

Testimony of Jennifer Geiling
Mayor's Office of Contract Services
Before the New York City Council Committee on Contracts
Jointly with the Committees on Aging and Youth Services
Oversight Hearing T2020-6239
June 23, 2020

Good morning Chairs Kallos, Chin and Rose and members of the Committees on Contracts, Aging and Youth Services. My name is Jennifer Geiling, and I serve as the Deputy Director for Policy and Partnerships at the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS). Thank you for providing MOCS with this opportunity to share the role our agency played in supporting human services providers during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

I'd like to begin by noting that COVID-19 amplified the significance and relevance of the work that MOCS has pursued over the years. Digital procurement, centralized guidance, standard practices and collaboration were key to nonprofit business continuity during COVID-19.

Nonprofit organizations that had teams dispersed across the five boroughs, working from home on laptops and cell phones, were able to maintain operations with the City because of online systems like PASSPort and HHS Accelerator, digital practices like electronic signatures and electronic invoicing, and Citywide coordination and guidance that was informed by provider input.

The pandemic made it clearer than ever that we need to permanently institutionalize digital procurement through PASSPort and continue our efforts to create accessible and standard practices for all of our vendors.

Turning our attention to the City's COVID-19 human services response, we all remember the tremendous disruption and uncertainty that ensued at the onset of the pandemic in mid-March. The City responded rapidly to support our critical human service providers, stabilize the sector and leverage communication channels. A centralized team, the C-19 Response Team, focusing exclusively on business continuity for human services providers, was formed with MOCS, the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and the Offices of the Deputy Mayors of Health and Human Services and Strategic Policy Initiatives.

Within a matter of days, we were able to reassure providers that their payments would continue uninterrupted as they worked with their contracting agencies on plans to deliver services in that fluid and uncertain environment. We met daily with City procurement and finance leadership to realize this goal. Over the course of the emergency response, from March 13 – May 31, the City disbursed more than \$755 million to the sector to support cash flow and allow for financial flexibility, paying more than 9,100 invoices and initiating nearly 1,360 budget

advances. As of today, nearly \$900 million has been disbursed to human services nonprofits through nearly 14,000 invoice and advance transactions since March 13.

The C-19 Response Team also immediately issued guidance to ease administrative practices – allowing contracts to flow through the system and business to continue. Over the course of eleven (11) weeks of emergency response, we issued seven (7) guidance documents to the sector, targeted at ongoing business practices and maintaining the health and stability of our provider partner organizations.

It was critical that our hundreds of providers received information and updates quickly and clearly, given the shifting nature of the pandemic, and had an established pathway to communicate with the City. We created a staffed, centralized service desk to respond to business questions and triage concerns. Agency COVID-19 Liaisons were identified in each Health and Human Services (HHS) City agency with whom we could coordinate rapid responses and bring open questions to resolution. COVID-19 Liaisons met at least bi-weekly as a full workgroup to address sector-wide provider concerns and establish responses. We quickly created a webpage to offer up-to-date information from our team and across the City that pertained directly to human services business continuity, health and safety practices, and City resources.

We also enabled partnership and information sharing through weekly conversations with more than 25 nonprofit membership associations, representing hundreds of nonprofit organizations. And, in addition to those weekly conversations, we reached out almost daily to share critical updates in between scheduled video calls.

It was through these channels that we heard about many of the challenges the sector's essential workforce was experiencing – which enabled us to take fast action. We secured emergency child-care through Regional Enrichment Centers and access to isolation hotels and testing for HHS provider staff. And, just this week, we are coordinating with more than 800 providers to distribute seven (7) million face coverings for nonprofit staff and clients.

Recognizing the critical role of disinfecting supplies and safety equipment in this period, the C-19 Response Team immediately advised that the City would reimburse providers for these expenses. We developed a standard approach – applicable across the City's HHS agencies – to maintain documentation and submit invoices, all in an effort to ensure prompt payment of expenses and save time down the line in reporting to FEMA or other oversight and response agencies.

The COVID-19 response underscored the significance of many long standing MOCS initiatives and our work to implement a digital procurement process with centralized practices, standard policies and vendor partnership.

That is why, as the City continues to move to reopen and then into recovery, MOCS will continue to pursue its mission and support human services providers through signature efforts: the continuing roll out of new PASSPort features that will realize an end-to-end digital procurement system across the City of New York, streamlining and standardizing audit practices and invoice review, partnering in the City Implementation Team for the Indirect Cost Rate

Funding Initiative, managing HHS Accelerator, and centralizing support for agency CFOs to enable providers to maximize cash flow through budget management and invoice practices.

Beginning next month – HHS Accelerator will facilitate the disbursement of automatic advances at the start of Fiscal Year 2021 for registered contracts and approved budgets – a new initiative that the City instituted to support nonprofit cash flow during COVID-19 reopening and recovery. Said another way, the City of New York will be issuing 25% budget advances – automatically and without any request by providers – for all Fiscal Year 2021 registered HHS contracts and approved budgets. This is money up front and early that will allow for business flexibility and liquidity.

Later this summer, MOCS will issue guidance on streamlining invoice review to continue expediting payments through FY21. We are proud to be working on this policy with our City agency partners who were instrumental in our coordinated efforts during COVID-19. The upcoming guidance is informed by provider experience during COVID-19 and we want to acknowledge their partnership and open conversation which enables this work.

In summary, the City's COVID-19 human services response highlighted the necessity and relevance of many long standing initiatives and values – digital procurement, centralized coordination, standard policies, communication and partnership. As we move forward, we will continue to hold these values while also providing the kinds of outreach, technical support, and personalized guidance that helped so many providers sustain operations during the emergency while developing new and enhanced tools to make it easier for the nonprofit human services sector to do business with the City of New York.

Thank you for this opportunity to share the important work we pursued in collaboration with our City agency and nonprofit partners. I am joined today by Erin Villari, Deputy Director of Financial Services at MOCS and colleagues from the Department for the Aging (DFTA) and Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). We look forward to answering any questions you may have about our human services response during COVID-19.



Testimony of Marjorie D. Parker, President and CEO of JobsFirstNYC before the NYC Council Committees' on Youth Services, Aging, and Contracts for a Joint Hearing on Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit Contracting during a Pandemic held on June 23, 2020

Good afternoon Chairperson Debi Rose, Chairperson Margaret Chin, Chairperson Ben Kallos and distinguished members of the Youth Services, Aging, and Contracts committees. My name is Marjorie Parker and I am the President and CEO of JobsFirstNYC, a non-profit intermediary that creates and advances solutions that break down barriers and transform the systems supporting young adults and their communities in the pursuit of economic opportunities.

According to a recent analysis from NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, the unemployment rate in May 2020 among young people, ages 16 to 24, has skyrocketed during the pandemic, rising to 35.2% from its pre-pandemic rate of 6.6%. In contrast, the unemployment rate among workers 55 and older rose from a pre-pandemic rate of 3.1% to 14.1%, 5.8 percentage points lower than the overall City's rate. For young adults, a recession can have much longer lasting consequences. For example, young adults have more difficulty than usual entering the workforce or maintaining a job held at the onset of a recession. Extended delay in employment can reduce asset accumulation over their lifetimes. And young adults today may be even harder hit than in previous generations, because they carry more student loan debt, on average, than previous generations of young adults. This reality requires all of the city's resources to ensure that another generation is not left behind.

To understand the breadth of the pandemic's economic impact on young adults, their communities, and the organizations that support them, JobsFirstNYC conducted interviews with leaders from 68 of our partner institutions. The resulting report, called *The Early Impact of COVID-19 on Young Adult Workforce Development: Insights from the Field*, shares the insights we collected, articulates emerging questions that the young adult workforce development field is now grappling with, and offers recommendations to ensure that young adults and their communities are not left behind. You can read the report on our website [www.jobsfirstnyc.org] or click this link: [The Early Impact of COVID-19 on Young Adult Workforce Development: Insights from the Field](#).

However, before sharing our key findings and recommendations for the City Council, JobsFirstNYC must share its disappointment and concern by the lack of leadership from the city to invest in New York City's out-of-school and out-of-work population. The New York City Council passed a [Resolution](#) that was enacted on April 25, 2017, which charged Mayor De Blasio to launch a *NYC Disconnected Youth Task Force* that would work to develop a single-system strategy with real investment to address the full needs of our city's most vulnerable and left behind young adults. A first report, which has not come, was due to the City Council on March 1, 2018. We again call on your leadership to advocate for the needs of young adults who lack a champion and need access to education, postsecondary training, and employment opportunities now more than ever. Despite the urgent need for immediate action to get through the COVID-19 storm, the workforce development community must also focus on developing a coherent long-term vision for preparing young adults to fully participate in the civic and economic life of New York City. Young adults, the nonprofits that serve them, and the businesses that employ them are facing unprecedented challenges.

Our latest report found the following 7 Insights that should inform the City Council's approach:

1. Household finances are declining rapidly as COVID-19 exacerbates preexisting inequalities in the areas of food, housing, health, and financial insecurity.
2. Having a job has become a matter of life and death, not just employment.
3. The pandemic is causing young adults to face greater competition for jobs, internships, and work-based learning experiences.
4. Young adults and nonprofit staff are facing rising mental and physical health needs.
5. The transition to remote teaching and learning is not meeting all of the needs of young adults and will negatively affect their skills training and educational progress.
6. Funding is flexible right now, but nonprofits are bracing for drastic public funding cuts.
7. The future of the labor market is uncertain, leaving workforce providers and jobseekers without a roadmap.

To address the issues unfolding in communities across New York City and leaving many young adults behind, the New York City Council should consider the following recommendations:

1. **Hold the line on cutting funding for critical programs and convert current funding to general operating support for at least the next year.** Nonprofits are using existing resources to provide emergency funds that they have not budgeted for, all the while facing reduced philanthropic funding and looming budget cuts. To maintain these emergency services alongside current programming efforts, funders must convert program-specific funding into general operating support. This will ensure that nonprofits not only survive this crisis but can nimbly respond to the emerging needs in communities that are unraveling in real time.

2. **Create opportunities for the workforce development field to rightsize its organizations.** Resources are dwindling as the needs of organizations and the young adults they serve are increasing. Organizations have transitioned to remote programming and undergone major shifts in program design, structural operation, and the use of technology. It is critical that funders support these changes with increased funding, loosened accountability metrics, and exible protocols that allow organizations to restructure service delivery in a way that is best suited for their communities in a post- COVID-19 landscape.
3. **Invest in mental health counseling and support services.** Nonprofit staff and the communities they serve are experiencing trauma in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will require mental health counseling and other social-emotional support in the near future. Government should invest in mental health counseling to ensure that anyone experiencing trauma—including young adults, nonprofit staff, and community members—has access to free services.
4. **Invest in institutional partnerships between the workforce and educational systems.** In light of limited resources and growing needs in low-income communities, partnerships between educational institutions and workforce development providers create localized solutions that respond to the unique needs of young adults and the communities where they live. Funders should incentivize these institutional collaborations so that they are able to innovate in response to the current crisis and to lay the foundation for an equitable post- COVID-19 landscape. Neighborhoods with high numbers of out-of-school, out-of-work young adults can especially benefit from institutional partnerships. Place-based solutions, such as **Youth WINS**, a Staten Island-based JobsFirstNYC partnership initiative, are effective in building institutional capacity and producing better outcomes for their target constituents.
5. **Map in-demand skills and partner with employers to develop new strategies to improve educational and training programs for young adults.** Understanding the talent needs of industries will be key to redesigning and implementing effective skills training programs and related industry-specific credentials. This understanding comes from strong relationships with employers and from comprehensive knowledge of the skills needed in high- growth areas of the economy, as well as labor market data and trends. Workforce development organizations should design initiatives focused on sectoral employment (such as JobsFirstNYC's **Young Adult Sectoral Employment Project**), and should embark on strategies that map and match skills across sectors to improve young adults' employment opportunities.

Ultimately, any COVID-19 economic relief strategy must take a hyperlocal approach in the neighborhoods most affected, ensure that mechanisms are in place to connect local residents of these neighborhoods to any jobs created, and support the city's smallest businesses to gain the knowledge and resources they need to access government-sponsored economic recovery programs. Without these three elements, relief efforts will leave behind those who have suffered the most from this pandemic.



Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate the opportunity to testify and look forward to working with each of you to advocate for progress through the NYC Disconnected Youth Task Force, enact these recommendations, and ensure that all New Yorkers benefit from the City's COVID-19 relief efforts.

Good Afternoon Council,

Thank you for allowing me to be here today to testify on behalf of the families and young people who benefit from funding that you provide through the After Three and Middle School Expanded Learning Initiatives. I am Naa-Shorme Aidoo, the Policy Director at ExpandedED Schools, an intermediary that provides coaching, technical assistance and funding for afterschool programs. Over the past five years, ExpandedED Schools has received discretionary funding that supports youth enrichment through its After Three Initiative in 56 schools that span 36 council districts and targeted literacy support through the Middle School Expanded Learning Initiative, also known as MS ExTRA, in 24 schools.

COVID-19 has shed light on the many inequities that our communities and our youth face on a daily basis, inequities that service providers present at this hearing are devoted to responding to and restoring. Our current climate of heightened awareness to anti-black racism has revealed just how deeply rooted these inequities are. As community voices have demanded restorative justice, we want to ensure that we are able to provide the services that support youth and community development during this crucial time. As healthcare disparities, community-police tensions and brutality, and economic hardship increase, our families need services for their youth that provide them with safe and productive outlets, supplement the learning loss accrued over the past three months as adults return to work or seek out employment opportunities.

As an intermediary, we support community-based organizations that have been providing essential services to our communities during this critical time. Throughout this time and our history of partnership, we support the integration of services and advise on best of use of funds dispersed. Thanks to contractual flexibilities from the city, these services have continued and made all of the difference in how our city responded to this crisis. We ask for these flexibilities to be maintained as we enter a still uncertain FY21 and fill in the gaps that help our partner organizations meet the needs of their communities. As they continue to rise to the challenge of leading our communities through the recovery in a manner that is just and equitable, we hope that city contracts will support in those efforts.

With Gratitude,

Naa-Shorme Aidoo

Policy Director, ExpandedED Schools

New York City Economic Development Corporation Testimony

NYCEDC's Relief Efforts During the COVID-19 Crisis

James Patchett, President and CEO

June 24, 2020

Good afternoon Chair Vallone and members of the Economic Development Committee. My name is James Patchett and I am president and CEO of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, also known as EDC.

Over the past three months, New York City has changed. COVID-19 brought us and the world to a standstill. Terms and practices that were once uncommon – social distancing, face masks in public settings and virtual gatherings – are now part of our new normal. It does feel strange doing this zoom hearing with you all, but these are the times we live in and the precautions we must take. That being said, it is good to see all your faces and I hope you and your families are doing well. Working from home has been an adjustment – my kids and cat have been featured guests in many meetings. I do not believe that will be the case today but, you never know.

Today, we are having an important discussion about EDC's role in the City's response to COVID-19. I am pleased to share my testimony and not only highlight our efforts as an organization but the resilience of this city and its people, and the path forward to a new normal that benefits all New Yorkers.

The past three months have been among the most challenging in New York City's history. Thousands of our neighbors and loved ones have died from this terrible disease. Our city shut down and is just getting underway with the process of re-opening. Many New Yorkers just like us continue to work from home and adapt to new professional challenges while juggling childcare and family obligations.

But if this crisis has reminded me of anything, it is that you should never count out New York City. We step up for one another and fight for our city. That is just what we do. I've seen this fight first-hand at EDC. We've been supporting the City's response to COVID-19 from the very beginning.

In early March, we were a traditional economic development organization focused on making strategic investments to create jobs. Then, in a matter of days, we transformed ourselves into a bio-tech startup, a manufacturing corporation, a place that set up hospitals and built ventilators. Our cruise terminals morphed into hospitals and our armories into food distribution centers. We stood up local supply chains from scratch and produced critical medical supplies. And we've worked with members of the New York delegation to advocate for more federal resources for our businesses.

And while the days have been long, I am incredibly inspired by the innovation, creativity, and tenacity that my team and people across the city have shown.

It all began with an ask to produce face shields. In a matter of days, we had a design, a prototype and approval from the Department of Health. And a day later, we were in production. Over the past couple of months, we've partnered with 15 domestic manufacturers, 9 of which are in NYC, to create over 4 million shields.

It was mid-March when we were asked to do the seemingly impossible: build a new ventilator. In that moment, if you asked me to explain the terms HEPA filter, PEEP valve, or manual resuscitator bag, I would have been at a loss for words. How quickly things change. When the Mayor first asked me, it seemed crazy that we could ever do this. A ventilator is an incredibly complicated instrument and the thought that we could figure it out, build it and scale production in just a few weeks--and all within New York City—seemed impossible. But we're New Yorkers, so we got to work.

We set up a 15-person team from scratch— people who have never done anything like this before. They quickly became experts in FDA certification, the supply chains for medical-grade materials, and translating medical research into manufacturing specs. In less than a month, we identified and convened a consortium of researchers from MIT with local innovators and manufacturers to design, develop and deliver this life-saving technology. These breathing assistance machines free up ICU ventilators for critically ill patients, which was an absolute top priority at the height of this medical crisis.

The rapid evolution in technology, the investments the city made in the tech sector and the relationships EDC developed through diversifying the economy and planning for the future, all came together in a pivotal moment.

This was only possible because New York City had done two very important things in the preceding decades:

- First, we invested heavily to cultivate our technology sector and became a capital of innovation for the new economy.
- Second, we remembered our city's roots and continued to ensure that there were still people in New York City who could make things.

