

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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Fl.

B E F O R E: Margaret S. Chin  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Chaim M. Deutsch  
Daniel Dromm  
Deborah L. Rose  
Diana Ayala  
Mark Treyger  
Mathieu Eugene  
Paul A. Vallone  
Ruben Diaz, Sr.

## A P P E A R A N C E S

Caryn Resnick  
DFTA

Abigail Pick  
UJA Federation New York

Andrea Cianfrani  
LiveOn NY

Tara Klein  
United Neighborhood Houses

Molly Krakowski  
Affairs of JASA

Brenda Gardner  
AARP

PO-Ling NG  
CPC Open Door Senior Center

Rocky Chin  
AARP

Lui Yok Tim  
Hamilton Madison House Senior Center

Edward Ma  
Hamilton Madison House Senior Center

Theodora Ziongas  
Hamilton Madison House Senior Center

1 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good morning.

2 MEMBERS: Good morning.

3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I'm glad everybody got  
4 a seat. I'm Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair of  
5 the Committee on Aging. Thank you for joining us  
6 today for the Committees oversight hearing on Senior  
7 Center Model Food Budgets.  
8

9 The Department for the Aging or DFTA, serve  
10 nearly 30,000 older adults daily at almost 250 senior  
11 center sites. These senior centers provide important  
12 services to older adults including meals, activities,  
13 health management resources, educational programing,  
14 and socialization.

15 According to the National Council on Aging,  
16 seniors who attend senior centers experience  
17 improvement in their social, mental, and economic  
18 wellbeing. Study also shows that seniors who attend  
19 senior centers can learn to manage and even postpone  
20 the beginning of chronic illness. With such  
21 benefits, it is vital that our senior centers are  
22 financially equipped to support their older adult  
23 participant.

24 Sadly, senior center receives different amounts  
25 of funding and are reimbursed at different rates,

1  
2 though the reason why is often unclear. Recognizing  
3 such funding disparities among senior centers, the  
4 Council successfully negotiated with the  
5 Administration to add \$10 million to the baseline  
6 budget to put toward right sizing senior center  
7 budgets beginning in FY 2018.

8 DFTA and the office of Management and Budget or  
9 OMB work together to create a model budget for senior  
10 centers. Both agencies decided to focus the model  
11 budget process on ensuring's that providers have  
12 adequate funding to support programming and direct  
13 staff. Absent from such model budget, however, was  
14 funding for meals. Meals preparation and kitchen  
15 staff.

16 Last year, the Council's Aging Committee held an  
17 oversight hearing on DFTA's senior center model  
18 budgets where the Committee raised concern about  
19 DFTA's Model Senior Center Budget.

20 Unfortunately, many of the issues we raised at  
21 the hearing remain including the Administration's  
22 failure to address food in the Model Budget process.  
23 Food and meals are major drivers of expense and very  
24 quickly between providers.

1  
2 In order to put such discrepancy into  
3 perspective, I would like to share data from a 2018  
4 State Comptroller, Thomas DiNapoli's report.

5 According to the report, while 37 Senior Centers  
6 were provided between \$3-6 per congregate meals, 108  
7 were provided between \$6-9 per congregate meal, 71  
8 were provided between \$9-12 per congregate meal, and  
9 30 were funded for \$12 or more per congregate meal.

10 These are huge gaps and as I stated many times  
11 before, such gaps should have been addressed during  
12 the first face of the Model Budget process.

13 I'm also alarmed that the Model Budget did not  
14 address kitchen staff who work diligently to ensure  
15 that our seniors have meals. Furthermore, the  
16 Administration is adding fuel to the fire by dragging  
17 their feet on the implementation of the Model Food  
18 Budget process.

19 At a March 2018 Aging Committee hearing, then  
20 DFTA Commissioner Donna Corrado testified before the  
21 Committee that DFTA and a consultant Guidehouse were  
22 analyzing food service meal, reimbursement, and how  
23 the administration could modernize food services.

24 The former Commissioner also testified that the food  
25

1  
2 service component and reimbursement for meal should  
3 be addressed in phase 2 of the model budget process.

4 Later, at a June 2018, Aging Committee hearing,  
5 DFTA testified that phase 2 of the model budget  
6 process would be completed by December 2018. It is  
7 now February 27<sup>th</sup> and neither DFTA nor OMB have  
8 released any information on the model food budget  
9 analysis.

10 This is unacceptable. Without immediate action,  
11 we cannot begin a process to provide desperately  
12 needed support to senior center kitchen staff workers  
13 who have been left out of the model budget process  
14 and deserve a living wage.

15 Many senior centers and service providers have  
16 shared stories that attest to the critical role that  
17 kitchen staff play in their center of success and  
18 their seniors health and wellbeing.

19 Many kitchen staff often have to balance several  
20 hats serving as not only the cook, but also the food  
21 delivery, driver, and even dishwasher. One kitchen  
22 service manager at a senior center in midtown oversee  
23 more than 4,400 meals a week. As one center put it,  
24 they work hard to serve our community member in a  
25 safe and efficient manner. They are worthy of a

1  
2 living wage. A model budget process that exclude  
3 this core need is not a model budget at all.

4 At today's hearing the Committee seeks to hear  
5 especially when the second phase of the model budget  
6 process will be completed. The Committee also seek  
7 to learn more about the model budget food budget  
8 analysis and process especially the process DFTA has  
9 made, what data and information they have discovered  
10 during the analysis, if any, and how they have  
11 involved advocates in such process.

12 I would like to thank the Committee Staff for  
13 helping in putting together this hearing. Our Policy  
14 Analyst, Kalima Johnson, Counsel Nuzhat Chowdhury,  
15 and Finance Analyst Daniel Kroop, and Finance Unit  
16 Head, Dohini Sompura and my Legislative Director,  
17 Marian Guerra and I'd like to thank the other member  
18 of the Committee who have joined us today. We have  
19 Council Member Dromm, Council Member Vallone, and  
20 Council Member Eugene.

21 Right now, I'm going to ask the Council Staff to  
22 administer the oath to the panel from the  
23 administration.

24 COUNCIL STAFF: Please raise your right hand. Do  
25 you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and

1  
2 nothing but the truth in your testimony before this  
3 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
4 questions?

5 PANEL: I do.

6 CARYN RESNICK: Good morning, Chairperson Chin  
7 and members of the Aging Committee. I am Caryn  
8 Resnick, Acting Commissioner for the New York City  
9 Department for the Aging. I am joined today by  
10 Michael Bosnick, Deputy Commissioner for the Division  
11 of Planning and Technology. I would like to thank  
12 you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the  
13 topic of senior center model food budgets.

14 We are grateful for the Administration's  
15 partnership with the Council, championed by your  
16 leadership and advocacy, Councilwoman Chin. This  
17 collaboration has led to an increase in DFTA's annual  
18 funding by more than \$90 million, representing 60  
19 percent growth in the agency's City Tax Levy  
20 baselined budget. As a result of this investment we  
21 implemented senior center model budgets with an  
22 additional \$10 million in new baselined funds  
23 beginning in FY'18 for the DFTA portfolio.

24 We stabilized case management staffing through an  
25 infusion of \$7.3 million to provide more competitive



1 salaries, which have helped reduce high turnover  
2 rates, improved service delivery, and ensured  
3 continuity and quality of care.  
4

5 We've doubled DFTA's existing allocation to \$8  
6 million for caregiver programs to provide more  
7 support to caregivers and care receivers with the  
8 creativity and flexibility they need to address these  
9 services.

10 We expanded Multi-Disciplinary Teams comprised of  
11 professionals from Adult Protective Services, law  
12 enforcement, medical centers, financial institutions,  
13 and community-based organizations, through a \$1.5  
14 million increase in baselined funding. These teams  
15 were established in all five boroughs, strengthening  
16 the City's ability to address complex elder abuse  
17 cases in a coordinated fashion and we committed an  
18 additional \$3.2 million increase in DFTA's baseline  
19 budget to focus on geriatric mental health as part of  
20 the suite of groundbreaking initiatives under  
21 ThriveNYC, including one program that embeds mental  
22 health practitioners in senior centers across the  
23 City, and another program that combats social  
24 isolation among homebound older adults.  
25

1  
2 As the largest Area Agency on Aging in the  
3 nation, DFTA currently funds senior centers at 249  
4 sites across the five boroughs at approximately \$150  
5 million annually, serving about 173,000 older New  
6 Yorkers in FY'18. Senior centers provide meals at no  
7 cost to seniors, though modest contributions are  
8 accepted and are completely voluntary, and an  
9 environment where older New Yorkers can participate  
10 in a variety of recreational, health promotional, and  
11 cultural activities, as well as receive counseling on  
12 social services and obtain assistance with benefits.  
13 Each day, 25,000 older adults receive meals at senior  
14 centers, and another 5,000 participate in activities  
15 without taking a meal.

16 All DFTA sponsored senior centers serve food that  
17 meets City and State nutritional standards, and meals  
18 that are culturally relevant to program participants  
19 are available citywide. The majority of senior  
20 centers cook on site, some programs cater, and other  
21 centers prepare meals for other programs.

22 Kosher meal programs are available at senior  
23 centers in all five boroughs. A number of senior  
24 centers in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens serve meals  
25 that are culturally appropriate to their Chinese

1  
2 constituents, including senior centers in Chairperson  
3 Chin's district.

4       In Queens, Korean Community Services of  
5 Metropolitan New York, provides Korean meals at the  
6 DFTA senior center they operate in Flushing in  
7 Council Member Vallone's district, as well as at  
8 another site in Corona.

9       In the Bronx, several senior centers serve  
10 Spanish and Latin American fare, as the preference of  
11 their constituents. Other senior centers offer  
12 Indian, Italian, Southern, and Caribbean meals to  
13 meet constituents' needs. Through cultural sharing  
14 and exchanges enriched by educational programming and  
15 translation services, senior centers foster  
16 sensitivity and appreciation for different cultures  
17 among a diverse membership, which break down cultural  
18 barriers in centers that have undergone demographic  
19 changes.

20       DFTA engaged Fordham University to conduct an  
21 analysis of the impact of participation in senior  
22 center activities on the overall health and well-  
23 being of older New Yorkers. The study followed older  
24 adults who were participants in senior centers, as  
25 well as older adults who had not participated in a

1 senior center for at least one year. Findings  
2 indicated that senior center members are achieving  
3 positive outcomes. Senior center participants  
4 reported improved physical and mental health,  
5 increased participation in health programs, frequent  
6 exercising, and positive behavior change in  
7 monitoring weight and keeping physically active.  
8 Participation in a senior center also helped to  
9 reduce social isolation.  
10

11 The older adult population served by senior  
12 centers are among those with the lowest incomes, the  
13 fewest resources, the poorest health, the greatest  
14 social isolation, and the most need for services.  
15 The findings of this study indicate that senior  
16 centers are attracting this group that has multiple  
17 needs and senior center members experience improved  
18 physical and mental health, not only in the time  
19 period after joining a senior center but maintain or  
20 even continue to improve even one year later. This  
21 is a very important finding, given the decline in  
22 health and social activity in this age group,  
23 especially among those with low incomes. Maintenance  
24 of health and social activity, rather than a decline,  
25 is a major benefit of senior centers.

1  
2 In June 2018, DFTA discussed the senior center  
3 model budget process before this Committee. We  
4 stated that the overarching goal of the initiative is  
5 two-fold; to increase resources to ensure strong  
6 programming across the network of 2489 senior centers  
7 and to increase equity among centers by making more  
8 uniform the level of financial support provided to  
9 each of them.

10 In line with the broader vision of promoting  
11 fairness and equity, the Administration added \$10  
12 million in new baselined funds for the senior center  
13 portfolio starting in FY'18. This significant  
14 investment in the DFTA network was designed to help  
15 create parity in our senior center budgets and  
16 provide adequate funding to achieve an expanded array  
17 of programming across the senior center system.

18 DFTA and the Mayor's Office of Management and  
19 Budget, with input from our network providers and  
20 other stakeholders, conducted a thorough analysis of  
21 the existing line item budgets and spending patterns  
22 across our portfolio of 249 senior centers. As a  
23 result, we identified several characteristics that  
24 exemplify high quality programs, highlighting strong  
25 leadership and staff, as well as a rich array of

1 health and education programming. We then compared  
2 existing budgets to the funding patterns that support  
3 the key attributes of high-quality programs and  
4 calculated the need for each center based on where  
5 their current budgets compare to the model.  
6

7 The model budget reflects that every center needs  
8 adequate funding to provide threshold levels of  
9 quality programming and to pay competitive wages to  
10 attract and retain high quality staff. The network  
11 of 249 senior centers was divided into five groups  
12 based on Average Daily Participants, in recognition  
13 of the fact that there are certain costs that vary  
14 based on the size of a center, such as the need for  
15 modestly more staff to run a very large center  
16 compared to a very small one. At the same time, the  
17 model accounts for certain fixed costs for running a  
18 center, irrespective of Average Daily Participants.

