

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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September 19, 2019  
Start: 10:16 a.m.  
Recess: 12:31 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Deborah L. Rose,  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Margaret S. Chin  
Mathieu Eugene  
Andy L. King  
Farah N. Louis

A P P E A R A N C E S

Sandra Gutierrez  
Deputy Commissioner of Community Development

Susan Haskell  
Deputy Commissioner of Youth Services

Wanda Ascherl  
Assistant Commissioner

Rong Zhang  
Assistant Commissioner

Lisa Schwartzwald  
New York Immigration Coalition

Ira Yankwitt  
Literacy Assistance Center NYC Coalition for  
Adult Literacy

Lena Cohen  
United Neighborhood Houses

Nancy Robles  
Vow Voices of Women

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: [GAVEL] Good morning. This  
3 hearing is called to order, although, you've been  
4 very orderly.

5 So again, good morning, I want to thank you all  
6 for being here. My name is Council Member Debbie  
7 Rose and I am the Chair of the Committee on Youth  
8 Services.

9 Today, we are conducting an oversight hearing on  
10 DYCD's Adult Literacy Program. In addition to  
11 oversight, we will also hear bill Intro. 649 by  
12 Council Member Eugene, which would incorporate  
13 bilingual components into DYCD's after-school  
14 programs.

15 I would first like to thank our speaker Corey  
16 Johnson who is always committed to the increasing the  
17 quality of life for people in New York City and his  
18 commitment to youth in New York.

19 I would also like to thank all of the young  
20 people, literacy advocates, program providers and all  
21 of those who came to testify at this important  
22 hearing.

23 Finally, I would like to acknowledge my  
24 colleagues who have joined us, Council Member; who is  
25 our new Council Member, Council Member Farah Louis.

1  
2 Thank you, this is her first Committee hearing and  
3 thank you for being here. And we will be joined by  
4 others I am sure.

5 Each September 8<sup>th</sup> since 1966, the United Nations  
6 Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;  
7 also known as UNESCO, raises international awareness  
8 about adult and child literacy through the observance  
9 of International Literacy Day. It seems fitting that  
10 that theme of International Literacy Day this year  
11 was literacy and multilingualism.

12 UNESCO recognizes that literacy is an important  
13 international matter of dignity and human rights that  
14 helps to sustain communities, uplift the impoverished  
15 and provide opportunities for persons around the  
16 globe.

17 Indeed, Frederick Douglass, a former slave and  
18 famous abolitionist was quoted as saying, "once you  
19 learn to read, you will forever be free." This quote  
20 means a lot, as we have seen that literacy and  
21 education are mechanisms to succeed and rise through  
22 the economic, social and political ranks of society.  
23 But throughout history, literacy has also been a  
24 method of social control and oppression.

1  
2 As the ability to read and right have determined  
3 where certain people stand within the societal  
4 hierarchy. Literacy has been seen as a way to keep  
5 the poor powerless and the rich powerful. However,  
6 from this quote, we see that literacy could lead also  
7 to a better future as it once did for Frederick  
8 Douglass. Low literacy levels are an important issue  
9 that exists within the United States, particularly  
10 important is low adult literacy levels. As more than  
11 \$36 million adults cannot read or write above a  
12 third-grade level.

13 In New York State alone, there are a total of 3.4  
14 million residents who are either functionally  
15 illiterate, lack a high school diploma or cannot  
16 speak English. Even more shocking is that only 10  
17 percent of those who have low literacy levels are  
18 receiving the help they need. Low adult literacy  
19 rates are common aspects of poverty, incarceration,  
20 high school drop out rates in schools and a barrier  
21 to understanding basic health, financial and consumer  
22 issues.

23 It has been reported that children with parents  
24 with low literacy levels are more likely to get poor  
25 grades, display behavioral problems, have high

absentee rates, repeat school years or even drop out.

In addition, the economic impacts of low adult literacy levels are extreme.

With an estimated \$225 billion or more each year nationwide being wasted due to nonproductivity in the workforce, crimes and loss of tax revenue due to unemployment and another \$232 billion a year in health care costs.

In an effort to ensure that adults receive help in improving their literacy skills, DYCD supports programming and services related to reading, writing, and test accessing secondary completion or TASC, which is now the replacement for the GED. Which has since replaced a general educational development or GED test. And English language classes for youth and adults within New York City.

Particularly, important to this hearing is DYCD's adult literacy program, which connects anyone over the age of 16, who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in school, or who is unable to adequately speak, read, or write the English language with a range of programs. Programs include: Adult Basic Education to teach reading, writing, and math to native or fluent English Speaker; TASC prep, to

1  
2 prepare students for the required test to receive a  
3 high school equivalency diploma; and English for  
4 Speakers of Other Languages classes to improve  
5 English language skills for those who lack fluent  
6 knowledge of the English language.

7       Ultimately, these DYCD funded programs look to  
8 ensure New Yorkers learn the reading, writing, and  
9 communications skills they need to obtain a job  
10 and/or continue their education.

11       Today, we will look to better understand DYCD's  
12 Adult Literacy Program, what gaps exist and how  
13 programming can be improved. In addition to the  
14 oversight portion of this hearing, we will also hear  
15 Intro. No. 649 which is sponsored by Council Member  
16 Mathieu Eugene and would require bilingual DYCD after  
17 school programs at schools with more than one third  
18 of the students in the school district being English  
19 language learners.

20       The law would require that such schools have  
21 certain bilingual components including things such as  
22 bilingual instructors and staff, as well as  
23 activities conducted in the native languages of the  
24 students.

1  
2 As New York City is a diverse melting pot of  
3 races, ethnicities and religions, this legislation  
4 would be appropriate, in an effort to ensure that  
5 children who do not speak English receive  
6 comprehensive after school programming just like any  
7 other child.

8 I look forward to hearing from those invited to  
9 testify and would like to thank my staff, Isa Rogers  
10 and **[INAUDIBLE 10:55]** and the Committee Staff Paul  
11 Sinegal, Kevin Kotowski and Michele Peregrin, along  
12 with our community engagement representative  
13 Elizabeth Arts[SP?].

14 And now, we will swear in our panel.

15 COUNCIL CLERK: Good morning, would you raise  
16 your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth,  
17 the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your  
18 testimony today and to respond honestly to Council  
19 Members questions?

20 Please state your names for the record.

21 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: I am Sandra Gutierrez from  
22 DYCD.

23 RONG ZHANG: I am Rong Zhang, DYCD.

24 SUSAN HASKELL: Susan Haskell, DYCD.

25 WANDA ASCHERL: Wanda Ascherl, DYCD.



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you all, you can begin  
3 your testimony.

4 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: Good morning Chair Rose and  
5 Members of the Youth Services Committee. I am Sandra  
6 Gutierrez, the Deputy Commissioner for Community  
7 Development at the Department of Youth and Community  
8 Development.

9 I am pleased to be joined by Susan Haskell,  
10 Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services, Assistant  
11 Commissioner Wanda Ascherl and Assistant Commissioner  
12 Rong Zhang.

13 On behalf of Bill Chong, we thank you for the  
14 opportunity to comment on DYCD's adult literacy  
15 services and Intro. 649. Which would require  
16 bilingual instruction to after-school programs in  
17 certain school districts.

18 I will testify on Adult Literacy and Deputy  
19 Commissioner Haskell will then discuss the bill.  
20 These topics really speak to DYCD's mission to invest  
21 in a network of community-based organizations and  
22 programs to alleviate the affects of poverty and to  
23 provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities  
24 to flourish.

1  
2       The ability to read and write is fundamental to a  
3 persons capacity to succeed. English proficiency is  
4 associated with the ability to find and keep  
5 employment that pays a living wage and provides  
6 opportunities for upward advancement. It helps  
7 parents fully support and participate in their  
8 child's education and to actively engage in civic  
9 life.

10       According to the 2015 American Community Survey,  
11 1.8 million individuals, over 23 percent of the New  
12 York City's population are not proficient in English  
13 and 19 percent of the city's population 25 and over,  
14 have less than a high school education.

15       We want to thank the Council for its strong and  
16 longstanding partnership on adult literacy programs.  
17 It has been critical funding to programs across the  
18 city. DYCD commits \$13.87 million to support adult  
19 literacy programs from a mix of CSBG, CDBG and city  
20 tax levy funding. This work is complimented by other  
21 literacy programs supported by the Department of  
22 Education, the City University of New York and the  
23 public library systems.

24       DYCD's adult literacy programs include a variety  
25 of courses that meet the various needs of our

1 participants. For example, these adult literacy  
2 programs are for adult basic education that teaches  
3 both native and nonnative English speakers, reading,  
4 writing and math. We offer testing assessment  
5 secondary completion and English for speakers of  
6 other languages. These teach listening, speaking,  
7 reading and writing to individuals whose primary  
8 language is not English.  
9

10 We appreciate the work of the literacy providers  
11 who are at the front line committed to serving  
12 immigrant communities who are constantly threatened  
13 by ICE raids, family separation, and the new public  
14 charge rule.

15 We also want to acknowledge the work of the  
16 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. We have been  
17 working closely with them on advising programs on the  
18 impact of the latest actions in Washington.

19 Fortunately, families that participate in DYCD  
20 program services will not be impacted by the changes  
21 in the Public Charge Rule.

22 In our efforts to support funded programs to make  
23 continuous improvement, DYCD in collaboration with  
24 the technical assistance provider, the Literacy  
25 Center, provides professional development and

1  
2 technical assistance to literacy providers. Staff  
3 development focuses on building best practices in  
4 literacy, numeracy, English language instruction and  
5 curriculum development. Last year, over 40 trainee  
6 and coaching sessions were provided to approximately  
7 400 literacy staff.

8 In Fiscal Year 2019, our literacy programs  
9 enrolled over 16,000 participants. While the  
10 majority of program participants made progress in  
11 literacy, over 56 percent of the enrolled  
12 participants improved their reading skills in at  
13 least one grade level. Students not only benefit  
14 academically by participating in our literacy  
15 programs, they also received other much needed  
16 assistance, such as referrals to employment training,  
17 college assistance and individual support.

18 Before I turn over to Deputy Commissioner  
19 Haskell, I would like to share a story about a  
20 student in one of our programs to demonstrate the  
21 value of our programs. The student was incarcerated  
22 at 16 and became pregnant at 17 years old, but she  
23 got a second chance by enrolling in our programs.

24 Here is what she wrote about the program. It's a  
25 calm, supportive environment. The teachers and the

1 workers treat me with respect. They are supporting,  
2 understanding and care about my education. On the  
3 days I couldn't attend, the teachers called with deep  
4 concern. They taught me what to say at job  
5 interviews and even provided me with interview  
6 clothes. The program is important to me because it  
7 gave me a second chance at success. It has bestowed  
8 a purpose in my life, giving me a chance to make my  
9 parents proud and more importantly, to be the best I  
10 can be for my daughter. This is just one of the  
11 thousand examples of the extraordinary work our  
12 programs do to help students.

14 Now, it's my pleasure to hand it over to Deputy  
15 Commissioner.

16 SUSAN HASKELL: DYCD supports the delivery of  
17 after-school services for young people with a range  
18 of language skills, in a manner that's linguistically  
19 and culturally accessible.

20 There are many benefits for young people to  
21 participate in our programs, including development of  
22 positive self-esteem, fostering positive peer  
23 connections and caring relationships between youth  
24 and staff, engagement of parents in the development  
25 of their children and exposure to different languages

1  
2 and cultures within a community that can instill an  
3 appreciation for diversity.

4 Our program participants speak many languages in  
5 addition to English. Even so, 97 percent of our  
6 participants, the vast majority report that they  
7 speak English well.