Our key partners in the ventilator effort included New Lab, an innovative space in Brooklyn that enables tech invention. The ventilators were produced at Boyce Technologies in Long Island City, a state-of-the-art manufacturer. EDC has supported both New Lab and Boyce over the last several years, and the capacity they brought to the table is the only reason we were able to design and produce 3,000 new ventilators here in New York to respond to this crisis.

And beyond technology, EDC has made strategic investments in key city industries like fashion and garment manufacturing, and those investments are paying incredible dividends today.

As Broadway went dark, this community did not think about themselves but how they could support our frontline workers. It did not take long for EDC to connect with Javier Muñoz, a

Broadway star known for playing the lead role in Hamilton. Javier is leading the Broadway Relief Project, which united Broadway seamstresses, actors, and other members of the community. The goal: produce and distribute thousands of hospital gowns for our healthcare heroes all while bringing members of the Broadway community back to work. This partnership is a true testament to New Yorkers supporting New Yorkers, and with the support and guidance of EDC, the project produced over 50,000 gowns.

And this is only one example of our work in this space. HD Fashion, a minority-owned business, produced and shipped 420,000 gowns in only 5-weeks. This effort was made possible through their work with 9 sub-contractors, all of which are minority-and women-owned businesses. It is also important to note that through this work, HD Fashion was able to retain nearly 130 workers.

We've now partnered with 14 local manufacturers across all five boroughs. To date, we've produced 3.2 million gowns. There were many days in the depths of this crisis that hospitals would have run out of gowns if it wasn't for this effort.

I share these stories not just because of what it says about our work to date, but also because it points the way to our collective economic recovery. Thankfully, we've seen incredible progress on the health side. Due to the tenacity of New Yorkers and hard work of our medical professionals, we are on the other side of the health crisis.

And while health and safety must always be the top priority, it is time to look towards the future and the recovery that lies ahead. New York City hit a major milestone on Monday when it entered Phase 2. As the reopening of the economy moves forward, we must always follow the data and science. That is why our efforts to rapidly scale up testing are key.

Here again, New York City's innovators are stepping up to be part of the solution. At EDC, we built a new supply chain with local biotech companies and small manufacturers and are now in production on 50,000 COVID-19 testing kits per week. In a matter of weeks, our team consulted with experts across the country // forged relationships with local manufactures // worked with medical professionals and City agencies to review swab designs // figured out sanitization and vetting processes for medical use // and then quickly found local manufacturers to begin production.

Again, the confluence of innovation and manufacturing partners was essential. As with our efforts to produce ventilators, the ongoing production of new test kits would not be possible in New York without having innovative companies and the capacity to make things here. Print Parts in Manhattan is 3D printing swabs and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx is following a CDC protocol to produce transport medium ----- a liquid that preserves the collected sample while it is transferred to a lab for testing. And in Brooklyn, we've converted a co-working space, Collab, into a test kit production facility.

It's incredible to me that we developed these extremely precise and technologically advanced materials in New York City so quickly. To-date nearly 175,000 test kits have been delivered to H+H hospitals and clinics, nursing homes, and community testing sites. When the first completed kits were making their way off the production line, cheers erupted in the facility.

It is incredibly inspiring to see how New Yorkers are stepping up to support New Yorkers. And you will hear from some of them later today. I am proud of the work that's happening across the city. It highlights my core belief that innovation, science, and New Yorkers working together will get us through this. I know you all share this belief.

With the phased re-open underway, the hard work is only just beginning. There are many pieces to consider: childcare, transit, how and when we return to our offices, and later to other public venues. All of this aiming to address the bigger question of how we restore vitality to this city we love.

The efforts I've highlighted – face shields, gowns, “bridge” ventilators, and test kits – have done two really important things for the city. The first is providing our frontline workers with the supplies and protective equipment they need to fight this disease and keep the city moving. The second is bringing people back to work with these efforts creating/preserving almost 3,000 jobs. Almost 60 percent of gown manufacturers qualify as MWBEs. At Collab, where test kits are being assembled, they have re-hired their staff and are hiring restaurant workers from the Bushwick area. And while these efforts provide a glimmer of hope, it is only a drop in the bucket.

New York City is facing the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. The unemployment numbers we are seeing are staggering. In a matter of weeks, NYC went from nearly full employment to 1.29M New Yorkers filing for unemployment benefits. The Mayor has noted that the City is projected to lose \$9 billion in tax revenue this fiscal year. I don't need to remind this committee of the financial straits we find ourselves in.

On top of this all, this crisis has laid bare even more starkly that inequalities that exist within our City – access to healthcare, food, and broadband. The events of the past month have shown the systemic racism and injustice that exist within our city and across the nation.

People are calling for equity and an end to systemic injustice and police brutality, which at an alarmingly high, disproportionate rate impacts Black Americans. Words are not enough. We must act and hold ourselves accountable. At EDC, we have taken a series of steps to put equity more at the center of our work. Internally, we are aggressively ramping up recruitment and hiring efforts to diversify our workforce and are implementing mandatory all-staff trainings on race and equity. Externally, we must take another look at how our work addresses these issues. Right now, we are undertaking a very intentional internal effort to guide us on this area over the next few months.

This process and recovery will be far from easy and the road ahead will be a long one. The City cannot do it alone – there are only so many tools we can use. It is why the Federal Government must take bold action and do more.

We need real economic relief. We need a stimulus package that supports states and cities, and provides the resources needed for a robust recovery.

Our small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy and neighborhoods, have been shuttered for weeks. Our incredible restaurants, local retailers, small non-profits and cultural institutions are what draw people to New York—tourists, immigrants, people from all over the world. Small businesses are taking the brunt of this, and it just won't be possible for the City to give them the support they need until the Federal Government steps up with further relief—PPP is just the tip of the iceberg of what's needed. We now need to look beyond maintaining payrolls and towards what our businesses will need to be able to restart successfully. That includes additional, more flexible capital.

The Federal Government must do more, and I know that EDC, those on this call, and other officials will continue to push for action and hold federal leaders accountable for their action or inaction. And as we advocate for more federal resources, we must ensure that a recovery is equitable and inclusive of all. Returning to the way things were done in the past is not good enough. We must create a “new” normal.

Economic development has an important role to play. Working with this committee, we must continue to invest in initiatives that 1) bring good paying jobs to all New Yorkers and 2) ensure they have the skills to get those positions, keep them and excel in them. Advanced manufacturing, tech, cyber, life science, garment manufacturing, and fashion offer opportunities for us to continue to diversify the city's economy while providing New Yorkers with real opportunities to attain a greater level of economic stability and success.

It is a tall order, but I am confident the city will come through stronger than before. And to anyone who doubts that, just remember the stories I shared earlier. Only in New York City can you develop a ventilator in less than a month or nasopharyngeal swabs within weeks. New Yorkers make the impossible possible, and we will do it again and again.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I now welcome any questions you have.



(formerly TASC)

ExpandedED Schools

Close the learning gap. Open the world.

ExpandedED Schools was founded in 1998 (as The After-School Corporation, or TASC) to build a citywide system of daily comprehensive after-school programs for kids in kindergarten through high school in those schools that need it most. ExpandedED Schools builds on its 22 years of experience to provide after-school and expanded learning opportunities by partnering with schools and community based organizations (CBOs) to close the learning gap by increasing access to enriched education experiences.

ExpandedED Schools has been an innovator in after-school and expanded learning, piloting several ExpandedED demonstrations in NYC that have added enrichments in literacy, STEM, civics, the arts and entrepreneurship as well as work-based learning for older students. In ExpandedED Schools, kids get 35% more learning time at about 10% of the cost of the school day.

We thank the Council for funding ExpandedED Schools for more than 15 years to help innovate and lay the foundation for the City's expansion in after-school.

Summary of ExpandedED Schools FY 21 Council Funding Requests

The After Three Enrichment Initiative (TASC After Three)

FY 20 Award: \$4.0M

FY 21 Request: \$6.0M

Reference Number: 82022

Currently serves 59 after-school programs in 43 Council Districts in all 5 boroughs. These programs provide students an opportunity to access high-quality arts, athletics and academic programs that help them stay engaged in school. ExpandedED Schools provides the programmatic and fiscal oversight that the Council demands at City-funded sites.

Additional Afterschool Enrichment Initiative funding will support the following:

- **Support additional after-school programs throughout the city** determined by readiness of CBO partnership, principal commitment and vision, existence of other after-school resources to be leveraged and equity and spread across the city aiming to continue to support all boroughs and all council districts that want a program.
- Continued support to the existing 58 programs to serve more students on waitlists and **ensuring quality enhancements, such as STEM, literacy and social and emotional learning.**
- Investment in *ExpandedED Options*, a **credit bearing apprenticeship** for high school students to learn career-related skills at premier cultural institutions. This would support **11 apprenticeship partnerships serving 240 young people.**
- Continue to provide **capacity building support** through individual coaching, program support, fiscal and program oversight as well as technical assistance and capacity building trainings.

Middle School Expanded Learning Time Program

FY 20 Award: \$1,550,000

FY 21 Request: \$1,550,000

Reference Number: 85083

Partnering with the DOE and ExpandedED Schools, the Council is shaping the future of the 3PM to 6PM hours for Middle School students by connecting the school day closely to the expanded learning hours. The Council's support of this initiative helps 28 middle schools, through the use of local CBOs, to encourage student to remain engaged in school at a critical period in their lives.

For more information, contact Naa-Shorme Aidoo at naidoo@expandedschools.org or 646-943-8847.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

82nd Street Academics
Abundant Waters Inc.
Areté Education Inc.
Asphalt Green
Aspira
BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life)
BEAM Center
Bergen Basin Community Development Corporation
Brooklyn Community Services
CAMBA Inc.
Child Center of New York
Children's Aid
Chinese American Parents Association
Chinese American Planning Council
Citizen Schools New York
City Parks Foundation
City Year Inc.
Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP)
Community Resource Exchange (CRE)
Cypress Hills Local Development Corp.
Directions For Our Youth
Eagle Academy Foundation Inc.
East Side House Settlement
Educational Alliance Inc.
Educational Video Center Inc.
Food Fight
Generation Schools Network
Global Kids Inc.
Good Shepherd Services
Grand Street Settlement
HANAC
Harlem Dowling-West Side Center for Children & Family Services
Harriman Summer Camp/Healthy Kids Program
Henry Street Settlement
Hudson Guild
Hunter College
Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island
Kids Creative
Learning Through an Expanded Arts Program (LEAP)
Manhattan Youth Recreation and Resources, Inc.
Maspeth Town Hall
Mentoring in Medicine
Millenium Development Corporation
Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility
Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corporation
New Settlement Apartments/ The Crenulated Co. Ltd.
New York Edge (Sports & Arts in Schools)
New York Hall of Science
NIA Community Services Network
NYU Tandon School of Engineering
Partnership with Children (PWC)
Pure Elements
Research Foundation of CUNY / Medgar Evers College ACE
Riverdale Neighborhood House
Samuel Field YM & YWHA Inc.
Sheltering Arms
South Asian Youth Action
South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO)
Southern Queens Park Association Inc.
St. Nicks Alliance Corporation
Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center Inc.
Strycker's Bay Neighborhood Council Inc.
Studio in a School Association Inc.
Sylvia Center
University Settlement Society of New York Inc.
Variety Boys and Girls Clubs of Queens, Inc.
WHEDco
YM&YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood Coalition
YMCA of Greater New York
Zone 126/Jacob Riis Settlement



**New York City Council
Committees on Contracts, Aging, and Youth Services
Oversight Hearing: Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit
Contracting during a Pandemic**

June 23, 2020

Thank you Chairs Kallos, Chin, Rose, and members of your respective committees for the opportunity to submit testimony for the June 23 remote hearing about the challenges of providing essential services in these unprecedented times.

JASA is a not-for-profit agency serving the needs and interests of older adults in the greater New York area. JASA honors older New Yorkers as vital members of society, providing services that support aging with purpose and partnering to build strong communities. For over 50 years, JASA has served as one of New York's largest and most trusted agencies serving older adults in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. We provide life sustaining programs for seniors and peace of mind for their families and friends. JASA has a comprehensive, integrated network of services that provides a continuum of community care. Programming promotes independence, safety, wellness, community participation, and an enhanced quality of life for New York City's older adults. These programs reach over 40,000 clients and include home care, case management services, senior centers, NORC supportive services, home delivered meals, caregiver support, continuing education, licensed mental health, senior housing, advocacy, legal services, adult protective services, and guardianship services. We welcome today's hearing as an opportunity to share our experience with NYC contracts and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

JASA, like most agencies in the human service sector, is no stranger to challenging financial situations. NYC contracts are chronically underfunded; each year, agencies must supplement government contracts with private and philanthropic dollars to make up for gaps in our program budgets. We turn to NYC Council annually to help, and help you do, through discretionary funds and Council Initiatives adding nearly 1.5 million dollars in our budget.

The Covid-19 pandemic hit the nonprofit human service sector hard, and in every way imaginable. Our clients are some of the most vulnerable: they are older, many with chronic diseases and underlying health conditions. Some are formerly homeless and others are victims of elder abuse and exploitation. Many live in immigrant communities and communities of color, underserved by health care entities and where health disparities are pronounced. Most JASA clients live alone and rely on others to assist in a variety of ways (shopping, homecare, food preparation, to name a few) and necessary physical distancing results in social isolation and loneliness.

Delayed Contract Registration

In an ordinary year, I would likely be talking about the need for the City to invest in human services, to fully pay for the services being delivered, and pay a fair wage to human services workers. However, as of today, one week before the end of the fiscal year, JASA is still waiting for 31 unregistered contracts for FY20 amounting to \$897,000. Three of those contracts (NORC programs) are entirely carried by Council, and have no other funding streams; they account for approximately \$600,000. Most of the unregistered contracts have MOCS IDs and many have DFTA IDs, and yet they are not available yet. All JASA programs have continued operating throughout the pandemic, with many operating remotely, with piling expenses for Covid-19 PPE and equipment to allow for remote work. We can't bill for those expenses if the programs are not registered.

JASA is a highly reliable community partner and we operate in good faith, with the experience that NYC contracts are not always registered in a timely fashion. In most years, we are confident that we will be paid within the fiscal year. This year, our repeat inquiries resulted in either no response or confusing messages. For example, we received an email from Council Finance on April 21st detailing how discretionary contract expenses would be handled post the March 22nd PAUSE and dividing services between "essential" and "not essential". We were also reminded that prior to reimbursement, providers needed to have a registered contract. JASA was reassured verbally by Council Finance, and DFTA and Council Members that our services were essential, but nothing in writing. And with programs still unregistered, we were forced to consider whether we should be sending out termination notices to staff.

Covid-19 Expenses

JASA has kept meticulous records of all COVID-19 expenses. Citywide, over 300 JASA staff have continued to see high-risk clients face to face or to report for essential work throughout the pandemic. Our staff and clients have experienced COVID-19 related illness and deaths. JASA purchased necessary PPE for Adult Protective Services and Community Guardian staff, homecare workers, senior housing staff, home delivered meals workers, and other essential staff who are unable to work remotely. JASA sites that have remained open have undergone regular and intense cleaning and any cleaning supplies have been made available to staff. In addition, JASA has 640 staff working remotely. Staff was supplied with any equipment necessary to continue doing their essential work.

JASA has received different messages from different City agencies. For example, HRA approved our submitted COVID-19 expenses, but there is no additional money attached and we were advised to use accruals first. If the accruals are insufficient to cover our expenses, we are expected to apply for a budget modification. This delays payment even further. We have submitted Covid-19 expenses twice to DFTA and both times they were not accepted. JASA's accounting department staff have also been informed by DFTA that indirect costs will not be reimbursed on COVID-19 expenses in existing contracts.

Inability to Financially Plan for FY21

In this time of uncertainty, one of the most challenging aspects of the last few months has been the lack of clear communication. We are now on the cusp of FY21 and must make financial plans and decisions for the coming year that impact clients and staff. As of yet, there has been no information forthcoming about the potential FY21 budget. We vigorously urge FY21 budget inclusion of Council discretionary funds and initiatives (NORC initiative, healthy aging, support our seniors, DOVE, senior centers for immigrant populations, SU-CASA), which fund vital services to older adults and keep our programs whole, and as I noted earlier are the sole funding for several of our NORC programs. Without the Council's support, many programs would cease to exist.

We are also deeply concerned about mid-year funding cuts to existing contracts that support programs that are already operating. As I outlined earlier in this testimony, while it is not unusual for JASA to "carry" expenses for a program for 9 months, before actually receiving payment, we are not in a position to permanently forgo contract payment.

Senior centers are another area of great concern. Since mid-March, JASA congregate sites have been shut. The senior center contracts are in the process of being renewed and registered at the existing funding level. We expect advances on these contracts in July. We are in a challenging position, trying to determine whether we keep staff employed, despite the shifting of service provision. For some, their original jobs cannot be performed during the shut down. Will the scope of services be amended? Will the city provide a commitment that any cuts will be prospective only? Can we be reassured that we will be reimbursed for any incurred expenses? JASA's collective bargaining agreements with multiple unions, primarily DC 37, call for notice periods and severance terms which any City funding decisions need to take into account.

Finally, I would like to raise an issue of salary differentials for essential workers. Since the beginning of the pandemic, JASA has urged the City to recognize the human services workers who are carrying the burden of frontline work in the field, traveling to clients' homes and at work sites in order to ensure the safety of our clients, with a pay differential. JASA is paying a modest salary differential, but City agencies will not reimburse us for these differentials except in very limited circumstances, despite our requests and explanations about the strain that our workforce is experiencing and the challenges that we face. These dedicated JASA staff members continue to provide essential services. We urge you to persuade the Mayor to recognize the need for staff to be compensated appropriately. They are truly essential to helping New York's most vulnerable individuals remain safe.