19 The resulting amounts given to each center were  
20 divided between an amount for program staff and  
21 another for programming, based on each center's areas  
22 of need. However, funding remained flexible across  
23 line items within certain parameters. Thus, allowing  
24 centers to identify the most critical needs and  
25 submit proposals accordingly.

1  
2 We are pleased to report that a large number of  
3 providers have told us that the infusion of funding  
4 given to them has made a marked difference in the  
5 levels, types and quality of programming they can  
6 offer. Various centers have used the funds to right  
7 size salaries and bring on board one or more new  
8 staff members to expand and enrich programming.

9 At this time, we are engaged in the second and  
10 final phase of the model budget process, centered on  
11 food and related staff costs. DFTA is working with  
12 stakeholders and with OMB to determine the amount of  
13 funding needed for food purchase and for adequate  
14 members of food staff receiving competitive salaries,  
15 in order to provide high quality meals with cultural  
16 diversity throughout the senior center network.  
17 Though their major focus is on home delivered meals,  
18 we've also engaged Guidehouse, formerly  
19 PricewaterhouseCoopers Public Sector Practice, to  
20 provide additional support to DFTA and OMB's  
21 analysis.

22 I would like to summarize the progress to date.  
23 DFTA has been seeking stakeholder input concerning  
24 food and food costs and held a focus group with  
25 providers this past January. We have received

1  
2 invaluable information and insights from umbrella  
3 organizations involved in aging services, as well as  
4 seniors who attend senior centers.

5       According to the focus group discussion, senior  
6 centers take pride in their ability to deliver  
7 quality, diverse food. New York City has one of the  
8 most diverse population in the country, as well as  
9 some of the highest food prices nationally. These  
10 programs help older New Yorkers stay engaged in their  
11 communities and offer a place where they feel at  
12 home. In relation to food service, centers also face  
13 challenges related to staffing, facilities menu  
14 planning, and reporting.

15       We have worked with Guidehouse to collect  
16 information concerning food and related staff costs,  
17 efficiencies, innovations, and practices in other  
18 large cities so that we can learn from their  
19 successes and challenges.

20       In New York City, challenges include differing  
21 perspectives on what meals should be served,  
22 increased expectations among older adults, resulting  
23 in shopping around for the best meal and programming,  
24 balancing generational preferences regarding food, as  
25 older seniors prefer more traditional congregate



1  
2 meals and younger generations focus more on nutrition  
3 and varied food costs across the system.

4       Staff from our agency and from OMB visited and  
5 did outreach to senior centers to engage directors,  
6 other staff and attendees about their food program,  
7 including what works well and what needs to be  
8 improved and how to achieve those improvements. The  
9 centers are of varied sizes and are located in  
10 different boroughs. Some serve meals prepared on  
11 site and others serve catered meals. The sites  
12 include Brookdale Senior Center in Council Member  
13 Eugene's district; KCS Flushing Senior Center in  
14 Council Member Vallone's district; and West Brighton  
15 Senior Center in Council Member Rose's district.

16       Similar to the Phase 1 senior center model budget  
17 work, DFTA has been working with OMB on an extensive  
18 data analysis to determine what constitutes adequate  
19 funding levels for purchasing and preparing food, as  
20 well as adequate salaries for hiring and retaining  
21 qualified food related staff.

22       In this analysis, we're comparing the cost of  
23 preparing regular meals and kosher meals, controlling  
24 for the size of the centers, and looking at centers

1  
2 cooking in their own kitchen versus those using  
3 caterers.

4 Through this multi-faceted approach to learning  
5 about food programming, we will attain results that  
6 will allow us to ensure that dollars are expended  
7 wisely and effectively, while at the same time,  
8 senior centers are given flexibility to structure  
9 their programs in a way that can best meet the needs  
10 of their communities and the desires of seniors  
11 opting for a meal. We're working with OMB on this  
12 analysis and expect to have results to share later  
13 this spring.

14 Thank you again for this opportunity to provide  
15 testimony on senior center model food budgets. I  
16 look forward to our continued efforts together to  
17 address the needs of older New Yorkers. I am pleased  
18 to answer any questions you may have.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Commissioner for  
20 your testimony. I'm going to have Council Member  
21 Vallone start with the questions.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you, Chair. Thank  
23 you, Commissioner. Lots here, lots that we've talked  
24 about over the last five years and thank you to the  
25 advocates and all our seniors that are out there.

1 Thank you for always coming to our hearings.

2 Margaret and I draw strength from you, as does Danny  
3 and all the rest of us.

4 Today there's also speaking about a budget on  
5 ThriveNYC's tremendous \$850 million budget and I  
6 know you mentioned that there is a portion of some  
7 additional mental health funding going towards DFTA  
8 or somehow allocated in this.

9 My question is, is there coordination or  
10 additional funding from Thrive that's coming to DFTA  
11 for senior services?

12 CARYN RESNICK: We're really going to address  
13 that at our budget hearing which is coming up in just  
14 a few weeks, but yes, we did get additional resources  
15 through ThriveNYC.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Are any of those  
17 resources allocated for this topic? For additional  
18 funding for meals and senior center allocations?

19 CARYN RESNICK: No, those are specifically I  
20 believe, for mental health services. It would not be  
21 a part of this Phase 2 of the model budget.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, that might be  
23 something that we can look into. I think DFTA is  
24 always challenged by how much you have to do and the  
25

1 budget that our Chair is always fighting to increase  
2 because it's just obviously, no matter what we put in  
3 its not enough with the number of seniors that are  
4 aging. I think we need to use that interagency  
5 approach to alleviate the burdens. As you always go  
6 from these capital expense, expenditures, allocations  
7 for meals, the list keeps on going and it keeps  
8 falling to DFTA to pick up and I think there's  
9 funding there. We need to fight for our share of  
10 that.  
11

12 The Local Law 140 that Margaret and I passed last  
13 year is really what brought us to this because in  
14 past hearings we kept asking for the data, the data,  
15 the data and one of those examples of how much  
16 insurmountable data there is that DFTA has to provide  
17 for us.

18 So, we passed Local Law 140 requiring DFTA to  
19 breakdown this information. I think you started to  
20 give it to us, but you didn't flush it all out. You  
21 were saying at the 249 senior centers divided into  
22 five groups, but then that was it. So, I mean, in  
23 order for us to properly dig down into the allocation  
24 to the centers, how they're using that funding, and  
25 what funding they receive, especially with the

1  
2 additional \$10 million baseline, maybe you can help  
3 us on that?

4 CARYN RESNICK: So, thank you for Local Law 140.  
5 It took us a great deal of time to gather and collect  
6 all of that data and it is available. We have shared  
7 it with the Council and I can walk you through a  
8 little bit of what's in there and a great deal of  
9 what we're talking about today has all of that raw  
10 data available and so, you can get a sense of the  
11 scope and the depth and how much raw data there is  
12 for us to analyze.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, I think that's  
14 critical for us to see how the five groups are broken  
15 down. Even just to start the conversation and how  
16 you're separating that with the data, so we can move  
17 forward with that.

18 CARYN RESNICK: So, just to give you a quick  
19 summary, in Local Law 140, what we reported out are  
20 the total annual reimbursed expenditures for  
21 congregate meals. The total annual reimbursed  
22 expenditures for congregate meals that are  
23 disaggregated by kosher and non-kosher, the cost per  
24 meal for each of the 249 senior centers, the cost per  
25 meal for each senior center disaggregated by kosher

1  
2 and non-kosher and the method by which the senior  
3 center provides congregate meals, either in house,  
4 preparation, or catered meals and whether the senior  
5 center provides meals for any other senior centers.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Caryn, you just went  
7 through the next five questions. So, if you could  
8 break it down.

9 CARYN RESNICK: So, it's all there.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And they know that's  
11 supposed to be publicly listed also?

12 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, it is.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Is it?

14 CARYN RESNICK: Yes. You can find it on DFTA's  
15 website.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's important.  
17 Alright, so then continue, because those are the  
18 categories that really, we're focusing on. On the  
19 different type of the ethic meals, the preparation  
20 meal course, the staffing of the costs, the contracts  
21 that are being provided. Like you mentioned with KCS  
22 and some of the other providers that are out there.

23 CARYN RESNICK: I mean, there're a few more  
24 things that I can mention, but there's kind of  
25

1  
2 endless tabs and data, so I can't walk you through  
3 all of it.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, I think those are  
5 the main categories. I think maybe take it from  
6 there.

7 CARYN RESNICK: There's also the combined total  
8 cost per person, for information and assistance and  
9 for ed and rec, and health promotion and the  
10 description of services in each area. The percentage  
11 of service utilization based on actual units of  
12 services versus the planned units of service and  
13 information and assistance ed, rec, and health  
14 promotion. The total number of employee's full time  
15 and part time, and the total budgeted amount for  
16 personal services.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, whats the next step  
18 with that data now? Are we going to take a look at  
19 some of the larger senior centers and some of the  
20 smaller ones and some of the differencing in cost  
21 needs for them, especially when it comes to food  
22 preparation? Because some of them are doing their  
23 own meals.

24 CARYN RESNICK: Exactly, it's an extremely  
25 diverse field and we knew that, but you know, having

1  
2 now spent time visiting centers, speaking with  
3 participants, we get a greater sense of not only the  
4 diversity but that people who cook, prefer cooking.  
5 Many that cater prefer catering. So, we need to take  
6 all of that into consideration and that all impacts  
7 cost.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, I know our Chair is  
9 going to dive into that as is Council Member Dromm  
10 but what do you see then as the next step with that  
11 data? For us, we're trying to fight to get those  
12 additional costs because obviously each meal costs  
13 different and has different expenses. Obviously,  
14 whether it's Kosher, **[inaudible 40:18]**, or Asian, or  
15 Korean or Chinese. There are additional costs that  
16 are not being subsidized or reimbursed for that and  
17 it's usually falling on either the senior or the  
18 senior center. With this data coming in is there  
19 going to be any different approach to how those  
20 expenses are being allocated?

21 CARYN RESNICK: I don't know that we are there  
22 yet. We're continuing the analysis, so I can't  
23 comment on what the outcome will be, but similar to  
24 the model budget process, I think we're going to come  
25



1  
2 up with a model and then try and get everybody in the  
3 model.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: We'll beat this year's  
5 budget? Is that going to be part of what we're  
6 fighting for coming up?

7 CARYN RESNICK: We expect to be able to conclude  
8 the analysis by late spring and then we will share it  
9 with you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Is that also going to be  
11 in coordination with Phase 2's data?

12 CARYN RESNICK: Oh, I'm sorry, I was referring to  
13 Phase 2 data.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, this is all kind  
15 of —

16 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, it's all interrelated, yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, it's hard for us  
18 today to dive into data that's coming in the spring  
19 but some of the things that are absent that the Chair  
20 mentioned in her opening statement was cost for  
21 preparation for meals and staff, food and meals  
22 expense, having varying costs and increase costs and  
23 ones we just mentioned about ethnic meals. The  
24 preparation for meals and staffing, how are we going  
25 to address those additional costs?

1  
2 CARYN RESNICK: As I mentioned Local Law 140 does  
3 have a lot of that data. So, you can begin to look  
4 at it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, we may have the  
6 data but then we need to fund what the data is  
7 telling us to do. So, are we planning on taking that  
8 data and increasing the cost for the additional  
9 staff? And that's one of the things we're always  
10 looking for is the staffing budget, the overhead  
11 costs. The underlying focus of 140 and what Chair  
12 and I is the tremendous burden of the overhead cost  
13 of any senior center. These are all parts and  
14 components of that. So, meals are just one segment  
15 of that, but if we can get them additional assistance  
16 for the different layers of the cost, that's where  
17 this data will be so helpful to show parity at the  
18 centers. To show the fight for the also increase.  
19 So, it might give you the opportunity then to say,  
20 will that be part of the budget ask as we move  
21 forward from budget to final budget conversations and  
22 discussions because it's been an annual ask, an  
23 increase to meet those average rises of costs,  
24 because there hasn't been an increase in the cost of  
25 a meal in years. So, this data I believe is just

1  
2 going to reflect that. It's just going to confirm  
3 that, so for you as the Acting Commissioner, we want  
4 to make sure that you're going to get that increase  
5 by advocating for it and telling us what you think is  
6 the next plan for DFTA to tackle that. God Bless  
7 You. There's a lot of sneezing today.

8 CARYN RESNICK: So, as I mentioned earlier, the  
9 overarching goal of our whole model budget initiative  
10 including Phase 2, is to increase resources and to  
11 ensure strong programming and services across the  
12 whole network and to create parity and equity and  
13 that's what we're driving toward.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Do you have a goal for  
15 creating parity and equity as to a budget number?  
16 What would get us to parity and equity for our senior  
17 centers, because we all want that?

18 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, and so, it's a shared goal  
19 and a shared vision and until we have concluded the  
20 analysis, we will share it with you at that time.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, we will always  
22 continue the fight with you, not against you, because  
23 that's what we're trying to do.

24 CARYN RESNICK: I appreciate that.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, Chair Chin, I'll  
3 gladly turn it to you, to your hearing.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member Dromm, do you  
5 have any questions? Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very much and I  
7 do have to leave shortly to, so I appreciate the  
8 opportunity.

