

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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Monday, September 22, 2025

Start: 1:35 P.M.

Recess: 3:21 P.M.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Hon. Crystal Hudson, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Chris Banks
Linda Lee
Darlene Mealy
Yusef Salaam
Lynn C. Schulman
Susan Zhuang

Other Council Members Attending:
Lincoln Restler

COMMITTEE ON AGING
A P P E A R A N C E S

Lorraine Cortès-Vázquez,
Commissioner for the New York City Department
for the Aging (NYC Aging)

Marcus Jackson,
Manager of Advocacy, Community, and Government
Relations at Encore Community Services

Jeanette Estima,
Director, Policy and Advocacy at Citymeals on
Wheels

Jeannine Cahill-Jackson,
Director of Elder Law Civil Practice at
The Legal Aid Society

Anita Kwok,
Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses
(UNH)

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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SERGEANT LUGO: Good morning, this is a microphone check for the Committee on Aging. Today's date is September 22, 2025, located in the Chambers, recording done by Pedro Lugo.

(PAUSE)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, and welcome to the New York City hybrid hearing on the Committee on Aging. Please silence all electronic devices at this time. If you are here to testify and you have not yet filled out an appearance slip, even though you filled it out online, you have to do that in person. Also, please silence electronic devices. Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [GAVEL] Thank you so much. Good afternoon, and apologies again for my delay.

Welcome to today's hearing: *Oversight - NYC Department for the Aging Meal Programming*. I'm Crystal Hudson, Aging Committee Chair, and my pronouns are she/her. We're also considering the following legislation today, Introductions 237 and 238 sponsored by me, which would codify New York City Aging's grab-and-go meal program and establish a

technical support program for older adults,
respectively.

Introduction 725, sponsored by Council
Member Lynn Schulman, requiring NYC Aging and the
Department of Housing Preservation and Development
HPD to report on senior and accessible dwelling
units.

Introduction 770, sponsored by Council
Member Linda Lee, in relation to requiring home-
delivered meals to be delivered each day of the
calendar year. And we are joined here today by
Council Member Linda Lee.

A recent report from the New York State
Comptroller's Office finds that New York City's older
adult population is both large and rapidly growing.
This trend is driven by increased longevity, the
aging of the Baby Boomer generation, and immigration.
Currently, New York City is home to approximately 1.8
million residents aged 60 and older, representing
nearly 21% of the city's total population. But with
this population growth comes a troubling rise in
economic hardship.

In twenty, 21.5% of New Yorkers age 65
and older lived below the federal poverty line,

1 compared with 18.2% of the city overall. The number
2 of older adults living in poverty grew from about
3 178,000 in 2013 to more than 250,900 in 2023, a
4 nearly 41% increase in just a decade. Median
5 household income for households headed by older
6 adults age 65 and older was only \$46,359 in 2023, far
7 below what is required to meet New York City's cost
8 of living.
9

10 Housing costs compound these pressures—
11 61% of older renters are rent burdened, spending at
12 least 30% of their income on housing. Food insecurity
13 has emerged as one of the most acute threats to older
14 New Yorkers' well-being.

15 According to New York City Aging's most
16 recent Service Needs Assessment, nearly 30% of older
17 adults reported difficulty or an inability to
18 purchase affordable, healthy food. A 2024 survey
19 conducted by Citymeals on Wheels and the CUNY Urban
20 Food Policy Institute found that almost half of older
21 New Yorkers reported some level of food insecurity.
22 Among those receiving home-delivered meals, 60% still
23 reported food insecurity. These findings underscore
24 that even those already accessing nutrition programs
25 are struggling to afford or obtain sufficient food,

revealing gaps in coverage and the depth of need across the city's aging population.

Like pouring gasoline on a fire, the Trump administration and congressional Republicans are intentionally making these problems much worse. On September 2nd, draconian Republican cuts and cruel work requirements for SNAP took effect. These changes will cause millions of people, including many older New Yorkers and immigrant New Yorkers, to lose access to critical food assistance, further burdening food banks and other charitable organizations with extra demand for food.

But it doesn't stop there. Trump has attacked food banks, too, clawing back millions in funding and driving Americans further into food insecurity and poverty. And drastic cuts and work requirements for Medicaid will severely harm our city's older adults, restricting their access to healthcare. Even the federal agency that awards grants to support older adults is on the chopping block, with the Trump administration firing many of its employees and announcing its intention to dismantle it entirely.

That's why it's more critical than ever that we have meal programming options in New York City for older adults, and that we allocate sufficient resources to meet growing demand for food assistance in our city. Through New York City's network of Older Adult Centers and the Home-delivered meals program, and together with our State partners, the City can and must do its part to provide nutritious meals to older New Yorkers and ensure they can live their lives with dignity and security.

But as we will discuss today, the number of home-delivered meals served has declined by 800,000 since fiscal year 2023, and the number of meals served at OACS has yet to reach pre-pandemic levels despite a rapidly growing need for food among our city's older adults.

At today's hearing, we will review the recently released metrics for these programs from the 2025 Mayor's Management Report, discuss how federal cuts will impact New York City's Aging services of food insecurity among older adults, and examine ways to restore and expand meal programming so that the City can serve more older adults at a time when the

federal government is turning its back on our most vulnerable communities.

And before I conclude, I just want to read another bit that is relevant: The Trump administration's recent decision to eliminate its Annual Food Insecurity Report comes just months after deep cuts to SNAP, obscuring the data we need to track how those cuts affect vulnerable New Yorkers. For older New Yorkers who already face high rates of poverty and food insecurity, the loss of this national benchmark makes it harder to demonstrate need and secure resources, meaning that the City must really hold itself accountable here.

Now, I'd like to conclude by thanking the committee staff for their work on this hearing, Christopher Pepe, Chloë Rivera, and Saiyemul Hamid. I would also like to thank my staff, Andrew Wright, Erika Ruintan, and Omar Richardson.

Before I read a written statement from Council Member Schulman on her bill being considered today, I'd like to offer the opportunity for Council Member Lee to read a statement on her bill.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Thank you so much, Chair. So good morning, everyone, colleagues, agency

1
2 partners, advocates, and neighbors. I'm here to talk
3 about Intro 770, which is the bill being heard today.
4 The goal of this bill is clear and simple. Every
5 eligible older New Yorker should have a reliable
6 supply of nutritious food for all seven days of the
7 week, year-round. To be explicit, the bill's focus is
8 on seven days of food supply, not necessarily seven
9 days of doorstep delivery. Many excellent providers
10 already meet weekend and holiday needs through multi-
11 day drops, frozen or ready-to-heat meals, and shelf-
12 stable packs. We want to honor that smart, practical
13 approach while making sure no day is left uncovered.

14 I'm grateful to the providers and
15 advocates who've engaged with us. As a former
16 nonprofit executive, I value the partnership and the
17 operational know-how that you bring, and we share the
18 same aim: Keep seniors nourished consistently and do
19 it in a way that strengthens, not strains, the
20 community organizations at the heart of this work.

21 Between now and markup, I'll be working
22 with the Chair, my colleagues, the Administration,
23 the Department for the Aging, and OMB to land this
24 bill in a strong, workable place, which means
25 aligning resources with the goal, including pursuing

1
2 companion appropriations and ensuring contract terms
3 reflect real costs. And as many of you know, I hate
4 unfunded mandates. And so that is not the goal of
5 this bill. We want to make sure that there's funding
6 in place—so we hear you—to the nonprofit leaders
7 out there.

8 Codifying flexibility, affirming that
9 advanced provision, frozen shelf stable multi-day
10 delivery is fully compliant so long as clients have
11 uninterrupted access to food, and also improving the
12 mechanics—from prompt payments to clear guidance and
13 reporting so that providers can plan confidently and
14 clients experience seamless service.

15 Our seniors deserve the dignity of
16 knowing tomorrow's meal is there, full stop, and our
17 nonprofit partners deserve the clarity and support
18 that let them do this work sustainably.

19 Thank you to everyone who has contributed
20 thoughtful feedback. I look forward to finalizing a
21 bill that is steady, flexible, and sustainable—a
22 seven-day food supply guarantees that our older
23 adults can count on it and our providers can deliver.
24 Thank you.
25

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much,
Council Member Lee.

And now I will read a written statement
by Council Member Schulman on her bill being
considered today, Introduction 725. And she states:

"Thank you, Chair Hudson, and thank you
to my colleagues on the Committee on Aging for
holding this important hearing today. As we all know,
New York City is home to a rapidly growing population
of older adults. By 2031, one in five New Yorkers
will be over the age of 60. Yet too many of our
seniors live in apartments that are not equipped to
meet their needs as they age, particularly when it
comes to accessibility and mobility.