We call for addressing social and racial inequalities and ask the City to do the same. Failing to recognize and financially compensate essential social service workers, who are predominantly women of color and immigrants, contributes to the very problems we seek to address.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony. JASA looks forward to working with the City Council, and the Administration, as a valued partner during what is sure to be a challenging FY21.

Molly Krakowski
Senior Director, Government Affairs
JASA
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212 273-5260



MIND-BUILDERS TESTIMONY – JUNE 22 & 23, 2020 - MADAHA KINSEY-LAMB

To you dedicated leaders of New York City, let me first say **thank you for this opportunity, and for your commitment to arrive at just and thoughtful policies for the distribution of public funds in these extraordinary times.** My name is Madaha Kinsey-Lamb, and I am the Executive Director and Founder of Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center in the Northeast Bronx. **Current statistics for our neighborhood show that our (10467) zip code has the highest numbers of COVID-19 infection in all of New York City.**

We conduct classes and community productions with more than 750 students each year, with a particular focus on youth. Since we began with arts education more than 40 years ago, we have known that we serve a vulnerable population. But it's why we, like so many other community-based cultural organizations, have always been about more than providing music and dance classes; UPK, theater, community folk culture research, and fitness classes.

At Mind-Builders we work alongside our parents, students, the grandparents, and more than 34 teaching artists to empower our children and our community, to build confidence, prepare for college scholarship auditions and access to specialized high schools; provide free tutoring, counseling, jobs, and career training; and have youth realize dreams they never thought possible. Within two weeks of the NYC shutdown order, we had **transitioned all of our classes to online. Close to 75% of our students continued in over 225 weekly virtual classes that we provided at no charge.**

Without your support over the years, Mind-Builders could not have become the force that it is for hope and leadership in this community, and so again we thank you. But more is needed. **The need for what we do has never been greater. The inequities of twelve generations that continue to be evidenced in our communities every day must be addressed.** Thank you for the courage and wisdom you will continue to demonstrate towards this goal.

New York City Council

Committee on Contracts

**AT-PROMISE YOUTH ARE NOT
EXPENDABLE AND NEITHER
ARE THOSE WHO
SERVE THEM**

June 23, 2020

Testimony Presented By
Michael De Vito Jr.
Associate Executive Director
NYCID



Good morning Councilmembers:

I'm Michael DeVito from New York Center for Interpersonal Development on Staten Island. We are Richmond County's Conflict Dispute Resolution Center and we improve lives every day by building community and nurturing personal growth.

First, thank you, councilmembers for your attention and your efforts to figure out a way through this unprecedented emergency.

I am not going to share anything that you don't already know. In fact, by now you've undoubtedly heard the painful realities we face so many times you've probably begun to process it as noise. We are all feeling this way, much like how we all began to shut out the repeated images of planes hitting our towers over and over; and how we turned off our internet when we could no longer stand to see people being thrown out of their homes in 2008.

What I hope to do in this little bit of time on my soapbox is to convince you all that at-risk youth are not expendable – they are your priority, and the entities that serve them are your saving grace.

It will come as no surprise that NYCID stands with our #savesummer advocates that we must fund SYEP, SONYC, COMPASS and Cornerstones. But that's not all. In this pitch you also get the chance to protect Transfer schools, Young Adult Borough Centers and Pathways to Graduation programs that offer our City's most vulnerable not just opportunity but people who support them in creating a plans and setting goals, not just a seat at the table but a paycheck to pay for their meal, not just a piece of paper but a way to contribute to the greater good of New York City and America by becoming tax payers.

I raise my voice today because we've seen deep deep cuts in the last decade in some programs as much as 55% and yet we have forged on.

A while back I reported to this committee that the Partnerships CBOs like NYCID have with the City have saved the Big Apple billions. Here's the figure that has been presented over the years to many of these committees:

It is \$325,000 - that's the aggregated figure presented by Northeastern University and the Community Service Society,

"in lifetime budgetary terms, 'each individual without a high school diploma represents a net cost to New York City of \$134,037, whereas each New Yorker with a high school diploma or GED yields a net benefit of \$192,715 – a swing of more than \$325,000 per person.'¹ Thus, in the aggregate, simply helping one low-

¹ Community Service Society, From Basic Skills to Better Futures: Generating Economic Dividends for New York City at 9 (Sept. 2009).

skilled New Yorker earn a high school degree or equivalency is worth more than \$325,000 to the city.”²

In the last 20 years we have helped more than **15,000** New Yorkers obtain a high school diploma since 2005. That’s \$4.9 **billion** dollars of net benefit for our city.

As you move forward, you must remember this number. You must remember that your community-based organizations are easy targets. We don’t have unions. We serve at the behest of the City. We keep saying “yes” because we can’t say no to those we serve.

You must note that this 4.9 Billion figure doesn’t also account for the dollars we save you from keeping young people of our prison system, avoiding homelessness, and/or addiction. This figure doesn’t account for the unaccountable cases of not just improving lives; rather we are **SAVING** lives.

So I am not going to bore you with more figures. What I will implore you to do is to double down. We need you to turn over every stone and find a way through that doesn’t cost any more than we **CANNOT** afford already. It will be a generation of kids you leave behind and an entire industry that you drop in the basket with the trash if you do not protect the dollars that help us do what **ONLY** we can do.

We can do more with less to a point, but we cannot do anything with nothing.

In the Marines we say that we are only as fast as the slowest Marine. I implore you all now to remember that we are only successful when we give opportunity and access to every New Yorker and American.

Leave no one behind.

Thank you.

² Id. at 1.

Joe's Testimony

Committee on Contracts jointly with the Committee on Aging and the Committee on Youth Services

June 23, 2020

Good afternoon Chairs Kallos, Chin and Rose and Other Members of the City Council:

My name is Joseph Peri and I am the President and CEO of Junior Achievement of New York.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here with you to testify today. I have had the opportunity to meet some of you personally in the past, but for those of you not familiar with Junior Achievement of New York, we are the local affiliate of Junior Achievement USA, and the largest non-profit organization in the Greater New York area dedicated to creating pathways to economic empowerment for young people Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Our mission is to teach and inspire young people to understand the economic world around them, plan for their financial futures, and make the most of their potential, with the premise that knowledge and access leads to empowerment. Currently, JA New York provides free programming to students who reside in 49 of the 51 council districts and we seek to expand our horizons to ensure our programming is accessible to all students throughout the five boroughs.

As you know, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and workforce readiness are not part of the required curriculum in New York State schools. That means that most students graduate without any meaningful exposure to basic pocketbook economics or to the larger topic of how our economy works. Without this kind of literacy, our student are at risk to becoming adults without learning how to make smart financial decisions and plan for their futures.

Students in underserved and high-need communities face a host of barriers to success. JA programs help prepare students to believe in and shape their futures by helping them develop good personal finance habits, teaching them leadership and soft-skills, and fostering an "entrepreneurial mindset" they can use to achieve economic freedom and career success no matter what paths they ultimately pursue.

We create partnerships between hundreds of businesses and over 300 local schools across the New York region that give professionals the opportunity to help shape our next generation of community leaders, workers, consumers and innovators.

As we continue to grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to remote learning environments begun this spring, JA began a significant "pivot" – accelerating a transition that was already underway - to deliver JA programs utilizing technology and digital resources.

JA content at every grade level is being rolled out in real-time and asynchronous digital formats - for teachers, parents and our corporate volunteers to use to engage with students.

We have developed a suite of Career Series events to provide students with remote access to career and work readiness programming. These have included Virtual Career Panels, virtual delivery of our JA University Program to help create a pathway to college, and our Virtual Executive Series which has been connecting students to our network of C-Suite and executive partners.

These are just some of the ways that we have begun re-envisioning JA to align with the “new normal”. We’ve had some great successes already this spring, and we are ready to go and to scale up quickly with these programs.

In this transformative moment for our country, as we embark on a national conversation addressing the legacy of institutional racism and ensure a more just society for people of color, Junior Achievement can play a critical role in this essential endeavor. Empowering young people with the economic knowledge, skills and resources they need is critical to helping young people fully benefit from our economic system, and can serve as a key component in addressing inequities and inequality.

JA students are reflective of the New York City communities we serve: one-fifth of JA students are Black, a quarter are Asian and nearly 50% are Latino. Nearly 80% of the students we serve qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch program and many come from immigrant communities and will be the first generation in their family to graduate high school or attend college.

JA New York has leveraged relatively modest allocations of City Council initiative (Young Women’s Leadership and Digital Inclusion and Literacy) and discretionary member funding to reach thousands of such students annually. We respectfully urge the Council to keep these allocations in place for fiscal year 2021.

Now more than ever, young people need to envision a future that they can shape and look forward to. New York as we remember it will indeed return, and when it does, JA New York will be there to celebrate and inspire, more grateful and more resolved than ever.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of JA New York and the more than 100,000 students we serve every year.

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of JA New York and the more than 100,000 students we serve every year.



Testimony to the New York City Council on Senior Services Contracting during a Pandemic
Delivered on June 23, 2020 by Melissa Sklarz, Senior Government Relations Strategist

My name is Melissa Sklarz and I am the Senior Government Relations Strategist for SAGE. On behalf of SAGE and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) elders we serve, thank you for holding this hearing today to further discuss the range of services that we have developed on behalf of our LGBT elder community.

Founded in 1978, SAGE is the country's first and largest organization dedicated to improving the lives of LGBT older people. SAGE is the leading provider of services and supports to LGBT older adults in New York City.

LGBT elders, and especially LGBT elders of color, are living at the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not only because of their age, but also because of: (1) disproportionately high levels of underlying health conditions like HIV and diabetes; (2) higher levels of poverty and food and housing insecurity; (3) lower access to health care and supportive services; (4) social isolation and thin support networks; and (5) mistrust of government and other institutions based on historical and current discrimination and mistreatment. All of these challenges are even further exacerbated for transgender elders of color.

Additionally, LGBT elders are often isolated and live with only the thinnest of support networks. Compared to older Americans in general, LGBT older people are much more likely to be single and living alone; most LGBT elders are not parents and do not have kids to check on them. Here in New York, LGBT elders are still subjected to discrimination and people living with HIV are still living with the stigma of being HIV+ and are reporting increased instances of targeted discrimination because of their status. As reported in the Washington Post on April 2, 2020, "for the city's roughly 800,000 LGBT residents — especially elders, who find themselves among the most at risk once again — the corona-virus pandemic's woes of loneliness, panic, and fear of being vulnerable to infection are evocative of the HIV/AIDS crisis a generation ago."¹

This acute social isolation, which has been exacerbated by the shelter-in-place and quarantine directives during the pandemic, and thin networks means, in many cases, SAGE constituents have nobody to watch out for them – to ensure that they have essential food and medicine, to make sure they can access life-saving benefits and financial support, and to offer a modicum of social contact - other than SAGE.

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/coronavirus-hiv-aids-new-york/2020/04/02/9e7f8728-74f4-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html



SAGE is serving the most vulnerable of the most vulnerable in the midst of this public health crisis: older LGBT people, older people living with HIV and LGBT elders of color. For many LGBT elders, without SAGE's support, many of our city's LGBT elders will be alone in this uniquely threatening and scary time.

The realities of the COVID-19 pandemic shine a powerful spotlight on the inequities within our LGBT elder communities of color. We already know that people of color are getting sicker, more needing hospitalization, and dying at much higher rates than the population as a whole. At SAGE, we see the effect on LGBT people of color and transgender elders. Sadly, SAGE has lost 31 of our participants since the pandemic began in New York in March.

SAGE is actively addressing elders' food insecurity, access to services, and social engagement. SAGE's Care Managers and dozens of additional staff are providing compassionate, phone-based support to 3,500 elders each week – older people who need a caring voice, a kind ear, and a link to desperately needed services. Fighting isolation and keeping our constituents connected, the Virtual SAGE Center is offering more than 80 support groups, classes, and activities each week.

SAGE is a cornerstone of the LGBT community, providing vital services to LGBT elders and older people living with HIV for over 42 years. And, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, SAGE leadership has been forced to shift considerable capacity, energy and resources to simply adapt to the new reality left by the COVID-19 pandemic and SAGE requires the enduring discretionary support from the NYC Council to continue to provide our crucial services.

To ensure that our City's LGBT elders can continue to be supported and access lifesaving services and supports, SAGE asks for a restoration of support from the New York City Council in the past. Crucial discretionary support through the Council's LGBT Senior Center in Every Borough initiative funds our SAGE Centers in The Bronx, Staten Island, Brooklyn, Midtown and Harlem. Support from the Council also funds our case management services to LGBT elders who attend SAGE Centers in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Additionally, critical discretionary support from the Council supports crucial mental health services for LGBT older people at risk and frail and homebound. Finally, this funding also provides housing navigation for LGBT elders of color and our SAGEVets program, used to provide outreach, information and referrals and support for LGBT older veterans in our City.

SAGE is grateful for the partnership that we have had with the New York City Council, which has been instrumental and crucial in ensuring that our LGBT elders can age with dignity and respect. New York is at a critical juncture as the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our vista as a city. Elder New Yorkers remain at risk, especially among vulnerable LGBT elders. SAGE respectfully requests a restoration of discretionary support from the Council to prove, once again, that New York City takes care of its LGBT elders



Testimony of Good Shepherd Services
Before the New York City Council Committees on Contracts, Aging and Youth Services
Oversight – Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit Contracting during a Pandemic

Council Member Ben Kallos, Chair, Committee on Contracts
Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair, Committee on Aging
Council Member Deborah Rose, Chair, Committee on Youth Services

Submitted by Dana Altneu, Assistant Director of Government Contracts
June 23, 2020

Thank you for hosting today's important hearing on nonprofit contracting during COVID-19, with a particular focus on youth and senior services. This testimony will share key details around some of the experiences of human service providers around youth programs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guided by social and racial justice, Good Shepherd Services partners and grows with communities so that all NYC children, youth, and families succeed and thrive. We provide quality, effective services that deepen connections between family members, within schools, and among neighbors. We work closely with community leaders to advocate, both locally and nationally, on behalf of our participants to make New York City a better place to live and work.

GSS opened its first afterschool program in Red Hook in 1991, and since then has greatly expanded the number of programs it operates and children served. Today, we operate 20 afterschool programs throughout Brooklyn and the Bronx, serving about 3,000 K-8th graders annually.

GSS after-school programs employ research-informed youth development practices and evidence-based models to promote personal growth, social skills, and school engagement. GSS is committed to a balanced approach to out-of-school time that combines academics, youth development, enrichment, physical activity, and family engagement.

With New York City at the epicenter of a global pandemic, the recovery and long-term well-being of our city is of the utmost importance. COVID-19 has ravaged New York City's economy and safety net and has underscored the significant racial and economic disparities that have impacted New York City's neighborhoods for decades. Just as we did through other crises that our city has faced, Good Shepherd Services has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 emergency response by continuing to deliver essential services to New Yorkers, including providing residential programming, emergency food, counseling, shelter, youth and family supports, and more.

We have seen numerous rapid changes to contracted programs, with youth service providers being forced to significantly shift their operations in order to comply with health and safety guidelines. To the City's credit, the March 18, 2020 guidance from the Mayor's Office of Contracting Services (MOCS) gave providers assurances that they would continue to be reimbursed for services provided even if they could not meet their original contract obligations. This gave providers the space to ensure staff could continue to be paid and allowed some stability in a chaotic time.

Due to resulting revenue shortfalls, New York City is proposing significant budget cuts to youth services programs, and based on histories of previous financial crises, we fear that more cuts are coming to human services. These programs have become a lifeline for vulnerable New Yorkers during this crisis, and that will be crucial to our city's recovery. Economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis will only be possible if programs, like the ones provided by GSS continue. The supports that GSS provides both pre-COVID-19 and during COVID-19—afterschool and summer camp, foster care, prevention, supportive housing, residential, employment, domestic violence, juvenile justice and more—are more crucial to assist our communities now. We understand that difficult choices have to be made, but urge the City to preserve key programs and investments in the human services sector—including last year's investments in higher indirect rates and salary parity for early childhood educators—so that the sector remains stable over the coming months and can continue their work helping New Yorkers recover. Additionally, the Mayor's three year Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) investment comes to an end this year and it is vital to continue COLAs in our years – an investment in COLA is an investment in essential non-profit workers.

DYCD

The most drastic cuts made in Mayor de Blasio's FY 2021 Budget are to DYCD. The Executive Budget proposes the entire elimination of summer programs including COMPASS/SONYC, Beacon, Cornerstone and the Summer Youth Employment Program. These cuts will deprive youth of the opportunity to connect with peers and caring adults over this summer—a summer where youth are acutely vulnerable to learning loss because they have not been in school in-person for the entire spring. These budget cuts will also leave parents who are reentering the workforce as the City's economy slowly reopens with no childcare options.

Elimination of Summer Program

The cuts also threaten the infrastructure of the community-based organizations who serve youth and their families. The FY 2021 Executive Budget not only cuts the crucial programs operated during the summer but it also prohibits providers from using their reduced budgets to retain staff in order to prepare for reopening in the Fall. Due to cuts to summer programming GSS has laid off over 300 staff, the single biggest layoff of staff at one time since our inception in 1947.

The impact of these cuts on the organizations that execute DYCD contracts will persist after the summer is over. Youth services providers across the city have spent years building an infrastructure for effective youth services programs. This includes year-round, full-time staff such as multi-site supervisors and site directors who are deeply versed in the principles of Positive Youth Development, as well as other fixed costs. If providers are unable to pay year-round staff for July and August, the youth development workforce and youth development field will detrimentally change.

