

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH
SERVICES

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Wednesday, March 22, 2023

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HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM, CITY HALL

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning everyone and
3 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for
4 the Committee on Youth Services. At this time please
5 silence all electronic devices. Chair Stevens, we
6 are ready to begin.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good morning. [GAVEL]

8 Good morning and welcome to the fiscal 2024
9 preliminary budget hearing for Department of Youth
10 and Community Development. I am Councilman Althea
11 Stevens, Chair of Committee for Youth Services.
12 Today we'll be hearing from DYCD Commissioner Keith
13 Howard, Deputy Commissioner Alan Cheng, and Assistant
14 Commissioner Nevita Bailey. Thank you for joining
15 us.

16 This morning we will discuss the fiscal 2024
17 preliminary expense budget for DYCD, which stands at
18 \$943 million, total headcount of 510 positions
19 supported by \$45.9 million in personnel services, and
20 a total of \$894.1 million and other-than-personnel
21 services. The fiscal budget is \$188.2 million less
22 than the fiscal 2023 adopted budget. While the
23 \$188.2 million reductions does not include the City
24 Council discretionary funding of approximately \$138
25

million that typically takes place at the adopted budget, it also includes the additional reduction of approximately \$58 million.

I want to better understand from the agency what programs and services-- what program and services have been impacted by this reduction. DYCD fiscal 2024 preliminary budget has no new needs. Does the agency believe this is sufficient resources to meet the needs of our youngest residents now at this time, the investments in programs that will create a path to success for our young people? Although I'm pleased to see the baseline funding for SYP of \$79.4 million in the fiscal preliminary 2023 budget, which allows for 100,000 young people to receive summer employment, because it offered our youth the opportunity to develop professionally and strive for advancements. However, with the high unemployment rates of youth in our city, I implore us to reimagine what youth workforce development looks like.

In addition, street homelessness remains a challenge in the city and more needs to be done in terms of outreach and mental health support for unsheltered homeless, and provide a safe place for

those individuals to reside while receiving necessary wraparound support.

However, homeless runaway youth are often left out of that conversation. We have to ensure that organizations that provide a safe haven for our youth to do that to close-- a safe haven for our youth to not have to close their doors because they have not received a fair contract, therefore cannot receive adequate funding to pay staff and run the program successfully.

The DYCD has taken-- has been tasked with managing the perception of the city's next generation of leaders to fulfill their potential. The committee looks forward to working with the administration to ensure additional funding for other programs in DYCD. The commitment-- the committee wants to ensure that all DYCD programs are serving as many young people as possible, and to do that we must have sufficient resources. In the City Council-- It is the City Council's responsibility to ensure that the City's budget is fair, transparent, and accountability to New Yorkers. Hence as the Chair of the Committee on Youth Services, I will continue to push for accountability-- accountability and accuracy and

ensure that the budget reflects the needs and interests of the young people.

It essential-- It is essential that the budget we adopt this year is reflective of the priorities and interests of the city and the people we represent. This hearing is a vital part of that process.

I expect that DYCD will be responsive to the questions and concerns of council members. I look forward to an active engagement with the Administration over the next few months to ensure that fiscal 2024 adopted budget meets the goals the City Council has set out, and we want to ensure that the program for the young-- for the youth and young adults are equipped to serving everyone and its needs.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the following people. Kate Connolly my Chief of Staff and the entire A team back at the district office, Sandra Gray, Fiscal Analyst to the committee. Ali Ali, Unit Head, Christine Yemen, Counsel to the Committee. [TO COUNSEL: I said your last name wrong, didn't I. Sorry, I always mess up your name. I'm working on it.]And Elizabeth Arzt, our Policy Analyst to the Committee. I would like to

acknowledge the Councilmembers, who are here at this time. Councilmember Alexis Avila, thank you for joining us. And our Committee Counsel will swear you in now.

We're taking a brief pause and we're moving rooms.

[1 MINUTE SILENCE]

We're staying.

So, you can swear them in.

COUNSEL: Okay, well now hear testimony from the administration. Before we begin I'll administer the affirmation. Please raise your right hand.

Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this committee and respond honestly to Councilmember questions?

ALL: Yes.

COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin when ready.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Good morning. Good morning Chair Stevens and members of the Youth Service Committee. I am DYCD Commissioner Keith Howard, and I'm joined by First Deputy Commissioner Alan Cheng and Nevita Bailey, Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance.

This is my first time appearing before this committee, but I have enjoyed working with each of you since my appointment as Commissioner.

We are pleased to be here to discuss the fiscal 2024 preliminary budget. The budget stands at \$943 million \$708 million, or 75.1%, is city tax levy money. \$88 million, or 9.3%, is federal. \$142 million, or 15%, is intercity funding, and \$5.3 million ,or less-- less than 1%, is state funding.

The budget puts DYCD in a strong position to build on the progress of the past year. It demonstrates Mayor Eric Adams' strong commitment to young people and families, and it does not propose cuts to existing programs. And I just want to repeat that. It does not propose cuts to existing programs.

Summer Youth Employment Program: Last month applications open for the 2023 Summer Youth Employment Program. This summer will mark the 60th anniversary of the program, with New York City once again slated to provide 100,000 summer job opportunities for young people ages 14 to 24. In February, Deputy Commissioner Mulligan testified before the Committee on the accomplishments of last summer, including more than 18,000 work sites and

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nearly 9000 young people working in city government.
This summer, we are looking to do more, and
appreciate the Council's strong commitment to
promoting summer youth employment and hosting young
people in their offices.

New this summer is SYP Pride. SYP Pride will
connect LGBTQ+ youth with supportive and welcoming
work, and career exploration experiencing by
partnering with employers committed to providing
employment and learning opportunities that affirm and
empower LGBTQ+ youth. DYCD and the Department of
Education are kicking off Summer Rising 2023. We're
planning implementation meetings. We are engaging
community-based organizations and advocates to share
reflections on 2022. School locations are being
finalized, followed by identifying CBO partners for
each confirmed location. The preliminary budget
includes \$149.6 million to support Summer Rising.
Summer Rising will again connect 100,000 elementary
and middle school students to fun, culturally
relevant, hands-on enrichment experience to
strengthen skills, develop interests, and cultivate
curiosity.

Chair Stevens we both visited many programs across the five boroughs last summer, and I heard concerns about the enrollment process. In fact, I was with you when some of those concerns were expressed. To address this, we are planning to improve the process. This summer, families will be able to apply anytime during the enrollment period process. No more first come, first serve. And rank preference for multiple sites is similar to last year. Some student groups will have priority for Summer Rising enrollment, such as students in temporary housing, academically mandated students, and students with disabilities. This year we will also offer priority consideration for students enrolled in a DYCD funded after-school program at their program Summer Rising location, to accommodate students and families who are accustomed to year round programming from their CBO provider. And again, Chair we heard you. We anticipate the enrollment process to open in early April. We will continue to update in the times ahead prior to its launch.

To date we have 136 Saturday Night Light programs citywide. This initiative offers free high-quality

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2 sports programs on Saturday nights to young people 11
3 to 18 years old, including basketball, soccer,
4 volleyball, dance, martial arts, and much, much more.

5 Combined, Summer Rising, SYP, and other center-
6 based programs will serve an amazing 214,000 young
7 people this summer, with a record investment of \$367
8 million in the future of young-- younger New Yorkers.

9 This is outstanding accomplishment, and the Mayor
10 and the council are truly investing in our young
11 people's future.

12 Adult Literacy Concept Paper: Last year DYCD
13 released the concept paper for literacy programs in
14 anticipation of the RFP being released shortly. In
15 that, and all DYCD issued RFPs moving forward, we
16 will include hybrid classes and mental health
17 services to address issues such as depression,
18 anxiety, trauma, and substance abuse.

19 Again, Chair Stevens, we heard you and we heard
20 the committee members. This is consistent with Mayor
21 Adams's focus on mental health support, especially as
22 the city continues his recovery from COVID-19 and
23 addresses the impact that the pandemic had on the
24 well beings of New Yorkers. DYCD has received
25 feedback from the concept papers for inclusion in the

RFP. As part of the mayor's, "The Road Forward: A Blueprint to Address New York City's Response to the Asylum Seeker Crisis", we will be extending adult literacy programming into the humanitarian relief centers.

Recently, Mayor Adams entrusted DYCD with the Office of Neighborhood Safety. This includes the Mayor's action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, the Office to Prevent Gun Violence, and Atlas Precision Employment Initiative. These programs are aligned with the DYCD's mission, and improve community-police relations, reduce crime, incarceration, and diminish contact with the justice system. The transition to DYCD began in February, and will continue over the next several months. We look forward to continuing conversation with the Council during this transition.

Chair and members of the Committee. Thank you once again for the opportunity to discuss the preliminary budget. I also want to thank my senior leadership team that's in the back. So we are pleased to answer any questions that you and the Councilmembers may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Well, I'm really happy to hear some of the feedback and it

being taken in consideration around like the hybrid for adult literacy. And you know, getting applications out earlier. Those really just made my heart warm. So thank you for listening to some of that feedback. But we'll get into some questions.

So DYCD's fiscal 2024 plenary budget of \$943 million is \$188.3 million, or 16% less than the fiscal 2023 adopted budget of \$1.1 billion.

Excluding from the fiscal 2024 preliminary budget is \$130.8 million of council discretionary funding that is typically added at adoption. What is the reason for the remaining \$57.5 million decrease? What programs and services have been eliminated or decreased in fiscal 2024 due to this reduction in funding?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So I'm going to ask Assistant Commissioner Navita Bailey to answer that question. But before she answers that question, I just want to just indicate, and just in the strongest possible words possible that there has been no reduction in services. Navita?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. I just want to make sure we explain what that-- what that is then if there's no reduction in services.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Good morning, Chair Stevens and esteemed members of the Council. The savings or the reductions that you're seeing reflected in the budget are primarily associated with revenue that has not been added to our budget in FY 24. Additionally, there are some one-time funds that are not reflected yet, and again that is, as mentioned, the Council funding as well as some funding from OVONYMI. Regarding the PEGs, as the Commissioner mentioned, most of the PEGs that are reflected in the budget are accrual saving PEGs. And so there-- as he mentioned, there is no impact to services, and no provider will get a contract reduction as a result of the PEGs that were submitted.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So I just I just want to make sure, because I feel like I'm missing something, because the money that hasn't been adopted typically is the money from-- that would be adopted from City Council, which will come in at the end. And we did account for that. But there's still \$57.5 million. So could you-- I'm sorry, say that again, around-- Where's that coming from?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Sure. So in FY 24, there was a PEG plan. So there's \$35 million, approximately, that's going to impact the FY 24 budget. Additionally, there's funding associated with revenue that has not been added to our budget yet. So for example, that would be the tandem funding that supports the SYP program. That's not added. We have the Council discretionary funding, which is approximately about \$120 million, that has not been added to our budget. And so these things are comprising the about approximate \$200 million variance between the two fiscal years.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The DYCD preliminary plan does not include any new needs. What budget priorities did the Agency submit to OMB in fiscal 2024? Are those reflected in the plenary budget plan?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So, you know, the interesting thing is the expansion within DYCD, right? So clearly, we have expanded with SYP, we have expanded with Summer Rising, you know, the Saturday Night Lights program is also what we feel is robust and working. So we are in constant communication with our OMB partners to see exactly

where we need to have staffing improvement and increases.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But even with those expansions, doesn't mean that there-- there are new needs? Like, because I even heard when you were in your testimony, you talked about the expanding program for the HERCs. Even with the expansion of those, SYP, and all those things. Those are new needs. And so I'm just trying to understand how do we get from saying that we don't have any new needs, and we have new services that we're providing?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, you know, the--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And we're-- In addition to that, we're adding the Cure Violence Sites under there in the portfolio as well; correct. So those seem like new needs.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm not contesting that. I'm basically saying that with the existing staff that we have, we are definitely meeting the mission and the purpose of the agency. And that we are in communication, constant communications with OMB, identifying where there are issues with staffing and programs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I mean, I think it's-- we have to make sure that we're not stretching people, because we want to also keep the integrity and quality of the work as well. So that that also needs to be stated, because it's-- there do seem like there are new needs.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I think we are definitely on the same page.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Are the new-- Do you anticipate additional resources will be needed or current funding levels sufficient?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you anticipate additional resources will be needed? Or is there any current funding levels insufficient?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So we are definitely-- Again, we're definitely meeting with existing staff. We're definitely meeting our mission and our purpose for all the programming areas. But we are-- we're clearly open to identifying issues with OMB as we have and continue to do.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The fiscal 2024 preliminary budget for DYCD supports 510 full time positions, a

decrease of 41 positions from the fiscal 2023 adopted budgets, and a decrease of seven positions from the fiscal 2023 current headcount of 517. Does this agency have adequate headcount effectively run all programs and initiatives?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: As you indicated, the current headcount is 517. I mean, the headcount is 517. What we currently have is 478, as-- as our current headcount. So with-- You know, our vacancies are 39. But again, let me-- I'm just circling you back to what I what I indicated before, is that: As we're constantly trying to bring on new staff, we are at high level of confidence, you know, with our current existing staff, that we can fulfill the mission and the purpose of programs across the board.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is the Agency currently actively seeking to fill those positions, the 39 positions you said you...?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Absolutely. We-- We have a-- We have brought on Chief Communication Specialists who have been doing an awesome job with heir team to advertise vacancies and job postings on social media. Of course, we've always received

applications from the New York City government website. We are attending job fairs as well. So we're making a robust effort to complete those-- to fill those vacancies.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, what we tell all agencies: Please see the Council as partners. Like if you have vacancies, feel free to send them over to not only myself, but other councilmembers. We're always pushing them out. One of the top things that we get in our office is housing and jobs. And so people are constantly coming to look for us. So also use the Council as a resource when there are vacancies, so that we can be supportive in that process.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I think that's a great idea. And in fact, what we will do is all of the vacancy and postings, we will make sure that it gets sent over to Council, all the councilmembers.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The city, the Citywide Vacancy Reduction memo issued in November described the changes in city hiring processes, ending the policy that only allow agencies to fill one of every two vacant positions. Yet we have been hearing from agencies that this practice is still being enforced

in some cases. Since November, has DYCD been approved by OMB to fill all vacant positions? Or are you still required to provide to vacant positions for every one to be hired?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: That-- That one-to-two ratio was rescinded.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, but that's-- that's why I'm asking. Have you been able to do it? Has that been something that's been able to be done in the DYCD? Because I know it's been rescinded. But what I'm asking is, has it been actually implemented?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure. And yes, it has been implemented. We currently have 12 approvals, approved PARs that we're actively filling, and the remainder we're working on, you know, posting those and getting them to Lumbee[ph].

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It is our understanding that personnel approval requests and PARs are what agencies submitted to OMB for approval hiring candidates that they-- they would like to hire for job openings. What is the top reason for denial from OMB, especially as it relates to DYCD? Have you had any denials?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: No, OMB has not disapproved any of our positions. Oftentimes, we may pull some down because we have to change them, modify them, because of needs that the agency is facing. So over the last year, you know, going from summer to, you know, the school year, we've made some changes to some of our postings. And therefore we've taken them down-- we've asked them to be taken out so that we can adjust those.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How often does a PAR denial resubmitted, one or more times to OMB for approval.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: We haven't had that experience of having them rescinded, so...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: At the oversight hearing for Committee on Youth Services, Aging and Contracts, it was stated by MOCS that there was a funding total of \$4.2 billion that the nonprofits cannot access. Has DYCD been impacted by this denial by providing contracts?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So, this past summer, DYCD, led by the First Deputy Mayor, along with our other sister agencies, we actually worked closely together with MOCS to clear the backlog. And that backlog

resulted in \$6.2 billion in-- in released monies, to nonprofit organizations.

We continue to work with MOCS to make sure that our nonprofit, our community-based partners get paid and get paid on time.

I also want to emphasize this that when I got appointed last year, one of the first things that I met with my team about is, let's do a review from soups to nuts, A to Z, of all our contracting process, just to make sure that we can make changes that we feel can expedite more payments to our-- to our nonprofit CBO partners. And I can honestly say that I actually see you know, some-- some positive signs that we that we have.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I mean, I will say this again, the same thing that I said at the MOCS. Like, one, I don't believe we should give them kudos for getting money out that we should have gotten out already, right? Because it is important that our agencies are doing the work, and they are waiting two to three years to get paid.

And I said the last year in the budget hearing: I think that DYCD gets blamed for something that they

don't have control over. And so it's this very weird dance that we've been doing.

And so yes, the backlog got cleared, but we're also here rollout from the providers that it's backing up again, and they're still waiting for money to be released again.

So yes, we cleared the backlog. But now we're still back in the same position, because we still have the same policies that are in place that have started the backlogs. So we really need to get to a place where we're figuring out how do we streamline it so agencies can get paid on time.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I hear you. And I-- And one of the things that, as you know, the task force to-- to clear nonprofit payments has been working diligently to, you know, correct some system issues. So I have high hopes and a high level of confidence that there's going to be positive results moving forward. But we definitely hear you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm happy you have high hopes, because I do not. So yeah, I feel like we also are trying to codify some of the stuff that they say they need, and they're pushing back on it. So I'm happy one of us have high hopes.

So what is the boroughs that are most impacted by the delays in contracts? Do you have that information around payment-- late payments?

So I'm going ask our ACO to respond to that.

MS. CANTELM: Good morning Chair. And thanks for the question. So what we have seen in the past in terms of delays is a whole host of issues. One is timing of when those awards are made. System sometimes could be a cause for delay. What we're also seeing is sometimes with providers, right?, getting their pre-qualification status in order. But those are delays and challenges that we at DYCD have been committed to helping them on and working through, so that we could push through their contracts for registration.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. How will the potential closure of Sheltering Arms impact the services provided by DYCD?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Can you repeat that?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How will the potential closure of Sheltering Arms impact the services provided by DYCD?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So it's unfortunate, the situation that-- Shelter-- Sheltering Arms find

themselves in. But we've been working closely with them to make sure that there's a continuity of service. So we are still working through some transitional issues. So-- But I would love to talk to you offline if there any are pain points, that we see that we can alert you to. But we feel confident that we-- that the continuity of service is our main objective.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many youth will be affected by this closure?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're going to ask Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell to respond to that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Hi, Chair. Thank you for that question. And yeah, I echo what Commissioner said. It's just a heartbreaking situation about Sheltering Arms closure, and that we have a plan in place that's going to ensure continuity of service. So they have contracts when within our runaway and homeless youth programs. We have activated a plan before the start of the fiscal year, and anticipate a smooth transition with that. We also have about ten COMPASS after school programs, where nearly-- we have a plan nearly confirmed for all ten, and Sheltering Arms has agreed to continue

services through June 30. So we anticipate a really smooth transition there as well. There shouldn't be any impact on the experiences of young people.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, it's really unfortunate. And I think we as a city needs to see this as a red flag, and making sure that we're putting a system in place, because I have been saying this since I became Chair, that this is what I foresee, that because we are not paying folks on time, that this will continue to happen.

So you know, I want to make sure that we don't take this lightly. And I don't believe that you guys are, but I think that there needs to actually be things done tangibly to move and expedite payments in an expeditious way. And just-- Also just thinking about that, when we're talking about the young people impacted, is there a plan put in place for employer-- people who are employed by Sheltering Arms? Are we looking to see for them take some of these new these new contractors that are picking up? Are they going to take some of these employees on? Has that been talked about at all?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Absolutely. We're facilitating conversations between Sheltering Arms

and their staff, and providers that have been identified to take on the new programs so that they can incorporate as much continuity of the staff in those relationships as well.

Yeah, that's, that's also really important. As you guys know, especially working with young people and families, staff build up a level of trust, and to then just have a new provider come in is going to be really hard. And you know, I've seen programs that like transitioned out other programs, and they are not able to get the numbers because there's no continuity, they don't know the-- they don't know the neighborhoods, or they don't know the families, and it becomes really tragic. So I definitely hope that we, you know, we can come up with a plan that really helps and support the community in a real positive way.

For COMPASS, SONYC, Beacons, Cornerstones, Learn & Earn internships, and Adult Literacy, can you provide us a total enrollment for fiscal 2022 and current enrollment for fiscal 2023?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Good morning, Chair Stevens can repeat the program areas again? I want to make sure I give you the correct information.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Pretty much all of them.

But we can start with COMPASS.

COMPASS began. Cornerstone. Which other one did you mention?

Learn & Earn, and Adult Literacy? Um, yeah.

Adult Literacy, and Interns and Earn? I think that's what this is? No. That's something--

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Would you like a whole laundry list?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. Like I said, all the programs.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: And you want enrollment for FY 23?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: FY-- Yes. 2022 and 2023.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: 2022 for COMPASS was 112,441.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you have a broken down by borough by any chance?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Not by borough. We can give that to you afterwards.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: All the information I will be giving you is the aggregate for

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2 those program areas. So I just want to make sure
3 that you guys are aware of that as well.

4 So for COMPASS, it's 112,441. In FY 23 it's
5 112,259. Beacon is 109,568. That's 22. In 23 it's
6 90,471. Cornerstone FY 22. This is not including
7 community events, but just participants 22,458. FY
8 23 was 21,006. Train & Earn FY 22 was 5,530, FY 23
9 was 4,241. Learn & Earn FY 22 was 1,069, FY 23 was
10 1,063. I believe you mentioned another area. I'm
11 sorry if I don't recall.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Adult literacy.

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Adult literacy,
14 FY 22 was 14,458. FY 23 was 11,644.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is there-- Is there under
16 spending in any program areas that you want to update
17 us for, for fiscal 2023

18 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: In FY 23 most of
19 our underspending was dedicated towards the PEG
20 initiative. And so if you'll notice, most of the
21 PEGs that are reflected in the FY 2004 plan are
22 reflective of [inaudible]-saving PEGs.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What's the attendance for
24 the Beacons and Cornerstones. Do you have that?
25 Like an average attendance?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Average
3 attendance, as far as daily attendance? No, I don't
4 have that yet, right now, Chair Stevens. We can get
5 it to you afterwards.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. What is-- Is
7 there adequate number of staffing to cover those
8 programs, Cornerstones and Beacons.

9 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Adequate number in terms of
10 the CBO partners?

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The providers, yes.

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So across the industry,
13 private and public, we all are, unfortunately,
14 struggling with staffing and staffing issues. But
15 what we are doing to support nonprofit community-
16 based partners is providing capacity building in
17 addition to helping, and posting, and doing job fairs
18 with them as well, to make sure that they can staff
19 up, and staff up properly.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, it's-- it's one of
21 the challenges that we've been talking about across
22 the city around being able to find staff and I know,
23 especially with the nonprofits, they've been
24 struggling, especially because a lot of their
25 salaries are much lower. And so the recruitment

efforts are really hard. So we definitely want to make sure we continue to support them.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I also appreciate the real experience that you bring to the table, running a nonprofit organization. So you understand the struggle that goes along with it. And considering the fact that nonprofit organizations established their own salary levels on how to track the most qualified, the best person for-- for the position.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It's hard because you know, most people who work in nonprofits you do it for the love, and not for the money. But we live in New York, so...

