

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEES ON AGING, CIVIL SERVICE & LABOR,
SMALL BUSINESS, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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February 25, 2009
Start: 10:27 am
Recess: 12:41 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

TONY AVELLA
Acting Chairperson

MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO
Chairperson

LARRY B. SEABROOK
Chairperson

DAVID YASSKY
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Letitia James
Annabel Palma
Helen D. Foster

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Kendall Stewart
Sara M. Gonzalez
Vincent J. Gentile
James Vacca
Mathieu Eugene
Elizabeth Crowley
Michael C. Nelson
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Suri Duitch
Director of Adult and Continuing Education
CUNY

Gail Mellow
President
LaGuardia Community College

Eduardo J. Marti
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Denise A. Ward
Assistant Dean for Continuing Education
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Edward G. Rogoff
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Thomas Kamber
Executive Director
OATS

Arthur Matarazzo
Participant
OATS

Maria Serrano
Director of Senior Employment
DFTA

2 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Good morning,
3 everyone. I'd like to welcome you to this
4 hearing. As you can tell, I am not Charles
5 Barron, head of the Higher Education Committee.
6 Charles is actually on his way to Washington this
7 morning. He called me late last night and asked
8 if I would chair the Higher Education Committee
9 this morning on his behalf. I'm happy to do that.
10 Let me give the opening statement that Charles
11 would have given and then I'm going to call on
12 Council Member Marie del Carmen Arroyo and Council
13 Member Larry Seabrook also for opening remarks.
14 We are expected to be joined by Council Member
15 David Yassky as well. Good morning. Allow me to
16 introduce my fellow members of the Higher
17 Education Committee and the other committees that
18 are here. Joining on my right is Council Member
19 Sara Gonzalez and on the left is Annabel Palma,
20 James Vacca and we expect other members to be here
21 shortly. I would also like to thank the members
22 of the Committees on Aging, Civil Service and
23 Labor and Small Business for joining us today.
24 Today, City Council committees will examine
25 retaining older workers for the 21st Century

workforce. The Social Security Administration estimates that the number of Americans 65 and older will double during the first three decades of this century to 70 million. This is compared with the rise of about 25% in the nation's overall population to nearly 360 million. Many Americans aged 65 and older are choosing to defer formal retirement and continue working. Whether these workers cannot afford to retire, or they choose to continue working due to the social and psychological benefits that the workplace provides, older workers will need to refresh current skills and learn new ones for the ever-changing electronic workplace. Many older adults, particularly baby boomers, are returning to school to advance their careers or pursue new ones. Community colleges across the nation are leading efforts to offer innovative programs to older students to hone their job seeking strategies and other career skills. Such colleges have created educational and vocational training programs and offer supportive services for older students. Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, for example, has a highly

2 recognized program for older adults called My
3 Turn, which is a free education program open to
4 New York State residents age 60 and older. My
5 Turn offers over 400 courses, ranging from arts
6 and music to computers and health education. More
7 than 2,000 students have enrolled in the My Turn
8 program each academic year. Experienced workers
9 are a vital part of our city's workforce and
10 economy. We look forward to hearing testimony
11 from program providers today and discussing ways
12 to improve and encourage programs that will target
13 this important population. Next I'd like to call
14 on Council Member Arroyo for her opening
15 statement.

16 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, my
17 Co-chair. It's a privilege and a pleasure to hold
18 this joint hearing with the Committees on Higher
19 Education, Small Business Services and Civil
20 Service and Labor. I'd like to welcome also my
21 other co-chair, Council Member Seabrook, who is
22 batting clean-up for the committee in absence of a
23 permanent chair, but it's a good choice. I
24 welcome everyone here this morning. In this
25 economic climate where people across all income

2 levels are faced with the prospect of losing their
3 jobs, it is appropriate that the council examine
4 workforce programs that seek to ensure that those
5 who require jobs and job training have the tools
6 they need to obtain the work they need.

7 Specifically today we'll be looking at the
8 training and workforce programs available to help
9 older New Yorkers achieve their job and career
10 goals. While it's no surprise to anyone that the
11 aging population is growing rapidly, many of us
12 are included, furthermore, I'm sure that it is no
13 surprise that increasing numbers of older adults
14 and seniors are often forced to work not only well
15 past their retirement years, but also to seek to
16 move into totally new careers. According to the
17 U.S. Department of Labor, between 1977 and 2007,
18 employment of workers over 65 increased over 100%.
19 That's compared to an increase of 59% for the rest
20 of the population. The number of employed men 65
21 and over rose 75% while the employment rates for
22 women age 65 and older increased nearly twice as
23 much to 147%. Most surprising, seniors age 75 and
24 over experienced the largest increase during this
25 period. Although the total labor force is

1 projected to increase by 8.5% by the year 2016,
2 the number of workers age 55 to 64 is expected to
3 climb by 36.5%. Those between the age of 65 and
4 74 will grow by more than 80%, accounting for over
5 6% of the total workforce in the year 2016. it
6 has also been projected that by the year 2015,
7 workers age 55 and older will comprise 20% of the
8 state's overall labor market. Today's older
9 adults and seniors have very different needs and
10 desires when compared to past generations of older
11 adults. Many wish to stay connected in some way
12 to their work life, even after they retire. Among
13 the reasons is to maintain financial security and
14 to stay productive and socially engaged. One of
15 the things that we've learned in discussions in
16 this committee is that retirement puts seniors or
17 older adults at risk for social isolation. When
18 that incident in their life increases, it's
19 usually connected to their leaving the workplace.
20 Some older adults wish to continue full time work,
21 but many say they simply wish to work fewer hours
22 with more flexible work arrangements. Despite the
23 needs and desires, many barriers prevent older
24 workers from achieving their goals. Some barriers
25

1 include the difficulties faced in keeping pace
2 with changing skill requirements and technology,
3 inflexible work schedules, insufficient training
4 opportunities, a legal framework that can strongly
5 encourage retirement at early ages, as well as
6 actual or perceived age discrimination in the
7 workplace. Additionally, those who have limited
8 English proficiency and disabilities may require
9 special accommodations that some employers may be
10 unable and often unwilling to provide.
11

12 Furthermore, for those who have been out of the
13 workforce for a number of years, reconnecting with
14 the job market may be especially difficult.

15 Dislocated workers face a particularly difficult
16 time in obtaining new employment. They have
17 obsolete skills and they may live in a geographic
18 area that has a declining number of jobs similar
19 to what they were formerly trained for. That is
20 just a quick glimpse at some of the issues faced
21 by this segment of the population. At this
22 hearing we will examine this issue in much greater
23 detail and look at what the city, through the
24 Workforce One Centers, managed by the Small
25 Business Services and the partnership with the

2 City University of New York and the programs that
3 are available to address these issues and to
4 prepare older adults, the private sector and the
5 city itself for the future face of our workforce.

6 As always, I look forward to our conversation.

7 Your insights and your inputs always make us a
8 little smarter and launch conversations that get
9 us closer to solving some of the city's problems.

10 I will excuse myself shortly to attend a hearing
11 across the street in education. I'm going to ask
12 my colleague, Council Member Sara Gonzalez, to sit
13 in during my absence.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Thank you.

15 Next I'd like to call on Co chair Larry Seabrook.

16 CHAIRPERSON SEABROOK: Thank you
17 very much, Mr. Chairman and good morning. I'm
18 Council Member Larry B. Seabrook, chair of the
19 Committee on Civil Service and Labor. Allow me to
20 introduce the members of that committee, Mr. Vinny
21 Gentile, who wasn't here when we first did the
22 introduction and he's a member of the Civil
23 Service and Labor Committee and the Committee on
24 Aging as well. We're all aging. We're getting
25 there. They're talking about us. Today we will

2 examine retaining older workers for the 21st
3 Century workforce. According to the U.S.
4 Department of Labor, between 1977 and 2007,
5 employment of workers age 65 and over increased by
6 101%. Although the total labor force is projected
7 to increase by 8.5% by 2016, the number of workers
8 aged 16 to 24 is projected to decline. In
9 comparison, workers age 55 to 64 are expected to
10 climb by 36.5%. The aging of New York State's
11 population will substantially affect certain
12 occupations and industries. As mature workers
13 retire in large numbers from key industries,
14 including state government, educational service,
15 health services and manufacturing jobs, industries
16 may face labor force gaps. Additionally,
17 companies could face a talent void as trained and
18 qualified personnel leave the workforce. More
19 people are deciding that formal retirement is not
20 for them. Some people continue to work for
21 financial reasons. Others simply like to keep
22 busy while learning new skills. Older workers
23 offer competitive advantages to employers because
24 many possess management and organizational skills
25 that can be used in a variety of industries and

2 occupations. Despite the advantages older workers
3 offer, many continue to face challenges in the
4 labor market. Some of the barriers experienced by
5 older workers include difficulty in keeping pace
6 with changing skills requirements and technology,
7 lack of flexibility in work schedules,
8 insufficient training opportunities, laws and
9 regulations that encourage complete retirement at
10 earlier ages and actual or perceived age
11 discrimination in the workplace by employers and
12 coworkers. Older persons of communities of color
13 may face racial and ethnic discrimination in
14 addition to the barriers they may face as older
15 workers. The nature of retirement is changing.
16 No longer do most workers wish to experience a
17 sudden end of work, followed by an equally sudden
18 onset of full time retirement. Today the council
19 looks forward to hearing testimony on modifying
20 retirement plans and utilizing the vast expertise
21 of older workers. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I
22 think that we're ready to conduct the hearing.
23 Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Thank you.

25 The first panel will be representatives of CUNY.

2 I think we have five members of the panel, if the
3 sergeant-at-arms can put some more chairs at the
4 witness table. I need five chairs. While we're
5 waiting for the panel to be seated, we've also
6 been joined by Council Member Mike Nelson.

7 SURI DUITCH: Thank you for the
8 opportunity to testify here this morning. My name
9 is Suri Duitch, and I am the University Director
10 of Adult and Continuing Education at the City
11 University of New York. We're pleased to be here
12 this morning with a panel of experts from CUNY to
13 testify about retraining older adults for the 21st
14 Century workforce, a topic of great importance to
15 the university. CUNY's adult and continuing
16 education programs, which operate at all of our
17 colleges, provide a range of workforce development
18 services to New Yorkers. During the 2007-2008
19 year, we enrolled about 250,000 individuals in
20 over 4,000 adult and continuing education programs
21 and courses. This number included 80,000 adults
22 enrolled in vocational programs of many kinds,
23 from short workshops that help individuals retool
24 their resumes and get prepared for a job search,
25 to GED preparation and basic skills programs

helping individuals transition into college degrees programs, to intensive longer-term vocational training for specific positions in a wide range of industries. In a time of economic recession, need for these programs are increasing. Older adults are an important constituency for continuing education and workforce development programs at CUNY. Many CUNY colleges offer discounted continuing education tuition and specialized programs targeted to older adults, including work-related training and education. You'll hear about one example, the 50+ Club at Queensborough Community College. Other CUNY colleges programs targeted to this population include: Options College Study Program for Mature Learners at the College of Staten Island, the College for Older Adults at Queens College, and Kingsborough Community College's 55+ Community Active Program. You also referred to the program My Turn in the opening statement. CUNY has computer courses especially for older adults at Lehman College in the Bronx, Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn, Queens College and Queensborough

2 Community College. I will now introduce you to
3 the panel of my colleagues from CUNY: President
4 Gail Mellow of LaGuardia Community College and
5 President Eduardo Marti of Queensborough Community
6 College, along with Denise Ward, Assistant Dean
7 for Continuing Education and Workforce Development
8 at Queensborough. They'll speak about their
9 colleges' wide range of programs supporting older
10 adults. Professor Edward Rogoff of the Zicklin
11 School of Business at Baruch College will speak
12 about his own research around the entrepreneurial
13 efforts of older adults and the business
14 development services provided through Baruch's
15 Field Center for Entrepreneurship and other small
16 business assistance programs at CUNY. Thank you
17 again for this opportunity to testify.