Staffing for youth services programs typically takes place months in advance. This allows providers to hire and train staff, prepare activities, enroll children and secure space. Social distancing requirements

necessitate programmatic changes which staff at all levels need to be trained on. However, if these cuts are not reversed, providers will not have the opportunity to prepare for programs to reopen.

Youth Services during the COVID-19 Crisis

New York City's youth service providers have adapted quickly in the face of devastating circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within days, GSS programs such as COMPASS/SONYC and Beacon and Cornerstone Community Centers pivoted from in-person programming to remote, virtual engagement for youth and their families, while also supplementing local food distribution for families. Through these contracts, GSS is currently offering online tutoring support, art and recreation programming, as well as meal distribution and additional supports to youth and families through grab-and-go meal provision and grocery delivery for many households. Since March, our two Cornerstone programs have distributed over 4,800 meals, and on most days we have been able to distribute additional items including masks, bags of vegetables, art kit, hot meals and other items.

It is vital that the contracts reflect the changes that have happened or the changes that may need to happen for programs to reopen with programmatic or fiscal modifications in order to conduct safe, socially distant in-person programs. This includes allowing new unique expenses related to COVID-19 in order to best meet the needs of the families we work with. This includes gift cards for food and other necessary items, as DYCD has stated that these items were family expenses, and not youth expenses.

Additionally, many of our staff on Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) contracts have been busy distributing meals and supplies at Cornerstone programs while others have helped to staff the Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs) run in collaboration with the Department of Education. In order to create equity across all GSS programs, staff that are reporting to program sites and working directly with participants are being paid 1.5x pay. While some other agencies, and other DYCD programs are paying 1.5x pay, we have been informed that we will not be reimbursed on our DYCD Cornerstone, Beacon, Compass or SONYC contracts. This means that the vital services that GSS is providing to New Yorkers across the city, will need to be covered by GSS, increasing the financial burden on GSS.

DYCD must enter into a collaborative process with its providers to amend budgets and work scopes to reflect changes in practice, including:

- Adjusting enrollment and rate of participation expectations due to the need for indoor gatherings to be smaller;
- Amending budgets to reflect COVID-19 related costs including increased cost of liability insurance, cleaning supplies, hazard pay, and having individualized supplies for children in order to maintain social distance;
- Adjusting per-child costs to reflect fewer children in each setting and therefore, needing to employ additional staff; and
- Adjusting hours to allow cohorts for flexible program schedule to meet the needs of communities, social distancing and ongoing changes that will need to occur as the city adapts to the new normal of COVID-19.

Next Steps

GSS urges the de Blasio administration to immediately restore funding for COMPASS/SONYC, Beacon, Cornerstone and SYEP. Sixteen days ago, the Mayor made a commitment to shift funding from NYPD to youth and social services. Yet no action has been taken even though the Mayor is empowered to restore funding through a revision of the Executive Budget as he did for SONYC summer programs in 2015.

Furthermore, GSS urges DYCD to work collaboratively with providers to adjust work scopes and budgets to reflect the new realities of providing service during this crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. For any follow up, please contact Dana Altneu at Dana_Altneu@goodshepherds.org



TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

Oversight - Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit Contracting during a Pandemic

Committees on Contracts, Aging and Youth Services

Honorable Ben Kallos, Chair, Committee on Contracts

Honorable Margaret Chin, Chair, Committee on Aging

Honorable Debi Rose, Chair, Committee on Youth Services

Submitted by:

UJA-Federation of New York

June 23, 2020

TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

Oversight - Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit Contracting during a Pandemic Committees on Contracts, Aging and Youth Services June 23, 2020

Thank you, Chairs Kallos, Chin and Rose and members of the Committees on Contracts, Aging and Youth Services for the opportunity to provide testimony on nonprofit contracting throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Established more than 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. Central to UJA's mission is to care for those in need. UJA identifies and meet the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. UJA connects people to their communities; responds to crises in New York, Israel and around the world, and supports nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services.

UJA-Federation of New York stands with its network of nonprofit partners and coalition allies that have highlighted, through their advocacy and testimony, the inefficiencies, lack of communication, and general confusion perpetuated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic related to City-contracted human services policies, procurement, procedures, and payment. UJA would like to take this opportunity to highlight a series of proposals that would significantly change human services contracting practices to assist the sector in this time of crisis and beyond.

Contracts

On March 18, 2020, the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) issued guidance governing New York City nonprofit human services contracts. Providers were assured that they would continue to be reimbursed and staff would be paid in FY20, even if they could not fully meet their original contract requirements. However, since issuing the guidance, the City's revenue projections have plummeted, and as a result, significant budget cuts to youth services programs have been implemented. Given the financial challenges the City faces in the coming fiscal year, UJA fears additional, deep cuts across all human services contracts in FY21.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, human services nonprofits have played a critical role in New York City's emergency response and will continue to play an important role in recovery efforts. Nonprofits have pivoted their programs to support their clients; they continue to provide emergency food, childcare, homecare, early childhood education, case management assistance, socialization activities and mental health supports, among other critical services. These programs address the needs of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, and with the added impact of civil unrest in hard-hit neighborhoods, it is crucial that New York City keep its strong network of community-based human services intact in FY21. This includes maintaining the City's commitment to increased investment in the human services indirect cost rate.

Proposed Changes to Human Services Contracting Processes

UJA has provided a framework, offering nine clear cut procedural and policy changes that are readily implementable in the immediate future, to ease New York City's contracting processes

both during the pandemic and beyond. The majority of these actions do not require additional contractual cash expenditures, and if implemented properly, have the potential to realize some cost savings. None of these proposals requires Charter revisions; most can be implemented through Administrative action; some may require City Council approval. These proposals provide opportunity for great and meaningful contracting changes for the human services sector.

UJA urges the Council to consider the following:

1. Eliminate VENDEX requirements for nonprofit organizations (including electronic filings).

- a. VENDEX is not necessary to effectively test nonprofit stability and ensure that the City deals with responsible providers. City agencies already have access via HHS Accelerator to 990/NYS CHAR 500 filings that contain all relevant information.

To make this change would require amending the Administrative Code section that established VENDEX.

2. Simplify line item budgeting to include the following (as applicable):

- a. Personnel – no requirement to specify individual positions or salaries; if the contract includes a requirement for certain types of staff, require attestation on the claim, but no salary detail.
- b. Fringe – lump sum; no cap (at least up to 50%)
- c. Consultants/subcontractors – of consultants/subs who perform program services under the contract, i.e., to protect against excessive subcontracting beyond what the RFP allowed.
- d. OTPS – all other non-PS costs
- e. Full Cost Indirect Rate – federal rate or CPA-certified.
- f. Authority to move up to 10% of funds from any category to another

Currently, budgets strictly control monies. Shifting contract structure to three simple lines: PS, OTPS and Indirect, and approval and control through audit would dramatically reduce delays and concerns. This change would yield significant savings for City agencies, as well as providers.

This change requires only policy direction from City Hall – no rule change, no statute.

3. Simplified Claiming: Initial advance, followed by annualized monthly or quarterly claim payments

- a. 25% advance paid on Day 1 – per current policy
- b. 25% Returnable Grant Fund (RGF loan) paid on Day 1 – if contract is not yet registered for any already-operating program.
- c. Automatic payments of one-twelfth of contract value each month – for any program with regular, year-round services (i.e., staffing does not materially vary month-to-month) set up a payment system with flat amounts each month, irrespective of actual fluctuations in expenses; claims thereafter are submitted per contract terms (monthly/quarterly); there could be a “true-up” two-to-three times

a year, at pre-established benchmark dates, to ensure that the expenses are actually incurred.

- d. Recoup the 25% advance/RGF loans by no more than 5% a month – spread the recoupment across a minimum of six months, e.g., so that a provider who received a \$250,000 advance on a \$1 million contract would be getting about \$83,000 per month and would then be recouped in the second half of the year at no more than \$42,000 per month.

These changes would ensure cash flow with no real risk to the City. All expenses would be verified throughout the year, without interrupting payments unless significant irregularity is found. This change also yields savings for NYC agencies.

These changes require only policy direction from City Hall – no rule change, no statute.

4. Appoint Chief Nonprofit Contracting Officer (modeled on Chief MWBE Officer) with Commissioner rank

- a. This new official should oversee/manage the contract registration process, both by holding meetings with and pressuring individual City agencies to register their respective portfolios on time, and by intervening (upon provider requests) in individual cases of major problems.

Implementing a Chief Nonprofit Contracting Officer provides accountability for the human services providers to ensure that they meet timeliness expectations, as well as an avenue to obtain relief in egregious cases.

This would be an appointment of Mayoral staff; no legislation is required.

5. Direct every City human services agency to appoint a Nonprofit Contracting Advocate/Ombudsperson

- a. This new position would function similarly to a patient advocate in a hospital setting. It provides accountability for the human services agencies to ensure that they meet timeliness expectations, and an avenue for nonprofits to seek help if problems arise.

This is done through Executive Order, no legislation required, and to avoid additional personnel costs, the advocate/ombudsman can be an existing staff person.

6. Increase lending pool in the FCNY loan fund

- a. Contracts continue to be registered late. The \$20 million invested with the Fund for the City of New York, which is used to issue interest free loans to nonprofits whose contracts are late, has not been increased since 2008, even as the portfolio of human services has increased by one third (from \$4 billion to \$6 billion).
- b. City agencies often fail to offer loans to providers whose operations are severely impacted by significant delays in contract registration (in some instances, the delay can be as long as one full contract year).

This proposal would require a one-time, \$20 million appropriation to the Fund for the City of New York. While this investment is substantial in such a difficult budget year, its impact would be significant in strengthening the human services sector as it assists in New York City's recovery.

7. Offer Master Contract structures to multi-service providers

- a. Require every City agency to offer a single master contract to any provider that operates multiple programs/multiple sites for that agency, and establish a multi-service contract option, available to the universe of providers that hold at least five contracts totaling at least \$2M with at least three different NYC agencies, to enable those providers (estimated to be approximately 150-200 providers) to consolidate their contracting relationship with NYC to a single governing contract.

Large nonprofits have many contracts, across programs and City agencies. There is extreme bureaucratic inefficiency in repetition of non-contract specific works. A single contract with program specific task orders would greatly lessen unnecessary paperwork and smooth issues of uneven policies across different funding streams. It would also encourage different City agencies to move towards standardization in contract requirements.

This change requires only policy direction from City Hall – no rule change, no statute. A new multi-service contracting unit may need to be established to consolidate provider contracts across agency lines – e.g., via HRA. The suggested process would resemble the EDC master contract currently in operation.

8. Provide full, real-time transparency of the contract registration process for providers

- a. PassPORT – expedite the roll-out of functionality to allow providers to see exactly where their unregistered contracts are in the approval process (at least by agency/unit location, if not by individual staff/desk).
- b. Require Comptroller to publicly disclose “bounce back” contract status – currently, when Comptroller sends a contract back to the agency (without a corruption finding), that contract disappears from the CheckbookNYC system, no longer showing as either registered or pending; Comptroller must provide transparency so providers can know when their contracts have been returned to the agencies that are trying to register them, including disclosure of the reasons.

Sunlight is the best disinfectant. Disclosure of where contracts are in the process will cause all parties to conduct their respective roles more efficiently. This functionality is already developed and should be very close launching soon. The City can use the PassPORT tracking system to make the Comptroller's process transparent if the Comptroller declines to do so.

9. Structure discretionary contracts as multi-year awards

- a. Instead of treating every discretionary contract as though it is new every year, once a provider has had the same award for more than one year, the host agency should structure the award as a multi-year contract, with the same renewal and

extension options as programmatic contracts. Discretionary contracts would of course include a term conditioning any future year upon the Council's inclusion of the provider in its budget, but all City contracts are subject to appropriation.

City Council discretionary awards are issued with start of the fiscal year, July 1st, and are treated as though they are each brand new, even where the provider has had the same award for 20 years and the program is operational. Because agencies do not start the registration process until after budget adoption in June, all discretionary contracts are always late, and many are only registered in the last month or two of the contracts, if then. This is extraordinarily disruptive to cash flow and programmatic continuity, especially for those City Council discretionary awards that support longstanding, large programs with significant staff.

The NYC Law Department has, on rare occasion, permitted Council contracts to be extended. Using a multi-year format could require legislative authorization, and potentially, a minor amendment to state law, but would yield significant savings and benefits.

Conclusion

These nine proposals are a valuable set of reforms that could be a tremendous help to supporting the nonprofit human services sector as the City tries to emerge from this pandemic, while also dealing with the ongoing disturbing issues of race, inequality and lack of opportunity that plague the areas in which many community-based services are located.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and recommendations. Please feel free to reach out to stuchinh@ujafedny.org with any questions.

TESTIMONY

New York City Council
Committee on Contracts

Jointly with the Committee on Aging and the Committee on Youth Services
June 23, 2020

Submitted by:
MJ Okma
Policy and Campaign Strategist
Human Services Council of New York

Good morning Chair Kallos and members of the New York City Council Committee on Contracts, Chair Chin and members of the Committee on Aging, and Chair Rose and members of the Committee on Youth Services. My name is MJ Okma and I am the Policy and Campaign Strategist at the Human Services Council (HSC), a membership organization representing over 170 human services providers in New York City. HSC serves our membership as a coordinating body, advocate, and an intermediary between the human services sector and government. We take on this work so that our members can focus on running their organizations and providing direct support to New Yorkers. These are the nonprofits that support our City's children, seniors, those experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, individuals who are incarcerated or otherwise involved in the justice system, immigrants, and individuals coping with substance abuse and other mental health and behavioral challenges.

There has been an underfunding crisis in the human services sector long before COVID-19 came to our City. Currently, because our government contracts drastically underfund the cost of implementing mandated services, it has been very difficult to be nimble and respond to New Yorker's immediate and long-term needs during our continued pandemic response and recovery. New York City's preexisting human services funding crisis led 68% of providers to anticipate not being able to meet **pre-COVID-19** demands for services. That need is on the rise while providers are also facing devastating and sudden cuts to their government contracts, which strip services away from communities who have already been hardest hit by this pandemic due to structural racism, ableism, and income inequality.

The sector has been speaking about these issues long before COVID-19 and during this crisis, we have asked the City to provide the necessary tools nonprofits need to affect real change. But solutions and resources have been slow to materialize.

We must act boldly and immediately.

On June 10th, HSC sent all members of the City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio a letter calling for a reduction of the New York Police Department's (NYPD) operating budget by at least \$1 billion in FY21 and for that funding to be redistributed to a substantial investment in critical social services that support those who have been hardest hit both by COVID-19. That list

included the following sector-wide recommendations that those that fall under the Department of Aging and the Department of Youth & Community Development¹:

- **Ensure the COLA for city-contracted human services workers does not expire by including a 3% increase on the personnel services line of all human services contracts at the cost of \$48M and work on long-term solutions to ensure that human services workers finally earn fair pay for their labor.** Years of underfunding of the sector has resulted in the human services workforce being some of the lowest compensated workers in New York City's economy. 60 percent of human services workers qualify for public assistance while they perform lifesaving work every day, particularly on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. When elected officials refuse to listen to providers and drastically undervalue the services they provide, it is the human services workforce, which is 80% people of color, who are disproportionately impacted. If New York City is committed to investing in social services and community-based solutions beyond policing, these workers MUST be paid fairly. A COLA is needed now, as well as a commitment to achieving real livable wages and parity for this essential workforce.
- **Fully restore all summer youth programs, including COMPASS/SONYC, Beacon, and NYCHA-based Cornerstone programs, which are facing \$79M in cuts, and work with providers on proposed alternative program models suggest by advocates so that youth have safe places to go and learn this summer.** Young people of color face massive gaps in education and work-based learning that have been further exacerbated by the inequity of remote learning. The child welfare and juvenile justice systems should not be the outcome for poor Black and Brown children, but we fear that lack of programming and the current civic unrest will make that pathway increasingly inevitable. We are leaving our children and youth with no productive activities for the summer, which will lead to devastating consequences.
- **Reverse the cut of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) at the cost of \$124M and expand the program.** Last year, 76,000 youth applicants were turned away from the SYEP due to lack of open spots. As the youth leaders of Teens Take Charge have made clear to the City through their testimony and advocacy to Save SYEP, programs like SYEP help reduce the gaps in work-based learning and social capital that the segregation in NYC creates.
- **Fund the home-delivered meal program with an immediate \$26M investment to cover the real costs of running the program which has proven be a true lifeline to many New Yorkers.** The home delivered meal program provides nutritious meals to homebound individuals which allow recipients to delay or avoid institutional care and remain in their communities. The average cost of a home delivered meal in an urban area

¹ A copy of the full June 10th letter calling City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio to cut the NYPD budget to fund social services is attached to this testimony for further reference.

is \$11.78, not including New York State's \$15 minimum wage, which is much lower than the DFTA-provided rate of \$9.58 per meal. This stark contrast between funding levels and real costs puts the program at risk as providers struggle to close the gap in funding. The current home-delivered meals RFP – which we think should be held for now given the COVID-19 pandemic – needs to be funded at this higher level going forward.

- **Fund the Unity Works Program, a workforce development program specifically aimed at creating work and education opportunities for homeless and runaway LGBTQI youth at \$2.7M for 4 years.** The contract for this RFP has already been awarded, but the funding has been put on pause. 90% of New York City's homeless LGBTQI youth are people of color who are – particularly the Black youth – at an increased risk of criminalization. The Unity Works funding would help improve the odds of these LGBTQI youth obtaining employment and furthering their educational pathways.