8 In Fiscal year 2019, of the 180,000 after-school  
9 participants age 18 and under, roughly 22,000 plus or  
10 13 percent indicated English was not their primary  
11 language. But the majority of these students also  
12 reported that they were able to speak English well or  
13 better. Roughly 5,500 of the participants or 3  
14 percent indicated that they didn't speak English well  
15 or at all.

16 Our partnerships with community-based providers  
17 are essential to our successful programs. Our  
18 funding model reflects that community-based  
19 organizations and their staff are best equipped to  
20 meet the needs of English language learners. A key  
21 role of DYCD's partners in after school for non-  
22 English speaking youth is to help them adapt to their  
23 community and become contributing members in their  
24 neighborhood.

1  
2 As a youth development environment, after-school  
3 can play a vital role in the process of learning  
4 language and culture in a new setting.

5 The organizations we fund are expected to hire  
6 staff and design programs in accordance with the  
7 needs of their participants. Successful program  
8 elements for English language learners include:  
9 Hiring staff from the neighborhood, including those  
10 who speak the languages of participants; providing  
11 essential written materials in languages spoken by  
12 their communities; provide program activities which  
13 engage all the senses to develop language skills;  
14 having students engage with peers making social  
15 connections that will support language development in  
16 a supportive setting; using play, arts, literacy and  
17 stem activities; for example, to reinforce youth  
18 development principles regardless of language  
19 ability; and programs working closely with their  
20 school which may have additional language resources  
21 including a language service for parent meetings and  
22 orientations.

23 Here are just a few examples of after-school  
24 programs and their approach to supporting English  
25 language learners. In Chair Rose's district at PS

1  
2 57, the YMCA serves a Liberian community in Park  
3 Hill. A main focus for the program there, is having  
4 staff onsite that speak multiple dialects of the  
5 African community and Spanish, Arabic and Urdu to  
6 help parents and youth who need assistance. The  
7 program translates important written materials for  
8 parents to help keep them engaged in their child's  
9 experience in after-school. And additionally, the  
10 program partnership with the school includes have  
11 after school staff present for day school family  
12 events.

13 In Council Member Eugene's district, CAMBA  
14 operates a SONYC program at MS 246 Walt Whitman. The  
15 program serves a predominantly Caribbean population  
16 and some staff speak Haitian Creole and are able to  
17 translate when students and parents need assistance.

18 In partnership with Kasim[SP?], they offer  
19 steelpan classes. They hosted a family night with a  
20 Caribbean Carnival theme where staff and students  
21 dressed in attire to represent Caribbean countries  
22 and a cultural dinner was served. The theme carried  
23 over into the community school event that took place  
24 the next day.



1  
2 In Northern Brooklyn at St. Nicks Alliance, about  
3 26 percent of youth enrolled in their programs. They  
4 have five programs, our English language learners.  
5 St. Nicks developed a multi-tiered literacy emersion  
6 model. Their program enables young people to explore  
7 learning through visual performing and digital arts.

8 They celebrated the culture and language of  
9 origin of participants through a partnership with New  
10 York City Children's theater and Magic Box  
11 Productions, which specialize in teaching English  
12 language learners. St. Nicks also operates a mobile  
13 library with 15,000 title collection in English and  
14 non-English languages and offers reading coaches for  
15 one on one and small group instruction, as well as  
16 transformational coaching to help English language  
17 learners with behavioral challenges.

18 New York Edge operates at the Academy for New  
19 Americans, a school in Astoria, that provides after-  
20 school services to young people who recently arrived  
21 in the country and are still learning English. Youth  
22 study at the Academy and then transfer to their  
23 neighborhood middle school or traditional high school  
24 when their English language has improved.

1  
2 Children in this program come from 38 countries  
3 and speak 18 languages. Staff members serve as  
4 interpreters in Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese,  
5 French, Hindi, Urdu, Russian and Greek, for example.  
6 In addition to the recruitment efforts of our  
7 providers, families can learn where services are  
8 available through DYCD's centralized resources. For  
9 example, we operated youth connect, a 1-800 hotline.  
10 Callers can learn about our programs and find sites  
11 in their neighborhood.

12 When callers need interpretation assistance, we  
13 connect them to our language back operators who have  
14 the ability to speak up to 180 different languages.  
15 We also are very excited that just in the past week  
16 or so, we launched Discover DYCD 2.0. This is a new  
17 public access website which will allow New Yorkers to  
18 find DYCD resources throughout the city and it's also  
19 available in over 180 languages. Discovery DYCD  
20 includes a feature which allows them to apply to many  
21 DYCD services at one time online.

22 To reach out more directly to immigrant  
23 communities, DYCD advertises services in community  
24 newspapers in multiple languages including Haitian  
25 Creole, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, Bengali and Polish.

1  
2 To help us meet the needs of all New Yorkers,  
3 we're currently conducting a community needs  
4 assessment across the city in ten specified languages  
5 under the city's language access law plus Yiddish.  
6 The data will be used to inform DYCD's strategic  
7 planning and new directions for the agency.

8 Through hundreds of after-school programs  
9 including the examples described above, DYCD is well  
10 positioned to meet the needs of young people and  
11 families. We appreciate the spirit of the bill and  
12 look forward to continued discussions with the  
13 council on promoting services for English language  
14 learners.

15 Once again, thank you for holding the hearing  
16 today. We look forward to collaborating with you on  
17 how to best support literacy and after-school  
18 programs.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you so much for your  
20 testimony this morning. We've been joined by Council  
21 Member Eugene; I am sure he'll be back.

22 So, we all as was well stated in your  
23 presentation and in my opening remarks, the  
24 importance of literacy and the value and what the  
25 negative impacts are in the absence of it. So, today

1  
2 we're trying to see where we are in terms of our  
3 literacy services and to talk about Council Member  
4 Eugene's bill.

5       So, there are multiple definitions for literacy.  
6 Which one or how does DYCD define literacy and does  
7 that definition drive your programming?

8       SUSAN HASSELL: I am going to let Rong –

9       RONG ZHANG: Well, yes, I agree with you. There  
10 are various definitions but here we basically your  
11 using the definition that it was used in the national  
12 survey of the adult needs. Basically, is a person's  
13 ability to use English to be able to function and to  
14 be able to read, understand and process documents.

15       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, and so, does that  
16 definition drive the programs that you have  
17 developed?

18       RONG ZHANG: Sure, so, you know, programs are all  
19 designed to teach people basic reading, writing and a  
20 numeracy skills to enable people to understand basic  
21 English and be able to function at the level that's  
22 needed for them to survive in terms of English  
23 language learners and for people who are you know,  
24 high school equivalency programs to be able to  
25 conduct job interviews.

1  
2       And also, there is a functional level to. You  
3 know, the materials that we use for example, most  
4 classrooms are mostly contextualized with authentic  
5 materials, so that people can learn not only the  
6 language but also the basic vocabulary that's going  
7 to be used in the situation only. For example, if  
8 you go to a doctors office, you know what are the  
9 basic words to use. If you go to a job interview,  
10 you know, how are you going to conduct yourself in  
11 terms of the language and also the verbal and a  
12 number of aspect of an interview.

13       So, you know, it's really literacy skills,  
14 numeracy skills, plus anything that's meaningful to  
15 peoples real life.

16       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Was the curriculum developed by  
17 DYCD and is it standardized?

18       RONG ZHANG: No, we do not use a standardized  
19 curriculum as a lot of provider leaders. So, this  
20 has been an ongoing discussion with the providers.  
21 People generally feel that we should not have a  
22 uniform curriculum, simply because programs are –  
23 programs serve people from different backgrounds with  
24 different needs.

25

1  
2       So, programs develop their own curriculum,  
3 develop their own lesson plans. However, we convene  
4 them to share the curriculum and lesson plans, how  
5 they conduct their lessons and we work closely with  
6 our partner, the Literacy Center to provide  
7 professional development in terms of developing  
8 curriculum and lesson plans that are in terms of the  
9 curriculum style, how you use it and that's  
10 standardized.

11       For example, we create what we call a nine-strand  
12 curriculum and you not only can you identify the  
13 needs of the students, you identify the program  
14 materials to be used, you incorporate an evaluation  
15 piece into the curriculum. So, that's standardized  
16 but in terms of the content, it's not.

17       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: That's great. So, you provide  
18 a rubric for them and within that framework, they  
19 have the ability to do what meets the needs of their  
20 particular constituents.

21       RONG ZHANG: Exactly.

22       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, how many adults are  
23 illiterate in New York City and of that number, how  
24 many or what percentage would you say are receiving  
25 literacy services?

1  
2 RONG ZHANG: Well, based on what we generally  
3 know, as indicted in the testimony, there are about  
4 1.8 people that either do not speak English well or  
5 do not have a high school diploma. So, we consider  
6 those people, they are in need of literacy services.

7 DYCD, thanks to the support of Council the last  
8 few years, we had expanded our services. So, we are  
9 able to serve about 16,000 annually, just within  
10 DYCD. And as you know, that DYCD is not the only  
11 literacy providing agency and there is CUNY,  
12 Department of Education and the library systems also  
13 provide services and funding could come from the  
14 City, it could also come from the State Education  
15 Department and there's also private funding  
16 supporting the services.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, is that 16,000 number your  
18 capacity or do you have the ability to serve more?

19 RONG ZHANG: Well, you know, we are always in the  
20 business of building capacity, as we know the number  
21 of people we serve, it is far from the needs out  
22 there. We always try to build that capacity and try  
23 to serve more. Yes, definitely programs can serve  
24 more if there is continued stable funding.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you feel that you have the  
3 capacity to meet the need?

4 RONG ZHANG: That will need a lot of study, but  
5 I'm pretty sure that our programs can serve more.

6 SUSAN HASSELL: I'm going to add to that, that a  
7 couple of years ago when the expansion started, we  
8 wanted to make sure not only that we could meet  
9 capacity but that the capacity was met with quality  
10 services.

11 So, one of the things that we knew, was that  
12 there was uneven capacity out in the community. So,  
13 some community-based organizations had a lot of  
14 capacity and did quality programs and then some  
15 others had great interaction and they had great  
16 relationships with the community, but maybe they  
17 needed more support in terms of staff development, a  
18 professional development.

19 And so, we put together a plan during the first  
20 expansion that had to do with how will we drive staff  
21 development to build capacity? Not just capacity in  
22 terms of instruction, but all the supporting programs  
23 around the literacy program.

24 So, that's how we partnered with the literacy  
25 center and they do a lot of our professional



1  
2 development. We can talk a little bit about that,  
3 but also there are other ways that we build capacity  
4 in the field and that is exchanging those best  
5 practices. Having networks, providers who come  
6 together and talk about what works, what doesn't  
7 work? What needs to be tweaked? How often should  
8 this happen? How do you accelerate learning? All  
9 those kinds of questions that that community needs to  
10 have to constantly improve services with a certain  
11 amount of funding that hasn't changed or that doesn't  
12 change.

13       So, we have focused a lot in the place where we  
14 thought we needed to focus was on that capacity  
15 building piece, so that students could get better  
16 quality services from the cadre of instructors. One  
17 of the things that we also knew was that training to  
18 be an instructor was very expensive. So, if people  
19 wanted to be literacy providers or instructors, it  
20 would take them not only a long time, but it would  
21 cost them.

22       So, this strategy really was to identify the  
23 people who really wanted to do that who were already  
24 doing that and who needed to get better so that we

1  
2 can amplify not just the field but raise the quality  
3 of services for those.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, Commissioner and along  
5 with that line, do you provide any services to the  
6 service providers to help them be able to meet the  
7 need after you've had this cross pollination with  
8 other agencies to determine like, what are best  
9 practices. Do you then provide technical assistance  
10 to the programs at DYCD?

