



TESTIMONY

Presented by

**Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez
Commissioner**

on

FY 2021 Preliminary Budget

before the

**New York City Council
Committee on Aging**

on

**Friday, March 6, 2020
10:00 A.M.**

at

**Council Chambers, City Hall
New York, NY 10007**

Good morning, Chair Chin, Chair Dromm, and members of the Aging and Finance Committees. I am Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA). I am joined this morning by Jose Mercado our Chief Financial Officer. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss DFTA's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2021.

In addition to working to eliminate ageism and ensuring the dignity and quality of life of older New Yorkers, providing high quality services and resources is among the Department's top priorities. To support this important work, our FY '21 Preliminary Budget projects \$385 million in funding, which includes allocations of \$173 million to support older adult centers, \$41.8 million for home delivered meals, \$38 million for case management, \$35 million to support home care for homebound seniors who are not Medicaid eligible, \$8 million for NORC programs, and \$8 million for caregiver services. In addition to supporting these services, the commitment of this Administration has also expanded critical geriatric mental health initiatives, needed elder abuse supports, and other essential programs, including caregiver services, which we discussed at length during our last oversight hearing.

Through the support and advocacy of important stakeholders—some of whom are present this morning—we have also advanced many of our efforts to help older New Yorkers age in place and age with dignity. Some notable successes include:

- Ensuring parity among programming in our congregate center, congregate food costs, and center staff structure and salary;
- Record growth in our home-delivered meals programs (HDM), which on average deliver more than 18,000 meals per day to homebound older adults across the city;

- The expansion of our network of social clubs in NYCHA developments, which as of November 2019, increased by twelve; and
- The promulgation of rules which empower our Social Adult Day Care Ombuds Office to have greater oversight on possible fraudulent or unscrupulous actions of SADCs operating in the City.

We're also incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of the City Council, which in FY'20 awarded DFTA with over \$46 million in discretionary funding, effectively allowing us to make even greater investments in often unserved or underserved communities. One such investment includes the \$1.3 million for nursing services in our Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs). While recognizing all these important external partnerships, I would be remiss not to mention that this Administration has over the years consistently made major investments in aging services, including an overall increase of \$118 million in baseline funding.

FOOD MODEL BUDGET

This fiscal year, our model budget exercise came to a successful close. The overarching goal of the exercise was two-fold: (1) to increase resources and ensure strong programming and adequate food costs across our network of congregate centers; and (2) to make more uniform the funding level of each center to support equity in staffing structure and salary.

In FY '18, the first phase of this process, which focused on programming and program staff, resulted in the significant investment of \$10 million of baseline funding in our network of older adult centers. These centers were thus able to use this increased funding to right-size salaries, hire more staff, and expand and enrich center programming. The second and final phase of the model budget process focused on expenses related to food costs and food-related staff. In FY '20, this

process resulted in an additional \$10 million baseline funding for congregate food costs and for staff salary parity. In addition to these major investments of tens-of-millions of dollars in annual funding for our older adults congregate centers, the Administration has also committed to increase this funding in the outyears.

HOME DELIVERED MEALS

In addition to our congregate centers, our home-delivered meals (HDM) program is another vital component in DFTA's network of services. Not only do HDMs provide sustenance to homebound older adults across the five boroughs, the interaction with the delivery person—which for many of our clients may be the only direct human interaction for the day—support our ongoing effort to combat social isolation. On any given weekday throughout the City, approximately 18,000 homebound older people receive a home delivered meal. In 2019, a record total of 4,554,828 meals were delivered by our providers, demonstrating just how essential this program truly is.

Just a few short weeks ago, on January 22nd to be exact, we issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) for our home-delivered meals program. Through this RFP, which was preceded by a spirited and meaningful public Concept Paper process, DFTA is seeking to fund programs that are able to address the most critical overarching goals of the HDM program, including increasing meal options for recipients, embracing the diversity of our City by increasing the availability of culturally aligned meals, and promoting uniformly high-quality meals made from good food. In addition to choice, diversity and quality, great emphasis is also placed on ensuring that food purchased meet the Good Food Purchasing guidelines set forth by Mayor's Office of Food Policy, and fosters great collaboration within the network.

Since its issuance, the RFP has generated great interest, enthusiasm, and inquiries among potential proposers. DFTA has since hosted a very well attended bidders conference, fielded various questions from interested parties and, accordingly, released a series of addenda—a total of four to-date. We have also extended the submission deadline. Responses to the RFP are now officially due Wednesday, April 8, 2020.