18 GAIL MELLOW: I'm Gail Mellow. I'm
19 the president of LaGuardia Community College. I
20 wanted you to get a sense of how difficult I think
21 the employment opportunities are. One of our
22 students who is an entrepreneur took his open bed
23 pickup truck to Midtown Manhattan and yelled out
24 the window at a corner, "I need a comptroller,"
25 and four guys with briefcases jumped into the back

2 of the truck. I'm teasing. There's not a lot of
3 workforce development jokes I can really tell. I
4 want to give you just a little bit of a specific
5 and tell you about a program at LaGuardia to give
6 you a sense of the kind of deep and connected way
7 in which CUNY can make an extraordinary difference
8 with this population. This is a proposal that's
9 been put together by LaGuardia in conjunction with
10 the New York City Department of Aging, the city's
11 Workforce Investment Board, the Older Adults
12 Technology Services and SBS, along with health
13 care employers and health care workers. Our
14 health partners include such entities as the
15 Hospital for Special Surgery, Jacobi Medical, New
16 York Health and Hospitals, the Jewish Home and
17 Hospital and the Isabella Geriatrics Center. What
18 we really want to do is put older workers into
19 high skilled health care jobs that both the
20 workers need and the hospitals need as well. What
21 we're going to do with this program, which we'll
22 present for about 60 individuals, is that we're
23 going to assess with one-on-one consultation the
24 older workers' skills. We're going to find out
25 what they want to do at this point in their life.

We'll do not only a skills assessment but we'll do very basic work with them like financial literacy. Do they understand what their options are? We'll do work search strategies. We'll talk with them about the challenges of working in the health care field. We'll talk about the entrepreneurship opportunities for them in developing their own business. We'll talk about such things like intergenerational communication and really talk about how key that is. We'll also do contextualized English as a second language instruction where in the instruction we really contextualize the ESL training so that it's really focused on the language you might use in a health care setting. The we're going to provide a very interesting occupational certificate. We worked in partnership to develop this certificate with the International Association of Health Care Central Service Material Management. We're going to provide training so that individuals become certified registered central service technicians. When I read this, I had no idea what this is, and they had to explain to me that we really will train these individuals in the principles and

2 methods of sterilization and control, sterilized
3 cleaning, packaging, distributing sterilized
4 materials, inventory control and for goods and
5 medical equipment and instruments and trays. All
6 of the things that if you don't do well really can
7 cause the individuals in a hospital or a
8 geriatrics center not to have the kind of care
9 that the hospital wants to give. So we think it's
10 a perfectly designed employment opportunity for
11 these older workers. It will be in the context of
12 looking at all the kinds of things that they want
13 to do. The hospitals are delighted that we will
14 deliver these mature, responsible, active
15 individuals who are highly trained and really I
16 think very interested in providing this kind of
17 service. I do so apologize to this joint council.
18 I'm so happy to be here, but I do have to leave.
19 So, with no disrespect for you, if there are any
20 questions I am happy to answer them, but I'm then
21 going to stand up and leave.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Council Member
23 Gonzalez has a question.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Good
25 morning. Thank you. I know that you work closely

2 with the Department of Aging and Older Adults
3 Technical Services in respect to these services
4 that you're providing in the school. What is the
5 method of outreach and how are you reaching the
6 seniors otherwise?

7 GAIL MELLOW: We have a very
8 extensive program of outreach. Like the other
9 community colleges, LaGuardia runs open houses
10 throughout the semester to really talk about what
11 opportunities there are for older adults. We also
12 work with community service organizations and the
13 faith-based organizations in our community to let
14 individuals know. The other thing that you should
15 remember is that at a community college about 15%
16 of our students are over the age of 55. So we
17 already have students on campus who are very
18 interested in these kinds of activities. A job
19 that would be meaningful and productive for the
20 community, but often not a full time career for
21 them.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Do you
23 have the number of people that are part of this
24 program, in respect to stats?

25 GAIL MELLOW: We don't. This is a

2 new program that we're developing.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: But you
4 will have?

5 GAIL MELLOW: We are launching this
6 program.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIRPERSON SEABROOK: Thank you
10 very much. Just a quick question. Has there been
11 any conversation about the new stimulus package as
12 it relates to any of this training that would be
13 funds that would be made available to community
14 colleges to do some of these things that you're
15 talking about?

16 GAIL MELLOW: Councilman Seabrook,
17 if you can look closely at me you'll see that
18 there's dollar signs in my irises because we've
19 been looking very actively. CUNY, as a whole, has
20 really been pouring over the stimulus package to
21 determine that ways in which we can attract those
22 dollars. There are new provisions in the stimulus
23 package that will allow the local workforce
24 investment board to contract specifically
25 programmatically with community colleges. So

2 there are multiple ways in which we will do that.
3 At LaGuardia we also run one of the Workforce One
4 centers where we place about 2,000 people a month
5 into jobs. So we're very excited about the
6 stimulus package and we're really putting together
7 these and more. We're looking at energy and
8 activities like weatherization. We're looking at
9 our green job development. We're looking at the
10 entrepreneurship possibilities. There are so many
11 ways in which we really want to provide for the
12 citizens of New York City by making sure we draw
13 down and use that money very effectively.

14 CHAIRPERSON SEABROOK: Thank you
15 very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Before you go,
17 let me just introduce the members of the
18 committees that have shown up: Council Member
19 Gale Brewer, Council Member Foster and Council
20 Member Stewart. I think we were also joined by
21 Council Member James for a short time. My
22 question relates to the question that Council
23 Member Seabrook just had for you. What if you
24 don't get the stimulus package? This will be a
25 question for the rest of the panel as you each

1
2 speak. What are the financial implications of the
3 budget cuts on CUNY and as it relates to the older
4 workforce programs?

5 GAIL MELLOW: Our spring semester
6 starts in March and I have a 25% increase in the
7 number of new students registering for LaGuardia.
8 But I will also tell you that we just did
9 something we called burst our cancellations, which
10 is when students have registered but they haven't
11 paid enough of a down payment. We cancelled 2,000
12 students. Those are students who went through all
13 the rigmarole you have to enroll, including their
14 financial aid applications. So I think if we
15 don't really get serious about funding higher
16 education, it's not just the older adults, it's
17 really throughout New York City, we will see
18 individuals who want to improve themselves and who
19 are very focused on getting the kind of education
20 they need to be productively employed who will not
21 be able to afford education. We know now that
22 students sometimes choose between buying their
23 Metro card in the morning or getting breakfast.
24 Those kinds of choices are tough. I have many
25 more homeless students than I've ever had before.

2 We've also seen things like domestic violence
3 reports increasing, because when your family is on
4 the edge and one more thing drops off, it really
5 redound through the family system. So I think
6 unless we really invest in public higher education
7 we are not just going to be hurting for the short
8 term; we will be hurting for the long term.

9 CUNY's community colleges create a middle class in
10 New York City. Without a middle class I don't
11 really want to live in the city. So we're very
12 concerned about that. We're happy with the
13 opportunity that the stimulus package might offer.
14 But I think we need the funding, both from this
15 council that has been extraordinarily supportive,
16 but frankly also from the mayor. At least in this
17 fiscal year we are not receiving a cut from the
18 state, but next year that doesn't look as
19 optimistic. So all of those I think are
20 components of the kind of package that we're going
21 to need to serve students who desperately want to
22 be educated.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Thank you.

24 Any other questions for President Mellow before
25 she goes? Council Member Vacca?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I want to
3 speak about the older adults and some of the
4 programs. First of all, you mentioned College for
5 Older Adults at Queens College. Can you explain?

6 SURI DUITCH: I had mentioned that
7 in my testimony. We can send you some follow-up
8 information if you wish. It's actually a range of
9 programs that are targeted toward older adults,
10 including workforce, but also recreational,
11 personal development and social activities. We'd
12 be happy to send you some additional information
13 about that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: It is not
15 degree driven?

16 SURI DUITCH: That's right. It's
17 continuing education.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: These
19 courses are at a reduced tuition or no tuition?

20 SURI DUITCH: They are reduced
21 tuition.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: At Lehman
23 you have computer courses especially for older
24 adults. What does that mean? Is that part of
25 continuing education?

2 SURI DUITCH: That's right. At
3 Lehman and a number of other colleges, some of
4 which I had mentioned. I'm sure the council
5 members will hear more about this as the morning
6 goes on. But the need for technology skills among
7 older adults is a particularly important issue.
8 If you're still in the workforce, having computer
9 skills, understanding the internet, understanding
10 all of these things that many people actually take
11 for granted at this point in terms of skills is
12 quite important, and so there are targeted
13 programs.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Isn't there
15 an age at which time people can go back and take
16 degree-bearing courses?

17 SURI DUITCH: That's right. This
18 is, again, it's on the non-credit side in
19 continuing education. So there are reduced
20 tuition but it's not the same as enrolling in
21 degree programs and credit bearing courses where
22 there actually are tuition waivers.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: What is the
24 policy on the credit-bearing courses for senior
25 citizens?

2 SURI DUITCH: The policy, and
3 people can correct me if I say it incorrectly, but
4 the policy at the senior colleges is that one can
5 audit courses and at the community colleges is
6 that one can audit, which means taking a course
7 for no credit, or take courses for credit. So
8 there are two different policies, one for the
9 community colleges and one for the senior colleges
10 at CUNY.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: But at the
12 community colleges it can be a credit-bearing
13 course?

14 SURI DUITCH: That's right.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: For an older
16 person, leading to a two-year degree?

17 SURI DUITCH: Yes, that's right.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: And that's
19 at a reduced tuition?

20 SURI DUITCH: That's free.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Is there a
22 transportation component for any of your programs
23 for older adults?

24 SURI DUITCH: Not that I'm aware
25 of, but we could confirm that for you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I just
3 wanted you to be cognizant of that. Many adults,
4 especially in the evening, to enrich themselves
5 may have transportation needs, especially if
6 they're physically disabled or if they're distant
7 from the college. I ask you to look at that. I
8 think that would enhance your program and avail it
9 to more people. Do you do anything for older
10 people online?

11 SURI DUITCH: I can't speak to that
12 this morning specifically. None of the programs
13 that we are talking about here this morning are
14 specifically online. I guess it's connected to
15 the point about computer courses targeted toward
16 older adults. I'm sure there are older adults for
17 whom going online makes a lot of sense, but it's
18 not typical for the population of individuals at
19 CUNY that you would think first to go online as
20 opposed to into a classroom.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I know when
22 we think of seniors we don't think of them online,
23 but we have about 30% of seniors now, and it's
24 growing, who do know how to operate the internet.
25 They're learning through CUNY and I think you're

2 doing a great job, but they're also learning
3 through classes at their senior centers and
4 through other programs. So it may be a market
5 that you would want to tap. I think that's
6 another way of getting people who may not have
7 transportation to learn and to grow from what you
8 offer.

9 SURI DUITCH: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: I know there's
13 another question, but I know President Mellow you
14 do have to go. Council Member Stewart, can we let
15 President Mellow go, or is your question directly
16 to her?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: I just
18 have one question. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could
19 you speak to the trend in CUNY and if there's an
20 increase in the enrollment in an area of
21 concentration?

22 GAIL MELLOW: I can speak to the
23 community colleges and say that the trend that I
24 have been seeing is really towards health care.
25 That has been a growing trend. Certainly that's

2 where a lot of jobs in New York City are. They're
3 very lucrative jobs. People really can make a
4 good living. I think also there's the service
5 component. People like to be able to help serve
6 people. I've also seen an increase in students in
7 entrepreneurial programs. So those are two at my
8 campus that I have seen.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Mr. Chair,
10 I lied when I said I only had one question.
11 There's a follow-up to that. I get the feeling
12 from a number of students who came to my office
13 and said that there's a difficulty or a long
14 waiting list in getting into nursing programs and
15 things like that. If that's trend, why is it that
16 we're not making much more room for those
17 students?

