service Programs are not the
4 solution for all aging communities, we do know that
5 the State's program--from the State's program that
6 the Neighborhood NORC program has proven to be a
7 remarkably appropriate approach to helping address
8 the many issues and challenges that foreign born
9 seniors in the city are confronting. We do hope that
10 you will be able to help us secure community funding
11 for this Neighborhood NORC Support Service Program in
12 the 2017 City Budget so that many more of New York
13 City's foreign born seniors can move with greater
14 security and support as a result of this program.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Next.

17 [background noise, pause]

18 SASHA KESLER: Hi. Good morning Council
19 Member Chin and Council Member Menchaca, and to the
20 staff of the Aging and Immigration Committees. My
21 name is Sasha Kesler and I work at UJA-Federation as
22 Government Relations Associate. Thank you very much
23 for the opportunity to testify this morning, and for
24 bringing attention to the unique and essential role
25 that Classic NORCs and Neighborhood NORCs can play in
serving immigrant seniors in New York City. Before I

3 begin, I want to give a big thank you to the Center
4 for the Urban--Center for Urban Future for the
5 research that has really been foundational in helping
6 us to understand the unique experience of immigrant
7 seniors in New York City. According to the Center
8 for an Urban Future's July 2013 Report, *The New Face*
9 *of New York's Seniors* the population of seniors
10 particularly immigrant seniors is growing rapidly.
11 The number of New York City's residents age 65 and
12 over is set to increase 35% from approximately 998,000
13 as of July 2013 to 1.3 million by 2030. There are
14 463,000 older immigrant residents, which constitutes--
15 --as of 2013 constituted 46% of the City's total
16 senior population, and the growth rates indicate that
17 the immigrant senior population will be majority of
18 the population in as little as five years. In 21 out
19 of the city's 55 census defined neighborhoods,
20 immigrants already account for the majority of the
21 senior population. In Queens, this is true for 10
22 out of 14 of the neighborhoods. And while poverty
23 and isolation is prevalent amongst all seniors,
24 immigrant seniors face unique challenges including
25 limited retirement savings, ineligibility for entola-
-entitlement services, and limited English language

3 access. According to the Center for an Urban Future
4 the median income for immigrant seniors in New York
5 is \$8,000 lower per year than native born seniors.
6 And for those living in households with two or more
7 people, this disparity grows to nearly \$40,000 per
8 year. Nearly 130,000 immigrant seniors in the city
9 or 24% of the total population are living in poverty
10 compared to only 69--not to only 69,000 but compared
11 to 69,000 or 15% of native born seniors. Older
12 immigrants comprise 46% of all seniors in New York,
13 but 65% of all seniors living in poverty. And
14 furthermore, in New York City nearly two-thirds of
15 immigrants reside--residents age 65 or older have
16 limited English profic--proficiency while nearly
17 200,000 or 35--37% live in linguistically isolated
18 households. And this was testified by the members of
19 the Chinatown Neighborhood NORC earlier. As a result
20 of these language and cultural barriers, many older
21 immigrants have trouble finding out about existing
22 support services, and are much more likely than their
23 native born counterparts to suffer from isolation,
24 loneliness and depression. Classic NORCs and
25 Neighborhood NORCs have a vital role to play in
ensuring that seniors are able to age in place with

3 dignity. New York sitter--New York City is
4 considered one of the best places to age in place
5 through the easy access to public transportation,
6 basic necessities and community resources nearby.
7 And while NORCs in Manhattan are able to effectively
8 serve both native born and immigrant seniors, there
9 are significant concentrations of foreign born
10 seniors that are not services by NORCs or
11 Neighborhood NORCs, and often lack the services to
12 effectively age in place. While we're grateful for
13 the city's investment of \$4 million in 1999--as Anita
14 pointed out almost 20 years ago--to build a city-
15 funded Classic NORCs program, it is essential that
16 the city equally invest in building a Neighborhood
17 NORCs program to ensure that all seniors whether
18 foreign born or native born are able to be served by
19 the NORC model and successfully age in place. And
20 the City Council has been a leader in funding NORCs
21 and Neighborhood NORCs, but ultimately we know that a
22 baselined investment is essential towards ensuring
23 permanent services. And just to--to use Council
24 Member Menchanca's words, we at UJA and as part of
25 this coalition and of advocates who are for NORCs and
Neighborhood NORCs, we are sounding the alarm. We

3 are ready to turn up the heat because we want to
4 obtain equal if not greater funding for a
5 Neighborhood NORCs program to serve immigrant seniors
6 in New York City. So thank you very much for the
7 opportunity to testify today, and UJ Federation
8 works--looks forward to working in partnership to
9 expand Classic NORCs and neighbor--in New York City
10 and to build a Neighborhood NORCs program. Thank
11 you.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Next.

13 SUSANNA LEVIT: [off mic] My name is
14 Susanna Levit.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, she just should--
16 -Susanna, push the button.