INDIRECT COST RATE

This fiscal year (in December 2019) Mayor de Blasio along with Speaker Johnson also announced the launch of the groundbreaking *Indirect Cost Rate Funding Initiative* (ICR) designed to increase financial stability for human services providers, predominately nonprofit organizations. A gamechanger, particularly for DFTA's smaller contractors, nonprofits may now receive additional funding for their organizational indirect costs, such as audit and accounting staff, previously not offered.

Honored in the recent November Plan Update, this commitment is a \$54 million annual investment and applicable to health and human contracts across all City agencies. Thus far, only 10% of our network of contractors have already submitted the Entryway Choice form, the first step in the ICR process. Please join me in encouraging our entire network of service providers to take this necessary first step at ensuring that their critical services continue for generations to come.

CONCLUSION

The items I have just described are only a few among our recent accomplishments the Administration has been able to support and achieve this fiscal year—my first as Commissioner. Others include the RFP for our geriatric mental health program, which will expand our mental health services and interventions in congregate centers; the relaunch of our elder abuse campaign

intended to raise public awareness on the nuances and types of abuses, which range from physical violence to mental, emotional, and financial abuse; the development of our Social Adult Day Care Registration payment portal, which launched earlier this week; and in collaboration with 311, we created and opened Aging Connect our in-house information and referral contact center to help older new Yorkers and their families navigate the complex network of aging services, programs, and supports throughout the City.

Needless to say, much has been achieved this fiscal year for the City's older adult population and our network of providers who serve them. Simultaneously, during my ten-month tenure as Commissioner, DFTA has also successfully completed a bold and robust reorganization and restructuring process all in an effort to ensure even greater efficiency and effectiveness to advance the Department's mission.

As you know, keeping pace with the evolving needs of the city's 1.7 million older adults cannot be accomplished alone or in a vacuum. Thusly, we will continue to rely on our ongoing partnership with the Council, and the effective advocacy of stakeholders, our contracted providers, and lastly—and arguably most importantly—older adults themselves for whom all our hard work and efforts are ultimately intended to benefit.



**Testimony of
Beth Finkel
AARP New York**

**New York City Council
Committee on Aging
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Aging**

March 6, 2020

**City Hall
New York, New York**

Contact: Beth Finkel (212) 407-3717 | bfinkel@aarp.org

Good morning Chairperson Chin and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Beth Finkel and I am the State Director of AARP New York. On behalf of our 750,000 members age 50 and older in New York City, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today about very important funding decisions you must make.

For nearly a decade AARP New York has been conducting research to inform all of us about the challenges facing our aging population and about the changes we must make to help them safely and securely age in the communities and homes they love. We owe that to them.

What our research has shown time and time again is that pocketbook issues are the source of the greatest stress facing City residents ages 50+. Those residents account for nearly a third of our population, and their numbers are expected to increase by 30% in the next 20 years.

Financial hardships are felt most acutely by our aging African American, Hispanic and Asian American residents. As a matter of fact, our most recent report, *Disrupt Disparities 2.0: Solutions for New Yorkers Age 50+*, identified that in gentrifying neighborhoods, the median annual income for older Whites is as much as \$100,000 higher than for older African American or Hispanic residents.

This Council has been generous over the years with its support for older New Yorkers and the services they rely on. But I am here to ask that you do more. Literally hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers are counting on you.

I'd also like to point out that nonprofit senior serving organizations are counting on you too. They are shouldering too much of the cost of caring for seniors. AARP worries about their long-term sustainability.

Not long ago, we spoke with a local nonprofit that provided home delivered meals. Nearly 30,000 homebound elderly rely on home delivered meals.

Because of the gap between what the city pays per home delivered meal and the actual cost of that meal, that nonprofit had to cover hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional costs. And they are not alone.

So I am here to urge you to add \$16 million to the budget for home delivered meals so we can close the gap between the \$9.58 per meal the City Department for Aging is paying and the estimated \$11.78 each meal actually costs.

Beyond that, we ask you to increase investments in older adults and the people who provide them with services and support.

We'd like to see staff pay parity in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities and increased funding for service coordination in the Senior Affordable Rental Apartments program. Those two investments alone will impact nearly 12,000 seniors.