11 SUSAN HASSELL: Absolutely, so there is several  
12 layers to this, and one is that the literacy center  
13 does the formal training for those instructors,  
14 right? But then there are other strategies that we  
15 use, so that those shared practices also can be  
16 documented, and they could be shared, but Rong could  
17 talk a little bit more about that.

18 RONG ZHANG: Sure, that was a good question. You  
19 know, providers work with us and teachers, a lot of  
20 teachers are part-time. Very limited time to  
21 actually seek professional developments. So, what we  
22 have done is that one, with DYCD funded the literacy  
23 center to be our technical provider.

24 Then within DYCD staff, we have staff that are  
25 specifically trained in each of the areas that we

1  
2 fund. Namely, English the second language, AB and  
3 HSE and we provide workshops on a constant basis.  
4 These workshops are all developed and designed based  
5 on a needs assessment at the beginning of each year.  
6 And then, they are developed into it could be one  
7 shot workshops, it could be a series of workshops,  
8 institutes and also coteaching, coaching. So, all  
9 sorts of things and also, we build resources for  
10 people for example, build a website where resources  
11 are there for people to access.

12 So, there are all different ways and it's really  
13 a multiple approach to the staff development. And on  
14 top of that, you know, we encourage programs to share  
15 best practices. We convene them to do networking, to  
16 find out about each other's resources and needs and  
17 then to do the sharing.

18 So, every year we convene what we call teach and  
19 share. You know, basically all teachers come in and  
20 share the best practices and then they go back and  
21 test and experiment with little techniques that they  
22 learned from the sessions.

23 And we also started last year, what we call a  
24 literacy conference day, a literacy staff long day.  
25 So, each year, there is one day we devoted to staff

1  
2 development, where we have panel discussions. We  
3 have ten to fifteen work shops developed for each  
4 specific area. There we not only have DYCD funded  
5 programs, literacy assistant staff is there and a  
6 staff from CUNY is there. So, they are all there  
7 sharing the best practices.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. I am sure you have  
9 a demographic breakdown of those individuals who  
10 require literacy services by age, sex race and  
11 ethnicity and where they - I guess geographic  
12 location where they primarily come from. Is that  
13 something you can make available to us?

14 SUSAN HASSELL: We can make our demographic  
15 information available to you, yes. So, let me say  
16 something about demographics. DYCD, we collect  
17 demographic information so that we can improve  
18 programs, so that we know where people are accessing  
19 services, but we also know where the gaps are.

20 So, we do collect demographic information that's  
21 basic name, age, address, those kinds of things. But  
22 we also ask other questions that have to do with  
23 identifying the needs of the participants. It could  
24 be, do you have healthcare? Or other questions like  
25 that, so that when a person applies, we can connect

1  
2 them to other services. If you've heard the  
3 Commissioner Chong speak about our integrated  
4 approach to the work that we do at DYCD and certainly  
5 moving forward on connecting programs through, not  
6 just referrals but best practices and capacity  
7 building, we're doing some of that work where you  
8 know, the demographic information is really important  
9 for us to use as guides or to develop new programs if  
10 need be. But we will be happy to share some of that  
11 demographic information if you'd like.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, you refer them to wrap  
13 around services that are within DYCD purview or even  
14 outside of that?

15 SUSAN HASSELL: Correct and we do that, I think  
16 Deputy Commissioner Haskell did talk about our new  
17 online system, which is an online application,  
18 universal application. That has just launched last  
19 week. Of course, it's new in trying it but our other  
20 systems allow people to go onto our website, DYCD's  
21 website. So, that they can find other programs that  
22 are near where they're either receiving literacy  
23 services or even in the same community-based  
24 organization.

25

1  
2 But we do have some statistics about who we're  
3 serving currently, and we serve actually 87 percent.  
4 We've served 16,526 participants in FY 2019; 87  
5 percent of the participants are in the English for  
6 speakers of another language. The makeup of the  
7 participants are there's 52 percent Hispanic, 20  
8 percent Asian, 15 percent White, and 13 percent Black  
9 or African American.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, have you noticed any  
11 specific demographic trends in the individuals that  
12 are requiring services?

13 SUSAN HASSELL: I would say that the changes in  
14 the demographics is that there are more people of  
15 different countries. So, the diversity I think has  
16 widened in that we're seeing more people and know  
17 that we have programs that actually give services in  
18 it could be 100 different languages.

19 So, we know that the span is widening in terms of  
20 the number of our ethnicities or cultures, or  
21 languages that are spoken. So, that I can speak to,  
22 maybe perhaps you can speak to the other.

23 RONG ZHANG: I mean, you know, really our  
24 programs as you know, there all in the communities,  
25 all five boroughs. So, depending on where you go,

1  
2 so, if you go to upper Manhattan, Washington Heights  
3 Inguinal area, you will receive mostly Hispanic,  
4 Spanish speaking population. There is a heavy need  
5 for English language services.

6 Coming downtown in Lower East Side, you will see  
7 heavy presence of Chinese population, Asian  
8 population. In Chinatown area, we have a few  
9 programs and you go to Southern Brooklyn, you will  
10 see Russians over there. And in the Carrol Gardens  
11 are in Brooklyn, New York City Arabic population.  
12 And we also see that there is a growth of African  
13 population in the Bronx. You know, we've seen in  
14 those programs.

15 So, yes, we do observe some of those changes and  
16 programs are all neighborhood programs and they  
17 address those needs immediately and quickly with  
18 their staffing, with the appropriate language  
19 competencies.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I know that Council Member  
21 Eugene has some questions, but I'd like to ask you  
22 about Intro. 649 and what are your concerns with  
23 this? Do you have any concerns with this bill? And  
24 what is the feasibility of your supporting it?

1  
2 SUSAN HASSELL: Most importantly, I think we  
3 support English language learners in our programs.  
4 We certainly appreciate the spirit of this bill. We  
5 think that after school is an amazing place for young  
6 people whom English is not their first language and  
7 who have limited English proficiency.

8 In our programs we sited a few of the examples of  
9 the type of ways that our programs specifically  
10 address a language barrier or support families of  
11 young people who are non-English speaking, but I  
12 think generally, the way all our programs are framed,  
13 which is to address a language barrier or other  
14 barriers that young people are experiencing to  
15 connection.

16 But specific to English language learners, having  
17 more time. The research is evolving but having more  
18 time in an after-school setting is very helpful to  
19 non-English speaking students in after-school. Also,  
20 the environment of after-school can be very  
21 supportive and less stressful in that there aren't  
22 high stakes markers for achievement, as there are  
23 during the school day.

24 So, young people can relax a little bit more, get  
25 comfortable. They might feel more – if they don't



1  
2 speak English comfortably, they might feel more  
3 comfortable experimenting speaking to their peers,  
4 speaking to a carrying adult without such a high  
5 stakes engagement.

6       And then, our programs are really very supportive  
7 in terms of young peoples motivation levels, social  
8 emotional learning, which is also a critical factor  
9 for English language learners. So, yes, we support  
10 English language learners and I look forward to  
11 sharing more of the ways that we do this in our  
12 programs.

13       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, are there any barriers  
14 that you see to this bill being supported by DYCD?

15       SUSAN HASSELL: I think we still have a lot of  
16 open questions. There are many unknowns for exactly  
17 what the implications of the bill would be, and we  
18 are ready to work with Council to talk through any of  
19 those.

20       We just have a lot of questions essentially. I  
21 mean what the impact of the bill will depend on the  
22 individual experience of the provider and their  
23 current staffing models and the students who are in  
24 their programs. So, we do feel there are more  
25 questions to ask.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'm going to yield to Council  
3 Member Eugene. I am sure he has some questions and  
4 then I will come back.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very much  
6 Madame Chair and first and foremost I thank you and  
7 commend you for your leadership in addressing the  
8 issues affecting the young people in New York City.  
9 The future of this city, thank you so much and thank  
10 you for this wonderful, very important public hearing  
11 also and I want to thank your staff also. Thank you.

12 And I want to thank Deputy Commissioner and all  
13 the members of the panel. I want to thank you for  
14 what you are doing through DYCD, the wonderful job  
15 and the excellent program that DYCD is offering to  
16 the young people and adults in New York City. And I  
17 had the opportunity to work closely with DYCD and I  
18 say that, before I was elected or so. I was on the  
19 other side or so, because I created an organization  
20 seven young people and I know the wonderful job that  
21 DYCD is doing.

22 But what I wanted to say, my father always said  
23 that there is no perfection, there is always home for  
24 improvement. We should always work together to  
25 implement and to better what we are doing.

1  
2 I am so pleased to have introduced, enter  
3 legislation Intro. 649 and I'm pleased that you are  
4 willing to support it and my City Council would be  
5 very pleased to hear your concern and to work  
6 together to make it work.

7 But let me ask a few questions. We all know  
8 that New York City is home to so many people. That's  
9 why we're making New York City a great and vibrant,  
10 people from different countries, but they don't speak  
11 English is not their first language and I think  
12 Assistant Commissioner Rong Zhang mentioned that  
13 there are about one million people I think in the  
14 State of New York or in the City of New York - in the  
15 City right?

16 RONG ZHANG: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Without high schools.  
18 This is a big number. This is a big number, but you  
19 mentioned that DYCD serves about 16,000 is that  
20 correct?

21 RONG ZHANG: 16,000.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: 16,000 is a very small  
23 number when you consider one million point eight but  
24 considering also the importance of literacy.  
25 Literacy gave to people the tool they need to succeed

1  
2 in society and especially in a city like New York  
3 City. Many people in our city who came to the city  
4 as you know, they have a language barrier but when we  
5 offer them the opportunity to be literate, that gives  
6 them the tool to succeed in this society and we will  
7 reduce the crime, the incarceration, the poverty.  
8 This is a very important issue for the city of New  
9 York.

10 My question is that, what DYCD have in place to  
11 increase the number and to do the necessary effort to  
12 serve more people to have them get their high school  
13 equivalency?

14 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: So, I want to clarify that  
15 DYCD serviced over 16,000 people last year, but we  
16 don't do this alone. We do this with the Department  
17 of Education who also offers literacy programs with  
18 CUNY and with the public libraries. And that network  
19 of people together with DYCD services 70,000 people,  
20 actually probably it's over 70,000 but I just wanted  
21 to correct the number, that it's not just us, it's a  
22 lot of people. We couldn't do this alone and we  
23 always welcome the opportunity to serve more and  
24 serve better, but we wanted to make that  
25 clarification.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: When we talk about after  
3 school program or literacy program, language  
4 opportunity is very important also. So, those  
5 people, they don't speak English. English is not  
6 their first language.

7 So, among your staff people, do you have staff  
8 members of people, teachers, who speak different  
9 languages based on the population of students they  
10 are serving?

11 SUSAN HASSELL: I'll start just talking a little  
12 bit about an after-school response to that and I  
13 appreciate the question, thank you for that.

14 Commissioner Chong, my colleague noted that  
15 service integration and improving the quality of  
16 service through information is one of his main  
17 priorities and my colleagues Michael Deutsch and  
18 Denise Williams have been working on improving the  
19 capacity of the agency to deliver better services;  
20 you mentioned continued quality improvement.

21 So, I'm excited that we were able to look into  
22 the language of participants and that's part of the  
23 new data collection, efforts that DYCD has launched  
24 recently. So, I am able to give you more answer to  
25 that question now, because we have better information

1  
2 and in after-school, we had hundreds of staff that  
3 had been tagged by the program provider in the system  
4 as speaking a non-English language. At least 14  
5 languages were noted, Albanian, Arabic, Bengali,  
6 Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi and  
7 several more, including other.