9 I heard in your testimony that you mentioned that  
10 some centers are serving Indian food. Can you tell  
11 me where?

12 CARYN RESNICK: In Queens, India House serves  
13 Indian meals.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And how is that financed?

15 CARYN RESNICK: I'm trying to get to specific  
16 information about specific programs. I believe it's  
17 largely through discretionary funding.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Through discretionary,  
19 right. So, actually, it's not coming through the  
20 DFTA budget and I think we really need to focus on  
21 that and not just Indian but all South Asian foods.

22 CARYN RESNICK: All, yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And my understanding with  
24 India Home, is that it doesn't operate on a daily  
25 basis and that they move the centers around and then

1  
2 I believe that they cater in most of the food. So, I  
3 would really urge that we look at that because  
4 there's an increasing population of South Asian folks  
5 coming into the communities and they're not quite as  
6 highly populated in certain areas where a specific  
7 senior center is actually offering that as a main  
8 option of them and because that's not the case, I  
9 don't see them like even in centers like in Jackson  
10 Heights and Elmhurst. So, they don't really have any  
11 opportunity to get meals except for the times - and I  
12 applaud India Home for the work that they're doing  
13 but they don't have an opportunity unless it's the  
14 day that India Home is operating a program somewhere  
15 near and often times, it's not even like Jackson  
16 Heights, it might be Sunnyside, that they have to  
17 travel to which is then hard for the seniors to  
18 travel to as well.

19 So, I think we really have to address this  
20 growing community.

21 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you. We're taking that  
22 into consideration.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay, I hope it's in the  
24 plan and as Council Member Vallone has advocated and  
25 as Council Member Chair, Margaret Chin, who's been a

1  
2 champion on food issues, especially for our seniors  
3 in budget negotiations, we look forward to hearing  
4 that at the budget hearing and in certainly going  
5 into the executive budget as well. So, thank you.

6 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member Dromm, you are  
8 our finance Chair. We're counting on you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: That's why I'm talking  
10 about the budget because we need to have that in the  
11 budget from the Mayor's side.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That's right and I think from  
13 the Commissioners testimony, it doesn't sound like  
14 and it better not be, that you're going to be able to  
15 put the money in Phase 2 before the budget is passed,  
16 because I didn't see anything in the preliminary  
17 budget. The understanding was there were supposed to  
18 be at least another \$10 million for FY'20 in this  
19 year.

20 CARYN RESNICK: It's for FY'21 for Phase 1, the  
21 additional \$10 million.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: As far as I remember, we did  
23 the year of the senior in 2017, there was only a gap  
24 of one year in terms of the baseline. So, that's  
25

1  
2 what we're looking at, the food component but that  
3 money needs to be in this year's budget.

4 CARYN RESNICK: So, the first infusion of \$10  
5 million was in FY'18 and that's baselined going  
6 forward and then the second \$10 million was for  
7 FY'21.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We do not agree with you on  
9 that.

10 CARYN RESNICK: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Alright, because the budget  
12 was negotiated in 2017 and it started in 2018, the  
13 first \$10 million which took a while to get out,  
14 right?

15 CARYN RESNICK: Hmm, hmm.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Right, and I think that part  
17 of it was that center that got the extra funding,  
18 some of them were allowed to spend it on other  
19 things. Like a one-shot special need or whatever.

20 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: How many of those DFTA centers  
22 that came back to you and said that they want to use  
23 that extra money to cover food costs or food service  
24 staff?

1  
2 CARYN RESNICK: It was a small number, about  
3 twelve or so that came back and asked to use it for  
4 other staff or services and our budget director  
5 handled each of those requests and we did allow for  
6 some one-time expenditures. If there was a piece of  
7 equipment that needed to be replaced.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, you don't know how many  
9 came back specifically?

10 CARYN RESNICK: A dozen, twelve.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Twelve that asked to use it to  
12 supplement for their food budget or for service  
13 staff?

14 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, but at that same time  
16 though, we thought that with the model budget, the  
17 money that the Council allocate for senior center  
18 enhancement, DFTA asked us to maintain that pot  
19 because the center still needs it. So, I did assume a  
20 lot of the center used that money to cover either the  
21 food costs or staff costs, because they say they  
22 still need that money but some of the center that I  
23 was looking at the chart, the analysis, they got more  
24 money from the model budget. So, in reality, they  
25 shouldn't need that extra funding from the City



1  
2 Council unless they have to use that money for their  
3 food budget and the food service staff.

4 CARYN RESNICK: I can't comment on that. I mean  
5 if you have data, you'd like to share with us, we  
6 would certainly take a look at it.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, just a list of all the  
8 senior centers that we fund through the enhancement  
9 in last year's budget negotiation, our Council staff  
10 were told that DFTA said, oh, we still need it for  
11 these centers. So, going forward, I think my  
12 question is look, model budget is supposed to take  
13 care of their needs, but the Council still has to  
14 supplement because the food part is not taken care  
15 of.

16 CARYN RESNICK: So, that's the expectation and  
17 the goal through the Phase 2 food portion is to be  
18 able to address that and create some parity and  
19 equity across the system.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And that's why I think with  
21 the Phase 2, the money needs to be in this year's  
22 budget, and it didn't make it to the preliminary, but  
23 it needs to be in the executive budget.

24 Whoever is here from the administration, you got  
25 to hear that loud and clear.

1  
2 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you. I do hear you, loud  
3 and clear.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, I'm talking about people  
5 who are representing City Hall to. Well, the center  
6 is going to testify later and the advocates but  
7 enough already. We've been waiting. I know that you  
8 know, it takes time to do analysis and get it  
9 together but even basic information. The food cost  
10 goes up, food service worker, they're not getting  
11 paid enough. Meanwhile, yes, we took care of the  
12 director, the assistant director, but the people who  
13 serve the food, we didn't take care of them and we  
14 need to do that, and I know that you say oh, they got  
15 a **[inaudible 58:10]** increase. It's not enough. They  
16 should be paid -

17 CARYN RESNICK: A minimum wage increase.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, minimum wage but they  
19 should be paid more than minimum wage for what they  
20 do and when we talk to some of the providers, the  
21 samples that they gave us from what the kitchen cook  
22 or the chef, their responsibility is much, much more  
23 than minimum wage. I mean they have to plan the  
24 menu, shop for the food, besides cooking and making  
25 sure that everything is nutritious, because DFTA has

1  
2 a lot of rules for the food. You can't put too much  
3 salt, you can't put too much sugar. There's a lot of  
4 rules and regulations that they have to follow.

5 CARYN RESNICK: They do. They're federal, state  
6 and local regulations that we have to follow.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And meanwhile, you know my  
8 biggest peeve about some of those other privatized  
9 places where they don't follow any of the rules.

10 CARYN RESNICK: Well, due to other legislation now  
11 the Department of Health is going to do those  
12 inspections.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, yes, and it's going to  
14 start very soon.

15 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: If that was a battle.  
17 Remember they were saying that wasn't our  
18 jurisdiction. It was state run. They kept saying,  
19 anything that happens in our city we should be able  
20 to have our hands on and now, we're getting  
21 inspectors. They didn't have the inspectors, now  
22 we're getting inspectors, but it's all part of what  
23 we find out.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, from your testimony, so  
25 what you're telling me, is that your analysis is

1  
2 going to be done by late spring. So, you do not  
3 foresee putting any additional funding at all for  
4 this year's budget? I mean, starting for the next  
5 fiscal year which is FY'20.

6 CARYN RESNICK: We can't comment on the executive  
7 budget. So, no, I didn't say that.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: You need the funding, right?  
9 You need the funding for the food part and the food  
10 service worker, right? So, the money's got to come  
11 from somewhere.

12 CARYN RESNICK: We are about to embark on the  
13 budget hearing, so I think you're going to hear more  
14 on this topic.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, definitely, the first day  
16 of the budget hearing, OMB is going to get this  
17 question.

18 CARYN RESNICK: I know I'm going to be back here  
19 in just a few weeks, so we will have another  
20 opportunity to have this conversation.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, the budget hearing for  
22 the Committee on Aging is on March 12<sup>th</sup>. We will be  
23 in the Chambers and the public can testify that day,  
24 but the first hearing I think with OMB and the  
25 finance committee will be on March 6<sup>th</sup>, and that's

1  
2 when we will have an opportunity to ask a question  
3 and we'll do the same thing because it's critical. I  
4 mean, DFTA's budget is so minimal. It's so small and  
5 the work that you do is so great. I mean the senior  
6 population, it's going to be surpassing the pre-K  
7 population very, very soon and I think from your  
8 testimony, the study that you did with Fordham  
9 University prove our case. Seniors who go to senior  
10 centers are healthier, stronger, prevent illness,  
11 serious chronic illness, saving the government a lot  
12 of money. So, if we invest now, more seniors will be  
13 healthier and stronger. It just makes sense for the  
14 investment and so, that's what we have to push. We  
15 want our seniors to be healthy and strong we have to  
16 make that investment and we have to make it now.

17 So, \$10 million baseline is good but it's not  
18 enough. I mean, even that is not even enough for the  
19 centers. We want to really grow that number and I  
20 didn't get a chance to talk to our Finance Chair, but  
21 I will remind him that India Home is not part of  
22 DFTA's 249 portfolio. India Home is funded by a City  
23 Council initiative for a senior center serving  
24 immigrant population. So, they're not even a DFTA  
25 funded senior center and we have ten of those and

1  
2 hopefully DFTA will be able to pick them up in the  
3 next RFP because seniors growing and we need more  
4 senior centers, more and not less. So, that is  
5 something why we're advocating so hard to make sure  
6 that we have adequate funding so that we can increase  
7 number of centers and making sure they're well run.  
8 That's what our partnership is all about.

9 CARYN RESNICK: And I thank you for your  
10 advocacy.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, based on the data  
12 you do have, do you have the breakdown of how many  
13 senior centers came back to DFTA asking for  
14 additional food or meal staff reimbursements and what  
15 those costs would be to get them back out of the red?

16 CARYN RESNICK: I mentioned that earlier, that it  
17 was about a dozen programs that did come specifically  
18 and ask for either food staff increases, and we  
19 projected those based on waiting for the Phase 2  
20 model, but we did approve one-time expenses for  
21 people that had kitchen equipment problems.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's another area, so  
23 if there is a machine, equipment, some of the food  
24 preparation, how do the centers get repairs? Is it  
25 all through DFTA or is there a different capital

1  
2 allocation for those? A different expense  
3 allocation?

4 CARYN RESNICK: Generally, the process is that  
5 the request is made through their program officer and  
6 it's brought to our budget department and we fund  
7 them as repairs are needed, through expense, not  
8 capital.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Do we have a list if  
10 those repairs are up to date and how long the wait  
11 list is and what the costs are for that?

12 CARYN RESNICK: We don't have a wait list. We  
13 take care of them as the requests come in.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, DFTA's able to  
15 handle the requests as they come in? I know we've  
16 had this conversation at a past hearing. It seems a  
17 bit of overwhelming again, I'm always thinking  
18 there's too much on DFTA's plate especially when it  
19 comes to capital and expense repairs but or there  
20 should be at least different allocations for that.  
21 So, all our kitchens, there aren't any ongoing  
22 requests for repairs?

23 I see you're saying yes, I guess that's a good  
24 thing if you are saying yes.

1  
2       On staffing, same thing, any requests for  
3 staffing increases at the centers that you are seeing  
4 because of the increase of the amount at a particular  
5 center that their short of staff? Have those  
6 requests also come to you?

7       CARYN RESNICK: I mean, those lines are budgeted  
8 and so, I mean, we don't really get those requests.

9       COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: How are they handled  
10 budget wise, are there different allocations for the  
11 size?

12       CARYN RESNICK: As we went through the model  
13 budget, there are staffing patterns that that were  
14 identified and as people needed to hire additional  
15 staff, they were able to use that funding to do that  
16 or to give increases to existing staff.

17       COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, do we have any of  
18 that feedback? Was that enough? Is there additional  
19 staffing and/or increases that are being asked for by  
20 the centers that have come to your attention?

21       CARYN RESNICK: Maybe on a case by case basis but  
22 not across the network.

23       COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And is any of that for  
24 kitchen staff? Kitchen staff, those who are actually  
25 preparing the meals? Like my mom.



1  
2 CARYN RESNICK: Everybody was asked to wait for  
3 the Phase 2 of the model budget, so that's the goal  
4 of what this exercise is now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay, and I'm in my  
6 last, I'm obviously we could go each way, but the way  
7 the Chair has broken down the different categories  
8 and you have. One of them is obviously, we haven't  
9 talked much about home delivered meals. So, can you  
10 give us an update on where we are with the home  
11 delivered meals, if there's any RFP coming up where  
12 we are today and does DFTA include in the home  
13 delivered meals fees that come up for that? So, much  
14 of that the center or the provider has to incur the  
15 maintenance of the vehicle, the parking tickets,  
16 insurance cards funding and staffing of those. Is  
17 any of those being considered with the home delivered  
18 meals?