Intro 725 that I'm sponsoring would
require the Department for the Aging, in partnership
with HPD, to submit an annual report on how many
seniors live in apartment buildings in each council
district and how many of those apartments have been
retrofitted for people with disabilities. This may
sound straightforward, but the data we collect will
give us a clear picture of where the gaps are and how
we can better target resources to keep older adults

safe, independent, and in their homes. Without this information, we're flying blind.

Intro 725 is about dignity, transparency, and planning for the future of our city. It will ensure that we are making informed decisions to support seniors and allow them to age in place with the respect they deserve.

I look forward to working with all of you to move this bill forward. Thank you."

And I will now pass the MIC to the Committee Counsel to administer the oath to the Administration.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, in accordance with the Rules of the Council, I will administer the affirmation to the witnesses from the mayoral administration.

Commissioner, do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to respond honestly to council member questions?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (UN-MIC'D)
(INAUDIBLE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may proceed with your testimony.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Was this on?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can say it again
on the MIC.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I do.

(PAUSE)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Am I ready
to go?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Cool.

Good afternoon, first of all,
congratulations. I applaud you for getting an Aging
article in a new newspaper, which is a hard feat to
do. We are always struck by the ageism in our press
and the lack of attention to the aging issue. So
congratulations on that, and also for your strong
leadership and advocacy in terms of aging issues.

So, as you all know, my name is Lorraine
Cortès-Vázquez and I am the Commissioner for the New
York City Department for the Aging (NYC Aging). I am
grateful for the opportunity to speak with you today
about meal programming and services for older adults,
because we believe in aging in place, and these
services are an essential part of an age-inclusive
city centered around community-based care.

As we frequently say, nearly two million New Yorkers are aged 60 and over. That number is expected to increase significantly in the next decade, as you stated in your opening statement, Council Member. The city's population ages, so does the need for expanded services to help older adults remain in their homes and in communities with dignity. This includes a growing demand for caregiving support, resources, and especially mental health services. Older adults are particularly vulnerable-- as well as workforce issues. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to challenges like social isolation, financial insecurity, and limited access to culturally competent care, which can worsen such conditions as depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.

A common denominator of challenges faced by many older adults today is food insecurity and the need for increased nutritional services among older populations—older vulnerable populations.

I want to go back to just digress from the written statement for a minute to say why we believe the workforce is such an important part, because the workforce addresses financial insecurity,

which is very directly tied to food insecurity. So I want that link to be made.

Two of New York City's aging core services are Older Adult Centers—we have 308 of them—and home-delivered meals programs, which are intrinsically connected to providing meals and nutrition assistance to older adults.

While we do not typically view congregate or home-delivered meals as “food as medicine”, these are essential services for healthy living and preventing social isolation. However, we believe in the philosophy of food as medicine, the work done by OACS, HDM programs, and our case management providers combat poverty and financial insecurity, while also connecting homebound older adults to in-home services that address their needs when struggling with activities of daily living. For older adults experiencing food insecurity, it is typically represented by financial insecurity, and we're continuously working to meet those needs within our network of providers.

We continue to hit milestones in meal delivery, with a current record of more than 10 million meals served to older New Yorkers throughout

the five boroughs. This includes 6.1 million meals served at the 300-plus OACs in the network and 4.2 million meals delivered by our Home-Delivered Meals providers. We are pleased to share that we are on track to match that number again in the new fiscal year and are confident that, as the aging population grows in New York City and across the country, NYC Aging will be serving more than 10 million meals annually in the years to come. This is an incredible achievement when considering the dollar-for-dollar impact of meals provision as an anti-poverty measure in the lives of older adults. When the Older Americans Act (OAA) was passed 60 years ago this July in 1965, a key reason for creating that pivotal legislation was to address older adult poverty nationwide through nutrition and supportive services. While much has changed since the 1960s about being an older adult and the state of the aging population, the basic human needs for dignified aging—meals, health, agency, and income—remain the same.

Similar to the successes seen in our meals programming is our work through the Cabinet for Older New Yorkers, which utilizes cross-collaboration techniques to address the needs of older adults in a

range of areas. This includes housing needs, and we are proud of the work done in the Housing Subcommittee, which reviewed the New York City Housing Preservation and Development's Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS) to understand better how housing choice, availability, and accessibility impact older adults. Additionally, we have collaborated with HPD surrounding Universal Design improvements in buildings, which contribute to the overall impact on community care that we see in New York City. Ultimately, NYC Aging does not have the full perspective of housing construction needs, and we rely on that relationship with HPD for that expertise. This information will better inform our agencies' joint advocacy as we address housing needs among New York's older population.

Additionally, we have continued to pioneer improvements in the tech and digital literacy space. Just last month, we celebrated the expansion of the Neighborhood Tech Help program, a partnership between NYC Aging, HPD, New York Public Library, Presbyterian Senior Services, where older adults who are Section 8 tenants in the Bronx will have greater access to digital platforms and devices. This program

1 is in their communities and homes, serving NYCHA
2 facilities, older adult centers, libraries, and other
3 community facilities. We continue to focus our
4 mission on connecting older adults to services, like
5 digital literacy education, which greatly serve their
6 needs.
7

8 I know that the general purpose of
9 today's hearing is to address the four pieces of
10 legislation that are being introduced today—it
11 might be three. This includes Introduction 237, a
12 bill to establish a grab-and-go meal program;
13 Introduction 770, a bill to require home-delivered
14 meals every day of the calendar year; Introduction
15 525 (sic) (***TRANSCRIPTION NOTE: 725**), a bill to
16 require HPD and NYC Aging report on accessibility for
17 older adults in multiple dwelling units; and
18 Introduction 238, a bill to establish a tech support
19 program for older adults.

20 Regarding Introductions 237 and 770, we
21 agree that these bills could improve meal delivery
22 and nutrition programs for older adults, but want to
23 highlight—and I thank you for, Council Member Lee,
24 for acknowledging that in your opening statement,
25 that as it is presented, the bill would present

1 implementation difficulties for the providers. And as
2 they are in the negotiation phase, we could address
3 those issues— we are also looking at grab-and-go
4 options at OACs, we are mindful of the federal
5 requirement in the Older Americans Act in Title III
6 C-1 congregate meal funding, which necessitates that
7 congregate meals provided at OACs and services happen
8 at the same locations. Without consideration of this
9 OAA mandate or changes to federal law, there will be
10 funding implications, which might diminish the role
11 of the federal government in reimbursing those meals.
12 Similarly, Introduction 770, which would necessitate
13 seven days of daily meal deliveries, is currently
14 achieved through public-private partnerships with the
15 Citymeals on Wheels to supplement NYC Aging HDM
16 contracts. Nonetheless, the daily meal delivery
17 requirement could be difficult to achieve, given
18 labor needs, operational challenges seen in all our
19 programs, and we expect this would result in
20 additional cost implications for this program.

21
22 Regarding Introduction 725, which would
23 require Aging to report on older adult and accessible
24 dwelling units, within our discussions with HPD, they
25 do not have a way of tracking which units house older

adults across the breadth of housing types across the City. While they fund older adult program housing through their SARA program, that program is a portion of the housing types for older adults. Furthermore, we are not aware of any administrative datasets that track or would be able to track the data required in Introduction 725. We would be open to connecting with the Council about publicly available datasets that include the information that the Council is seeking through this bill.

Finally, Introduction 238 would establish a technical support program for older adults. Technology literacy is an issue that NYC Aging is committed to and actively supports. Older adults are welcome to take a variety of courses offered at Older Adult Centers, which were further improved through Council legislation to give greater access to courses like utilizing email, as well as understanding and navigating telehealth options. In truth, digital and technological literacy are paramount goals to achieving the spirit of this bill; however, the City does not have the capability to execute a large-scale IT support program, including devices that the City does not have the ability to access or control. NYC

Aging is committed to advocating for the needs of older adults and ensuring that partner agencies, which are responsible for aspects of an older adult's life or experience, know and apply that perspective.

As always, I am immensely proud of the work of the NYC Aging staff and the provider network. What they accomplish every day is amazing. We are consistently working to be more innovative and efficient in meeting the diverse and growing needs of New York City's older adults. With your continued partnership, we can ensure that older New Yorkers are not only cared for but are also celebrated, respected, and have every opportunity to live fulfilling lives. And as you said in your op-ed today, Council Member, those are not just words; those are actions that we believe in and should do every day.

I'm happy to discuss further these important pieces of legislation heard today.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much, Commissioner. I'm going to start off with some questions, and then we'll turn it over to Council Member Lee.