8       So, yes, we have in the after school – and I  
9 think this has always been true, we've seen the data  
10 now, but I think people who work in the after-school  
11 programs know that this is part of the work that they  
12 do is an effort to have staff reflect the community  
13 that they are serving. So, yes, we have many staff  
14 members who speak languages other than English in the  
15 programs.

16       COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Let me put it another  
17 way. Let's say for example, you have a class of 100  
18 students and 20 or 30 of them speak let's say,  
19 Spanish or any other language, are you going to  
20 select or appoint or get somebody who speaks Spanish  
21 and English to serve these 30 or 20 students?  
22 Because they represent approximately one-third of the  
23 class?

24       WANDA ASCHERL: So, we don't necessarily enforce  
25 a specific practice, but we have seen in our after-

1  
2 school programs is that our agencies organically  
3 design activities and identify staff that reflect the  
4 community.

5 So, in that example of 100 participants in let's  
6 say 20 of the young people, speak let's say Spanish.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: An example, it could be  
8 any other language.

9 WANDA ASCHERL: Or any other language. They  
10 would hire, they often times hire several staff that  
11 speak that predominant language in the program, so  
12 that the young people can interact with adults,  
13 interact with peers in the activity level.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: So, I think measure the  
15 success of the after-school program. How do you  
16 measure the success of the after-school program or  
17 literacy program?

18 WANDA ASCHERL: Well, I'll start with after-  
19 school. We have a few different measure depending on  
20 the program area, but one thing we look at as a  
21 starting point, we look at whether the program is  
22 able to engage young people.

23 So, we have a contract with community-based  
24 providers, if the quality of their work is not  
25 excellent, it's less likely that young people will

1 attend, and the parents will sign their young people  
2 up for the program.

3  
4 So, the first thing we look is, are they able to  
5 engage young people? And if they are, how often do  
6 those young people participate in programs? So, they  
7 signed up and they came, do they keep coming back  
8 because they value the service that they are given  
9 and in addition to that, we know that there is a lot  
10 of support for the after-school programs from  
11 communities. We see that in advocacy year after  
12 year.

13 More specifically, we have independent evaluators  
14 who look at outcomes in our programs. Some examples,  
15 and again, they very widely are, do young people feel  
16 that they are learning new skills? Do they feel  
17 comfortable that they have a supportive peer  
18 environment? Do they feel connected to caring adults  
19 in the programs? Do they feel that the programs are  
20 enhancing their leadership skills? We have a  
21 comprehensive questionnaire that we implemented with  
22 our middle school students about how their developing  
23 leadership skills.

24 Are they getting hours in stem and literacy? And  
25 how do parents feel about those programs? We want to



1 know about their satisfaction as well as a principal.  
2 How does the principal feel about this program  
3 supporting their school day?  
4

5 So, we have multiple measures on the outcomes and  
6 the experience of young people in our programs.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: So, you said, part of  
8 your strategy to measure the outcome or the success  
9 of the program is to find out if the students are  
10 comfortable with the program, if they are involved,  
11 if they keep coming, but when you find out there are  
12 several issues or the student doesn't come back to  
13 the program, they are not satisfied. What is a step  
14 that you take to remedy to resolve this situation and  
15 to ensure that they come back and that they are  
16 comfortable? Do you have staff in place for that?  
17 Social workers, psychologists, professional to go in  
18 exactly and find out what is wrong and how can you  
19 resolve the situation?

20 SUSAN HASSELL: I think, you know fundamental to  
21 positive youth development, which is the basis of  
22 doing good programming is to help meet a young person  
23 where they are, especially the young peoples who are  
24 experiencing barriers. And some of the ways we get  
25

1  
2 to those satisfaction or dissatisfaction questions,  
3 is through our customer service questionnaire.

4 We're launching additional questionnaires in all  
5 of our programs, we did a pretty comprehensive  
6 assessment of beacon participants in prior years to  
7 find out, are they getting what they need, and we'll  
8 look at where the demand is that maybe were not  
9 hitting.

10 On the top of my head, I can think of one thing  
11 that really made an impression on our agency was that  
12 a lot of participant felt like food and security was  
13 one of their main concerns and as a participant of  
14 the program and we've been making efforts to connect  
15 food services with the programs.

16 And then we also, look we have a hotline. I  
17 mentioned the hotline in multiple languages and  
18 sometimes we get specific complaints about a program.  
19 It doesn't happen very often, but we welcome those  
20 concerns. We look forward to responding immediately  
21 to any of those concerns. Talk to the parent, talk  
22 to the young person, negotiate a more positive  
23 outcome with the provider.

24 Those are a few things that I can think of off  
25 the top of my head.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Okay, this is my last  
3 question. Bilingual program and literacy program are  
4 a very important program that benefits not only the  
5 student but also the City of New York in the society.  
6 I know you are trying to do the best that you can do.  
7 What is the biggest challenge that you face in trying  
8 to provide literacy and bilingual program to the  
9 people who are in need? What is the biggest  
10 challenge? There is no challenge?

11 SUSAN HASSELL: No, of course there are.

12 WANDA ASCHERL: I see the biggest challenge and I  
13 think that's something that's beyond this is that in  
14 the youth development field, there is a high demand  
15 for staff and there is a shortage of staff.

16 So, I think that that would be the one challenge  
17 that I see for our providers is hiring qualified  
18 staff that meet our DOH and credentialing  
19 requirements and regulations, while at the same time  
20 having the experience in this field. So, that I  
21 would say would be the challenge.

22 SUSAN HASSELL: I agree with that, that's a micro  
23 challenge, meaning like on a specific program level  
24 and it's kind of a macro challenge across the city.  
25 As a direct result I think, of the great expansion

1 we've had in this Administration for Youth Services.  
2 It's the capacity question that you were asking.  
3 That was being asked about literacy programs earlier;  
4 we continue to expand after-school programs in  
5 particular for middle school students and community  
6 centers and we need more staff in an after-school  
7 program than you need in a school day, because the  
8 staff ratios are higher.  
9

10 And so, one of our challenges has been helping  
11 providers meet those needs. Helping them with  
12 recruitment efforts, connecting to arts. Adults in  
13 arts professionals, connecting with CUNY, we're  
14 constantly trying to help respond to that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: And to complete, what is  
16 your process to recruit staff? When you need to  
17 recruit some staff, what is your process? The  
18 process you are going through, how do you do that, to  
19 recruit the staff?

20 SUSAN HASKELL: I think providers, I mean, they  
21 start in their own community I think with staff  
22 recruitment. It could be from people who are coming  
23 up through the programs. People grow up in programs  
24 and become staff members and I think there's been in  
25 recent years like a stronger effort toward career

1  
2 development. If I am a group leader in a program,  
3 how do I develop my skills that I can become a  
4 program director? So, we have the higher-level  
5 positions. There are the more traditional methods of  
6 advertising and we have some websites specifically  
7 dedicated to recruiting youth professionals.

8 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: We also, as an agency, through  
9 our capacity building department provide resources  
10 and training for the providers. Staff development,  
11 career development, how do you facilitate a  
12 curriculum? How do you manage a classroom? So, from  
13 the agencies perspective, we try to provide resources  
14 beyond what the providers do at the local level.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very much.  
16 Thank you, Madam Chair, thank you so very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you so much Council  
18 Member Eugene. I have a couple of nitty gritty  
19 questions.

20 How many programs are within your adult literacy  
21 program portfolio? And, what is the breakdown of the  
22 number of participants per specific program? And,  
23 what is the cost per participant in each of these  
24 programs?

1  
2 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: We have 77 base contracts, 40  
3 discretionary contracts and the price per participant  
4 is \$950. In 2014, we increased that price per  
5 participant from \$500 to \$950.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You increased that when?

7 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: In 2014, in that last RFP and  
8 in terms of your last question about how many  
9 participants are in each one of those contracts, we  
10 can send that information to you.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, thank you and -

12 RONG ZHANG: So, you know the program very well,  
13 so several areas just pointing out. So, out of the  
14 16,200 some people we served last year, in the ESL  
15 program, we have about 12,500.

16 So, as Commissioner Gutierrez just mentioned, the  
17 ESL population accounts for about 78 percent of the  
18 total we serve. And in our ABE programs, we have  
19 2,800 - a little over 2,800 in there. And then the  
20 smallest portion is the high school equivalency  
21 students is 930, somewhere there.

22 So, I just wanted to point out is that in DYCD's  
23 programming, it is actually stating our RFP clearly  
24 that we want programs to focus on lower levels. So,  
25 we've basically said that we would like to see you

1  
2 know, anywhere between 50 to 60 percent of students  
3 be at the lowest level that other programs do not  
4 serve or cannot serve.

5 And that's one of the reasons why you know, our  
6 population for the high school equivalency program,  
7 the HSE programs is small. And in the ESL, if you'd  
8 further look at it and more people are at the lowest  
9 in the levels.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And your adult literacy, what  
11 was your adult literacy programs, what was the  
12 number? In your adult over 18 years of age?

13 RONG ZHANG: Oh, the adult literacy program  
14 serves people 16 and over and within that population  
15 that we serve, most of the people we serve are  
16 between 25 and 44. That's the major and then you  
17 have about 20 to 25 percent of the people between 16  
18 and 24, that's the breakdown in terms of age.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And what's the total number of  
20 people who are enrolled in your adult literacy  
21 programs?

22 RONG ZHANG: That's year we enrolled over 16,000.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: 16,000, okay, and is there a  
24 waiting list and if so, how do you plan to reduce  
25 that list? Are there waiting lists for services?

1  
2 RONG ZHANG: Well, in terms of waiting lists,  
3 each agency automatically documents people that they  
4 cannot place in the classes immediately.

5 So, yes, all programs have their own waiting list  
6 and we know that on average there are probably about  
7 anywhere between 400 and 600 people on the waiting  
8 list, but we don't know how accurate that it. For  
9 example, a person can walk into a program asking for  
10 service, but if you don't have an opening at this  
11 point, and you put them on the waiting list, the  
12 person could go walk down do another program that's  
13 down the block and get enrolled.

14 So, you know, we're not sure how accurate that  
15 is, but there certainly is waiting lists and  
16 programs, that's why we always try to convene  
17 programs and do networking and have programs know  
18 that there are other programs in your neighborhood.  
19 There are other programs somewhere else, so you can  
20 always make sure that you can refer people to other  
21 programs instead of having them wait for services.  
22 So, yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you think there is a need  
24 to increase the number of programs that we have that  
25 are providing the services?



1  
2 RONG ZHANG: Certainly, and you know, with  
3 Council's support last three years, this is the  
4 fourth year, we were able to actually enroll a lot  
5 more people because of the expansion funding.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Did we actually increase the  
7 number of programs that you are not contracting as  
8 opposed to -

9 RONG ZHANG: With the expansion funding, what we  
10 did was that we for example, this year, we plan to  
11 actually expand 55 contracts. Of course, this will  
12 be at the request of CBO's to. We cannot just go  
13 there and impose an increase. So, we have them  
14 understand that there is additional funding to  
15 support and they have to take into consideration  
16 their capacity in terms of the staffing, space and  
17 everything else and then we can request.

18 So, we are expanding 55 contracts this year to  
19 serve an additional 4,000 people this year and  
20 Council has designated 40 some contracts.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Will they be new contracts or  
22 just expanding existing services?

23 RONG ZHANG: No, these are in addition to DYCD's  
24 existing contracts and we do contracts with them, we  
25 support them, we provide staff development. They

1  
2 serve close to another 4,000 people, so we're talking  
3 about an additional 8,000 people each year.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay.

5 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: Can I expand on that a little  
6 bit.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh yes, Commissioner.