18 GAIL MELLOW: There are two very
19 specific reasons. One is that it's biology labs.
20 We run our biology lab from 6 o'clock in the
21 morning until 10:30 at night, Monday through
22 Friday. We also run it all day Saturday and
23 Sunday afternoon. I have to at least have some
24 time for them to get in there and clean it. They
25 cost about a million and a half to build. If I

2 could build five more biology labs, I could begin
3 to serve a larger group of students. For the
4 capital construction, the community colleges in
5 CUNY are required to have a match. For us it's
6 really been the city match that has been the
7 problem. We have had funding from the state but
8 we have not had the city match to do the kind of
9 capital construction that would allow all of the
10 community colleges to build those facilities. The
11 second is really hospital space. The National
12 League of Nurses requires that when you're on
13 clinical rotation you have one faculty member to
14 ten students when you're actually on the floor of
15 a hospital. You can imagine that you can't just
16 flood those hospital floors with groups of 20, 30
17 and 40 students because the hospitals themselves
18 are really running sort of full tilt. So it's
19 both the clinical placement and the ability to
20 really serve the on-campus educational needs.
21 That's where the City Council could be enormously
22 helpful in supporting the capital requests of the
23 community colleges.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Mr. Chair,
25 \$5 million for CUNY. Thank you.

2 GAIL MELLOW: Thank you, Councilman
3 Stewart.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: I know you
5 have to go, Gail, but I would just make one
6 comment because I thought Council Member Stewart's
7 question was very appropriate and your answer was
8 very appropriate. As you may know, tomorrow I'll
9 be introducing a resolution here in the City
10 Council urging the administration to keep the
11 commitment when it comes to matching funds. I
12 think the information that I have is that the CUNY
13 system has lost out on \$180 million because the
14 city failed to keep its match. If it wasn't for
15 the City Council and Borough President's
16 discretionary funds that we have done on our own,
17 that figure would be as high as \$337 million. But
18 clearly, there is money that the state is
19 allocating and the city actually should do its
20 fair share and do that match. I'm glad you
21 mentioned that. I will be introducing that
22 tomorrow. Thank you. I know you know you have to
23 go. We'll proceed with the rest of the panel who
24 have been waiting patiently to speak.

25 EDUARDO J. MARTI: I was driving

1 that truck looking for comptrollers. Good
2 morning. My name is Eduardo Marti. I'm the
3 president of Queensborough Community College. I
4 have a prepared statement that you have in front
5 of you. I'd like to deviate a little bit because
6 I think the questions that you are asking are very
7 pertinent and I think we need to spend time
8 discussing them. My point to you is that the
9 community colleges of the City University of New
10 York are your colleges. You fund these colleges.
11 As a matter of fact, you fund them at the tune of
12 \$239 million a year. We serve 54,000 students.
13 That's 54,000 full time equivalence, which means
14 when you put full time students and part time
15 students together. That really translates to
16 about \$4,300 per full time equivalent student.
17 The point that I'm trying to make is that over
18 five years that \$4,398 translates into millions of
19 dollars in tax revenues for the City of New York.
20 Because a multiplier of 4.9, which is a very
21 conservative multiplier, on the salaries that
22 these people make is one that will give you that
23 kind of revenue. So clearly community colleges in
24 the City of New York are a good investment for the
25

2 City of New York. My point is that you're sitting
3 here as individuals who are responsible for the
4 welfare of New York City.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Mr. President,
6 may I interrupt just a second? I hate to be a
7 stickler for details, but we're here discussing a
8 very specific topic. We are all very strong
9 supporters of CUNY and the needs and the
10 challenges that the system has. I want us to
11 focus our conversation on the topic of the hearing
12 and we can do the discussion about the budget
13 concerns with CUNY at a different point.

14 EDUARDO J. MARTI: I am not talking
15 about the concerns about the budget, Madame
16 Arroyo.

17 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: It sounds that
18 way. Let's make sure we focus on the topic. So
19 if you can bring it back to that, I would
20 appreciate it.

21 EDUARDO J. MARTI: I will. I'll be
22 very happy to do so. The point that I'm trying to
23 make is that you spend a lot of money in programs
24 for the City University of New York, specifically
25 on the community colleges. I'd like to make

1
2 certain that you look at the community colleges as
3 places that you require, demand, and look to for
4 education and training for our individuals. As it
5 has been said before by President Mellow, we have
6 lot of older adults in our population. We provide
7 free courses, credit courses, for our individuals
8 that, I think, is over 62. That is extremely
9 important. When you're taking that contractor
10 that was trying to get on that truck that was
11 referred to before, it is extremely important that
12 that contractor that is out of a job is able to
13 understand that they can go to Borough of
14 Manhattan Community College, Bronx Community
15 College, Kingsborough, or Queensborough. There
16 they will find a place where they will be able to
17 get the courses that are necessary go be retrained
18 for a job that can not only prepare them for a new
19 job, but take advantage of the experience that
20 they have had in their previous job in order to be
21 able to get the new position. So it could be one
22 course, or two courses or a whole program, but
23 that is important. I don't believe that we are
24 really looking at CUNY in that manner. We are
25 seeing CUNY as an institution that we sort of fund

2 in order to provide some services for some
3 populations. But it is important that you see it
4 that way. My colleague, Dean Ward, who runs a
5 very specific at our campus, called 50+, will
6 address that particular program in detail. My
7 point to you is a very simple point and I will end
8 with this. I will answer any questions that you
9 might have. It's a very simple point. Use the
10 community colleges of CUNY as portals of entry
11 into this great university. You have an asset
12 that needs to be used in order to bring the New
13 York City economy back on track. I'll be happy to
14 answer any questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: I think it
16 would be better if we take the questions after the
17 entire panel has spoken.

18 DENISE A. WARD: Good morning. I
19 am Denise Ward. I'm the Assistant Dean for
20 Continuing Education and Workforce Development at
21 Queensborough Community College. I started the
22 50+ Club one year ago. The topics of educating an
23 aging workforce and the birth of the 50+ Club are
24 related and personal. I was downsized twice.
25 Once at age 50 and the second time six years

2 later. My journey from a senior officer of a
3 large multinational Wall Street bank to a dean of
4 a college took a little over four years and was
5 filled with fits and starts. It should have been
6 easier. I was the head of a training and staff
7 development department servicing 7,000 people
8 worldwide. I knew how to retrain, develop skills,
9 recruit, assess performance, grow leaders, design
10 programs, career counsel, network and match talent
11 to the right jobs. These are key elements in
12 moving senior officers through diverse career
13 paths and key elements to retool my own career.
14 But at the time I was sole breadwinner, a single
15 parent and I had two sons still in college. It
16 was the time of the tech bubble and the ensuing
17 downturn and within one year, 9/11. Over the
18 course of the four years, I held eight part time
19 jobs, started two businesses and sold my condo and
20 moved out of state. One of the college teaching
21 jobs was for the Navy onboard an aircraft carrier
22 on mission in the Persian Gulf. I taught four
23 courses, six days a week, for eight weeks. I soon
24 realized that many of my students were a lot like
25 me, trying to take what they knew from their 15 to

2 20 year duty and apply it to build new careers.

3 So on the seventh day of the week for the eight
4 weeks I conducted individual career counseling.

5 My personal experience, observation and research
6 of the boomer and senior program, called the

7 Center for Learning and Living at a former college

8 I worked at, my study of the demographics, the

9 values, attitudes and mores of the boomer and

10 senior populations and the fact that about 2.8

11 boomers in the United States were turning 60 in

12 2006 all led me to conclude that there was work to

13 be done. In addition, after arriving at

14 Queensborough Community College, I studied the

15 Queens market and realized that despite continuing

16 education offering over 300 courses each term, we

17 were under serving the 50 plus population at the

18 time. Statistics also demonstrated that

19 approximately one-third of the Queens population

20 at the time, about 767,000, were age 50 and above.

21 Simultaneous to this research I was contacted by

22 the Sutton Place Community Association requesting

23 that I create a program for boomers and seniors in

24 their area of Manhattan, thus entered the 50+

25 Club. The 50+ Club was developed to address the

1 complicated societal issues facing baby boomers
2 and seniors who are living longer and seeking more
3 enriched, engaged and active lifestyles, while
4 simultaneously meeting new job-related, financial
5 and health care challenges. Phase One programs,
6 one year ago, focused on enrichment and lifestyle
7 courses in topics such as history, literature,
8 art, dance, fitness and current events. We
9 enrolled in the first term 100 members who
10 enrolled in 400 courses. Phase Two started this
11 year brought programs in career development and
12 health care. We are now offering workforce-
13 related courses in career preparation, financial
14 management, retirement strategies, computers and
15 the law. Career explorations targets, for
16 instance, downsized boomers and seniors or those
17 reentering the workforce and in order to enter new
18 fields or starts business understand what their
19 interests are. The course covers job research,
20 networking, interviewing and resume writing. We
21 also offer financial management courses for this
22 population, such as Protecting your Retirement
23 Nest Egg in Uncertain Times, The Latest Options
24 for Financing Long-Term Care and Transcending
25

2 Investment Anxiety. We've developed courses based
3 on what's happening out there in the marketplace
4 and in the economy as we go. We offer a program
5 called Aging and the Law and we offer and have
6 offered extensive programs in computer skills,
7 specifically for the elderly population. We also
8 offer several stress reduction courses. Once
9 participants go through these programs and decide
10 on a career strategy, they learn their basic
11 skills in both computing and English language
12 skills, which we have a large population who need
13 these types of programs in Queens, we guide them
14 into one of about 30 certificate programs that we
15 hold in classrooms, or another 50 to 100 career-
16 related online programs. Many are also directed
17 into targeted programs in the college for degrees.
18 We've found in Queens that the industries most
19 welcoming to boomers are health care management,
20 the allied health fields, education and financial
21 and retail services. Starting a home based
22 business is a good option if an individual can
23 live on a partial salary for a period of time and
24 the business does not have to be highly
25 capitalized. But caution must be taken in this

environment today. Things are changing rapidly.

Some pertinent observations of boomers who are being downsized and seniors that need to return to work are that boomers are generally at the peak of their earning potential and may still face large expenses. Retirees are on fixed incomes.

Financial stressors are great and entry level pay and programs may not cut it. And that's a lot of the programs that we may be offering. Retirees are accustomed to a certain lifestyle and a certain standing in their community and family.

Societal and psychological pressures are great.

Boomers and seniors are looking for social connections and a sense of community. The most effective programs extend beyond the classroom.

We mentioned before about outreach. We're doing some of our programs in senior citizen centers.

We're doing some of our programs in companies, for instance, *The New York Times* and their plant operation in Queens. We are working together to develop programs because of the direction the print of newspapers is going in our city.

Immigrant populations have the added challenge of language. We must be aggressive in providing

contextually based ESL workplace and professional programming. Guidance and counseling, including a career plan should be including in the strategies to assist this population. Addressing some of these issues, the club format offers a social atmosphere of inclusion and a bundled pricing which is sensitive to retirees on fixed and limited income. The club membership entitles the members to special benefits. It was mentioned before about one of the challenges for our campus in Northeast Queens is there is not a lot of public transportation. So parking on campus is at a premium. That is one of the benefits that we are offering the 50+ Club members is parking on campus. It means a lot. I believe CUNY has a responsibility to the older workers of our great city, especially in these challenging economic times. I also believe that community colleges and continuing education departments with their close ties to the communities and their constituents, including businesses, schools and residents, are uniquely poised to provide that assistance. We stand ready to serve and hope that we can collaboratively work with you to meet the needs

2 and demands of the New York City workers,
3 especially the older 50 plus age workers who are
4 trying to weather these challenging times.