We also want to see increased investment in senior centers, which serve approximately 124,000 older New Yorkers. Specifically, we call on the Council to invest in: equity for the 38 centers that were left out of the 2017 'Model Budget' analysis; much needed capital improvements; and the DFTA innovation fund, so that we can see more age-friendly improvements made.

All together, we are asking for \$11.7 million to fund these initiatives.

We would also like to see last year's \$9.7 million Council investment baselined and the fulfillment of the \$10 million promised in new funds for senior centers.

These aren't big dollars in the context of the overall City budget, but they would amount to big changes for seniors and the organizations and people that serve them. We are counting on you to make these allocations and are here to tell you, you can count on AARP's support to do what it takes to get this done.

Thank you.



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**Testimony from Selfhelp Community Services, Inc.
New York City Council Aging Committee
FY21 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 6, 2020**

My name is Katie Foley and I am the Director of Public Affairs at Selfhelp Community Services. Thank you to Finance Committee Chair Daniel Dromm, Aging Committee Chair Margaret Chin, and the members of both committees for the opportunity to testify today on the FY21 Preliminary Budget.

Selfhelp was founded in 1936 to help those fleeing Nazi Germany maintain their independence and dignity as they struggled to forge new lives in America. Today, Selfhelp has grown into one of the largest and most respected not-for-profit human service agencies in the New York metropolitan area, with 46 program locations throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Nassau County. We provides a broad set of services to more than 20,000 elderly, frail, and vulnerable New Yorkers each year, while remaining the largest provider of comprehensive services to Holocaust survivors in North America. Selfhelp offers a complete network of community-based home care, social service, and senior housing programs with the overarching goal of helping clients to live with dignity and independence and avoid institutional care.

Our services are extensive and include: specialized programs for Holocaust Survivors; eleven affordable senior housing complexes; four Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) programs; three intensive case management programs; five senior centers including one of New York City's first Innovative Senior Centers; home health care; client centered technology programs including the Virtual Senior Center; court-appointed guardianship; the Selfhelp Alzheimer's Resource Program (SHARP); and New York Connects, which provides seniors and people with disabilities with the information and support they need to remain living independently in their own homes.

We are grateful for the Council's ongoing support for so many important senior programs and for always emphasizing the needs of older adults in policy decisions and budget allocations. With strong community based programs, we are confident that older New Yorkers will be able to access the care and support they deserve and need to be able to age in their own homes and communities.

Today I will focus on a few of Selfhelp's priorities that we hope that Council will highlight over the next few months and in budget negotiations.

Senior Center Model Budget

We commend the Department for the Aging (DFTA), Office of Management and Budget, and the City Council for the ongoing commitment to senior centers since the beginning of the model budget process. Funding for the City's senior centers is a critical step to stabilizing one of the core programs that supports older New Yorkers, including many immigrant seniors.

The model budget process included funding to be allocated in FY21, including \$10 million for senior centers and \$5 million for congregate meals and kitchen staff. We are requesting that the Council support a request for the Administration to restore and baseline \$9.7 million to restore and baseline previous one-time funding that supported senior centers, home delivered meals, NORCs, and NYCHA community spaces.

The Need for Affordable Housing

Since 1963, Selfhelp has been building affordable housing. Today, Selfhelp Community Services is a major provider of affordable housing for seniors in New York City and on Long Island. Our housing portfolio includes twelve affordable apartment developments, comprising of 14 buildings located in Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Long Island, which house over 1,400 low- and moderate-income senior residents in attractive, functional apartments with supportive services as needed.

Selfhelp appreciates the strong support of Mayor de Blasio and the City Council for senior affordable housing in New York City. The need for affordable senior housing with services remains as or more significant today as it was in 2016, when LiveOn NY first reported their findings that an estimated 200,000 seniors were on waiting lists for housing through the HUD202 program in New York City. In fact, housing challenges continue to plague older adults, as many seniors live on fixed incomes that cannot keep pace with rising rents; experience mobility challenges that limit housing options within an aging rental-stock; and are found to have high rates of rent burden, with 1/3 of individuals receiving SCRIE paying more than 70% of their income on rent. Given the current need for senior affordable housing, Selfhelp recommends that the City ensure that senior housing is prioritized in its overall development pipeline.