17 SUSANNA LEVIT: Thank you. Sorry. My
18 name is Susanna Levit, and I am a Director of
19 Immigrant and Family Services at Shorefront Y.
20 Today, I would like to briefly discuss the importance
21 of NORC program in addressing the needs of Elderly
22 Immigrant Federation throughout New York City and
23 South Brooklyn where our NORC is located. I would
24 like to thank Margaret Chin, Chair of the Aging
25 Committee and Chair Carlos Menca--Menchaca, and the
members of the committee for the opportunity to

3 testify today, and all of the commendable efforts
4 that serve many towards encouraging supportive
5 services for senior situations. It has been 30 years
6 since we founded the expressed (sic) NORC program--
7 you--it will be an exaggeration to say that over this
8 period the program has changed hearts and minds of
9 thousands of individuals living in this country. It
10 is hard to estimate--or estimate the importance of
11 NORC program. They have successfully fostered health
12 and safety without a doubt. Help them create and
13 sustain a sense of place without sheer social
14 relationship. I am sure, but you know, that an
15 increasing number of New York City older adults are
16 living in poverty. In addition, we are facing the
17 challenge of aging of the city's immigrant
18 population. At present, in New York City the
19 majority of immigrant seniors have lower income, much
20 less in retirement savings and far fewer benefits
21 from traditional entitlements program. They also
22 typically reside in culturally and linguistically
23 accelerated households. I strongly believe that many
24 of you will agree that the argument that we see this
25 NORC programs as key towards addressing the complex
public issue, but bring it together with service

3 delivery, assistance with healthcare management, and
4 community driven efforts. Shorefront Y serves a
5 predominantly immigrant community that serves diverse
6 cultures, ethnicities and religions. Surrounding
7 Shorefront Y is our neighborhood Naturally Occurring-
8 -Occurring Retirement Communities, the NORC, right on
9 the ocean. The majority of older adults residing in
10 the NORC designated area are low income immigrant
11 centers. Many of them are Russian speaking
12 immigrants from the former Soviet Union, the second
13 poorest immigrants population in New York City. For
14 the most part, they have no in education (sic) in
15 English language skills, live alone and provide care
16 for their grandchildren. Our NORC program offers
17 numbers initiations (sic) to support their members
18 and change their quality of life from aging in lace,
19 and ensure that they will stay independent in their
20 homes and achieve maximum potential. We focus our
21 welfare on minimize on minimizing their social rate
22 salvation and promoting their education and community
23 building. We also work practically to identify major
24 health concerns in the community, and we improve the
25 health status of older adults residing in Brighton
Beach area. As part of our NORC program, we have

3 provided services to almost 1,200 individuals. For
4 quite a number of them the Shorefront Y has become a
5 home, a place that encourage just brunt (sic) of the
6 community and services. On a daily basis our staff
7 when providing assistance to individuals who depend
8 on this including those who are unable to leave their
9 homes. Among other things, we help them to apply for
10 and maintain government benefits, address their vital
11 health, safety and medical care issues, provide
12 socialization and wellness if that is needed. (sic)
13 Our commitment to the work we do is strong, and our
14 goals are different. We truly believe that we will
15 be able to continue our operation for the benefit of
16 those in need. We greatly appreciated your support,
17 and here with me today is Director of NORC and one of
18 the representatives of the Advisory Committee of our
19 NORC, Bella Artmanchek (sp?)

20 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: Try not to move here.

21 [bell] Good morning. [speaking foreign language]

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [interposing] Can you
23 put the mic closer to you?

24 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: Okay.

25 TRANSLATOR: Okay. Be sure it's right.

3 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
4 language]

5 TRANSLATOR: For quite some time I have--
6 I've serving as a volunteer at Shorefront Y, which is
7 located at--right in the Brighton Beach area.

8 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
9 language]

10 TRANSLATOR: The NORC program is a very
11 important program located at Shorefront Y.

12 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
13 language]

14 TRANSLATOR: [speaking foreign language]

15 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: And this program was
16 founded in 2007 and became--and brought many benefits
17 to the senior population in Brighton Beach.

18 TRANSLATOR: And I would say that the
19 whole life of our community was utilized.

20 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
21 language]

22 TRANSLATOR: For--for example we talk
23 about wellness. We have worked with the NORCs on the
24 boardwalk.

25 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
language]

3 TRANSLATOR: We have a chess club and
4 computer club.

5 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
6 language]

7 TRANSLATOR: We also have a swimming pool
8 at Shorefront Y, and for those individuals who are
9 unable to leave their homes, we have a social worker
10 and the nurse who visits them at their home.

11 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
12 language]

13 TRANSLATOR: The social worker helps to
14 handle letters and art implementation at home for
15 those who--again for those who are unable to leave
16 their homes.

17 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
18 language]

19 TRANSLATOR: Additionally, the most
20 problem is tourists, concerts, and visits to
21 theaters--

22 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
23 language]

24 TRANSLATOR: --computer classes.

25 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: Uh-huh.

3 TRANSLATOR: Again.

4 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
5 language]

6 TRANSLATOR: Additionally, there is
7 strong efforts on civic life in the community, and
8 one of the examples, which I'd like to mention here
9 is the engagement after Hurricane Sandy when the
10 employees of the Shorefront Y, and in particular the
11 NORC program helped the seniors in the community.

12 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
13 language]

14 TRANSLATOR: There was a headquarters for
15 support. It was established at the Shorefront Y, and
16 of the staff of the--of the program helped the
17 seniors by providing food, heaters and--

18 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [interposing]
19 [speaking foreign language]

20 TRANSLATORS: --necessary supplies to
21 those who needed them at that time.

22 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
23 language]

24 TRANSLATOR: The--my--the majority of the
25 receipt in service program are people who are left
without their husbands or wives so basically we do

3 it, and for them the program offers and important
4 opportunity to come to a come to a specific place,
5 and not to feel isolated by staying at home. So this
6 places offers them some--some opportunity for
7 socialization.