5 EDWARD G. ROGOFF: Thank you very
6 much. I'm Edward Rogoff. I'm a Professional of
7 Management at Baruch College and the Chair of the
8 Department of Management. One of the greatest
9 needs in today's economy is helping older workers,
10 who I define as people over 50, earn money. The
11 City University plays a major role in this because
12 one of the significant ways that people over 50
13 generate income is through self-employment and
14 entrepreneurial ventures. CUNY has a variety of
15 programs to help them. We all know that
16 entrepreneurship, including self-employment is a
17 major force in the U.S. economy, encompassing
18 businesses from part time home based work to major
19 enterprises backed by sophisticated venture
20 capital funding. Although entrepreneurship has
21 received significant and growing attention
22 generally, it has only recently been recognized as
23 an important activity among older Americans. The
24 evidence is clear that entrepreneurship among
25 older Americans is a major phenomenon. Research

1
2 by AARP found that 69% of people between the ages
3 of 45 and 74 who are still in the workforce plant
4 to continue working in some way beyond their
5 normal retirement. This finding was largely
6 duplicated in a subsequent AARP study among
7 workers 50 to 70, 68% of whom reported they
8 planned to work in some capacity post-retirement.
9 Many of these people will likely choose
10 entrepreneurship in the form of self-employment,
11 business ownership or direct investment in a small
12 business as their post-retirement venture. A 2006
13 nationwide survey of Americans age 45 to 64,
14 sponsored by Thrivent Financial, found that 71%
15 believe that they lack the funds in retirement to
16 fulfill their personal plans. And 43% plan to
17 work either full or part time during retirement.
18 More specifically, 34% of the sample felt that it
19 was very or somewhat likely that they would start
20 a business following retirement from their current
21 employment. Census data shows that self-
22 employment increases with age much more rapidly
23 than traditional employment. For example, people
24 age 25 to 34 have a rate of self-employment of
25 7.2%, but for the age group 55 to 64, the self-

2 employment rate is 17.8%, and for people over 65,
3 the self-employment rate is 26.9%. The weak
4 economy has drastically limited employment
5 opportunities generally and certainly for older
6 workers at the same time that it has reduced
7 savings, 401(k)s and equity values in homes.

8 Therefore, we can, with confidence, expect that
9 the demand from the have-to entrepreneurs is
10 certainly much greater than it was six months ago
11 and that is growing. Older entrepreneurs are
12 different from younger entrepreneurs. They don't
13 have the years to execute time consuming
14 strategies and they don't have the ability to
15 withstand large risks, which limit the options of
16 the types of entrepreneurial activity they may
17 choose. Successfully managing this risk requires
18 a careful effort to identify the amount of
19 financial and personal risk the entrepreneur can
20 tolerate. Therefore, they need programs that are
21 skilled in addressing their unique needs. To meet
22 these needs, the City University provides a number
23 of quality services. Baruch College has one of
24 the top ranked entrepreneurship programs in the
25 country, having been ranked in the top 25 schools

2 by Princeton review in two of the last three
3 years. Baruch is home to the Lawrence N. Field
4 Center for Entrepreneurship, which provides
5 training, counseling and help in obtaining
6 financing for more than 1,000 clients each year.
7 It is the largest entrepreneurship center in the
8 United States. The Field Center offers classes on
9 topics from franchising to financing and from
10 business plan development to protecting your
11 intellectual property. We provide counseling by
12 full time business counselors and by Baruch
13 faculty through the Small Business Development
14 Center, provide forums for clients to meet all
15 types of funding sources and connect clients with
16 Baruch students to assist them as interns. Last
17 year, in partnership with AARP and Newton Business
18 Programs, we ran a day-long program for aspiring
19 entrepreneurs over 50 and hope to repeat it again
20 this year. About 15% of Field Center clients
21 actually go on to start a business and I believe
22 that this high rate is a function of a complete
23 and varied service offering through the Field
24 Center, all of which are provided at no cost to
25 clients. Other CUNY also offer programs through

2 Small Business Development Centers at Lehman
3 College and York College, continuing education
4 programs at most CUNY schools that have a
5 significant focus on starting small businesses.
6 Business incubator programs at Bronx Community
7 College and LaGuardia Community College offer a
8 whole different range of services. The CUNY
9 programs are a significant effort to help this
10 older population. Certainly more is needed and
11 hopefully government at all levels will rally to
12 meet this need. Thank you very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you for
14 your testimony. As Chair of the Committee on
15 Aging, I deal with a lot of nonprofit
16 organizations that do extremely important work in
17 the area of training and education for older New
18 Yorkers. They target the population that is well
19 over 50. Everything I've heard is targeted to
20 those over 50. What is CUNY's experience with the
21 over 60 or over 65 population? Do any of you know
22 if there is a trend or is that age group
23 increasing in terms of seeking the services that
24 are provided in the CUNY facilities?

25 SURI DUITCH: Well I would say the

2 range of services is not different. I can't tell
3 you sitting here today that we have the data that
4 would tell us whether or not there is a trend, but
5 we would be happy to find out and let you know
6 after this hearing. So you're saying specifically
7 for individuals age 60 and above?

8 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: As chair of
9 that committee that's my focus. We're responsible
10 for so many different things, but as chair of the
11 committee my focus is on the older adults. While
12 CUNY is an incredible opportunity for older
13 adults, I'm wondering how many are accessing that
14 opportunity and if the numbers are low then we
15 need to talk about what partnerships have to be
16 created with the nonprofits in the communities to
17 be able to get that information out to their
18 program participants. I know that we'll hear from
19 some groups after this panel that can tell us a
20 little bit more about what they do specifically to
21 that age group. I think that we need to have that
22 conversation moving forward because it is an
23 opportunity. I am one of the strongest supporters
24 of CUNY's community college system. It's
25 important that while a little bit on the high end

2 for the retraining opportunities, there are older
3 New Yorkers out there than can benefit
4 tremendously from CUNY's programming.

5 EDUARDO J. MARTI: Councilman
6 Gonzalez, that's exactly what I trying to do.

7 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I'm Arroyo.

8 EDUARDO J. MARTI: Pardon?

9 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I'm Arroyo.

10 EDUARDO J. MARTI: Oh, I'm sorry.

11 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Although she's
12 a very nice lady.

13 EDUARDO J. MARTI: I know she is.

14 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I wouldn't
15 mind being confused with her.

16 EDUARDO J. MARTI: We obviously
17 have seen a trend in terms of the numbers of
18 people who are coming to us who are older, and by
19 older I mean beyond 65. They generally come to
20 the enrichment programs. For example, we have a
21 very good fine arts program, and I daresay the
22 average age of the people who are attending the
23 ceramics courses and the painting courses is
24 beyond 65. But I think that you're absolutely
25 correct. I think that what we need to do in CUNY

2 is to partner with community organizations that
3 can enable not only to communicate to the older
4 adults of the opportunities that are available,
5 but actually even some of the retraining. They
6 can do work as well. Some of them need it.

7 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: That's why I
8 bring it up as a conversation and one that we
9 certainly need to follow up on. I'm going to be a
10 little bit ironic now though, because I'm
11 whispering to my co-chair Larry Seabrook, where
12 are the Bronx facilities, the institutions?
13 They're not here. Are there no seniors in the
14 Bronx? Is there no programming available in CUNY
15 in the Bronx institutions? What's the story?

16 SURI DUITCH: When we bring a panel
17 before you as part of a hearing we always select
18 just a few colleges. So we gave a few examples of
19 those programs.

20 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: But you're all
21 from Queens, which is nice, but it could lead me
22 to believe that CUNY has no opportunities for the
23 population we're here discussing in the Bronx or
24 the other boroughs.

25 SURI DUITCH: That's certainly not

1 the case.

2
3 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: We need to
4 correct that. So could you tell me what programs
5 are available at the other institutions?

6 SURI DUITCH: I made reference in
7 my testimony to Lehman specifically.

8 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And I missed
9 it because I had to step out to the education
10 hearings.

11 SURI DUITCH: Courses in continuing
12 education at Lehman and also Lehman has a
13 significant population of older adults in taking
14 degree classes to reprogram classes on an audit
15 basis. That's something we had talked about a
16 little bit earlier in the hearing. So Lehman
17 certainly comes to mind, but we could give you
18 examples from Hostos and Bronx Community College
19 as well, with regard to the Bronx.

20 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And the other
21 boroughs, because only Queens is here. It's
22 important that we know what opportunities exist in
23 the other boroughs. So if you could make that
24 information available to us that would be very
25 helpful to us.

2 SURI DUITCH: Sure.

3 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: The follow-up
4 question to that is do you see people over the age
5 of 50 first time registering at the community
6 colleges or the four-year institutions to further
7 their higher education goals? As first time
8 registering in college, not pursuing another
9 degree or things of that nature.

10 SURI DUITCH: We can follow up with
11 data. Certainly President Marti made reference to
12 seeing a trend in some of the programs at
13 Queensborough. We are certainly hearing from
14 increased numbers of older adults who don't have
15 high school degrees or GEDs who are coming back.
16 This is even the case where people have many years
17 and even decades of work experience. Losing a job
18 in the most recent downturn and not having a high
19 school degree or a GED is a real serious problem.
20 So we are definitely seeing increased numbers of
21 older adults coming back to our GED programs.
22 That's a pretty big lift if you've never been in
23 college and you haven't been in school for many
24 decades to go back and start preparing to take the
25 GED exam. But we're seeing more people in that

2 situation.

3 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I think
4 that's important information for us to have an
5 look at in terms of planning for the future and
6 what is it that we in the council can be helpful
7 in supporting CUNY programming. If there's a
8 trend that obviously requires attention and
9 financing that we do so in a way that's practical
10 and appropriate so that you don't come back to us
11 in a couple of years and say, look at what's
12 happening here and you're then behind and playing
13 catch-up. I think it's important that we get
14 ahead of it and do the programming planning that
15 we need to do moving into the future so that we're
16 able to accommodate individuals who by virtue of
17 an economic crisis or other things happening in
18 their life coming to you that you can't serve
19 because you don't have the capacity for it.
20 That's something that we need to make sure does
21 not happen.

22 EDUARDO J. MARTI: Again, the GED
23 issue is a very good example of how we can partner
24 with community organizations. Let us not forget
25 also the large number of students who are

2 undocumented that also need assistance in being
3 able to navigate the process to get through CUNY.
4 So the partnership with local agencies might be
5 very, very important for us.

6 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I apologize,
7 but Council Member Yassky is whispering that he
8 has to get back to a DEP hearing, so I just wanted
9 to acknowledge that he joined us. We've also been
10 joined by Council Member Eugene, a member of the
11 Aging Committee. I don't want to belabor this
12 point, but I think we need to regroup in another
13 setting so that we can have focused conversations
14 about the opportunities that we need to work on
15 moving forward in preparing our city and CUNY to
16 meet the needs of those who are going to come to
17 you seeking opportunities to change their
18 circumstances. I am one of those individuals who
19 turned to CUNY and was able to begin a track on
20 higher education goals that had it not been for
21 CUNY's ability to accommodate, I don't know that I
22 would be sitting here today. I don't think that
23 I'm the last one that will do that. And expect
24 that those numbers increase when tuition continues
25 to rise in other systems. Our CUNY system has to

2 be prepared to meet the challenges that the
3 numbers that are going to come to you are going to
4 represent to that system. With that said, any
5 questions, Council Member Stewart?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Thank you,
7 Council Member. We know that New York City is a
8 city of immigrants. I didn't hear you say much
9 about what programs or what you're doing to help
10 the older New Yorkers, 50 plus, as far as
11 immigration is concerned. What programs do you
12 offer? What do you do? I know at LaGuardia I was
13 in conversation with one of the folks there and we
14 were dealing with a program that helps folks who
15 are trained in other countries in different
16 languages and we're trying to have them adjusted
17 to work in New York City. I want to know what
18 CUNY in general is doing, because if we have so
19 many immigrants here that need so much help, I
20 think you should have specific programs to
21 encourage immigrants to come to CUNY.