Members of the Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce also provided the Mayor with core recommendations of what must be done to immediately address contracting issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they are let to lead to any concrete action items from the administration. In addition to also calling for the COLA for city-contracted human services workers, a reversal of cuts to the SYEP and all summer youth programs, and a reworking of the Home Delivered Meals RFP in order to meet current demands – the letter also highlighted the urgent need for the following actions²:

- **Commit to paying frontline human services workers emergency pay retroactive to March 23, 2020, when non-essential workers in New York were ordered to stay home.**
- **Ensure the survival of small community-based and person of color led organizations by providing access to the resources they need in order to stay open and serve our communities, and structure human services procurements going forward to be inclusive of small, person of color led institutions.**
- **Bring community partners to the table to discuss budget cuts so that essential services are preserved, and necessary cuts are made in ways to minimize the impact on communities and human services providers.**
- **Support providers now with continuing emergency funds to address COVID needs and during reopening with a plan for redesign of program space. Funds are needed to ensure important community spaces can adhere to social distancing requirements, are deep cleaned, and have necessary sanitation supplies.**

² A copy of the full June 5th letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio outlining these recommendations and signed 35 members the Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce is attached to this testimony for further reference.

- **Back FY21 contracts with robust cash advances that are sent out immediately in July.**
- **Stop the recoupment of advances and change the policy so that advances are recouped at the end of the contract, not at the end of each year.**
- **Provide no cost extensions on contracts and allow providers to carry over accruals.**
- **Pay invoices immediately upon receipt and verify documentation at audit.**

The human services sector has the expertise, experience, cultural competency, and community trust needed to make sure that individuals get the lifesaving services they need now, as well as support for long-term personal recovery. But none of that will be possible unless the City commits to supporting the financial stability of the sector. For decades, despite small incremental changes, the City has asked human services providers to do more with less. This dangerous gamble directly resulted in a human services sector that was on the brink of failure before New York City saw its first case of COVID-19. Now our City is facing the devastating ramifications of those choices. We cannot ignore this crisis any longer.

Thank you again for providing me with this opportunity to testify, and for your partnership on all the issues impacting our community. I look forward to working with you on these pressing issues.



The Voice of the Human Services Community

June 4, 2020

Board of Directors

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Ariel Zwang

Executive Director

Michelle Jackson

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio:

As those who work every day to better the lives of all New Yorkers, with centuries of experience working in our communities, the human services sector is deeply disturbed by the government's response to protests and to the racist policies leading up to them. We know what is needed now is not an increased and heavily militarized police presence and damaging curfew, it is making sure there is equitable access to housing, transportation, food, good-paying jobs, worker protections, youth programming, and education. Unfortunately, we speak at this moment about more immediate crises in the way our own government and police – those who should stand with us in building up New York – are mishandling the response to protests and putting many in jeopardy.

Our sector is in solidarity with Black activists and organizers across New York and the entire United States protesting in response to police brutality and structural anti-Black violence and discrimination. The City and State must take immediate actions to demonstrate that they, like us, want to achieve real equity and stand with us to rebuild New York.

- **Remove the oppressive and ill-planned curfew.** New York City's curfew was enacted with limited guidance for those essential workers continuing to work on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic through the curfew and to protect homeless New Yorkers. This directly impacts the access to services in Black communities who have been most impacted by COVID-19 and the ability of our workers to safely do their jobs. The curfew was enacted hastily and without clear instructions, leaving employers scrambling to protect workers out in the field, and with the real worry that those out after curfew will be harassed. Human services workers - a majority of whom are women of color - are already paid poverty wages under government contracts to be on the frontlines of the pandemic and put themselves and their families at risk. New York needs to finally start providing these workers with PPE and incentive pay, not

actively compounding their trauma and making their jobs harder.

- **Fully clear the records of all New Yorkers who are arrested for exercising their First Amendment rights or violating the poorly executed curfew.** New Yorkers peacefully exercising their rights to protest police misconduct and structural racism should not be labeled as criminals. Discrimination based on having a record already disproportionately impacts the Black community due to the very structural racism those out on the streets are protesting. Many human services workers, who are desperately needed in the field, cannot work for programs with an arrest record. Clearing these records is a powerful and necessary step towards breaking the cycle of oppression.
- **Immediately stop the use of tear gas which is a lethal weapon during COVID-19.** The use of weapons that restrict breathing during a pandemic that impacts the respiratory system is completely unethical—it impacts the lungs and makes those who are subjected to it more vulnerable to COVID-19 and drastically increases the transmission of COVID-19 by causing people to cough, take off/lose their face masks, and touch their eyes and face. Even if we were not in the middle of combating a fast-spreading respiratory-based virus with no cure, tear gas has been proven to cause chemical burns to the skin, corneal abrasions, and long-lasting or even permanent lung injury. Propelled canisters also cause skull and bone fractures.

The sector is on the frontlines of fighting inequality, racism, and poverty every day. Government policies have made our jobs more difficult, and we will continue to push for reforms so that we can better serve communities. At this moment of real crisis, we need true leadership, compassion, and thoughtfulness, and cannot stand by as we see failure after failure compound this public health crisis and reckoning of systemic racial inequity.

These steps are only the beginning. The time to act is now.

Sincerely,



Michelle Jackson
Executive Director

Contact: MJ Okma, Policy and Campaign Strategist
okmam@humanservicescouncil.org

cc: Members of the New York State Senate
Members of the New York State Assembly
Members of the New York City Council

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor of New York City
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

June 5, 2020

Re: Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

As members of the Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce, we are honored to represent the sector during these unprecedented times, and to work with our City partners to forge a path to real and equitable recovery. As we continue to serve communities – many who were already in crisis before COVID-19 - we have asked the City to provide the necessary tools nonprofits need to affect real change, but solutions and resources have been slow to materialize. Taskforce meetings have not yet yielded concrete action items, and we are frustrated as many of the items we are raising are not new and could have been addressed years ago.

We are community partners who desperately want to help lead New York through this crisis, and are asking for bold action and immediate movement on the below recommendations. The last scheduled meeting of this group is on June 11th, 2020, and we would like that meeting to include key decision makers including OMB and the First Deputy Mayor's Office, to illustrate a commitment to recovery.

Support Essential Workers:

- Commit to paying frontline human services workers emergency pay retroactive to March 23, 2020, when non-essential workers in New York were ordered to stay home. The City's emergency pay plan for residential workers needs to be quickly approved and paid out and essential workers not covered by that program must also receive pay for their work on the frontlines.
- Pay human services workers fairly. City-contracted human services workers are some of the lowest compensated workers in our City's economy. The small COLA that they receive on City contracts is set to expire at the end of FY20 and we must not allow this benefit to be stripped away from these essential workers.
- Work to achieve comprehensive pay parity for human services workers as part of New York COVID-19 recovery to ensure these workers finally earn fair pay for their labor under City contracts.

Protect Community Services:

- Ensure the survival of small community-based and person of color led organizations by providing access to the resources they need in order to stay open and serve our communities, and structure human services procurements going forward to be inclusive of small, person of color led institutions.
- Immediately retract the summer program cuts that leave no safe place for our kids: SYEP, Beacon, SONYC, and Compass. Young people of Color fall behind every summer – we anticipate that this will be vastly exacerbated by the inequity of remote learning. The child welfare and juvenile justice systems should not be the outcome for poor Black and Brown children, but we fear that lack of programming and the current civic unrest will make that inevitable. We are leaving our children and youth with no productive activities for the summer, which will lead to devastating consequences.
- Fund programs that address the inequities that have been exposed by COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bring community partners to the table to discuss budget cuts so that essential services are preserved, and necessary cuts are made in ways to minimize the impact on communities and human services providers.
- Pull the Home Delivered Meals RFP, which is already underfunded based on pre-COVID-19 demands, and work with food-based providers to design a home delivered meals system that utilizes the sector’s expertise, infrastructure, and current needs of the community.
- Embrace changes made during COVID-19 that benefit communities, like the expanded use of technology to better serve clients.
- Support providers now with continuing emergency funds to address COVID needs and during reopening with a plan for redesign of program space. Funds are needed to ensure important community spaces can adhere to social distancing requirements, are deep cleaned, and have necessary sanitation supplies.

Amend the Procurement Process:

- Back FY21 contracts with robust cash advances that are sent out immediately in July.
- Stop the recoupment of advances and change the policy so that advances are recouped at the end of the contract, not at the end of each year.
- Provide no cost extensions on contracts and allow providers to carry over accruals.
- Pay invoices immediately upon receipt and verify documentation at audit.

For decades, despite small incremental changes, the City has asked human services providers to do more with less. This dangerous gamble directly resulted in a human services sector that was on the brink of failure before New York City saw its first case of COVID-19. Now our City is facing the devastating ramifications of those choices. If City officials continue to drag their feet, small and large human services nonprofits alike will be pushed into failure resulting in the direct loss of services for New Yorkers who have already been hardest hit by this pandemic due to

structural racism, ableism, and income inequality. As this Taskforce comes to a close, we ask for a response to these recommendations so that we can all move New York City into recovery and ensure there is a viable human services network to aid New Yorkers every day, and in the next disaster.

The time to act is now.

Ali Forney Center
Asian American Federation
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
Black Veterans for Social Justice
Bowery Residents' Committee (BRC)
BronxWorks
CASES
Casita Maria
Catholic Charities Brooklyn & Queens
Center for Hearing and Communication
Children of Promise
Children's Village/Harlem Dowling
Chinese-American Planning Council
Citymeals on Wheels
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Girls for Gender Equity
Good Shepherd Services
Henry Street Settlement
Hispanic Federation
Independence Care System
LGBT Community Center
Los Sures/ Southside United
MinKwon Center for Community Action
NAACP
Northside Center for Child Development
Older Adults Technology Services (OATS)
Project Hospitality
RiseBoro Community Partnership
SCO Family of Services/Center for Family Life in Sunset Park
Safe Horizon
Services for the UnderServed
Sheltering Arms
Urban Pathways
Urban Resource Institute (URI)
WomanKind

TESTIMONY

New York City Council
Committee on Contracts

Jointly with the Committee on Aging and the Committee on Youth Services
June 23, 2020

Submitted by:
MJ Okma
Policy and Campaign Strategist
Human Services Council of New York

Good morning Chair Kallos and members of the New York City Council Committee on Contracts, Chair Chin and members of the Committee on Aging, and Chair Rose and members of the Committee on Youth Services. My name is MJ Okma and I am the Policy and Campaign Strategist at the Human Services Council (HSC), a membership organization representing over 170 human services providers in New York City. HSC serves our membership as a coordinating body, advocate, and an intermediary between the human services sector and government. We take on this work so that our members can focus on running their organizations and providing direct support to New Yorkers. These are the nonprofits that support our City's children, seniors, those experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, individuals who are incarcerated or otherwise involved in the justice system, immigrants, and individuals coping with substance abuse and other mental health and behavioral challenges.

There has been an underfunding crisis in the human services sector long before COVID-19 came to our City. Currently, because our government contracts drastically underfund the cost of implementing mandated services, it has been very difficult to be nimble and respond to New Yorker's immediate and long-term needs during our continued pandemic response and recovery. New York City's preexisting human services funding crisis led 68% of providers to anticipate not being able to meet **pre-COVID-19** demands for services. That need is on the rise while providers are also facing devastating and sudden cuts to their government contracts, which strip services away from communities who have already been hardest hit by this pandemic due to structural racism, ableism, and income inequality.

The sector has been speaking about these issues long before COVID-19 and during this crisis, we have asked the City to provide the necessary tools nonprofits need to affect real change. But solutions and resources have been slow to materialize.

We must act boldly and immediately.

On June 10th, HSC sent all members of the City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio a letter calling for a reduction of the New York Police Department's (NYPD) operating budget by at least \$1 billion in FY21 and for that funding to be redistributed to a substantial investment in critical social services that support those who have been hardest hit both by COVID-19. That list

included the following sector-wide recommendations that those that fall under the Department of Aging and the Department of Youth & Community Development¹:

- **Ensure the COLA for city-contracted human services workers does not expire by including a 3% increase on the personnel services line of all human services contracts at the cost of \$48M and work on long-term solutions to ensure that human services workers finally earn fair pay for their labor.** Years of underfunding of the sector has resulted in the human services workforce being some of the lowest compensated workers in New York City's economy. 60 percent of human services workers qualify for public assistance while they perform lifesaving work every day, particularly on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. When elected officials refuse to listen to providers and drastically undervalue the services they provide, it is the human services workforce, which is 80% people of color, who are disproportionately impacted. If New York City is committed to investing in social services and community-based solutions beyond policing, these workers MUST be paid fairly. A COLA is needed now, as well as a commitment to achieving real livable wages and parity for this essential workforce.
- **Fully restore all summer youth programs, including COMPASS/SONYC, Beacon, and NYCHA-based Cornerstone programs, which are facing \$79M in cuts, and work with providers on proposed alternative program models suggest by advocates so that youth have safe places to go and learn this summer.** Young people of color face massive gaps in education and work-based learning that have been further exacerbated by the inequity of remote learning. The child welfare and juvenile justice systems should not be the outcome for poor Black and Brown children, but we fear that lack of programming and the current civic unrest will make that pathway increasingly inevitable. We are leaving our children and youth with no productive activities for the summer, which will lead to devastating consequences.
- **Reverse the cut of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) at the cost of \$124M and expand the program.** Last year, 76,000 youth applicants were turned away from the SYEP due to lack of open spots. As the youth leaders of Teens Take Charge have made clear to the City through their testimony and advocacy to Save SYEP, programs like SYEP help reduce the gaps in work-based learning and social capital that the segregation in NYC creates.
- **Fund the home-delivered meal program with an immediate \$26M investment to cover the real costs of running the program which has proven be a true lifeline to many New Yorkers.** The home delivered meal program provides nutritious meals to homebound individuals which allow recipients to delay or avoid institutional care and remain in their communities. The average cost of a home delivered meal in an urban area

¹ A copy of the full June 10th letter calling City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio to cut the NYPD budget to fund social services is attached to this testimony for further reference.

is \$11.78, not including New York State's \$15 minimum wage, which is much lower than the DFTA-provided rate of \$9.58 per meal. This stark contrast between funding levels and real costs puts the program at risk as providers struggle to close the gap in funding. The current home-delivered meals RFP – which we think should be held for now given the COVID-19 pandemic – needs to be funded at this higher level going forward.

- **Fund the Unity Works Program, a workforce development program specifically aimed at creating work and education opportunities for homeless and runaway LGBTQI youth at \$2.7M for 4 years.** The contract for this RFP has already been awarded, but the funding has been put on pause. 90% of New York City's homeless LGBTQI youth are people of color who are – particularly the Black youth – at an increased risk of criminalization. The Unity Works funding would help improve the odds of these LGBTQI youth obtaining employment and furthering their educational pathways.

Members of the Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce also provided the Mayor with core recommendations of what must be done to immediately address contracting issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they are let to lead to any concrete action items from the administration. In addition to also calling for the COLA for city-contracted human services workers, a reversal of cuts to the SYEP and all summer youth programs, and a reworking of the Home Delivered Meals RFP in order to meet current demands – the letter also highlighted the urgent need for the following actions²:

- **Commit to paying frontline human services workers emergency pay retroactive to March 23, 2020, when non-essential workers in New York were ordered to stay home.**
- **Ensure the survival of small community-based and person of color led organizations by providing access to the resources they need in order to stay open and serve our communities, and structure human services procurements going forward to be inclusive of small, person of color led institutions.**
- **Bring community partners to the table to discuss budget cuts so that essential services are preserved, and necessary cuts are made in ways to minimize the impact on communities and human services providers.**
- **Support providers now with continuing emergency funds to address COVID needs and during reopening with a plan for redesign of program space. Funds are needed to ensure important community spaces can adhere to social distancing requirements, are deep cleaned, and have necessary sanitation supplies.**

² A copy of the full June 5th letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio outlining these recommendations and signed 35 members the Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce is attached to this testimony for further reference.

- **Back FY21 contracts with robust cash advances that are sent out immediately in July.**
- **Stop the recoupment of advances and change the policy so that advances are recouped at the end of the contract, not at the end of each year.**
- **Provide no cost extensions on contracts and allow providers to carry over accruals.**
- **Pay invoices immediately upon receipt and verify documentation at audit.**

The human services sector has the expertise, experience, cultural competency, and community trust needed to make sure that individuals get the lifesaving services they need now, as well as support for long-term personal recovery. But none of that will be possible unless the City commits to supporting the financial stability of the sector. For decades, despite small incremental changes, the City has asked human services providers to do more with less. This dangerous gamble directly resulted in a human services sector that was on the brink of failure before New York City saw its first case of COVID-19. Now our City is facing the devastating ramifications of those choices. We cannot ignore this crisis any longer.

Thank you again for providing me with this opportunity to testify, and for your partnership on all the issues impacting our community. I look forward to working with you on these pressing issues.



The Voice of the Human Services Community

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Executive Director

Michelle Jackson

June 10, 2020

Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bill de Blasio and Members of New York City Council,

The Human Services Council (HSC) stands in full support of the demands of the Communities United for Police Reform's NYC Budget Justice campaign – along with countless community groups - that calls for a reduction of the New York Police Department's (NYPD) operating budget by \$1 billion in FY21 and for that funding to be redistributed to a substantial investment in existing critical youth and social services programs as well as the development of new initiatives to address systemic racism and support communities of color.

As a membership organization representing over 170 human services providers in New York, HSC members commit to proactively address the anti-Blackness and racism within our own institutions and to advocate for the people and communities we serve. At this moment, our advocacy includes pushing back on the expanded role of the NYPD into our services and directly calling out a budget that continues to underfund social services while maintaining the immense budget of a police department at the expense of our communities.