8 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [speaking foreign
9 language]

10 TRANSLATOR: For--for me, and for many
11 representatives of our community, we honestly believe
12 that this is a very important program, and for many
13 of us, I would say for the majority of us, that this
14 program offers the opportunity to come to Shorefront
15 Y and not to feel isolated in our homes.

16 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: Thank you.

17 TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you very much
19 for coming, and we really thank you for your
20 testimony. I think you're really adding a very
21 important voice about the Neighborhood NORC because
22 in the Council two years ago we were trying to help
23 save some of the NORC program because of the funding
24 cut, but I think from all the discussion that you are
25 bringing forth that we really should seriously think
about really getting the city to help establish this

3 program, and--and establish the funding stream, and
4 not just rely on the state. So I think I really
5 thank you for making us aware in terms of how
6 important the Neighborhood NORC program is.

7 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: [off mic] Thank you.

8 SUSANNA LEVIT: Thank you.

9 [background comments]

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I want to add
11 to that reality that it was an important thing to
12 hear from you, and please remind me of your name.
13 I'm sorry.

14 TRANSLATOR: Bella.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Phillip?

16 TRANSLATOR: Bella.

17 BELLA ARTMANCHEK: Bella.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Bella.

19 TRANSLATOR: Bella.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Bella. It's Bella.

21 Thank you so much for your testimony today because
22 what you continue to remind us in this conversation
23 while we're fighting and advocating for
24 repositioning, and you can also translate in a little
25 bit. I'll keep it short. You reminded us how much
positive impact our--our immigrant seniors are.

3 They're not just a group of people who need things.
4 They're a group of people who have life and pursuits
5 for their community as well, and Sandy is a perfect
6 example, and--and I know the work that--that they did
7 in--in Shorefront, well in Brighton Beach
8 specifically because I was in Red Hook, and we did a
9 lot of work in solidarity with some of our south--
10 south Brooklyn communities, and you have the model.
11 I--I think that out of many of the communities it was
12 the seniors in Brighton Beach that came out in--in
13 force because they were organized. That's what we're
14 protecting here. We're not just trying to--to--to
15 bring services between one group and another group.
16 We're--we're preserving the fabric of our communities
17 that respond to crisis moments. And back to--I'm
18 sorry. All my names are out. Ms. Sasha Kesler.
19 Thank you. Sorry. Yeah, we are going to get--have
20 to get fired up and I'm--I'm--I'm glad that, that
21 came up in every few parts of the testimony because
22 that's what we're going to need to do. And just like
23 we responded to Sandy, we're going to have to do the
24 same thing here because we are in a crisis moment.
25 It's not in the forms of water and surge, it's--it's
about--it's about the moving beyond 50% of immigrant-

3 -of our seniors, and I'm hoping we can get ideas from
4 you and energy, and showing up. And even if we can't
5 bring the seniors here, let's bring those voices up
6 in our communities, and so how sounding the alarm
7 together. Thank you.

8 SASHA KESLER: We're on board. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I'm going to call up
11 the next panel. Howard Shih from the Asian-American
12 Federation. Mohammed Razvi from COPA. [pause] Are
13 there anyone else that wants to testify? Please make
14 sure you fill out a sheet--a slip. We have one more
15 panel after this. Howard, do you want to start?

16 HOWARD SHIH Okay. Thank you to the
17 Committee for Aging and the Committee for Immigration
18 for convening this hearing. I am Howard Shih
19 Director of Research and Policy at the Asian-American
20 Federation. The Federation's mission is to raise the
21 influence and wellbeing of the Pan Asian-American
22 community through research, policy advocacy, public
23 awareness and organizational development. I think
24 we've already heard today that, you know, the Asian--
25 the Asian portion of the senior population is the
fastest growing, and it's in our--it's in my written

3 testimony, and we've seen highlights where poverty is
4 really high in the Asian senior community, language--
5 English ability is really low, and the population is
6 also spreading throughout the city. We see that
7 Asians are now 10% of over half of the City Council
8 districts in the city. So what I wanted to--to
9 highlight is-- Well, first of all, this year we will
10 be issuing a report on the Asian seniors, and so we
11 will be glad to share it with--with you those--the
12 results of that report will be coming out in the next
13 couple of months. But I think what we wanted to talk
14 about is more about, you know, the reason a lot of
15 Asians are aging in place in the city is that the
16 city provides a lot of different excellent services
17 through our member agencies. But our member agencies
18 are facing a lot of--of constraints in terms of the
19 resources that they're getting from city, state and
20 private sources. And so, and they need additional
21 resources because the agency and population is
22 growing really fast. And so, one of the things I
23 also wanted to highlight is in the report last year
24 released in May 2015, we looked at how city social
25 service funding was going to the Asian community.
And I wanted to highlight that, you know, between