22 SURI DUITCH: Let me just say
23 generally and then I know my colleagues have
24 specific examples. Immigrant populations are a
25 major constituency of CUNY and of continuing

2 education and workforce programs. English as a
3 second language and the program that you reference
4 which helps foreign trained medical professionals
5 become medical professionals in New York and the
6 United States is a really important example. That
7 program actually runs at Lehman College and at
8 LaGuardia. The Center for Immigrant Education and
9 Training, which is likely the program that you're
10 referring to at LaGuardia, has a range of
11 programs. That's also the case for many of our
12 other colleges. When I made reference earlier to
13 GED programs and seeing increased numbers of
14 people coming back for those programs, in many
15 cases those individuals have also been through our
16 English as a second language programs. They are
17 going through ESL first and then going to GED. I
18 will defer to my colleagues.

19 EDWARD G. ROGOFF: I can address
20 the point relative to the entrepreneurship
21 programs at Baruch. We've run programs in
22 Russian, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Japanese and
23 Turkish. We employ counselors who speak a number
24 of different languages because we attract and
25 recruit from immigrant groups. Also, Baruch has

2 carried out, over the last five years, the leading
3 major national study of minority entrepreneurs,
4 which has been a major source of data on this
5 topic throughout the world. So I couldn't agree
6 with you more. I think this is extremely
7 important. We've addressed it within the confines
8 of our resources and the response to it is always
9 fantastic.

10 EDUARDO J. MARTI: I'd like to
11 approach it from a different point of view and
12 that is for the individuals who need help getting
13 a legal status in this country. We have a CUNY
14 wide center for immigration that is run by one of
15 the professors at Baruch and is throughout the
16 university and it helps individuals with the
17 processing that is necessary for them to become
18 legalized. At Queensborough we have an office for
19 international students that is staffed not only
20 with individuals who can help international
21 students coming to the country as well as
22 individuals who are in this country in a different
23 status. We have an attorney onboard and we
24 provide that service for free for all of our
25 students and for anyone else who wants to come to

2 us.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Having
4 said that, don't you think it's wise for us to
5 promote more of that to the public so that they
6 can know and they can utilize those services?

7 SURI DUITCH: The citizenship and
8 immigration project in particular is a highly
9 promoted program from CUNY. You may be familiar
10 with the call ins that we co-sponsor with *The*
11 *Daily News* where tens of thousands of people call
12 in to CUNY employees, CUNY students and volunteers
13 from the community around the entire range of
14 immigration issues. So we're always looking for
15 more opportunities to promote that program and
16 others. We have groups of volunteers and staff
17 who go out from that program into council
18 districts around the city offering targeted
19 special programs at CUNY colleges but also in
20 community organizations and we are very interested
21 more opportunities to do that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: I just
23 wanted to make sure that folks know that you're
24 doing a lot for immigrants. As the chair of the
25 Immigration Committee I work closely with those

2 folks, so I wanted that piece to come out in the
3 testimony. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Thank you for
5 your testimony. We'll be calling the next panel.
6 We have Beth Finkel and Joe Dirac from AARP, Maria
7 Serrano from DFTA Senior Employment, Beverly
8 Thompson from VISIONS for the Blind and Jess
9 Geevarghese. While this panel is being seated,
10 we've also been joined by Council Members Mathieu
11 Eugene and Elizabeth Crowley, and I know at one
12 point Council Member Yassky had joined us.

13 BETH FINKEL: Good morning. First
14 of all I want to thank the four chair people for
15 convening this hearing. We're very excited about
16 it. So a special thank you to Councilwoman
17 Arroyo, Council Member Barron, Seabrook and
18 Yassky. Again, my name is Beth Finkel. I'm the
19 Manager of Programs and Services for AARP New York
20 State. I'm joined here today by Joe Dirac, who is
21 with our AARP Foundation WorkSearch Project
22 Director. I particularly want to thank the other
23 panelists for coming out today because we've been
24 starting to develop some wonderful synergies among
25 us. Many of us have worked together already and I

2 know other panelists have talked about their
3 partnerships with AARP. I think part of that has
4 been because of the role of the council members
5 for helping develop this synergy and helping us
6 see where this is. Even this morning so many more
7 opportunities became highlighted to us. So I just
8 really want to thank you and say how excited we
9 are by having this being convened. AARP, as
10 everyone knows, is a not-for-profit, non-partisan
11 membership organization for people 50 plus. I'm
12 not going to go over our whole boilerplate, which
13 is in the testimony. But we do have 50 offices
14 across the country, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico
15 and the District of Columbia. Actually in New
16 York State we have three offices, one here in New
17 York City, one in Albany and one in Rochester.
18 Currently there are 800,000 AARP members in New
19 York City proper. We have 2.6 million in New York
20 State and over 40 million, not only in the United
21 States but actually globally too. So, again, I'd
22 like to thank you for letting us speak today and
23 talk about programs currently available in New
24 York that focus on retraining of older adults in
25 the 21st Century workforce and know that we've

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been doing this for a long time in many different respects, but now we're growing and incubating some new projects. So, again, I'm hoping for this synergy and collaboration. I know a lot of people have been talking about documentation of the news in terms of unemployment rates, unemployment rates of older adults, and the trends toward older adults working longer. I'm just going to say that we've attached a fact sheet to this testimony that looks at national trends. I'm not going to read from all of it. It sounds like you all know it as well as I do. The figures that I am giving you are as of December 2008. I know many of us have seen newer figures and I know that you have access to New York City figures. From the AARP Public Policy Institute, long-term unemployment tends to become even a greater problem for older job seekers, even than their younger counterparts and that's what we found nationally. Thirty-two percent of job seekers age 55 and over have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more. Again, this is December 2008 and we all know this trend has just been really accelerating. The number of unemployed in December 2008 increased by 632,000,

1
2 nearly 60,000 of whom were age 55 and older. Of
3 the 11.1 million unemployed, 1.4 million were at
4 least age 55. Many older workers who lose their
5 job really drop out of the labor force rather than
6 continue to be part of that long and fruitless
7 search. I think that that's why we're all
8 convened here today. The number of older persons
9 classified as discouraged by the Bureau of Labor
10 Statistics nearly tripled from December 2007 to
11 December 2008, rising from 53,000 to 154,000.

12 Despite these statistics, mature workers will be
13 an integral part of the U.S. economy for the years
14 to come. By 2010, one in three workers will be 50
15 and older. As the relative proportions of younger
16 workers declines, it will become even more vital
17 to ensure that older workers are prepared to meet
18 the skill demands of the 21st Century workplace.

19 AARP and the AARP Foundation are dedicated to
20 helping qualified mature workers maximize their
21 employment and earning potential in the workforce.

22 The foundation offers assistance nationally
23 through its WorkSearch program, Senior Community
24 Service Employment Program, SCSEP, Training
25 Assistance Program, and the Women's Scholarship

1
2 Program. The foundation and AARP New York are
3 working together to increase training and
4 employment opportunities through these programs.
5 I'm just going to highlight really quickly what
6 these programs are and then Joe is going to go
7 into more detail. And then if you have questions,
8 we'll be more than happy to answer them. We have
9 the use of SCSEP clients in three AARP/SCSEP
10 offices in New York City. One of them is in
11 Harlem, which is in the Verizon Center and offers
12 group orientations, one-on-one support and the TAP
13 training, which you're going to hear more about.
14 We have an office in Brooklyn and in the Bronx
15 that offer one-on-one support. We have certified
16 WorkSearch Centers that we've now had memos of
17 understanding with the foundation through the
18 Queen's Public Library, FECS, Dress for Success,
19 Self Help and Westchester Community College in
20 Yonkers. I want to say that's also a partnership
21 with Reserve and we're really pleased to have
22 that. Again, through the conversation today it
23 gave us a lot of ideas to working with CUNY more.
24 We are also going to be working with DFTA and
25 LaGuardia in that Department of Labor RFP that

2 they've put in for and AARP will be part of that
3 with our WorkSearch. Also with Buffalo/Niagara,
4 we are working with their SUNY system and the Mid
5 Manhattan Library. So, again, I just want to
6 stress that in addition to these initiatives, AARP
7 is very interested in expanding the universal
8 access points in New York City. We would love to
9 hear about more opportunities, recommendations and
10 ideas you might have so that we can do more of
11 these macro collaborations. So information about
12 these projects are all available in what I gave
13 you. Plus I think I gave you this little booklet
14 which has the websites connected and we could have
15 connections to your websites and the city's
16 websites on this. Now I'm going to pass the baton
17 on to Joe and he can get into more of the
18 intricacies of this.

19 JOSEPH DIRAC: Good morning,
20 Council Members. My name is Joe Dirac and I'm the
21 Project Director of New York City for the
22 WorkSearch Program, which is under the AARP
23 Foundation, the 501c or the nonprofit side of
24 AARP. I'm going to talk a little bit today about
25 the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

2 I should point out that we are one of a number of
3 sponsors of that program in this city. DFTA also
4 is a sponsor of that program, as well as Easter
5 Seals and some other organizations. We have about
6 a third of all the slots in New York City.

7 Currently that's 634 slots for the AARP Senior
8 Community Service Employment Program. One of the
9 questions earlier was about the economic stimulus.

10 I'm pleased to report that in fact we are going to
11 have some, at least temporarily, additional slots
12 in that program as a direct result of the economic
13 stimulus program. That program is federally
14 funded and it serves the population of 55 and
15 older and low income. It's a well established
16 program. It's been around for over 40 years.

17 It's a program that is very much needed and we
18 think we do a pretty good job of sponsoring it and
19 administering it nationwide and in New York City
20 here. SCSEP participants are placed in temporary
21 assignments in nonprofit organizations. That can
22 be either public or private nonprofits. They work
23 there typically 18 to 20 hours a week and are paid
24 a subsidized wage, similar to an internship
25 program. That benefits the community

2 organizations, which we call host agencies, in
3 which they serve as well as hopefully the
4 participants which gives them current references
5 and experience so that they can move on and find
6 current unsubsidized employment, or a "real job."

7 Some of the other programs that were mentioned
8 that we currently administer is WorkSearch.

9 That's a relatively new program, unlike SCSEP,
10 which I mentioned has been around for over 40

11 years. The WorkSearch program was really
12 developed just about a couple of years ago and it
13 was a result of AARP's social impact agenda. The
14 AARP Foundation WorkSearch program provides job
15 and career information, training and related
16 employment services to adult job seekers age 40
17 and above. You may notice the difference in age.

18 As I mentioned, in SCSEP we mentioned 55 and
19 older. We brought down in WorkSearch 40 and
20 above, which is actually about as low as I guess
21 you can call a senior. I tell the story that I've
22 had someone come into my office and he was 19-
23 years-old and I told him our program was for
24 seniors and he said, well I'm a senior in high
25 school. I guess it can be relative on what age we

1 call seniors, but for the purpose of this program,
2 age discrimination employment, believe it or not,
3 begins at 40 and above. So we've lowered the age
4 down to 40 and we've also increased, if you would,
5 the income guidelines. We can do that because
6 we're funding this program, not the federal
7 government, which has pretty stringent guidelines
8 on who they can serve. So the program provides a
9 variety of services, including interest and
10 ability inventories. It's an online assessment,
11 testing, training and job referral system all in
12 one. We purchased it from an outfit called the
13 National Business Service Alliance and we are
14 offering it free of charge to anyone that's in our
15 target population of 40 and above and in some
16 cases even younger than that. One of the key
17 services the program offers is a comprehensive
18 web-based assessment tool. It virtually is
19 available to anyone. We've chosen to deploy it
20 through what we call certified WorkSearch Centers.
21 I'm pleased to report if you go to our website,
22 AARPWorkSearch.org, you'll see a number of those,
23 but you'll see the tool and some of the other
24 services outlined in more detail. Actually you
25

1
2 can also see there a video that was filmed in
3 Harlem and features both the services. This is
4 our national program, but they chose what we've
5 got going on here in New York to highlight. I'm
6 pleased because, in fact, the Verizon Technology
7 Center which we have in Harlem is where we
8 collaborate with that organization. They actually
9 have the facility there which has computers. What
10 we do is we come in there several days a week and
11 offer our services to people that are interested
12 in WorkSearch. That's just through strictly a
13 collaborative effort. We don't pay any rent and
14 we like that. They get plenty of people that come
15 through their door and they like that. So it's a
16 win/win situation. So it's through these
17 collaborative efforts and we've chosen a method
18 called certified WorkSearch Center to deploy it.
19 The way that works is any organization, and we
20 talked to some others this morning that might be
21 interested, if you can put 1,000 people on this
22 system, we can pretty much make you a certified
23 WorkSearch Center. We'll provide it free of
24 charge to those organizations. We'll come in and
25 train their trainers and get them ready to go and