19 CARYN RESNICK: So, I'd prefer to have a separate  
20 conversation about the home delivered meals because I  
21 think there's been a lot conflating between the  
22 congregate food meal budget and the home delivered  
23 meals process, but again, we're continuing to analyze  
24 and look at different models, look at all of the  
25 different models that exist in our network and try

1  
2 and come up with and work with the community and we  
3 have an RFP scheduled for – so our hope would be to  
4 issue some kind of an RFI in advance of the  
5 **[inaudible 1:12:00]** paper and do a tremendous amount  
6 of community engagement.

7 As you know, it's a hot button issue. Once we  
8 talk about food in general, everybody has an opinion  
9 and a feeling about how things should move forward.  
10 So, we want to make sure we collect all of that input  
11 from everybody.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, isn't that  
13 happening now?

14 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, when was the last  
16 time an RFP was issued?

17 CARYN RESNICK: It's been quite a long time.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: How long are we talking  
19 about?

20 CARYN RESNICK: The time has come.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: The time has come. So,  
22 when do you envision the RFI prior to the RFP? The  
23 first step, just for those who may not know first  
24 there's the collecting of the data.  
25

1  
2 CARYN RESNICK: Information, it's just sort of get  
3 a sense of the landscape out there and what kind of  
4 thoughts and ideas coming from the community.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Is that ongoing now?

6 CARYN RESNICK: We're going much of that now.  
7 We've had stakeholder and we're going to roll out a  
8 whole engagement plan to make sure we get input.

9 We're going to survey seniors, themselves to get a  
10 sense of what they feel about the meals. Of course,  
11 you know, the clients are the most important  
12 customer.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I would think we have  
14 most of that data now, so I wouldn't think there's  
15 reinventing the wheel on that one. I think we pretty  
16 much know. I think the costs of that in Phase 2 is a  
17 little different. So, when would you envision an RFP  
18 then to be issued?

19 CARYN RESNICK: The schedule is to have an RFP -

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: The drum roll.

21 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, it's within the next year as  
22 we get all of our input and gather all the  
23 information from the community.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, we've respectfully  
25 heard that a few times. So, I think we need to put a

1  
2 timeline cap on that, so that we can get some type of  
3 certainty saying that the RFP will be issued, so that  
4 we can all prepare for it and get our providers and  
5 our seniors to know it's coming.

6 Is there any talk of expanding the providers in  
7 the existing system that we're using to go beyond the  
8 meal providing service to a different level? I know  
9 there are certain centers that do it all on their  
10 own, there are certain others that will contract that  
11 out. Are there thoughts now of expanding that for  
12 the RFP?

13 CARYN RESNICK: I mean, those are all of the  
14 things on the table that we're looking at and we want  
15 to dialog with the community. So, we haven't made  
16 any decisions at this point but those are all part of  
17 the complex decision making.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Alright, Chair, I always  
19 turn to you.

20 CHAIRPERON CHIN: We've been joined by Council  
21 Member Ayala. Do you have any questions?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I was trying to actually  
23 live stream in my car on the way here so that I could  
24 hear a little bit, but you kept breaking up  
25 apparently.

1  
2 CARYN RESNICK: Oh, sorry.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: But I have one question.  
4 I don't want to ask questions that may have already  
5 been asked, but because we're seeing such a  
6 tremendous change in communities like mine, where we  
7 now have a like a Covello Senior Center where we have  
8 a growing Asian population of seniors, is there some  
9 sort of overview that happens annually that better  
10 assesses what the specific needs of each center is to  
11 better accommodate new needs? Because I wonder you  
12 know, as we're seeing population shifts, we're not  
13 necessarily offering culturally relevant meals  
14 precisely anymore. We're not offering the type of  
15 programming that all of the seniors benefit from and  
16 so, I just wonder because by 2030 we're expected to  
17 have the senior booming and how are we kind of  
18 accommodating for that now?

19 CARYN RESNICK: So, one we work with all of our  
20 providers to make sure they are to the best of their  
21 ability providing culturally relevant meals and  
22 programs and I think across the network, we do a very  
23 good job at doing that and we are also beginning the  
24 process, so we are heavily involved in looking at  
25 many different aspects of our whole network in doing

1  
2 an analysis of the demographic data that really shows  
3 us where populations of seniors are living. Where  
4 new immigrant groups are coming in. We're starting  
5 to look as using language as a proxy for who's living  
6 in what areas and where they're expected to be by  
7 2030. So, we can see if our centers are in the right  
8 communities in serving the right populations in a  
9 culturally sensitive way.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Yeah, thank you. I  
11 appreciate that.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Before I continue with some of  
13 the other questions. You know, for the Department of  
14 Homeless Services, they are also doing model budget,  
15 but they put some money into the preliminary budget  
16 as a placeholder while they're doing the analysis and  
17 that's what I was asking the administration. That  
18 put some money in to the budget to show that you're  
19 making a commitment. They're doing it at another  
20 agency. Why couldn't DFTA do that? How come you're  
21 treated differently and those bigger agencies?

22 CARYN RESNICK: Well, I think the \$10 million was  
23 the administration's commitment.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But that was a couple of years  
25 ago when we fought for the year of the senior.

1 CARYN RESNICK: It was last year.

2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, FY'18 which is 2017.

3 The fiscal year is also always a year later.

4 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That's not equal treatment.

6 CARYN RESNICK: I can't comment on that whole  
7 process because I'm not familiar with it.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, that's why I'm aiming at  
9 the Mayor's office representative sitting here,  
10 alright. I'm not asking something that's totally you  
11 know, off the wall, whatever, another agency did that  
12 okay. They put money in there as a commitment, so  
13 why couldn't we do that for DFTA?

14 The question we have about the food analysis is  
15 that you have this Guidehouse, what is the total  
16 value of the Guidehouse contract and what is the  
17 scope of work that they're getting paid for and  
18 milestone that they're supposed to agree to?

19 CARYN RESNICK: Go, the Guidehouse consultancy is  
20 really strictly focused on home delivered meals and  
21 the food service analysis we're currently engaged  
22 with is really with OMB and they did some data  
23 analysis to help inform that partnership with us and  
24 OMB as we move forward.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, they're not doing the  
3 analysis for the congregate meal?

4 CARYN RESNICK: No.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, is that contract completed  
6 already?

7 CARYN RESNICK: No, I believe they're expected to  
8 be continuing that consultancy through - yeah, so the  
9 contract for home delivered meals extends for another  
10 few months.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, so they're not doing  
12 congregate meals?

13 CARYN RESNICK: No.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OMB is doing it, alright.

15 CARYN RESNICK: DFTA.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: DFTA and OMB. In your  
17 testimony, you talked about the Fordham University  
18 study.

19 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Which is terrific. Now, does  
21 Guidehouse, would they have done an analysis to  
22 provide a dollar estimate on how much the city saved  
23 on services like hospital, psychiatric ward, nursing  
24 home, emergency, food, when it invests in additional



1  
2 dollar into nutrition or health services at senior  
3 center?

4 CARYN RESNICK: No, there was not part of the  
5 scope of service.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, they didn't do that?

7 CARYN RESNICK: No.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, it would be interesting.

9 CARYN RESNICK: It is interesting.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: DFTA should look into that to  
11 make a strong case. That every dollar that the city  
12 invests in our senior center save us how much money.  
13 We could definitely use that data. I mean, it's in  
14 the study but it needs to be translated into dollar  
15 values.

16 CARYN RESNICK: We've long been interested in  
17 doing that and I believe some of the Universities  
18 have begun to engage or have certainly talked about  
19 doing that kind of analysis.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Have there been any kind of  
21 analysis?

22 CARYN RESNICK: I'll talk to our colleagues at  
23 Brookdale Center on Aging and others that do this  
24 kind of analysis and see if any of that's available.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, if not, then they should  
3 take it on to prove your case. That senior centers  
4 are so important because it's helping to save the  
5 administration the city money.

6 CARYN RESNICK: I think the Fordham study is a  
7 seminal study in that way that it's the first time we  
8 had some concrete evidence. I mean we know  
9 anecdotally that we all believe that we're doing good  
10 work that saves healthcare dollars but that was our  
11 first evidence and we would love to do a deeper dive  
12 and see if we can do that kind of analysis or work  
13 with institutions that are doing that.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good, we'll follow up on that.  
15 Looking at the range of reimbursement that you have  
16 for food costs, does that take into consideration of  
17 the salary, like the average salary of kitchen staff  
18 or you just assume that everybody should be paid  
19 minimum wage and that's it? I mean are there like  
20 different salary ranges or average salaries?

21 CARYN RESNICK: I mean, what the data shows, and  
22 you can see that in the Local Law 140 report is that  
23 there is a great range in salaries that are paid.  
24 So, I think part of the Phase 2 exercise is to look  
25 at some modeling so that there can be more equity and

1  
2 parity across the system or to the Phase 1 model  
3 budget process.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, the meal reimbursement  
5 money actually includes food costs, food preparation,  
6 the staff that take care of the food part, does it  
7 also include maintenance if they cook? Do they  
8 prepare food in their own kitchen, does that include  
9 maintenance for their kitchen to be able to do all  
10 the cooking time?

11 CARYN RESNICK: All the cooking prep and  
12 everything that goes into the cost of actually  
13 producing a meal.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: It's included in that meal  
15 reimbursement and that's why there's such a range of  
16 difference?

17 CARYN RESNICK: Exactly.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, are you hearing from  
19 centers and do have any data on kitchen staff  
20 turnover from the providers?

21 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah, we've heard this  
22 anecdotally I'm sure as you have and, in our site  
23 visits that OMB accompanied us on. We did hear that  
24 anecdotally as well from staff at the centers that we  
25

1  
2 visited. I'm going to survey the whole system to get  
3 a better sense of that.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I mean that's why it's so  
5 important to make sure that the money is in this  
6 year's budget to start taking care of the food  
7 service staff, salary, and making sure that we can  
8 maintain good food service staff at the senior  
9 center. I mean, if they're not paid well, some of  
10 them are going to leave and also, they rely on a lot  
11 of volunteers. That's not even added to the cost.  
12 There are so many volunteers that help serve the food  
13 and all that. So, all we're paying for is really the  
14 people who are in charge.

15 We just got to have the money in this year's  
16 budget, there's no way out on that one.

17 Do you get a lot of requests from centers about  
18 their repairs for kitchen equipment's?

19 CARYN RESNICK: We get recurring requests for  
20 kitchen equipment.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And you have a budget line  
22 that take care of that?

23 CARYN RESNICK: We don't have a separate budget  
24 line, but as we have the funding available, I'm  
25

1  
2 looking at my budget director over here, we are able  
3 to cover those costs, yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, do you know from last  
5 year, for FY'19 how much money did you spend on  
6 emergency repair, kitchen equipment repair?

7 CARYN RESNICK: I'm sure we'd have to go back and  
8 get that analysis for you, but we can.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, you can provide that,  
10 and I mean, you got to have some dedicated resource  
11 for that because things happen. I mean, those  
12 repairs need to be done. I mean that's the same, it  
13 goes back to the hearing that we had about the  
14 capital budget that DFTA also needs to have a capital  
15 budget.

16 CARYN RESNICK: We make those repairs with  
17 expense money actually.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And you just accrue money and  
19 so you use that money to do this kind of emergency  
20 repairs?

21 CARYN RESNICK: I mean, that's one of the ways  
22 we're able to finance it, yes. But most of these  
23 would not be capital eligible. We went through that  
24 at our last hearing.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, we did. So, I'm not  
3 going to go there. So, I know we talk off line about  
4 the 38 centers are not included in the model budget  
5 are they included in your food service analysis?

6 CARYN RESNICK: All of the data about those are  
7 included in the report we issued for Local Law 140.  
8 So, you can look at the meal costs and the  
9 utilization and the budgets in those programs.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But then they are sort of like  
11 separated out from your 249. I mean, we're not even  
12 talking about **[Inaudible 1:35:12]** and all the other  
13 good programs that are around but we also have to  
14 kind of come up with some solution what to do with  
15 them and how do we make sure that the programs can  
16 continue to run or expand and get the support that  
17 they need instead of being left out of this model  
18 budget process.

19 CARYN RESNICK: Right, not all of the 38 serve  
20 food and as we discussed, we're happy to have the  
21 conversation with you offline and we'll do a little  
22 more analysis about those programs.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay. When was the last time  
24 DFTA funded a baseline increase for meals across all  
25

1  
2 the senior centers and home delivery meal and what  
3 was that increase?

4 CARYN RESNICK: FY'15 I believe, there was an  
5 across the board increase in the reimbursement rate  
6 for food and I believe at that time, we also did a  
7 differential for Kosher meals for the first time.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: FY'15, so that was 2014. That  
9 was like almost five years ago. How much was that  
10 increase?

11 CARYN RESNICK: \$0.25 cents a meal and I think  
12 \$0.50 cents for Kosher and for home delivered Kosher.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: \$0.25 cents increase. The  
14 cost of living I mean; food price goes up. I think  
15 that's where the urgency is. I mean, the centers are  
16 hurting. I mean they need the relief as quickly as  
17 possible. I mean the advocates will tell us again,  
18 that we are below the national average in terms of  
19 the food reimbursement.