3 fiscal year 2002 and 2014, the Asian community got
4 only 2.7% of the total contract dollars from DFTA,
5 and 3.7% of the total number of contracts. But I
6 also want to say that DFTA has been really responsive
7 since the release of that report, and we've been glad
8 to work with them in improving the amount of
9 resources that are delivered to, and now I think
10 we'll talk about some of the opportunities that he's
11 gotten through--through some of the additional
12 funding. To sort of address the NORC and the
13 Neighborhood NORC models, I think these are
14 potentially innovative ways to deliver services to
15 Asian seniors. But we also want to recommend that
16 the city keep in consideration when they choose to
17 renew or expand or even initiate these--these new
18 programs some of these ideas that we have. We want
19 to advocate for the opportunity to create more
20 Neighborhood NORCs. If you look at the statistics,
21 Asian seniors are more likely to live in smaller
22 buildings so they wouldn't meet the requirements for
23 the Classic NORCs in that situation. Sixty percent
24 of Asian seniors live in buildings with less than ten
25 apartments. So that's roughly around where the
Classic--the cutoff point for where the Classic NORC

3 is. While in--in fitting within the Neighborhood
4 NORC requirements, while only 49% of non-Asian
5 seniors lived in those types of buildings. So I
6 think we feel that the Neighborhood NORC model will
7 probably be a better fit for larger parts of the
8 Asian senior community. And as part of the 9/11
9 recovery, we also saw that a lot of Asian led
10 agencies encouraged Asians to apply for public
11 housing and, you know, the waiting lists are 10, 15
12 years. And now we're seeing a lot of Asians moving
13 into public housing. So we urge that NORCs that are
14 located within public housing to start anticipating
15 additional need for--for services for Asian seniors,
16 and to include that in their planning in future RFPs
17 and contracts. They also encourage to city to
18 anticipate the need for senior services in--in the
19 new affordable housing that--that is going to be
20 created, hopefully created. We urge the city to
21 require a set-aside for community spaces within the
22 housing developments to culminate the development of
23 NORCs or other community services. That way we have
24 infrastructure in place in anticipation of needs.
25 And finally, we request increased funding to Asian
organizations. It's something that--to meet the

3 needs of a growing--growing population. As we see the
4 immigration trends, we anticipate that our senior
5 population continue to grow. We're seeing that the
6 first wave of immigration that occurred--occurred
7 during the reforms of 1965. Those immigrants are now
8 aging in--into the population and they're
9 contributing to the growth of the--of the Asian
10 senior population. Thank you for the opportunity to
11 testify.

12 MOHAMMED RAZVI: Good afternoon. My name
13 is Mohammed Razvi (sp?). We run the only and the
14 first senior center in Brooklyn for the Muslim
15 Community, predominantly South Asians and Arabic
16 speaking people. Of the funding that Howard just
17 mentioned the 2.7, we only received .000001%. So it
18 is really nothing. Last year we were very lucky to
19 have \$7,500 from discretionary funds. This year
20 we're even more lucky because we have \$11,000 from
21 discretionary fund, but thank God. As Howard was
22 mentioning the conversation with Council Member Chin
23 and all the efforts, we received guess what, \$75,000
24 this year. All right. It's just a drop in the
25 bucket. What we're requesting is our fair share. As
Howard was mentioning, the Asian population needs

3 their fair share. I'll be very clear. They are
4 wonderful community groups who have done wonderful
5 works. They have wonderful NORCs. I don't even have
6 NORC. I don't even have a senior center. I barely
7 am running a senior program just on the funds that
8 I'm receiving from our donors or our wonderful
9 volunteers who are helping out. We are looking
10 towards very important that, yes, absolutely
11 Neighborhood NORCs for our community as well. But
12 more importantly, I want to share that pie, the big
13 pie that we're all looking at. It's unfortunate--
14 everyone says, oh, you're not experienced yet. It's
15 not like rocket science. We're helping seniors. Our
16 community groups, the new community groups, the new
17 immigrants are helping the community for a long time
18 now. We've been living here, and we are smaller
19 groups, but however, that doesn't mean that it's
20 going to take a master's degree to help these
21 seniors. I understand many groups are saying, oh, we
22 can take you under our wing, and we're going to help
23 you. They do that, but when there's budget cuts, as
24 someone just mentioned, guess who's first to get cut?
25 It's the subcontractors, and then unfortunately these
larger organizations are saved. They're servicing

3 everyone. I'm here to say that they do not service
4 everyone. Just servicing or 10 or 5 or 20 seniors
5 does not mean you serviced all of Chinatown. It does
6 not mean that you serve all of the South Asians or
7 the Pakistani or the Muslim groups. Just because 10
8 people come to you because there's no other place to
9 go, I cannot say that, and I don't think others
10 should say that. I think each community should have
11 their own Neighborhood NORCs, organizations,
12 absolutely, and we can definitely do that. I mean
13 we're very fortunate that the process has started,
14 and more importantly and the policies. I'll--I'll
15 state it again. It's important for the community
16 groups who are subcontractors, the CBOs, not to get
17 cut when there are budget cuts. The larger
18 organizations to take--to take their own cut--own
19 cuts because they get direct--indirect contract
20 funding. But that's where it's at. It's all about
21 the pie, but unfortunately, the seniors we're
22 servicing of the new immigrant seniors that are
23 coming about. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you
25 for testifying. I mean that's why I think in the
last two years, the Council has been advocating for

3 more discretionary funding to support initiatives as
4 we were able to help centers and organizations that
5 support immigrant senior populations and hopefully,
6 we can get the Mayor and the Administration to
7 baseline, and to be able to issue new RFPs that have
8 criteria that target immigrant population and
9 organizations in our community, and that's something
10 that I encourage all of you to come back to the
11 budget hearing, and make your voices heard because
12 those budget hearings are very important, and also to
13 contact the Administration and the Mayor. This is
14 the time. In the next couple of months it's
15 critical. So thank you for being here today, and I
16 look forward to seeing you at the budget hearings.
17 Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Chair.
19 Not so fast. [laughter] I have a couple of
20 questions as well. And again, we need you to come
21 back to the--to the hearings, and just a quick
22 question. On specifically Mr.--Mr. Howard Shih.