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Public servants as well.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know. I'm here too. So it's really hard. So it's-- those things that-- You know, we have to make sure we're just kind of being supportive of what that looks like.

What is the workforce enhancement? What-- What DYCD programs are this funding used for and why?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Thank you, Chair Stevens. If you give me one second, I can give you that information, as far as the WEI Initiative. So in FY 23, the city enacted the Wage Enhancement

Initiative that would provide additional funding to nonprofits and DYCD. That allocation was \$8.8 million. It supported 227 providers and 1322 contracts.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. It was stated in the PMMR that the first four months, a total of 1445 youths and young adults were served through case management at RHY drop-in centers, an increase of 48%, from fiscal 2022. What is the amount of time that you can stay in a drop-in center?

Oh, welcome back.

MS. HASKELL: Hello. There's-- drop in centers are designed to be, you know, a point where young people can access services at any time. There's no limit to the number of times, or the length of time that you can come to help meet your needs, from education to employment, health and mental health, recreation, and of course housing. So there's no limit to the period of time young people can access services in a drop in center.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many beds are provided for this program?

MS. HASKELL: DYCD funds 813 Runaway and Homeless Youth Services beds.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is the agency looking to
3 increase the number of beds for homeless young
4 adults?

5 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So we are in constant
6 communication with OMB. They understand the issues.
7 So it's a-- it's an ongoing conversation. And also
8 talking with our providers, as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So is that a yes?

10 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So that's means that it's
11 in constant communication. So we are working with
12 OMB--

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm going to take that as a
14 yes.

15 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: --to resolve, you know,
16 what we feel, and what everybody feels is an issue.
17 But OMB comes to the table with-- with a real
18 understanding of exactly what we need to do to move
19 forward.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I feel like I come to the
21 table with a real understanding and believe we need
22 more beds. So you know, is that the understanding we
23 all can come to, because this is something I've been
24 ringing the bell about for a year now.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I know. And we've heard you. And again, as a real thought partner, just conveying your message and along with providers and having conversations with OMB, I think everybody understands and realizes that, yes, it would be a good investment, but we need to talk through it and communicate. And that's what we're doing now.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I like that we're moving in the right direction of being on the same page. We're not there yet. But we're going get you to there. Don't worry.

Is there currently a process in place to address the needs of beds in drop-in centers?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Could you repeat that?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is there currently a process in place to address the needs for beds in drop-in centers?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: All right. So let's be very clear, because there's a lot that has been written and talked about, and I appreciate you checking in with me to understand exactly what was going on in the drop-in centers. So drop-in centers are contractually-- contractually in DYCD to operate as drop-in centers, where they provide wraparound

services, food, clothing, et cetera. The main purpose of our ecosystem is referral to our shelter and residential programs. And then from the shelter to residential programs, put that young vulnerable person in-- in shared housing, okay? Solid, shared housing. So I think we sort of missed the ball-- or missed the-- there's some level of confusion and-- and some issues that are currently being discussed out there. But I can honestly tell you that if we're going to continue and keep the ecosystem as we have designed it, as we have contracted with our providers to do, drop-in centers have to immediately refer that young person to a shelter residential program. And then that shelter residential program has to provide that young person some housing. That's the goal. And I just want everybody to understand that and to keep, you know, keep-- keep the focus on housing.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Agreed. So you're talking to a person who always wants permanent housing for folks. And that's should always be the goal. But that's not where we're at. And so I think that, one, if we're seeing people staying in drop-in centers longer than necessary, then that should be a red flag of saying, like, "Hey, there's clearly something

wrong. Let's figure out what that issue is, and why they're not being referred out." And some of the issues is, because what I said before around the beds, we don't have enough beds because is the way it's counted and contracted. So I think that, yes, once again, we are all saying the same things. But it's about how do we get there? So there's clearly an issue there, that young people are staying at the drop-in centers longer than necessary. So we need to fix that. And until we fix it, I think that we can't just say that, "Oh, we're contracted this way." We need to provide a service for young people who are traumatized, who already feel rejected, and don't have places to go and say, like, alright, if this is not working, then how are we going to make the system work? Because it is not. And that's what I'm hearing from providers. That's what I'm hearing from young people. And again, we are saying the same thing, but it's talking about how do we get there in the right direction, and we're not there.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And you're preaching to the converted. You're literally preaching to the converted.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I don't know if I'm
3 speaking to the converted.

4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Absolutely. Because our
5 overall mission is to-- is the health and safety of
6 that young, vulnerable person. And for, you know,
7 anyone to say that that is not our focus-- our focus
8 point, is a disservice. It's a disservice--

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No. I don't think people
10 are saying that. And I don't want anyone to take
11 that to be that way.

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I've heard-- I've heard
13 some stories.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But I'm not saying that.

15 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So we're not talking about
17 what they're saying. I'm talking about what I'm
18 saying. What I'm saying is it is a symptom of
19 something that is wrong. If people-- if young people
20 are staying and drop-in centers longer than
21 necessary, that is where our focus needs to be. I'm
22 not saying, like, let's remove beds, or do this
23 because we're contracted or something. Like if a
24 rule does not make sense for young people, then I'm
25

not going to follow it. Because young people deserve to be in places they feel safe and want it.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And again, you're preaching to the converted.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, well--

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're all on the same page.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, great.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Hi, there, Commissioner, can you can you tell me-- I understood your answer in terms of increasing the number of beds is in conversation?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: No, I never said that. Not for drop-in centers?

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: No, no. For increasing the number of beds for homeless youth. As a conversation. You and OMB are in conversation.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Correct. Yes, I'm sorry, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So given the ecosystem and how they are all connected, the Chair's note of-- of understanding, and I think I think this is reflected in some of the problems that we're seeing, that there is an insufficient number of beds. How many beds are we concretely pursuing in the pipeline to get online

to begin to-- to alleviate some of the stress points?

Is there a concrete number that is being worked on?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And that's the conversation that's ongoing.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So there is no concrete number?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: That's the conversation that's ongoing.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. There's no number. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. What is the understanding that currently temporary funding housing-- What is understanding that there is a current temporary funding housing specialist in the DYCD funded drop-in centers until the end of the fiscal year? How much is the DYCD spending to find this temporary housing specialist and is DYCD advocating to continue funding and maintaining those positions?

MS. HASSELL: Chair Stevens, thank you for that question. We were-- DYCD was very excited about the opportunity to offer stable housing opportunities through-- through vouchers, EHV, CityFHEPS to young people, and the support that they're able to receive

at drop-in centers through housing specialists has been really vital to helping young people access apartments and, you know, through that process, so we feel that has been a really good investment. And as the Commissioner has alluded, we are in conversations about how that will go forward.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I am going-- I would like to acknowledge Councilmember Riley has joined us. And I'm going to pause here. And I know Councilmember Riley has a question. And I'll let my colleagues have questions. I still have a number of questions, but I want to pause.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Thank you Chair Stevens, and good morning Commissioner. How you doing today? Good morning, team. I just have a few questions. Summer Rising, Summer Youth, Saturday Night Lights and the Beacon/Cornerstone program. So I'm just going to go in those directions.

For Summer Rising, I know last year when I was taking my daughter to a program within the community, there was an issue that there wasn't access to outside space. And also there was an issue that some programs weren't able to travel or take the children on trips, because they didn't have access to school

buses in time. I brought up this issue last year, and it was said to me before you came in, Commissioner, that this will be addressed this year.

So I know that with the \$277 million, are we planning on addressing this issue this year of having more access to outdoor space, and having our children able to take school trips. Because I do believe we don't want an extension of school, that they just stuck in the school building all day. They're actually outside enjoying space, like, you know, like a summer camp type of vibe.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I appreciate that-- that question. We are all about enrichment programs and experience for a young person in Summer Rising. Again, 110,000 young people having an assortment of different trips, and art museums, and all sorts of enrichment experience.

I believe, you know, that we are focusing-- we are on the same page along with our partner at DOE. So we know that there are issues with transportation and the procurement of-- of buses and transportation. I clearly understand that. And in fact, in Staten Island, on one of my visits, there was a young lady named Margaret, who-- and she may be the same age as

your-- as your daughter, who actually put our hands up and said, "Commissioner, we're tired of going around the block." You know. "Is there a way that we can get a bus to take us to trips around the city?" And as we started to talk with community-based organizations, and understanding where the pain point is, is actually an issue with the industry, the busing industry, and being able to procure those buses in a timely manner.

But I can honestly say that there are a few organizations, community-based organizations, and to Margaret's delight, DYCD stepped in was able to provide transportation for her and her class to go on trips.

So we're constantly working to make sure that our community-based partners have access to the space that you're talking about.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And in addition to transportation.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: I appreciate that. And--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm sorry, Kevin, can I just ask--

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: No, go ahead.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: -- a followup question.

Because the issue around the busing was more around timing, because of the way the program was structured. And so if that's not addressed, I think that that-- that's the real question. So how are we going to address the young people being in class, I think until 12, and then being still being able to have time for trips? Are we going to be looking at a much more flexible schedule? Because the issue around busing was that they needed to be back by three because they then had to go to the bus pickups for the young people. So it was more around timing and not necessarily access. So could you talk a little bit about that, please?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So I'm thinking, you know, that the issue is-- is multiple, instead of singular. So we are talking about being able to contract out buses to take young people, the young classes on trips. In terms of the pickup times and the arrive-- the pickup times? I'll let Susan talk about that.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Thank you. Go ahead.

MS. HASKELL: Yeah, I will just say, quickly, you're right. Trip planning, especially with students who need transportation, after the-- after

the time buses come is-- could be a challenge. What we're encouraging on the local level is, like, collaboration between CBOs and principles. We're not quite there yet, where we've landed that, but to plan the first parts of the day so that there are good blocks for trips, maybe like an eight to three o'clock block, or, you know--

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: I just want to be clear also, and Chair Stevens, thank you for that. I do appreciate the trips. It would be nearly impossible to take 110,000 children to the same trips, museums, the museums would be overcrowded. I'm just merely speaking about outdoor space access. The schools are adjacent to parks in the communities, libraries, community centers. There was just no access for the children to experience outdoor space. So I just wanted to bring that up to the attention. [BELL RINGS] Now, just for the sake of time, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

Summer Youth: The additional \$11 million that we incorporate last year and advocated for with Summer Youth. Could you just state how many slots that is going to provide this upcoming fiscal year?

2 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Okay, I'm going to
3 introduce Deputy Commissioner Valerie Mulligan.

4 COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Thank you, Commissioner.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Can you repeat the
6 question?

7 COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Um, the additional \$11
8 million that we advocated for last year in Summer
9 Youth. Can you just address how many slots that's
10 going to provide this year, this upcoming fiscal
11 year?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So I believe the
13 \$11 million you're referring to as the funding that
14 we allocated to MetroCards for last year's program,
15 not for slots.

16 COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Yes. Correct. Excuse me.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So that was a one
18 time add that we had last year. We were able to
19 provide MetroCards to every young person in SYP last
20 year who had an in-person SYP experience. And we're
21 currently in discussions with OMB about where we are
22 for MetroCard funding for this year. But overall, we
23 served 100,000 Last year. So that \$11 million
24 contributed to the larger SYP budget.
25

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Thank you. My next question: The Saturday Night Lights Program, Commissioner: The program in my district, personally isn't doing too well. They're saying that they don't have a lot of participation. Being that the marketing from the program-- I do understand that you guys do do outreach with DOE. But there's just a banner in front of these buildings. And besides the banner, a lot of people in the community don't know about the program.

Our young people are in dire need of having safe spaces that they could, you know, fellowship amongst each other. I'm truly worried about our young people, and just speaking to them working with them on a everyday basis. What they're saying to us is that they don't feel comfortable going into certain areas to have-- experience the program. So I just want to know about the outreach that we're doing for the Saturday Night Lights Program. And then I'm going to go into the Beacon question that me and you spoke about yesterday as well.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Sure. 136 sites, absolutely. We're monitoring the participation of each and every site for-- that DYCD is responsible

for, the just robust sports programs that go into those sites.

And I want to emphasize and I said this before, earlier, that we hired a Chief Communication Strategist and-- and a team, a communication team, to start, to continue, to promote, you know, on social media, and in engagement, and in grassroots engagement which is very important to young people who, you know-- as you know, as well, as I know, they live on their phones, you know, to make sure that we have the proper outreach, to publicize the programs that we have not only in our Beacon, but also in our Community Centers. So your-- if you haven't seen, you know, the social media sites of DYCD, you're seeing that there's more activity, and there's more promotion that's going on.

But I would love to sit down with you to hear about your ideas and suggestions on how to promote it even further.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: I have some great ideas and I would love to give you some.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Okay. Let me hear them.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: And I know Chair Stevens has some good ones too.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And one of them would be to have young people run the page, and not adults, because we don't know how to market--

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Oh, talk about it. Man, that's beautiful.

Lastly, and thank you so much for being so responsive to me yesterday. Beacon programs: I was able to-- we were able to get a Beacon program in my district at Truman High School. The access to the school has been an issue for the Beacon Program and lot of providers.

The whole purpose of a Beacon program is to pretty much have a community-based organization that have structural programming that the community can actually benefit from. But if the school and DOE and DYCD aren't in cahoots and partnering with each other, and they're given limited access to a school space-- For instance, I have a wonderful program named Game Over in my district, a beautiful basketball program run by Eric Hicks. They gave Game Over a very small gym, and they rent out the bigger gym to schools from Westchester, AAU tournaments, things of that nature. But the whole purpose and Truman's inside Co-Op City, which represents 30,000

individuals, and has probably over 10,000 youth. If we get the bigger space for the building and have more youth inside there, I think that will give them access to a safe space. So the Beacon Program I'm very worried about, especially within my community. I've been having this conversation since I've been the office about the same school and the same issues, about having access to space.

So can you just talk about that? And how can you help me to improve that? Because I know DYCD is trying to stop gun violence within our community. And I think giving our youth safe spaces that they can explore, network, and be around each other, Without being afraid that something bad is going to happen. I think that's the number one initiative that we need to do to stop gun violence.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I agree wholeheartedly. Our Beacon program, you know, has been around-- of course, the investment of the first African American Mayor, David Dinkins, in creating the Beacon program. It's one of the vital parts, and one of the vital programs in DYCD.

I can honestly tell you that Chancellor Banks and I are regularly meeting to discuss it issues such as

Beacon and access to school, and the school facilities.

As I committed to you on the phone yesterday, when you called me, I already charged my team to make sure that we are investigating that complaint, and that we are rectifying that complaint immediately, because that should not be the case.

COMMISSIONER RILEY: Thank you, Commissioner Howard. Thank you, Chair Stevens. I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Councilmember Avilés?

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Hi, there. Thank you so much for being here, and all the work obviously, that everyone at the agency does for New York City residents.

I'd like to talk a little bit about adult literacy. From what I can see, the city continues to deprioritize adult literacy, and not kind of meet the urgency of what adult literacy is, a foundational aspect to integrating into communities. Coming from a district that is majority foreign born, right?, we are still severely lacking and capacity for adult literacy. And yet, I see here even in the headcount, that for 29, the headcount decreases from 14 to 9. And still the funding overall, with-- in addition to

having the asylee arrivals that are coming to our communities, we're still using volunteer networks of folks who are just giving their time to try to help provide adult literacy. It is not enough.

I don't understand how we are-- have expanded need, potentially expanding services, and yet we have no needs in the budget. We need adult literacy to be significantly expanded. I appreciate the change in the programming that now allows hybrid. We see that as clearly was successful. And providers absolutely need that flexibility. But I don't see how this budget meets the demand for adult literacy, both in its urgency for communities across New York City, but also in demand. It is one of the more consistent requests that we get, and there is no funding and no services.

So could you talk a little bit about that and how the agency is advocating for increased funding? And how it expands-- Why is there a staffing cut?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Good morning. Nice to see you again. Regarding adult literacy: The adult literacy program, we haven't had any actual reductions in service levels for providers. Through this past year, there was additional funding, we

thank the Council for once again, putting those one-time funds that you put in there.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Can you get closer to the microphone?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Can you hear me now?

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: A little better. The acoustics are terrible.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: No problem. I just wanted to say-- thank the Council once again, for the one time funds that you continue to put in the adult literacy program every year. It's appreciated. This year, you were able to provide an additional 3500 slots. And so we want to thank you for that.

However, regarding the additional funding, we continue to work with our providers in their existing capacity to allocate additional slots. And so we do that every year. the cuts that are proposed for the FY 24 fiscal year do not provide any service reductions to that portfolio. And additionally, when we get additional funds for adult literacy provider, because it's one time funds, it's not like we can do an RFP. And so when we do allocations, we have to

only tap into our system provider network, which kind of limits capacity as far as how much we can do additionally.

But we are continuing to work on it. We recognize the value of it. We know how much literacy is important to our communities, especially our immigrant communities, as well as the migrants who are coming to New York City. And so as the Commissioner mentioned, we have the ESL program at HERRCs. And we believe that we'll continue to do good work in those areas. And as we continue to expand, working with OMB to see how we can continue to provide that service.

But as far as regarding capacity for providers, we've kind of maximized our existing provider network regarding additional slots. I'll let our Deputy Commissioner Bobbitt add any additional information.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Thank you for the question, Councilmember. I really think that my colleague, Associate Commissioner Bailey, framed the issue well.

We are doing what we can in supporting the provider network as we can, in the context in which she laid it out.

2 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So in terms of how is the
3 additional need of the HERRCs? How is that funded?

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: We are using
5 existing funds to fund that within our budget.

6 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So with the existing-- so
7 with the-- you're just transferring money?

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: We're self-
9 funding as an agency, the support for the migrants
10 regarding ESOL.

11 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So would you-- would you
12 say that there is sufficient funding in adult
13 literacy in New York City at this point? What-- What
14 kind of advocacy is the agency doing to maximize the
15 request for additional funding?

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Well, we-- we've
17 always appreciated the funding that the Council
18 provides every year as well as the Administration's
19 consistent effort. As I mentioned previously,
20 because it's one-time funding, we cannot do multiple
21 year baseline procurements to award it. And so when
22 we get one time funding, we have to utilize our
23 existing provider network to allocate those
24 additional slots, which kind of creates capacity
25 issues.

And so you know, if funding has become baselined, and we can be much more intentional about the allocation of slots, we believe that we'd be able to hopefully expand that provider capacity and to be able to allocate more funding.

So do you think that-- I'm sorry, Chair, I'm just-- do you think-- is the agency of the mindset that this funding should be fully baselined?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Well, if-- You know, it's always subject to available funding. You know, the city has a number of competing priorities. And so we will defer to OMB about the availability of funding for the adult literacy portfolio. But again, we are grateful for the additional funds that are always provided by the council.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So given-- given the dance that we have to do with agencies, which you know, they have enough, but they don't have enough, because there's not enough service provision, and OMB apparently is making all the decisions.

I will say for the record, it is not enough. It is woefully underfunded. Providers need an expand-- I know we've increased the rate that providers are being given over the year, and I applaud that. It is

still not enough. We need both expanded rates, and we need expanded services. For a city of 8 million, with a high percentage of immigrant population \$11 million is a pittance for what is required.

So if you can't say, I will say it for you: It needs to be baselined and expanded, and our community's health and safety depend on it. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, Councilmember. I do want to go back to homeless runaway youth. I have a question regarding: What is the utilization rate of 813 RHY beds, and what is DYCD doing to get it to 100%? There are reports that there are 75% overall utilization between July 1 and December 31. So how are we getting to 100% utilization?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm going to look Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell respond to that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Thanks, Chair. Thank you for that question. We saw-- Certainly during COVID, we saw a dip in utilization, but we have seen steady growth in the past like fiscal year and a half. We are investing in a marketing campaign. We want to-- It was one of the city's commitment, as part of Opportunity Starts at Home.

We want to increase advertising. We have-- As you know, we have a street outreach contract where providers finding youth, where they congregate, and whenever possible, transporting them to a safe place to stay. So yeah, I think we've seen a steadily-- steadily increasing utilization, and we're going to continue to do everything we can to make people aware that there are resources available.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean, I think that's one of the reasons why, even with the drop-in centers, that's one of the things we need to make sure that we're utilizing all the beds, even while we're advocating for more, it's going to be really important and essential to clean some of that up. But don't go anywhere because we're about to start talking about Summer Rising.

The Council called upon the Administration to increase the funding for Summer Rising initiative. \$277 million was allocated to DOE and DYCD. For the program in the fiscal 2023 Executive Budget. The program incorporated DOE's academic program, DYCD's school beats enrichment program, through existing COMPASS, SONYC, and Beacon contracts. Can you provide us with updates of this program?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, we're really excited. We are really deep in planning for Summer Rising. Summer is upon us.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Summer's here.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Summer's here. You're right. Summer's here. Our plan is to open enrollment for Summer Rising in the month of April. And, again, as Commissioner said, we're going for 110,000 seats again. We're-- we maintain a big commitment to K-8 students this summer. And we look forward to rolling it out.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And just to go back to some of the-- because I know Kevin already kind of alluded to this with the trip-- I mean, the trips and outdoor space access. My question is: Will there be more flexibility with the scheduling of programming, or is it going to be very restricted in the same way it has been for the last two years?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I want to-- I don't want to-- I don't think of it as being restrictive, but I certainly understand--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I do. I used to run camps. So I do.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Okay. I do
3 understand, you know, that trips have to be planned
4 in a way to accommodate everybody's travel.
5 Absolutely. We want to be as flexible as we can to
6 provide the best experience for young people. So I
7 welcome ideas about how we can do better in that way.
8 Our goal is certainly to be--

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You know, I have ideas.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I know you do. Our
11 goal is to be as flexible as possible for the best
12 experience for young people.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely. Will DYCD be
14 leading efforts in enrollment this year? Because
15 that was a huge challenge last year. It was on DOE's
16 side, and the providers didn't feel like they were
17 part of that. So will you guys be leading that
18 effort? Especially because our providers-- and you
19 guys know how to do recruitment better than DOE?

20 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, you and I were-- We
21 were out there, right? So we visited a couple of the
22 programs. We heard some of the pain, the issues.
23 And I can honestly say that there's been a real
24 concerted effort on everybody's part to make sure
25

2 that this year's enrollment, that we that we improve
3 it.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Will you guys be taking the
5 lead? Will the providers we taking the lead?