20 Because even though we are only asking seniors to  
21 make a contribution, but that contribution has  
22 increased and some of the centers are forced to  
23 increase the food contribution to make up for the  
24 lack of revenue. So, that's why and I'm going to say  
25

1  
2 it again, you got to put some money in this year's  
3 budget now.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Chair, did we get any  
5 information on the 38 NYCHA senior centers alright,  
6 because that wasn't included in Phase 1. Are they  
7 going to be reincluded in?

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, that was the 38 that I  
9 was talking about.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay.

11 CARYN RESNICK: We're going to have a separate  
12 conversation about.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, NYCHA alone I  
14 think is another area to tackle sister agencies for  
15 budget as the NYCHA budgets increasing, with the  
16 crisis that's happening with NYCHA, I believe this  
17 should be part of that. I think there's ways for us  
18 to include ourselves whether its Thrive, whether it's  
19 NYCHA. I think anytime there's a senior involved,  
20 there should be an allocation from those billions  
21 that are being allocated to assist DFTA on these and  
22 I think that's part of one of the areas we can fight  
23 for.

24

25



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, any other question we  
3 did not get a chance to ask we will send it over to  
4 you.

5 CARYN RESNICK: I'm happy to respond.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, thank you.

7 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you. I appreciate our  
8 partnership.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We do to, but we just want to  
10 be loud and clear this year that we're not going to  
11 take anything less. They got to put more money into  
12 the budget for DFTA. So, thank you for testifying  
13 and we are going to start the public session. Can I  
14 clap.

15 Okay, we're calling up the next panel, Abbe Pick  
16 from UJA Federation, Molly Krakowski from JASA,  
17 Andrea Cianfrani from LiveOn NY, and Tara Klein from  
18 United Neighborhood Houses.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Hi, you are all hiding  
20 behind the pillar that's why I couldn't see. They're  
21 all right behind the pillar.

22 ABIGAIL PICK: On behalf of UJA -Federation of  
23 New York and our network of nonprofit partners, thank  
24 you Chairperson Chin and members of the Aging  
25 Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on

1  
2 the importance of supporting New York City's older  
3 adults.

4 My name is Abbe Pick and I manage the anti-  
5 poverty portfolio at UJA Federation New York.

6 Established more than 100 years ago, UJA is one  
7 of the nation's largest local philanthropies. UJA's  
8 mission is to fight poverty, connect people to  
9 community, and respond to crises both locally and  
10 globally. UJA thanks the City Council and  
11 Chairperson Chin for securing baselined funding from  
12 DFTA in FY'18, specifically around model budgets for  
13 senior centers.

14 Despite a noted increase rate of food insecurity  
15 among older adults, funding for meals, equipment, and  
16 kitchen staff at senior centers has not been included  
17 in these model budgets. Additionally, New York City  
18 funded congregate meals are reimbursed at a rate  
19 that's 20 percent lower than the national average and  
20 senior centers in our network have reported running  
21 out of food for weekend and holiday meals. We  
22 therefore urge the Council to work with the  
23 Administration to invest in additional \$20 million  
24 for congregate meals.

1  
2 Similarly, home delivered meals and in particular  
3 Kosher home delivered meals which on average are 30  
4 percent more expensive than a non-kosher meal are  
5 reimbursed at lower than national average as well  
6 presenting a unique challenge for our agencies who  
7 provide services to clients who keep kosher. We  
8 therefore request that an infusion of \$15 million to  
9 support home delivered meals be included in the FY'20  
10 budget as well.

11 While food insecurity rates among most New  
12 Yorkers have declined, rates among older adults have  
13 increased. As many as one in four seniors living at  
14 home are nutritionally at risk. UJA Federation New  
15 York respectfully urges your consideration and  
16 support of these vital programs that assist our  
17 city's most vulnerable. Thank you for your time.

18 ANDREA CIANFRANI: Good morning. Good morning  
19 Chairwoman Chin and Council Members of the Aging  
20 Committee. Thank you so much for holding this  
21 important hearing today.

22 I am Andrea Cianfrani, I'm the director of Public  
23 Policy of LiveOn NY. We are a nonprofit membership  
24 organization of about 100 community-based  
25 organizations serving seniors throughout New York

1  
2 City and we're really happy to be here today to talk  
3 about this important issue.

4 I do want to start out by thanking the Council  
5 for your steadfast support over the years, over the  
6 decades of senior services throughout New York City.  
7 It's critical and we know that you are very  
8 supportive of these issues. I do also want to  
9 acknowledge and thank the leadership at DFTA and  
10 Acting Commissioner Resnick for her work and  
11 increasing stakeholder input throughout these  
12 processes over the past several months and looking  
13 forward as she has testified today.

14 I do want to focus my testimony today in two  
15 areas. First is fairness, we support the spirit of  
16 New York City being the fairest big city in America,  
17 but fairness does not have an age cutoff. We really  
18 believe that when DFTA is receiving less than 1  
19 percent of the city budget and senior meals are  
20 funded at 20 percent below the national average, we  
21 can do better. New York City needs to be a fair city  
22 for all ages and we fully support initiatives in  
23 smart policy that will get us there and we can do  
24 this.

1  
2       The second is focused around Smart Investments.  
3 Chairwoman Chin, you raised a great point earlier  
4 about the dollars invested in senior services and  
5 what that saves and what that goes to and we fully  
6 agree, and we think that that's really important as  
7 part of all of these conversations.

8       We also know, we're aware of the headlines in  
9 this fiscal year with pegs but we also believe in  
10 good times and in not so good times and investing in  
11 senior services is smart fiscal policy is responsible  
12 and the money that is invested in senior services  
13 stretches across the community. It supports seniors,  
14 it supports the services that they use, that we will  
15 all use. The infrastructure we're building for New  
16 York City as we all age and really importantly it  
17 supports the individuals who have chosen their  
18 profession of serving older adults through nonprofits  
19 and senior services.

20       So, you know, again, we really want to support  
21 Smart Investment in city services, and we know that  
22 senior services are top of that list for turning a  
23 dollar and stretching it across to build our  
24 communities.

1  
2       So, how do we get there? How do we make New York  
3 City a fair city for all ages? I'm glad you asked.

4       We have several recommendations fully outlined in  
5 our testimony, but we really want to focus today, and  
6 you'll hear a lot more in our budget testimony, but  
7 really want to focus on congregate meals and home  
8 delivered meals today.

9       So, first is investing \$20 million in congregate  
10 meals. You've heard a lot about phases, model  
11 budgets. I just want to clarify the first investment  
12 was a total of \$20 million promised in model senior  
13 center budgets.

14       As you know, \$10 million of that went out to  
15 centers late last year and that was directed towards  
16 senior center staff and programs. That is great,  
17 it's a very important first step. The second \$10  
18 million of that, that is promised, is promised by  
19 FY'21. So, those are two really important things to  
20 keep in mind because that money can, should, and we  
21 advocate, should go out immediately. The needs are  
22 there, and we know that can happen.

23       So, that's a total of \$20 million. Again, as you  
24 heard today was directed at direct staff and  
25 programs, very important.

1  
2 With that said, we need those initial  
3 investments. We started rebuilding the house, we  
4 forgot to add the kitchen. The kitchen is very  
5 important.

6 So, that is what we're talking about when we're  
7 talking about a second \$20 million today. We are  
8 advocating for a \$20 million-dollar investment this  
9 year in congregate meals. So, that would cover raw  
10 food costs you heard today, the rising cost of food.  
11 The last time there was an increase that would go to  
12 senior centers to increase those meal costs that  
13 increase over time. It would support the staff who  
14 are incredible. I know there's variation across the  
15 system, but we can figure that out. We can put that  
16 towards senior centers that are of all sizes and need  
17 different staffing needs.

18 You all know, because you visit your senior  
19 centers. You walk in, I walked into a senior center  
20 a couple weeks ago. I was stopped before I even got  
21 in the door and they talked to me about the  
22 incredible kitchen staff and the food and you all  
23 hear that to. So, you're going to hear about it.  
24 Good, bad, everything in between and it's the heart  
25 and soul of a senior center and it's what we need to

1  
2 invest in. So, that would go to staff as well as the  
3 mandates that you heard that are needed to run a  
4 kitchen. H-Vac systems, ovens, equipment, things  
5 that breakdown, things that need to be serviced.

6 So, those are really important costs that this  
7 funding would go to that is needed immediately.

8 Secondly, and again, I want to highlight that  
9 those needs are exacerbated at NYCHA senior centers  
10 and the important work building communities there  
11 that we need to invest in that Council Member Vallone  
12 referenced as well.

13 The other pieces we're advocating for, home  
14 delivered meals a \$15 million increase as well to  
15 address increase need and again 20 percent below the  
16 national average. We need to do better.

17 We are also advocating, we'll talk about this at  
18 the budget hearing but the pegs across the board,  
19 pegs for all agencies for an agency such as small as  
20 DFTA, it's unfair to kind of put that there and we  
21 really believe that DFTA should not receive pegs.

22 Pushing out the \$10 million that was promised  
23 immediately, we advocate for that and again, the last  
24 thing I'll say and Acting Commissioner Resnick  
25 referenced the increased transparency and involvement



1  
2 in the senior center network in these discussions and  
3 we agree with that and we think it's really important  
4 and we hope that continues and increases because we  
5 know that their input is valuable to these  
6 conversations as we build the city forward and  
7 prepare for the upcoming RFP's.

8 So, with that, I just thank you for hearing this  
9 and investing in senior services. Thank you.

10 TARA KLEIN: Thanks. Good morning everyone.  
11 Thank you, Chairwoman Chin for holding today's  
12 hearing and the Council Members for being here and  
13 participating in this very important hearing today.

14 My name is Tara Klein and I am a Policy Analyst  
15 at United Neighborhood Houses, which is the  
16 membership association of settlement houses in New  
17 York City. We serve all ages multiple services.  
18 Across our services for older adults, we operate 41  
19 senior centers. Our members operate 41 senior  
20 centers and 8 home delivered meal programs.

21 So, as Andrea just mentioned, we are supporting  
22 an increase for \$20 million put into senior center  
23 congregate meal programs this year as well as \$15  
24 million into the home delivered meals program for a  
25

1  
2 total of \$35 million in new investments in this  
3 year's budget.

4 Meal programs are so critical for older adults  
5 and good nutrition is a key determinant of health  
6 outcomes as people age but unfortunately hunger among  
7 older adults in New York City remains high with  
8 approximately 11 percent of New York City residence  
9 over age 60 experiencing food insecurity and that's  
10 even higher in the Bronx, where about 24 percent of  
11 older residence experience food insecurity and access  
12 to congregate and home delivered meal programs are a  
13 key part of the strategy to reduce that food  
14 insecurity.

15 Unfortunately, providers face major barriers in  
16 serving meals to seniors in those programs due to  
17 cost and lost reimbursement rates from DFTA.

18 As we've heard the true meal cost for programs  
19 include raw food, disposables, supplies, kitchen  
20 maintenance, equipment, emergency repairs,  
21 exterminations, and staffed, and for home delivered  
22 meals, they also include vehicle maintenance, gas,  
23 heating/cooling systems and parking costs and tickets  
24 as well as the OTPS and the indirect and the rent and  
25 the utilities and human resources, all of that and

1  
2 DFTA contracts don't cover the full cost of providing  
3 meals making it difficult for providers to run  
4 effective programs that adequately support their  
5 populations.

6 Organizations will often incur deficits to meet  
7 the needs of their communities and ensure seniors  
8 receive meals. Daily attendance at senior centers  
9 tend to fluctuate, which also has an impact. One UNH  
10 member has said that they are contracted to provide  
11 65 daily lunches at their center, but regularly  
12 provide over 90, due to increased attendance and yet  
13 they're not reimbursed by DFTA for those additional  
14 incurred costs.

15 There's an outside impact as we've heard on  
16 programs that serve culturally appropriate or  
17 relevant meals, or therapeutic meals, as they often  
18 cost more and according to Hunger Free America's most  
19 recent annual report, 34 percent of food pantries and  
20 kitchens in New York City were forced to turn people  
21 away, reduce their portion sizes, or limit their  
22 hours of operation due to a lack of resources. This  
23 is a real systemic problem.

24 We've heard about the national average cost of  
25 meals and meal reimbursements and we know that New

1  
2 York City is 20 percent below that rate. We know  
3 that the cost of living is also higher in New York  
4 City inflating these numbers that are out there even  
5 more. We know that the cost of food has increased  
6 every year.

7 I want to mention that the Council gave us some  
8 support in last year and fiscal year 19 added \$2.84  
9 million to the home delivered meal program, which  
10 helped bring reimbursement rates up a little bit but  
11 unfortunately, it wasn't baseline and it wasn't  
12 included in the preliminary budget and so, that is  
13 very important and again, the model budget, we're  
14 very appreciative of that \$20 million and we agree  
15 that the extra \$10 million that was promised by 2021  
16 is needed urgently right now. Let's put it in.