23 HOWARDS SHIH: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Did I say that
25 right?

HOWARD SHIH: Yes, you did.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You--you report--
4 you reference a report that yielded the fact of the
5 2.7% of total contracting dollars--

6 HOWARD SHIH: [interposing] Yes/

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --for the Asian-
8 American community.

9 HOWARD SHIH: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can you tell me
11 how--how you--how--how did you--how did you do that?
12 How--how--

13 HOWARD SHIH: [interposing] Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --how did--how
15 does the contract information will now tell you those
16 piece of information?

17 HOWARD SHIH: Right, so what we did is we
18 worked with the Comptroller's Office to get all of
19 the registered contracts for the fiscal years going
20 all the way back to fiscal year 2002--

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
22 Right.

23 HOWARD SHIH: --and we looked at the
24 individual con--we looked at, um, for the different
25 agencies that provide contracts to social service
agencies to identify who the primary contractor is,

3 and whether or not they're Asian led, or for
4 particular mainstream groups if there are programs
5 that we knew we're servicing the majority Asian
6 community. For example, Educational Alliance has a
7 childcare program within Chinatown, and we know that
8 while they are mainstream organizations, that is
9 almost 90%, you know, Chinese.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right.

11 HOWARD SHIH: So then we--we counted that
12 as service in the Asian community. So then we just
13 tallied up the totals and we got it.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, it's--it's
15 looking now at the leadership of your organization,
16 and then also service--service populations. So
17 either or--

18 HOWARD SHIH: [interposing] Yeah, either
19 or.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --well you
21 calculated that. (sic)

22 HOWARD SHIH: Yeah. Well, I mean, it's--
23 looking at organizations that are primary, the
24 mission is to service the Asian community and
25 counting those and then adding in also the mainstream

3 organizations that have programs that are devoted to--
4 --that end up serving Asians--primarily Asians.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great. That's
6 super helpful, and I think we can work together in
7 looking at the analysis deeper as we--as we look at
8 the--the data that we're getting out of this--this
9 particular hearing. And Mr. Razvi, you mention--by
10 the way, I agree, fair share is where we--we got to
11 go, and I'm really excited about--about the
12 experiments this Council is doing. Both Council
13 Member Chin and I participate in something called
14 participatory budgeting where we're really
15 rethinking. This is just the beginning, by the way,
16 but we're really rethinking that question about how
17 our communities can represent themselves in the
18 budget. We're doing it right now with capital, but I
19 see a future, a future where we can actually go into
20 budgets in the city agencies, and begin to influence
21 it with just sheer force of participation from our
22 communities. So that everyone can actually help
23 shape those--those budget priorities. So just know
24 that it's on its way, and we're going to need your
25 help to that. I invite you to come to Sunset Park
and we have Big Boat Week coming up in March. I'd

3 love for you to kind of be in the mix of it, and see
4 how you--how it kind of talks to you. But beyond
5 fair share subcontracts, you mention large contracts
6 should not have policies--should have policies to not
7 cut subcontractors with budget cuts. And nobody
8 wants a budget cut, but then how--how do you--how do
9 you propose we do it, or they do it?

10 MOHAMMED RAZVI: So the most important
11 thing is when there are large contracts, there's an
12 indirect cost each agency gets. It's up to 10%. If
13 it's a \$200,000 contract and it's about \$20,000, and
14 if there's a budget cut of 5%, they should take out
15 over \$10,000, not out of, you know, a contract, which
16 a--a subcontractor has \$5,000 or \$8,000, and he's
17 providing--he or she is providing the service. Most
18 importantly, these are the small subcontracts
19 organizations that are providing the translation
20 services. Well, that's a service.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right. So I got
22 it. So you're--you're saying instead of just taking
23 that--because it's easier to--to like--to look at
24 subcontractors and say we have five. Just get rid of
25 one of them, and instead do a different--kind of
force a different conversation around how they cut it

3 so that essential services along the pipeline of--of
4 work that comes from the main contractor's
5 subcontract, it doesn't remove some of the essential
6 stuff.

7 MOHAMMED RAZVI: Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I like that. It's
9 a good idea. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. I'm going
11 to call up the next, the final panel. From the
12 Jewish Community House, Faye Levine and please help
13 me out with this name. Regina

14 REGENIA GRAUFRIGEN: [off mic]

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Eugenia?

16 REGENIA GRAUFRIGEN: [off mic]

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, Regina Galprin.

18 (sp?)

19 REGENIA GRAUFRIGEN: [off mic]

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Eugenia.

21 REGENIA GRAUFRIGEN: [off mic]

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [laughs] Okay. Karen
23 Chuah (sp?) from Samuel Field Y. Is someone still
24 here from Knickerbocker Senior Center? No. Yin Chu
25 Jao? No. From India House? Lakshman? And we've

3 also been joined by Council Member Treyger from
4 Brooklyn.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [off mic] That--
6 that's the mic. You just got here in time for your
7 constituents. See how it works out? [laughs] Okay,
8 you may begin, and please identify your name for the
9 record.