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: It is a shared program. It
7 is a partnership.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I think that when we say
9 shared, we need to make sure that the things that we
10 do well, that we take the lead on. The things that
11 they do well, they should take the lead on. And
12 recruitment is something we do well. So that's where
13 we should be focused, and so that it's not all over
14 the place. DOE does not-- And I tell them this all
15 the time, because I'm on the education committee too,
16 so this is not new. That is not something that they
17 do because they have not had to do that before. So
18 I'm not understanding why an agency that's never had
19 to do recruitment -- because kids typically just show
20 up because they got to go to school -- is taking the
21 lead on recruitment. And so I think that, and I'm
22 going to continue to push that. That this is
23 something that providers do while they're in the
24 community. They have relationships with the families
25 and the young people, and they should be taking the

lead on enrollment and recruitment, because we do that very well.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I can tell you, those are the conversations that we're having, right?, in terms of exactly how do we move forward. How do we-- how do we, you know, get situated and-- and pull out the best possible recruitment program?

I'm telling you that the providers, the principal, DOE, DYCD, and of course, I would love for you to weigh in as well. We're all at the table working it out.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely. But, you know, I'm going to say it again: We do it well, so give it to us. I'm going to keep saying it. When will the joint planning for principals and program directors happen? This was one of the drums that I was beating last year a lot. How are we making sure that there is shared deadlines, there are shared meetings, that principals are not getting information before the program providers, and that program providers are not getting different information? When will that start taking place? Is there going to be time and space for them to plan together? Because even when we talk about the flexibility of scheduling and things like

that, those things cannot take place unless there's real shared responsibility. Often it does not-- Although we constantly say that it is shared, it does not often feel shared with the providers. They often feel like they are being told to. The principal is stumping them. Like we had situations where I was calling, like literally DOE when I was at the site, saying like, "This principal is changing the rules. Why is this okay?" And pushing back, and the providers having no say. So I think some of that can be alleviated if we are having joint planning sessions, that we are making it joint goals, and working together. So when will that start and take place?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And again, we hear you. And those planning sessions are occurring. And not only that--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Right now with the principal and the directors?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We are meeting with the principals. But in addition to that -- this is where the focus has changed and my communication with Chancellor Banks -- he wanted to make sure that there was a senior level investment as well. And so he has

added the superintendents into the conversation, into the mix. And the superintendents have had, you know, a lot of responsibilities in-- in making sure that programs are suited and situated, and that they're working with us and all of our community partners, along with the principal to make sure that we get it right. We're having regular meetings with DOE partners and the superintendents.

And, you know, I'm going to pivot a little bit and let Susan talk about some of those high-level meetings. But you know, I can honestly tell you that I have a high level of confidence that this-- the enrollment is going to be better and improved this year? But Susan?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, I agree. The Commissioner is right. That planning has begun. DOE is kicked off principal and superintendent meetings, and our team is also present. We've kicked off our CBO convenings, and DOE is also present. And I think acknowledging this was--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I just want to say I love y'all. And this is the same conversation we had last year. There's always a lot of high-level planning. And then, like, it's like, "Oh, a DOE person is in

the room. That's joint planning." I-- Like, being a program director and running programming. If-- If the principal and the person who's running that program with them are not sitting down to have shared goals, we know that it's going to become difficult. So I know that you guys are doing your convenings and all those things.

But that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about how are we making sure, because last year we had program providers who were not-- who were not-- did not even know where they were going to be until the program started, and principals and program providers meeting the week that camp started. And so those things should not be happening.

So my question is more around: How are we making sure that the two people who are in charge, and literally equals, are meeting and working together so we can level the playing field, and one is not feeling like the other one is not listening to them and those type of things.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So I believe I emphasized in the very beginning that we have focus groups, and we're constantly talking with our community-based partners who have-- who are involved in Summer

Rising, to make sure that the focus groups, those communications are elevated to a senior level, and those issues are being resolved.

So it's happening. It's not like we're segregating the segment out. I was exactly with you, stride by stride, talking with those community-based organization, and understanding the pain in enrollment. And I--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It's not about enrollment. I'm talking about planning. Even before we get to enrollment--

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Planning, enrollment, processing... We're still talking about operationalizing 110,000 young people for the summer. So--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Agreed.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: -- communication is extremely important. And that communication, and planning, processing, integration, best practices, all of those conversations are happening on multiple levels.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But the most important level are the people on the ground. And so what happens is, every year, we have people-- because

like, even last year, there was like, "We've been planning for months," and it was planning at the top, but there was no conversation about the direct service providers. And so that is something I want us to make sure that we are keeping an eye and focus on. Because even if we're talking, we're not the ones running the program.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: If there's--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So the focus groups are great, and those are nice, but it is important that the people running these programs are working together and planning together. Because that-- Sometimes it's just not-- it's just-- it's disjointed.

And listen, everybody who's going to be there, right?, the principal and the provider is going to make sure that these kids have fun, they're safe and their learning. But it would be so much better if we-- And I said it last year: Force planning. Like some-- some principals and providers do it well automatically. But that's not the case for all. And so in those situations, and it-- which means that we should be creating space for those things to take place.

And so we just need to keep them in our heads. Because what happens is we do plan up here, we do talk, and all those things, but that doesn't always translate at the lower levels into direct service.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So I hear you, we hear you, the team hears you, you know. And again, that's the goal. That's the objective. And we are having those conversations.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. What is the total funding for this-- for our Summer Rising fiscal 2024 preliminary plan?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Hi, Chair Stevens. The total funding for the FY 24 Summer Rising plan is \$150 million.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you-- Do we have the funding for the community-based summer programming? The funding source for that?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: The center-based programs are you referring to?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes. Those funds are baselined in the budget.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. How much is it?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Give me one second.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And just while you're looking for that, are we going to have the same disparity as we did last year with Summer Rising contract contracts being higher than community-based programs again, so is that going to be the same situation again?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So regarding the center-based programming, the funding for this summer is \$4.6 million.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How much?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: \$4.6 million.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: \$4.6 million.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes. And so regarding the--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many young people does that serve? I'm sorry.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I think it's a little over 2,200. But I don't have that right in front of me.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: If you could follow up, that would be great.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Sure.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

3 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Regarding center-
4 based programming and the funding model, the funding
5 model is consistent on what they have, because the
6 services are continuing. It's-- our existing center
7 based programs offer comprehensive services. The
8 Summer Rising model is a bit different. It was
9 enhanced during the prior administration. And so as
10 a result, their price per participant is different
11 between the two.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. We keep saying that
13 it was enhanced, but they pretty much are doing the
14 same thing, serving the same young people. And
15 often, those are the community-based programs that
16 are in NYCHA developments, and we're paying them
17 less. So it's like a tale of two cities, in
18 literally programs that are doing very, very, very
19 similar work and serving the same people. And then
20 you have providers who have to pay people at the same
21 title level different salaries because of that
22 funding disparity. So we really have to figure that
23 out.

24 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I want to hear more
25 about your-- your understanding of that, because you

know, these-- the community-center-based programs, and the Summer Rising programs: We just-- We just see that the investment, and the enrichment, and the experiences-- You know, and that's what we really focus in on, in terms of making sure that young people have an enriching experience for the summer.

But I want to hear some of your issues in terms of why you see the-- the equity-- the equity issue that you see.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, we can talk about it now. Because there's huge equity issues, right? So you have center-based programs who have directors who are literally in charge of buildings. There is no-- There's no partnerships in there with them. They're there by themselves, often in NYCHA facilities that are not kept up to par, they are the janitors, they are-- they are also the mechanics. They are fixing things. They're the plumbers and doing all those things. And they get less money to run those programs. And so that is a huge equity in itself.

Whereas like the Summer Rising folks, they literally just have to show up. If you're in a community-based program-- Oh, I forgot you-- You forgot to actually run community-based programs, you

2 have to buy furniture, you have to make sure that the
3 building is clean, you have to get snacks, you have
4 to have--

5 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I think that's kind of a
6 disservice to the Summer Rising program, all right?

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It's no dis-- it's no
8 disservice, because I ran those programs too.

9 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I mean, "all they have to
10 do is just show up," you know.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It is a big difference.
12 Because it is. I'm telling you.

13 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, we value both
14 programs.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I value both of them too.
16 And I ran both those programs. But what I'm saying
17 to you is there's a clear difference around the work
18 that is put in at a community center, and is often
19 dismissed and not seen as-- as important. And then
20 you have another program that is doing very similar
21 work, working with the same group of kids getting
22 paid less.

23 So we ourselves doing that are putting up a
24 disparity. So that's what we're doing. So--

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I-- And I respectfully disagree, because I've been to Milbank, I've been to a couple of the community-based programs throughout the summer, Carter Center in Staten Island, and, you know, I'm just inspired by the staff, the programming. And I also visit, of course, the Summer Rising programs as well. It's all inspiring, I don't see a devalue in comparison the way that you describe it.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: We are devaluing them by not paying them by not paying them the same. So that's the difference. I want to be clear: Both of those programs have amazing people, and they do the work because they love it. What I'm saying is the fact that we have two contracts, doing very-- almost the same work, and sometimes more work at the other program getting paid less. We are saying we're devaluing them.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I just want to add something to that, Chair Stevens, which is what you acknowledge just a moment ago, which is that there is planning that needs to happen in a Summer Rising Program. We use-- We have a collaborative planning tool. We set up a lot of time with staff that is

being acknowledged in the enhanced rate. So although the activities look very similar, the experience for young people is going to be, you know, a model that we support of enrichment. You yourself acknowledge, there's a lot of coordination and planning that-- that needs to happen for that day to be successful, because there are two, like, partners working together. And that is what the enhancement acknowledged.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And what I'm saying is we need to acknowledge the enhancement that they're doing in the community-based programs as well. That is what I'm saying. Like, we're not talking about work here. But we're talking about: They're doing similar work, they should be getting paid the same. So to me, it's always unacceptable, because people don't talk about it. So I'll move on because I still have three pages of questions. So we're going to talk a little bit about SNL, Saturday Night Lights. My favorite thing to talk about. Darrel, don't come up here giggling.

Please detail the proposed FY 24 budget for Saturday Night Lights program. Please break down the funds from DYCD from the funds from NYPD.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So DYCD has, I
3 believe a \$4.3 million budget for-- for SNL. We are
4 an ongoing conversations with OMB regarding funding
5 for FY 24. But we do anticipate planning the
6 expansion, and we recognize that that will continue
7 going forward. There'll be no impact to the
8 implementation of the expansion in FY 24, and we're
9 just going to-- we're in continuous conversations
10 with OMB about the appropriate funding levels.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And you said \$4.3 million
12 was the budget? How much of that is for NYPD?

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I am unaware of
14 the NYPD budget. I'm just-- I can only respond with
15 DYCD figures.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right. Thank you. How
17 was this budget determined? And were any changes
18 made due to under-enrollment or increased needs.

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So the budget was
20 determined, I believe it was \$40,000 for the-- for
21 the OTPS yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, why you over there
23 whispering?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: So each site
25 receives \$45,000 from us to operate.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You said what? \$45,000?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: \$45,000. And then
4 we take \$5,000 off the top for administrative fees.
5 So it's like a \$50,000 allocation per program, \$5,000
6 for administrative supporting our internal staff,
7 also the supports that we give them. We're also
8 providing food at every site every Saturday.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many young people does
10 this program serve?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: A little over
12 4,100.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How is this program being
14 evaluated? To determine it's success?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: So we don't
16 currently have a long-term evaluation. But we do
17 have our staff going out, conducting our internal
18 site visit evaluations, to determine how programs are
19 operating, who's being successful, what are the best
20 practices. Of course, as part of our best practice,
21 we have sites-- And I'm sure this might be one of
22 your questions -- If we have sites that aren't
23 performing well, we are activating our partners to
24 ensure that we are pushing in other young people.
25 We're working with them on staff development,

training. We've even gotten to the point where we've modified the sport. So someone that was trying to do basketball, but young people wasn't clicking, they're now doing baseball. And now young people are coming in. We've-- we've changed site locations in some cases. One that you may be familiar with is Patterson. Patterson is a smaller site. We moved them to a school. They had-- They have an uptick now of enrollment and retention. And of course, one of the other questions may be: What about the sites that are still not performing well? So we are taking a look at those sites and coming to a final decision on whether or not those are the best locations for SNL programs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So you said you didn't have an evaluation, but it seems like you do. So can you talk about when-- when you're going to start this long-term evaluation, because what-- because what is this? We're in, what?, year 3, 2 of this program?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Year three with us. That's right.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: So we-- we are in some discussions around what a long-term longitudinal

study and evaluation looks like for SNL. But again, currently, we are using our internal processes to evaluate the programs, or make modifications if needed.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you so much. You answered all my questions.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: I know. I try.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know. You're doing better. All right, so we're going to talk about language access. The preliminary plan includes an additional \$5 million for language access programming in fiscal 2023. This is a one-time city funding for translation and interpretation services. Does DYCD plan to baseline this funding?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: There are ongoing conversations around that. I cannot have-- give a final answer at that time-- at this time.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. There's so many ongoing conversations.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: It's the budget Chair Stevens. You know, the budget--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So many conversations.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: You know, we do negotiations up until the adopted plan. So we're

hopeful that by the end of this fiscal year, all issues will be resolved and addressed.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What programs does DYCD have currently for the expansion of citywide language accessibility?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: We'll have to get back to you on that. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. So we're going to talk about adult literacy. I did hear in the opening statement, Commissioner Howard said that there will be a hybrid option. I know providers will be happy to hear that. So I know that's one of the things we're talking about for a while. So thank you for acknowledging that.

Funds for the adult literacy provider for basic education in the English language and high school equivalency programs that serves New York City's adult learners. Last year the Council pushed for the administration to enhance the program with an additional \$6.7 million that was added at adoption. This new funding was supposed to increase the levels of investment per student for the upcoming DYCD RFP. The Council adult literacy pilot program, the first in the nation, has proven that adult literacy

education is underfunded in New York City. Of the \$6.7 million, OMB stated that \$1.4 million are transferred to OMI for literacy services. Has OMB consulted with DYCD before utilizing the \$1.4 million?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes, Chair Stevens. In partnership with OMB, DYCD submitted that for the savings plan.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Has the remaining funding of \$5.3 million used-- How was the remaining funding for \$5.3 million used in fiscal 2023?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: The large majority of the additional funding was used to support the over 3000 slots for the participants. In addition there was one-time funding for OTPS needs to enhance services.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Adult literacy-- A DYCD Adult Literacy Program Manager met with last week-- Thursday-- Associate Commissioner Cheng informed the program managers is that because the forthcoming adult literacy RFP has been postponed, programs will receive one year contract extensions for FY 2024. However, they stated that the contract expansions will only include the pre-FY-22 baseline funds, not

the additional \$8 million expansion funds that was baselined in 2021 and 2022, and including the contracts for FY 22, and FY 23. If the \$8 million was baselined in FY 22 and FY 23, why is it not automatically being included in the extension contracts? The Commissioner provided-- said that there was no cuts in the existing programs.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So I can't speak to the conversation of the e-mail that you're referring to regarding [inaudible], but as far as additional slots, if there's additional funding that was baselined, and we enhance those programming regarding any continuation, that would be included in that continuation. If you know Deputy Commissioner Bobbitt would like to expand on it, he can.

But regarding the \$8 million, it was baselined. And again, the additional slots are around 4900. There should be no changes to the providers contract if it's continuing, unless there was a decision for performance to make modifications to that contract. Um, but again, Deputy Commissioner Bobbitt can provide additional information.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: No, that's correct. I just wanted to draw attention. You-- You

referenced the RFP, and I think you said the RFP had been delayed. There's a concept paper which has been released, and we're reviewing the findings from the concept paper. But I wouldn't say that the RFP had been delayed, per se. It's just that it's forthcoming.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But we're extending the contracts; correct?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: We don't intend for there to be a gap in services, so we're--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's not what I asked.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: I'm sorry. Could you repeat the question.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. So we're-- I'm asking-- so if the-- if the contracts are up in the RFP, because we're waiting for the concept paper, that is post-- that is postponed. Like I don't-- It's okay. I'm just asking: So if it's postponed, because, if the contract is ending, and we didn't have the RFP out in time, we're extending the contract, right?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: We're-- Yes, we are extending contracts through FY 23 into FY 24. That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So it's postponed. That's okay. That's not a problem. But the question is that if there was an additional money added before, so with the extension, that's not going to be the case? The \$8 million?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So we have our-- the commissioner who sent that information, so he can definitely expand on it. But again, if there's \$8 million that was added to the budget, and was awarded to providers, we will then have that included in the continuation plan that you're referencing, unless there was some kind of performance issue.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: I think there needs to be a little bit of clarification, because I was at the meeting with the providers. And we talked about extending-- renewing the current contracts for FY 24. So one of the questions that came up was: Does the renewal include the baseline additional \$8 million? I said, "No, we're-- we're extending we're renewing the base contracts." And until the end of the year, and you know, I cannot say what we're going to do with it additional-- We, I know this baseline. I told them that we will have a plan for that. Maybe

most likely, we'll continue to expand the base contracts as we have been doing in the last few years. That's how we explain that. I think there was confusion.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I also want to give Assistant Commissioner Bailey an opportunity for the clarify as well.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So again, Chair, if there was baseline awards allocated to providers in the continuation plan, that would be continued. And so if there's \$8 million that was baselined, unless it was a one-time allocation, that's the only reason why it would not be part of the continuation plan.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's what I'm asking about. The one-time \$8 million. That's not included. So that's why they're pushing back around. Is that going to be included as well?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: If it's one-time funding, we can't do baseline modifications or contracts if there's no funding in the out year. So if it's just a one-time funding initiative, then what he's referring to is correct. It's just a one-time slot increase or enhancement to the contract.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. According to the advocates and stakeholders, the fair rate for adult literacy infrastructure should be \$2,700 per student, or \$450 per instructional hour, the city has committed to increasing the rate to \$950 to \$130. But that only includes the one time COLA. How will the City-- How will the City pay adult literacy providers in FY 2024?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So as Assistant Commissioner Rong referenced, the concept paper and RFP was delayed, and so we are continuing with the existing rates that are reflected to those contracts that are inclusive of ICR, REI, and POLO, over the term of existing contract. As we move forward into the award, the PDP will be increased to 1300. And that's all we can provide at this time because, we can only award based on available funding.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What is the timeline for the next RFP?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I'm going to defer to our ACO, Dana Cantelmi.

MS. CANTELM: So currently, right now we're in the progress of reviewing all the feedback that came in, and we're looking at an RFP release in the fall.

1 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: September? October?
3 November?

4 MS. CANTELMY: I'm sorry?

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You said the fall?
6 September?

7 MS. CANTELMY: The fall of this-- yeah.
8 September. Well, I don't want to say September. I'm
9 going to commit to a season, because I don't want to
10 say September on record.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But the way the weather
12 works around here, it might fall be next week.

13 MS. CANTELMY: I know.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So you might not want to
15 commit to that either

16 MS. CANTELMY: Fall with contracts to begin in
17 July of 2024. July 1st.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Will DYCD commit to raising
19 the rate of-- to \$270 per student or \$450 per
20 instructional hour in the RFP?

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: DYCD can only
22 provide a funding based on what we have in our
23 budget. And at this time, you do not have the funds
24 for a rate as you are proposing.

25 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What do you have funds for?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: The \$1,300 that's reflected in the concept paper.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Interesting. Is the Administration planning to advocate for literacy funding from the State?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I believe the Administration is always looking to any additional funding from the State or Federal Government to support services. So if there's any opportunity, we'll definitely take advantage of that.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So we're going to talk SYP. Valerie, are you coming up here? What is the target number of slots for summer 2024?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So we're excited to say we're going to serve 100,000 young people this summer.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The deadline for application submission is March 31. How many applications has DYCD received to date?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So to date, we have received slightly over 100,000.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Already?

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Slightly over 100,000 already.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right. Look at us.
3 That's good news. What changes did DYCD make to the
4 application process? Because you know how I feel
5 about the application.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So this year, we
7 worked with our vendor to make some changes to the
8 application that would make it easier to fill out.
9 We've heard a lot of feedback that it takes a long
10 time, it's not straightforward. So some of the
11 changes we made were that the application
12 automatically routes you to the type of slot, as
13 opposed to a young person having to figure out how to
14 access which type of slot. We're excited about that.
15 So the idea behind what we did was to make it so that
16 the logic was more automatic for a young person, as
17 opposed to them having to kind of break down what a
18 PIN number is, how to access their school, or their
19 school based slot.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Did we add anything around
21 trying to connect them to other services? You know
22 how I feel about this. We haven't done that yet?

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Not yet.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Not in the
25 application process.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. We'll get there someday. How many providers does DYCD have managing SYP slots?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: We have 65 SYP providers.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And that hasn't been extended as of yet?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: No.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: As the number of employers of youth increase, what is the process that DYCD has to secure worksites for enhancing programs?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Yeah, so our employer engagement team is something that we're really proud to say has expanded their capacity. So we have a team at the SYP staff at DYCD who's focused on reaching out to all sorts of employers from government agencies to private businesses. We also have a lot of support from City Hall around the First Deputy Mayor's Business Leadership Council, who we work with her to recruit employers there. We're on the ground with SBS reaching out to MWBEs, to their network of BIDs, so SBS has been a great partner to us in connecting to their networks. We've tapped into all of our other agencies not only to ask them

to host young people, but to connect us to our--
their vendors so that we can reach out to their
vendors to ask them to host as well.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I know last year, the
Council did a great job of getting interns. So I
want to make sure we're partnering with you guys
again, to make sure that, you know, councilmembers
are hosting staff. And I think we need to do a
better job at tackling our state members. So let's
create a plan to get them on board to get as many of
them, as well, to start hosting some of our young
people. So let's-- let's talk offline.

What is the current number of city agencies that
DYCD use for SYP programming?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I can get you that
number in a-- I believe it was 82. Don't hold me to
it. Yep, last year, we had placements at 82
different city agencies.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Um, could you give me a
breakdown of like which agencies-- the top agencies?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I have-- it's a
list of 82, so I can give it to you offline.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You can give me the top
five who have the most young people?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Sure. So our biggest one last year was the NYPD. I think you know that we have a really big partnership with them. And this year, we're looking to expand that to have young people at every single precinct across the city. So NYPD is a great partner, Parks, CUNY, NYCHA, H+H, DOE. DYFDA is a great partner; they host interns themselves and also help us place young people at their senior centers. Libraries. DSS.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Okay. I have some-- some additional questions. Is it correct that after the EHV vouchers and current DYCD CityFHEPS voucher pilot vouchers are exhausted, that DYCD has not confirmed that RHY in DYCD programs will have access to CityFHEPS vouchers without having to enter the DHS shelter system?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I did hear your words. But can you repeat that question-- A lot-- There was a lot in there.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: There were so many words and so many letters. Um, is it correct that after the EHV vouchers and current DYCD CityFHEPS vouchers are exhausted, that DYCD has not confirmed that RHY

and DYCD programs will have access to the CityFHEPS vouchers without entering DHS shelters?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: That's accurate.