1 then they can deploy it. So we're obviously
2 looking for collaborative efforts as we've gotten
3 in the Queens Library, Dress for Success and some
4 of the current providers of this service. As I
5 say, we're trying to bring it to a theater near
6 you. We're near Harlem and the Apollo Theater.
7 We really want to bring it around to the whole
8 community. That's the one way we're deploying it.
9 In those communities where it's not available,
10 being that it's an online tool available 24 hours
11 a day, 7 days a week, we can in fact just have you
12 sign up and get it from the internet yourself.
13 We've found that it's a more effective way for the
14 population we serve to have somebody kind of help
15 orientate them and navigate them through the tool
16 initially. That's why we've chosen this certified
17 WorkSearch Center model to deploy this tool. Some
18 of the other service that were mentioned is the
19 TAP. We call it TAP or Training Assistance
20 Program. That is basically a scholarship program
21 kind of thing where we offer three types of
22 training: advisor-led training, community-based
23 training and a concept called OJE. I'll briefly
24 describe each one of those. The community-based
25

2 training is a short-term, focused training that is
3 provided through regional educators and training
4 providers. So for example, the City University of
5 New York could be a training provider. Through
6 this then we could actually offer some help and
7 assistance for some of the folks to take courses.
8 The way they do that is they would actually take
9 some of the assessments using the WorkSearch tool
10 and then AARP Foundation would fund a scholarship
11 or a training assistance program to take those
12 various courses. We do that for various short-
13 term kind of courses that lead to a credential
14 typically that hopefully leads to a job. The
15 other one is the advisor-led training, which we
16 use the NBSA, the National Business Service
17 program that we have where those are online
18 courses and we can actually fund courses and offer
19 full scholarships to various credentials backed by
20 a number of universities. They're all online
21 types of training. So if that's your preference
22 we can offer that as well. Then the last one is
23 the on-the-job experience program. It's not so
24 much a training, but a trial employment. If
25 someone wants to go to work and they have an

2 employer that's interested in hiring them, but
3 rather than just having the word of the applicant
4 to prove they can do the job, we can partner with
5 that employer and pay the first two or three weeks
6 of the salary of the applicant if the employer
7 agrees to hire them if they successfully complete
8 that trial employment period. That's been a very
9 successful way of getting people quickly into jobs
10 because it can be a real incentive for employers
11 to hire somebody who is on that program as opposed
12 to someone who just comes right off the street.
13 So those are the three ways through the WorkSearch
14 Program that we try to help out this population in
15 a very tough and difficult economic times right
16 now. But again, I am please to report that
17 probably as early as April 1st, as a direct result
18 of the economic stimulus package we will be
19 getting some additional slots and funds for the
20 SCSEP program. That's the good news. That
21 concludes my testimony unless you have any
22 questions.

23 BETH FINKEL: I'm going to just
24 finish off if that's okay. The other piece that I
25 wanted to add is the Women's Scholarship Program,

2 which I know Councilwoman Arroyo is familiar with.
3 There's also a flier attached to the testimony
4 that has all the details about the Women's
5 Scholarship Program. The applications just opened
6 up. This is a program where we give funds to
7 women 50 plus seeking new job skills, training,
8 and education opportunities to support themselves
9 and their families. The scholarships are
10 available to eligible individuals with moderate to
11 lower incomes and limited financial resources.
12 They have to be 40 years or older and as of March
13 31st be able to demonstrate financial need, be
14 enrolled in an accredited post-secondary school
15 and training program within six months of the
16 scholarship award date. So this scholarship has
17 been particularly helpful in three categories:
18 women who are raising children of another family
19 member, such as grandparents raising grandchildren
20 or those raising siblings or their nieces and
21 nephews; women who have been out of the workforce
22 for an extended period of time; and women in dead
23 end jobs, such as those with no opportunity for
24 advancement, low pay, or lacking health or
25 retirement benefits. It's posted on our website

2 as of February 3rd and they have to be applied for
3 online. Again, the website and everything is on
4 the attachment. We're hoping that you all will
5 help us promote this because we'd love to see a
6 lot of scholarship winners in New York City.
7 Thank you for that. Again, thank you from us on
8 the opportunity to testify here today to show off
9 the array of programs that AARP and the AARP
10 Foundation have for older adults for the 21st
11 Century workforce. We want to thank you for the
12 work that you do helping those in New York City.

13 BEVERLY THOMPSON: Thank you,
14 Madame Chair and distinguished Council Members.
15 I'm Beverly Thompson from VISIONS, which is an
16 agency for the blind and visually impaired. In
17 the world of work we are all temporarily able when
18 it comes to doing any given job. Eventually in
19 our lives none of us will be exempt. In the blink
20 of an eye as our population ages, many of us baby
21 boomers find that each day too many of us are
22 becoming a statistic in a growing epidemic in the
23 United States. What a difference a day makes
24 after your test results come in and you are one of
25 the 14.6 million Americans diagnosed with, say,

1 diabetes. There are 6.2 million that are unaware
2 that they even have the disease. I was too until
3 two weeks ago. And even more alarming is that a
4 high majority of those in workplace, nearly 54
5 million have pre-diabetes. Diabetes is the
6 leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults,
7 unfortunately, 20 to 74 years of age in the United
8 States. Rates of vision loss are expected to
9 double by 2020. That year is rather ironical
10 isn't it? We all must ask, as well as VISIONS,
11 how will any disability affect us on the job, what
12 can we do to protect our jobs if we have a
13 disability and will we be able to work well past
14 retirement as viable, able-bodied employees; many
15 of us not having a choice. We must know, and
16 VISIONS does provide, early detection, careful
17 monitoring and prompt treatment. All of these are
18 crucial to those of us who are aging on the job.
19 But what if we no longer have a job? What do we
20 need to get back into the labor market? Two areas
21 seem rather obvious to VISIONS. The first one
22 being that we need additional or advanced
23 supportive training and number two, we need new
24 skills to deal with whatever the disability has
25

1 taken from us and from our consumers. In the case
2 of macular degeneration and diabetes, both can go
3 undetected until it is too late. Both can lead to
4 vision loss and blindness. So how can we be
5 proactive? How can we be proactive at VISIONS?
6 There are three hurdles or barriers that plague
7 workers on the job and off, no matter what the
8 disability. VISIONS is there to advocate for and
9 find solutions and to break down barriers for
10 three areas: reluctance to disclose, lack of
11 awareness about accommodations, and limited
12 outreach for intervention. The first one,
13 reluctance to disclose, children with a disability
14 or a vision loss are usually already in the
15 system, as are adults 75 and older. However,
16 middle age or older adults are reluctant to admit
17 having vision problems. Will my new condition
18 raise too many alarms about retraining or
19 maintaining the ability to do my job? The fear is
20 discrimination and job loss. Thirteen percent of
21 Americans 43 to 64 reported having a vision loss.
22 How many have not? Even those with a functional
23 loss who have corrective lenses and their vision
24 is still blurred do not disclose. I am sure I
25

would not have been as open to disclose my diabetes had I not been at VISIONS. However, I was more reticent to give up the Bundt cake that a consumer of mine had made for me. But fortunately she makes diabetic deserts. Number two is lack of awareness about accommodations. Many employers don't realize that most of the time adaptations for employee needs are usually under \$100. For those of us at visions who work with the blind and visually impaired, changing a light fixture with a dimmer switch may be all that we need. Enlarging fonts, uploading software with a skilled user with present computer systems are able to accommodate programs like ZoomText and Jaws for low vision and blind computer users. The third on is limited outreach for intervention. Targeted outreach is key for any disabled group. VISIONS helps to manage the following: solving problems, reducing risks, coping with loss, monitoring health. At VISIONS we provide extensive vision rehab services that are a vital component of job retention. For us, vision rehab may include safe travel techniques, Braille, keyboarding, computers, access to no cost eye exams, vocational skills

2 training and job placement. We can help the aging
3 advocate for themselves to understand and adjust
4 to changing vision. We do this through our Senior
5 Speakout which we hold twice a month. We also
6 have a blind line over at our corporate offices
7 where we have a website where blind can call in to
8 our customer service team and find all the
9 facilities that are available for the blind and
10 visually impaired. However, those that do
11 advertise with us must provide Braille or
12 accommodations in order to list on our listserv.
13 We provide OJT, which is on the job training. We
14 do partnering with many large corporations. We
15 have squishy skills, what we call a soft skills
16 class that works with people skills. We have a
17 work experience training program that's a 13-week
18 stipend program for our consumers. We also have,
19 or trying to accommodate for testing within our
20 facilities at 123 West 23rd Street for the Unified
21 Court System so they can come in and test any of
22 our bilingual speakers and consumers for testing
23 to a job. So we're trying to make our facilities
24 more testing friendly and this is usually done
25 through lighting. We all want to continue working

2 and living independently as long as we are able.

3 But we also know that inevitable that day when we
4 become part of an unprecedented statistic that
5 will change the way we work and will change the
6 way we live.

7 JESS GEEVARGHESE: Thank you very
8 much, Council Members. My name is Jess
9 Geevarghese. I'm here today to speak on behalf of
10 ReServe, a nonprofit organization that for three
11 years has been connecting retired professionals
12 with compensated part time service opportunities
13 at New York City nonprofits, city agencies and
14 CUNY campuses. As a senior program officer at
15 ReServe, I have witnessed firsthand the need for
16 and the benefits of keeping older adults in the
17 workplace. Retired professionals have proven to
18 be an untapped resource of expertise and
19 productivity for New York City. In the year since
20 our establishment we have proven that retired
21 professionals bring a unique perspective that lead
22 to tremendous impacts on organizations all around
23 New York. Our model is simple. We work with
24 retired individuals, 50 plus, but most of whom are
25 65 to 70 years of age, who we call re-serviced,

1 who have skills in education, health, marketing,
2 business and the list goes on. These individuals
3 are placed at part time positions, generally 15
4 hours a week at nonprofits and city agencies and
5 CUNY campuses who pay \$15 an hour, \$10 of which
6 goes to the reservist. When money exchanges
7 hands, each side takes the proposition a little
8 bit more seriously. In coming up with this idea,
9 we felt that for the older adult to take the
10 opportunity seriously and for the agency to invest
11 in the individual that money would need to change
12 hands. To date we have matched more than 600
13 reservists to nearly 200 organizations. To
14 highlight a couple of placements, we have two
15 reservists working with the Zicklin School of
16 Business as internship advisers. Their professors
17 were overextended. In addition to a full course
18 of teaching, they were asked to advise their
19 students on internships. They brought in two
20 reservists who essentially took that piece off the
21 plate of the professors. These two individuals
22 have 30 plus years of business experience, real
23 world experience and were able to assist both the
24 students and the professors at CUNY. We have a
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2 reservist who has an impressive array of
3 experience in the magazine industry who was placed
4 at the 23rd Street Partnership, the Flatiron
5 District BID. He almost completely oversees the
6 publication of their monthly newsletter. Prior to
7 him coming onboard it wasn't available. One of
8 our reservists has devoted himself to creating and
9 running a basketball league at the Harlem
10 Community Justice Center's Juvenile Reentry
11 Program. Thanks to him and his efforts, dozens of
12 youth have had a safe and healthy option for after
13 school activity. Reservists' work value was
14 around \$4.4 million of professional service in
15 2008 alone. However, our partner organizations
16 have paid only \$1.5 million to access these
17 services. Organizations have come to us because
18 they're small nonprofits and sometimes larger
19 nonprofits and they have needs such as their
20 employees are overextended, they don't have access
21 to expertise or don't know how to connect to older
22 adults. ReServe has filled that function of being
23 a connector organization. Reservists come to us
24 because they want to make a meaningful commitment.
25 They want to serve. They want to provide their

2 professional expertise as an untapped resource.