10 KAREN SCHWAB: Hi. I'm Karen Schwab of
11 Samuel Field Y. I want to thank Councilman Chin and
12 Carlos Menchia for really inviting us. I really--you
13 have my testimony, but I'm really going to make it
14 much shorter. The Samuel Field Y is the first
15 Neighborhood NORC and--and we've had a lot of
16 questions here about how do we make it other
17 communities? How do we do other parts? And I always
18 want to talk about the fact that in all our NORCs, we
19 get two classic NORCs, and we get a Neighborhood
20 NORC. And our--but these are changing. The
21 immigrant population is moving in, not the original
22 part of what NORCs were because they were originally
23 communities that aged in place. But what we're
24 really seeing is people are moving into the NORC
25 areas especially in our Classic NORCs because they--
there is a NORC there. And so, people are moving in

3 so they can get the services. So those are the two
4 Classic NORCs. Our Neighborhood NORCs are in single-
5 family homes and two-family homes. Those communities
6 have aged in place. Their children have bought homes
7 in that area, and because of the immigrant community
8 being multi-generational, we're seeing a very large
9 influx in our Neighborhood NORC community of
10 Southeast Asian. And so what we're seeing and I've
11 seen is a radical change in who we're serving, and
12 how we're serving them. And so, we've created new
13 partnerships with the houses of worship, especially
14 with translation services because all the programs
15 obviously are financially limited. I thank the
16 Council for really providing service--the support for
17 our NORC-WOW program because with city programs it
18 didn't qualify for a city RFP. And so what we're
19 seeing is we're trying to draw upon all the resources
20 of all the community and all the community programs
21 to help us work together to really provide the
22 services whether it's in the NORC program. Whether--
23 I supervise our senior center as well, and we're
24 seeing a large immigrant population moving in that
25 community. So that as--you know, DFTA spoke and
several other people spoke, NORCs are a very

3 important service, but maybe it's the only one that
4 we need to do. We need to see how can we work
5 together really to serve what our communities are
6 starting to look like, and they keep changing day by
7 day. So I thank you and I thank you for giving me
8 the opportunity to speak.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you for being
10 here.

11 [background noise, pause]

12 FAYE LEVINE: Okay, hi. I'm Faye Levine,
13 Director of Social Services at the Edith and Carl
14 Marks Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst, also
15 known as the Marks JCH. I'd like to thank Council
16 Member Chin and Council Member Menchaca, and all the
17 committee members, and so glad that our--our leaders
18 Council Member Treyger has--came in at the right
19 time. [laughs] There are rights of port for--for
20 our program. Thank you, and we also want to thank
21 the City Council for funding the Neighborhood NORC
22 Initiative. It's--the--we're able to support--to
23 provide so many important services. We--the Marks
24 JCH has a Neighborhood NORC called the Good Neighbors
25 NORC in Bensonhurst. We serve a 19-block area of
single-family homes and multiple family dwellings and

3 so forth. And Bensonhurst has been called the second
4 largest immigrant neighborhood in the city according
5 to the Newest New Yorkers 2013. So our Neighborhood
6 NORC provides very vital services to immigrant
7 seniors and all the seniors in the NORC area. We
8 received state funding since 2007. Since--since the
9 beginning, we've reached over 1,300 seniors, and we
10 currently serve over 700 NORC residents. Seventy-
11 four percent are immigrants. In--in our community
12 our--our folks speak Russian, Chinese, English,
13 Spanish, Italian and other languages as--as well. We
14 know immigrant seniors are a vulnerable--a
15 vulnerable--I'm sorry--population needing support.
16 They face the language barrier. They don't know
17 their rights, what's even available. They don't know
18 what to ask. We help--we provide comprehensive
19 services in the agency. We do home visits, case
20 management. We have a nurse--nurses. We work with
21 Metropolitan Jewish Health System, and because the
22 service is flexible, the program is flexible, and
23 with the City Council funding, we're able to expand
24 and provide limited hours of housekeeping, personal
25 care, handyman. Even this year we started haircuts
for men and women for homebound seniors, and this

3 really helps the seniors to age in place in the
4 community. Our staff is culturally spent--sensitive.
5 We speak Russian, Cantonese, and--and Mandarin, and--
6 and English. We have--our services are provided in
7 the three main languages. Our newsletters are
8 outreach materials. We have group activities and
9 health promotion program in the three major
10 languages. We'll have tea talks for Chinese members.
11 We developed learning English through singing group
12 for predominantly Russian. We also have this Warm
13 Home program where we bring seniors that are living
14 close to each other together in someone's apartments.
15 Okay, and lastly I want to again thank you, and the--
16 the fact that the money is discretionary, as other
17 people have mentioned, that it's--it's--it's a
18 challenge. We--we have to let some staff go on June
19 30th, and we did not have funding, and we find out
20 later in the fiscal year, and we really appreciate it
21 if the--if you can make your decisions earlier when
22 it comes to the NORC [laughs] and hopefully in the
23 future for the funding to be baselined. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you.