We don't have confirmation of that right now. But we do-- like young people at this moment have access to vouchers in DYCD-funded RHY programs. So we continue to be able to, like through the support we were talking about, get access for runaway and homeless youth to vouchers directly from an RHY program.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And we definitely should work on that. Is it true that DYCD's RHY residential 2016 and 2018 contracts are funded at over 3K less than their 2019 contracts? Why is this? And what is DYCD doing to enhance all programs that are funded at the same level?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: That's-- That's accurate. You know, funding comes through an RFP process. We've had so much growth and expansion in runaway and homeless youth over the last several years, there were multiple RFPs. There are some programs that are funded off of an RFP that is funded at slightly less than the later RFPs. And we look forward to future RFPs, and coming up with a unified PPP.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So I know we talked about this a little bit already, but this is some of the questions that we have from the providers. Does DYCD have 24 drop-in centers disallowing sleeping and standing? When is the last time DYCD met with providers about this issue?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: That's a good question. I'm having a hard time pulling up the exact last time. We've had a tremendous amount of communication since the guidance to drop-in centers on January 13. Probably more than a dozen meetings with young people, advocates, providers. We-- You know, we've done our best hear provider concerns, and also try to address their questions, clarify our-- clarify our guidance. I would I wouldn't be surprised if the most recent conversation was yesterday. We've been meeting consistently.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Providers are saying that they've only met once regarding this issue. So I would suggest that maybe we should have a followup meeting. Maybe they-- you maybe had communications, but they're saying there was only one meeting regarding this issue. So we should definitely think about having a-- like an official meeting.

When will DYCD be issuing a policy or-- which is-- a policy around this issue and If that's been requested by the providers?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I mean, I think our guidance was clear. I think our guidance was clear. We did have followup questions from providers to offer clarification. We want to make sure their questions are answered. I don't think we'll be issuing any-- any new policy around that. But we do want to communicate answers to their questions.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What additional funding is DYCD advocating to increase the DIC contracts to support 24-hour case management on-site supportive services during overnight hours?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: The way our contracts are funded-- We currently have funded contracts for drop-in centers. We-- I'm not aware of any plan to increase drop-in center rates at this time.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But that's something that they're saying that they're needed. So are we advocating for this? Is this something that we see as a need?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I'd like to hear
3 more from providers about that. This is, you know...

4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: This is very much new to
5 the conversation.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, it's new, but now
7 it's-- now we've heard it. So we'll talk more about
8 it, since this is the first time you guys are hearing
9 it.

10 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I appreciate that.
11 And, you know, this allows us to talk offline. Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So guess what. That was
13 the last question. You guys made it. [LAUGHTER]
14 Look at that. All right. So all right. And Kevin
15 doesn't have any more questions either. Look, I
16 wasn't that bad. I told you it wasn't going to be
17 that bad. I told you. It was great. All right. So
18 we will now be hearing from the public, and I will
19 turn it over to counsel.

20 COUNSEL: All right, thank you to this panel.
21 That concludes testimony from the administration.
22 And we will now turn to public testimony. We will be
23 limiting public testimony to two minutes. For in
24 person panelists please come up to the table once
25 your name has been called. For virtual panelists

2 once your name is called a member of our staff will
3 unmute you and the sergeant at arms will set the
4 timer and give you the go ahead to begin.

5 [TWO MINUTES SILENCE]

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: If everyone can please just
7 have a seat. If we can please have quiet in the room
8 we are beginning shortly.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm back.

10 COUNSEL: We will now turn to public testimony.
11 We're going to limit public testimony today to two
12 minutes. For in-person panelists please come up to
13 the table once your name has been called. For
14 virtual panelists once your name is called a member
15 of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant At Arms
16 will set the timer and give you the go ahead to
17 begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to announce that
18 you may begin before delivering your testimony.

19 Now we'll call our first in person panel. Lena
20 Bilik, Alan Yu, Caitlyn Passaretti, Sean John Louis.

21 You can begin when ready.

22 MS. BILIK: Thank you to Chair Stevens, the
23 Committee, and the Council for the chance to testify.
24 My name is Lena Bilik, Senior Policy Analyst at
25 Children's Aid. For 170 years Children's Aid has

worked to ensure there are no boundaries to the aspirations of youth. We serve 50,000 youth at 40 sites across the city and receive, COMPASS, SONYC, Beacon, SYP, and adult literacy funding from DYCD. We're also members of the Campaign For Children and support its priorities.

DYCD-funded CBOs are critical infrastructures not only for youth but for working families. They are touch points for academics, social-emotional growth, career development, and we create spaces for socialization and joy. Despite this, we do see the mayor's prelim budget proposing a \$29 million PEG that we strongly suggest do not impact NYC programming, when we've already had to do so much more with less for so long.

There are reductions in the budget that are not clearly explained, and we urge clarity and to keep these programs whole. I go into more detail in my written testimony about how to shore up the sector, including a 6.5% COLA, payment of backlogs, and a fully funded prevailing wage schedule through Intro 510. However, I will highlight a few pieces now. For compass and SONYC these contracts have not been re-procured and many years, leaving us with outdated

rates that don't reflect the current labor market or inflation. We urge DYCD to reissue an RFP with a higher cost-per-participant rate to reflect the true costs of programming and a floor of \$21 an hour. As operators of Beacons, we also urge Beacons to have the same supports as other school-focused DYCD programs and a higher rate of \$21 an hour as a floor. We have data that shows that students at the school where we operate our Beacon in Chair Stevens' district that attend our after school have markedly lower rates of chronic absenteeism than the students that do not in that same school.

I also want to lift up the importance of adult literacy programs and asks of that coalition which we support. Through talking to our RA program participants, we have learned our program has created a strong network of mentorship, resources, and community for families. Cuts to DYCD right now are unacceptable given the need, and we look forward to working with the Council to get clarity on all this and ensure the sustainability of the sector in the city. Thank you so much.

COUNSEL: You can begin.

MS. PASSARETTI: Hello, I would like to thank by thanking Chair Stevens and all the members of the Committee on Youth Services for holding today's preliminary budget hearing on youth services. My name is Caitlyn Passaretti. I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the Policy and Advocacy Associate at the Citizens Committee for Children of New York. CCC is a multi-issue child advocacy organization that documents the facts, engages and mobilizes New Yorkers, and advocates for solutions to ensure that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

Youth services provide a central opportunities, employment and connections for young people in New York City. Youth programming helps to maintain connections among peers and helps to keep families connected to support systems, as well as provide financial opportunities and independence. CCC's Keeping Track of New York City's Children found that 62% of youth aged 18 to 24 reported a loss of employment income since March 2020, and nearly a quarter of youth aged 16 to 24 are out of school and out of work in New York City. This data shows too

many young people are facing barriers in accessing education, employment, and other community supports.

CCC knows that investing in new services is a key way to achieve community well being and youth Ross the city agreed. In their 2023 youth agenda, youth leaders named economic mobility for youth a top priority and urge that the ability for all youth to access year-round employment. We need creative, non-carceral solutions to violence, and we urge the Mayor and City Council to utilize this city budget to invest heavily in community programming, parks, housing, youth sports, employment, and behavioral health.

Additionally, we are calling for investments in targeted planning to support runaway and homeless youth. City leaders must reform the CityFHEPS vouchers so that runaway and homeless youth can utilize said vouchers without having to enter the DHS shelter system, and must also eliminate the 90-day rule for CityFHEPS eligibility. The city must invest \$2.42 million to create 40 additional DYCD beds for youth aged 21 to 24. And we also urge the city to invest \$1.62 million to maintain funding for the peer navigators positions to support youth in the DYCD

system. The city must also prioritize supporting the youth services ecosystem, including by supporting and strengthening the Youth Services Workforce. CCC is also a member of the campaign for children and we echo their recommendations, primarily creating a path to universal and year-round youth services by establishing 12-month youth service contracts and increasing the cost per participant rates for COMPASS and SONYC, shift to a K through 8 summer programming model to draw on the best aspects of Summer Rising and summer camp models, and invest \$4.8 million in green thumb to hire community engagement coordinators and support youth in those positions. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and sorry for going over.

MR. JEAN-LOUIS: Good afternoon Chair Stevens and the rest of the Youth Services Committee for allowing me to testify here today. My name is Shawn Jean-Louis, pronouns he/him, and I'm the Policy Director over at Expanded Schools.

Real quick before we get into it, I just want to thank Chair Stevens for coming to visit the White Coat Program over Highbridge Green last month, and

just listening to how our partnership over there works.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge that although we're not a direct service organization by nature, you know, we partner with about 65 distinct CBOs in over 134, excuse me, school-based sites, and about 65 of those sites are DYCD funded.

So, you know, although I haven't really tested the kind of quantitative statistical power of that sample, when they speak in unison, we listen. And what we've heard is a need for real authentic provider engagement to get the next round of contracts and the new RFP rolling, and awareness that the December 2022 release date for the concept paper around that RFP has passed, and a reticence around the timing and the release of the concept paper. There's also a real desire to inform the process so that, you know, there's a capacity within the scope of the new contracts to hire and retain staff effectively. And to not necessarily compete with themselves when it comes to pay parity between community-based programs and school-based programs.

I also want to take the time to, like, highlight how Expand Debt has been kind of a guide for agencies

like DYCD in the past. In its previous iteration as TASC, The After School Corporation, that-- that work was kind of leveraged in order to incorporate the after school-- institutionalized after school infrastructure that exists today. And in our current iteration, we look to continue to be a leader in that field, around provider support and engagement and what it looks like to a center provider voice.

I want to thank the Council for making that work possible with your \$4 million citywide initiative allocation in FY 23. And also think, you know, offices such as Chair Stevens's office and Councilmember Riley's office for taking meetings and listening to our \$6 million ask for FY 24 to continue that work and pushing the field forward around provider support engagement and a center-provided voice. So thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I appreciate your time.

COUNSEL: Thank you. That concludes this panel. Our next in person panel will be Elizabeth Bird, Yvette Russell, Gregory J. Morris, and Sheila Duke

You may begin when ready.

Thank you Chair Stevens and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify. My name is

Elizabeth Bird. I'm Director of Public Policy at Educational Alliance. We're a settlement house with community centers located throughout the Lower East Side. Our youth development work includes after school programming, a teen center, community school partnerships, and Summer Youth programming. Please see my complete testimony, my complete written testimony for our full recommendations.

Since our last RFPs were issued in 2015, we've had to stretch our contract dollars to provide programming amid significant inflation and a highly competitive labor market. Costs associated with materials trips, buses have all increased dramatically since then, so our contracted per student rate is no longer sufficient to provide quality programming. Any further cuts could simply not be supported by our programs. To recruit the staff we need, people who are energetic and passionate about working with young people, we have to be able to offer competitive wages and provide an expedient hiring process. Today chain retail businesses pay higher starting wages than our contracts allow. Additionally, we experience long delays of six weeks or more to secure DOE staff

clearances. Often qualified candidates simply withdraw their application in order to take similarly-paid position working in retail or another industry. Now is not the time to be enacting any cuts. We urge the city to reverse the PEG, adjust contract rates to reflect the true cost of operating high quality programs, and set a wage floor of \$21 an hour, and expedite back background clearances to two weeks.

I also want to just say quickly about Summer Rising, we desperately need the city to expedite the budget approval process for summer programming, and commit to allowing contracted providers a minimum of six weeks to effectively jointly plan their programs and hire staff.

Finally, I just want to lift up the concerns about students with disabilities. I urge DYCD to develop a clear plan and allocate funding to providers to ensure that we're able to equitably serve all students participating in after-school or summer programming. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

MS. RUSSELL: Good morning, my name is Yvette Russell, the Strategy Officer at Read Alliance.

1 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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2 Thank you so much committee and chair for hearing my
3 testimony today. Read Alliance, READ, is requesting
4 \$100,000 in City Council Initiative Funding to
5 support its critical Dual-Impact Program in low
6 income neighborhoods within the five boroughs of New
7 York City. Read Alliance trains and pays high school
8 students as individual reading tutors for younger
9 peers within the same communities. More than 85% of
10 early elementary students who complete the READ
11 program improve more than one grade level in reading
12 as a result of the individualized phonics instruction
13 they receive from their team leaders. And these
14 young people who are employed as their reading
15 tutors, earn minimum wage, up to \$1,000 or more
16 within a few months, and have the opportunity to
17 participate in robust team leadership programming
18 that leads to improve social and emotional learning
19 and positive post secondary outcomes.

20 Since 2000, Read Alliance has employed more than
21 15,000 high school youth, providing over 18,000
22 kindergarten first and second grade students with
23 individualized reading, tutoring. In fiscal year 22,
24 Read Alliance employed 441 unique teens in 659
25 positions earning minimum wage or more. In fiscal

year 23, READ has employed 500 unique team leaders in all five boroughs of New York to date, partnering with more than 100 high schools 17 from which we recruit more than 20 teens each year as reading tutors.

Intrinsic to our model is the magic of the Near Peer Connection and the bond that is created between older children and younger children in tutoring, mentoring and role model relationship. Young people are employed in their own communities, many working in the same elementary schools they attended as children, creating a sense of community empowerment and belonging. For most READ team leaders. This is their first job, their economically-empowered, and meaningful, and paid work experience where they can contribute to their family income bringing spending and saving power back into the local community.

Every young person employed at READ is part of the Team Leadership Program, which is structured a structured set of enhancements supporting college readiness, career exposure, mental health and wellness program, financial literacy, and leadership development. Every year, READ hosts an annual youth summit at which approximately 100 young people from

all five boroughs, many who were SYP participants, attend an all-day symposium, celebrating their achievements and connecting them to diverse professionals and extracurricular enrichments. Read Alliance is committed to paving a pathway to education careers for teen leaders work experience. To that end, we've built a robust relationship with College of Staten Island, and with Hunter College, the latter of which 16 Read Alliance team leaders from all five boroughs are currently taking classes at Hunter College's urban education College Now Course this spring. We've established a connection that will facilitate admissions priority to help and send that thank you young people with interest and teaching professions specifically, you're on a path to pursue that career. Thank you for your consideration and for the extended time.

MR. MORRIS: Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Greg Morris. I'm the CEO of the New York City Employment Training Coalition. For 25 years, the coalition has played a vital role in presenting and championing policy priorities that support the alignments and coordination of workforce development and economic development, seek to reduce

and eliminate barriers to meaningful long-term employment based on systemic and structural bias, and supply every new worker with the skills, training, and education they need to survive and thrive.

You know, the testimony that we give is-- you get it, you see it, you review it. I want to note something you said, Chair Stevens. You said we have the same conversations year after year. And you're right about that. And I want to highlight for you the same conversations we have year after year. We have a broken procurement system in the city that results in contracts not being met on time, people being paid what they deserve. We have a Summer Youth Employment Investment, which is fantastic, but doesn't relate to year-round employment opportunities which we know folks really need. We know there's a disconnect between the school system and CUNY, which results in young people not finding significant pathways to careers. We know we've got a broken workforce development system. We also know what neighborhoods tend to be-- have the highest rates of unemployment year after year after year. We know it's black and brown New Yorkers that are always left the farthest behind.

But, but we know the answers and solutions and the investment that this council can make, I think, right now, in year-round employment opportunities for young people, I think the investment that this council can make in adult literacy, I think the investment this council can make in supporting partnerships in communities that need access to services and supports matters more than ever.

And I guess I'll just only add to that particular thought: We are in a moment of crisis, and whether it's related to the unemployment not bouncing back, or it's related to one third of young men in the city not having access to full time work, or it's the surge in cash assistance recipients, this is a moment we can take to pull ourselves together and act in a way that ensures equity and opportunity. And I know this Council believes in that, and I trust and respect your investment, Chair Stevens, and this Committee's in making sure that our young people have a great path to the 21st century workforce. Thank you.

MS. DUKE: Good afternoon, Chair Stevens and members of the service committee. My name is Sheila Duke. I'm the proud CEO at Roads to Success. Roads

to Success is a 22-year-old organization whose mission is to empower young people to take control of their futures. We envision a world where everyone has an equitable path to success. Roads to Success currently serves over 5,000 youth and young people each year in Harlem, the Bronx and Brooklyn with programs and services that empower, impact, and build core skills to ensure stable and thriving pathways for our clients. Roads to Success programs range from traditional after school programs, youth employment, workforce, and job readiness programs, and leadership development.

In just 110 days, yes, 110 days, summer programs will officially launch. And let me just pause here and say that I highlight, underscore, and exclamation point all the things that were spoken about this morning.

Additionally, programs and services that provide young people meaningful pathways for employment are critical, such that we talked about this morning.

Roads to Success provides positive workforce development and training throughout the city's most underserved young people. RTS has been an SYP host for five years, and Summer Rising for the past three

years. This summer, we are looking towards continued partnerships enhance intentional continuity of services, again intentional continuity of services year round, to eliminate the pain points of CBOs.

RTS has served over 9,395 applicants since 2019. RTS remains home for thousands of young people and adults throughout the city, where we employ over 200 people annually, in which 65% of our staff have been employed with us for over five years. Again, I would just like to thank City Council for prioritizing young people and making critical investments to ensure their stabilities. Roads to Success is respectfully requesting new City Council funding this year so that we can deepen our impact and serve more young people throughout the city. Thank you for your time this morning.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you for this panel. I do have a couple of questions. And so specifically around the Educational Alliance. I would love to hear a little bit more about the experience that you talked about around students with disabilities related to Summer Rising last year. I know that there was a number of challenges, and just wanted to

get on the record some of those challenges that you faced.

MS. BIRD: Yeah, I think. And I am not-- just to clarify, I'm not in the school. So I get this from the-- our program directors.

But my understanding is that it is challenging to make sure that we have the services we need if a student is identified as having disabilities, and has a paraprofessional or assistive technology that is available to them during the school day. It's not always translated into the after school program, or, for example, in Summer Rising.

And so what we're asking is that we are contracted, or that we have funds that are allocated so that we are supported to do that financially, but also that we have support from DYCD to make sure that those services are maintained for the continuous period that a student is with us.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. And I just want to also just highlight: I know, the New York Employment Training Coalition, you spoke about a reimagined year-round program. That's one of the things that I've been hitting the drum with around a lot around, because I think, one, we talk about the

expansion of SYP, and yes, that's great. But if you look at the rates of unemployment for young people in New York City, we have the highest rate in the nation right now at 23.8%, which is extremely high. And so we do need to get to a place where we're reimagining what the workforce looks like. And so we are definitely on the same page around how we are moving forward, and not just talking about SYP and looking at what has Work, Learn, Grow look like, what does, you know, internships look like, and really reimagining it. Because when we were younger, a lot of us was able to go work at McDonald's or Footlocker or whatever. That is not the case anymore. And so as a city, this is something we definitely need to tackle together. So thank you for bringing that up.

MR. MORRIS: I appreciate you saying that. If I may just say my first job in the city was helping young people sign up for Summer Youth Employment many, many years ago. And I'm very proud of that. But as you pointed out, we need to reimagine the Workforce Development System. And that means year-round opportunities. It's our workforce development providers who make that possible.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely.

MR. MORRIS: So we encourage their support.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So we definitely would definitely want to set up some time so we can talk offline. So thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Chair Stevens, if I may?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Well, thank you to this panel, for your presentation today. My first job actually, and I stated it yesterday at the rally for the library cuts, was working at the library and what was so sustainable, I got it through Summer Youth, and I was able to be a page and continue out that job while I was in high school.

So I just wanted to get your feedback, because I did mention into DYCD and to the Administration that the providers that we connect our youth with, they should be providers that can actually offer them positions throughout the school year. So they have year round employment. I just wanted to get your feedback on that.

MR. BIRD: Yeah, I would just say it, and I think we probably all be in agreement, that we need to increase access to the opportunity. The reality is the investment has been in Summer Youth. And the

data tells you about Summer Youth. It's a great entry point, but it doesn't always lead to actual employment opportunities that last beyond those six weeks.

Providers could be in a position if they were resourced to do so. And if employers expressed a willingness to commit to seeking employment pathways for workers from the summer, if we actually could build the pathway to our mayor's model of what apprenticeships could look like, you'd want to start from this place. You'd want to start from "that six weeks, leads to my time in school, leads to year-round programming, leads to an internship or apprenticeship and so on."

The Workforce Development Providers that I've worked with can see that. They have that model. Many of them, stressed and overwhelmed by the pandemic, had to provide lots of other resources to support folks through this particular challenging period. But the reality is in this moment, face-to-face work got cut back. So as much as we talk about in the numbers sort of bouncing back in terms of unemployment, face-to-face work got cut back. So there's a lot of folks in particular, those young men

we talked about, and young people that we talked about who don't have access, we need to connect the dots and make it more likely than not that my summer, job turns into my year-round opportunity, turns into a true career path.

That requires an investment. The investments made in SYP, it hasn't been made in year-round programming.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Or long term, so that's part of the issue. And I mean, that's why I even said today around even the information that we're collecting at SYP is just not accurate, because it doesn't lead to anything else.

So instead of us asking for a Con Edison bill, or a light bill, we should be asking whatever services do you need and how can we connect those things?

MR. MORRIS: You were you were spot on when you started by saying we need reimagining, and we need to connect the dots. If I apply for one thing, I should have access to others. That's how we reimagine, and that's how we can activate, and I think-- I think we all understand how that's possible.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because the providers know
3 what the answers are. Because we're doing the work.
4 I said that too.

5 MR. MORRIS: That's why you're the people's
6 champion right here. Thank you so much.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I say that all the time.
8 But-- Yeah?

9 COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Yeah. Ms. Duke, do you
10 want to say something?

11 MS. DUKE: No, I was just going to say also just
12 the application process, it's not-- it's not easy for
13 a young person who has come to us in one year to
14 ensure that they're going to come to us the next
15 year. It's the lottery system. It's making sure
16 that the justice-involved youth that have been-- we
17 helped so many of them last year, but we don't know
18 that many of them will be placed with us, just
19 because of the disjointed application system. So we
20 really need to look at the application system and the
21 continuity over time that we have a young person in
22 our portals.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely.

24 COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: No, I agree. And I'll be
25 remiss if I don't say Ms. Duke, it's a pleasure to

see you. I've known you since college, and you're still advocating for young people. It's amazing to see you here today presenting. You guys are spot on. I think, Chair Stevens, with the leadership of Chair Stevens, we've been kind of putting that to the Administration. We're trying to give our young people access and opportunities to be way more than they possibly believe, and the lack of access that we're given to them, but we're pointing fingers and saying that they're doing so much bad things out there, when we're not providing them with the proper resources is, you know, foolery.

So with that being said, Please utilize us as your weapons to combat and fight against what's going on out there. And I appreciate the services that you've been doing.

MR. MORRIS: It's a true partnership.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely.

MR. MORRIS: That's the only way we're going to get this done.