Citymeals on Wheels and the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute found that 60% of older New Yorkers receiving home-delivered meals remain food insecure. What is driving this persistent gap despite meal program participation?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The Home-delivered meals program provides one meal per day, as do our Older Adult Centers-- as do most Older Adult Centers. There are some Older Adult Centers that provide an additional meal, either breakfast and some dinner. This may not meet the full nutritional needs of all food-insecure older adults. We acknowledge that. We know that that meal meets the nutritional needs for an older adult for that day.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That Particular meal.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Huh?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That particular meal...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: That particular meal does do that. And in some cases, that might be the only meal.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: that they receive, which is why the nutritional value is so important to us. That being said, it just represents a portion of what it is, and we cannot assess what food insecurity is for those people who are not clients of the older adult. And that's, you know, we know that there might be a lot more food insecurity, because there are a lot more older adults not coming to the Older Adult Center. We have no way of having that information, right?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. But I just want to be clear, this question is specifically about the folks who are receiving home-delivered meals.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yes. And that goes to the fact that this is one meal...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: A day.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: of meals for that older adult.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Understood. Yeah.

Does NYC Aging track the food insecurity rates of older adults not enrolled in meal programs, and how do they compare to those who are enrolled? Sounds like none.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, we don't have the means to track non-participants, but as you said in your opening remark, the needs assessment that we did this year did give us an insight into what food insecurity may be for those non-participants.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And the needs...

(CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (INAUDIBLE) the 30% that you described.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. But the needs assessment reached how many older adults?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It reached 8,600, which is great for a sample, so you can extrapolate from that, but we do not have an actual-- nor the capacity... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Have you ever considered, even if it's with a, you know, partnering with other organizations in order to get it done, but have you thought about like a citywide survey of older adults beyond just this sample?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: A citywide survey just on food insecurity?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Well, anything.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The need for
(INAUDIBLE)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: for older adults...
(CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (INAUDIBLE)
was a citywide. Uh...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But it's only 8,600
people, so beyond-- to scale up, essentially.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well, a from
a survey perspective, that's a pretty large scale.
But if the question-- Here's what I can answer: If it
were food insecurity, yes, that would be a valuable
survey for NYC aging to have. And then there's the
related statement, which is that there's a cost
associated...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Of course.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: with surveys
of that magnitude.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I'm just thinking
there have to be other organizations that are maybe
surveying their clients that maybe are not your
clients. And so if there's an opportunity to maybe
either pull data from other organizations... (CROSS-
TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, that's something we can explore...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: To look at who is conducting these types of surveys...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And see if they disaggregate data by age.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And see how we can make some statements. Just want to make...

(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Something to be....

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: One of the things that we were looking at is some of the information that the Department of Health may have or H+H...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But then, the distinction for us would be distinguishing food insecurity from hunger.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And that's-- there's a wide boulevard between those two issues, or could be.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, understood.

What benchmarks does NYC Aging use to determine when food insecurity among older New Yorkers has been successfully reduced?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: For those individuals who are deemed home-delivered meals eligible by our case management agencies, there is a-- food insecurity is one of the first questions that they ask for, and they look at two factors: Do you have someone in your home, either providing or being able to buy groceries for you or help you cook a meal? That is one indicator that there may be food insecurity. And then the other one is, would you even have the ability to prepare that meal or even-- and what is your ability in reheating a meal even? So that is the kind of thing that is an indicator for us to someone who's food insecure immediately.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And as you know, when someone is food insecure, home-delivered

meals are turned on immediately before the rest of the assessment is done.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But in order to determine if that food insecurity has been, quote, "successfully reduced"...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And we could address that by saying that we know that you will get one meal that contributes to the diminishing of your food insecurity.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So is it safe to say that one's participation in the Home-delivered meals program would be a benchmark that you would consider to say their food (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It is a benchmark for ensuring that at least you have one meal to address your food insecurity issues. A

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And I guess my specific question is, is that one meal equivalent, in your opinion, to food insecurity being successfully reduced? Or I suppose not in your opinion, but is that the benchmark that's being used?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I would say for that meal, right, but that is one meal that that individual is getting.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. Right, okay,
so, yeah...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You know
what I'm saying? So, I think we're...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes. It's not-- we're
saying probably the same thing, which is that it's
not...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: fully addressing food
insecurity, but it might be successfully...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It abates
it...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It abates it...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The best way
to say that it abates food insecurity because the
individual is getting one meal a day rather than no
meals a day.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. And so abating
food insecurity could be equivalent to successfully
reducing..

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Food insecurity?
Okay. It could just be semantics here.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Uh...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, because it's such a larger issue, right?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So what we're doing together is addressing one meal, which we believe is essential. Because there would be no meals, so...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You know that is bigger... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: One meal is certainly better than no meals.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Huh?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: One meal is better than no meals. It's not three meals...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right, right...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But it's not no meals either, so...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We are abating hunger.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We are abating starvation, yes.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. And in an ideal scenario, we can get to three meals, seven days, but we'll get there.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (INAUDIBLE) in just a bit... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We're working... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We're working towards... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: towards seven meals, (INAUDIBLE)...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (LAUGHS) Okay, congregate meal programs at Older Adult Centers—How does NYC Aging decide which OACs can expand beyond one hot meal per day to offer breakfast or dinner? You referenced this earlier, and...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right, the-- in the RFP that was issued three years ago, that was an option that people were given, and people can choose that option, and it's a budgetary-- it's a budgetary ability.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. So anybody can do it if they can afford to do it. Is that what you're saying?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, the 2025 Mayoral...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (INAUDIBLE) monitor as we do all meals.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

The 2025 Mayor's Management Report states that nearly six and a half million congregate meals were served at OACS in fiscal year 2025, an increase of about 300,000 from fiscal year 2024. Still, one million fewer meals were served at OACS in fiscal year 2025 as compared to fiscal year 2020. This figure also falls well short of the agency's goal of 8.3 million meals served in fiscal year 2025.

What is the timeline and strategy to reach and exceed pre-pandemic service levels? What strategies were employed to achieve the reported increases in fiscal year 2025?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So I want to address the home-delivered meals question first, right?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: If you recall, a year and a half ago, maybe two years ago, the state told us to take x number of-- I think it was 300,000-- 3,000?-- 3,000 older adults offer home-delivered meals (INAUDIBLE) and we had to do...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: that for a while. We then said we're not abiding by that, we came up in July and put as many of those people as we could reassess back into the rosters. We're still in that toggling with-- all 3,000 have not come back for home-delivered meals. So that is the shortfall that we believe contributes to that. Correspondingly, we have just-- You're joining us, Lincoln-- Correspondingly, we've just switched to a new data system, which we believe is a much better data system for NYC Aging. It is client-focused. It is also user-friendly, and we went from a very costly data system to something called VIVE. In that transition, we know that we have had some data glitches, so we believe that that is a contributor to some of these numbers. For Older Adult Clubs, what I can say is that we've done outreach and we've done a major Join Us

1 campaign. We are doing outreach at the local level
2 every day by the providers. And we are yet to meet
3 those pre-pandemic numbers. And it's something that
4 we're looking at continuously—looking at
5 innovations—we try pop-up clinics, we're doing many
6 different ways to try to address food insecurity and
7 to get people to come back to congregate settings.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Is there a specific
10 timeline or a goal by when you'd like to see those
11 numbers return to pre-pandemic levels?

12 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We were
13 hoping that that was this year, but we continue to
14 work on that. You know, I believe that with outreach,
15 I think with word of mouth, I think stronger
16 partnerships with some other entities all lead to
17 that, and I believe that all of those are in the
18 works locally as well as citywide.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And I'd like to
20 acknowledge that we've been joined by Council Members
21 Banks and Salaam.

22 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: How are you?
23 Great. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What measures are in
25 place to ensure meals are not only culturally

appropriate but also nutritionally adequate,
especially for older adults with chronic conditions
like diabetes or hypertension?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So as I said
earlier, the meals provide-- meet all of the state,
city, and federal nutrition guidelines, and also meet
the nutritional needs of the majority of older
adults. And you also are aware that we have a mandate
that if there are 20% of the population who are of a
different culture, services, as well as meals, must
comply with that population. So that is how we do
that.

We do not serve—and I want to be clear
for the record—we do not serve medically tailored
meals. That is not something that NYC Aging does.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. And I'd
also like to note that we've been joined by Council
Member Restler, who you seemed particularly excited
to see. (LAUGHS)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I'm always
excited to see him.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (LAUGHS)

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: (UN-MIC'D)

(INAUDIBLE)

ALL: (LAUGHTER)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: For the record.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But he said it for the record, off MIC.