3 We recently did a survey of our partner

4 organizations and 89% of the supervisors said that

5 reservists enhance the mission of their

6 organization. More importantly, respondents

7 showed that the aspects they valued about

8 reservists was their professional expertise. This

9 supports my contention that providing funding for

10 elder services in New York City is vital for the

11 purpose of assisting older populations who want to

12 work. Our ranks exemplify this. We have over 500

13 people waiting to be placed, in addition to the

14 600 that we have already placed. My colleagues

15 and I recognize that an initial investment in

16 funding city programs that would work to address

17 the role of older adults in the workplace is a

18 daunting prospect. However, I'm here to show you

19 that such an investment would yield enormous

20 benefits. Let ReServe be proof that New York City

21 has a large population of older adults who may

22 have ended one career but their desire to work and

23 to serve is far from diminished. We are calling

24 for the city to make a commitment of funding and

25 improving the workforce programs such as

2 WorkSearch and OATS and VISIONS as well that
3 address the spectrum and diversity of older adults
4 in New York City. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you all
6 for your testimony. There's a little bit of
7 conversation going on back and forth here because
8 we realized that we had two of our city agencies
9 missing in action for this hearing. SBS and DFTA
10 is here to answer questions but not to provide
11 testimony although I realize that we have had in
12 the Aging Committee a conversation about training
13 programs for older New Yorkers. I think we were
14 only able to hear from CUNY. So for the nonprofit
15 providers at the table, it seems like AARP and
16 ReServe ought to be talking. She's got a waiting
17 list and you can place them. What's going on
18 there? What's the opportunity for you to feed off
19 the other to be able to at least get those 500
20 that we know of? And a broader conversation is
21 how is DFTA interacting with you on these
22 programs, or SBS for that matter?

23 JOSEPH DIRAC: Actually we're doing
24 more than talking. We actually work with ReServe.
25 For example, at the Queens Library, I mentioned

2 WorkSearch, we have a ReServe person there that's
3 providing that service as well as helping us
4 establish a volunteer coordinator right here in
5 Manhattan. We also have gone to ReServe as a
6 source of expertise and some quality help for
7 that. So we're actually already talking and
8 working together very much. As well as with the
9 Department for the Aging. As I mentioned, AARP is
10 only one of the providers of the Senior Community
11 Service Employment Program. DFTA is one of the
12 other ones. We provide about a third of all of
13 the slots in New York City. DFTA provides a
14 percentage and there's several others. All the
15 providers meet on a regular basis to discuss
16 issues are of current interest. In fact we're
17 scheduled to meet tomorrow. We meet regularly and
18 we also participate in joint job fairs and those
19 types of activities. We're hoping with this U.S.
20 Department of Labor grant for all the workers
21 we've gone in provide a letter of support as well
22 as hopefully integrating WorkSearch into that as
23 well. So we do talk and work together.

24 BETH FINKEL: We've partnered with
25 ReServe. Actually we've done a lot of recruitment

2 for reservist volunteers. So we're very excited
3 about that. We've done some money management
4 program partnerships also. So it's something that
5 we're looking at, but I think that this highlights
6 the opportunity for even more of this, especially
7 in other settings and other collaborations that I
8 think are coming to light as we're talking here
9 today. Point well taken, thank you.

10 JESS GEEVARGHESE: One thing I want
11 to note is that ReServe has income restrictions.
12 So I feel like we represent a forest in terms of
13 each of us are a caretaker of a certain tree.
14 Whether it's a tree of retired professionals who
15 may not need the money, but may want the money or
16 a tree of individuals who do need the money to pay
17 their rent and basic survival. This is why we're
18 asking the city to oversee this forest and make
19 sure that the forest is growing and being
20 cultivated. In speaking to that, ReServe has a
21 contract with the City of New York and DFTA to
22 place reservists throughout the city agencies.
23 We've worked with 17 city agencies to date and
24 placed over 200 reservists at Department of Health
25 and Mental Hygiene, Department for the Aging,

2 Department of Environmental Protection, and the
3 list goes on. So we are certainly on people's
4 radar screens and also working collaboratively
5 with the various groups.

6 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: VISIONS, any
7 collaboration with DFTA, AARP, or ReServe?

8 BEVERLY THOMPSON: Not really, no.

9 BETH FINKEL: We do a lot of work
10 with VISIONS in terms of advocacy and public
11 policy, working with Nancy Miller.

12 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: That's
13 wonderful. I think the conversation has to be in
14 addressing the needs of older New Yorkers, some of
15 whom will present with special needs, how do these
16 programs more sensitive to those issues. VISIONS
17 certainly is one of the programs that serves as a
18 model for how we can do the integration
19 successfully. So I think that we need to expand
20 that network to include programs like VISIONS so
21 that we can get it right the first time. Yes?

22 BETH FINKEL: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Any questions?
24 No? Thank you for your testimony and for the work
25 that you do. After you all testify I leave here a

2 little smarter. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: The next panel
4 is a number of representatives from OATS. We'll
5 call them up all at the same time. I think we
6 have four people. We lost a few. Well, that's
7 unfortunate. I don't want DFTA to leave. After
8 this panel speaks I have a couple of questions for
9 you. I'm not going to be as diplomatic as my co-
10 chair and you should think about the answer to
11 this question. Why is DFTA not testifying? So
12 think about that question and then we're going to
13 call you up because you are here to answer
14 questions. After this panel, I'm going to call
15 you up since you are here to answer questions,
16 correct?

17 THOMAS KAMBER: My name is Tom
18 Kamber. I'm the Executive Director of Older
19 Adults Technology Services, OATS. We had a group
20 of seniors, but actually two out of our three
21 panelists had to go to work. So I wanted to just
22 say Garrison Phillips was here. He's a working
23 actor and he had to go to an audition. But he did
24 want to mention that he's 79-years-old, a Korean
25 War veteran, and he came to an OATS class several

1 years ago not knowing anything about the computer.
2 He's very hard of hearing, so he can't use a
3 telephone. He found out about the hearing today
4 by email. He found out about the audition that he
5 went to by email. He communicates with his family
6 in West Virginia by email. It is his principle
7 tool for staying engaged both with his family and
8 his community and also with his work. So he
9 wanted to talk about that today, but he actually
10 had to go to an audition. That's good news for
11 him. Also, Lester Johnson, who is also an OATS
12 trainee, came to work with us. He had been
13 working for a bank for a couple of decades and
14 needed retraining on technology. He came to an
15 OATS class, took our workforce technology course
16 and had to go today to his job that he now does
17 with a class that he took. We do have Art
18 Matarazzo here and I did want to yield to him and
19 hear from an actual OATS participant before I talk
20 about our stuff, and then we'll answer some
21 questions.
22

23 ARTHUR MATARAZZO: Thank you so
24 much. My name is Arthur Matarazzo. I'm very
25 honored and very impressed by the skills and

1 technical craftsmanship that must have went into
2 this room. Technology is always changing as time
3 goes on and we're in a new age, the 21st Century,
4 the age of electronics and technology. I'm a
5 retired New York City fireman. A couple of years
6 ago I decided I was going to try to get back into
7 the workforce. I registered for a tax preparatory
8 course with the understanding that if I aced the
9 course I could get a job. It was a trying course.
10 There was plenty of competition in the class with
11 much more knowledge of accounting than I had, and
12 I did so well they hired me. They paid me to take
13 more courses. But right before Christmas when we
14 were talking about job assignments, it came out
15 that I had no real computer skills. They weren't
16 offering any training in computers. It was just
17 assumed that I knew that stuff. So I didn't go
18 any further. I lost the course. So I wondered to
19 myself why I wasn't in the 21st Century. I didn't
20 need a computer as a fireman and my wife and I had
21 no children. Everybody I know my age who doesn't
22 do computing at work learns it from their kids.
23 So I decided I need to go to class; I had to go to
24 school. So I found the class in my neighborhood,
25

2 at the Lincoln Center Neighborhood Community
3 Center. I registered for classes there. They
4 have a computer lab with 12 seats. One of the
5 classes offered was an OATS class, Older Adults
6 Technical Services. When I read the course
7 description, we were going to be matched up with
8 high school students. I said, wow, they're going
9 to help us. They're going to help us because they
10 walk down the street and while they're talking to
11 their friends on the phone, in the other hand
12 they're doing other things. They're totally
13 ambidextrous. And they're chewing gum at the same
14 time and skipping rope. So some of things I
15 learned in taking the computer classes is that you
16 can't learn it on your own. Because as soon as
17 you get stuck, someone has to be there because
18 logic doesn't get you anywhere in computer world,
19 because the more keys you touch, the worse off you
20 are. Second I learned the internet and the
21 wonderful world of research presented is like
22 being in the Library of Congress with every volume
23 of book piled in the middle of the floor. I mean
24 the information is there but you have to know how
25 to get to it. Some of the classes I'm taking are

2 also just how to research information. There's
3 wonderful research websites. I found out that if
4 you just put in little and/or words that it
5 narrows down your results. That's all I wanted to
6 say is that now I feel like I'm in the 21st
7 Century somewhat. I sent my wife a PowerPoint
8 slideshow display on the email as a Valentine's
9 Day card. Six months ago I didn't even know what
10 email was. I just want to tell you that the irony
11 of it is that with all those courses I took at the
12 tax preparatory classes, I still can't do my own
13 taxes because I haven't learned how to e-file yet.
14 I took eight courses, I should be able to. Thank
15 you so much. I'm so happy to be here. This is a
16 wonderful room. What a great place to work.
17 Thank you very much.

18 THOMAS KAMBER: Thank you, Art.

19 I'm going to try to not say stuff that was covered
20 in the previous testimony. I'll skip around a
21 little bit in the written testimony. I do want to
22 thank the committee members and particularly the
23 committee chairpersons for hanging in here,
24 Council Member Arroyo, Avella and Crowley for
25 being here to support this really, really critical

1
2 issue. This is something that I think the city
3 really needs to devote a lot of attention to. I
4 did want to thank the OATS participants who came
5 and also the members of the OATS staff and Richard
6 Resnick who is here. He's also an OATS
7 participant and just wanted to observe for the
8 day. Some of you know what we do, but just very
9 quickly, Older Adults Technology Services is a
10 citywide nonprofit. We provide free technology
11 training to older adults at over 30 locations
12 around the city. We're five years old and in five
13 years we've taught over 4,000 senior citizens,
14 virtually all over the age of 60, all the way up
15 into their late 90s. Did we teach 100-year-old,
16 Renee? I think we have a 99-year-old that went
17 through the class. We've got an amazing range of
18 people. All of the programs are provided through
19 partnerships with local community-based
20 nonprofits. So OATS doesn't operate our own
21 community technology center. Our strategy is to
22 help other organizations better utilize their
23 facilities and provide best of class curriculum
24 and training and support to them at their own
25 locations. As people were discussing before,

1
2 older adults don't travel as well as younger
3 people do, so getting into the communities and
4 providing the services where people are has been
5 our principle strategy. This issue of older adult
6 workers came up for us in the very first course
7 that we taught in Bedford-Stuyvesant in 2004. We
8 expected that people would be coming and talking
9 about email and talking about digital photography
10 and things. When I asked the seniors in the class
11 what they were there for, the majority were
12 looking for work, which really set off a bell for
13 us. It made us think about what we were expecting
14 and what we were providing. We went back to the
15 drawing with our curriculum and started thinking
16 how we could better serve the needs of people.
17 Not just to teach them how to use a computer but
18 to give the life relevant skills that they need to
19 do something useful with the technology. So in
20 2005, partly supported by City Council members
21 with their discretionary funding, we were able to
22 develop this curriculum called Office Applications
23 for Older Adults, which is a 200-page, 20-session
24 class that covers basic workforce readiness skills
25 for older workers. It focuses on Microsoft