MS. RUSSELL: I have a big voice, I feel really weird, like, using the microphone. But I did want to just add in Read Alliance, we work with young men, a lot of young men who are serving as tutors. And as a

tutor, going into a classroom where you may have been someone who struggled with reading and having-- this literally just happened last week: I walked into one of the classrooms. There was a young male tutor, teenager, working with a little kid, six years old. When the student was leaving, he took his pinky and went like this to his tutor and said to him, "Pinky swear that you're going to come back tomorrow."

And I couldn't believe that these are little kids that are coming into the classroom already feeling like they are at a disadvantage. And they are being stigmatized, and then to look up to a teenager whose job it is to-- to help support them not only in their reading, but then Near Peer development, that-- that ability to be able to see the future in themselves by a teenager who's right in front of them. We have to do more about making sure that those teenagers have connections that remain in their community. And that also provide them a pathway to go out, explore, grow, and come back and serve their community.

So I thank you again, for your for your support today.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, absolutely. I think those-- those are important. And that's why we do

the work that we do. Making sure that we're giving people opportunity. And it's always important that people who look like us are serving us, right? And so, you know, often a lot of young men, and especially men-- men of color aren't working with young people. But they are. People say that, but they really are. And those things are really needed. And we need to make sure we're creating space for those things to happen. You can't see what-- You can't be what you can't see. So we want to make sure that we're in all those spaces as well.

But thank-- I want to thank this panel because we do have a number of people who want to testify. And so thank you guys. And just-- just a reminder. We want to make sure that we are-- when we are testing, testifying, all of our providers are doing amazing work and we always want to hear about them. But we want to just remember to think about what are some of the bigger city initiatives that we want to be talking about, and not necessarily focusing-- focusing on the micro level. So just make sure we're kind of talking about that and your testimony reflects that as well. Thank you.

COUNSEL: Our next in-person panel will be Liza Schwartzwald, Ariel Savransky, Ira Yankwitt, Nicholas Lombardo, and Jeffrey Lau.

You can begin when ready.

MR. YANKWITT: Thank you Chair Stevens for the opportunity to testify. My name is Ira Yankwitt and I am the Executive Director of the Literacy System Center. I'm also a proud member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy.

Despite what we heard earlier, Mayor Adams has proposed devastating cuts to adult literacy education, cuts that would bring funding to its lowest level since 2016, and which would eliminate opportunities for approximately 10,000 students. As you know, there are more than 2.2 million adults in New York City with limited English language proficiency, or who don't have a high school diploma. Yet combined city and state funding is so low that fewer than 4% of these adults are able to access adult basic education, high school equivalency, or English for Speakers of Other Language classes in any given year.

Moreover, over the past year, more than 50,000 asylum seekers and refugees have arrived in New York

after fleeing life-threatening social, political, environmental and economic conditions in their home countries. But rather than committing to bolster the resources and critical services that all of our communities deserve, Mayor Adams has proposed unconscionable budget cuts to crucial programs including adult literacy education.

In response to the Mayor's preliminary budget to Literacy Assistance Center in the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy call on the city to do three things: First, restore and baseline \$20.4 million in funding for DYCD RFP-contracted adult literacy programs. This would include \$5.7 million in established baseline funding, the \$8 million in expansion funding that was baselined in FY 22, and the \$6.7 million that was added for additional expansion in FY 23. The restored and baseline funding should be used both to keep programs whole and to invest in greater resources, services and supports for students.

Second, renew the \$4 million City Council Discretionary Adult Literacy Initiative with added flexibility so that programs that receive this

funding are not bound by the problematically low \$950 per student DYCD funding rate.

And third and finally, renew the \$2.5 million City Council Discretionary Adult Literacy Pilot Project, and expand it to \$5 million under the new title, Adult Literacy Program Enhancement now that the pilot has proven to be a resounding success.

Thank you for your time.

MS. SCHWARTZWALD: Ready to go? All right. Hi, my name is Liza Schwartzwald. I'm a Senior Manager of Economic Justice and Family Empowerment with the New York Immigration Coalition. We are a 200-plus CBO serving group. We do policy advocacy across New York State. I'm not going to echo all the numbers that my colleague here Ira has stated. I am cognizant that we are at a youth services hearing. So I want to add that perspective as well.

Right now in New York City, there are 456,000 limited-English-proficient parents of children under the age of 18. That's a little over half of all immigrant parents.

Additionally, for many years, New York City's immigrant youth have been dropping out of school in

staggering numbers at a rate almost five times that of their native-English-speaking peers.

So, you know, the number one indicator of success for children in school is in fact the-- the level of education that their parents have. When we do not provide adult literacy services for immigrant parents, it does not just affect them, it does not just keep them out of the workforce, out of integration, it keeps their children out as well.

If we want children to have success in New York City, if we want our immigrant children to thrive here, we need to support adult literacy programs as well. And so I would like to echo our asks here to restore and baseline \$20.4 million in funding for DYCD RFP-contracted adult literacy programs, to renew the \$4 million in City Council Discretionary Adult Literacy Funding with added flexibility, and to renew and expand the \$2.5 million City Council Adult Literacy Pilot to \$5 million under the New Adult Literacy Program Enhancement name.

And I also just wanted to reflect that we were happy to hear about additional mental health services and such that were going to be included in the new RFP, but we want to make sure that those are not

unfunded mandates. Very often, it is not enough money to actually provide those services. And in fact, you're just asking for more services for less money than even our baseline services costs. So thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

MS. SAVRANSKI: Thank you, Chairperson Stevens and members of the Committee on Youth Services for holding this hearing, and for the opportunity to testify. My name is Ariel Savranski, and I am a Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA Federation of New York. As my colleague has just stated, and this makes it really easy for me, we basically echo all of the asks concerning the adult literacy program.

I think also what my colleague, Liza, just pointed out: Many of the mandates that were included in the new concept paper that came out were unfunded mandates. And we are already struggling in terms of being able to provide the services that we're expected to provide as providers with the current funding structure of \$950 to \$1,000 per slot.

That's something that we really want to make sure we can increase this year before the new RFP comes out. As we know, the new RFP is potentially going to

be coming out this fall. And we really hope that NYC will take into account the comments that our community has submitted and-- and really make sure that our providers are reimbursed for the services.

I also just want to echo the discussion that we had earlier with the Commissioner. We are a little bit unclear as to where the adult literacy funding lies right now, because we were under the impression that there were massive cuts to adult literacy services. So we really want to make sure that we can get clarity just in terms of, you know, what funding we're actually getting. But we really appreciate your line of questioning and really pushing that.

I also just want to take a minute to highlight some of UJA's other youth services related asks. So at base level, and this also came up earlier, the administration must expedite payment of any outstanding contract backlogs from FY 21 and later, for NAD YC contracted programs, including Summer Rising. In terms of comprehensive background checks, there have been extreme delays in terms of providers being able to get those background checks back in time to execute programming. Right now they've reported having to wait between 2 and 12 months,

which is really not sufficient for programs that are supposed to last for 2 months.

And then lastly, just for Summer Rising for students with disabilities, as Elizabeth earlier mentioned with Educational Alliance, we want to make sure that we can serve students with disabilities effectively.

And also to your point, Councilmember Stevens we want CBOs to have control over participant registration as you know, our CBOs really know the communities that they're working with. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

MR. LAU: Good morning. Thank you, Chair Stevens, and thank you to the Committee for this opportunity to testify. My name is Jeff Lau. I'm the Program Director at the Chinese-American Planning Council. At CBC adult literacy means so much more than just learning English. In our classes, students learn English to help their children with education, navigate the healthcare system, find meaningful work, and become a US citizen. Through-- through classroom presentations, guest speakers educate students about their American rights, housing rights, financial

literacy, health and health care, and how to start a small business.

It is also in adult literacy programs where communities learn about critical services that are available to them. Through wraparound services and followup, students learn about childcare services, senior services, legal services, insurance, housing, college access, food assistance, workforce programs, and more.

English literacy classes means equipping our community to be empowered, and means learning how to build community and thrive in New York City. It means uplifting voices, so that we are heard and represented so adult literacy classes is critical in continuing all of this effort. In New York City, 2.2 million adults lack English proficiency and/or a high school diploma. However, at current funding, we're only able to see it about 4% of the community members, and only 4% of community members are able to access these services.

At CPC, we see about 1,600 people reaching out to our community centers looking for ESL and citizenship classes. But due to current funding limitations, we're only able to sit about 800. So it's about

half. So to close this gap in services and provide for our communities with the opportunity to empower them, to better navigate the city resources, we really need to fund adult literacy programs.

So I want to echo my colleagues here and ask that the city restore and baseline \$20.4 million in funding for DYCD RFP-contracted adult literacy programs, renew \$4 million City Council Discretionary Adult Literacy Initiative, with added flexibility and renew the \$2.5 million City Council Discretionary Adult Literacy Pilot Project, expanded to \$5 million under the new title of Adult Literacy Program Enhancement. I thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I just-- Just a quick question. I just want to make sure that with all the feedback, did all the providers provide feedback for the concept paper, especially around the unfunded mandates and explaining what that is? And can you talk to me a little bit about what those-- some of those unfunded mandates that were in the concept paper? Because I saw them, but I just wanted to make sure I have the same ones you have.

MR. YANKWITT: Sure I can start, and then others can certainly fill in. So you know, we-- we have

very mixed feelings about the concept paper. In many ways it reflected what many of us have been calling for in terms of the supports, resources, and services that students need and deserve. It also reflected a recognition of the wide range of outcomes and impacts that the City Council funded pilot project supported and elevated.

So we were pleased to see those elements there. Of course, the problem was, as you highlighted earlier, that they took what was a \$950 per student rate, simply adjusted for inflation to call for \$1,300 per student, when our calculations based on the cost model budget that the Literacy Assistance Center developed back in 2017, with DYCD funding, said it should be a minimum, as you noted earlier, \$2,700 per student. Or we also actually argued for using an instructional hourly rate, and we can explain why we prefer that, you know, at a further date.

So-- So the mandates around mental health support is absolutely something that we want to include, but it isn't funded. Mandates around other-- other counseling and case management funding supports that we want to have that aren't included, et cetera, so

that the problem here really comes down to the rate. Not what they included, but the fact that they're not funding it. And it sounds like, from the response, that they really have no plans to go above that \$1,300 per student rate, even though we were encouraged by the fact that they didn't move forward with the RFP because of the overwhelming response to the concept paper and the concerns that were raised.

So others want to speak to some of the other unfunded mandates?

MR. LAU: No, I think Ira really said it best here. I would definitely echo that the low rates, especially when you looked at the concept paper itself, they did add quite a few more services.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No. It added a lot. I was like, all right-- but they were great things. Like I thought it was things that should have been there always. But as you guys are saying, the per-participant rate does not match that.

MR. LAU: Yeah. And really just highlighting where we are right now. We're-- we're already having a hard time as it is trying to have full-time staff, right?, and hire case managers to basically do the workload that's already here. And for just the cost

of living adjustment increase, right?, and to add so much more and not really fund that. We would really have a hard time trying to figure out how to provide these services that we really do believe that our community needs too.

So it would be-- it would be in all of-- everybody's best interest to make sure that we are funding it so that we can all properly do this.

MR. YANKWITT: I would also just add that the concept paper called for a minimum of six hours of instruction a week, but the way it's funded made it really impossible for programs to provide more than six hours of instruction a week, and that's really a very minimal level. We want to be able to provide more hours of instruction. But of course, that costs more.

In addition, some of the ways they-- they identified what they wanted programs to focus on in terms of curriculum and instruction, including things like critical literacy, and focus on social justice issues, you know, are really things that we have been encouraging, but again, require teachers to be able to have the time to prepare those kinds of lessons to get the professional development they need.

So there was a lot in there that was encouraging, both around additional supports and services, but also around curriculum and instruction, but without the funding to provide the time for class, or the support for teachers to really be able to do this at the level that students deserve.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And today, I know that-- today for me, it was a first time hearing about the work that will be done-- done in the HERRCs. Have you guys heard about that, and that expansion, and going into the HERRCs as well? Because that was talked about today from the Commissioner.

MR. LAU: So what I could say to this as well, and it just goes to-- I don't want to comment too much about it, because I'm also still learning about this as well.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I learned about it today, so...

MR. LAU: What I can tell you about-- What I can tell you about this is that we are seeing an uptick in asylum seekers also seeking our classes. So for us to also hear that there is going to be a decrease in funding, possibly a cut, during a time when we are also increasing-- there's an increasing need of adult

literacy classes throughout the city, and again, these are folks who are trying to find work, these are folks who are trying to support their children. It's really unconscionable if I want to-- if I can use that word, that we're-- I don't necessarily-- Was it \$10 million that they were possibly cutting from adult literacy programming next year? This is-- This is unbelievable for-- for-- from our perspective, as we're trying to meet this need.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, it is very important work you have to do.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you all so much for your work. It is-- It is so meaningful in our communities. Can you-- Can you color for us a little bit of-- I guess number one I wanted to know: Are your contracts paid up to date? And then secondly, could you talk to us a little bit about-- You mentioned the cut as unconscionable. And the need. Apparently there's a lot of need, and they're meeting new needs, but with no new money. It's called magic.

Can you tell us a little bit about, like, obviously, you have-- you have these specific asks about restoration and baselining. But we know-- we know that that's the floor, not the ceiling. Can you

tell us what you think would be a sufficient amount of investment if our city were to really take this seriously, like that urgent matter that it is?

MR. LAU: So I will definitely echo what was written in the report that called for 27,000 per student. We can-- Yes, if we really wanted to be serious, if we really wanted to point out the need-- I could speak specifically for our program. Again, we see about 1,600 people coming into our centers every year. But we're only, really, with combined state and city funds really only-- I said 800. Half, all right? That puts quite a few folks on waiting lists as they're waiting to become a US citizen, as they're trying to find work, as they're trying to improve their-- their lives.

So to just give you an idea of that-- that need that was already here. And that was before. Now that we're also seeing an increase in folks who are asylum seekers, who also need our classes as well. I think that highlights the demand, and the need, and the number of-- that would be-- that we are asking for, so we can at least start to approach addressing...

2 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: And are your contracts in
3 this area paid up to date?

4 MR. LAU: I want to say yes. I can get back to
5 you on that.

6 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: I'm sure they're not. But
7 yeah.

8 MR. LAU: I want to get back to you.

9 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: It's not-- It's a trick
10 question, not for you.

11 MR. YANKWITT: So we heard this morning that the
12 city served 14,000 students in FY 22, 11,000-plus in
13 FY 23, though it may be a little higher at the end of
14 the year because the fiscal year isn't over, and
15 that's out of 2.2 million adults who could
16 potentially benefit from these services. So we're
17 talking about fewer than 1%.

18 So really, even if we invested 10 times the
19 current amount, right?, moved funding from
20 approximately \$20 million in baseline funding to \$200
21 million in baseline funding, we would still only be
22 able to serve 10% of the need. So I think that gives
23 you a sense of-- of the size and scope of what is
24 really needed versus-- versus what we have.

I also was really struck, by the way, the Administration, DYCD, kept on coming back to they'll be able to serve the same number going forward, right? And this, I think speaks to the catch 22 of the situation that providers are in: That they are offered funding, but it's such a low per-student rate, that unless they have other resources to subsidize that funding, they can't actually expand their services. So in some cases, programs have actually had to turn down increases in funding, because they couldn't-- because they couldn't run the programs at a loss.

So we end up with a more modest number of students than we actually could be serving if we had a higher per-student funding rate. DYCD then sees money that's left on the table, pulls it back, right?, and then says, "See, we're able to maintain the same level of funding as we did last year, and maintain the same level of service." But it's because you're funding many fewer programs and students than you could if you funded it at that higher rate, and actually expended all the money that was awarded to you.

2 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. Anybody else
3 want to comment on their contracts? Are they up to
4 date?

5 MS. SAVRANSKY: We don't provide adult literacy
6 [inaudible].

7 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Right, you don't.

8 MS. SAVRANSKY: We only represent people who do.
9 We also are not a direct service provider, but we are
10 an umbrella organization. So we work directly with
11 the direct service providers and have heard, you
12 know, multiple contracts, not just adult literacy,
13 are delayed even from FY 21. So...

14 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Right.

15 MR. YANKWITT: Our contracts aren't even
16 registered in some cases yet.

17 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: No. Thank you. I
18 appreciate that. And I think, you know, just in
19 terms of the services at the HERRC, you know, our
20 district was home to one of the larger one, a
21 thousand bed facility, and there was no such service
22 provision provided. In fact, what is being provided
23 now as volunteer mutual aid, neighbors that have come
24 together to do that. And I will say there was no
25 such service provision provided to emergency shelter

for families around ESL classes, although there have been some contracts-- additional contracts to some providers that are still too low to manage, and they're overwhelmed with-- with the size and scope of people. So I'm curious around where this movement of money is going, and why it's going to MOIA, and not maintaining where it needs to be. So I think more exploration in that area is warranted.

MS. SCHWARTZWALD: Yeah, and I'll just add here in terms of the shelter services, that one of the reasons why, you know, NYCAL has pushed so hard for allowing for hybrid and remote classes is because a lot of the people going through the shelters may be moving multiple times. Maybe they can get to an in person class one day, but next week, they're someplace else, and they can no longer get there. It's an hour and a half away. So providing that level of flexibility for hybrid and remote learning is one of the ways that we're actually better able to serve folks that are coming through our shelter services, and have the consistent, same teacher, same program all the way through.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: And I think-- Thank you so much. I mean, the hybrid situation, we, as a city

need to understand that we have had a life-altering situation that has taught us several things. Among them, remote is a good option for many people, and it expanded accessibility, and we saw more participation in remote services.

In fact, some of us that have to come to hearings in person are really challenged by needing to be in multiple places at the same time. So I hope that we can continue to retain that lesson. But this is a viable and good, accessible way for people to be engaged. And I'm so glad that they made that alteration. And we should continue to embrace the changes, right?, that we've seen, as opposed to romanticize a way of the past. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So thank you to this panel. And the last comment I just want to make: I know there was mentioning around the background checks. This-- this committee is very aware of this challenge. It was one of the biggest challenges that I had when I was running a program. So we are looking forward to having a hearing on it and making sure that folks know about that so they can come testify, because this has been a huge issue in our industry that does not get enough attention, and is

really hindering the services. So I just wanted to make sure you guys were aware.

MS. SAVRANSKI: Thank you. I really appreciate that.

MR. LAU: Thank you very much.

COUNSEL: Our next in person panel will be David Miranda, Luis Fuentes, and Annie Minguez.

You can begin on ready.

MR. MIRANDA: Thank you. My name is David Miranda, and I am the Senior Staff Attorney at Covenant House New York. I would like to thank the New York City Council Committee of Youth Services for the opportunity to testify today.

Covenant House New York is the nation's largest agency serving homeless, runaway, and trafficked youth. For more information on Covenant House New York, please refer to my written testimony.

As we all know, New York is experiencing an influx of immigrant new arrivals in the city. Although there has been much focus on undocumented families and unaccompanied minors, little to no attention has been paid to the plight of young adult migrants between the ages of 18 to 24.

RHY providers have stepped in to meet the immediate needs the needs of this population. We now must turn our attention to their long term needs, of which one of the greatest needs is immigration legal services. I am Covenant House New York's one legal services attorney and have transitioned to an almost full-time immigration work, causing other legal service cases that we previously would have handled in-house to require outside referrals or significantly longer periods of time before resolution. Additional resources are urgently needed to meet the legal resource needs of both immigrant and US citizen youth.

Due to their undocumented status migrant youth are especially high risk for human trafficking. Prior to the current landscape, we had already noticed an increase in a number of attempts to lure young people experiencing homelessness into situations involving commercial sexual exploitation. The service needs for these young survivors are extensive, and funding is needed to continue our programs that serve both immigrant and domestic survivors.

Although most homeless youth under the age of 21 seeking shelter will be able to find a bed and an RHY program, the same cannot be said for young people between the ages of 21 to 24. This leaves most of the homeless youth in this age range forced to choose between going to an adult homeless shelter or sleeping on the street. 21 to 24 year olds fare best in age-specific shelters. These youth need the educational and vocational training, medical, and mental health care, life skills workshops, and intensive case management that orange white programs provide. We ask that the city provide enough beds for this older population, so that no young person will ever be turned away from youth-specific shelter.

If I can just make just a couple more points?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 10 seconds, please.

MR. MIRANDA: The other issue that I wanted to-- to request is that we do-- that we are severely understaffed. Um, because the pay of the staff is not adequate. I think that issue has already been addressed. But I want to echo those sentiments as well, is that we do have a problem with retention, which really does affect the youth, because the youth do form bonds with the adult providers, and the high

turnover affects that. So with that, I would just ask that the city allocate appropriate funds in any in any contracts.

And I do thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you so much.

COUNSEL: I'm sorry. Just a minute. I'd also like to call up Nicholas Lombardo.

You can begin.

So thank you so much for-- Thank you so much for the opportunity to talk. I just want to commend y'all for listening to some of DYCD's responses, as laughable as it might have been. They have a lot of talking going on, but I've seen very few action. I don't think they specifically answered the question on what the cuts impact would mean for programming.

My name is Luis Fuentes. I'm a Senior Program Director for the Monterey Cornerstone. And the reason why I started off this way is because I'm confused on how my program is going to be impacted by these cuts. They talk about how programming won't be impacted, but they don't have a facilities manager that deals with the various NYCHA tickets and the various repairs that are needed.

At this current moment I'm relocated at a DOE School. For the summer, I was relocated at CS 300 on West 79 and prospect and I got to see Summer Rising firsthand. My numbers actually went up because the recruitment for Summer Rising was so dismal that parents needed to utilize my space-- utilize my program in order to get summer camp-- summer camp services.

When we talk about how things unfolded during the-- When we talk about how things unfolded in regards to Cornerstone, they talk about the cuts, but they don't talk about how the repairs need to be made in regards to the building. Right now I have floods, I have asbestos that's being addressed, and they don't even have a facilities manager to deal with all this stuff. So when they talk about programming won't be impacted, I'm confused on how that's the case when the services that they provide are impacted in regards to the funding that they have with the staffing that they have presently.

So I'm very confused on where we go from here in regards to how funding is not going to impact us, because \$29 million is a lot in regard to services on the ground. When you talk about Saturday Night

Lights, Saturday Night Lights is given \$45,000, and that \$45,000 is supposed to provide supplies, staffing, and everything else. How is that not being impacted by the cuts that they're discussing? They didn't really answer the question when you asked, "How was this impacting programming?" So in regards, I'm just confused on where we go from here.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm Annie Minguez. I'm the Vice President of Government Community Relations at Good Shepherd Services. We are an RHY, Summer Rising, SNL, SYP, After School, Cure Violence, Cornerstone, and Beacon provider. We support all the priorities set forth by the Campaign For Children, the Campaign For Summer Jobs, and the Coalition for Youth Homelessness. On Summer Rising, Good Shepherd Services supports over 2000 elementary and middle school students throughout Summer Rising, and over 400 across our two Cornerstone programs, of which Luis is one of the directors. Chair, you tackled many of our concerns in your line of questioning relating to the timing of school designations, the importance of DOE and DYCD Coordination, the role of early conversations between principal and providers, and how that plays-- the

role that that plays in ensuring the success of programs.