17 So, all of these numbers I think offer some  
18 really clear justification on the need for additional  
19 funding but there are also of course, stories behind  
20 these numbers and the seniors who get the food and  
21 especially the kitchen staff who provide the meals  
22 and I want to talk a little bit about what we've been  
23 hearing on the ground from some of our members on  
24 kitchen staff.

1  
2 They work very hard at very low pay. They're  
3 expected to do more than just prepare and serve food.  
4 Kitchen staff are really administrators, they  
5 complete inventory, order supplies and create menus  
6 that cover nutritional requirements. Many supervised  
7 volunteers who help run the kitchens and there's  
8 other mandatory paperwork.

9 At the same time, many of these cooks lack  
10 administrative job skills or don't have a high school  
11 diploma or many can't read in English and programs  
12 fill this need by having their directors and other  
13 staff fill in on an at hawk basis. Cooks must also  
14 be customer service representatives. Of course, to  
15 serve the meals and keep the senior center attendees  
16 happy.

17 While some centers have several staff members in  
18 the kitchen to share these responsibilities, small  
19 centers often just have one cook running the entire  
20 kitchen. If that cook is out sick or is taking  
21 personal time off, there's no substitute. The senior  
22 center director will often fill in and they're not a  
23 cook.

24 For kitchens that prepare both congregate and  
25 home delivered meals, staff often cook three meals a

1  
2 day and will work more than twelve-hour days and  
3 programs have expressed having to make a difficult  
4 financial choice between hiring more staff for low  
5 pay or overworking their existing staff.

6 Programs in the UNH network report paying kitchen  
7 staff around the minimum wage with raises only given  
8 when DFTA provides funding for a call out or the  
9 minimum wage increase as we heard.

10 One UNH member expressed anger over feeling force  
11 to reinforce poverty due to these low reimbursement  
12 rates and the consequential low salaries. This low  
13 pay has led to high turnover rates with many staff  
14 opting to work at higher paying institutions like  
15 schools and colleges or at restaurants.

16 In some UNH programs mentioned recent turnover at  
17 restaurants due to an uptake in fears of deportation  
18 for undocumented immigrants working in those  
19 restaurants. Hiring is very difficult, and one  
20 program reported a job posting for an assistant cook  
21 that went unfilled for six months. This is just a  
22 little bit of what we're hearing on the ground and we  
23 really need that additional investment.

24 I also wanted to echo what we just heard from  
25 Andrea about the Peg, and we understand it's a

1  
2 difficult city budget year. We understand those  
3 constraints but it's very urgent that DFTA do not  
4 face any cuts under Peg. The system has been  
5 underfunded for many years and only recently we've  
6 been pushing these new initiatives and working to get  
7 more funding into the system. We really can't afford  
8 to lose pace especially with the new RFPs coming out  
9 for home delivered meals in senior centers.

10 So, to reiterate, we want to make sure that we  
11 meet the nutritional needs of New York's growing  
12 older adult population, support a decently paid  
13 workforce, and ensure that programs are paid for the  
14 true cost of running meal programs and that will  
15 include that \$20 million for congregate meals, \$15  
16 million for home delivered meals, as well as the \$10  
17 million in model budget money. So, thank you for  
18 your time and I'm happy to answer any questions.

19 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: Hi. Good morning, my name is  
20 Molly Krakowski. I am Director of Legislative  
21 Affairs at JASA. Thank you for the opportunity to  
22 testify today Chairwoman Chin and members of the  
23 Committee. JASA, for the last fifty years has  
24 provided a whole range of senior services. One of  
25 which is 22 senior centers that we currently are

1  
2 operating. Of those 22-senior centers, we have one  
3 in Manhattan, eight in the Bronx, nine in Brooklyn,  
4 four in Queens. Each center is unique, they vary in  
5 size, demographics, and programs. The senior centers  
6 are inviting setting, they have very diverse  
7 communities in which they are based, and they offer a  
8 whole range of activities health, wellness, and  
9 culturally appropriate meals.

10 We are pleased to have the opportunity to address  
11 the meals specifically today. I'm not going to talk  
12 specifically about home delivered meals, although I  
13 do want to just reiterate what my colleagues have  
14 said, because we do provide home delivered meals,  
15 kosher home delivered meals which have taken a huge  
16 hit and we've faced a huge deficit over the years and  
17 the Council has actually stepped in with speaker  
18 funding for the last few years to help fill some of  
19 that deficit but that shouldn't be the system that we  
20 incur debt and then try and get Council monies to  
21 patch it up.

22 I'm going to focus on the congregate meals. DFTA  
23 senior centers operate with different reimbursement  
24 rates as we heard earlier today, there was a study in  
25 2017 Separate but Unequal, which is an analysis of



1  
2 disparities in the New York City Senior funding. It  
3 was done by Union Settlement and it showed that of  
4 the approximate 250 DFTA senior centers, there was a  
5 wide range of how much their per meal reimbursement  
6 rates were from \$3-6 to \$18 on the top end. All of  
7 JASA's 22 senior centers fall into that \$3-6 range.

8 In addition, as we heard earlier there is that  
9 additional expense for providing culturally  
10 appropriate kosher meals and of our 22 senior  
11 centers, 3 centers provide a kosher meal option, 13  
12 are exclusively kosher centers. Funding has not kept  
13 pace with the growing expense, not with non-kosher  
14 meals, not with kosher meals and our vendors are  
15 asking for increases, which frankly are completely  
16 reasonable, but we just don't have the money to do  
17 it.

18 The senior center contracts don't cover the full  
19 cost of the meal. The underfunding of services  
20 impacts on meal quality, and we know from the people  
21 who come and eat those meals that they say that it  
22 100 percent impacts whether or not they utilize a  
23 center.

24 In January, JASA participated in a roundtable  
25 discussion with other aging service providers in

1  
2 DFTA, I think the Acting Commissioner referenced that  
3 she's been meeting with community providers. The  
4 meeting provided an opportunity to share concerns  
5 about congregate meal services, envision new  
6 possibilities going forward, and we explored  
7 alternate models in meal service delivery and  
8 flexibility as ways to increase utilization and  
9 appeal to individuals who have different eating  
10 habits. You know, we're always trying to find ways  
11 to get more people into the center. Well, what if  
12 there was a salad bar? What if we had vegan options?  
13 What if there were later evening hours instead of the  
14 traditional 11:30-12 o'clock meal. All of those  
15 types of areas were discussed as was the dining  
16 experience. A lot of our centers are not the most  
17 inviting, exciting looking physically spaces that you  
18 want to go into and what could we do to get better  
19 lighting and really increase the appeal of the  
20 facilities.

21 But there was general agreement that all of those  
22 types of improvements and flexibility require an  
23 investment of money and its costly. So, JASA is  
24 joining with the other aging advocates in proposing a  
25 minimum investment of \$20 million in baselined

1 funding for DFTA congregate meals. The funding would  
2 bring meal costs closer to the national average. It  
3 would allow senior centers to operate with adequate  
4 funding for food service delivery staffing and  
5 provide enhanced experience to participants.  
6

7 I want to just touch on Phase 1 of the senior  
8 center model budget helped to begin address the  
9 salary inequity for some staff and insufficient and  
10 varying funding across DFTA contracts, but  
11 unfortunately, not all DFTA contracted senior centers  
12 were included in that initial evaluation. The first  
13 round of funding for the model budget only included  
14 senior centers that received DFTA contracts through  
15 the 2012 senior center RFP.

16 So, what that means is that senior centers that  
17 were originally funded by City Council members and  
18 then were baselined into the New York City budget,  
19 are not included in that initial evaluation in Phase  
20 1. So, there were 38 senior centers which included  
21 those initially baselined funding centers through the  
22 City Council as well as NYCHA social clubs and that's  
23 more or less everybody. They were not even included  
24 in that evaluation, so they received no money for  
25 staff increase. They received no money for their

1  
2 programming and now we're onto Phase 2. Where I  
3 believe that there not being looked at either because  
4 there not considered part of that 249 initial RFP  
5 2012 category and so, I'm concerned, JASA's concerned  
6 that DFTA revisit Phase 1 centers that were not  
7 included in that initial evaluation to make sure that  
8 there all brought up to speed. Most of them have the  
9 same requirements, all of them have almost identical  
10 requirements as any other DFTA senior center and I  
11 say almost all of them because I believe social clubs  
12 fall into a slightly different category, but we need  
13 them to be evaluated.

14 We have senior center directors who have been  
15 working for 20 plus years who are making  
16 significantly less now than their peers at other  
17 senior centers only because of how the senior center  
18 was initially funded. They're all baselined DFTA  
19 senior centers.

20 Finally, as the City tightens funding this year,  
21 we ask that DFTA not be subject to any Pegs. The  
22 agency is already less than half of one percent of  
23 the budget and any cut to DFTA is going to have a  
24 disproportionately negative effect on the community-  
25 based aging service network's ability to meet the

1  
2 needs of New York's growing and diverse population of  
3 older adults.

4       So, I thank you and I thank you for really  
5 calling attention and pushing on what's going on with  
6 this model budget funding.

7       CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you for your  
8 testimony. We will follow up with DFTA on the 38  
9 centers and make sure that they're taken care of.

10       COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And thank you. Before  
11 you go, so much of what we do is such a big help from  
12 the super women at that table. So, we really  
13 appreciate that and a lot of the questions and the  
14 hearings that we focus on come from these  
15 conversations and it's amazing how all of it  
16 connected. When you were talking about if the meal  
17 is not what it's supposed to be, then they won't even  
18 come for the services at the senior center and then  
19 out of the meal at 11:30-12 but then got forbid  
20 Access-A-Ride and all the wonders of that wonderful  
21 program in getting seniors to and then just one after  
22 another and if you have to pull funding from that to  
23 take away from programming and then the programming's  
24 are short, so that's why Chair Chin is always  
25 fighting for an overall increase on the budget

1  
2 because every area needs to be increased and so much  
3 of this is part from the Administration's plan.  
4 That's why we have to keep the pressure up for the  
5 funding for this critical thing. So, thank you for  
6 all of your testimony.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We have also been joined by  
8 Council Member Deutsch and Council Member Treyger.  
9 Do you have any questions or comments? Oh, Council  
10 Member Treyger.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Chair Chin  
12 once again for your outstanding leadership and  
13 drawing attention to these very pressing issues. I  
14 just want a quick commentary and agree with the  
15 points raised by our great champions for seniors with  
16 regards to how DFTA's budget is small when compared  
17 to many other of our city agencies and departments  
18 and so any potential Peg will have a disproportionate  
19 impact on our most vulnerable populations which we  
20 can't afford and also to the Chair's credit, she's  
21 been drawing attention to the fact that with the  
22 continued emergence and growth of these social adult  
23 daycares, it becomes even that much more pressing  
24 that we stand by and stick by our senior centers and  
25 our senior providers because it's now becoming a very

1  
2 pressing, almost an emergency situation in terms of  
3 just maintaining, staying afloat, to provide critical  
4 services to our seniors. I want to thank all of you  
5 for drawing attention to this, for your work, and I  
6 can assure you that our Chair will not allow really  
7 anything to hurt our seniors. So, thank you all for  
8 your great advocacy and your leadership. Thanks  
9 Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, Council Member  
11 Treyger because we have strong Committee members and  
12 our Committee has grown. So, we're definitely going  
13 to get more Council Members to join us in this fight  
14 for more funding. Council Member Deutsch?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you. I'm sorry  
16 I'm late, I just have like three hearings at the same  
17 time and a fourth one just came up. I just want to  
18 first of all commend our Chair who does an amazing,  
19 amazing job advocating for our seniors and that also  
20 goes with all the advocates and all the people that  
21 are here today.

22 I just wanted to give a little statement and just  
23 to say that, as we see the advocates and if you're  
24 sitting in the room, you don't have to wait for a  
25 hearing to bring up any issues that you have because

1  
2 there's so many things going on and when you bring up  
3 like ten or fifteen things that are being discussed  
4 at a hearing, it becomes kind of mixed messages. Not  
5 really mixed messages but confusing and also, it's  
6 very difficult to do fifteen things to make sure we  
7 get done on all those issues.

8       So, if we have anything, like even before a  
9 hearing or after a hearing to bring these issues to  
10 the elected officials and this way we can tackle it  
11 as they come and deal with it because sometimes  
12 dealing with agencies, there's so much red tape and  
13 bureaucracy that it takes a lot more than a hearing  
14 to fight for certain issues that come up at an Aging  
15 hearing.

16       So, I just want to encourage anyone that when you  
17 do have anything that you want to be addressed, let's  
18 tackle it one at a time and this way we can actually  
19 get the results that we need and also, working with  
20 Department of Aging, we have a very good relationship  
21 with them, with Caryn Resnick, so a lot of it has to  
22 do beyond her, it has to do with the budget, and this  
23 is something we need to tackle.