Selfhelp has been pleased to see the Administration's recognition of the need for senior specific housing as demonstrated through the investments and commitments included in the Seniors First Initiative, which has brought about historic commitments to the production and preservation of affordable senior housing. Through this initiative and the Senior Affordable Rental Assistance (SARA) program in particular, Selfhelp was awarded land by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to develop a senior building on one of its existing public housing properties, Sumner Houses, in Brooklyn. We are partnering with the RiseBoro, Urban Builders Collaborative and Lettore Construction on this development, with Daniel Libeskind as the architect. The building will have approximately 200 units and will have a community facility open to the entire Sumner complex.

Affordable Senior Housing as a Tool for Healthcare: SHASAM

In a budget year where the Medicaid deficit is front and center, it is important to remember programs that serve older adults on relatively small budgets while helping defer more substantial costs to the

Medicaid system. An investment in the SHASAM (Selfhelp's Active Services for Aging Model) would result in savings to the State's Medicaid program by preventing or lowering costs of emergency room visits and keeping low-income seniors out of costlier levels of care, such as assisted living or nursing homes.

Selfhelp's unique real estate model brings together safe and affordable apartments with our legacy of quality social services. At each Selfhelp building, we offer service coordination through SHASAM, which makes available social work services, education, and recreation, as well as access to skilled nursing and home care, if and when requested by the resident. The goal of SHASAM is to provide the appropriate level of assistance to allow older adults to remain in their apartments and not move to more costly settings such as assisted living or nursing homes. Recent research shows that access to SHASAM allows older adults to reduce their chances of being hospitalized and/or visiting an emergency room which reduced their overall Medicaid and/or Medicare costs.

A New York-based study, conducted by Dr. Michael Gusmano of Rutgers University, compared Selfhelp residents with access to service coordination to a comparison group of seniors in the same zip codes without this support. The published research shows that residents of Selfhelp's housing are healthier than their neighbors who do not live in high-quality housing.

Research shows that residents in Selfhelp's affordable housing had:

- 68% lower odds of Selfhelp residents being hospitalized
- \$1,778 average Medicaid payment per person, per hospitalization for Selfhelp residents, versus \$5,715 for the comparison group
- 53% lower odds of a Selfhelp resident visiting an emergency room compared to a non-Selfhelp resident

The full report is available through the Journal for Health Affairs (the article is available upon request), and a white paper published by Selfhelp is available at www.selfhelp.net.

Selfhelp sees the SARA program as a success for the City. However, in recognition of the significant continued need and to continue to improve upon current efforts, a \$1.8 million investment that would allow for expanded services to an initial cohort of 700 SARA units to receive service coordination. The Senior Affordable Rental Assistance Program (SARA) administered by HRA currently does not provide service coordination funds for seniors being referred to the program for the general lottery system.

Holocaust Survivor Initiative

For the past few years, the City Council, with the advocacy of former Council Member Espinal, along with the Jewish Caucus, started and expanded the Elie Wiesel Holocaust Survivor Initiative. This investment demonstrates the commitment of the City to ensure that some of our City's most vulnerable receive the care and services they need. This year, we are urging the City Council to renew this initiative, with continued support for Selfhelp and our Holocaust Survivor Program. In FY21, Selfhelp is seeking \$400,000 to support services frail, isolated, and financially needy Holocaust survivors.

Selfhelp's services honor a sacred pledge: to serve as the last surviving relative to victims of Nazi persecution. Selfhelp operates the oldest and largest program serving Holocaust survivors in North America, caring for nearly 4,800 elderly and frail individuals. This funding will support direct social services to frail, isolated, and financially needy Holocaust Survivors. \$275,000 of the funding will provide case management services to keep clients living safe in the community with dignity and independence, and support for clients in the Holocaust Financial Management Unit and Guardianship programs.

Approximately 50% of the survivors served by Selfhelp are living at or below the poverty line, while 80% of survivors from the former Soviet Union are living in poverty. As the largest provider of comprehensive services to survivors, Selfhelp is uniquely positioned to assist this last generation of survivors, especially as their needs grow more intense and more costly.

We continue to have over 300 survivors on a waitlist in Brooklyn that we are working to address with the FY20 City Council initiative grant. Additional funds in FY21 will help to address this population of survivors in Brooklyn, as well as direct social services to frail, isolated and financially needy Holocaust survivors across the City. Services include case management to assist in assessing and developing a mutual agreed upon care plan that will be implemented to keep the client safe in the community with dignity and independence.