25 FAYE LEVINE: Okay. [background comments]

If I can just--

3 Maybe you can hear me without it.

4 FAYE LEVINE: No, no, no. [off mic]

5 Okay, here.

6 But she can hear it.

7 FAYE LEVINE: Junior. (sic) [laughs]

8 REGENIA GRAUFRIGEN: Okay, good

9 afternoon. I think. My name is Regina Graufrigen

10 (sp?) I am immigrant from Russia from the Ukraine. A

11 long time ago I used to work in America for 20 years

12 and then the day when I stopped to work I was 72

13 years old. And I came home and I thought that my

14 life was finished because I cannot stand it without

15 people. I cannot live only by own life. My children

16 they work. My grandchildren they work. They left me

17 and I am alone in Brooklyn. I have Social Security

18 and this and no other help. When it comes--when I'm

19 coming to NORC, I decided I want here in NORC. I

20 feel that I am person that somebody needs me, and

21 they help me get this sort of life. Half a year ago,

22 it happened, an accident a car hit me, and when I

23 wake--when I wakes up in the hospital, I was with a

24 broken leg, with broken ribs--and ribs and other

25 injuries. My daughter took me to her house. She's

not in New York, and I used to stay with her for a

3 month, because I was finally feels at home. And then
4 I cannot stay any more by them, and to keep them so
5 dependent on my health, I came home. The first day--
6 only one night I was at home, and then the people
7 from NORC, the two ladies just staying with them they
8 came to me and they quickly organized everything from
9 organization of who can help me. And then I received
10 the lady that she was with me three days ago to help
11 me at home because I cannot move. It was a person
12 from Metropolitan Jewish Health system, and she came
13 three or four times today--a week, and helped me to
14 meet--to make exercise and finally--finally I start
15 to be on myself. But it's not at all. Again, if I
16 wouldn't be--without help that NORC organized for me
17 the lady that she's coming giving now to help me, I
18 wouldn't be today here, and I cannot tell them. I
19 cannot tell to you guys what has happened for me, and
20 how really I am depends to this organization, and not
21 only me. I know a lot of people in our communities
22 that they are asking how to become a member of NORC
23 because they live far away from NORC. [laughs] And
24 again--again, I would like to tell them thanks, a lot
25 of thanks, and I hope that they going to stay for
forever. [laughs]

3 FAYE LEVINE: [off mic] Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you very much,
5 and I'm glad you're healthy. I'm glad you're liking
6 it. [laughter] Good. So, next from India House?
7 [background comments] You want to move the mic over?

8 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI: Okay. [background
9 noise, pause] Hello. Thank you Council Member Chin
10 and Council Member Menchaca for giving me the
11 opportunity to testify. I--I'm from India Home.

12 We're a non-profit serving South Asian seniors with
13 the senior centers programs, occasional activities
14 and advocacy activities since 2008. We were started
15 by immigrants, staffed mostly by immigrants, served
16 again immigrants, and we're here because as Howard
17 Shih and Mohammed Razvi said, there are really very
18 few dollars going to support senior services for
19 South Asians or Asian-Americans all over New York
20 City. We are primarily based in Queens and we serve
21 a whole variety of South Asian communities on the
22 basic families, (sic) and know their needs. And
23 these communities are consistently overlooked, and
24 immigrant communities have a unique need due to--to
25 offset the multi-generational housing, and so on.

And so we--we are ready to start NORCs for the South

3 Asian community, culturally appropriate services. I
4 wish Ms. Resnick and Ms. Taylor were here because
5 there is a lot of community organizing and grassroots
6 organizing that's happening within the South Asian
7 community all over Queens and, of course, New York
8 City in places of worship, in community centers, very
9 informally. When we served at our senior centers in
10 2008, we just could not keep up with the demand. And
11 so we are constantly approached by the Punjabi groups
12 and Guyanese groups, the Shia Movement groups to
13 start programs for their communities and until the
14 past two years, we were largely run by community
15 donations. And thanks to the initiative of Council
16 Member Chin for the--with the immigrant senior
17 centers from the grant--Populations Fund, we did
18 receive a very sizable funding for--to continue our
19 programs for--our existing programs, but we're really
20 unable to keep up with the needs without support from
21 the City Council and DFTA. We do proposed to provide
22 NORC services such medical services, case management,
23 nutrition education, all of these in multiple places
24 because in neighborhood like Eastern Queens, as you
25 can all can attest, people can't--it's not--they're
not as walkable, but people do congregate in places

3 of worship or other hot spots. And also South
4 Queens, too. That unique community is constantly
5 undercounted in census figures, and so the true need
6 of that community is never really felt, and the
7 Bangladeshi community in Jamaica, and Jackson
8 Heights, there--they have very high rates of poverty,
9 and high rates of limited English proficiency. And
10 so, what I'm trying to make clear to the Council and
11 everyone here is that India Home is ready if there is
12 a NORC RFP coming up in three years. And, if there
13 are other initiatives that will come up hopefully
14 sooner like Council Member Vallone mentioned how to
15 get that sooner, we are ready to take that on, and
16 provide these services that are desperately needed
17 for our communities. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, thank you. Thank
19 you for being here, and I welcome you back to the
20 budget hearing, because it's really important to make
21 a strong case about Neighborhood NORC, and also
22 contact, you know, your council member so they know
23 that you want this program. So we got to really
24 build the support now. Chair Menchaca.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [pause] Thank you
again for being here, and [pause] I think my one

3 question for--remind me of your name again.

4 Lakshman.

5 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI Lakshman.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Lakshman?