ALL: (LAUGHTER)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, it's not actually on the record. (LAUGHS)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well, he knows that he made me happy the other day when-- I will let it go.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (LAUGHS)

Okay, despite the increase in meals served, the number of OAC meal participants declined by about 2,000 in fiscal year 2025 from fiscal year 2024, from about 117,000 to 100-- well, let me be specific, from 117,457 to 115,508. Why is this? And what outreach is being done to expand access, especially among immigrant communities who may face language barriers?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So I want to-- I want to be-- this is not an immigrant issue, you know, and this is not a cultural competence issue either. This is, as I mentioned earlier, a

combination of the state requirement and us trying to catch up and switching from one data system to the other.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I believe that that will, at some point, calibrate, and then we will know truly what the decline is, if there is a decline.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you collect demographic information about new meal participants and how they learned about the meal programs at their OACs to better inform future outreach?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Every provider has an intake form, and in that intake form, it does say, "How did you learn about this Older Adult Club?" All right? And I believe race and ethnicity are optional.

UNKNOWN: We'll check.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We'll check. I know that sexual preference is optional, but I don't know if race and ethnicity are optional, although language spoken is usually asked very specifically.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. I'm going to take a break here and turn it over to Council Member Lee for some of her questions.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Great.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Great, thank you, Chair.

So some of these questions I know, but I'll just ask for the record and also to refresh my own memory: So it seems like you would be supportive of Intro 770, provided that there are some adjustments made, right? In terms of how it's operationalized and also the funding, or generally do support? Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Absolutely. Those are the two issues that present the biggest barrier to this.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, perfect.

And then, if you could just remind me, how much do you sort of anticipate that it would cost-- and I forget if there's a distinction between the weekday meals versus the weekend meals, and what that cost difference is? (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Perfect. So if we were to add the two additional meals, sans the delivery issue, right, because that would increase it. It is estimated that it'll be between \$27 million to \$28 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: And that's not including, like you're saying, the overhead costs with staffing and the delivery fees, the gas, all that other...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: That is a complete cost. Because--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Complete (INAUDIBLE)...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Remember, with the public-private partnership, they only pay for the meal while the infrastructure is paid for by NYC public dollars already, right? So that would be an all-inclusive, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. Uh...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The infrastructure remains the same.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Right. I think what we're trying to figure out, then moving forward, is if we were to deliver, what would that look like for

1
2 seven-day meals, meaning how do we do it in such a
3 way where it doesn't incur more costs per se, right?
4 So (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

5 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So the
6 beauty of this is that we have a real example. We do
7 it now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The providers
10 do it now. And so they would continue to provide
11 that. It's just that the funding would come--If this
12 bill were enacted, it would be city funding, but
13 right now it's a combination.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Right. So, for the
15 \$27 million additional cost-- So I guess what I'm
16 trying to figure out is how many of the current
17 providers already provide six-day meals? Or I know
18 some do seven, right? But then, how many additional
19 Meals on Wheels providers would we want to bring
20 online to make it so that all the homebound meal
21 recipients are receiving meals for seven days?

22 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I don't
23 think that is an issue...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.
25

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: for us. I think the number is so minuscule as to those who provide six over seven.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I think that's not material.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And somebody is going to knock me-- yeah, okay. That is not a material number. (LAUGHS)

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: (LAUGHS) Okay, perfect.

I know that some of the weekend meals are also provided by Citymeals [on Wheels] (TIMER) in terms of offsetting some of the costs. So, have you had conversations with Citymeals in terms of what they would potentially or could potentially use that funding for, whether it's an additional meal during the week, or I just wasn't sure if...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Thank you for that question, because Citymeals and I had a conversation sometime last week, and have had all along, this bill does not eliminate Citymeals on Wheels. Citymeals on Wheels, and I'm not going to

1 speak for them; they can speak for themselves, is
2 committed to addressing food insecurity among older
3 adults. And so how they then address the other food
4 insecurity needs that the Council Member has-- the
5 Chair has presented, exists. And I've confirmed that
6 they exist. There are plenty of opportunities to
7 address food insecurity in a variety of measures.

8
9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. No, so that's
10 good to happen. So just to reiterate, because I know
11 that their funding is specifically going to some of
12 the weekend meals. And so if that is covered through
13 the City funding, then hopefully, potentially, we can
14 use those funds for something else to address food
15 insecurity.

16 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I think they
17 are in the best position to answer that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: All right, okay.

19 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But given
20 our conversations, there are plenty of opportunities.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: There is a
23 breakfast, there's fresh food. There are other great
24 opportunities for them to participate in addressing
25 our mutual goal of addressing food insecurity.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, perfect. And it's good to know that you guys are already having those conversations. I just want to make sure that the money stays, you know, in the community...

(CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: In the network...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: for... yeah...

(CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Oh, I think we all have the same interest.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: (LAUGHS) Perfect, perfect, okay.

For food programs overall, how is New York City Aging addressing the rising costs of meal production, which we all know is going up, and delivery, including the increase in gas, food, and wages?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You know, I want to remind all of us that when we started, maybe the food cost for home-delivered meals was like \$9.38, and over the past five years, we've increased that to \$14.00, and I'm looking for the number, uh, \$14.78 or something comparable to that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We, meaning "we"?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We meaning
"we".

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. I just want to
be clear.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We had a hand in
that.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: "We" means
the City and the City Council in partnership, have
addressed the cost of meals every year together.
Clear?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You're
welcome.

ALL: (LAUGHTER)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well, you
know the "we" always is, you and I and the Committee
and the City.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Not everybody says
"we" in an inclusive way. So I just wanted to confirm
on the record.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (LAUGHS) So funny that you say that, because I forgot to say my pronouns, which I start with "ella", her, and then she.

What was the question again for being so fresh?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I'm sorry, it's my fault.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That was fine.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Addressing the rise in the cost, which you were, then (INAUDIBLE)...
(CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay. So together we've addressed that. And it's something that we have to look at, given what we see in food costs and the economy now. But it's something that we're very mindful of. We know you are, and in partnership, we work to address.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Perfect. And after the reimbursement rate increase was implemented upon adoption, has New York City Aging received feedback from homebound meal providers about the program? And if so, what are the main concerns that are expressed?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You know I have-- I'm proud to say that I have a monthly meeting with providers where we discuss all of these issues.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: I used to be part of those.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yes, you were part of them. And it's a tradition that I hope continues, because I think it's invaluable. You can't do this as two separate entities. We've got to work on these issues together. Do we always agree? Of course not. But what we do know is that we're aligned in what advocacy is important to us, which includes food cost, food insecurity, financial insecurity, the workforce, and caregiving. We're aligned on all those things.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: And then just lastly, and I think the Chair sort of alluded to this, but how has New York City Aging been doing in terms of understanding for-- folks that are not included in this Meals on Wheels program or homebound meals program—Have you done any studies or assessments to gather data on the program's demands and how many more folks would be able to be included?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, it's something that we constantly work with, and we do that with the case management agency. They're a major partner in this, and they inform us as to what the demand is. Fortunately for us, for every older adult who has been identified as food insecure, we've been able to issue home-delivered meals. And one of the other strategies that we do is if we see one district underutilizing meals, we allow and transfer some of those meals to another district that we're not having a shortage or leaving anything on the table, as we say. And we do that almost regularly with home-delivered meals, and we started looking at that with congregate meals also.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. And have you worked with any other, I don't know, just randomly throwing this out there, other academic institutions or other folks that have sort of a pulse on aging issues throughout the city, that maybe you're outside of the DFTA network that you can partner with?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We do. But our network is our first line of support. And our network is what we rely on, and our network has a strong relationship with hospitals, churches, and

synagogues. And so they know what the demands are,
and they know where the unmet need is.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, perfect. Thank
you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And sorry, just as
one quick follow-up to Council Member Lee's question
about addressing rising food costs. For congregate
meals, they haven't seen a rate increase in years.
So...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And we have
requested to address congregate meals, and it's been
one of those things that we are constantly doing
because we recognize that also.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And you've made the
request for the OMB?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We have.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And we're in
conversations with OMB about that, although I believe
that there was a small increase.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What might that request look like?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: In dollar amount? (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Like...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I can get back to you on that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That'd be helpful.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Because we have that number just for meals.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great. Thank you. I'm going to turn it over to Council Member Restler, followed by Council Member Banks.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so much, Chair Hudson. I am really happy to be here for my first Aging Committee hearing. I don't know...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: You know, I don't have the privilege of serving on this committee, but I have been seeing you in action and just how

phenomenal a job you've done in delivering for older adults across the city.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: You know, I had the privilege of hosting our commissioner in District 33 last week, and I hope you don't mind me sharing this or saying this, but you know, she remarked about just how great a partnership you both-- you have had together and how instrumental that has been for the success of serving older adults in New York.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Could not happen otherwise.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: You know, in even just sitting here for five minutes, Commissioner, I just appreciate your refreshing candor and integrity and the care that you bring to this work. It is a real partnership with you, and that's just who you are. It's who you've always been. And so it's good to see you...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Council Member, you can come back anytime.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm, you know...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: The problem is, if I'm following up and Council Member Lee...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: When you have questions, you can call before you pose...