8 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: Because I want us to manage  
9 expectations among us. I think that what we said  
10 before was that we wanted to make sure as we did  
11 these literacy services to balance capacity building  
12 with the growth of the need, right, or responding to  
13 the need. And we wanted to make sure that if we say  
14 okay, we want services for 100,000 people, is there  
15 capacity building money? Is there capacity building  
16 support to do that, so that we can keep the quality  
17 services.

18 Why are the quality services so important? They  
19 have always been important, but they're much more  
20 important now, because when people who are having to  
21 learn literacy skills, the job environment expect  
22 much more of them than they used to.

23 So, it used to be that immigrants who came to  
24 this country went for a particular kind of job. That  
25 is no longer true, they can aspire to any kind of

1  
2 job, which can include skills in technology, other  
3 kinds of skills that in the past, they might not have  
4 needed.

5       So, we have to continue to improve capacity in  
6 terms of quality instruction, but also be more  
7 diverse in terms of not just giving language skills,  
8 but language skills in context to a new workforce,  
9 right. A new workforce environment, a new  
10 expectation about how someone uses language skills in  
11 the workplace.

12       So, we used to have workplaces where people  
13 didn't talk. They went to work, they made cars, you  
14 didn't have to talk too much. But now, you have to  
15 be socially adaptable in that environment and it  
16 means that you need language skills beyond just  
17 language, but communication skills, social skills,  
18 and those kinds of things. Be adaptive with social  
19 media, all kinds of things that were not the  
20 expectations before.

21       And so, do we have a need? Yes, the need  
22 continues to grow because there's more and more  
23 immigrants coming into the US and we have a  
24 considerable population that does not have a high  
25 school diploma, even if they were born here. But it

1  
2 is the same challenge, right, that we have to stop  
3 thinking about literacy as people just learning how  
4 to speak English or learning math but that we have to  
5 think about literacy skills as language acquisition  
6 plus all of these other things that are expected to  
7 them.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: The broader definition of  
9 literacy. So, are you saying that when you say we  
10 need to ensure that the capacity is there, are you  
11 talking about the capacity to meet those needs? Not  
12 in terms of space, spatially but I guess the  
13 intellectual ability or staffing? That we have  
14 enough people to staff these programs that can meet  
15 our learners at the level that they need to be  
16 engaged at?

17 So, do you collect any data from these programs  
18 regarding success, where they are going? Is there  
19 any type of data that you collect from our providers  
20 or the contracted providers?

21 RONG ZHANG: Oh, yeah, sure. In addition to the  
22 demographic, very important demographic information  
23 we have there, we also collect household income. In  
24 terms of success of programs, all students come into  
25 the program taking what we call a pretest,

1  
2 establishing a baseline and then they participate in  
3 classes. Then they are post-tested periodically.

4 So, we record what we call, incremental progress.  
5 That is the small baby step programs; we document  
6 that. We also have an expected education gain  
7 outcome, which is students in need to move from one  
8 prescribed level to another level.

9 So, just to give you what we had last year, last  
10 year we just said we served over 16,000 people, we  
11 had 56 percent of the people who actually made one  
12 level gain, which is the outcome expectation. And  
13 the majority of the people made of course, the baby  
14 step progress.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you evaluate these programs  
16 and what is the rubric that you use.

17 RONG ZHANG: The evaluation is something that's  
18 very important. We have contract managers that  
19 manage those contracts. So, our staff go out to  
20 observe and visit programs regularly and when they  
21 get there, they not only talk with program director  
22 staff but also with students. We also observe  
23 classrooms and following each visit, we have a report  
24 that we write out and basically, you know, what we  
25 see there in our comments and we share our findings

1  
2 with CBO's, so that this happens all the time and  
3 these findings from this visit, inform our staff  
4 development design. So, they all go hand and hand.  
5 This is done on a regular basis.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, I am assuming that the  
7 instructors that are doing what used to be the GED,  
8 the high school graduate exam, are certified teachers  
9 or no, are they DOE certified at all of these  
10 locations?

11 RONG ZHANG: So, DYCD do not require teachers to  
12 be certified, but we do have requirements in terms of  
13 qualification. For example, program directors,  
14 teachers will have to have a bachelor's degree a  
15 related area with five years teaching experience  
16 working with adult population.

17 We also have programs that work very closely with  
18 the Department of Education. You know, to kind of  
19 leverage resources. So, teachers provided through  
20 the Department of Education are very often state  
21 certified.

22 What follow up services or programs does DYCD  
23 provide to those who complete the literacy programs?  
24 Like, job search programs, things of that nature.

1  
2 RONG ZHANG: Helping students transition is  
3 something that we've been emphasizing the last few  
4 years. The next step would be employment, employment  
5 training programs or college. Since this is a  
6 literacy program that we're talking about, we look a  
7 lot at the next steps moving students from ESL to AB  
8 programs, AB students to HSE programs and that's the  
9 biggest effort that we make in moving students on  
10 this continuum. Annual students that are in HSE  
11 programs we connect them, you know, we try to do  
12 everything we can to provide college and a career  
13 advisement in that area.

14 Programs do work with CUNY colleges to connect  
15 students who are ready for the next steps. At this  
16 point, our funding does not specifically focus on  
17 follow up, but we do realize that the transition, the  
18 helping students, making sure that they get to the  
19 next step, is important. So, we convene them, we  
20 talk about this, but we do not have specific  
21 requirements on those.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: In the past adopted budgets  
23 where the Council and the Administration have secured  
24 \$12 million for adult literacy programming, the  
25 funding was shared between DYCD, the Mayor's Office

1  
2 of Immigration Affairs and DOE's community schools  
3 initiative. In Fiscal Year 2020, how much of the \$12  
4 million went to DYCD?

5 RONG ZHANG: Right now, the final plan has not  
6 been approved yet, but we have proposed to amend our  
7 existing contracts and also provide necessary support  
8 to programs. We are spending about \$6 million of the  
9 \$12 million within DYCD contracts and then there is  
10 the \$4 million that's going to be designated  
11 contracts through the Council. So, were talking  
12 about \$10 million that DYCD is going to manage.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What is the estimated cost per  
14 participant in a bilingual after school program and  
15 how does that cost compare with an after-school  
16 program that's conducted only in English?

17 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: I don't have any information  
18 about that right now and even the question about how  
19 much after school costs can vary whether you are  
20 talking about an elementary school, a middle school  
21 student, how many hours. There are so many variables  
22 in the cost, I don't know what the answer to offering  
23 bilingual instruction and after school will be.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Can you venture to say that  
25 there's some appreciable difference in the cost?



1  
2 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: I would say yes, yeah, I would  
3 say yes, primarily in staffing costs.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so, is that because you  
5 would have to pay bilingual staff more than staff  
6 that did not have another language?

7 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: That could be, it could also  
8 be the necessity to – maybe it's hiring additional  
9 staff. Is it getting rid of some staff or replacing  
10 other staff. Is it the cost of managing your  
11 staffing model all together? The additional  
12 administrative work.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Staff hours?

14 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: Yeah, staff hours, yeah, it  
15 could vary on many factors. Many unanswered  
16 questions I would say to get to that point.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you think that the  
18 difference is enough to rule out having bilingual  
19 after school programming across the board?

20 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: I don't think I could say  
21 that, but I do think there could be an appreciative  
22 cost to the nonprofit providers, yeah, I think it's  
23 possible.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I know we've talked a lot  
25 about cost and you know, it's very hard to sort of

1  
2 quantify some of the values that you might need to  
3 come up with a figure, but I would like to see you  
4 sort of put together what it would cost to have  
5 bilingual after school programming.

6 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: I will take that request back  
7 and also raise that the research to answer that  
8 question wouldn't be accessible in house to DYCD.  
9 Again, because the impact on individual programs  
10 1,200 or so, individual programs would depend on many  
11 factors including their current staffing models,  
12 their current student population, those things are  
13 fluid. The skill level of young people today. The  
14 skill level of young people in six months, but I will  
15 take that request back.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, well, you've already I  
17 think made some sort of assessment because you're  
18 talking about expanding the after-school literacy  
19 programs now, aren't you? We talked about that  
20 previously.

21 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: No, those are not after school  
22 programs, those are the adult programs.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh, okay, okay, okay.

24 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: This is adult literacy, so the  
25 price per participant is going to be very different

1  
2 than an after school, for all the reasons that  
3 Assistant Commissioner Haskell talked about before,  
4 which is that you know, they have very different  
5 criteria for after school, certainly expectations and  
6 it costs a lot more to have a child in after school  
7 than to have an adult who takes care of themselves,  
8 pretty much themselves, to a class. So, the price  
9 per participant is less than being able to give  
10 bilingual education to a child in after school. Sort  
11 of apples and oranges.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, so, I just want to know,  
13 is this something that we can expect that you would  
14 look at and try to give us a number?

15 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: Let's continue the  
16 conversation about that. Let's talk with you know,  
17 let me bring this back to DYCD and we'll work with  
18 Council and Council finance on any questions around  
19 this.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And my last question is, how  
21 do you interact and interface with the other literacy  
22 programs like, First Readers, other sort of  
23 community-based literacy programs? Is there any kind  
24 of interaction and sort of what is the mechanism that  
25 you use to have that?

1  
2 SANDRA GUTIERREZ: Yes, if I understand your  
3 question, I would say absolutely yes, maybe Wanda  
4 could talk about the connection between the literacy  
5 programs and our community centers?

6 WANDA ASCHERL: So, we have several programs that  
7 have both the literacy component and the beacon  
8 component that exists in one school and often times  
9 we find that in some cases it's the same provider,  
10 which is fantastic, because then they have the  
11 literacy piece. The staffing structure is within  
12 that agency and they have the after-school component  
13 and what they do is that they integrate those  
14 services as very seamless in that model where they  
15 serve as a referral and vice versa. From the after  
16 school to the adult literacy during the day.

17 We'd like to say that we're almost like serving  
18 the whole family, so you may have the adult learner  
19 in the ESL program, while their children are  
20 attending the after-school program and that's how we  
21 see those things happening.

22 And I did want to add that some of our providers,  
23 especially in our beacon and our corner stone  
24 programs, their required to collocate with other  
25 entities or smaller agencies that may not have the

1  
2 infrastructure to run a comprehensive program, but  
3 they are utilized to enhance service within the  
4 after-school program. And I've seen programs, in  
5 particular, one in Chinatown where they had beginners  
6 in advanced levels of basic literacy and learning  
7 just the basics of even just grocery shopping. Like,  
8 how to ask for oranges and apples to actual  
9 conversations and in this particular example, I was  
10 able to see twenty plus adults in three different  
11 classrooms, learning different types of  
12 functionalities around literacy and just every day  
13 living.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. What other city  
15 agencies or agencies does DYCD work with to address  
16 the problems associated with a literacy like DOE and  
17 HRA? Can you describe the nature of the interagency  
18 interactions and have any other programs resulted  
19 from this interagency collaboration?

20 WANDA ASCHERL: Well, we did mention that we work  
21 with the Department of Education on sharing teachers  
22 or making sure that there is a referral system back  
23 and forth. We have had conversations with them  
24 around literacy strategies or how we could do that  
25 better, those referral systems. With CUNY, we really

1  
2 rely on CUNY to help us with staff development and  
3 that sort of thing, but also to introduce our young  
4 people who have gone through literacy programs and  
5 then have completed their high school education, so  
6 that they can enter college and stay in college and  
7 of course, we talked about the need and the  
8 collaboration that we have with the public libraries.

9       We have in the past talked with HRA about  
10 literacy in the context of job training and job  
11 development and some of those discussions continue to  
12 go on because as you know, we have a lot going on at  
13 DYCD in the development of jobs, employment and  
14 career training.