The following are recommendations for how you, as New York City elected officials, can redirect funds from the NYPD and into programs that support those who have been hardest hit both by COVID-19 and address police accountability. Change is overdue and needed immediately. There is much more work to be done than can be captured in this list, and the City must commit to working with anti-racist activists and communities of color to comprehensively combat the crisis of anti-Blackness and deep-rooted structural racism in our City.

- **Fully restore all summer youth programs, including COMPASS/SONYC, Beacon, and NYCHA-based Cornerstone programs, which are facing \$79M in cuts, and work with providers on proposed alternative program models suggest by advocates so that**

youth have safe places to go and learn this summer. Young people of color face massive gaps in education and work-based learning that have been further exacerbated by the inequity of remote learning. The child welfare and juvenile justice systems should not be the outcome for poor Black and Brown children, but we fear that lack of programming and the current civic unrest will make that pathway increasingly inevitable. We are leaving our children and youth with no productive activities for the summer, which will lead to devastating consequences. The Campaign for Children has put forward models for both remote and in-person summer programs and should be contacted to partner on this effort.

- **Fully restore funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) at the cost of \$124M and expand the program.** Last year, 76,000 youth applicants were turned away from the SYEP due to lack of open spots. As the youth leaders of Teens Take Charge have made clear to the City through their testimony and advocacy to Save SYEP, programs like SYEP help reduce the gaps in work-based learning and social capital that the segregation in NYC creates. HSC supports the youth leaders of Teens Take Charge and echo their calls to expand the SYEP program.
- **Ensure the COLA for city-contracted human services workers does not expire by including a 3% increase on the personnel services line of all human services contracts at the cost of \$48M and work on long-term solutions to ensure that human services workers finally earn fair pay for their labor.** Years of underfunding of the sector has resulted in the human services workforce being some of the lowest compensated workers in New York City's economy. 60 percent of human services workers qualify for public assistance while they perform lifesaving work every day, particularly on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. When elected officials refuse to listen to providers and drastically undervalue the services they provide, it is the human services workforce, which is 80% people of color, who are disproportionately impacted. If New York City is committed to investing in social services and community-based solutions beyond policing, these workers **MUST** be paid fairly. A COLA is needed now, as well as a commitment to achieving real livable wages and parity for this essential workforce.
- **Fund the home-delivered meal program with an immediate \$26M investment to cover the real costs of running the program which has proven be a true lifeline to many New Yorkers.** The home delivered meal

program provides nutritious meals to homebound individuals which allow recipients to delay or avoid institutional care and remain in their communities. The average cost of a home delivered meal in an urban area is \$11.78, not including New York State's \$15 minimum wage, which is much lower than the DFTA-provided rate of \$9.58 per meal. This stark contrast between funding levels and real costs puts the program at risk as providers struggle to close the gap in funding. The current home-delivered meals RFP – which we think should be held for now given the COVID-19 pandemic – needs to be funded at this higher level going forward. LiveOn New York should be contacted about this recommendation.

- **Fund the Unity Works Program, a workforce development program specifically aimed at creating work and education opportunities for homeless and runaway LGBTQI youth at \$2.7M for 4 years.** The contract for this RFP have already been awarded, but the funding has been put on pause. 90% of New York City's homeless LGBTQI youth are people of color who are – particularly the Black youth – at an increased risk of criminalization. The Unity Works funding would help improve the odds of these LGBTQI youth obtaining employment and furthering their educational pathways.
- **Fund \$15M over the next 5 years for a CCITNYC pilot program to reduce the role of police in responding to behavioral health emergencies and explore ways to integrate mobile crisis and/or Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT) into 911 dispatch in lieu of police response.** There is a clear intersection between race and disability when it comes to which communities are most impacted by police violence that must not be ignored. One of the first steps to addressing this crisis is to ensure that police are not called for behavioral health emergencies. Since the NYPD started the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training in 2015, at least 17 mental health recipients have died or been shot in police encounters, including 15 deaths. CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily impacted precincts. The pilot will pair EMTs with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience) who will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises rather than the police. The Coalition of Behavioral Health has recommended the expansion of mobile crisis and HEAT.
- **Renew \$58.2M in funding for immigration legal services to ensure continuity of services and to help defend immigrants against the**

aggressive, anti-immigrant policies from Washington that continue even during this pandemic. Alongside the hostility from Washington, profiling in NYC consistently puts immigrant communities at risk. During the current anti-racism protests, undocumented New Yorkers risk deportation just for peacefully assembling or getting wrapped up in New York's recent ill-planned curfew.

- **Increase the emergency cash assistance fund for those New Yorkers cruelly left out of the federal relief packages, including direct cash payments and help for small businesses.** With immigrants disproportionately working while being increasingly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, New York City must stand firm in its commitment to these residents and continue leading the country in narrowing the inequality gap for immigrant New Yorkers. The New York Immigration Coalition has been advocating for this fund and should be contacted to partner with the City on this effort.
- **Enhance the Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (NSF) to \$10M.** Leadership development, financial management, management information systems improvements, and outcomes system development supported through the NSF will allow more community groups to strengthen their ability to serve their communities. The cap on personnel should also be removed to allow organizations to fund staff positions for lasting capacity. The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families has advocated for this – along with many other coalitions – and should be contacted to partner on this effort.
- **Provide \$70M in annual Bridge Program Funding.** These programs provide access to education and training in a continuum that creates an "on ramp" to help lead participants into quality jobs—which is especially important as we see a changing job market post-COVID. To be inclusive and increasingly impactful, the City must not ignore the barriers to immigrant participation in the workforce and a portion of any Bridge Program expansion should be used to fund an innovative pilot Immigrant Workforce Development Initiative. The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families and New York City Employment and Training Coalition have advocated for this and should be contacted to partner on this effort.

- **Invest in comprehensive housing assistance.** The need for affordable housing and homeless prevention – already a crisis in NYC – will only grow in the coming months due to COVID-19, which has disproportionately impacted Black and Brown New Yorkers. Greater resources are necessary to keep families housed after the eviction moratorium ends given the alarming projections of unemployment and the number of households experiencing severe rent burden. Short and long-term rent assistance is needed to cover rent arrears and support ongoing rent payments. Eviction prevention services will also be key to addressing housing security further upstream, which is less costly and less traumatic for families with children at risk of homelessness.

This list is only part of the work that needs to be done, and HSC appreciates our limited role in this conversation. The budget is a reflection of our values, and New York City must preserve critical human services programs including discretionary funding that assists hundreds of community organizations.

Our recommendations try to merge the need for immediate investment in critical programs with communities hit hardest by COVID-19, programs that reduce police interactions with communities, and ways to support people of color. We cannot stress enough that this is not a final and comprehensive list, and those who have done the difficult work of calling out inequity and racism need to be given seats at the table with real authority to invest critical dollars in communities of color.

Respectfully,

Michelle Jackson



Executive Director, Human Services Council

Contact: MJ Okma, Policy and Campaign Strategist
okmam@humanservicescouncil.org

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor of New York City
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

June 5, 2020

Re: Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

As members of the Nonprofit and Social Services Recovery Taskforce, we are honored to represent the sector during these unprecedented times, and to work with our City partners to forge a path to real and equitable recovery. As we continue to serve communities – many who were already in crisis before COVID-19 - we have asked the City to provide the necessary tools nonprofits need to affect real change, but solutions and resources have been slow to materialize. Taskforce meetings have not yet yielded concrete action items, and we are frustrated as many of the items we are raising are not new and could have been addressed years ago.

We are community partners who desperately want to help lead New York through this crisis, and are asking for bold action and immediate movement on the below recommendations. The last scheduled meeting of this group is on June 11th, 2020, and we would like that meeting to include key decision makers including OMB and the First Deputy Mayor's Office, to illustrate a commitment to recovery.

Support Essential Workers:

- Commit to paying frontline human services workers emergency pay retroactive to March 23, 2020, when non-essential workers in New York were ordered to stay home. The City's emergency pay plan for residential workers needs to be quickly approved and paid out and essential workers not covered by that program must also receive pay for their work on the frontlines.
- Pay human services workers fairly. City-contracted human services workers are some of the lowest compensated workers in our City's economy. The small COLA that they receive on City contracts is set to expire at the end of FY20 and we must not allow this benefit to be stripped away from these essential workers.
- Work to achieve comprehensive pay parity for human services workers as part of New York COVID-19 recovery to ensure these workers finally earn fair pay for their labor under City contracts.

Protect Community Services:

- Ensure the survival of small community-based and person of color led organizations by providing access to the resources they need in order to stay open and serve our communities, and structure human services procurements going forward to be inclusive of small, person of color led institutions.
- Immediately retract the summer program cuts that leave no safe place for our kids: SYEP, Beacon, SONYC, and Compass. Young people of Color fall behind every summer – we anticipate that this will be vastly exacerbated by the inequity of remote learning. The child welfare and juvenile justice systems should not be the outcome for poor Black and Brown children, but we fear that lack of programming and the current civic unrest will make that inevitable. We are leaving our children and youth with no productive activities for the summer, which will lead to devastating consequences.
- Fund programs that address the inequities that have been exposed by COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bring community partners to the table to discuss budget cuts so that essential services are preserved, and necessary cuts are made in ways to minimize the impact on communities and human services providers.
- Pull the Home Delivered Meals RFP, which is already underfunded based on pre-COVID-19 demands, and work with food-based providers to design a home delivered meals system that utilizes the sector's expertise, infrastructure, and current needs of the community.
- Embrace changes made during COVID-19 that benefit communities, like the expanded use of technology to better serve clients.
- Support providers now with continuing emergency funds to address COVID needs and during reopening with a plan for redesign of program space. Funds are needed to ensure important community spaces can adhere to social distancing requirements, are deep cleaned, and have necessary sanitation supplies.

Amend the Procurement Process:

- Back FY21 contracts with robust cash advances that are sent out immediately in July.
- Stop the recoupment of advances and change the policy so that advances are recouped at the end of the contract, not at the end of each year.
- Provide no cost extensions on contracts and allow providers to carry over accruals.
- Pay invoices immediately upon receipt and verify documentation at audit.

For decades, despite small incremental changes, the City has asked human services providers to do more with less. This dangerous gamble directly resulted in a human services sector that was on the brink of failure before New York City saw its first case of COVID-19. Now our City is facing the devastating ramifications of those choices. If City officials continue to drag their feet, small and large human services nonprofits alike will be pushed into failure resulting in the direct loss of services for New Yorkers who have already been hardest hit by this pandemic due to

structural racism, ableism, and income inequality. As this Taskforce comes to a close, we ask for a response to these recommendations so that we can all move New York City into recovery and ensure there is a viable human services network to aid New Yorkers every day, and in the next disaster.

The time to act is now.

Ali Forney Center
Asian American Federation
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
Black Veterans for Social Justice
Bowery Residents' Committee (BRC)
BronxWorks
CASES
Casita Maria
Catholic Charities Brooklyn & Queens
Center for Hearing and Communication
Children of Promise
Children's Village/Harlem Dowling
Chinese-American Planning Council
Citymeals on Wheels
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Girls for Gender Equity
Good Shepherd Services
Henry Street Settlement
Hispanic Federation
Independence Care System
LGBT Community Center
Los Sures/ Southside United
MinKwon Center for Community Action
NAACP
Northside Center for Child Development
Older Adults Technology Services (OATS)
Project Hospitality
RiseBoro Community Partnership
SCO Family of Services/Center for Family Life in Sunset Park
Safe Horizon
Services for the UnderServed
Sheltering Arms
Urban Pathways
Urban Resource Institute (URI)
WomanKind



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Jumaane D. Williams

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT - OVERSIGHT HEARING
JUNE 24, 2020**

Good afternoon,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank the Committee on Economic Development Chair Paul Vallone for holding this oversight hearing.

I welcome today's discussion with representatives from the New York City Economic Development Corporation. The topic of relief efforts amid COVID-19 is vital, especially since an economic recovery is on the minds of New Yorkers. It is important to continue efforts for this recovery since this requires a lot of innovation and work.

Within the administration's Executive Budget, contract payments from the New York City Small Business Services to the EDC for attracting and retaining businesses are declining. In fiscal year 2021, the proposed SBS contribution is \$25.1 million, down from about \$50.6 million in fiscal year 2020. In fact, since 2017, the contributions have been decreasing. If the City intends to support small businesses through these contributions, then there should be a clear and legitimate reason for why they are declining. Otherwise, it means even less help for small businesses in this climate.

The EDC's decision to help manufacturers produce face coverings and hospital gowns is an example of a sensible policy. Businesses suddenly facing a loss in income are able to make necessary supplies for our health care workers. This is a type of innovation that makes me concerned when seeing this budgetary decline for a program that is intended for small businesses.

There is also the worry on EDC's contributions to the City. According to the Citizens Budget Commission, EDC's operating revenue from 2015 to 2019 increased by 10 percent or \$35 million. But its operating expenses over the same time frame increased by 36 percent or \$384.2 million. Both capital-related operating expenses and office rent significantly rose by triple digits from 2015 to 2019. Notably, in 2019, operating income before payments to the City was at a deficit of \$1.9 million. Previously, this was at a surplus. It is troubling that contributions to the



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

City are declining, which stem from high expenses including operating the NYC Ferry. I hope officials discuss how to manage, if possible, this dilemma.

I also want to highlight the support of MWBEs, an issue that several Councilmembers have raised in previous hearings. We should recognize that communities of more color have been disproportionately affected in the economic downturn. An April report from the Center for New York City Affairs found 68 percent of 1.2 million jobs lost from the pandemic were held by people of more color. Women too have been impacted as they held 55 percent of the nationwide jobs lost in April alone per the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The field is still uneven, and we need to make sure that current relief efforts recognize the barriers that exist.

This is also true for the New York Works program. This is an especially important time to think about the employment of transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary people in such a program. Indeed, one of the goals of the program is ensuring “those jobs are accessible to New Yorkers.” We need to ensure the jobs truly are accessible. I recommend EDC highlight efforts in TGNCNB employment going forward.

Finally, I would like to raise, in response to the City’s ongoing fiscal problems, the question of the Hudson Yards development. Specifically, the tax breaks given to the developers. If billions were given to these developers, then why are we not looking at those tax breaks to cover at least a portion of the City’s revenue shortfalls? We do not know when development will be complete, and there is uncertainty surrounding the future of Hudson Yards. The area, already viewed as a place for the wealthy, should merit a review based upon the City’s existing financial woes.

Relief will persist for a long time, and that is needed for a steady recovery. Of course, it is not easy as it sounds based upon the City’s revenue shortfalls. EDC can help with decisions that make sense and make a difference for businesses. Of course, we remain vigilant on all relief efforts. Thank you, and I welcome today’s testimony.



Asian American Federation

Testimony for New York City Council Oversight Hearing – Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit Contracting during a Pandemic

Committees on Aging and Youth Services

June 23, 2020

My name is Jo-Ann Yoo, and I am the executive director of the Asian American Federation (AAF). AAF's mission is to raise the influence and well-being of the pan-Asian American community through research, policy advocacy, public awareness, and organizational development. We come to you today representing our network of over 70 member organizations supporting our community with their work in health and human services, education, economic development, civic participation, and social justice.

We are here to highlight the needs of Asian seniors, who are the fastest growing senior population in New York City and in the state. While the COVID-19 epidemic has negatively impacted the health and wellbeing of all New Yorkers, the Asian seniors of our city are particularly more vulnerable.

From 2000 to 2018, the Asian senior population in the City more than doubled, increasing faster than all other major race and ethnic groups. Nearly 1 in 4 Asian seniors live in poverty, with poverty rates reaching as high as 35% for Bangladeshi seniors and 30% for Chinese seniors. For seniors living in poverty, LEP rates were 83% for Asians, compared to 48% for non-Asians. Poverty and immigration status also hurt Asian seniors' ability to access affordable health insurance and immigrant seniors, particularly those who are limited in English proficiency and living in poverty, are less likely to have access to accurate information and are therefore more sensitive to news that are alarmist in nature.

Asian seniors need culturally competent services in order to thrive and are more likely to utilize services that reflect their traditional values and ethnic identities. Culturally competent programs will also understand the cultural and generational barriers that stop seniors from seeking help, particularly mental health services. While 40% of Asian seniors report experiencing depression and Asian women ages 65 and older have the highest suicide rate across all racial and ethnic groups, community-based organizations with roots in their neighborhoods are best placed to get Asian seniors the help they need.

However, the current COVID pandemic has exposed the consequences of chronic underfunding of Asian-servicing community organizations and services. Asian-led community organizations that are best placed to assist our seniors are having to radically change their operating models and face looming threats to funding.

An example of this can be seen in the increasing demands in food delivery services. Many of our member and partner agencies have had to pivot from providing congregate senior meal services to food delivery or food banking options due to COVID-19. Without necessary funding, our agencies are not able to ensure that the basic needs of our homebound Asian American seniors are being met.

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New York, NY 10005

Flushing:
37-17 Union Street, 2nd Floor
Flushing, NY 11354

These agencies are being stretched to their limits to prepare and deliver meals, purchase non-perishable foods, and to make deliveries, and hire staff to meet unanticipated needs.

In regard to mental health care, overcoming cultural stigma surrounding mental health services requires incorporating mental health care into existing services such as homebound meal delivery to reach Asian seniors where they are. Normalizing mental health concepts and addressing the intense social isolation in our senior community are the need of the hour, especially now that all seniors are essentially homebound even as the rest of the city slowly opens up.