On RHY, the response DYCD offered you about RHY youth not having to enter DHS only really applies to those participating in the pilot, in the voucher pilot program, which is only 50 vouchers. This does not apply to youth attempting to access the vouchers after the pilot ends.

We, along with the Coalition for Homeless Youth will continue to work with the Council to ensure that the laws that we pass in 2021 that allowed youth in care and youth experiencing homelessness to count their time in care and bypass the DHS shelter altogether.

On Cure Violence, I just want to kind of like name that this will be the third time that Cure Violence has moved from DOHMH to MOCJ to now DYCD. Good Shepherd has three cure violent sites, and Chair, as you noted, the transition happened officially earlier this year. Since then, we've met twice with DYCD, and providers are meeting with DYCD in April, and we look forward to those conversations.

I also just wanted to echo the Human Services Council ask, and just for the record share that

social workers in DOE start at 64,000, and after five years that increases to \$90,000. And we as nonprofits cannot compete with these salaries and benefits, because our contracts will not allow us to pay annual COLAs or bonuses. Chair Stevens, your bill to create a wage floor, if fully funded to include wage compression is an important step the City can take to address the salary inequities that exist among human services workers.

Thank you for the time to testify.

MR. LOMBARDO: Thank you Chair Stevens and members of the City Council for the opportunity to speak today. And thank you so much for your leadership on the issues that our programs all face. My name is Nicholas Lombardo, and I am a Learn And Earn Case Manager and Educator with one of the sites at the Chinese American Planning Council.

A little bit of background, just in case, Learn and Earn is a career exploration and college readiness program held after school for high school juniors and seniors whose families are low income. We work with over 100 students year round, providing workshops, volunteer activities, after school as well

as internship opportunities in the summer through the summer internship program.

We focus primarily though on meeting our students' needs in an holistic sense. So I'm not just an educator or a case manager. I'm also a tutor, an advisor, a mentor, and sometimes just an ear to listen to any problems going on that day.

We strive to foster a reliable community space where youth can learn and grow, while supported by adults who see them for all of who they are and what they might need. We want to ensure that all the youth in our program and other programs in our communities can flourish.

We see however, an increase in the need for mental health counseling, as students are facing more anxiety and depression, and there are limits to what our program is able to provide. And I as I speak to colleagues and other programs, I see this reflected in theirs as well.

When we are speaking with students about their needs in mental health, we are only able to make referrals to other professionals who our students do not know, they do not trust, and they cannot necessarily afford their services either. And this

is because the staff at my site, at least, and in many other programs do not are not trained in social work or psychological counseling.

On top of that, with only myself and one fellow case manager in the first place on hand to plan most of our daily programming, we do not have the capacity to meet with each of our many students about all of their goals, even on a monthly basis, let alone following up on their specific needs, which can take many, many hours more.

I'm here today to ask that we please do not have any cuts to the budgets that we have. If anything, we need more money to make sure that we can fund the services that we need to provide the students. Even one more staff on my team to help provide the services for students would make a huge, huge difference. So thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I just want to say thank you to this panel for testifying today. And just a couple of follow ups. Covenant House, please know that I'm fighting really hard to ensure that we're increasing the beds for older adult youth. And I know the challenges that are facing the community centers. I was there for almost 10 years. And the

work that we do in those places sometimes gets overlooked and not seen as important. But I know the struggles of having NYCHA facilities that are leaky roofs, asbestos, chipped paint, and all the things, and we have to take care of that and still provide quality programming. So I see you. I hear you. And I'm in the fight for you. Because you said, "What do we do next?" We're going to continue to fight, and keep pushing, and provide quality programs. So thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you. That concludes this panel. Our next in person panel will be Lisa Alpert, Donovan Swanson, Ramik Williams, and Jordan Otis.

You may begin when ready.

MS. ALPERT: Hi, good afternoon Chair Stevens, Councilmember Brewer. My name is Lisa Alpert. I'm with the Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn. And no, I did not wander into the wrong hearing. I am here to talk about youth services, in particular, the fantastic workforce development program that we have at Greenwood and have been running for six years now. And I wanted purely to bring this program to your attention and to recognize nontraditional sites that offer training for young people.

You may know Greenwood. We are a national historic landmark. We are in South Brooklyn. We are 478 acres. We've been in New York since 1838. And we're absolutely still an operating cemetery. But what like-- what we'd like to say is that we're reimagining and expanding what a cemetery can be. And to that end, we host a whole ton of public programs, education, arts, cultural programs, blah, blah, blah.

But here's the important part for today's hearing. We host, we think, one of the best workforce development programs in New York City. Here's what we do: We train young New Yorkers from low income communities in masonry restoration. This is the core skill of historic preservation and working on historic buildings for which there is a great need in New York City. It's a chance to build a career with a solid wage and a strong future growth, and this training leads young people to union apprenticeships and jobs or jobs with reputable private sector companies.

Typically our trainees are 50% from Brooklyn, but 25% from Queens, and about 25% from the Bronx. Over the next 10 weeks, these young people will be working

to restore one of Greenwoods 19th century mausoleums, which is a little mini training site for other historic buildings, and training for a bright new future. Our graduation is on the morning of Wednesday, May 24. So that's it. I wanted to put it in front of you, make you aware of this program happening, and truly we'd love to introduce you to come out and meet our trainees and to see them in action. Thanks a lot.

MR. SWANSON: Good morning, Chair Stevens. And thank you for holding this hearing today. As a former Community School director, Summer Rising director, I echo a lot of what you've called DYCD to today. And so essentially for our office, we really want to speak more about after school as well as SYP and Summer Rising. Specifically for after school, we recommend that city funds universal after school program for all elementary schools by increasing the number of campus contracts awarded citywide. Our office also urges that there be parity in the awards contracts for Cornerstone and Beacon sites for a lot of the issues that you also echoed, because we know that they experience-- they have unique needs and require a lot of attention.

It's been our experience that any parent that we've engaged with across Brooklyn after school is desperately needed. And we think K through five is where we can make the most impact.

Summer Youth Employment: We applaud the Mayor for and this Council for the record breaking efforts and expanding and enhancing SYP programming, especially with its 60th year anniversary.

With all of these great accomplishments, we still need more intentional direct recruitment to reach some of the most disenfranchised young people. We implore DYCD and ask this Counselor will continue to support the movement away from lottery to more direct, targeted seats, similar to the Career Ready seats, and also the new expansion of the SYP Pride initiative, which identifies safe and affirming worksites for LGBTQ youth.

Another area that requires more attention is to outreach to students with disabilities and District 75 students. The youth may be included in the general pool. However, we know that some providers do not have the capacity to service these students properly, and therefore their experience is impacted. And so we would appreciate more targeted outreach,

but also reconsidering the current contracts in existence and ensuring that those contracted providers are building capacity as well as we are moving forward in this journey.

There's a lot in my testimony that I will share with the Council. But just lastly, with Summer Rising, we know that there's a high need and not enough seats. So we encourage the expansion of that. And we're shocked to not see a request for an increase in funding in that area. We've observed a lot of issues and completely echo that enrollment should be given to DYCD providers. I experienced firsthand what that looked like. And I had a collaborative experience with my principal. So that just speaks to the issues.

But lastly, something that wasn't discussed is the inequity and experience when there's multiple providers in a school building and how do we kind of level out that experience because one provider will have trips and camp shirts and things like that. And then students are seeing that from the other site and not getting any of that.

So thank you for allowing us to testify and we are partners in this work, and we you know, again,

support anything that you, Chair, as well as this committee put forth and calling on DYCD to rise to the occasion. Thank you.

MR. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon. My name is Ramik Williams, Co-Executive Director of KAVI. Kings Against Violence Initiative. We practice trauma informed care for people, young people who've been impacted by trauma and violence. And I echo my colleague's statements for more funding and more open procurement opportunities. It's been over four years since DYCD has released a new RFP across the board of their portfolios. Equally, I hope that the city council will join us and advocating for the Youth Justice and Opportunity Act. On the Commissioner's earlier testimony around summer youth employment, I hope that we will call for extending an amplified and streamline enrollment process that will allow young people to actually apply for the program. Allowing just 60 days of enrollment does not allow for individuals, young people to gather the documents necessary to be-- to apply for a summer youth employment program. Equally, we hope that they will rely on their existing relationships with CUNY and DOE to pull those documents, those existing documents

from students' records so that they will automatically be enrolled in summer youth employment programs.

Lastly, to rely on community-based organizations for heightened communication and also to be worksites. The lack of communication between DYCD and alternative work sites like my colleague said, and as a hospital-based program, we're missing out on employment opportunities for young people.

In terms of the Summer Rising, we hope that they will include a family credential. The lack of family participation is something that researchers and practitioners know is all too glaring in addressing young people, and also to address the recent federal report that identifies a slight uptick in young pregnancy.

Also to add a young and entrepreneurial credential curriculum to the Summer Rising program with financial rewards because even elementary and middle school students should be incentivized to produce more, and think in an entrepreneurial spirit.

On Saturday Night Lights to increase the target age to 24, and to extend the operational hours to 1

p.m., which would be aligned with NYPD data on when youth crimes actually happen.

Lastly, we hope that DYCD would be more vocal in advocating, and more resourceful in advocating for housing for young adults.

MR. OTIS: Good afternoon, Chair Stevens and members of the Youth Services Committee. My name is Jordan Otis. I'm the Deputy Director at Midtown Community Court, which is a project of the Center for Justice Innovation, formerly the Center for Core Innovation.

For the past 25 years, the Center has partnered with City Council through evidence-based programming and racially-just direct service programming. And we're very appreciative of the support and collaboration you have all provided--

COUNSEL: Can you speak a little closer to the mic?

MR. OTIS: Better? So in addition to some of the other asks that we have across the Center as it relates to innovative core funding, misdemeanor ATI proposals, I want to focus a bit more about a new funding ask that we have to support a first of its kind Youth Weapons Diversion Initiative that we're

operating out of the Midtown Community Court. So across the Center, our goal is to provide meaningful and proportionate responses and prioritize public safety through programs focusing on dignity and respect. And the center has a very unique experience addressing gun violence, as it has also served as the original Cure Violence Site in New York City.

And so Midtown Community Court is asking for funds to expand and enhance the Weapons Diversion Program, which is one of the very first and one of very few holistic diversion options for young people ages 14 through 17. We've actually expanded this programming from originally just serving folks, young people arrested on weapons possession in Manhattan to serving folks citywide. And a lot of our cases at this point are also coming from Brooklyn and the Bronx and addition to Manhattan as well. If the young people do successfully complete programming with Midtown, it can actually lead to the non-filing of the case if it is-- before it has proceeded further in family court. If it has already been filed, it can actually lead to a dismissal, thereby avoiding the full, kind of, extent of that criminal process.

We've operated this program in partnership with the New York City Law Department, Legal Aid Society, and other defense agencies, as well as the Department of Probation and we have had a very successful start to this program, being able to enroll nearly every eligible participant that we've had, and have a successful graduation rate of over 90%.

I just want to wrap up by saying that we're able to really curb the behavior that leads to weapons possession and gun violence by also connecting youth to educational supports, job development opportunities, mental health and health and wellness services, youth development services, and social skills development too. We appreciate the support and continue collaborative efforts. And I thank you for the time this afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you to this panel. I don't have any questions. But I definitely want to hear more about the weapons diversion offline and I am very well aware of the inequities between the multiple providers in the building. We talked a lot about that at our Summer Rising and SYP hearing, but definitely we should talk more about how do we fix

them moving forward, and work with you and DYCD. So thank you.

COUNSEL: Our next in-person panel will be Jamie Pawlovich, Deborah Sue Lorenzen, Dante Bravo, and Tanya Walker.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You can start whenever you're ready.

MS. POWLOVICH: Sorry about that. Good afternoon. My name is Jaime Powlovich. I use she her pronouns and I'm the Executive Director of the Coalition for Homeless Youth. We're a statewide based advocacy agency that represents 65 providers, 29 of them are here in New York City, and represent the vast majority of the DYCD-funded Runaway and Homeless Youth providers. I'll be submitting longer testimony that goes into more detail, and definitely will be addressing some of the remarks that DYCD made earlier during your questioning of them regarding Runaway and Homeless Youth Services.

Similar to testimony that's already been given by Citizens Committee for Children and Good Shepherd Services, we would like to outline some key investments in Runaway and Homeless Youth Services in this year's budget.

First, and I know I've testified about this at length previously, we need to ensure that young people in DYCD get access to CityFHEPS vouchers after the current pilot vouchers are exhausted. What goes hand in hand with that is maintaining the current funded housing navigators in the DYCD funded drop-in centers. Since fiscal year 21, when the housing navigator positions were initially funded and youth were finally given access to limited rental assistance vouchers through the emergency housing vouchers in the CityFHEPS program, we have seen a 350% increase in positive and successful outcomes of young people experiencing homelessness. So a 350% increase in young people exiting homelessness into their own apartments, which shows that when we give young people access to vouchers, and we fund staff to support them in securing apartments, it works, and we should keep doing it.

Similarly, we want to maintain the funding for the 16 peer navigation positions in the DYCD-funded drop-in center. The peer navigation pilot program was actually something that was run by the coalition and then was funded in fiscal year 24 to create baselined positions. These must be maintained, not

only because it supports young people that are accessing services at the programs to get peer-on-peer interaction, but it's also creating sustainable full time positions for young people with the lived experience of homelessness.

And if I can just add one more quick thing, 10 seconds?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 10 seconds.

MS. POWLOVICH: Also similar to what others have testified, we want to echo the COLA increase of the Just Pay Campaign of 6.5%, as well as increased mental health, transitional independent living programs for young people. And then also something that I know, Chair, you are very passionate about increasing the bed availability for our young adults ages 21 to 24. Thank you.

Good afternoon members of the Council. My name is Tanya Walker and I'm one of the Assistant Division Directors of Youth and Family Services at Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, where we oversee Compass, SONYC, and Beacon programming. I'm here today to express to you the need for increased funding for after school, evening, and weekend program.

Our 13 sites are fully enrolled and the interest in program is seen in the community and in the schools that we serve. Our challenge is staffing. Currently across our programs, we've met enrollment numbers or even had to over-enroll and many of our sites. Unfortunately we are unable to have students begin because we had to waitlist them due to the current staff shortages. Our staff go through a stringent onboarding process which includes the completion of an extensive documentation packet from OCFS, multiple fingerprints from DOE and DOH, a medical statement that includes lab testing requirements, and several other steps before starting their first day of work. This process is more intense than a teacher starting in the DOE or person to choose office, job or retail.

Many times this deters our candidates from starting with us, completing the hiring process, or often dropping out in the middle of the process. I want to emphasize that this is not underutilization. It is not the lack of interest or the need for these services. It is the system at our external agencies we are required to use for clearing our staff. We are obligated to ensure all students are safe and

meet a staff-to-student ratio. Without staff it's unethical and unsafe to start students.

The pandemic has hit us hard, and we continue to make strides daily to regain and rethink the future of youth development, because it is not the same.

Our staff feel it. Our students feel it. But also does our office agencies. On one hand, I'm working diligently to keep programs up to code and ensure completion of documentation. In return I'm hit with a CBC response-- with no CBC response in over six months, and an e-mail asking me not to resubmit anything until the six months process is over.

The solution is to remove the backlog and expediate the DOHMH clearance process. The cost per participant has not changed, and this is unacceptable. With cost of inflation and the average cost of material, we need the funding. Furthermore, the staff who do weather the obstacles are severely underpaid. And we ask that DYCD considers a COLD. I ask: How do we continue this work? How do we continue to impact our students and the generations to come? I do that by being here today and asking you to fulfill all of those needs. Thank you.

MX. BRAVO: Thank you Chair Stevens and members of the New York City Council for the opportunity to testify. My name is Dante Bravo and I'm the Youth Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses. I use a them pronouns exclusively. UNH is a policy and social change organization that represents 45 neighborhoods houses including the amazing Cypress Hills Local Corporation, and St. Nicks Alliance.

The Mayor's FY 24 preliminary budget proposes a \$29.3 million dollar program cut for the Department of Youth and Community Development. However, the mayor's management report issued in January 2023 notes an increase in program utilization across many of these areas in FY 23. Therefore, calling any of these proposed cuts, however they are framed into question, the PEG must be restored in the FY 24 budget. And at the very least DYCD must provide clarity on why-- which programs are being included in the PEG and why.

In terms of programming UNH calls on the city to do the following for all DOE contracted programs:

Fund the current capacity of SONYC, COMPASS, Beacon and Cornerstones, especially if they are included in DYCD's PEG. Re-procured the COMPASS, SONYC program

that reflects an actual cost of providing high quality after school programming, including the establishment of a year-round, 12-month service contract.

We heard them on record say that they were going to release a concept paper before the end of 2022. We have yet to receive any such documentation.

It is crucial that Beacons and Cornerstones have the same supports as other school-focused DYCD programs. Therefore, in the FY 24 budget, the city must support Beacon providers with school administrators that restrict the ability of community members to enter DOE buildings, especially during Beacon's evening and weekend hours, increase Cornerstone budgets to cover the costs associated with operating programs in nature own spaces and ensure equal pay for Cornerstone staff doing similar work to Beacon and SONYC, COMPASS staff, provide greater transparency on how these rates are calculated, and ultimately, we call for a new \$3 million Council initiative to create a new mental health initiative with a specific focus on community centered programs like Beacon and Cornerstones. This new initiative would help with CBOs being able to

compensate social workers who more often than not end up going to the DOE because CBOs cannot compete with the exorbitant rates that they're being paid on city agency sides.

For more questions-- Thank you so much for your time. For any follow up questions I can be contacted at DBravo@unh.org.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know how to find you.

MS. LORENZEN: Good afternoon. I'm Debra Sue Lorenzen, and I'm the Director of Youth and Education at St. Nicks Alliance, and we serve about 6000 children and youth across North Brooklyn, including through a wide range of DYCD programs, After School, Beacons, Cornerstones, Saturday Night Lights, and one of New York City's largest summer youth employment programs.

I promise that many of the things I'm saying today you've heard already, but I do want to underscore how critical the issues are with our-- with youth services workforce right now.

In St. Nicks Alliance, for example, if we are fully staffed, we have about 300 staff excluding our seasonal 70 SYP staff, of which right now we've hired 10 with the summer coming close-- close behind.

So fully staffed, we have about 300. We're at 240 right now. That's roughly 20% of our workforce. So that's 20% fewer people helping kids with homework, responding to a child in crisis, sparking a child's artistic skills, reading to a child, helping a young person on their career planning.

So do we serve fewer children and families who desperately need childcare? Or do we operate out of DOH compliance, and risk a heavy fine, or closure?

After months of coaching do we hold onto a staff person who isn't well suited for their role and after school? Or do we risk being another staff short?

Do we meet a new staff's salary demands, which fall outside of current salary bands? Or do we raise all wages to prevent pay compression, even if contracts indicate the payroll isn't sustainable long term.

I don't know anyone in a supervisory role in the field who is laboring over these and other decisions.

And more worrisome than this, perhaps, is even the long-term implications of staff shortages. Our fields talent pipeline is weakening, and I'm worried about who the up and coming leaders are the training they're getting, the support they're getting, and

who's going to be running programs a few years from now. I intend to retire at some point. Maybe you do, too.

We need City Council's partnership in rebuilding the Youth Services workforce. We need to reverse the \$29.3 million PEG. We need to support prevailing wage schedule. We need to increase the cost-per-participant rate, to set a wage floor \$21 in the of interest pay compression. To me it is shameful that our contracts do not support living wages.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 10 seconds.

MS. LORENZEN: We need to include a 6.5% Cola. And we need to clear the backlog and expedite the DOE and DOH compliance background checks. I mean, I am afraid to count the number of wonderful candidates who have jumped ship after waiting months for fingerprint appointments and clearances. So I thank you for all the attention I know that you're going to give to these serious issues.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: One, I want to say: All the things you have in your checklist are on my checklist. So we are very much aligned in those things. And two, just a quick follow up question to

UNH: I know you mentioned a Mental Health

Initiative, but can you also talk about some of UNH Summer Rising asks?

MX. BRAVO: We absolutely can. So the big thing is that in order for Summer Rising to be successful for all parties, but especially for children and families who deserve summer opportunities that fulfill their needs, we're calling on city council to help us with making sure that CBOs have far more control over participant registration, especially to help families who need additional digital and language support to apply for programming. There was a DYCD Webinar today talking about these enrollment changes, and there is still very little CBO control over registration, very-- which is incredibly frustrating, especially when you pointed out the fact that we've been having these exact same conversations now for the past two years.

The city should allow youth and families, whether or not they want to attend, the morning DOE portion, the afternoon CBO camp portion, or both, and allow CBOs the chance to record how many of these young people choose with their feet what service is most appropriate for them.

And finally, in addition, Summer Rising 2023 can only be set up for success if there's increased and coordinated support for young people with disabilities, to make sure that CBOs have the resources they need to properly serve young people. This includes paraprofessional support, assistive technologies, and many other things that the DOE actually does have access to but often than not, does not partner effectively with their CBOs to make sure that these young people are taken care of.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you for that. I think all those things are really important. I definitely want to make sure that we are working with DYCD to get those things done and expedited. So thank you to this panel.

COUNSEL: Our next in person panel will be Turay Howard, Corinne Civil, Tené Howard, I'm sorry.

I'd also like to call up Scott Daly and Michael Rivadeneyra. I'm sorry if I mispronounced your name.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You can start whenever you're ready.

MS. HOWARD: There we go. That's a newbie status. It's okay. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Tené Howard. I'm Executive Director at Sadie

Nash Leadership Project. I've been in this role for three years, almost to the day. And I'd first like to thank the City Council for continuing to make investments and champion girls and gender-expansive young people in its budget.

Our mission at Sadie Nash is to strengthen, empower, and equip young women and gender-expansive youth of color as agents of change in their lives and in the world. We're really proud to be celebrating our 20th anniversary this year of delivering these sorts of programs, services, leadership opportunities to young women and gender-expansive youth. We've grown from a single summer program that worked with just 16 Girls in Brooklyn to a proven effective leadership, youth development leadership organization, actively engaging over 500 young women and gender-expansive youth annually in a range of cutting edge leadership programs.