15       So, wherever there's an opportunity for us and  
16 this is in the spirit of what we have said before in  
17 the spirit of our mission and certainly with  
18 Commissioner Chong's leadership about integrating  
19 services but that's not just integrating services  
20 among the community-based organizations. It's not  
21 just about integrating services among even our  
22 internal units, but it is among those city agencies  
23 who have the same interest in helping New Yorkers  
24 just thrive and succeed.

1  
2       So, obviously, we are going to be talking to HRA.  
3 We talked to the Department of Health, you know,  
4 because DYCD has such a large footprint in terms of  
5 the services that are provided, right. And  
6 particularly because we have a focus on alleviating  
7 poverty.

8       It's in our interest, but it's also in the  
9 interest of other city agencies to work with us, to  
10 partner and to develop all kind of strategies where  
11 people could use the services. I think everybody  
12 wants the same thing, that we want New Yorkers to be  
13 able to access first, to be informed, to be able to  
14 access and then to be able to participate in  
15 services. So, that the city gets better.

16       So, I assume they're members of the ICC and they  
17 address literacy as part of the -

18       WANDA ASCHERL: Yes, the ICC, we made a recent  
19 presentation to them actually.

20       RONG ZHANG: Right, so every time there is a  
21 quarterly meeting, this is made known to our  
22 providers and if I remember correctly, we have  
23 actually had student representatives talking about  
24 their programs, the programs that they make at those  
25 meetings. So, yes and also talking about and you

1  
2 asked a very important question, there is  
3 collaboration and partnership with other entities.  
4 You know, in addition to the city agencies that we  
5 work with, you know, in order to achieve what we  
6 always say, you know, collective impact. You need to  
7 really reach out to other services.

8       You know, this is literacy services, so tried our  
9 best to kind of connect our programs to entities like  
10 City Tutors, New York Cares, RSVP of Community  
11 Services Society. So, there are a lot of you know,  
12 untapped resources out there. For example, just  
13 yesterday we had a providers meeting and where we  
14 have folks from RSVP do a presentation on their  
15 volunteer program.

16       You know, they have retired people from all sorts  
17 of fields and who can actually serve as volunteers  
18 for programs. So, we not only talked about programs,  
19 we actually introduced what forms you need to  
20 complete, how are you going to be able to access  
21 those volunteers? We had one agency from Staten  
22 Island, JCC, actually talked about their experience  
23 working with RSVP and they just feel that it is such  
24 an asset that we certainly cannot just let it slip by  
25 and we got use them.



1  
2       So, you know, the programs have specific  
3 requests. Like they need tutors, they need for ESL  
4 learners, they need conversation partners. You know,  
5 and Union people who help them with digital literacy.

6       So, there are lot of talents out there and this  
7 is what we do. We want to connect programs to those  
8 and leverage the resources.

9       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, and what is the  
10 impact on children of adults who struggle with  
11 literacy? You know, for example, are there children  
12 who are more likely to suffer because of low literacy  
13 among you know, their parents?

14       RONG ZHANG: Oh, yeah, definitely. Lots of  
15 research points to that. You know, children with  
16 educated parents come to school with much much larger  
17 vocabulary for example. They are going to be able to  
18 benefit from the reading and accessing reading  
19 material is much easier than kids from families, from  
20 parents that do not read and write. And that's one  
21 of the reasons that our literacy programs –

22       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Address that?

23       RONG ZHANG: Yes, and we also integrate parent  
24 involvement, family involvement, family engagement is  
25 a wonderful thing that we emphasize in our programs.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, I said three questions  
3 ago, I know I said three questions ago, it was the  
4 last question. I just wanted to see if you were  
5 still paying attention. And this is the last one,  
6 this is the last one.

7 How many school districts in New York City have  
8 more than one third of the total number of students  
9 being English language learners, how is this measured  
10 and how is this reported?

11 SUSAN HASKELL: I don't know the answer to that  
12 question.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh, you're going to fail the  
14 test at the end?

15 SUSAN HASKELL: No, no, no.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You were doing so good.

17 SUSAN HASKELL: No, what I do know is, as I  
18 stated earlier, we have more and more information  
19 about our programs and what is I think you know, the  
20 spirit of this conversation is around what is  
21 happening with a young person who doesn't speak  
22 English in our programs?

23 And so, we have better participant data which I  
24 shared a bit in our testimony. I spoke to the number  
25 of staff we have. I also wanted to mention that our

1  
2 data shows that we have hundreds of program  
3 activities within after school that flag that a non-  
4 English language is being supported by the program  
5 activity. I think some of the examples we gave in  
6 testimony. We have many, many more examples, at  
7 least 18 other non-English languages are represented  
8 in an activity that's going on in the program.

9       So, I think the focus, what we learned in looking  
10 at this data in preparation for this hearing, is the  
11 5,000, approximately 3 percent of young people in our  
12 programs who aren't reporting that they speak English  
13 well. And I think that's the young person that we're  
14 trying to impact with the framework that we put  
15 around our programs to make sure they are connected  
16 to peers and caring adults and making sure that their  
17 experience is positive and that they continue to  
18 develop those literacy skills which are so important.

19       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you think it's possible for  
20 you to get me that number though?

21       SUSAN HASKELL: Can you -

22       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yes, I want to know how many  
23 school districts in New York City have more than one  
24 third of the total number of students being English  
25 language learners.

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SUSAN HASKELL: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yes, and we want to know how it's measured and reported because it's an important part of the bill that we're interested in passing.

SUSAN HASKELL: We'll reach out to our partners.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, now, I will say, thank you so much for your testimony and your time. And congratulations on the resource guide being out and available and again, thank you for your cooperation. And any of those numbers we ask for, I'm sure you'll be following up with getting to our administration.

PANEL: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. And so, our next panel will be.

COUCIL CLERK: Lisa Schwartzwald from New York Immigration Coalition, Ira Yankwitt from Literacy Assistance Center NYC Coalition for Adult Literacy, Lena Cohen from United Neighborhood Houses and Nancy Robles, Vow Voices of Women.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hi, as soon as you can, sit down, give us your name and your affiliation and you can begin your testimony.

Okay, I did say hi while you were getting seated, but I will say it again. Thank you for being here

1 this afternoon, well, it's not quite afternoon yet.

2 This morning and please give us your name and your  
3 affiliation and you can begin your testimony. Thank  
4 you.  
5

6 IRA YANKWITT: Good morning, thank you Chair Rose  
7 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Ira  
8 Yankwitt and I am the Executive Director the Literacy  
9 Assistance Center.

10 A 36-year-old nonprofit organization dedicated to  
11 strengthening and expanding the adult education  
12 system and to advancing adult literacy as a  
13 foundation for equal opportunity and social justice.

14 Today, I will be testifying on behalf of the New  
15 York City Coalition for Adult Literacy or NYCCAL. A  
16 coalition comprised of adult literacy teachers,  
17 program managers, students and allies from over 40  
18 community-based organizations, CUNY campuses and  
19 library programs across the five boroughs.

20 Today, in New York City, there are approximately  
21 2.2 million adults who lack English language  
22 proficiency, a high school diploma or both. The  
23 majority of these adults are immigrants. Others were  
24 born in the United States but underserved by the  
25 public-school system. Many of these adults are

1  
2 unemployed or live in poverty. Most are people of  
3 color.

4 Limited skills impact almost every aspect of  
5 their lives, making it difficult for them to secure  
6 living wage jobs, support their children in school,  
7 advocate for their rights as workers, access quality  
8 healthcare, and fully participate in the political  
9 process.

10 Yet public funding for adult literacy education  
11 is so limited that fewer than 4 percent of these 2.2  
12 million adults are able to access basic education,  
13 high school equivalency or English language classes  
14 in any given year.

15 NYCCAL is grateful to the City Council for  
16 championing the cause of these adults and for  
17 securing a \$12 million expansion of adult literacy  
18 funding and services for each over the past four  
19 years. Unfortunately, this funding and these  
20 services are just the tip of the iceberg.

21 When it comes to funding for adult literacy,  
22 there are really three issues. The first is the  
23 paucity of the funding itself which shuts the doors  
24 to over 95 percent of those adults in need.

1  
2       The second is the unreliable nature of the  
3 current funding streams, which poses a continuous  
4 threat to program stability, staff continuity, and  
5 the ability to fully achieve program and policy  
6 goals.

7       The third is the inadequacy of the funding  
8 formulas and rates which undermine programs ability  
9 to provide the full array in depth of services that  
10 students need.

11       In December of 2017, my organization, released a  
12 report entitled, Investing in Quality. A blueprint  
13 for adult literacy programs and funders. Funded by  
14 DYCD, the report details 14 building blocks of a  
15 comprehensive community-based adult literacy program,  
16 identifies the resources needed to fully implement  
17 the building blocks and includes a first of its kind  
18 cost model.

19       Based on our cost model, we found that community-  
20 based adult literacy programs would need to have  
21 their current funding rates increased by at least  
22 four times in order to fully implement the components  
23 and services outlined in the report.

24       While this might sound like a big leap, we know  
25 that in current funding rates, many of the critical

1  
2 program components that we identify, such as full-  
3 time teachers, counseling, support for students,  
4 workforce transition services, professional  
5 development and planning time for staff, and  
6 integrated technology are often compromised.

7 NYCCAL is calling on the City Council and the  
8 Mayor to take two crucial steps toward creating a  
9 city that truly provides educational opportunity for  
10 all.

11 First, baseline the \$12 million for DYCD funded  
12 adult literacy services and combine these funds with  
13 the existing \$3.5 million in previously baselined  
14 funding.

15 Then, once the baseline funding level for adult  
16 literacy services is increased, issue a new adult  
17 literacy RFP that establishes a funding rate that  
18 will enable programs to provide the high quality,  
19 comprehensive services that all adult students  
20 deserve.

21 Currently, DYCD funded programs are funded at  
22 \$950 per student, as we heard earlier. NYCCAL is  
23 calling on the next DYCD RFP to establish a rate of  
24 no less than double that amount and ideally up to  
25



1  
2 four times that amount consistent with the rate  
3 identified in our analysis.

4 NYCCAL believes that being able to read and  
5 write, speak and understand English, obtain an  
6 equivalency diploma and successfully enter job  
7 training or post-secondary education are the rights  
8 of every New Yorker and that every adult in need  
9 should be able to access high quality adult literacy  
10 services.

11 If we are truly a city committed to equal  
12 opportunity and social justice, we should expect no  
13 less. Thank you again for the opportunity to  
14 testify.

15 LENA COHEN: So, it's still morning, so good  
16 morning Chair Rose. Thank you so much for holding  
17 this hearing. I think it's a really excellent step  
18 that the Council is taking to provide as much  
19 oversight over these critical adult literacy services  
20 and we're really happy to be speaking with you today  
21 and hopefully, you know, a really productive  
22 relationship will develop so that we can strengthen  
23 New York City's Adult Literacy program.

24 My name is Lena Cohen, I am here on behalf of  
25 United Neighborhood Houses. We've had the pleasure

1 of working with you on a range of issues.

2 Especially this last year over the salary parity and

3 I want to also thank you for -

4 UNIDENTIFIED: [INAUDIBLE 02:21:17].

5 LENA COHEN: Yes, absolutely, we are lucky to be  
6 partners with you. Another issue that United  
7 Neighborhood Houses focuses on is adult literacy.  
8

9 Our network of 42 settlement houses across the  
10 state reaches 765 New Yorkers from all walks of life  
11 and right now, we're in our 100<sup>th</sup> year of mobilizing  
12 settlement houses and their communities to be leaders  
13 in strengthening their access to important public  
14 programs and civic engagement opportunities and so  
15 much more.