Additionally, immigration and integration trends are diversifying and dispersing the Asian senior population. Asian seniors can now be found outside of ethnic enclaves and new Asian communities have emerged in places such as Parkchester in the Bronx and East Harlem. The City needs to recognize that more resources are needed for Asian-serving senior service organizations to expand their reach throughout New York City and for mainstream agencies adapt their services to be more culturally competent to meet the growing Asian senior population.

As we start planning to re-emerge from our homes into the city, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers wonder how their essential needs will be met. Asian American seniors are one of the largest senior populations in New York and are the most vulnerable. This is an opportunity for this legislative body to envision a new economy that supports the growing senior population in the Asian communities in New York.

On behalf of our nearly 70 member and partner agencies that serve Asian seniors, we request resources for the following priorities:

- Address the growing need for in-language and culturally competent health care and mental health services for Asian seniors.
- Raise reimbursement rates for ethnic home-delivered meals and temporarily allow congregate meal contractors to run home-delivered meal services
- Continue funding for the Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations Initiative at \$1.5 million to support Asian senior centers in both existing and emerging neighborhoods.
- Amend contracting process to allow Asian-led nonprofits to more accurately reflect the cultural and language expertise they bring when serving Asian seniors.
- Establish protections for subcontractors or restructure contracts to enable Asian senior centers to contract directly with the City for homebound meals.
- Ensure that DFTA receives the funding they need to fully implement the new citywide languages covered in Local Law 30.

Thank you!

CAMBA
Testimony Before the New York City Council
Committees on Contracts, Youth Services, and Aging
June 23, 2020
Joanne M. Oplustil

Council Member Kallos, Council Member Rose, Council Member Chin, and Members of the Committees, my name is Joanne M. Oplustil and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of CAMBA. I want to thank you for holding today's hearing and affording us the opportunity to testify. CAMBA is one of New York City's largest and most trusted community-based organizations and is unique among peer agencies in scale, quality, and responsiveness. Founded in 1977 as a merchants' block association, the agency has grown in direct response to the needs of the Brooklyn community and beyond. Today, CAMBA provides services to 65,000 individuals and families annually through an integrated set of six program areas: Economic Development, Education and Youth Development, Family Support, Health, Housing, and Legal Services. Through our comprehensive continuum of care, CAMBA provides people with the tools and resources that they need to achieve their full potential.

I want to share with the Committees my belief that the City's decision to defund summer programming for youth will have a disastrous impact on the children, youth and families that we serve; that it will exacerbate the difficulties providers face with the contracting process; and that it will put the health of the non-profit sector further at risk.

All children need enrichment, additional supports, and outlets to grow and thrive. CAMBA provides these by leveraging a combination of programs aimed at differentiated age groups and needs. We serve approximately 5,600 youth annually through DYCD-funded programs that include a Summer Youth Employment Program, seven COMPASS after-school programs, three SONYC after-school programs, nine Cornerstone Community Centers, and four Beacon Community Centers. These programs operate in a rich array of neighborhoods across Brooklyn. They provide a lifeline to New York City's most vulnerable children, youth, and families that is needed now more than ever in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We provide young people with opportunities for academic enrichment, social-emotional learning, and exposure to the world of work that would not otherwise be available to them.

In addition to the direct impact on children, cutting summer programming will also have economic consequences. As the City is reopening, many low-income parents are returning to work. Many others are essential workers whose jobs were never affected by the stay-at-home order. These parents depend upon our summer camps and community centers to provide a safe and enriching environment for their children while they earn a living for their families. Many also depend on the extra income from the Summer Youth Employment Program to balance their budgets.

As you know, the non-profit sector in New York City has been put at risk of failure by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the City's finances. According to research by SeaChange Capital Partners, even New York City's large non-profits are at the financial breaking point. The failure of large providers would "tear the fabric of the City's social safety net with devastating

consequences for all.” For large non-profits in particular, this situation has not been ameliorated by federal stimulus funding. Because we have more than 500 employees, we are not eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program. Moreover, non-profits are not eligible for the Main Street Lending Program. Instead, we are being left to fend for ourselves.

Against this bleak financial backdrop, issues with City contracts for youth services loom large. In addition to eliminating summer contracts for youth services, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has informed us that Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) providers with year-round contracts that start on July 1 will not be permitted to charge against those contracts for July and August. Further, there will be no advances on contracts that start on September 1. The combined effect of these decisions would be to leave providers with no means for paying for the fixed costs associated with running youth development programs. In addition to items such as liability insurance, audit, and indirect, these fixed costs include core elements such as the salaries and benefits for full-time, year-round employees, including multi-site supervisors and site directors, who we would be forced to lay off. The affected employees would lose their income and their health insurance. They are experienced, dedicated professionals who all have deep expertise in the principles of Positive Youth Development and close relationships with the children, youth, and families that we serve. These staff members have deep ties to the communities they serve – many are former program participants who grew up in the neighborhoods where they now work. Laying them off and other cost-cutting measures would destroy the youth development infrastructure of every non-profit, large and small. It would set the field of youth development back by a decade or more and would dismantle the City’s capacity to meet the needs of its most vulnerable citizens.

There are also ongoing issues with the contracting process for DYCD contracts that exacerbate the financial challenges faced by non-profits. Many of our programs are funded by contracts that are split between a two-month summer contract (July-August) and a ten-month school-year contract (September-June) with a fixed split in funding for each that does not necessarily match the spending patterns of each provider. This rigid structure does not allow providers to account for the seasonality of expenses. We recommend that DYCD change to a system of 12-month contracts to enable providers to better accommodate seasonal fluctuations in costs over the course of the fiscal year.

This year, our situation is exacerbated because we cannot bill for July or August. Because OMB will not allow us to seek advances during the summer, the net effect is a two-month period where we have no cash. We are left unable to conduct start-up activities – such as hiring staff and purchasing supplies – for the next contract period in September. In effect, we are being asked to just flip a switch to start program activities in the fall, something that is simply impossible.

Our cash flow is further impacted by DYCD’s chronic lateness with getting contracts registered. Until a contract is registered, DYCD cannot provide a non-profit with any money under that contract. However, contract registration is typically months behind the schedule of service delivery. For example, in our experience Summer Youth Employment Program contracts are typically not registered until nine months after the contract start date. At present, for Fiscal Year 2021, CAMBA has \$5 million in budgets related to unregistered contracts. This dynamic forces those providers with lines of credit to rely on these and other mechanisms to maintain cash flow

even though interest on a line of credit is not a reimbursable expenses. For smaller community-based organizations who lack these sort of resources, the impact of late contract registration is even more devastating.

While the City tells us that we can address the problem of late registration by turning to the Fund for the City of New York, this is not an adequate solution. First, the Fund only covers expenses such as payroll and rent, leaving many other costs, such as equipment and supplies, uncovered. Second, the Fund provides support on a cost reimbursement basis, which requires us to front the money while we wait for our contracts to be registered. This year, with no DYCD funding for July or August, this requirement is particularly onerous. Furthermore, the Fund will only provide support to a provider that has a contract pending registration. If you are awaiting a contract from DYCD or any other City agency, the Fund for the City of New York is simply not available. Finally, the Fund has limited resources and operates on a first-come-first-served basis. In the current environment, it simply cannot meet the full level of demand.

Defunding the summer is only the start of the challenges facing non-profits. With little or no federal stimulus support, non-profits across the spectrum are in precarious financial condition. In this environment, the contracting challenges that I have outlined are especially important as agencies struggle to maintain payroll and other core expenses. Reform is needed now more than ever.

Thank you for allowing us to testify. I hope that our testimony on these important issues regarding contracting for youth services during the pandemic proves helpful to you as you work to craft solutions that will provide for the health, welfare, and well-being of all of New York City's children, youth, and families.



**Testimony
New York City Council
Committee on Contracts Jointly with the
Committee on Aging and the
Committee on Youth Services
Tuesday, June 23 2020**

Submitted by Penni Bunyaviroch
Director of Contracts Management
Catholic Charities Community Services

Good afternoon to Chairs Kallos, Chin and Rose and the members of the New York City Council Committees on Contracts, Aging and Youth Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding youth and senior services contracting during the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to wreak havoc on our clients, our services, and our City.

For over 70 years, Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York (CCCS) has provided comprehensive, professional human services to vulnerable, low-income City residents in the poorest communities of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island. Its network of services enables a participant in any of our programs to access a continuum of services which include: after-school programs at summer camps and community centers; youth employment programs; drop-out prevention programs; case management services to help people resolve financial, emotional and family issues; long-term disaster case management services; eviction and homelessness prevention; emergency food; immigration legal services; refugee resettlement; ESOL services; specialized assistance for the blind; and supportive housing programs for adults with serious mental illness. Through its programs, CCCS serves more than 100,000 individuals each year without regard to race, ethnicity, gender or religion.

The FY21 Budget – Cataclysm or Constructive Change?

As you know and have heard from many providers, the FY21 Executive Budget's Citywide Savings Program threatens to turn a summer of youth development to one of youth devastation. The suspension of both Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and summer day camp programs promises to leave thousands of children without constructive activities and guidance during otherwise idle summer months. Immigrant children and families, many of whom were excluded from the federal stimulus packages, would be especially worse off. Cuts to discretionary funding for youth and senior programming would further destabilize the communities we serve that have been hit hardest by the pandemic and prolong the road to healing and economic recovery.

Commitments by members of this Council and the Mayor to redirect investments into youth and social services, if fulfilled, may reverse the City's destructive course and pave the way for empowering development through investment in communities of color disproportionately affected by law enforcement and COVID-19. Should SYEP be restored, we have the employees and equipment ready to act immediately to resume operations and allow children to gain the valuable career experience and life skills that SYEP provides. For the more than 500,000 NYC immigrants from around the globe who were left out of federal stimulus programs, funding may provide not only legal assistance but case management, school and health insurance registration, access to medical and mental health care, English-language learning, and vocational training and job assistance. We support increased investments in youth and social services because we see the benefit these services have on the communities most affected by COVID-19 and the murder of George Floyd and know that these services are critical supports for these communities as they recover.

Contracts: Consternation and Collaboration

The City's record of handling youth and human services contracts is one of limited successes marred by significant shortcomings. The suspension of SYEP contracts with 24 hours' notice caused widespread turmoil among youth services providers and casts doubt on the City's willingness and ability to deliver on its contract and budgetary promises. The Council's discretionary guidance on contract activities after New York's March 22nd PAUSE order came 31 days late on April 21st, and caused enough confusion to merit subsequent guidance on April 24th and an FAQ on May 31st. Despite these additional communications, city agencies continue to reject contract expenses for clearly established essential services. We were initially told by one agency that they had been told to wait for Council Finance and OMB to determine explicitly whether a discretionary contract's services were essential before approving payments for work performed after March 22nd, and have been waiting for weeks after submitting documentation to other agencies to receive notice that the services we continue to provide are indeed essential and will be reimbursed. As recently as last week we had two agencies cite the May 31st FAQ to reject invoices for essential services simply for containing expenses for services after April 24th. While Council staff has been helpful in our attempts to rectify these issues, these are symptoms of a more systemic bureaucratic opacity. Other issues are simply continuations of pre-pandemic problems. Contract registration delays continue to be commonplace, and the current environment of distrust has left providers wondering if their FY20 contracts will be cut before they are ever registered.

This is not to say that among the City's failures there are no areas of improvement. Before it was abruptly disbanded, a MOCS- HHS provider workgroup led to the City's issuance of important contract guidance. The Mayor's Social Service Sector Advisory Council has factored some of our procurement solutions into its promised human services procurement process changes, COVID-reimbursements, reopening supports and creation of working groups, promises we hope it will have the fortitude to fulfill. The launch of PASSPort, the provision of 3-month contract advances, upcoming guidance on invoice review, and evaluation of piloting master contracts, if properly administered, could usher in a period of greater transparency and city agency accountability. The City's commitment to the Indirect

Cost Rate Initiative, if adhered to universally without exceptions for emergency contracts, is a promising step in ensuring that nonprofits can receive the federal NICRA, CPA-certified, or de minimis indirect rates that allow them to provide needed services without taking on losses. We hope that some of the \$20 million in FY20 savings from re-estimates of the funding needed to support this initiative will be used to execute emergency contracts in accordance with the City's commitment.



**Testimony of Lena Bilik, Policy Analyst, Children's Aid
Submitted Testimony on the FY 21 Executive Budget
Oversight: Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit Contracting during a Pandemic
June 23, 2020**

My name is Lena Bilik, Policy Analyst at Children's Aid. I would like to thank Chairs Debi Rose, Ben Kallos, and Margaret Chin, and the members of the Youth and Aging Committees for the opportunity to submit testimony on the difficulties with contracting during these uncertain times for the youth services sector. Given the current public health and economic crisis, it is clearer than ever children, youth and families citywide are being supported by essential social services, and that the human services sector must be supported in order to continue this crucial work.

For over 167 years, Children's Aid has been committed to ensuring there are no boundaries to the aspirations of young people, and no limits to their potential. We are leading a comprehensive counterattack on the obstacles that threaten kids' achievements in school and in life. We have constructed a continuum of services, positioned every step of the way throughout childhood, which builds well-being and prepares young people to succeed at every level of education and every milestone of life. Today our over 2,000 full and part-time staff members empower nearly 50,000 children, youth and their families through our network of 40 locations, including early childhood education centers, public schools, community centers, and community health clinics in four New York City neighborhoods – Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx, and the north shore of Staten Island.

Children's Aid is a member of the Campaign for Children, the New York State Network for Youth Success, the New York State Community Schools Network, and the New York City Coalition for Community School Excellence, and as a member of these networks and alliances we are in support of their policy agendas. Together, we are on a mission to connect children with what they need to learn, grow, and lead successful, independent lives.

Children's Aid stands with nonprofit youth service providers and advocates concerned with the well-being of New York City's young people this summer. The



Mayor's FY2021 Executive Budget eliminated over \$213 million in summer funding for Beacons, COMPASS summer camp, SONYC summer camp, NYCHA Cornerstones, and the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). These cuts will leave nearly 175,000 New Yorkers below the age of 24 with little to no supports and activities this summer, on top of the financial struggles and trauma they and their families are facing.

Cuts to youth programs not only eliminate the option of summer camps this year but threaten to decimate youth serving community-based organizations (CBOs) and the communities they serve going forward. In addition to cutting off a lifeline for children and families, thousands of youth services staff have been and will be laid off – staff who are often members of the community themselves. Providers who run these crucial programs will struggle to keep staff on board year-round with 10-month budgets, not to mention the struggle of developing programs and recruiting participants for the school year when they have no summer funding. These cuts threaten the stability and long-term survival of the youth service sector, and the CBO sector as a whole.

But it is not only the cuts I want to address today, though they are the foundation and landscape that must be acknowledged when discussing problems with contracts. Throughout this pandemic, communications around contracting between the city and CBOs have been confusing; inconsistent; marked by delays and lack of coordination; and at times even contradictory. At a moment when the sector's very existence is threatened and its services are needed more than ever, these contracting issues have been unnecessary sources of stress and barriers to providers in offering crucial services to children and families.

Children's Aid's youth services providers expressed to us that the direction from DYCD around working remotely was one example of communication with providers being contradictory and delayed. They were told remote work was permitted, and nothing else was needed, with unclear language that left many questions. At a later date, DYCD then asked for official work plans with specific parameters that would need to be approved, after our work had already begun. Providers were also told not to submit COVID-19 workscopes, and not enter attendance at the start of the shut-down. Two months later, providers were asked to enter attendance, COVID-19 workscopes, and to separate COVID-19



expenses in these workscopes for billing later on. This uneven communication and delay in specific details caused unnecessary stress and burden on providers during an already uncertain and difficult time.

There were other delays in communication that made the switch to virtual programming more difficult for youth services providers (though it did not in the end stop them from providing youth engagement successfully). DYCD did not give any formal written guidance on virtual afterschool until mid-April, after we were well on our way providing it. DYCD also did not respond to specific questions we had around repurposing funds and rightsizing SONYC after the announcement that there would be changes. We were looking for crucial information about which of our contracts would be affected by the budget cuts in the Fall; we did not get a response until mid-June. The questions were sent in April.

There is also a sense among providers of a lack of coordination between agencies -- DOH, DYCD, DOE, and state and city agencies -- around contracts. The sudden and separate announcements of the elimination of SYEP and other summer programs ignored the fact that many providers braid funding from multiple city programs and agencies. It must also be noted that there was a great deal of frustration in the youth services field about the way the summer cuts were announced in general: with an email giving 24 hours notice and no prior warning. The original 24 hour notice given (which was later pushed to a week) was seen as extremely harmful and unrealistic by providers. In the days and weeks following the cuts, providers were overwhelmingly met with silence when they reached out with questions and concerns. This experience of not being given ample notice about devastating and dramatic cuts has compromised long-held relationships between providers and DYCD.

In order to successfully do our work of serving children and families, CBO providers need consistent and timely communication from our government partners, and more flexible contracts for these uncertain times. There must be flexibility in terms of what providers can spend money on, especially around PPE and other unanticipated costs related to COVID-19. We also recommend that DYCD release a general framework on how to approach issues like attendance and budgeting during this time, so that providers aren't playing a guessing game, and can instead focus on serving the children and families that depend on us more



than ever. We also request that agencies communicate much more amongst themselves going forward; for example, DOE, DOH and DYCD need to work in tandem to issue guidance and regulations around reopening. Because of the already existing challenges and delays in background checks and fingerprinting pre-COVID, if schools are opened with little notice, how will we be able to clear staff in time to start?