7 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And in your
9 testimony that you just gave, you talked a little bit
10 about some of that gap between the city agencies, and
11 the city, and Southeast Asian community. Can you
12 talk a little bit about--and--and also that--that
13 you're not getting enough funds. Can you tell me a
14 little bit more about what you think that--what's
15 causing that gap from your perspective, India Home's
16 perspective--

17 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI [interposing] Right.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --but really the
19 analysis that you're bringing to the table today.

20 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI No, just even from
21 our experience, I can attest to the fact that we did
22 not realize that there was City money for these
23 services, and a lot of immigrant communities, whether
24 they are highly educated or not as educated, they
25 just did not--we--like we--we were not familiar with
the fact that we can receive city dollars. In fact,

3 our first discretionary fund from Council Member
4 James Gennaro back in I think 2009, we--his office
5 approached us. We did not now that we can go to our
6 elected officials and--and ask for this kind of
7 funding. And so there really is a lack of knowledge,
8 and that's--that's one of the main things. Now, you
9 know, the word is spreading and there--there are
10 smaller groups that--that say, oh, yeah, maybe we can
11 approach our local council member, or DFTA or so one.
12 But then there's the lack of capacity to actually
13 take on these--the government paperwork and, you
14 know, just having-- Until now, to be honest, all our
15 staff members were fully engaged in the program
16 services and just now are we able to send ne staff
17 members such as myself to these blessed hearings --
18 [laughs]

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

20 Yeah.

21 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI --all the way into
22 Manhattan when we have to go all over Queens from
23 Sunnyside to Glen Oaks to Jamaica, and so it's--it's,
24 one, a lack a knowledge and the secondly a lack of
25 resources and staff time.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that--that
4 what you--that nugget of experience needs to be a
5 major piece of our budget conversations as we move
6 forward in this month of March. The--the concept of--
7 --of more knowledge and awareness, and that's
8 something that we're going to take accountability on
9 as council members and the City of New York needs to
10 take accountability, that's what we need to hear.
11 And so, those are things we can fix, knowledge.
12 Capacity is another thing. It's--it's different, and
13 I think that's where funding comes--comes in, but
14 that that's part of the whole picture, and--and so
15 thank you for being here. We'll lift those voices in
16 the--in the budget hearings, but it's always great to
17 have someone like you here to talk about what--what
18 those gaps are, and how--how there's things that we
19 can do with no funding. And it's just reimagining,
20 repositioning of our roles both of us, and--and then
21 also point to repositioning the funding and the
22 policies that go to organizations like yours, small
23 organizations to build capacity. So thank you. I
24 just--I just wanted--it was worth, very worth you
25 being here. So make sure that you let your
organization know that.

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3 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI Thank you, and I
4 just wanted to say that, you know, even our
5 communities like we don't always approach the
6 government for help, and so that's, you know, there--
7 there is a little blame on our part as well, but, you
8 know, we're--we're here now and so [laughs--

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
10 You're here now.

11 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI --we're ready.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And you're going
13 to start that wild fire in your community. Thank
14 you.

15 LAKSHMAN KALASAPUDI Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member
17 Treyger.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank--thank you
19 to both--both chairs, and certain Chair Menchaca
20 who's been very vocal and aggressive in fighting for
21 immigrant rights, and I thank Chair Chin who has been
22 a champion for seniors, and I--I cannot thank you
23 enough for having this very timely hearing during
24 the--this--the intense start of budget season. I--I
25 just want to just--just add my voice to what we heard
from--from advocates, those in--on the ground and, of

3 course, ACH of Bensonhurst that could speak on a--on
4 a--on a personal level, more--more reasons that one.
5 Certainly, I am part of immigrants myself. My family
6 comes from the Ukraine. So [speaking foreign
7 language] And so, is JCH and groups like them and
8 many of the groups that we--we're hearing from here
9 today, they're also one-stop shops for many, many
10 different things. The JCH for example, it--when--
11 when Hurricane Sandy hit, for example, they--they--
12 they became like a--a crisis relief center to deal
13 with cases of--of people that were displaced, people
14 that needed help and service. You literally and I--I
15 mean this to all of the advocates, all the groups
16 here, you add years to the lives of our seniors. You
17 are a one-stop shop for many of their--of their
18 needs. Certainly connecting them to government
19 services that they never knew. Some immigrants come
20 from countries that where you--you would be strongly
21 discouraged--I'll say it politely--from interacting
22 with government or questioning government. And so
23 many immigrants are fearful especially from--from
24 places where they came from. The former Soviet Union
25 we--we--we speak from experience about that. So,
these organizations do an incredible amount of work

3 even beyond the scope of their contracts that they
4 don't get reimbursed for. So I think that this is a
5 very timely discussion as we enter into budget
6 season. NORCs are--are a great way to--to--to help
7 connect. The government cannot do all this work.
8 You actually add years to their lives, and you make
9 the government's life easier by the work that you do.
10 So I just want to add my voice in support, and
11 Chairs, let's--let's go get them at budget season.
12 We need to help and support our NORCs across the
13 state. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: One again, I want to
15 thank everyone for coming, and remind you the
16 Preliminary Budget Hearing or the Aging Committee is
17 next Friday. So the process begins, and we encourage
18 all of you to actively help us to fight for the
19 resources that we need for our seniors, our
20 immigrant seniors. So thank you and good afternoon,
21 and the hearing now adjourned. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 10, 2016