16 UNH leads advocacy with our partners such as the  
17 New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy on a broad  
18 range of issues including: Civic engagement; youth  
19 services; early childhood education; as well senior  
20 services and of course, immigrant services in adult  
21 literacy.

22 So, we thank the City Council for passing a  
23 budget that included \$12 million for adult literacy  
24 over the past few Fiscal years. It's been a really  
25 important step that the Council and the

1  
2 Administration have taken to provide the 2.2 million  
3 New Yorkers in the city that lack either an English  
4 proficiency, a high school diploma or both.

5 But the available programming only serves a small  
6 fraction of the need. Right now, we're looking at a  
7 population of 3 percent that has access to English  
8 literacy services. And so, that really puts us in a  
9 difficult position when we consider the broad crisis  
10 that we're trying to battle.

11 DYCD funded adult literacy programs are truly  
12 excellent. They are so important to invest in  
13 because they serve people in need that are barred  
14 from participating in many other types of adult  
15 education programs. A lot of the other programs  
16 focus on things like workforce outcomes and what not,  
17 and that really tends to leave out the lowest level  
18 learners that community-based organizations, such as  
19 settlement houses focus on.

20 As we heard in the DYCD testimony, their programs  
21 are really structured to serve at least 50 percent  
22 learners that are at the lowest levels. And so,  
23 that's why these programs are so essential to invest  
24 in and fund because they work, and the data proves

1  
2 that and it's just a question of whether or not we  
3 have the funds to really meet the growing need.

4       Additionally, DYCD funded programs are open to  
5 all residents regardless of citizenship status. So,  
6 given the growing attacks against immigrant  
7 communities and other adult literacy learners such as  
8 Public Charge, these programs are really essential in  
9 terms of providing a safe space for immigrants and  
10 their other students and allies to connect with  
11 teachers at community-based organizations in the  
12 context of learning English and trying to improve  
13 their lives.

14       However, we are extremely thankful for the  
15 partnership that we've established with the Council  
16 and the Administration to secure these additional \$12  
17 million expansion dollars, but they haven't been  
18 baselined yet. And of course, that leaves providers  
19 year after year with uncertainty as to whether they  
20 can keep the door open or retain their staff and this  
21 perineal uncertainty really prevents programs from  
22 expanding in achieving the goals that we all want  
23 them to be able to achieve.

24       So, that's why we're really excited to work with  
25 you and your colleagues in the Council to get these

1  
2 dollars baselined once and for all in Fiscal Year  
3 2021, so that we can then focus on the other things  
4 that my colleague Ira was talking about, such as the  
5 lower reimbursement rates.

6 As Ira mentioned, the DYCD Commission report in  
7 2017, that the Literacy Assistance Center conducted  
8 showed that providers are only receiving \$950 per  
9 student. And that rate is not anywhere close to what  
10 they really need to provide high quality service.  
11 However, the community-based organizations that  
12 provide these services are committed to meeting the  
13 students needs.

14 And so, they often dip into their other funding  
15 stream, such as general operating dollars and what  
16 not, to make sure that they are able to support their  
17 students. That leaves them with a deficit year after  
18 year. They are willing to take that on because it is  
19 such an important service to provide English classes,  
20 but the city should really you know, consider the  
21 fact that in order to provide sustainable funding for  
22 these programs, we do really need higher  
23 reimbursement rates and we're excited to work with  
24 you all to figure out how we can make that happen in  
25 a way that allows us to address the gap in education

1  
2 among adults, as well meet providers where they need  
3 to be met.

4 And we think that's possible because these  
5 programs are structured in a really helpful and  
6 productive way and we hope to work with you to see  
7 them grow in the next year.

8 So, thank you for hearing this testimony and  
9 we're excited to partner with you.

10 LISA SCHWARTZWALD: Alright, is it afternoon yet?  
11 We're five minutes over now, so, good afternoon  
12 Council Member Rose. My name is Lisa Schwartzwald, I  
13 am a manager of Education Policy. I specialize in  
14 two generation work, early childhood and adult  
15 literacy at the New York Immigration Coalition.

16 So, we are an umbrella policy and advocacy  
17 organization of more than 200 groups serving  
18 immigrants and refugees across New York State.

19 Our member organization specifically served the  
20 needs of marginalized immigrant communities including  
21 newly arrived immigrants, low income families, and  
22 youth and adults with limited English proficiency.

23 So, we would also of course like to thank you and  
24 the Mayor and the City Council for the \$12 million  
25 investment in Adult Literacy services. I would say

1  
2 that I absolutely echo what my colleagues Ira and  
3 Lena have both said. I would also like to add that  
4 across New York State, there are around 971,000  
5 parents of multilingual learners and I apologize,  
6 it's not in the written testimony.

7 But, between the ages of zero and eight and many  
8 of those live in New York City and around 42 percent  
9 of those parents are limited English proficient.

10 So, when we talk about these adult literacy  
11 programs and how important they are, I think that it  
12 is also equally important to stress how many parents  
13 need to access services and programs like this. Not  
14 only for their own benefit and for the benefit of  
15 workforce but also because they are their child's  
16 access to all of these incredibly

17 important services to their healthcare, to their  
18 education. You know, if they want to go to the  
19 doctor, if they want to talk to their child's  
20 teacher. Like, all of these are things that they  
21 really need the support in doing and I think we've  
22 seen that parents truly do so many things on behalf  
23 of their children.

24 So, when we talk about this fewer than four  
25 percent of New Yorkers who need these services not

1  
2 being able to access them, we are also talking about  
3 all of those parents.

4 I would also again like to echo the ask that we  
5 baseline that \$12 million and combine it with the 3.5  
6 that's already been baselined, so that we can really  
7 you know, plan year to year for these programs to  
8 keeping them as strong as they are already. And  
9 also, to echo that we also hear from our providers  
10 that the amount of money that they get per student is  
11 just simply not enough to really cover the costs of  
12 running these programs.

13 And again, they do do it anyway. I think  
14 particularly in the worlds that we currently live in  
15 when immigrants are really under attack.

16 Being able to access resources like this that can  
17 help them on the immigration path and that can help  
18 them to really integrate and join their communities  
19 and then give back is incredibly important.

20 So, I just want to say thank you again for having  
21 us here today and I look forward to working with you  
22 in the future.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

24

25



1  
2 NANCY ROBLES: Good afternoon, my name is Nancy  
3 and I am a survivor of domestic violence and a member  
4 of Voices Women known as VOW.

5 VOW is a grassroots organization of survivors of  
6 domestic violence who organize to improve the systems  
7 that abused women turn to for safety and justice.  
8 It's important that we provide services to victims in  
9 a safe, compassion and swift manner.

10 One of the key gap to improving these services is  
11 that many domestic violence services, organizations  
12 do not have peer delivered services model in place.

13 We believe that agencies that receive funding for  
14 domestic violence services, should have an active  
15 peer delivered service model.

16 They can begin by having all of their employment  
17 advertisement include language that encourage  
18 survivors of domestic violence to apply. Moreover,  
19 we believe that the City Council, Department of  
20 Homeless Services, Human Resource Administration and  
21 the Mayor's Office to end domestic and gender-based  
22 violence should mandate that organizations applying  
23 for funding has this model in place within their  
24 organization.

1  
2 Hiring survivors helps other survivors establish  
3 connection with someone who shared a similar story.  
4 It can increase hope which many survivors have lost  
5 during an abusive relationship. This is just a  
6 beginning and we encourage all who work in the  
7 domestic violence services field to put into action a  
8 peer delivered service model.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you and in regard to  
11 your comments about domestic violence and peer  
12 related services, peer delivered services, are you  
13 also requesting that these services be delivered in  
14 the languages that many of the survivors you know,  
15 come to the agency with?

16 NANCY ROBLES: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so, you would want  
18 culturally competent peer directed services.

19 NANCY ROBLES: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, and I thank you for your  
21 courage to come and testify before us today. And  
22 that's something that we would more than be willing  
23 to promote.

24 NANCY ROBLES: Thank you.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, I want to thank all of  
3 you, and I think I just heard in all of your  
4 testimony that you think baselining is a good thing.  
5 Go figure. So, you are asking that the funding, at  
6 the level that we currently fund, that that number be  
7 baselined and is it because of the difficulty in  
8 retaining staff from year to year because of the  
9 uncertainty of the funding, or are there other  
10 contributing factors?

11 IRA YANKWITT: Yes, exactly, it's both the  
12 inability to have certainty about being able to  
13 maintain staff which then also becomes an issue about  
14 actually being able to hire staff, because there are  
15 fewer people who are willing to take on that  
16 uncertainty as teachers. But it's really the  
17 instability both of staff and then all of the other  
18 program structures and personnel and resources. So,  
19 it's teachers, it's counselors, it's space concerns.  
20 So, anything that you need to run a program, if you  
21 don't know that you are going to have funding in  
22 subsequent years, it's hard to make those kinds of  
23 commitments and that's part of why it's been  
24 sometimes difficult for DYCD to distribute the funds  
25 as quickly as you might imagine.

1  
2 Programs are very eager to expand their services,  
3 but between the fact that in some cases, as Lena  
4 mentioned, there running at a loss at \$950 a student.  
5 They can't increase that loss and because they don't  
6 know that the services and the funding, the services  
7 are going to extend into the out years. They have to  
8 regrettably decline.

9 So, it's both a staffing issue, uncertainty about  
10 staffing, but really uncertainty about every other  
11 kind of resource and structure that a program needs  
12 to invest in.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: DYCD increased the per student  
14 allocation to \$950. Each of you indicated in your  
15 testimony that that's not enough and you said that  
16 \$2,000 per student is a rate. What would you say  
17 would be an acceptable per student rate to provide  
18 the quality of services that are needed?

19 IRA YANKWITT: So, my organization as was  
20 mentioned earlier in the DYCD testimony, is DYCD is a  
21 technical assistance provider to the adult literacy  
22 programs that they fund. And in our first year of  
23 having our funding increased as a result of the \$12  
24 million in expansion funding, DYCD, I would say very  
25 courageously allowed us to use part of those funds to

1  
2 work with programs to produce a report that says,  
3 here's what makes a good program. Here are the  
4 resources you need and then to do a cost model budget  
5 that where we actually created a hypothetical adult  
6 literacy program that look typical of the programs  
7 that we see in CBO's throughout the city and  
8 identified what the costs and went in and did the  
9 research and including things like looking at what's  
10 the cost of commercial real estate in the South  
11 Bronx, right.

12 And so, from that, we came up with a per student  
13 cost, which is about four times the current funding  
14 rate. So, that's why we keep on citing that funding.

15 Obviously, there is attention that even if we  
16 were able to baseline the \$12 million and have that  
17 built into the RFP, if we increase the investment per  
18 student at the same baselined amount, that decreases  
19 the number of students who would be served.

20 Now, we might argue that you know, the ability to  
21 provide the kind of quality services that these  
22 students need, and the kinds of outcomes we're going  
23 to be able see. Not just in terms of workforce or  
24 credentialing, but in terms of a parents ability to  
25 support their children. The ability of an immigrant

1  
2 to really fully participate in the political process  
3 to access healthcare.

4 We might say that that's worth the trade off in  
5 numbers but there is a tension there and you know,  
6 I'm talking off script here, but really what we  
7 should be coming to and asking for is \$50 million.  
8 So, that we can quadruple the level of funding in  
9 each student but also maintain and even increase the  
10 numbers served because we're already only serving 3-4  
11 percent.

12 But I'm happy to share that report with you  
13 anytime and you could see how we cost it out.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, is there a wait time to  
15 get into the programs?

16 LENA COHEN: Yeah, quite a few of them have wait  
17 times. I think that in terms of which of our  
18 programs kind of collected information, how many of  
19 them are able to actually bring people in off the  
20 wait list. It can definitely vary from program to  
21 program and from neighborhood to neighborhood. But  
22 certainly, I think almost all the programs have some  
23 sort of wait list involved.