ALL: (LAUGHTER)

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Well, I'll try to be nice, but I just will say when I'm following up, Chair Hudson and Council Member Lee, you know, I sound like the-- I am the novice because you both are deeply steeped in the policies and the of serving older adults.

So it's good to be here. It's good to be with you all. I am coming, Commissioner, today with a parochial set of questions. Maybe your staff is going to tell you about them now, regarding, uh, Polish people in Greenpoint. You know, when changes were made to the home delivery contract, the Polish Slavic Center is no longer a partner. As you know as well as I do, a lot of the older adults who receive home-delivered meals, it's like their sole engagement with another person for maybe that whole day or maybe even for the week. And having that culturally competent Polish-speaking individual who's bringing a Polish meal, it really makes a difference. And I've been

going back and forth with your staff. I know you all are looking at this and you're trying. And I appreciated your comments earlier. This is not about you-- but is this something that you can continue to give a fresh look at? You know, we just want to make sure that for this community of homebound Polish seniors, they're getting the culturally competent, linguistic, you know, right, types of meals that bring them joy.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Absolutely. For the record, they are getting culturally competent meals, all right. And we're making every effort to ensure that that happens.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I took that very, very seriously. But the contractor (TIMER) who had the contract originally did not submit a proposal that won. And that is part of the City procurement process.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But the commitment to that community has never waned, and that's the key point here. And our commitment is to continue to provide culturally competent meals and to

1
2 make sure that the current provider is also doing
3 that in the most welcoming way possible.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I get it. And the
5 procurement process is what the procurement process
6 is. And not everyone can win, right? But they had
7 long been a sub on doing this work for decades. And I
8 think doing a great job from everything I could tell
9 based on the seniors and the people I talked to in my
10 community...

11 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And we had
12 no problems with their performance. It was just...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I understand
14 that.

15 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I know you
17 weren't criticizing them, or you know, they were a
18 sub on the contract. They didn't win this. They
19 weren't part of the winning bid for this next round.
20 You know, we're going to continue to solicit feedback
21 from our community about how they feel things are
22 going. You know, we've gotten-- I think we've gotten
23 more complaints earlier in the year, things seem to
24 have subsided. We'll continue to check in and hear
25 back. You know, if there was an opportunity for them

1 to be brought on as a sub again, I know that's up to
2 the vendor. It's not your decision, but I know it
3 would mean a lot to the people of Greenpoint, for the
4 Polish people in Greenpoint who really depend on
5 this. But you know, I...

7 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And I want
8 to make sure that-- I want to hear directly what
9 those issues are, so that we can address those that
10 we can and be forthright about those that we can't.
11 But hearsay sometimes is very hard and not tangible
12 to address.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Totally.

14 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And our
16 obligation as public officials is not to keep a
17 provider happy, it's to serve the seniors
18 effectively, right? And so that is my North Star. I
19 know it's your North Star. And we'll do some more due
20 diligence and appreciate your team's, you know,
21 willingness to always engage.

22 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I just want to
24 thank you. It's good to be here with you all.
25

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Thank you for your questions, and we'll be sure to follow up...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: on your behalf and your district's behalf as well.

Council Member Banks?

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I want...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yep?

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Oh, go ahead.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Hi, Council Member Banks...

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Hey, good to see you.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I want to address one of the questions you raised about the... José is not here, but he sent me a note...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (LAUGHS) Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: About the cost, you know, he's a man with the dollars, or he manages them so well. One of the ways we try to address the cost of-- it's not the ideal way--but one of-- and it's not a structural way. Well, no, it's

not a consistent way, but the way we address the Older Adult Club on food costs is through the underspending. And we do that exercise where we shift dollars to sometimes address that. But that is not really addressing the meal cost as we have with home-delivered meals. I want to... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You're talking about the congregate meals question?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Congregate meals. I'm so sorry...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, for the Older Adult Club meal cost... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You shift money around as needed... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We shift around. We shift around the senior budget, we shift money among contractors to try to address that. But that is not the same-- it is not the same consistent way that we do with home-delivered meals.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. Okay. Well, we appreciate the effort there, but definitely would like to see...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: a sustained increase in that funding. So you know, as always, consider us partners in that.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Sorry, Chris. Sorry, Council Member Banks.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: It's okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. Commissioner, it's always good to see you, and you know your partnership has been greatly appreciated in the 42nd Council District.

And, obviously, regarding this particular bill, Intro 237, are there any potential challenges you foresee on the agency side when it comes to the implementation?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: One of the things-- You're talking about District 37 (sic), you're talking about Fort Greene and... Is that what you're talking about?

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Well, Fort Greene, and...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: All right. One of the strongest partnerships we have is with Fort Greene, which is the major provider in that area. And they've received additional funding through

the Council so that they can take care of some other NYCHA facilities and NYCHA housing.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: In particular, Mount Ararat.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Mount Ararat.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And, uh...

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Council Member Mealy's district.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: They've addressed a lot of those issues, you know, and I always go back to it, and it's not a canned statement, but it is a real statement, a realistic statement about the needs constantly outpacing the resources for NYC Aging.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But the providers, and I go back to the statement I just made, prior to two years ago, we always left, uh, sometimes \$15 million of unspent dollars in the aging network around Older Adult Centers. And two years-- it was something that I raised every year, and the

Chair can tell you. And then two years ago, we just tackled it and started shifting dollars from one provider to the other, to not have that kind of money stay unspent when we know that the needs are so high.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: What changes or accommodations would DFTA need, whether budgetarily, staffing, or otherwise, to help with the implementation of these programs, such as obviously the grab-and-go meals and the technical support for the adults, and the other similar initiatives?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I think one of... The Chair constantly talks about the size of this budget compared to the population.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And the way that we have to address some of those unmet needs now is through ensuring that we shift dollars across the network, and that's the remedy that we have, and it's the remedy that we've been using. Does it address everything? No, but it gets us closer (TIMER) to looking at some of those issues and making sure that we don't have dollars left on the table.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Excellent. And I think this question was asked already, but how is

DFTA ensuring that meals are culturally appropriate for immigrant and diverse communities, including, you know, some of the heavy Caribbean and Latin South Asian populations, particularly in neighborhoods like East New York?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah. NYC Aging has always had an eye towards that. I would say, three years ago, I believe it was, Council Member, when you put it in as a mandate. We've always, I think you said 15%, we went to 20%. I don't remember... Committee...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I do believe that's correct.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay. It is a requirement. Before it was standard, now it's a requirement. And we monitor against that to make sure that meals and activities are culturally competent if there's 20% of the population or more that center or reside in the area.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: And lastly, Madam Chair, if I may have a minute. Lastly, if these bills are passed, I just want to put on a record that I hope that the 42nd Council District will be one of the first districts that are prioritized. The need in

my district is great, and while we are grateful for the food pantry funding and the annual enhancements we receive, it is far from enough. Too many seniors and families are still falling through the cracks. So I hope that this initiative, along with the strong oversight of DFTA's meal program, will help close some of these gaps once and for all to help deal with some of the food insecurity issues in the 42nd. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Commissioner, again.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you, Council Member Banks.

Going into home-delivered meals, older adult food insecurity is at a crisis level in New York City, as we all know. Why are home-delivered meals providers required in New York City Aging's HDM standards to operate only 249 days a year when food insecurity exists 365 days a year? What resources are needed to expand the home-delivered meals service?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So there...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (INAUDIBLE) a little bit...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: are 249 operating days. But meals are provided for weekends

and holidays through our programs. So even though we may be operating and open 249 for home-delivered meals, they still get the full complement of that because they get seven meals a week.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But, hold on a second...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So, holiday meals are provided. They might be done through extra deliveries.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. I think they don't consistently receive meals seven days a week, I mean, we...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I don't know where they do not.