Today I'm here to speak in support of the sports training and role models for Success Citywide Girls Initiative, also known as STAR CGI. Members of our initiative are here to ask for your continued support in ensuring that STAR CGI funding is restored in the Council's FY 24 budget. In fiscal year 2024, STAR

1 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

180

2 CGI's collaborative is seeking a full restoration of
3 our-- of our funds and to be able to continue to
4 serve young women and gender expansive youth in all
5 51 council districts. Our organizations are a
6 lifeline for young people. It's through our
7 organizations that young people are gaining
8 opportunities to really sustain in this unprecedented
9 time.

10 In December 2021, US Surgeon General issued an
11 advisory on protecting Youth Mental Health in
12 recognition of this growing crisis. Especially black
13 and Latino, LGBTQ+, young women, and gender expansive
14 youth, it is proven that they are at greater risk of
15 some of these mental health challenges.

16 Organizations like ours, in the STAR CGI
17 collaborative are really creating new opportunities
18 for healing and self care for these people.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 10 seconds.

20 MS. HOWARD: And we really want to be able to
21 continue these programs, not only next year, but into
22 the future. Thank you for allowing us to share a
23 little bit about what we do. Thank you.

24 MS. CIVIL: Okay, hello there. My name is
25 Corinne Civil. I also work with Sadie Nash

Leadership Project and represent STAR CGI through Sadie Nash.

Sadie Nash, it's the joy of my life working here as a program manager. It's a unique learning environment because we intentionally create safe -- emotionally, physically, and intellectually safe -- educational spaces. Nashers, which is how we refer to our youth participants, share with us that they need programming that is accessible to them.

Some of them are first generation in this country. Some of them have disabilities. And some of them are facing hardships at home that we will never truly know about. It is important for us to meet them where they are. It is also important for us to offer them resources and opportunities that meaningfully invest in their well being and the well being of the communities that they are a part of and that are raising them.

In general, extracurricular activities and enrichment programs are linked to higher GPAs, greater self esteem, more psychological resilience, more civic engagement, higher future wages, and occupational attainment. This year, through City Council funding, we have also worked with over-- we

have already worked with over 500 young women and gender expensive youth through our leadership, social justice, activism and college and career readiness programs.

Just to share some quotes from our youth, because they can say it better than I can ever say it:

"From my experience through Sadie Nash, I want people to know that it is more than leadership. It is about finding out who you are and what you represent, to show up and show out for your community, and those you love and care for. It is about your connections in the space and community that lasts longer than the program. It is radical sisterhood."

And thank you so much for your time. I yield to our Councilmembers and appreciate you listening.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

MR. RIVADENEYRA: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Michael Rivadeneyra. I am Vice President for Government Relations at the YMCA of Greater New York. Thank you Chair and to the committee for this opportunity to testify. I will be submitting my testimony. However, I just wanted to highlight a couple of things.

The YMCA is a proud member of both Campaigns For Children and the New York Coalition for adult literacy. So I just wanted to share that we support their asks in terms of the full restoration to the PEGs and to the full restoration to the adult literacy contracts. But I do want to highlight, sitting here hearing the-- the Chair speak about Summer Rising and some of the concerns there as well as the contract to NYCAL.

So Summer Rising, one of the things that needs to actually happen as well to what my colleagues have said, is a better coordination around IEP students. The unfortunate thing is that DOE wills provide a para, but the para does not always follow the student to the enrichment part of the program. Unfortunately, part of that is due to staffing shortages.

We are unable to compete with the wages that DOE is able to afford, and we are already still trying to meet our ratio requirements, which brings to the point about background checks. And thank you Chair for saying that you are going to have a future hearing on that. Background checks are a reason why we are unable to always meet our ratios due to the

fact that it takes months for clearance to be received. In regards to Beacon, in terms of Summer Rising, we are still unaware whether or not the DYCD is going to provide the same rates as they did last year for the Beacon slots. So we are still planning as if we're going to move forward with lower rates rather than the higher rates that are offered for elementary and middle school COMPASS and SONYC.

And then lastly, with the adult literacy contract, I do want to flag that DYCD testified today that they're hoping to have an RFP come out this fall. If a contract comes out this fall, hopefully awards will be made by spring, meaning that those contracts will go into effect FY 24. So we do need those rates to go up within this fiscal year. We can not stand for another contract with just rates going up based on inflation. The \$1300 per student is inefficient. Thank you.

Good afternoon Chair Stevens and all on the committee. My name is Scott Daly and I'm the Senior Director of the New York Junior Tennis League, free community tennis programs throughout the city of New York.

We are funded by the City Council under a separate initiative of physical education and fitness. For many years, it has been our belief that kids have talent, but most of them don't have access or opportunity to certain events and sports. That's what we're able to do through tennis. Without the support of the City Council, so many kids throughout the city of New York would never have a chance to put a tennis racket into their own hands.

Every year we service over 85,000 children's in schools, in parks, in community centers. We bring programs on an average of six to eight weeks throughout the city, in the parks whether we be in the Bronx, Crotona, or in Brooklyn, in McDonald's, or Linden. We're all over. I submitted the testimony. Take a look at the pie chart: 75% of our demographic are from Black, Latino, and Asian. Two thirds of the children who take part in this are 10 years old and younger. We provide them a safe haven.

We are asking this year for a million dollars, an increase of \$200,000. We've been at the same funding rate for the last 15 years. I'm sure I don't have to tell anybody here what's happened to costs in 15 years. Whereas minimum wage back then was \$7.25,

we're paying people to start with us at \$18. It's getting harder and harder. Expenses have doubled and tripled.

One final note is that during the summer of 2020, in the first year of COVID, we were able to get out into the park to bring activity, physical education, in order to give these children a chance to get out of the house, teach them social skills in many different locations.

I firmly believe as our founder, Arthur Ashe, that tennis can transform the lives of poor children as it did his own.

I want to thank you now at this time for your strong funding support, and on behalf of all the youngsters and parents of NYJTL. I thank you and the Council's commitment to the youth of the city of New York. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I have no questions for this panel at this time. Thank you for testifying.

MR. DAILY: Thank you.

COUNSEL: Our next in person panel will be Katie Aylwin, Keith Hicks, Shilpy Chatterjee, and Sebastian Vante.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I need you guys to give me two minutes I'll be right back.

COUNSEL: Before the next panel we're going to take a brief five minute recess.

[TWO MINUTES SILENCE]

You can begin when ready

MR. VANTE: Good afternoon. My name is Sebastian Vante. I use he/him pronouns, and I am the Senior Director of Streetwork Project, a program of Safe Horizon, the nation's largest nonprofit victim services organization. Safe Horizon helps 250,000 New Yorkers each year who have experienced violence and abuse. Streetwork project provides shelter, showers, hot meals, and so much more to homeless and street involved young people ages 13 to 25, and helps them find safety and stability. We are grateful for your years of collective support and for championing our nonprofit human services sector.

I've submitted my full testimony and wants to emphasize a few points.

First, Safe Horizon is a proud member of Just Pay a racial equity and gender justice campaign committed to ending the government exploitation of human

services workers. Our dedicated staff desperately need a 6.5% COLA this year.

Second, City Council Initiative funding contracted through DYCD supports our Streetwork Project and our Immigration Law Project. We are requesting a restoration of our supports for persons involved in the sex trade funding and enhancement of \$100,000 to our Initiative For Immigrant Survivors Of Domestic Violence funding. Lastly, Safe Horizon is a proud member of the Coalition for Homeless Youth. We join them in urging the city to categorically make RHY eligible for CityFHEPS vouchers, right-size our DYCD contracts, fund 16 housing specialists and 16 peer navigators, fund 2 mental health focused transitional independent living program pilots, and create 40 additional DYCD RHY beds for youth ages 21 to 24.

Our city must invest in our young people and provide every opportunity for runaway and homeless youth to thrive. RHY deserves funding that prioritizes their ability to access quality, safe, affordable housing and mental health services. Thank you for your time.

MS. CHATTERJEE: Good afternoon. I would like to thank the Chair, Councilmember Stevens and each member of the committee for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Shilpy Chatterjee. I use she and her pronouns. I work as a Senior Prevention Coordinator for the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault. For over 20 years the alliance has worked to prevent sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes through education, research and advocacy.

I'm here today to talk with you about the importance of sexual violence prevention for New York City Youth and to ask for \$125,000 for our project DOT, an empowerment program to the Young Women's Initiative.

Sexual violence prevention programming that focuses on teenage girls is essential. According to the CDC in 2021 alone, 18% of high school girls experienced sexual violence. These rates have been rising, and at scale that far outpaces sexual violence experienced by boys. The Alliance's project DOT addresses sexual violence in a way that leverages community strength and prioritizes young girls leadership development with a focus on social norm change, healthy relationships, practicing consent,

and safe bystander engagement techniques. We work to broaden the reach of DOT to a diversity of young women of color, and LGBTQIA youth. As a DOT facilitator myself, I'm grateful to be in the space with young folks who are challenging and deconstructing regressive social norms, and creating a society that is rooted in mutual respect, safety, and dignity.

To prevent sexual violence across New York City, it is essential that we train and empower the youth. Our Project DOT is a proven program that changes young women's lives and initiates ripples of impact throughout their communities. We are asking for the council's continued funding through the Young Women's Initiative of \$125,000 to support this transformational work.

Thank you for your time and attention. And I welcome your questions.

MS. AYLWIN: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm Katie Aylwin. I'm the Director of Education and Youth Development at WHEDco from the Bronx,

I echo so many of the sentiments that all of my colleagues that have spoken before me have brought to

the Chair and also appreciate that you have said that so many of those things are your priorities.

But just to be on record as saying that we can pump as much money into youth development as possible. But if we're not paying our staff and getting the highest quality people in front of our kids, it's not going to work.

And so thinking through how we can find these staff-- I mean, here, at WHEDco, just a story from the field. At WHEDco this year, for every two folks that we've hired, we've lost one person. So we are just in a constant churn of overturn of staff. And as so many folks prior to me have mentioned, the hiring process of folks to work in front of our young people and be background cleared is so laborious.

And so getting folks to go through that entire process, and then stick around for their clearance, and then actually be trained by us and be the wonderful youth development professionals that we hope that there'll be, has really been a huge struggle for us this year. And it's just getting harder. You know, we can't as a field compete with a lot of retail jobs or food service jobs that are offering folks more hours, and also much more money,

and some of them benefits, and so you know, for some of us that are only able to offer our staff 15 or 16 hours a week, like what-- how are we getting the best quality people? So I'm very thrilled to hear your support about that. Never a doubt in my mind. But thank you so much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you and the workforce issue is a real one. And that's one of the ones I've been talking about since I started chairing this committee. And we really need to be thinking about how we are building a pipeline? I believe from St. Nicks Alliance, she talked about-- you know, she's looking to retire, right? But when we're retiring, it's so hard to make sure that we have quality folks taking our positions, because we're not able to build a pipeline the way we-- we should, but that is something the Council takes very serious. And we've been working really hard at about thinking about what it really looks like to have pipelines and workforce development.

And like I said before, and even in my opening statement, we have to reimagining-- reimagine what the workforce looks like. And that includes workforce development, and the human sector service

is at the top of my list of how do we make sure that we secure that field. So thank you. Thank you to this panel.

COUNSEL: Our last in person panel will be Alan Yu, Nicole Mussenden, Sharon Cohen, and Glennis Aquino-Gil. I'm sorry if I mispronounced your name.

You may begin when ready.

Thank you Chair Stevens and members of the Committee. I'm Alan Yu, the Executive Director of New Yorkers for Children, NYFC, a nonprofit that works to improve the well-being of people in the child welfare system, with a focus on youth aging out of foster care.

We provide educational, mental health and financial support to over one thousand youth annually, while also developing innovative initiatives to fill gaps in the system. We do this through our long standing partnership with ACS, foster care agencies, and many community organizations.

Thank you to the city council for the \$50,000 award this current fiscal year, which is enabling us to serve youth in our Fostering Empowerment Program and Back-To-School Program. For the upcoming fiscal

year NYFC is respectfully requesting that the city council renew our award and make deeper investments in our programs population. Additional resources are crucial for NYFC to support our clients in more comprehensive ways, and lead to increase educational attainment mental wellness and career development for youth aging out.

Over 7,000 students in the city spend time in foster care each year, and they're disproportionately black and from low-income communities. Though they represent a relatively small portion of the public school population, youth in the foster system have some of the most complex educational needs and bleakest academic outcomes of any student group. One in five students in the city who spent any time in foster care dropped out of high school. By state test standards, 80% of foster care students were not proficient in reading and math, and that was before the pandemic, and half are chronically absent from school.

Because many of the young people we serve have experienced multiple overlapping traumas on the individual and systemic levels. We provide free mental health support from credentialed staff that

facilitate healing and growth. Another key aspect of our programming philosophy is alleviating the root causes of poverty for the people we serve. Through our commitment to providing young people with emergency cash support, we aim to empower youth to make their own financial decisions and surmount crises that might otherwise disrupt their lives.

Overall, an investment by City Council in NYFC means an investment in youth and families in the child welfare system in the city. Our commitment to strengthening channels to post secondary programs, college and careers, particularly for students on alternative paths to graduation, is instrumental in ensuring our youth are not overlooked, creating equitable outcomes.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 10 seconds.

MS. COHEN: Good afternoon, Chairman Stevens and to the Youth Services Committee. First, I want to commend you on your investment in youth and your dedication. I've been here for three hours, and I've heard it in you and I really, truly appreciate it. I'm Sharon Cohen, the founder and CEO of Figure Skating in Harlem. We've been embedded in the community for 25 years. We're the first and only

girls empowerment organization that combines the power of education with access to the elite sport of figure skating to help girls thrive and become strong leaders. Most recently, we won a trophy by the International Olympic Committee for women and sport, for gender equity and racial inclusion, one of only five in the world to win this. We serve hundreds of girls, ages six to eighteen, mostly in upper Manhattan and the Bronx.

And I'm here today because we're part of a larger collaborative called the STAR CGI, which we are so grateful the Council has supported for nearly 10 years. I think we've touched over 500,000 youth in that time with \$12 million in support. The reason I'm here today is, as one of 10 girls-focused organizations that has not been on parity with the other organizations. As we came in at about year two or three, rather than right at the beginning. Our portion of support has been less than the other organizations, but we do the same amount of work. We participated in a robust way to help uplift and work with New York City girls. So it's a nominal increase, but we do ask the City Council consider making all the organizations part of the STAR CGI

Collaborative on parity together at the \$100,000 level.

I will end by saying I hope you'll come see our girls in action. We just had an amazing ice show. It's unique and I think sports, and academics, and leadership development is a winning combination to change lives. Thank you.

MS. AQUINO-GIL: Good afternoon. Thank you for your time today. My name is Glennis Aquino-Gil. I'm from the Armory Foundation. I'm the Chief Administrative Officer and Community Liaison there. I'm also part of the STAR CGI-- or we are part of the STAR CGI program, and have been a part of it for eight years now. Thank you to the Council for funding us for ten years now. This program has really changed the lives and impacted the lives of so many girls and nonconforming youth of color. The Sports Training And Role Models for Success Citywide Girls Initiative, better known as STAR CGI, has been generously funded for 10 years now. And we have been a part of this fantastic initiative and want to be sure to thank the Council for their tremendous support. One of the reasons the Armory is able to provide our ongoing youth athletic and educational

programming is because of this funding. The last three years have been a time of upheaval for our planet and especially the young women and gender nonconforming youth of color we service. As a collective, we shared our talented teams, our programming, and ideas to create very strong STARS programming.

Some background on the armory: Thousands of New York City High School track athletes call the armory home for both training and competition. For the past 30 years, we see about 1500 student athletes come to train with their coaches and teams, with close to 100 public schools and parochial schools from the city.

We have track meets of over 6000 athletes throughout the year, and we see about 300,000 visits throughout the year as well.

We're here to say that we want to thank the Council again for continuing to support us and we would like to see the continued support go into fiscal year 24. Thank you.

MS. MUSSENDEN: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Nicole Mussenden, and I am the president and CEO of PowerPlay NYC. I'd like to begin by thanking the New York City Council Committee on Youth Services

for taking time to listen to our testimonies, and for their crucial leadership and support of our work in youth development. I'd also like to thank Speaker Adams for inviting us to the State of the City Address as well. PowerPlay New York City serves as a lead agency for STAR CGI, which is the Sports Training And Role Models For Success Citywide Girls Initiative, a collaboration of 10 leading New York City nonprofits serving youth across all five boroughs and in all 51 New York City council districts throughout-- through after school and summer sports, academic enhancement, STEM, College Prep, and the arts.

Over the past decade, we have joined forces to serve and advocate for more than 500,000 girls, young women and gender-expansive youth from systemically underserved communities, supporting their growth emotionally, academically, and physically to be strong, skilled, and successful leaders.

The STAR CGI coalition supports the Council's efforts to restore the \$14 million reduction in the fiscal year 24 budget. And we respectfully seek the restoration of the \$1,472,000 funded to the New York

City-- funded by the New York City Council in fiscal year 24 for out-of-school-time efforts.

With the renewed funding STAR CGI will assist our young people in closing the mental and physical wellness gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, with the rise of crime in the city, we know that we are a relevant partner in this programming space, and vital to our community that we serve.

PowerPlay New York City's mission is to advance the lives of girls through sports, helping them grow physically, emotionally and academically stronger. We partner with schools and community-based organizations to conduct sports-based after school and summer programming, emphasizing social emotional skills. We offer-- Wuickly we offer basketball, running--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: 10 seconds.

MS. MUSSENDEN: --soccer, and non traditional sports such as fencing and rugby to our girls to develop their social emotional wellness. As a lead agency of the STAR CGI initiative, PowerPlay also respectfully seeks the restoration of \$550,000 in funding in fiscal year 24, from the New York City Council. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, I don't have any
3 questions for this panel. Thank you.

4 MS. MUSSENDEN: Thank you.

5 COUNSEL: That concludes our in-person testimony.
6 If we inadvertently missed anyone who would like to
7 testify in person, please visit the sergeant's table
8 and complete a witness slip now.

9 We will now be moving to remote testimony. I'd
10 just like to remind the virtual panelists, once your
11 name is called a member of our staff will unmute you
12 and the Sergeant At Arms will set the timer and give
13 you the go ahead to begin. Please wait for the
14 sergeant to announce that you may begin before
15 delivering your testimony. Our first panel of
16 virtual witnesses will be Allison Bay, Rachel
17 Gazdick, Maeve Montalvo, and Darrin Mack. Allison,
18 you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

20 MS. BAY: Good afternoon. Greetings, Committee
21 Chair Stevens and the members of the Committee.
22 Thank you for allowing JobsFirstNYC to provide
23 testimony today. My name is Allison Bay and I'm the
24 Manager of Evaluation at IMPACT, at JobsFirstNYC. We
25 create systems that focus on making New York City

more inclusive and advance economic mobility for all young adults in the communities they call home. In partnership with Community Service Society, JobsFirstNYC commissioned a data brief that explores the state of the out-of-school, out-of-work young adult population, hereafter referred to as OOSOW. This brief looks at related trends and includes actionable recommendations to ensure that OOSOW youth are put back on track to economic security.

Some key findings in the brief include the following: The number of OOSOW youth has increased significantly since the onset of the pandemic, reversing a decade long positive trend. Black and Latinx and Hispanic communities had the largest increases in the overall OOSOW youth population since the pandemic. The OOSOW population increased most in the city's already-economically-marginalized districts. The communities with the most significant changes in the OOSOW youth population since the pandemic we're in Queens community district one Manhattan community districts, four, five, and nine and Bronx Community districts four to eight. The proportion of males in the OOSOW population is growing. Most OOSOW young adults lack any college

education. However, the increase in OOSOW youth is driven largely by a lack of options in the labor market rather than by educational attainment levels.

Lastly, wage growth for young adults has been slow relative to growth in wages for all workers.

JobsFirstNYC recommends the following to meet the economic needs of young people: Address the warning signs concerning part-time, low-wage work; ensure more young adults can gain full time employment; support neighborhood partnership development in neighborhoods with high and rising OOSOW rates; prioritize economic mobility and pathways to prosperity for historically marginalized and disproportionately harmed communities; create a seamless continuum of integrated services across education and youth development institutions; expanded the earned income tax credit to young adult workers aged 18 to 24; increase the minimum wage and strengthen wage equity policies for young adult workers; and further expand and strengthen the Summer Youth Employment Program.

My colleagues and I look forward to sharing the state of brief with each of your offices upon its release and discussing the ways in which we can

partner to ensure the economic mobility for all young adults in New York City. Thank you very much.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Rachel Gazdick, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MR. SULTAN: Good afternoon. My name is Amir Sultan. I'm not Rachel Gazdick, our CEO for New York Edge, I'm a program manager for the organization for a number of years, and I'd like to first thank Madam Chair and the members of the Committee for this opportunity.

I'm here today to ask that you prioritize New York Edge's fiscal year 24 citywide funding request. We're seeking for the first time \$250,000 under the Council's Social and Emotional Supports for Students Initiative. We're also seeking \$1.2 under the Council's After School Enrichment Initiative, an increase of \$200,000 over last year. This would be our first increase and 15 years.

New York edge is the largest provider of school-based, after school, and summer programming in New York City, serving 30,000 students in over 100 schools throughout the five boroughs. Core

components of our programming include STEM education, social/emotional learning and leadership, visual and performing arts, sports, health and wellness, academics and college and career readiness, and summer programs.

SEL is integrated into every element of what we do. Our model for aiding social/emotional learning includes robust academic and personal wellness support, and trauma-informed strategies. We are, as identified by Mosaic ACT, the largest after school provider in the nation offering SEL supports.

Our mission is to help bridge the opportunity gap among students and underinvested communities, and as our name implies, we strive to provide every student in our programs with the edge that they need to succeed in the classroom and in life.

Our student population is 90% or more African American or Hispanic, serving males and females equally, more than 85% come from low income households. Council's citywide funding has enabled us to enrich and expand our school year and summer programs, and has allowed us to develop and implement new unique and [inaudible] such as our student led podcast, Formative, our student book publishing

initiative, and our Heart For Art Program in partnership with the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

MR. SULTAN: Sustained Council funding through the years has also enabled us to become one of the city's largest providers of college access programs. Funding of 250,000 under the Social And Emotional Supports For Students Initiative, will enable us to support our current SEO--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

MR. SULTAN: --provide programming, providing high quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning assessments, curriculum and resources to all of our partner schools, the students we serve--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

MR. SULTAN: --and their families. New York edge, its students and families are extremely grateful for the council's 30-plus years of support. We are now looking to you to meet the needs of the next generation of young people by supporting our fiscal year 24 funding request. And I thank you again.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Maeve Montalvo, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

MS. MONTALVO: Carrie Stevens and members of the committee on Youth Services, thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Maeve Montalvo and I am the Director of Education at the Museum of the City of New York and East Harlem, where we engage New Yorkers and visitors in celebrating, documenting, and interpreting New York City's past, present, and future and we are currently celebrating our 100th anniversary.