24 IRA YANKWITT: Right and there is some cruelty in  
25 keeping wait lists, because if I come to a program

1  
2 and I'm looking for services and I'm put on a wait  
3 list, my assumption is that that's real and I'm going  
4 to get off that wait list. And I'm actually going to  
5 get services and it also may lead me not to look for  
6 services elsewhere or to accept services elsewhere if  
7 that's the program that I really believe would serve  
8 me best.

9       So, I know when I ran a program, we really  
10 struggled with whether to keep a wait list at all.  
11 You know, because we didn't want people to have the  
12 false hope that they were going to get in.

13       So, you know we don't really - we know what the  
14 need is in terms of the \$2.2 million. We know the  
15 number that we're serving in terms of the 16,000 that  
16 DYCD cited or 60 plus thousand citywide. What we  
17 don't know is what the demand really is because  
18 programs are sometimes reluctant to keep wait lists  
19 or longer wait lists than is really realistic.

20       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What is the largest gap in  
21 terms of adult literacy throughout New York City and  
22 can it be fixed?

23       IRA YANKWITT: In terms of the types of services?

24       CHAIRPERSON ROSE: In terms of adult literacy  
25 programs, what would you say is the largest gap?

1  
2 IRA YANKWITT: I think we probably all could  
3 speak to that a little differently. I mean, I think  
4 something that I've observed from the time I started  
5 in the early 90's, to now is that as the demographics  
6 of the city change as we welcome more and more  
7 immigrants, more of the services have shifted from  
8 the basic literacy. Basic education, high school  
9 equivalency, but those who are underserved by the  
10 public-school system to English language classes for  
11 immigrant and even in those basic literacy and high  
12 school equivalency programs, often what we're seeing  
13 is immigrants who develop English language  
14 proficiency then transferring in to get their  
15 diploma, which is fantastic.

16 But I think the reality is, because the capacity  
17 is so limited in terms of the number of seats, and  
18 the demand on part of immigrants is so great, not  
19 only aren't we serving the vast majority of  
20 immigrants who can use the services but just a small  
21 handful, but it also means that we're seeing fewer  
22 and fewer classes for those who were born and raised  
23 in New York City and didn't graduate from high  
24 school.



1  
2 And that concerns me, because by not offering the  
3 classes, we're not really seeing what the true demand  
4 is and I don't think we're speaking to a need and a  
5 real responsibility we have to serve people who we  
6 weren't able to serve as children.

7 LENA COHEN: And I would just add from the  
8 settlement house perspective, that the majority of  
9 students that seek out classes are working parents,  
10 and these are parents that don't necessarily fit the  
11 nine to five office job image that you know, a lot of  
12 people would associate with when you want to schedule  
13 a class. Because if someone else doesn't want to  
14 schedule their adult literacy class at 5 p.m. if  
15 that's when the folks that they want to serve are  
16 going to work.

17 So, as a result, we've seen a lot of  
18 organizations such as university settlement or Henry  
19 Street settlement or CAMBA schedule their adult  
20 literacy classes at the time that the parents would  
21 be dropping off their children to the early childhood  
22 education programs.

23 And so, that's why when we talk about the gaps in  
24 population served, we really have to consider what  
25 the life model is of the student that's going to the

1  
2 class in addition to all of the age and demographic  
3 and social characteristic information that DYCD is  
4 very good about collecting.

5 Anecdotally, we know that students often have to  
6 stop taking classes because it no longer fits with  
7 their work schedule. They don't have childcare  
8 available and if they can only go to a settlement  
9 house for a service, their probably going to choose  
10 something closer to case management or other types of  
11 wrap around social services.

12 The language in Schedule C that explains the  
13 scope of service for adult literacy programs,  
14 includes support services such as case management.  
15 which it's really great, however, because providers  
16 are only receiving \$950 per student, it's really  
17 going above and beyond. But whenever they build in  
18 case management into those programs.

19 And so, again, it goes back to the issues of  
20 programs operating on a deficit, programs being  
21 unable to plan for the years ahead due to the lack of  
22 baselined funds and then, when we talk about the wait  
23 list, it's like how can they really get to the wait  
24 list when they're just trying to make sure that on  
25 July 1<sup>st</sup>, their doors will still be open.

1  
2 LISA SCHWARTZWALD: I would add in addition to  
3 agreeing absolutely with both of those things. That  
4 the NYIC had actually done a series of round tables  
5 this past summer, both in New York City and in a  
6 couple other places and what we were really hearing  
7 in addition to just the difficulty. Particularly the  
8 difficulty with working adults was that for parents  
9 specifically, often times the goal of learning  
10 English was too intergrade. Right, so they were  
11 really just integration factors. They want to be  
12 able to go around their neighborhood and just  
13 interact with people and you know, build a home  
14 somewhere and the sort of end goal of a lot of adult  
15 literacy funding is very, very focused on workforce  
16 development and high school equivalency part of whats  
17 great about the DYCD funding is that so much of it  
18 does go to lower English proficiency, but there is  
19 still a sort of idea, I think, that circulates like  
20 the purpose of adult literacy is ultimately jobs and  
21 that is not what we always see reflected.

22 Often times you have one parent working but one  
23 parent may not be working. And so, their primary  
24 focus is really on parenting. And that particular  
25 population of people; it's very difficult to get them

1  
2 into classes, just because there are so few of them  
3 to begin with that focus on those levels.

4 And when programs are really being pushed towards  
5 these sort of workforce, adult literacy programs,  
6 just because that's where quite a bit of the funding  
7 exists. Then it really limits the spots that those  
8 parents can take to do what they want to do.

9 IRA YANKWITT: If I could just piggyback on that.  
10 I mean, throughout this hearing what we've been  
11 talking about are the current publicly funded  
12 community-based adult literacy programs.

13 When you ask about gaps and what additional  
14 funding might be able to support, I think about  
15 organizations that are currently providing services  
16 that are not getting publicly funded or the kinds of  
17 organizations that could be providing services that  
18 aren't getting publicly funded.

19 And those are often the organizations working  
20 most on the grassroots, most contextualizing their  
21 work around issues in communities. So, I think about  
22 an organization like ID Car in Queens, in Jackson  
23 Heights, working with an Epulis community who are  
24 providing ESOL classes with volunteers from the

1  
2 community and they focus on issues like temporary  
3 protected status and the right of nail salon workers.

4 You know, which is a large job but within the  
5 community. Their not getting publicly funded dollars  
6 to do that work.

7 I think about the testimony that we heard from  
8 the panelist at the end, which I was very humbled by  
9 and really appreciate it. Why aren't we providing in  
10 addition to other services, adult literacy classes  
11 within domestic violence shelters. So, I vote think  
12 about where are the gaps and services in terms of who  
13 we know are in need of the traditional services if  
14 you will, but I also think about where the gaps are  
15 in terms of the folks who are providing  
16 nontraditional services or could be providing  
17 services. And I'd encourage us to expand our  
18 thinking about who and where these services could be  
19 provided if they were the resources.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: That's excellent, we're like  
21 on the same page. What would a sort of a perfect  
22 model look like in an adult literacy program? What  
23 are the pieces, the components that you know, would  
24 make it totally comprehensive, you know,  
25 collaborative? Do you have like a model program that

1  
2 could be actually – maybe we could pilot? So, that  
3 we could you know, make it a comprehensive –

4 IRA YANKWITT: Funny you should ask. So, this  
5 report that we produced, and I'd be delighted to send  
6 you as many copies as you want, or just the link and  
7 you don't even have to kill the tree.

8 The report is structured such that we actually  
9 identify based on research and work with programs,  
10 program managers, teachers, students in New York  
11 City. We identify 14 components of a comprehensive  
12 program and we describe them, and we summarize them  
13 all in one page.

14 And it's generic in the sense that they are the  
15 components that any program anywhere would need to  
16 have in place. Obviously, depending on your  
17 community, who you're working with. Which if those  
18 would be more in **[inaudible 2:57:38]**, which might be  
19 different, but these are 14 components of a  
20 comprehensive program.

21 Then we went on to say, describe what the  
22 resources you needed to implement them and then the  
23 cost. So, that's what that report outlines and happy  
24 to share that.

1  
2 And what we have come to Council to discuss for  
3 at least the last two years, and Council Member  
4 Menchaca who is a real champion in this issue, he has  
5 been very receptive to.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: He is a very vocal advocate.

7 IRA YANKWITT: Absolutely, is potentially funding  
8 a pilot where we would identify and we would do this  
9 in partnership with Council, because you obviously  
10 know your communities far more than we do, right.

11 Where we would identify let's say, five programs  
12 that have been providing services within five  
13 different communities that would have the capacity to  
14 have their funding quadrupled, consistent with our  
15 report to serve the same number of students but to  
16 serve them fully and comprehensively and to be able  
17 to build out all those components and let's think not  
18 just about the traditional workforce outcomes or  
19 educational gain outcomes, but the range of goals  
20 that students have for coming to programs.

21 Let's track their outcomes around that full range  
22 of goals you know, and maybe most significantly  
23 parent engagement and parent empowerment. And let's  
24 really see, are we right? Right, we're coming to you  
25 and saying, if you fund these programs at four times

1  
2 the level that they are currently funding at, they  
3 are going to be able to serve their students better  
4 and we're going to see significantly better outcomes.  
5 Let's test that and so, we've suggested five  
6 programs, four times the amount. It's a few million  
7 dollars; Council Member Menchaca has been receptive.  
8 We've had those discussions, but we really never  
9 moved forward in seeing that.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I was going to say, you don't  
11 have to sell me on this. I'm going to talk to  
12 Council Member Menchaca, we're both on the budget  
13 negotiating team which is going to meet shortly.

14 So, I look forward to sort of circling back to  
15 have an extensive conversation about this and I just  
16 want to ask you very quickly, any feedback, any  
17 concerns, anything about Intro. 649 from your  
18 prospective?

19 LENA COHEN: Sure, I'll speak on behalf of UNH.  
20 We appreciate the Council creating this opportunity  
21 to discuss the bill, which will require bilingual  
22 staff after school programs. As settlement houses  
23 are one of the leading providers of after school  
24 programs, you know, our members kind of perked up at  
25 this idea and recognize - or you know, we're happy



1  
2 that the Council is responding to the need for  
3 multilingual access in after school programs.

4 However, city and state contracts for these programs  
5 do not provide sufficient funds to allow providers to  
6 hire staff that meet all of the language requirements  
7 that would be in this legislation.

8 Many programs are working for the minimum wage or  
9 just a little more and a lot of staff at these  
10 programs are competing with jobs that offer similar  
11 compensation but do not require specialized skills,  
12 so we're concerned on that.

13 While we completely agree with the need, we would  
14 just have to find a way to ensure that we wouldn't  
15 see too much staff transitioning away given these new  
16 requirements and instead, we could really focus on  
17 supplementing the bill with professional development  
18 and technical assistance as well as the funds that  
19 provide us with need to retain the staff and really  
20 achieve the goals that we very much see this bill  
21 sets out to do.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I want to thank you all. I  
23 want to thank you all for a very good hearing and I  
24 really like the fact that you made it very clear what  
25

1  
2 the recommendations should be going forward. Thank  
3 you.

4 Nancy, thank you for your testimony and if  
5 there's anything that we can do to be of assistance,  
6 please be in touch and I just have one for the  
7 record. The New York, the YMCA of Greater New York,  
8 has submitted testimony for this oversight hearing,  
9 that will be entered.

10 And with that, I'd like to thank you all again  
11 and this meeting is adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date April 1, 2018