(PAUSE)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: They're not delivered seven days a week. But they are equivalent to seven days of meals a week.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I see. Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: All right? So, you might-- and it varies, some programs deliver two on Friday, some deliver two on Friday and one on Saturday. It's a variety of different delivery

methodologies. But it is not a seven-day-a-week delivery.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, then is it safe to say that would not be an additional cost if this is what you're already doing? Because, essentially, we are codifying what you already do.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No, because the way it is provided now is through a public-private partnership that absorbs the cost.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so what is the estimated cost?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The cost, the additional two meals as a City program, is the 27... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The \$27 million to \$28 million that you mentioned?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right.

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so perhaps this is something that we can discuss as the bill moves forward. But we estimate that it would cost about \$9 million. There is a big discrepancy between the \$9 million and the \$30 million.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I don't know how you would arrive at \$9 million.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: If you're doing just food cost, even that won't come up to-- that would go far beyond \$9 million.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. So...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So, let's look at...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, we'll follow up.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right. And we can give you the breakdown of the \$27 million.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, and for older adults participating in the home-delivered meals programs specifically, how many receive home-delivered meals as their only source of food?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: How many-- say that again?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How many receive home-delivered meals as their only source of food? Do you have a sense?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We can get back to you on that. That is what we absolutely know that they get. I don't know if we have...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: As a minimum...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: data element on other meals that they've been getting.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Or I think even just the question of whether or not it's their only source of food.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You know, we talked about earlier, obviously...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right. Yup.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (INAUDIBLE)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (INAUDIBLE) would indicate that to be eligible for home-delivered meals, the assessment indicates that you cannot cook for yourself, you have no one buying groceries for you, and you have no other way to provide meals for yourself.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, but I don't think we can assume that everyone who meets those standards may not have other means of eating.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I mean, it's not an assumption we can necessarily make... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, yeah, it's not...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: There might be some people who...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You know?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I'm trying to think of myself as a caregiver. My mother would not receive home-delivered meals; first of all, she has caregiving, but even if she did, she would still probably get some meal support through the family. But that is not...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: That is not something...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That is not (INAUDIBLE) everybody... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: that we know or wasn't available through the assessment process.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. In fiscal year 2025, NYC Aging served approximately 3.8 million home-delivered meals to 23,935 clients, a 10% decline in meals and 3% decline in recipients compared to fiscal year 2024, which NYC Aging partially attributes to a new data management system that you referenced earlier. Can you explain more about the system and why it is negatively impacting the City's ability to provide food to older adults?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So it's a combination of two things. It's still the 2,000 Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) clients that have not come back into the system. All right? So that's one part of that drop. And then the other one, which we will remedy, is, you know, a data transition and building up to making sure that everyone has the ability to use the data system that we have.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And do you know how many older adults were previously eligible for home-delivered meals because of a temporary situation that they're no longer eligible for?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The 3,000 that we have been speaking about for the MLTC.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how's the information that a client is no longer eligible for home-delivered meals communicated to them, and what options are provided to them to continue accessing nutritious food?

(PAUSE)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It's discussed with them verbally. Then they get it in writing, and then they have to have a plan that talks about how they are getting their food, whether it's from pantries or-- There has to be a an aftercare plan.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are there any clients who are initially deemed ineligible who are then brought back?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well, clients have a two-week period to file a grievance and to say, "Your information is incorrect."

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how do they file that grievance?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Usually through the caseworker who's in constant communication with them. Actually...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so verbally, right?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. How many grievance cases are reversed or overturned?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You know, I'm going to have to get back to you on that. That's a great question, by the way. (INAUDIBLE) I think I have that question.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. How much notice is provided to an older adult who is deemed no longer eligible? You said two weeks? Well, two weeks-- Two weeks essentially is the timeline from when they would be off the program?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You have two weeks to say that-- Don't forget you're getting a meal every day.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So you have two weeks within that period to say, "My home care attendant is providing my meal," is accurate or not. You know, even if I were transitioned to MLTC, that doesn't mean that I'm getting a meal, because MLTC only does medically required meals.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Since fiscal year 2023, the number of home-delivered meals served has declined by almost 800,000, and the number of clients has declined by roughly 3,500. What resources and policy changes are needed to reverse these significant losses and get more food to more clients?

(PAUSE)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I don't know how to give you information on that right now. All right? It's something we'll look at.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. How many of these clients transitioned to congregate meals? If you track that data, or do you track that data?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I'll get back to you on exactly what the transition data is that we have that toggles between home-delivered meals and congregate. And that I'll get you back the data. OACs have the opportunity to deliver meals to an older adult if they are medically, you know, they've been discharged from a hospital, and so they haven't come to the center. So I will get you the numbers on those distinct ways that OACs do it, and also when someone transfers from congregate to home delivered or vice versa.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, great, thank you.

And then also for clients that are offered the option to participate in meals served at OACS, but they declined to do so, do you have a sense of some of the most common reasons why they declined to participate?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: That I'll get back to you. I don't even know that anecdotally.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, okay. How does NYC Aging monitor compliance with the requirement that home-delivered meals drivers conduct two face-to-face contacts per week?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It is part of an assessment. Now we have a system where we are tracking the drivers, and so that is a requirement that the provider has to document.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so let me just ask you—tracking drivers, I don't want to assume I know what that means, but I...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I'm not going to sound like I'm the data expert either.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But I do know that we have a system that the driver logs in to. Please don't ask me right now how.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But there is a system that the driver logs into to say, one, that the meal was delivered...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Mm-hmm?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: All right? So there is also the thing about the time of delivery, so that we're monitoring lots of things at that time.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The amount of time of the delivery, the actual delivery, and then the contact. And so I could give you more details on what that system is and how that system operates.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: For now, I think that's sufficient. I was thinking that perhaps there was a tracking device in the van, and I was going to ask, just because they... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (INAUDIBLE) the driver's phone.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, which is better, just because they arrive at the location or whatever...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Doesn't necessarily mean... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I think. I think...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: that they're having a face-to-face contact... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I remember thinking, like, wow. But I believe it's on the driver's phone. I cannot tell you if it's fully operational or is still in test phase, but I do know that's where we've... that's where... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So there's a software system that they use. Okay, great.

What percentage of older New Yorkers who request home-delivered meals are found ineligible? And then what happens to them?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We don't track those who are found ineligible. Our focus is on food insecurity. But what we do is make referrals to other agencies... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, that's what I was going to ask, are there any... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (INAUDIBLE)
let them know that there are other recourses...
(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay? And let them know what local food pantries are, but we don't track them from that point on.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Got it. How does NYC coordinate with case management-- is NYC Aging coordinating with case management agencies to ensure assessments are timely and do not delay access to food?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Food is not delayed. The minute you're found to be food insecure, the assessment may not continue, but that service is turned on.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So do they get a meal the next day? The same day?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Probably the next week...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The next week?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, the minute you're deemed eligible, you're turned on to say that you're eligible. We will notify the home-delivered meals provider, and more than likely, it would not take a whole week unless it happened, you know, on a Friday.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so the next business day?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What share of home-delivered meals clients are immigrants or have limited English proficiency? And how does NYC Aging ensure linguistically and culturally appropriate meal delivery?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Since we don't track citizenship or immigration status...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But you do track, I think you said language? (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But we do track language and culture, and religion. So, we're still working to get all of that data on languages spoken. All right?

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. For grab-and-go meals, how many OACs currently contract for grab-and-

1
2 go meals? And how does NYC Aging decide where those
3 contracts are placed?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We have 106
5 providers, and each one of them has the ability to do
6 grab-and-go.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How do you decide
8 where the contracts go? How did you select the 106
9 vendors...

10 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The
11 contractors in the, uh, are indicated during the RFP
12 that they would do grab-and-go. And grab-and-go, of
13 course, has to be on a limited basis, because the
14 federal requirement is that each meal is done in a
15 congregate setting.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, and...

17 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So, grab-and-
18 go could be for a second meal; it could be that
19 circumstances are not allowing them to come to the
20 center that day.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And I just want to
22 confirm, is 106 providers the same as 106 OACs?