24       So, I just want to say thank you again because  
25 I'm sure you're here, you're not getting paid for



1  
2 being here but an hour to week, so it's very  
3 important for us that you're all here today and  
4 taking of your time and to address many of the issues  
5 that affect our seniors. So, thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member Deutsch, we  
7 continue to strategize with our advocates and  
8 especially this year. So, we're going to be calling  
9 on you to help us to.

10 We wanted to see if you have some data in terms  
11 of your members, the providers in the center that you  
12 run in terms of the over costs for the food? Like  
13 you're running a deficit? Like, it would be good if  
14 we can get some data in terms of which centers are  
15 running a deficit because of the food costs not being  
16 covered, because sometime at the end of the fiscal  
17 year, they go to DFTA then DFTA somehow finds some  
18 money or they let the Council know that oh, we need  
19 your continued support with discretionary funding to  
20 cover that because I think the administration  
21 baselined a portion of it last year but still, I mean  
22 the Council initiative is still over \$2 million.

23 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: I think that's a great  
24 question. I think the point raised today about the  
25 information that is now available online, which we

1  
2 all are taking a look at closely about, that's a  
3 really good starting point to know where we're  
4 starting and then looking at what the Council has  
5 funded over time through initiatives as well as  
6 talking with our members. I think that's something  
7 we can work on together to help provide information  
8 on.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That will be great.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Especially since we  
11 didn't get any. This way we can get some from you.

12 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: It's a range but I could get it  
13 to you. I could get you the actual numbers but I did  
14 want to mention that when you asked the question of  
15 the Acting Commissioner about the number of centers  
16 that requested money specifically for food, to be  
17 careful, I think it's a drop misleading in the sense  
18 that the budgets were all submitted, they had to be  
19 resubmitted multiple times, there were things that  
20 were not allowed to be asked for. So, I don't think  
21 that the fact that twelve eventually ended up getting  
22 funding or pleading for funding for food related  
23 expenses necessarily translates into the fact that  
24 all of those centers and sites wouldn't have or  
25

1  
2 didn't initially include requests for funding related  
3 to food staff and concerns.

4 I think it's a little bit tricky then that. I  
5 mean we eventually submitted budgets that we knew  
6 were within the guides of what we needed to submit  
7 and certainly needed that funding to go towards, and  
8 we're very grateful for the funding that we received  
9 for the centers that received the funding.

10 TARA KLEIN: Yeah, and I'd agree. I think the  
11 overarching goal of the model budget process is to  
12 promote fairness across the system and to kind of  
13 provide infrastructure building across the entire  
14 system and as Molly pointed out adding to that, the  
15 38 centers that weren't even evaluated and so I think  
16 and I know that there was a push to get funding out  
17 the door quicker than probably would have liked to  
18 have been, you know, would have liked to take more  
19 time but I think especially in this next Phase, I  
20 think that's a really important point to look at. To  
21 make sure that all centers that are receiving funding  
22 have information that they know what they can do with  
23 the funding because I think you're right. I think  
24 you know the idea was that it was to be directed  
25 toward staff and programming and you know, that's

1  
2 what most were told and thought and going back later  
3 and trying to negotiate, I think a lot of centers  
4 would have liked that flexibility but you know, we  
5 understand the time constraints but I think in the  
6 spirit of fairness across I'm hoping that we can do  
7 that in a broader way and especially with the round  
8 with meals here. So, I think that's a good point.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, thank you. Thank you  
10 for your advocacy and thank you for coming to testify  
11 today. Oh, Council Member Rose. Well, Staten Island  
12 did get a mention earlier.

13 Okay, we have Rocky Chin from AARP, Brenda  
14 Gardner AARP, Po-Ling Ng from CPC Open Door Senior  
15 Center.

16 Okay, you can begin.

17 ROCKY CHIN: Good afternoon. I'm here  
18 representing AARP and I'm really happy that we're  
19 having this discussion. It's an ongoing discussion  
20 and my colleague and the staff member Chris Widelo,  
21 who is over there, can also help me answer questions  
22 if you have any.

23 I'm going to cut testimony a little bit because  
24 we're running over but it was excellent running over  
25 because we really appreciate the robust advocacy of

1  
2 our Chairperson of the City Council Committee here on  
3 Aging but also all the Committee members. We really,  
4 really do want to appreciate the partnership the  
5 partnership that we have.

6 My name is Rocky Chin, I am a member of the AARP  
7 Executive Council for New York State. You should  
8 know that we have members upstate today as well and  
9 all this week advocating for 50 plus.

10 On behalf of our over 800,000 members age 50 and  
11 older in New York City, I want to thank you for the  
12 opportunity to talk about congregate and home  
13 delivered meals in New York City and just echoing,  
14 AARP wants to just echo the concerns and the needs of  
15 the advocates that have become before and that are  
16 going to speak today from the senior centers about  
17 the need to increase the funding for congregate and  
18 home delivered meals.

19 So, I'm going to just focus on the highlight the  
20 demographic need. I think you mentioned this many  
21 times before but it's worth mentioning again. Why we  
22 need to do better in the area of nutrition for older  
23 adults in New York City.

24 Today, AARP, in partnership with the Center for  
25 an Urban Future, will release a new detailed brief

1  
2 about the aging of the population in cities and  
3 counties across New York State. Our analysis finds  
4 that older adults are the fastest growing segment of  
5 the population statewide. Over the past decade, the  
6 number of New Yorkers aged 65 and over increased by  
7 647,000 or 26 percent and during the same period, the  
8 state's overall population grew by just 3 percent.  
9 There are now more New Yorkers age 65 and older  
10 statewide than there are children under the age of  
11 13.

12 I have included a few maps at the end of the  
13 printed testimony to illustrate the aging trend in  
14 New York City for those 65 plus and 85 plus and  
15 there's actually an extra map there that we printed.

16 Additionally, this older population is much more  
17 diverse. In New York City, the older immigrant  
18 population has grown even faster, increasing 42  
19 percent over the past decade and I should just add  
20 here that AARP earlier in the year, in 2018, released  
21 a very important study working with partners  
22 addressing desperate impact on communities of color  
23 and that's a very important initiative. So, we in  
24 New York are very aware of that.

25

1  
2 Our congregate and home delivered programs are  
3 really as had been said before, on the front line of  
4 ensuring older adults in New York City receive well  
5 balanced meals every day and also, a key component of  
6 independence and aging in place. For some, it is  
7 often the only hot meal they will receive. Without  
8 congregate and home delivered meals, thousands of New  
9 York City residents will go hungry every day. So, it  
10 is crucial as you have said, and as you have  
11 advocated in the City Council, that New York City  
12 keep pace with increased funds associated with  
13 improving these services and providing essential  
14 services.

15 So, we cannot continually ask our senior centers  
16 providing congregate meals and home delivered meal  
17 providers to do more with less. You have already  
18 heard from the providers about the obstacles they  
19 face every day. Increased food cost, unfunded  
20 mandates on kitchens, the low wages, etc.

21 When it comes to nutrition, New York City has  
22 made great strides to streamline the SNAP process for  
23 low income residents across the city who meet  
24 eligibility requirements. We should take pride that  
25 in our public schools, students have access to

1  
2 nutritional meals, free of charge and during the  
3 summer, anyone under the age of 18 can receive free  
4 breakfast or lunch at hundreds of public schools,  
5 parks, pools, and libraries across the city. So,  
6 isn't it time that New York City strive to ensure  
7 that no older adult goes without a nutritious meal?  
8 A step toward that goal is ensuring that our core  
9 programs, as we we've talked about today, congregate  
10 and home delivered meal are positioned for success  
11 and a major part of that is adequate funding.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today  
13 and we look forward to partnering with you as we come  
14 back to City Hall, as we go to the Mayor's office, as  
15 we go all over the state but we really agree with you  
16 that now is the time to really address this inequity  
17 in terms of funding for these programs. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you for your  
19 testimony and really wanted to thank AARP for their  
20 support at our hearings and definitely we need you at  
21 the state. We got to get the state to deliver to.  
22 Thank you.

23 PO-LING NG: Good afternoon. My lovely  
24 **[INAUDIBLE 2:38:45]** and Margaret Chin, Chair and a  
25 member of the City Council. Thank you for giving us



1 the opportunity to you know, listen to our voice.

2 This means I really want you to open your heart and  
3 open your ear to listen to us and give us a hand to  
4 solve all the problems.  
5

6 My name is Po-Ling Ng. I am on behalf of the  
7 Chinese American Planning Council. Also, you know,  
8 and I am a member of the AARP and also, you're the  
9 settlement house because I really love to serve the  
10 seniors so that's why I stay in the senior job for 50  
11 years.

12 I enjoy my life because I'm thinking about  
13 seniors so lovely but because that I supply  
14 wonderful, quantity and quality service for our  
15 sisters and brothers. But today I really want to  
16 talk about the budget otherwise because today is the  
17 budget hearing, but I really thank you to the Council  
18 and really regarding about the model budget.

19 Relating to the food and the staff and also for  
20 the congregate meal, Meals on Wheels but I tell you a  
21 really good story, thank you who support all Open  
22 Door. The Open Door open our door in 1972 but at the  
23 beginning we [inaudible 2:41:27] the social services.  
24 No Meals on Wheels, no congregate meals. Until 1979,  
25 our senior thinking about, they are very poor. They

1  
2 only depend on the social security. At that time,  
3 there was no SSI. How could they survive? So,  
4 that's why we had the lobby and go into the  
5 Department for the Aging and fight for the congregate  
6 meal. Finally, they listened to us, gave us the  
7 congregate meal since 1979. But in 1980, I'm so  
8 happy, because our former Mayor, everyone knows,  
9 Mayor Koch. Mayor Koch and our Commissioner Center  
10 come to open door for **[inaudible 2:42:48]**. At that  
11 time, our cook really cooked a chicken. Then you  
12 know, the Mayor Koch and said the **[inaudible 2:43:06]**  
13 I taste. I said, definitely, you are the Mayor and  
14 then she tasted our food. Oh, such wonderful. Really  
15 delicious. At that time, I said, Mayor, right now is  
16 a good time. I ask you the money. I said that  
17 Mayor, you are so lucky you had the chance to taste  
18 our food but how about a handicap person? They are  
19 low income. They don't leave for long, they stay  
20 home. Nobody takes good care of them. They are the  
21 hunger. They are the lonely person. Who care of  
22 them?

23 They say, Po-Ling, what are you talking about. I  
24 said, you are very smart. I knew you'd give me  
25 money. If you give me money, I will provide service

1  
2 to the senior. You know that Mayor Koch always meets  
3 up with me. We keep smiling and talk and I say, at  
4 that time, Mayor Koch said Po-Ling, how could I help  
5 you sending no money. I said, Mayor, you're very  
6 smart. You don't have money, but you know a lot of  
7 very rich business men and a very rich person. What  
8 are you don't understand to direct the money? Use  
9 that money for the Meals on Wheels.

10 At that time, Mayor Koch said, Po-Ling why are  
11 you that smart. You're so smart. Okay, let me start  
12 to do my job. Then, she reached people in raising  
13 money. 1980, just you know, three months later, we  
14 get the money. Meals on Wheels start. Open Door is  
15 the first Meals on Wheels provider. It's 38 years  
16 already but I'm so happy they helped me, but I am  
17 really disappointed because last year, the OMB, thank  
18 you the City Council, you know, Margaret Chin,  
19 everyone, fight for \$10,000 for the money for 249  
20 senior centers. 223 get the money, but Open Door get  
21 zero.

22 So, that's why I'm so angry. I'm so angry. I  
23 tell you. I do a good job. Without me, how could  
24 you have the Meals on Wheels program. My gosh, but  
25 Meals on Wheels program, [inaudible 2:24:14] and you

1  
2 know, there is a lot of a poor area. They need the  
3 service. Why I cannot get one dime. I'm so angry.  
4 Then Margaret Chin, very good, because we enter her  
5 district. I always keep calling her. I need her in  
6 the district. I said to Margaret, Margaret, you are  
7 the Chairperson. You know how we do a wonderful job,  
8 why we cannot get any money? But they said that oh,  
9 Po-Ling because you do a wonderful job so that's why  
10 you cannot get any money.

11 That's fair, no. I do a good job, so give me  
12 more money. Not penalty of me. So, that's why I  
13 tell you last year, I did not get any money. I give  
14 you the trouble because you know, talking about Meals  
15 on Wheels, they only give us Monday through Friday  
16 seven dollars and seventeen cents per meal including  
17 everything. But again, we give our first seven meals  
18 away. Again, Saturday and Sunday only to **[inaudible**  
19 **2:49:22]** \$3.92. \$3.92, that including personal,  
20 personal salary, fringe benefits, and health  
21 installments. My friend, you know that [inaudible  
22 2:49:49] salary is \$15.00 an hour but all my kitchen  
23 staff just get the \$15.00 an hour. Someone worked  
24 for me 42 years, still gets the \$15.00 an hour. You  
25 think that's fair? You think that's fair? 42 years

1 still \$15.00. I'm don't compare, I just saying my  
2 problem and the fringe benefits, everyone said that  
3 why do you go to work? We want to get the Medicaid,  
4 it's better to go to work but if they go to work,  
5 that employer should ensure their health insurance.  
6 You know how much money we pay. Single, we pay about  
7 \$10,000 for each employee. Most of them for family  
8 plan. Family plan is pay more than \$20,000 a year.