Last year, the museum directly served nearly 25,000 students and youth through our programming, whether through field trips for Summer Rising, serving as an SYP host site, or developing programs for families and teams. We provide opportunities for self expression, joy, meaning making, and community building.

The museum is a proud member of the Cultural Institutions Group, and on behalf of the Museum of the City of New York and as a member of the broader cultural community in New York City. I thank you all for your service on behalf of the city's youth.

In order to continue providing engaging and diverse programming, the cultural community respectfully requests that the \$40 million added at adoption in fiscal year 23 be restored and baselined. Also being requested as a full additional \$10 million to be split evenly between the CIGs and our program group partners to help create more stability and equity within the sector. Finally, we ask for a full restoration of all Cultural Council initiatives.

This support will enable us to continue to do work like these two examples I will close with:

Last summer we hosted 85 SYP participants from all five boroughs. During their time at the museum they gained valuable skills in visual performing and media arts, as they hone their abilities to tell their own stories and those of their communities through the arts. We are excited to participate as an SYP host site again.

We are also in our second year of an in depth school partnership with the South Bronx Community Charter High School from District 16, where we've engaged over 150 tenth graders, and students have engaged with the history of New York City on topics that they are eager to discuss, including civil

rights, labor movements, sexual identity, and religious freedom movements in New York City. The city's cultural institutions are committed to continuing to serve as sites to inspire and engage youth. But we need consistent baseline support to be able to staff and plan ahead to do so. I want to thank the members of the committee for receiving this testimony and for your work and ensuring our city's youth receive the support they need and the opportunities they deserve. Thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Darren Mack, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has begun.

Good afternoon. Thank you Chair Stevens and members of the youth service committee for allowing me to testify today. My name is Darren Mack. I'm a member of the Commission on Community Reinvestment and the Closing of Rikers Island, established by Local Law 193. This Commission is charged with assurance significant reinvestment recommendations are made in vulnerable communities disparately and historically impacted by mass incarceration. Research and data have shown a significant percentage

of individuals incarcerated at Rikers Island, and our youth impacted by the criminal legal system reside in historically underserved neighborhoods in New York City.

As a Co-Chair, of the Youth Subcommittee in the commission, our mission is to identify investments that will prevent or remove young people from the criminal justice pipeline. The question remains: Where will the city get the funding from? New York City's Department of Correction has the highest DOC budget in the country. We spend the most money on DOC and get the worst results.

I urge the City Council to reject the Mayor's additional \$35 million to DOC's bloated budget, and we will be able to restore those resources to fund many of the organizations providing programs and services to youth and young adults in historically under-resourced communities testifying today.

Fund not just SYP but Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring Youth Employment Programs all year round. The city should increase investments in credible messengers and conflict mediators to support these programs' expansion into schools and give them adequate salaries to reflect the hard work and on-

call nature of their work with COLA, the Cost Of Living Adjustments. I also support the funding request by the Coalition of Homeless Youth and Kings Against Violence Intervention. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: : I don't have any questions for this panel. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel for their testimony. Our next virtual panel will be Jason Warwin, Sierra Kraft, Shayla Perez-Duran, and Nadia Swanson. Jason Warren, you may begin your testimony when the sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

COUNSEL: Okay, we're going to move on to Sierra Kraft. You may begin when the sergeant starts your clock.

MR. WARWIN: Hello, good afternoon. My name is Jason Warwin. And I am the Co-Founder and Associate Executive Director of the Brotherhood Sister Sol. Greetings, Madam Chair Stevens, members of the City Council and colleagues from the frontlines of youth development. It's my pleasure to be here today, and I lend my voice to the many who seek to uplift the youth of our city, and ensure they receive the

support and services they need to thrive and achieve their potential.

I am a child of this city, born and raised here, attending public schools throughout my academic career, and witnessed firsthand the effects of poverty, violence, drugs, and racism and other ills that have affected my community.

I co-founded the Brotherhood Sister Sol in 1995 to address issues and provide holistic and long-term support services for underserved youth throughout New York City. BroSis offers a holistic array of programming including four-to-six year rites of passage programming, daily after school enrichment, visual and performing arts, college preparation, job training and placement, community organizing training, as well as summer camps and month-long international study programs in Africa and Latin America. We are youth development and social justice organization. For nearly 30 years, we have been providing this city's youth with the support, guidance, knowledge, and resources necessary in order to understand and overcome the negative pressures in their lives, as well as the skills to combat them.

We educate our members, helping them to develop critical thinking and leadership skills. We organize around issues affecting our communities, and we train educators and youth workers on how to implement our pedagogical approach to youth development. Our headquarters are located on 143rd Street in West Harlem. However, we serve youth from throughout New York City, and we train educators in various schools.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

MR. WARWIN: In recent years, we have held partnership partnerships with schools at Epic North and Epic South, and district 28 and 32 in Queens, at the Brooklyn High School for leadership and community service and district 33 in Brooklyn, at the South Bronx Community Charter High School, and Metropolitan High School in council district 16 and 17 in the Bronx.

In the schools, we've provided extensive training and coaching to teachers to support replication of our rites of passage program, which has improved school culture, reduced suspensions, increased graduation rates, and impacted thousands of students throughout the city.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

MR. WARWIN: Over the years we've received significant support from the City Council. Our new 22,000 square foot Community Center--

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

MR. WARWIN: --would not have been possible without the Council's generous capital.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. WARWIN: Your ongoing support is vital to the operations of our organization as well as all youth--

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Sierra Kraft. You may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

MS. KRAFT: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you to the Committee on Youth Services for inviting testimony. My name is Sierra Kraft and I'm the Executive Director at the ICARE Coalition. ICARE as a coalition of seven legal services organizations that provides free representation to immigrant children facing deportation in New York City, with the ultimate goal of universal access to counsel in the coming years.

I want to take a moment to share our sincere gratitude. Since 2014, support from City Council

through the Unaccompanied Minors And Family Initiative have made it possible for the ICARE coalition to stand alongside over 8,000 young immigrants, defend them from deportation, and empower them to become leaders of tomorrow.

Legal representation for the lives of many young New Yorkers has been truly life changing. Many of the children we represent are escaping extreme violence and trauma in their home country in search of protection and safety. Without ICARE's representation, most of these children would be forced to represent themselves against a trained government lawyer. And studies show that children without representation stand just a 15% chance of winning their case. Loss of access to attorneys can result in the rapid deportation of children and families to countries where their lives are at risk.

As the migrant crisis intensifies, the need for legal services skyrockets. New York continues to rank fourth in the country for highest number of unaccompanied arrivals released to sponsors. And every year nearly 2,000 young New Yorkers are placed in removal proceedings, facing deportation without due process if they cannot afford a lawyer. ICARE

seeks to ensure that quality legal services are offered to all children, not only those who are able to afford them. Children represented by ICARE attorneys have more than 90% success rate. And today we renew our call to the city to prioritize funding for the many unaccompanied minors in New York City who are reliant on the critical legal services and immigration supports that ICARE coalition provides.

Our coalition requests \$5.6 million this year so we can continue to serve nearly 2,000 children and families through legal screenings, know-your-rights training, direct representation, and referrals to city and social services.

Now more than ever, it's critical we stand in solidarity with children seeking safety, protection and a new life in the city. We look forward to our continued partnership with you to ensure we live our values as a sanctuary city. Thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Cheyla Perez Duran, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has begun.

MS. PEREZ DURAN: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is

Cheylyla Perez and I'm the program coordinator of the BronxWorks

Um, can you hear me?

Thank you. I'm sorry. My name is Cheylyla Perez and I'm the Program Coordinator of the BronxWorks Adult ESL program in the South Bronx, one of the programs participating in DYCD Adult Literacy Pilot Project.

So today I will speak about the importance of renewing and doubling funding for the pilot program. The funds we receive every year are used to offer ESL classes, civics and reading and writing classes. But we still need more funding. Some of our students don't know how to read and write, so they actually ask-- they usually ask for classes that can allow them to improve their literacy skills. So if we receive more funds, you know, we will be able to offer more reading and writing classes.

There are many adults in our community who want to get a better job or apply to college, or sometimes they don't have the resources to achieve those goals. So if adult literacy programs receive more support, our community will receive at least basic education to obtain the knowledge and skills for employment.

So we are grateful for the opportunity to show to this pilot project what we can do for the community when we receive enough funds. Thank you so much, and thank you for the opportunity.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Nadia Swanson, you may begin when the sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has begun.

MX. SWANSON: Hello, thank you to Chair Stevens and the committee for your continued advocacy for our youth and RHY programs. My name is Nadia Swanson, I use they/them pronouns. And I'm the Director of Technical Assistance and Advocacy at the Ali Forney Center. We are in full support of the Coalition for Homeless Youth's proposed budget for RHY. And so I will use my time to focus on the realities of what LGB and specifically trans youth are facing currently, and the absolutely necessary increase of \$2.42 million for 40 new 21-24-year-old beds, \$2.6 for mental health focused till programs, FEPS for all youth, and the increase in funding to hire and retain the most qualified staff.

At AFC we serve over 2000 LGBTQ plus youth per year, 90% of them are BIPOC, 90% have undergone

severe trauma and family rejection, over 80% and have engaged in some form of survival sex. 40% of our youth are trans but they access 90% of the services that we offer, because they do not feel safe and other services, and 50% of our youth come from outside of New York.

I mentioned that last step because trans rights, specifically trans youth rights are being legally taken away on a daily basis. As of today, there are over 428 anti-LGBT bills being considered across the US, and the Right is publicly calling for the quote "elimination of trans people". Because collective trauma results in an increase of LGBTQ youth from all over the US coming to New York City to seek safety.

It is important to remember that we're not immune to that-- that increase in anti-LGBT hate in New York City, as we've seen a very large increase of violence towards our own community here, which makes the budget increase even more vital.

Now about our drop-in centers: Almost 100% of the youth who access our overnight programs are 21 to 24. We agree that you should not need to rely on drop-in centers for a place to sleep, but without adequate 21-to-24-year-old beds, overall, let alone

where the LGBTQ youth feel safe, it is their safest option at a drop in. Youth also need a variety of long-term housing options from vouchers, mental health, housing, permanent supportive housing that is LGBTQ, focused and affirming and support from peer navigators.

We are tired of having the quote conversations to find the answer that DYCD was referring to when the answers have been shared year after year.

If the city really wants to end youth homelessness, they would fund long term housing and affirming support services to keep youth housed. It is almost impossible for anyone to thrive when they are unhoused. It is our duty as a society to take care of our youth so they can move far beyond survival to thriving.

Thank you to the committee for allocating for the budget to reflect our shared values. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. That concludes this panel. Our next virtual panel will be Daniele Gerard, Anthony Springer, and Jimmy Orekoya. Daniele Gerard, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has begun.

MR. SPRINGER: Hello, good afternoon. My name is Anthony Springer. I am the Senior Advocacy Associate at Bronx Connect. I want to thank Chair Stevens and the Youth Services Committee for the opportunity to speak at this committee. Bronx Connect is a is a faith and community-based program that offers alternatives to detention, incarceration, and violence prevention work. We utilize asset-based mentoring, to connect court-involved and high-risk youth and adults with positive local community resources to prevent recidivism and address youth initiated goals in education and employment. We are members of the ATI coalition as well as the Close Rikers Coalition.

Today, I'm here I want to speak a little bit just about the importance of this Close Rikers initiative. One of the things that we know is that community safety is not just a jails issue. It is a community issue. In New York, we already have a framework in place to be able to reduce recidivism and stem gun violence. That structure and that solution is really these community groups that have made it a lifestyle to be able to work with-- with people who are justice

involved, or those in the justice system. So what-- what we need to do is really just spend more time supporting these programs. Just Bronx Connect in general is-- we have a 97% success rate for those who have graduated from our programs. They stay felony conviction free up to three years. We track it up to three years. Over 90% of the youth who have completed that program have also remained un-arrested. Rikers, in contrast, has been marred with a history of mismanagement, death, and deterioration.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has expired.

MR. SPRINGER: It's time for us as a city to focus-- to focus-- to move the focus away from the enormous budget that Rikers has to keep it open, and-- and move it to the alternatives that have already shown that they present-- present results.

So as-- just to bring this to a close here, there is focused attention on prevention as well as wraparound services that will provide those opportunities for not just the job development that's needed, not just the homes that's needed. It will provide this-- this the city with an opportunity to be able to stem the--

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 MR. SPRINGER: It's already proven. It will be
5 able to stem the violence. It will be able to stem--
6 to stem some of the issues that we face that lead
7 people--

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

9 MR. SPRINGER: --to prisons and jails like
10 Rikers. What we need is really support for those in
11 need. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

13 COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. We're
14 going to go back to Daniele Gerard. You may begin
15 when the sergeant starts your clock.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has begun.

17 COUNSEL: Daniele, are you able to speak?

18 Okay, we can go back. We're going to move on to
19 Jimi Orekoya. You can begin when the surgeon starts
20 your clock.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 MR. OREKOYA: What just happened.

23 COUNSEL: Jimi, can you hear us?

24 MR. OREKOYA: Hello and good afternoon to the
25 Chairperson Stevens and the Youth Services Committee

members. My name is Jimi Orekoya and I am the Division Director for Community and Center-Based Operations here at New Settlement, a 34-year-old community organization serving youth and families in the Bronx with a wide range of education, health, and wellness programs.

We have just recently celebrated our 10th year anniversary, as a centerpiece of our efforts to improve the health and increase the safety of children and youth from across the Bronx. We are here to thank you, honestly, City Councilmember and Speaker for your sustained budget support for our youth programs, especially our aquatic center and pool. In particular, I want to thank Councilmember Stevens for your--

COUNSEL: We can't hear you Jimi. Just one minute.

MR. OREKOYA: Hello. Yes. A little technical thing going on.

COUNSEL: Okay, we can hear you now.

MR. OREKOYA: Yes. I wanted to ask for your continued support for our swimming programs, which are a treasured and precious resource for children, youth, families, and elders from across the Bronx at

the New Settlement Community Center, which provides a continuum of swimming instruction and activities around the clock from morning to evening for 5,000 children, adults, and seniors from across the Bronx. Each year, the New Settlement provides free-to-low-cost swimming classes to over 2000 individuals, most of whom are under the age of 16.

This starts with youngsters from New Settlement programs, from surrounding schools or community centers, and from neighborhoods across the Bronx participating in their first swimming classes, and continues into Red Cross Certified Swim Instruction. Annually, 25 to 30 teens are certified in lifeguard certification classes. Many of them graduate to work at pools across the city, helping to address the citywide lifeguard shortage. Our competitive swim team, The Blue Seals, are made up primarily of students of color from around the Bronx. They train and competes locally, regionally and nationally.

Recently, they have competed in Florida, New Jersey, and Connecticut, as well as at the Black Heritage Classic in North Carolina.

Our aquatics program is staffed by positive professionals who are leaders and role models from

the surrounding community and now branch out to provide opportunities for swimmers of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

We have inclusive classes for neurodivergent autistic children and swimming opportunities for transgender adults. For seniors, we offer aquatics programs that promote strength and fitness.

Our competitive-sized pool is beautiful and we are an organization that is deeply committed to this. It's a grandiose undertaking to keep this facility clean, heated, and equipped with sparkling amenities. Our staff are committed to welcoming and engaging in all visitors with-- with respect.

As some of you may know, according to research from USAA Swimming Foundation, 64% of African American, and 45% Hispanic children cannot swim compared to just 40% of white shirt.

Equally concerning, is 87% we are considering and definitely asking for continued support from the City Council regarding funding for aquatics programming. Thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. I think we're going to try Daniele Gerard one last time. You

can begin when you're when the sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MS. GERARD: My name is Daniele Gerard, I'm a Senior Staff Attorney at Children's Rights. Thank you Chair Stevens and Committee staff, and to the advocates and providers who spoke before me. Children's Rights is a national advocate for youth in state systems. We are a member of the New York City Jails Action Coalition. Our clients in foster care and juvenile justice systems are disproportionately represented in young adult and juvenile correctional facilities. We advocate for young adults incarcerated on Rikers. We support Speaker Adams vision for the city budget and her emphasis on closing Rikers on schedule in 2027 in accordance with the law.

As the Council considers the Administration's proposed budget and your own priorities, we urge you to focus on funding programs and services to keep young adults off Rikers in the first place, including ending the foster-care-to-prison pipeline and supporting young people once they're no longer incarcerated.

The mayor's proposed budget cuts will be detrimental to funding the preventive services our communities so desperately need, including affordable housing, community mental health resources, support for families, and funding for our schools and libraries. New York City taxpayers pay well over a half a million dollars per incarcerated person per year. Yet incarcerated persons continue to die on Rikers, and those who remain have been going without showers, food, and are left in their cells for hours on end without recreation programming, or medical and mental health services.

Meanwhile, officers are still not showing up for work. More than 50% of people detained on Rikers have a mental health diagnosis. 85% are there pretrial, and over 90% are of color. The investments we are recommending will help the city close Rikers by supporting young adults and older New Yorkers before they interact with the criminal legal system.

I refer you to the written testimony Children's Rights will be submitting for more detail. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: : I have no questions for this panel. Thank you for your testimony.

COUNSEL: Our next virtual panel will be Grace Aaronson, Cecilia Teuber, and Quentin Hunt. Grace Aronson, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MS. AARONSON: Oops. Good afternoon, Chair Stevens. My name is Grace Aaronson testifying on behalf of Desiree Brown-Malta, Director of Programs at the Academy of Medical and Public Health Services, or AMPHS. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today. AAMPHS is a public health nonprofit in Sunset Park that works to bridge the health equity gap among immigrant communities in New York City. We work primarily with undocumented immigrants whose language barriers pose significant obstacles to accessing health care, education, and the workforce.

Over the past few years, much of our work has included improving basic adult literacy skills among the most vulnerable New Yorkers to help address those issues. Our adult literacy classes have served as a platform for COVID information and resource dissemination, as a community and solidarity, and as a source for mental health support.

As such, we're asking the City Council renew \$4 million for Adult Literacy Initiative discretionary funding to address the immense inequitable gap in English literacy, digital literacy, systems navigation skills, and access to information our communities face.

We also receive funding from the Adult Literacy Pilot Project, which we hope to expand to \$5 million to continue funding groups like ours. Receiving the pilot project funding last year has been instrumental for our program. We've hired bilingual educational case managers to provide work readiness and HSE support for our students, built out a civics digital literacy and arts curriculum to support student integration into their communities, and provide a professional development to more effectively train our teachers. At our current funding level, which covers a \$950 per student cost through adult literacy initiative discretionary funds. We've experienced higher teacher attrition and lack of ability to invest in other student resources like curriculum building, enrichment activities, and case management support. The pilot project has been an incredible first step in expanding the capacity of our adult

literacy program to what it should look like.

Ongoing coordinated adult literacy services are much more cost effective and a better intervention than the risk of unemployment, exploitation and poor health outcomes for our communities. These two initiatives can truly help us enhance economic growth and promote healthy communities.

I humbly thank the City Council funding these initiatives this past fiscal year and strongly urge the council to continue to fully fund and even expand.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

MS. AARONSON: Thank you so much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you for your testimony. I'd also like to call Derwin Green onto this panel. Cecilia Teuber, you will be next. You may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MS. TEUBER: Good afternoon, Chair Stevens and Youth Services Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Cecilia Teuber. I work as a Community Organizer for BronxConnect. BronxConnect is a faith-based and community-based organization that provides supportive

services and programs for at-risk and justice involved youth. BronxConnect is a member of the Campaign to Close Rikers and that's what I'm here about today-- to speak about today. And this is in relation to youth services. So one priority we do have at the Campaign to Close Rikers is to redistribute funding that the Department of Corrections receives now. Approximately \$359 million can be saved by reducing DOC's uniformed headcount to 5760 individuals. We can use this money to fund services and programs to keep youth out of jail. At BronxConnect, we offer Alternative To Incarceration and Alternative To Detention Programs. We provide support for the youth that come through to prevent them from reoffending, which has been proven to be successful. Data has shown that 92% of our Alternative To Detention Family Court youth remain un-arrested while in our programs, and 80% of those ATD Family Court youth were not remanded upon exit of our program. These numbers are proof that programs such as ATI and ATD are successful with reducing recidivism rates among youth.

We need to ensure that the Plan to Close Rikers follows the timeline and hits each milestone. We're

looking to you, City Council, to make sure this plan is upheld for moral and legal reasons. We are urging you to divest from the inflated Department of Corrections budget, and invest in the community services that keep our youth out of jail. I know that was short, but I really appreciate the time that you have here, that you've given me here today. So thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Quentin Hunt, you may begin when the sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin. You may begin.

COUNSEL: Okay, we're going to move on to Derwin Greene, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MR. GREENE: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Derwin Greene. I'm from the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center.

I just wanted to thank the committee for allowing me to be able to testify on behalf of my organization, the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, where our organization has worked in the

Northwest for almost 50 years now providing community services from cradle to adulthood.

And so the point that I want to address is just talking about staff retention, and basically knowing that right now, staff retention is the new recruitment, as far as being able to survive in DYCD programming. Knowing right now that we're losing a lot of group leaders and staff in our organization because of the current pay scale, which is kind of antiquated and outdated. The pay raises that the staff are now receiving are not up to date with what the cost of living is now in the city or even with the current rising inflation, and with the vast majority of my staff being in college, and trying to retain them upon graduation or the different challenges that may occur with their financial situations. If the pay rate is not increased, this is going to be an ongoing problem. And trying to address now these stigma of this situation that's going on with our youth as they try to return to normalcy after post pandemic, at a time where they're less excited about the future it's hard to get them excited and run quality programming, when you don't have the staff that you need. Because once you've

invested enough number of time with them, you're not able to hold them for long because they-- they're looking to increase their wages because they also have to survive as well. So I thank you for the committee for this time and allowing me to present. Thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. That concludes our remote testimony for today. I'll do one last call for virtual registrants to see if they're on: Briana Palmer, Elizabeth Pagan, Violetta Galagarza, Crystal Montonez, Juan Calcutta, and Alex Stein?

If we inadvertently missed anyone else who would like to testify virtually please use the raise hand function and Zoom and we'll call on you in the order of hands raised.

Seeing no one else I'd like to note that written testimony which will be reviewed in full by committee staff may be submitted to the record up to 72 hours after the close of this hearing by emailing it to testimony@counsel.nyc.gov. And now I'll turn it to Chair Stevens for closing remarks.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I want to thank DYCD for showing up in testifying today. And I also want to

thank everyone who came in today to testify, and really display that we have the answers to really help and support the city as we continue to recover from our pandemic and also as we continue to reimagine what workforce looks like and preparing for the summer. So with that, I conclude this hearing

[GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date <INSERT TRANSCRIPTION DATE>