An additional \$125,000 of funding provides support for Witness Theater, an innovative inter-generational education program that brings together Holocaust survivors and high school students to elicit, expose, and memorialize survivors' moving stories of survival. New and innovative educational programs, such as Witness Theater, are especially important now, given the fact that New York City is seeing a rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes. Witness Theater involves Holocaust survivors in a therapeutic process designed to help them come to terms with their past and instill their memories of the Holocaust in the next generation. The program culminates in free public performances (also available for free online through Facebook live streaming) that serve as a vehicle for the survivors' testimonies to be heard by many and to witness the special connections made between the generations. Council funding helps us bring Witness Theater to broad and diverse audiences who can bear witness to the Holocaust survivors' stories of resilience and strength.

Access to social services keeps frail, isolated, and financially needy Holocaust survivors living in their communities with dignity and independence. Using Person Centered Trauma Informed (PCTI) principles, social workers sensitively meet the needs of this unique population and help to prevent them from entering crisis and/or being placed in an institutional settings such as hospitals and nursing homes. Witness Theater is an educational initiative that benefits the participants and the community-at-large through free public performances. The free public performances serve as a vehicle for the survivors' testimonies to be heard by many and to witness the special connections made between the generations. Council funding helps these performances reach a broad and diverse audience to bear witness to the Holocaust survivors' stories of resilience and strength.

Senior Transportation Program

With support from Council Member Paul Vallone and the Queens Delegation, Selfhelp has been operating a senior transportation program to provide free transportation to and from medical appointments. Due to the success of the program and high demand from individuals, we are seeking to continue this program across Queens. With funding provided by the delegation for this year, Selfhelp has so far provided over 350 rides across multiple City Council districts in the borough. Due to the demand for accessible transportation and popularity of this program we believe that with this funding, Selfhelp will be able to continue to serve the Queens seniors that in need.

Based on feedback received by individuals who benefitted from the program, as well as the demand for services, we know that the program improves quality of life for older New Yorkers, as it eliminates concerns about transportation costs, traveling alone, and navigating public transit. Further, in transportation deserts in parts of NYC and Queens in particular, this program removed a significant barrier for older adults in caring for their health.

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, or NORCs, are multi-age housing developments or neighborhoods that were not originally designed for older adults, but are now home to a significant number of older people. NORCs help thousands of older adults remain healthy, stable, and able to age in place by offering health care, social services, and socialization opportunities right at home.

Thank you to the Council for supporting a major investment in the City's Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) last year, particularly to support nursing services. Selfhelp provides social services to more than 1,300 residents at four Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Neighborhood NORCs throughout Queens. We are very appreciative of the consistent support the NORC program has received in the City Council. Because of your enthusiasm for this program, we have been able to bring resources and attention to the needs of a large and rapidly growing senior population served by Selfhelp's NORCs.

Selfhelp's mission directly supports the purpose of NORCs: meet the needs of older adults and enable them to remain living independently in their homes; thrive in their communities, and delay hospitalization or nursing home placement. N/NORC programs provide case management services; health and nursing services; recreational, social and cultural activities and ancillary services tailored to meet the needs of each community. Programs actively encourage healthy aging by providing access to health care, promoting health and wellness activities, addressing disease prevention and responding to chronic health conditions.

We support an investment of at least \$1.7 million to ensure salary parity for DFTA-funded NORCs. Additionally, each year the Administration adds \$1 million for NORCs into the City Budget, but these funds are not included in the Preliminary Budget proposal. We request that these funds are restored and baselined to ensure programmatic stability. Finally, we request that the Council restores the NORC Initiative at last year's level of \$5.3 million, which includes \$1.3 million in support for nursing.

A key component of the N/NORC program model is health care management and assistance. Nurses provide services to N/NORC residents that might not otherwise exist in the community, such as medication education, diabetes testing, flu shots, mobility and balance screenings, and helping clients get in touch with doctors. Older adults across New York City rely on N/NORC services to remain healthy and stably housed; without these services, their options for receiving appropriate community-based care would be greatly diminished.

Virtual Senior Center

As the aging population grows, so too does the number of homebound elders who are at a high risk of social isolation and depression. Social isolation is one of the most serious issues affecting the elders of our community. Selfhelp's Virtual Senior Center is one program which has been proven to effectively and profoundly impact this problem. A study conducted by the AARP Public Policy Institute and Stanford University found that a lack of social contacts among older adults is associated with an estimated \$6.7 billion in additional federal Medicare spending annually. As DFTA has noted in the past, loneliness and social isolation are associated with increased mortality among older adults.