We also support the asks of the Human Services Council that the City Council push the administration to support nonprofits like Children's Aid through the government contracting process by:

1. Providing 6-month cash advances for FY21 contracts
2. Recouping advances at the end of contracts, not the end of years.
3. Paying invoices immediately and verifying documentation at audit
4. Investing in the nonprofit sector's remote work needs as organizations continue to provide critical services remotely
5. And expanding emergency pay to all essential human services workers

To recover collectively from this challenging time, nonprofits need to be seen as partners with the city, as entities to be worked alongside in full transparency and with full respect. The CBO sector is an invaluable part of the city's social safety net. Communication, guidance, regulations, and budget flexibility must be clear, timely, and realistic in order for the sector to effectively keep doing what they do best; meeting the needs of the thousands of New Yorkers who rely upon their services.

Children's Aid sincerely thanks the New York City Council for their vigorous support of children, youth, and their families in New York City. We look forward to continuing working with the City Council and the Administration to improve opportunities for young people in the City of New York and to continue the city's commitment to the next generation of leaders. Please feel free to contact me at lbilik@childrensaidnyc.org with any questions regarding this testimony.



Commitment to Improve Quality of Life

Tuesday, June 23, 2020

To: New York City Council Committee on Finance
From: India Home, Inc.
Re: Oversight -

We thank Chair Margaret Chin and the Committee on Aging for helping India Home provide for the South Asian senior community during such difficult times.

The mission of India Home is to improve the quality of life for older adults by providing culturally appropriate social services. India Home has grown tremendously in the last year to fulfill our mission to serve South Asian older adults with culturally appropriate social services. Our largest center in Jamaica has attracted more than 100 seniors on average. At our three centers throughout Queens, including Sunnyside and Kew Gardens, we have served on average 250 seniors a week. We have begun the process of establishing a center in Ozone Park and despite current circumstances regarding COVID-19, we are reaching more seniors now than ever before with a number of targeted services.

100% of the seniors India Home serves are foreign born and nearly 80% of them have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), which limits their access to mainstream services. Our clients come to us from the heavily South Asian neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, Briarwood, Jamaica, Richmond Hill, and Queens Village. They also live in growing communities found in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and beyond.

India Home addresses the growing needs of Senior center services which include congregate meal programs, case management, health and wellness programs, creative aging programs and various one-on-one services. During this pandemic, India Home quickly responded to the needs of the South Asian senior community and has continued to serve an even higher number of clients than ever before. We have been tirelessly working to make sure our community gets accurate information and resources in-language. We have prioritized food security and quickly started a culturally competent home-delivered meal and grocery program which serves meals to 110 seniors five days a week and has served groceries to over 500 seniors. Our dedication to reducing social isolation and promoting health & wellness continues, as we have transitioned to virtual senior programs, including informational lectures, yoga, meditation and creative aging. We have also continued to provide case management, telephone reassurance, counseling, ESL & citizenship classes, among other programs.

We have worked very hard to provide these services, however, we have certainly faced a great amount of challenges. Our raison d'être is our provision of these services to seniors in a culturally competent manner. While quantity is important, that diminishes the needs of minority groups such as those we serve. The meals provided through the Get Food NYC initiative have not met these needs, and yet this is the extent to which the City is providing meals. We have received numerous complaints regarding the quality of this food, and on many instances complaints that this food is spoiled. Thus, we have been working directly with the caterers

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Board of Director Officers
Mr. Mukund Mehta, President
Dr. Amit Sood, Treasurer
Mr. Ali Najmi, Secretary

Board of Director Members
Ms. Jaya Bahadkar
Ms. Neetu Jain
Dr. Ankineedu Prasad



Commitment to Improve Quality of Life

to provide culturally competent meals using our own funds. While this is a temporary solution we are able to run with the help of private donations, we need the City's help to sustain this program and to continue to provide and prioritize culturally competent services.

India Home makes the following recommendations:

1. Recognize nonprofit workers as essential workers in getting the needs of seniors met
2. Support grassroots organizations such as India Home with expense funding to better serve and stabilize the growing aging community.
3. Make easier process for local, culturally competent restaurants to contract with the City and lower the number of meals expected for them
4. Work directly with local nonprofits to handle meals so that cultural competence is ensured

We request your continued and increased support to help India Home better serve the vulnerable South Asian senior community.

Sincerely,

Mukund Mehta, President

Dr. Vasundhara Kalasapudi, Executive Director



45 Broadway, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10006
212-967-0322 | www.unhny.org

**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council Committees on Contracts, Aging, and Youth Services
Oversight - Youth and Senior Services Nonprofit Contracting during a Pandemic**

**Council Member Ben Kallos, Chair, Committee on Contracts
Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair, Committee on Aging
Council Member Deborah Rose, Chair, Committee on Youth Services**

Submitted by Tara Klein, Policy Analyst

June 23, 2020

Thank you for hosting today's important hearing on nonprofit contracting during COVID-19, with a particular focus on youth and senior services. United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is a policy and social change organization representing 43 neighborhood settlement houses that reach 765,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life.

A progressive leader for more than 100 years, UNH is stewarding a new era for New York's settlement house movement. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies and promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all New Yorkers. UNH leads advocacy and partners with our members on a range of issues including civic and community engagement, neighborhood affordability, healthy aging, early childhood education, adult literacy, and youth development. We also provide professional development and peer learning to build the skills and leadership capabilities of settlement house staff at all levels.

With New York City at the epicenter of a global pandemic, the recovery and long-term well being of our city is of the utmost importance. COVID-19 has ravaged New York City's economy and safety net and has underscored the significant racial and economic disparities that have impacted New York City's neighborhoods for decades. Just as they did through other crises that our city has faced, settlement houses have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 emergency response by continuing to deliver essential services to New Yorkers, including providing emergency food, counseling, shelter, youth and family supports, and more.

We have seen numerous rapid changes to contracted programs, with youth and aging service providers being forced to significantly shift their operations in order to comply with health and safety guidelines. To the City's credit, the March 18, 2020 guidance from the Mayor's Office of Contracting Services (MOCS) gave providers assurances that they would continue to be reimbursed for services provided even if they could not meet their original contract obligations. This gave providers the space to ensure staff could continue to be paid and allowed some stability in a chaotic time.

However, due to resulting revenue shortfalls, New York City is proposing significant budget cuts to youth services programs, and based on histories of previous financial crises, we fear that more cuts

are coming to human services. These programs have become a lifeline for vulnerable New Yorkers during this crisis, and that will be crucial to our city's recovery. Economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis will only be possible if settlement houses are able to continue serving their neighborhoods. The supports that settlement houses provided before—housing assistance, mental health care and homecare, workforce development, early childhood education, food assistance, youth programming, and case management—are all the more crucial to assist our communities now. **We understand that difficult choices have to be made, but urge the City to preserve key programs and investments in the human services sector—including last year's investments in higher indirect rates and salary parity for early childhood educators—so that the sector remains stable over the coming months and can continue their work helping New Yorkers recover.**

Our testimony will share key details around some of the experiences of human service providers around aging and youth programs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aging Contracts

Older adults are the age group most vulnerable to COVID-19, and as such they have faced some of the most dramatic changes to daily life and services. Many have been unwilling to risk going outside to collect food and supplies, face a digital divide in utilizing technologies that connect us like video conferencing, and are at high risk of mental health challenges stemming from social isolation and uncertainty. While the challenges have certainly been large and unprecedented, it is important to note that the Department for the Aging (DFTA) has exhibited numerous contracting challenges since the onset of COVID-19, and a number of unanswered questions about the future of services remain.

DFTA Direct and GetFood NYC

First, while the City's provision of emergency meals to older adults has overall been beneficial to those with growing food insecurity, the programs have been wrought with administrative hurdles. Senior centers that previously served congregate meals to their communities underwent several swift changes to meal distribution. The early switch from an in-person congregate meal to a grab-and-go model was very popular, but changing health guidelines quickly eliminated this program in favor of a new emergency food delivery service, which came to be known as DFTA Direct. Instead of utilizing existing senior centers to prepare food and manage delivery to their communities, DFTA issued an emergency RFP with an extremely tight deadline that was not made widely available to those senior centers. Several private vendors were selected to prepare and deliver the meals, while senior centers were instructed to staff their buildings to act as holding areas for that food.

At this point, a number of major barriers to service delivery began. There were many concerns about the quality of the food, with complaints including food that was difficult for seniors to chew and low availability and quality of culturally-appropriate meals (especially kosher meals). In a well-known case, one vendor was delivering subpar snack-type food and subsequently their contract was terminated. For senior centers, there was a long-standing problem of not having access to the names of older adults who were placed on rosters to receive meals. Instead of assigning older adults to a vendor based on the senior center they attended, they were broken up by address. While this in itself was not a problem, senior centers were not provided with these lists or a way to look up an older adult to see if they were scheduled to get meals, and when those deliveries would be made. As a result, senior centers were inundated with phone calls from older adults: some did not receive their meal while their neighbor got one, some wanted to know when the meal would be delivered, some wanted to make sure they were signed up, etc. Without access to these lists or a delivery database, senior centers were unable to answer these questions. On top of the problems of adequate food not reaching older adults in need, senior centers took the brunt of blame for these mishaps, even though they were not responsible for them.

Eventually, the DFTA Direct contracts and management of the program were transferred to the City's new Food Czar, managed by Commissioner Kathryn Garcia and the Department of Sanitation (DSNY), under the umbrella of the City's broader GetFood NYC emergency food program. DSNY listened to providers and advocates to address some of the biggest challenges, for example, by implementing a new trusted enroller program to allow senior center staff to sign people up for food directly. While some things have gotten better, reports indicate there are still some problems, including poor quality food and some meals that resemble snacks. Now, providers indicate that older adults are calling them to cancel their GetFood meals, becoming more willing to risk going outside to the store to shop for food they prefer.

As the City moves toward reopening, questions remain about how GetFood will wind down, including whether DFTA will resume control of these contracts and when senior centers will be asked to phase meal services back in. We hope these types of questions will be answered with the input of providers with service experience, and that plans are communicated well in advance of their anticipated implementation date so programs can prepare. It is important for any phase in to be clearly communicated and flexible, in the event that there is another outbreak and programs need to close again.

Further, with several millions of dollars budgeted for GetFood in the Executive Budget for FY21, there are outstanding questions around how long these funds will be used, whether there is a timeline for how long the program will continue, and whether emergency appropriations would be made if all budgeted funds were spent but there was still a need for the GetFood program. Alternatively, if the program ends before funds are fully spent, UNH recommends that any unspent GetFood NYC funds be redirected to fund DFTA's home delivered meals programs and senior center food programs.

Notably, the Food Czar recently collected responses to a Request for Information (RFI) for nonprofits who are interested in being part of the City's emergency food response. While we are glad the City recognizes the critical role of nonprofits in providing for their communities, this RFI has come fairly late in the progression of the pandemic. Unfortunately, we know that many aging services programs that regularly prepare or distribute meals did not apply due to stringent requirements they could not meet such as the number of meals provided and the provision of delivery trucks or vans. While an RFP has not yet been released, we hope any future procurement will take these lessons into account and provide more flexibility.

Home Delivered Meals

Some of the challenges of DFTA Direct and GetFood NYC result from the use of private vendors with little experience in senior meal delivery, though there are many community-based organizations with long-standing programs who could carry out this work. This is especially clear by looking at the home delivered meals program (HDM), a DFTA-contracted program that existed before COVID-19, continued during the pandemic, and will continue in the future. HDM includes meal delivery and regular case management assessment, with in-person wellness checks part of the model to support the most vulnerable homebound older adults.

During COVID-19, HDM providers were instructed to continue business as usual. At the same time, the program saw demand increase rapidly, with many indicating a 20-30% uptick in clients as urgent community needs grew. Notably, there was also increased strain on DFTA-contracted Case Management programs, which in part refer clients to receive HDMs. While operating as normal with this new demand, HDM programs expressed concerns about deliverers putting themselves at risk to enter people's homes, without receiving any incentive pay. Regardless, programs continued to provide appropriate and individually-tailored meals, often drawing into what organizational reserves they had to do so.

DFTA currently has a new Request for Proposals (RFP) out for the home delivered meals program, which includes several programmatic changes to increase meal choice. This RFP was released before COVID-19 hit, and since then the deadline has been postponed several times. It is currently due tomorrow, June 24th, with contracts scheduled to begin January 1, 2021 (this start date represents a six-month delay from initial plans). The RFP lists the number of meals to be served in each catchment area, but these numbers are no longer accurate, given the increased demand we have seen and uncertainty about how these numbers will change in the future. Further, providers are still responding to the COVID-19 crisis and are focused on running their programs and applying for emergency funding sources. A pandemic is not the time for the City to release a new procurement, and this RFP must be postponed until after COVID-19 has subsided. We must take the lessons we have learned from this crisis about emergency food, social isolation, and the needs of older adults in order to create a stronger home delivered meals system in the future. Changing the program now runs the risk of older adults falling through the cracks.

COVID-19 has also underscored how the wrap around supports that home-delivered meals clients receive—case management, regular contact from drivers who are trained on how to work with older adults, and tailored and nutritionally appropriate meals—are crucial. Nonprofit providers have shown throughout COVID-19 that they are finely attuned to their community’s needs, understand how to tailor meals to support individuals, and can provide effective social supports to older adults. From what we have seen from the DFTA Direct and GetFood programs, this is not the case for private vendors.

Further, we have heard reports that DFTA instructed HDM providers to stop signing up new clients in May and instead to refer them to the GetFood program, and has also told some providers to transfer some existing clients into GetFood, even though that program does not provide the social supports that many clients need.

Despite its overwhelming success in maintaining health and nutrition throughout the pandemic and beyond, the home delivered meals program is underfunded, with DFTA contracts failing to cover the full cost of providing meals. Before the pandemic, some providers individually reported losing hundreds of thousands of dollars each year on their contracts. DFTA contracts reimburse providers approximately 25% below the national average cost of a home delivered meal. This underfunding has only been made more acute by the increased demand during COVID-19. Ultimately this underfunding impacts the quality and availability of services for the older adults who rely on these meals.

In addition to postponing the RFP, the City must allocate \$26.2 million in emergency funding for the home delivered meals program, including \$8.5 million retroactively for FY 2020 and \$17.7 million for FY 2021. This funding will cover increased demand and incentive pay for staff during the pandemic and address long-standing underfunded contracts.

Future Procurements

Before the pandemic, DFTA was on track to reprocur several other programs, including senior centers, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), and case management. As DFTA prepares these concept papers, the agency must conduct a robust community engagement process with providers and advocates to ensure that any programmatic changes are reflective of needs, including service delivery in a post-COVID-19 world. Much like home delivered meals, these procurements must remain on hold until after the pandemic subsides.

DYCD

The most drastic cuts made in Mayor de Blasio's FY 2021 Budget are to DYCD. The Executive Budget proposes the entire elimination of summer programs including COMPASS/SONYC, Beacon, Cornerstone and the Summer Youth Employment Program. These cuts will deprive youth of the opportunity to connect with peers and caring adults over this summer—a summer where youth are acutely vulnerable to learning loss because they have not been in school in-person for the entire spring. These budget cuts will also leave parents who are reentering the workforce as the City's economy slowly reopens with no childcare options.

Elimination of Summer Program

The cuts also threaten the infrastructure of the community based organizations who serve youth and their families. The FY 2021 Executive Budget not only cuts the crucial programs operated during the summer but it also prohibits providers from using their reduced budgets to retain staff in order to prepare for reopening.

The impact of these cuts on the organizations that execute DYCD contracts will persist after the summer is over. As we speak, youth services workers are receiving layoff and furlough notices. Youth services providers across the city have spent years building an infrastructure for effective youth services programs. This includes year-round, full-time staff such as multi-site supervisors and site directors who are deeply versed in the principles of Positive Youth Development, as well as other fixed costs. If providers are unable to pay year-round staff for July and August, the youth development workforce and youth development field will detrimentally change.

Staffing for youth services programs typically takes place months in advance. This allows providers to hire and train staff, prepare activities, enroll children and secure space. Social distancing requirements necessitate programmatic changes which staff at all levels need to be trained on. However, if these cuts are not reversed, providers will not have the opportunity to prepare for programs to reopen.

Youth Services during the COVID-19 Crisis

New York City's youth service providers have adapted quickly in the face of devastating circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within days, programs such as COMPASS/SONYC and Beacon and Cornerstone Community Centers pivoted from in-person programming to remote, virtual engagement for youth and their families, while also supplementing local food distribution for families. Community-based organizations (CBOs) are currently offering online tutoring support, art and recreation programming, as well as behavioral health care and additional supports to youth and families through grab-and-go meal provision and grocery delivery for many households.

Yet, the contracts they work under do not always reflect the changes that have happened or the changes that may need to happen for programs to reopen with programmatic or fiscal modifications in order to conduct safe, socially distant in-person programs.

DYCD must enter into a collaborative process with its providers to amend budgets and worksopes to reflect changes in practice, including:

- Adjusting enrollment and rate of participation expectations due to the need for indoor gatherings to be smaller;
- Amending budgets to reflect COVID-19 related costs including increased cost of liability insurance, cleaning supplies and having individualized supplies for children in order to maintain social distance;
- Adjusting per-child costs to reflect fewer children in each setting; and

- Adjusting hours to allow cohorts for part-day in person programs.

Next Steps

UNH urges the de Blasio administration to immediately restore funding for COMPASS/SONYC, Beacon, Cornerstone and SYEP. Sixteen days ago, the Mayor made a commitment to shift funding from NYPD to youth and social services. Yet no action has been taken even though the Mayor is empowered to restore funding through a revision of the Executive Budget as he did for SONYC summer programs in 2015.

Furthermore, UNH urges DYCD to work collaboratively with providers to adjust workscopes and budgets to reflect the new realities of providing service during this crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. For any follow up, please contact Tara Klein at tklein@unhny.org.