23 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: One hundred
24 forty-six providers have grab-and-go.
25

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: One hundred forty-six?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right, they are contracted to provide grab-and-go meals.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And do you know how many OACs that is? Are you using that as the...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well, the...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: providers as OACs, or... Because there could be a network... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No, no, no, I'm not. I wouldn't do the quantum leap.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Because we have 308 OACs. All I can do is crosswalk some of those providers, who may have multiple sites. So, I could then look at what that means in OACs—what the 146 equals in OACs.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That would be helpful.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How many grab-and-go meals were provided in fiscal year 2025? And how does this compare to fiscal year 2024?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Do we have a number for grab-and-go meals? I do not know that we track it that way.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You don't know that you track year over year?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I don't know, uh, a commissioner does not know how we track the grab-and-go(s) distinct from meals.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And I am going to find out right now.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay, they're getting me that information.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, we'll come back to that.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are grab-and-go meals treated as primary meals rather than supplemental for purposes of the contracts?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No, it would be a meal. It would be labeled. It would have, uh...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I guess...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Probably
would give a reason why they are doing the grab-and-
go. And so...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Well, a home-
delivered meal for a congregate meal, you know, would
be considered, I suppose, like a primary meal. So, is
there a difference in that sense for contractual
purposes?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Some
providers provide the grab-and-go as the second meal.
If you have a commissary kitchen, you can provide--
Once you have the ability to grab-and-go, some could
do it as a secondary meal, some could do it
situationally as the main meal. It depends on the
circumstances.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so some OACs,
yeah, may provide more than one meal.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Inclusive of the...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And that may
be as a grab-and-go option.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Now, in the...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: For
example...

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thinking about the
3 opposite scenario.

4 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Uh-huh?

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Could they be
6 providing fewer meals if they are using the grab-and-
7 go as... (CROSS-TALK)

8 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Oh, the
9 (INAUDIBLE)...

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are providers
11 using... (CROSS-TALK)

12 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: grab-and-go meals
14 (INAUDIBLE) congregate...

15 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: (INAUDIBLE)
16 understand that. So, can a grab-and-go substitute for
17 a congregate meal?

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Correct.

19 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: All right, so
20 if that's the question, it is situational. Right? So,
21 if I cannot stay for whatever reason today, my grab-
22 and-go may be my primary meal.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The congregate meal
24 could serve as one's grab-and-go meal...
25

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The grab-and-go would be somebody's congregate meal, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Okay, thank you for that... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Why don't we try to...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No, no, no, you're-- we're there. I'm saying it the opposite. So, I just want to make sure we're...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay. It's the same. We're saying the same thing... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We're saying the same thing. Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I believe.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, well, I said the congregate meal would serve as the grab-and-go. You're saying the grab-and-go would serve as the congregate. But...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It's the same thing.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: One of them is your primary meal for that day.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Okay? Given the circumstances. But sometimes grab-and-go could be more than just your primary meal.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: That's the point I wanted to make, too.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, right, right, we got that, okay, great.

What data does NYC Aging collect on grab-and-go usage rates compared to congregate meals at the same OACs? Is...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I would have to get back to you on that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And then any-- We're still working on the FY25 versus FY24 grab-and-go meals?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Number?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah, we are.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Does current city, state, and federal funding meet the documented need for nutrition programming, given that food insecurity rates remain at pandemic-era levels?

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I can ask in a different way if that's helpful.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: What we can say is that the food insecurity provided by the current congregate meals and home-delivered meals addresses that for one meal for those individuals served.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so, I...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right? Because... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I would say... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Because, we... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I would say no.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I would-- because there are many people who are not availing themselves, and who are not eligible for those meals at this point, and many are not coming to the Older Adult Center.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Let me ask you this, too, just in light of the news that came out today with regard to the Trump administration choosing not

to measure food insecurity—will NYC aging continue to measure and survey food insecurity?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We could measure that for those individuals that we serve, and we could definitely work with the Mayor's Office of Food Policy to see how we will be addressing food insecurity.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: The measure of food insecurity.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: On September 2nd, President Trump and Congressional Republicans' cuts to SNAP went into effect. The Community Service Society of New York estimates that benefits for roughly two million New Yorkers who receive food stamps through SNAP will be cut this month, with a family of four standing to lose \$36 per month in benefits. Can you describe any steps that NYC Aging is taking to mitigate the impact of SNAP work requirements and cuts on the older adults you serve?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We are working with DSS to determine how many older adults

are receiving SNAP. We are working very closely with them. We know the number and are looking at ways to address all of these food insecurity issues.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you for that.

What policies or resources are required from the city or state to limit the damage and protect lower-income older New Yorkers from falling deeper into poverty or going hungry?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It's one of the issues that we're constantly looking at, I mean, workforce is one way of doing that. Food pantries are another way of doing that. The correlation between financial insecurity and food insecurity is very strong, and we look at both those issues through our services.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How are restrictions on SNAP access for immigrant older adults playing out in New York City?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I cannot answer that. We don't administer SNAP, and our services are-- Oh, I got the grab-and-go numbers for you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And our services, uhm, we can tell you how many people who come through our case management, as well as our Aging Connect, how many people are indicating that they've been impacted. But we're not-- we don't administer that. We work very closely with DSS on that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So you wouldn't know then how many older adult immigrant New Yorkers might be impacted by being kicked off of SNAP?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No, we could tell you the number that are on SNAP now, but not knowing that nuance as to what that (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What's that number that are on SNAP?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I'll get back to you on that number. I believe it's about 500,000, but I'll get back to you on that number. I don't want to give it an inaccurate number.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And then, do you know if there will be any changes to how older immigrants access food through NYC Aging's meal programming?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: We don't track status or citizenship. So it would just be an older adult who is 60 or over who comes and gets a meal.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, fair. So the grab-and-go meals?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Grab-and-go—through May 2025, because that's the number we have, is 320,997 grab-and-go meals.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And in FY24 for the full year, that was 322,271.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so roughly 2,000 decrease.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well, no, that was-- that was through-- the number I'm giving you is through May, and the grab-and-go number for 2024 was full year.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Right? So there are two months of data.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: It seems to be on track... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So it could be on track, yeah...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: On the increase, I mean.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, that's fair. Thank you. Uh...

(PAUSE)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Ah, it was 146 OACs, not providers—my mistake.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Got it. Well, then... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: That provides grab-and-go. Of the 308 OACs, 146 provide grab-and-go.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. That's good of you to own your team's mistake, because that was-- I think they gave that to you. That's what a good boss does.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah. I just got that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Let me just find my...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: You had asked how many.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, I know.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The difference between, I just can't find my note, but I'll get to it. It's 146 OACs.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Not providers.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you for that.

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. I am just trying to streamline some of the questions here.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I know because I'm on a tight, tight...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We gotcha'. So-- and, thank you, thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No, I thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Does the Administration support Intro Number 237, which would codify the Grab-and-Go Meals program and allow OACs to voluntarily offer grab-and-go meals to participating older adults? And what challenges do you foresee if this legislation advances?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I think the challenges for us are the federal requirement. The federal requirement says that congregate meals, uh, and services have to be provided at the same time, and that might impact federal dollars.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Does the Administration support Intro Number 238, which would require NYC Aging and DoITT to develop a technical support program to serve older adults?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: So what we do support is the expansion of technical support services. Technical support for devices that are not owned by the City, monitored by the City, we don't have the capacity to do that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. Are there any forms of tech support for older adults that are currently provided by or funded by the City?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Many of our Older Adult Centers provide, uh, no, not technical support, provide training and digital training...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Technology...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: and digital training. And in that, an individual may bring in

1
2 their tablet and say. "Help me navigate this," or
3 their phone...

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, but not a...

5 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: But, no,
6 technical support is not a part of any of our
7 provisions.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you know how many
9 older adults participate in those programs that you
10 mentioned each year?

11 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I can get you
12 that number.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: And we know
15 that there is a higher demand for that.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: For digital
18 training.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Not Technical
21 Support.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, right. Does
23 the Administration-- we all need technical support
24 (INAUDIBLE)...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Well, I definitely do when...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (INAUDIBLE)

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: I'm trying to get you some numbers here.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (LAUGHS) Does the Administration support Intro Number 725, which would require New York City Aging and HPD to determine how many older adults live in apartment buildings in each council district and how many of those apartments are retrofitted for people with disabilities, including mobility issues?

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: There are so many roadblocks to that bill as it is proposed that it was even challenging to come up with a cost estimate.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Because we couldn't even figure out how it would even be implemented.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Alrighty, well, those are all my questions for you today.

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I thank you so very much, and thank you again for your patience. I had a...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: No...

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Rerouted train delay issue earlier. So...

COMMISSIONER CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I now open the hearing for public testimony. I remind members of the public that this is a formal government proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all times. As such, members of the public shall remain silent at all times.

The witness table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table.

Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony, but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized,

you will have two minutes to speak on the oversight topic: *NYC Department for the Aging Meal Programming, or on Introductions 237,238,725, and 770.*

If you have a written statement or additional testimony you wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms.

You may also email written testimony to Testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours after the close of this hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be accepted.

The first panel is Emma Bessire, Jeannine Cahill-Jackson, Marcus Jackson, Anita Kwok, and one more.

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, Jeannette Estima instead of Emma Bessire. So, Jeannette, Jeannine, Marcus, and Anita

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you want to start?