9  
10 May I ask you, you have the very good math. Only  
11 \$3.92, how could you pay the personal, pay the  
12 medical fee, and pay the medical installments and  
13 food costs, everything including. I am not a super  
14 lady, I try to be, but you know, last year I  
15 **[inaudible 2:52:07]** more than \$100,000. Thank God, I  
16 keep calling, calling, and post Margaret Chin.  
17 Margaret Chin said Po-Ling I know you're so, so poor.  
18 I really want to help you, poor lady because I help  
19 you, means that I help the elderly. Later on, she  
20 gave me some money. I still shy of more about  
21 \$40,000 but I talked to my sponsor agents. My  
22 sponsor agent said that the director responsibility.  
23 Funding don't give to you. The City Council don't  
24 give to you. Go ahead, **[inaudible 2:53:15]** and give  
25 you the money.

1  
2           So, that's why I tell you, I know everyone  
3 because I'm the special member of the AARP because  
4 I'm one of them.

5           So, you see, yeah, not only, **[inaudible 2:53:51]**  
6 you know, for China town and all east side. I will  
7 try for deliver for meals. They had attack because  
8 we should go door to door to deliver meals. When the  
9 vehicle parked in front of the building, they come  
10 down to get the ticket. Who pays the ticket? The  
11 budget, no money to pay the ticket. The first vote,  
12 they said for us to try to pay by themselves. I  
13 said, that [inaudible 2:54:44]. So, that's why you  
14 know, how about parking.

15           CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Po-Ling, you got to wrap up  
16 because you got to save some of the story for the  
17 budget, the real budget hearing in March, because I  
18 still have another panel.

19           PO-LING NG: Ah, oh, right now I'm thinking on  
20 behalf of all of you because I'm a member of the  
21 AARP. You give your time to me and so that's why I  
22 just said that you know. The Councilperson, special,  
23 all of you, you know, why I come here and raising my  
24 voice. Money, money, money, no money cannot run the  
25 program, so that's why I'm saying to you. I need the

1  
2 money. I need the money to provide quantity and  
3 quality services. I really want you to follow the  
4 Mayor Koch's way to do it. Listen to Po-Ling's voice  
5 and give us the money. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Po-Ling. Make sure  
7 you come back for the budget hearing on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

8 BRENDA GARDNER: Thank you Po-Ling as a colleague  
9 in AARP, I'm delighted to meet you and hear you.  
10 Council Chairwoman Chin and Council Members of the  
11 Aging. My name is Brenda Gardner. I am yes, a  
12 volunteer with AARP but what I want to just really  
13 quickly tell you is a personal anecdote about food.  
14 I'm limiting it to this.

15 I am 74-years-young, and I know that and that's  
16 one of the reasons I'm saying it and part of it is  
17 because I am very independent and tend to go. A lot  
18 of our older seniors are frail and need these  
19 programs. I, in 2016, had a second bout with cancer.  
20 In 2006 I had the first one, did not need services.  
21 I managed when I was younger to get through it.

22 In 2016, I had the chemotherapy and was much  
23 weakened in terms of just getting through the illness  
24 and my independence was alright, don't be so proud,  
25 you need help and through on core services at the

1  
2 46<sup>th</sup> Street Center, they gave me Meals on Wheels and  
3 the volunteers who delivered daily, except for  
4 Sunday, were incredible. We got the meals for  
5 Sunday's on Saturday and it's something that I - it  
6 was almost a year I think that I stayed with it. I  
7 think I stayed with it for nine months and then I  
8 felt I could deal with this myself again and didn't  
9 use it, but I was very frail during that time and it  
10 really saved me. I'm just going to say it like that  
11 because it is nutritious. So, that's my personal  
12 anecdote that I really think it should be something  
13 that should be continued. It came out of the senior  
14 center, since then, I think they got delivered these  
15 meals that were sent. I mean, fresh direct is one  
16 now that I've heard and sometimes people say are  
17 better than the one, we used. That's something that  
18 again, will be the costs stuff that I think, we  
19 should definitely, I am for it.

20 Thank you for listening to my anecdote.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you for your testimony.  
22 Thank you for being here. Okay, we have one last  
23 panel. Lui Yok Tim from Hamilton Madison House  
24 Center, Theodora Ziongas [SP?] from also Hamilton

25



1  
2 Madison House and Edward Ma, City Hall Senior Center,  
3 Hamilton Madison House.

4 THEODORA ZIONGAS: Good afternoon. Po-Ling is  
5 certainly a hard act to follow. My name is Theodora  
6 Ziongas and I'm the new Assistant Executive Director  
7 for Older Adults and Community Services at Hamilton  
8 Madison House. As you know, Hamilton Madison House  
9 was established in 1898 as a voluntary nonprofit  
10 settlement house dedicated to improving the quality  
11 of life of the residents in the two bridges community  
12 China Town area of Manhattans lower east side. We  
13 speak the many languages of the community and serve  
14 more than 8,000 children and adults annually.

15 We have been around the community for 120 years  
16 continually serving the needs of our residents. We  
17 want to thank the New York City Council for their  
18 continuing support of our Senior programs and  
19 especially the Chair of the Aging Committee, Margaret  
20 Chin for being such a strong advocate for older  
21 adults.

22 I remember the year of the senior and how great  
23 strides were achieved to increased funding for  
24 seniors and care givers in New York City, but we  
25 still have many challenges and increased funding is

1  
2 critical to continue and expand the needs of the  
3 services we provide.

4 Services provided to the seniors age 60 and over  
5 in the community comprise a large part of our program  
6 offerings. In addition, to the Smith and  
7 Knickerbocker NORC programs, we operate the large  
8 City Hall Senior Center at 100 Gold street as well as  
9 three satellite senior centers.

10 The meals provided at our senior centers are  
11 critical to the health and wellbeing of the seniors  
12 in our community. We are consistently oversubscribed  
13 for both the breakfast and the lunch services  
14 creating many challenges for us as we struggle to  
15 meet the growing needs of our community which will  
16 only increase.

17 Over the past five years, we have provided over a  
18 half a million total meals, which is close 30,000  
19 above what we had projected. So, annually, we  
20 provide over 5 percent above what we are budgeted  
21 for.

22 So, we cannot continue without some additional  
23 support. Health is wealth and our goal are to  
24 provide the support allowing our seniors to remain as  
25 active and engaged in our communities for as long as

1 possible with as much dignity as possible. We are  
2 facing increasing challenges in achieving our goals  
3 as prices for nutritious food increase in the number  
4 of seniors seeking our services continues to  
5 increase. So, it's a double whammy. The cost of raw  
6 food has risen in the past few years, yet the  
7 allocation has not. The cost of paper goods instead  
8 of Styrofoam is another added expense.

9  
10 Although we offer many health promotions,  
11 education, recreation and other case work and health  
12 management services, the meals are the important glue  
13 that binds all of this together.

14 As seniors come to our centers for our nutritious  
15 meals, they will remain for our exercise programs.  
16 They socialize and create new friendships, decrease  
17 their emotional isolation and maintain important  
18 connections to the community.

19 They will turn to us if they have additional  
20 needs as well, since we become a trusted local  
21 resource. We cannot continue to provide the level of  
22 service we do without additional funding in the years  
23 ahead. Not only are the prices for nutritious food  
24 increasing, we are serving more individuals each  
25 year. Continuity is also vital as we struggle to

1  
2 maintain committed kitchen and custodial staff at our  
3 centers. That is really critical, and we've heard a  
4 lot today about minimum wage. These individuals  
5 provide vital services and there much more than just  
6 cooking the meals.

7 Additional funding for cost of living increases  
8 is also essential in allowing us to do so. In our  
9 case, meeting the needs of our diverse population  
10 also requires hiring bilingual staff, which often is  
11 a challenge and additional funding is vital to  
12 helping us maintain this very dedicated staff and you  
13 also mentioned volunteers play a hugely vital role in  
14 helping us meet our needs.

15 Thank you very much for this opportunity to  
16 testify. I am also accompanied today by 13 seniors  
17 from our center which only represent of the many  
18 thousands that we serve and show how dedicated they  
19 are to our programs and I'm also accompanied by 2  
20 seniors who would like to testify. Mr. Lui and Mr.  
21 Ma. So, I'd like to introduce them.

22 LUI YOK TIM: Good afternoon ladies and  
23 gentlemen, bosses, we don't get that much more people  
24 sitting around so, I will be fast, quick and simple  
25 okay.

1  
2 My name is Lui Yok Tim. I am a member and  
3 volunteer at the Hamilton Madison House Smith Senior  
4 Center. I attend the senior center every day of the  
5 week. I enjoy helping to serve lunch and host bingo  
6 and karaoke activities.

7 After lunch, I encourage the seniors to  
8 participate in other activities and have fun. Okay,  
9 I believe the new program is very important to all  
10 our seniors not just our center, to all of the senior  
11 centers in New York City to help us to get our  
12 nutrition. Some of the seniors are not physically  
13 fit to cook at home for themselves, so they come to  
14 our center to have lunch.

15 As a volunteer, I feel proud to be able to help  
16 them. I hope there will be more funding. Just for  
17 funding okay, for our seniors to have good,  
18 nutritious meals and stay healthy. Thanks for the  
19 attention, that's all I want to say.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you. There  
21 are also people watching at home.

22 LUI YOK TIM: Oh, wait, I want to ask one  
23 question about that lady over there. Okay, you were  
24 telling me you had chemotherapy, right? I tell you I  
25 was a cancer patient back in 2013. I needed

1  
2 radiation and chemotherapy. I was supposed to die in  
3 2013 but I made it. My surgeon, my doctors say, nine  
4 patients out of ten, they cannot survive but I'm the  
5 last one and this country gave me a half a million  
6 dollars sitting here talking to you today. So, I'm  
7 proud to be a senior and try to get more funding for  
8 our seniors.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, thank you, thank  
10 you. We're glad that you are health and strong and  
11 volunteering and contributing to our community.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Right, thanks.

13 EDWARD MA: Thank you honorable Council Member  
14 Chair and Committee for today. I have been attending  
15 this hearing so many times, but this is the first  
16 time so touching. The real, real active and vigorous  
17 and touching the point. The meal, the food, it's  
18 very, very - I'm so glad you know, Council Member  
19 Vallone, especially from him I learn. I know you  
20 more, better than I know you in the general  
21 community. I really appreciate your leadership, your  
22 quality of your leadership. You really perform and  
23 understanding the need of the senior and I'm so happy  
24 myself as a senior, I have been 10 years in the  
25 Hamilton Madison Senior House Center. Actually, I

1  
2 was a volunteer 50 years ago volunteer teaching at  
3 the Hamilton Madison House Senior Center. So, after  
4 social work school graduate, I also I was doing  
5 volunteer for Hamilton Madison House as the Committee  
6 of Mental Health advisory board Chair for almost 20  
7 years and then became a Human Rights Commissioner for  
8 6 years. Now, today, as a member of City Hall Senior  
9 Center and I myself, have two things to testify. The  
10 food, so important because in the beginning, many  
11 years ago, we got six pieces shrimps. Now, we got  
12 three and it's shrinking, and I was so happy, and  
13 Councilwoman Chin and the budget is so important.  
14 I'm so happy you are trying to **[inaudible 3:14:51]** a  
15 system of graduates of the budget, the increase  
16 automatically annually without request. Who knows,  
17 you know the budget increase and another thing, also  
18 the - now before we get shrimp once a month now, we  
19 get two months if you're lucky. When the center is  
20 serving the shrimp or some fish, you know what, for  
21 450 people. It used to be 300. I was surprised, how  
22 did it get word of mouth to people. I'm a regular  
23 that go there, some couldn't get the meal ticket.

24 LUI YOK TIM: Could you stop one minute.

25

1  
2 EDWARD MA: I was saying Margaret will tell you  
3 because of budget cut. That's why you get three  
4 shrimp.

5 LUI YOK TIM: Yes, yes, yes, and also the second  
6 one. I used to come here after my retirement. I  
7 have my wife also to get more food. I eat leftover,  
8 so I don't want to go to senior center. Now, after  
9 many years, I feel I have to go to senior center  
10 because why, for fresh food and for meeting people or  
11 get in program because getting the people and that's  
12 why I feel I'm missing something, so I go to there to  
13 meet the people, to read papers, and sing karaoke and  
14 I'm very happy and I feel my retirement is the best  
15 year for my life. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you and also Mr.  
17 Ma is the karaoke champion at City Hall Senior  
18 Center, but thank you so much for being here today  
19 and I just wanted to remind you that budget hearing  
20 for the Committee on Aging is on March 12<sup>th</sup>, ten  
21 o'clock in the morning and the public will be able to  
22 testify hopefully before noon. So, I encourage more  
23 seniors to come and tell your story because we wanted  
24 to get it on the record and to make sure that we'll  
25 be able to fight for more funding for senior services



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this year. So, thank you all again for being here  
today.

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 April 1, 2018