2 Office, such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint skills
3 and a little bit of file management. It won't
4 make anybody a complete whizbang expert on any of
5 those programs, but it's enough to get a 60 or 70
6 or 80-year-old participant to the level where they
7 can get through a job interview, where they can
8 successfully apply for a job, where they can start
9 and be oriented well enough to work with typical
10 office programs and be confident that they have a
11 strategy for learning new technology skills which
12 always emerge on the job as well. We have taught
13 that course at multiple locations all over; mostly
14 Manhattan, Bronx and Brooklyn. We have taught
15 several hundred seniors on that. We have
16 currently an incredibly long waiting list of 500
17 seniors who want the courses this year of which we
18 expect we can only serve one out of every five in
19 the coming year for people that want these
20 classes. OATS does not advertise our classes
21 ever. The last time that word got out in the
22 public media about OATS courses, we had to shut
23 our phone system down for an entire week, which
24 was last summer. On Spanish language TV, on
25 Univision, Mario Tapia mentioned our OATS program

2 for about three minutes in May and we had over 300
3 phone calls. Both our hotline and our main office
4 lines went down. The answering service was
5 totally clogged and we couldn't function. So
6 there's just an incredible demand for these
7 courses. We have requests in from the City
8 Department of Parks and the libraries. There are
9 Attain labs all over the city. Dozens of senior
10 centers and dozens of settlement houses, housing
11 developments, recreation centers, nursing homes,
12 hospitals, YMCAs, all of which have asked for our
13 services and are currently largely funding us out
14 of pocket. The investment in this program has
15 been, to date, from private foundations, such as
16 the Samuels Foundation and Independent Community
17 Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, local partners like
18 Union Settlement, like Lincoln Square Neighborhood
19 Center, which provides services, like the YMCA in
20 Brooklyn and even the tenant's association in
21 Bedford-Stuyvesant who took \$8,000 out of their
22 tenant's association account to finance a
23 workforce class for their members. That's been
24 the principle source of support for our programs.
25 On the city government side we've been entirely

supported by the City Council to date. So the council members specifically have given us their discretionary support and that's enabled us to provide services all over the city in different council members' districts. That was the first source of support for the innovative work that we were doing. It continues to be the only source of government support that we have. Last year we had an initiative that was sponsored by the Committee on Technology for \$500,000, which allowed us to reach 1,400 people in FY08 and that initiative was zeroed out in the budget cuts last June, which meant that we had to lay off staff and cut all of our sites down. So we were at 25 sites actively last June and we're down to about 9 right now with the private money that we have left. So our basic point on the workforce issues is that the issue is very urgent. It's very timely given the economy. There are three things that are in my testimony. One is that seniors need this for income purposes, which many people have mentioned. Secondly, people want to give back and contribute, which many people have mentioned. And finally, from our point of view, that there is an economic

competitiveness factor here where we can't afford to have older workers who have something to contribute in the workplace that are disadvantaged because of lack of training or lack of the ability to connect to jobs that they are the best qualified candidates for. We actually can't afford that in our economy. Older workers make the economy more competitive. It's not just that we're trying to give people some kind of handout. The older workers need these jobs but they also have things to contribute that make them more competitive and make those jobs better performed sometimes by older workers. We need to provide that training for them. On the government side, in terms of the support we've been able to get, we've had an excellent working relationship with the Department for the Aging, which has consistently tried to work with us to connect us to sites that they have. They recently partnered with us on this federal Department of Labor grant, which I thought they did a fantastic job on the application and SBS and LaGuardia Community College. We're really excited about that. There has been just no money available from the

1 financial standpoint. So over five years we've
2 taught 4,000 people, we've spent almost a million
3 dollars in private money and City Council
4 discretionary funds. We have yet to get our first
5 dollar from any public agency in New York City or
6 the state. We just can't do this alone. We can't
7 keep going on forever like this. We're hitting a
8 brick wall on it. That's our message.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Tom, nice to
11 see you. Arthur, I love to hear the testimony of
12 the New Yorkers that experience the things that we
13 think make sense and get behind in terms of
14 funding. You provide the proof that there is a
15 great deal of sense in investing in our community
16 partners to do the work that they do. One of the
17 things that Tom did not touch on is the
18 partnership between the three nonprofits, OATS,
19 DOROT and Per Scholas. OATS trains on the use of
20 the computer technology. Per Scholas provides the
21 hardware and the technical support to keep it
22 running. DOROT provides the online internet
23 educational programming for folks who access
24 remotely. It is something that Council Member
25 Brewer and I are strong supporters of and will

2 continue to work to make sure that at some point
3 we're able to change what you've testified here
4 the only public funding you get is through City
5 Council discretionary dollars. I'm trying to
6 convince my co-chair here to get them into his
7 district. That's how we start moving it forward.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Thank you for
9 that.

10 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Arthur, you're
11 the proof that the things that come to us and that
12 organizations like OATS and AARP and VISIONS and
13 ReServe just make sense. Government cannot be all
14 things to all people, but our nonprofit partners
15 step in and fill that gap. I want to thank you.
16 Congratulations on your success.

17 ARTHUR MATARAZZO: Thank you.

18 THOMAS KAMBER: I did want to
19 mention that the DOROT and Per Scholas
20 collaboration is leading to some really
21 interesting opportunities this year. The Samuels
22 Foundation just invested heavily in the program.
23 Partly what we're doing is working with older
24 individuals who received computers from Per
25 Scholas through that collaboration and providing

1
2 them with advanced curriculum and advanced
3 training. The New York Academy of Medicine is
4 actually going to evaluate the results from that.
5 So the initial project has been really fantastic.
6 We're in a holding pattern at the moment on the
7 funding side. We also have been working very
8 closely with ReServe, who we give first preference
9 to all of our classes for free because we know
10 that when we train a reservist they go back out
11 into the community and contribute more. We've
12 worked very closely with other partners, including
13 SAGE and VISIONS and a lot of the other groups out
14 there. There's been a great partnership and we're
15 having a lot of success with it. Thank you for
16 supporting it.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: I'd like to
18 call DFTA up to the table. When you answer my
19 first question, please introduce yourselves. Why
20 was the Department of Aging not giving a formal
21 report on what the agency does and how the agency
22 works with all of these nonprofits?

23 MARIA SERRANO: My name is Maria
24 Serrano. I'm director of senior employment
25 services for the Department for the Aging. It is

1 my understanding that I was here to answer some
2 questions. That a few weeks ago our assistant
3 commissioner, Karen Shaffer was here and provided
4 testimony on basically all of the collaboration
5 that we have in place at the department. However,
6 it's a great honor for me to be here in front of
7 the City Council and to have heard the incredible
8 response to everything that we're doing
9 collaboratively with AARP, OATS, CUNY, SBS, and
10 the list is long. We are very, very strong
11 partners with all of these organizations,
12 particularly DFTA with SBS is a mandated partner
13 on the workforce development. As a result, we
14 have an incredible position across all the city
15 workforce centers and have positioned our staff to
16 ensure that our seniors are properly represented.
17 Basically everything that is available at the
18 Department for the Aging, but primarily to address
19 the workforce issues that our seniors might be
20 encountering. We do have a training center at 220
21 Cherry Street. That's the home base for the
22 Senior Employment Program. In that location,
23 that's where we weave across the city of New York
24 all the services that are centralized for the
25

community. We offer, under the Senior Employment Program, the Title V program, the community service program that enables seniors who are 55 years of age and older to participate in employment and training options that are available in many of the community-based organizations that we have partnered with. At this level over 400 are working closely with them. Every year we make sure that we increase the participation of the community-based organizations because, in fact, they are an incredible training support to the work that we do with SCSEP. We are at a different plateau because of the emergency that we have with the workforce in the city and all the layoffs. We're seeing an incredible influx of people coming through the doors seeking our services. As a result, we have rolled up our sleeves and are making sure that we are proactive. We have a few initiatives that we're trying to put in place immediately. We have responded to the grant which will enable us to expand services for SCSEP. We believe also that we are strong candidates to receive some funds from the recent stimulus package. That is also going to enable us to

2 expand most of the services to the participants in
3 the city and anybody who is eligible for the
4 programs. But there's a group of people that are
5 not eligible for the program. Those are also of
6 an incredible concern and we have been working
7 very closely with them to make sure that they also
8 receive services. For that we are working with
9 ReServe to bring in a few staff members to help us
10 with job development skills, with referral to
11 market more with the business organizations of New
12 York and to make sure that this group of people
13 also receive support from the Department for the
14 Aging. Although we have been doing this for many,
15 many years without them being eligible, but we
16 refer all of our participants who are not eligible
17 to the New York City Workforce Development System.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: I think your
19 testimony just brings out the fact of my comment
20 that there should have been testimony from DFTA at
21 the beginning of this hearing. Obviously, you're
22 doing a lot of things. What I would suggest
23 because we do have to be out of here at 1 o'clock,
24 is I'd like to see an actual written description
25 from the agency of all the things you do for the

2 older workforce and how the collaboration with all
3 the nonprofits works and how you fund them. You
4 said you're trying to get them to expand their
5 outreach. Are you funding them? Is it just talk
6 back and forth and expertise and advice that
7 you're giving them? Is DFTA actually providing
8 some grants for these nonprofits to operate? I
9 think that's very important information. The
10 little that you gave us I think is good. But I
11 think the agency, and again this is not you, this
12 is not personal; the agency needs to understand
13 that this is an important issue and they shouldn't
14 disrespect the committees at a hearing like to
15 this to say they don't feel their testimony is
16 important enough to come. I think you have to
17 take that back. I say that to the mayor's
18 representative as well. That clearly the
19 Department for the Aging should have been here to
20 testify and a much higher level person than her,
21 even though she's obviously knowledgeable about
22 the program. I think that's an insult to the
23 committees that were here and I think that's an
24 insult to the issue.

25 MARIA SERRANO: I just want to say

1 that it was our understanding that the hearing
2 would be focusing on the work of CUNY. If there
3 was confusion on our end, then I certainly
4 apologize for that. We would be glad to provide
5 you with something in writing. I think that we
6 also felt it would be repetitive because we did
7 have an extensive hearing on this issue. But I
8 understand that your subcommittee was not involved
9 so we can certainly provide you with any
10 information.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: I just want to
13 add that I did speak to staff and there was an
14 official invitation given to DFTA to testify.
15 Maybe there was some confusion, but there was a
16 definite invitation made.

17 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I think my
18 colleague makes an excellent point. I did not
19 react as chair of the Committee on Aging to DFTA
20 not providing formal testimony because I've heard
21 testimony from DFTA on more than one occasion with
22 regards to the workforce development programs DFTA
23 manages and is in collaboration with organizations
24 with. But I think the point is that we can't take
25 for granted that your audience is knowledgeable or

1 understands the nuances. So it is appropriate for
2 us to provide to all committee members of the four
3 committees that were scheduled to be at this
4 hearing with a briefing paper from DFTA on the
5 services and programs available for workforce
6 development. I think you touched on the issue on
7 the impact of the layoffs and the economy in our
8 city. How is that impacting DFTA? Are we seeing
9 older New Yorkers more displaced than other
10 groups? You don't have the answers to those
11 questions. I want you to go back and study that
12 and get back to us with a formal response on what
13 you find. Then we can talk about how we handle or
14 deal with that issue. To support my colleague's
15 position, DFTA should have been here. The point
16 is very well taken and I hope that we will be able
17 to correct the lack of information that was
18 present at this meeting with a briefing paper to
19 the committee members.
20

21 MARIA SERRANO: All right.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVELLA: Thank you.

23 That concludes this hearing on this issue. I want
24 to thank everybody and my co-chairs and the
25 council members that were here. I think we sort

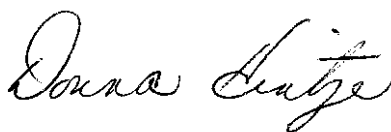
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2 of shed some light on this issue an much more

3 needs to be done. Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature_____

Date March 17, 2009