MARCUS JACKSON: Good afternoon, Chair Hudson and the Members of the Committee. My name is Marcus Jackson, and I'm the Manager of Advocacy, Community, and Government Relations at Encore

Community Services. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Encore has been serving older New Yorkers for nearly 50 years. Every day we deliver meals, provide case management, and create spaces for connection, helping thousands of older adults age with dignity.

We strongly support the intent of Intro 770 to ensure that every older adult who needs it receives a home-delivered meal seven days a week, year-round. But we must be clear, providers cannot do this work without full City funding at the current reimbursement rate. Today, Encore delivers weekday meals funded by DFTA, while weekend meals are provided through a community partnership that doesn't cover our cost. That creates deficits for providers. At Encore alone, covering two additional weekend meals per week at the DFTA reimbursement rate would require about \$1.8 million per year. Citywide, we estimate that the number is roughly \$34 million. Without this investment, mandating seven-day delivery would strain providers, divert scarce private dollars, and ultimately shortchange older adults.

So we urge the Council to do two things:

First is to ensure that Intro 770 explicitly requires full DFTA funding for seven meals per week at the full reimbursement rate.

Second, work with providers and community partners to implement this expansion in a way that strengthens the aging services system.

A fully funded seven-day service would mean better nutrition, greater stability, and more social connections for tens of thousands of homebound older adults. That's the vision we share with you, and we look forward to working together to make it happen. Again, we stress the urgency and the importance of the language in the bill, reflecting the sentiments that were expressed today, having the bill fully funded. (TIMER) Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Perfect timing!

MARCUS JACKSON: Yeah!

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: (LAUGHS) Thank you so much.

JEANETTE ESTIMA: Hi, my name is Jeannette Estima, and I'm the Director of Policy and Advocacy at Citymeals on Wheels. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

We would like to express our support for the bills before the Committee today and commend the bill sponsors and their work to expand food and technology access for older adults.

With food insecurity on the rise, New York City's congregate and home-delivered meals programs must be considered anti-hunger interventions, not just opportunities to decrease social isolation or provide a little support to families. As such, the City's elder nutrition programs should be expanded to offer more food to older adults in ways that provide them with the dignity of choice in what, where, when, and how they eat.

Furthermore, the City's existing food assistance infrastructure must be properly funded at a baseline to ensure the continuity of nutrition support. Over the past couple of years, we've gotten a better understanding of the food needs of homebound older adults. You've cited some of the statistics in our research. I'll just add to that, in addition to about half of the respondents reporting food insecurity, we also learned that only 56% were receiving SNAP. And about a third of

those receiving SNAP said it was not enough to cover their needs. And only 18% had used a food pantry, and only 4% had used a mobile food pantry.

So what we know is that the City's homebound older adults are not accessing the food and support that they need. Many are unable to access existing anti-hunger programs because of their limited ability to get to food pantries, and also the physical and mental difficulties that come with preparing a meal with ingredients you might get from a pantry or from a grocery store.

Without a home-delivered meals provided every day of the week, many would simply go without food. The solution (TIMER) is clear, though: improving existing programs like the home-delivered meals and congregate meals, offering new opportunities for grab-and-go, investing in innovative new programs, and making pantries and online resources more accessible so that we can get more food to people. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.

JEANNINE CAHILL-JACKSON: Good afternoon, Chair Hudson and Members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is

Jeannine Cahill-Jackson, and I'm the Director of Elder Law with the Legal Aid Society.

The Legal Aid Society is in support of all of the bills before the Council today. Just to go through a few suggestions and comments we have:

First, regarding the grab-and-go meals, this could be very essential for older adults to be still able to access their daily meal, but still be able to make a doctor's appointment to address any health concerns they might have at a particular time about eating in a congregate setting and enable them to do what they need to do while not sacrificing their access to food.

Second, regarding the DFTA-funded meal program for seven days a week, this is extremely important to ensure food access for older adults. As was highlighted multiple times today, even this is still just one meal out of three. For many folks who are homebound, the ability to even buy groceries to supplement the other two meals a day is often something that they can't navigate on their own without support.

So in addition, as a future consideration for the Council, I would suggest-- or

Third, Legal Aid supports the Technical Support Bill. Older adults have many barriers to accessing essential services, and technology is just one of them. In addition to teaching folks how to use the resources, we strongly suggest that at least one tablet or laptop is accessible at each Older Adult Center so that low-income New Yorkers who can't afford their own devices can use the information they gain through a device that they can access for free. In addition, perhaps a private space (TIMER) to have a meeting with the doctor or a legal professional could be helpful as well.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes, absolutely.

JEANNINE CAHILL-JACKSON: Thank you.

This would make it easier for the older adult to go to a comfortable space, maybe not have to commute all the way to, for example, the Legal

Aid Society to meet with their attorney and to be able to provide documents, other things very important to accessing help that they need.

Lastly, Legal Aid supports the bill requiring the report on which apartments seniors live in and which are accessible units. We recommend a few additional data points to be included in the report:

One, Legal Aid recommends that this report not only include documentation of how many disabled older adults are-- I apologize, I'm misreading my own writing. I'm going to rephrase--

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Happens to the best of us.

JEANNINE CAHILL-JACKSON: We recommend that it be included in the report the number of disabled older New Yorkers who live in non accessible apartments. And further, if it's easily identifiable, what accommodations could be made to make their apartment more accessible, if that's noted as well--and perhaps what is not able to be-- if the unit's not able to be modified, for example-- installing an elevator in a five-flight walk-up building might not be an easily accessible change;

1
2 however, perhaps widening a door or changing the
3 tub so that you can step into it are actually
4 modifications that could be achieved. This could
5 open the doorway to partnerships with other
6 organizations, and maybe HPD, to help fund these
7 changes, get an aide in the older New Yorkers'
8 apartments to keep them living in the community.
9 Thank you very much for your time, and we'll submit
10 written testimony as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.

12 ANITA KWOK: Thank you, Chair Hudson, for
13 convening this oversight hearing on NYC Aging's
14 meal programming. My name is Anita Kwok, a policy
15 analyst at United Neighborhood Houses, a member
16 organization of settlement houses in New York.

17 Settlement houses indicate that food
18 insecurity is one of the top community concerns in
19 2025, and that those needs are growing rapidly. At
20 the same time, federal funding threats and cuts to
21 programs like SNAP and FEMA's Emergency Food and
22 Shelter Program are leaving settlement houses
23 without the necessary tools to respond, while
24 placing greater strain on other emergency food
25 programs.

Regarding Intro 237, grab-and-go meals were a tremendous innovation at the start of the pandemic. We were disappointed to hear NYC Aging ending the program in 2022 unless providers included it in their contracts, and many centers continue to report that grab-and-go remains a popular option. Older adults have public health concerns. Food insecurity remains high, which affects providers' utilization numbers for the congregate meals. Anything the City can do to address these needs should be embraced, and the City must ensure that grab-and-go meals continue to be a viable option at all OACs that offer them.

While our members agree that there is a need, they also have concerns about implementation. One of our members reported NYC Aging being inconsistent, telling some providers that they could budget for grab-and-go meals while telling others that they couldn't. Another member stated that they would need another staff person. Several of our members note that older adults will go around to various Older Adult Centers looking for grab-and-go meals for an additional lunch to pack, because food insecurity is this high. A lot of the

members are also just serving a lot more Older adults than they're contracted for, but above all, we support Intro 237 to allow all OACs to provide grab-and-go meals if they want to.

Regarding Intro 770, for our homebound adults, the home-delivered meals program is the only food that they are receiving for all their nutritional needs, and they often will stretch that meal to last all day. So we continue to call for a \$27 million investment to operationalize Intro 770, which requires (TIMER) the City to pay for meals seven days a week. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And, sorry, what was the dollar amount?

ANITA KWOK: It is \$27 million.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Got it, thank you.

Thank you all so much for your testimony.

I don't believe we have any virtual testimony—if there's anyone else present in the room or on Zoom who has not had the opportunity to testify, please raise your hand on Zoom or step up. Okay, seeing nobody, I'd like to thank everyone again for testifying today, including the

Administration. I want to remind people that you can still submit written testimony up to 72 hours after the close of this hearing by emailing it to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

And I'll just close by saying food insecurity, whether measured by the Trump administration or not, will continue to exist. And it is, therefore, I think even more important now than ever that we, here in New York City, continue to serve everybody, but older adults in particular, who might be struggling and experiencing food insecurity.

So thanks, everyone, for being here today. And with that, we are adjourned.

Oh, and my apologies, we were joined by Council Member Mealy.

Thank you, and we'll adjourn. [GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date October 18, 2025