The Virtual Senior Center (VSC) engages homebound seniors, who are no longer able to get to their local senior centers, into the larger community by using technology to connect them with other participants in a range of online, interactive, real-time classes where participants can hear, see and talk with each other. We have submitted a number of requests to various City Council members to support the continuation of this program.

Discretionary Funding For Core Senior Services

In order to create a robust aging services network to meet the needs of today's seniors and those turning 60 each day, Selfhelp supports the priorities of our partner organizations, including continued investment in all the Council initiatives that support aging programs, found in Schedule C. A few examples include:

- Support our Seniors provides diverse services across the City
- SU-CASA programs are creative aging art programs at senior centers
- Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations support New York City's diverse older adults with culturally competent services
- Healthy Aging Initiative provides support for various health-promotion programs
- Social Adult Day offers additional support for seniors with high levels of need, including for Selfhelp's Alzheimer's Resource Program

We appreciate the City Council for consistent support of these program and all senior services.

COLA

The Mayor and City Council have taken important steps to undo decades of underfunding in human services wages with multi-year cost-of-living investments. Investing in this workforce is essential to addressing the gender wage gap and uplifting thousands of New Yorkers close to the poverty line. We support the Human Services Council by requesting a 3% cost-of-living adjustment which is needed to ensure human services workers can thrive in NYC.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of the 20,000 clients we serve, I am grateful for the Council's support on so many important programs.



Preliminary budget and oversight hearing for the Department for the
Aging
Aging Committee
March 6, 2020

Testimony submitted by: Rachel Sherrow
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My name is Rachel Sherrow and I am the Associate Executive Director at Citymeals on Wheels. I would like to begin by thanking the Council for their continued support of aging services and Citymeals on Wheels which will help to deliver over 2 million meals to 18,000 homebound elderly citywide this year. I also want to thank the Aging committee, and most especially Council woman Margaret Chin for continuing to take the lead in advocating for the support of senior services which continue to be underfunded despite the increase in the population of older adults. A 2017 report from City Comptroller Scott Stringer's Office showed there was a 19% increase in this group, approaching 1.2 million or 13% of the total population.¹ This report and others repeatedly state that older adults are the fastest growing group and will surpass 24% of the total population by 2060.²

As most of you know, Citymeals on Wheels is a not-for-profit agency working in a public/private partnership with the New York City Department for the Aging. The Department funds the meals that homebound elderly receive Mondays through Fridays, and Citymeals on Wheels funds the same network of providers to deliver weekend, holiday and emergency meals. On the days the city does not provide a meal, Citymeals steps in to prevent our aging neighbors from being without food or human company. In fact, Citymeals, as an added benefit generates revenue for New York City through the federal government's cash in lieu of commodities program which reimburses DFTA approximately 67 cents for every meal funded by Citymeals. All of this money goes toward the city-funded weekday meals program, bringing in over \$1.4 million last fiscal year and an additional 180,000 home delivered meals for those who need it. Studies have shown that access to food and better nutrition, is an effective way to cut medical costs and improve overall health, especially for older adults, thus making meals on wheels an incredibly vital program and Citymeals essential to the continuation of meals for those unable to shop or cook for themselves.

A study from America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) states that food-insecure households spend more than 45 percent on medical care than people in food-secure households, and according to Feeding America, older adults are the fastest growing food-insecure

population in the country.³ Another report just out, by the Center for An Urban Future reports that 1 in 7 older New Yorkers lives in poverty. Living longer, and on fixed incomes means more struggle over access to food for this vulnerable group.

Unfortunately, for homebound elderly to access supplemental food is a more difficult and often times impossible task. They are unable to walk to pantries, or wait in line and carry the bags home, and as we know, 40% of our meal recipients are unable to leave their homes, and many do not have support to help them.

This is why home delivered meals are integral to their survival.

Ensuring that our meal recipients have food throughout the week is what the partnership between DFTA and Citymeals provides. Without Citymeals, over 18,000 homebound older adults would no longer receive meals on weekends, holiday or in times of emergency.

Meals on Wheels is a cheaper alternative to institutionalization, more dignified, and what the majority of older adults prefer. With the recent RFP DFTA released, the price per meal for the weekday meals will increase and Citymeals, after ten years of holding the cost the same, understands the need to ensure our community based partners are receiving the appropriate reimbursement for each meal they deliver to the doors of our older neighbors who need this food on a daily basis. Increasing the reimbursement rate, will enable

providers to more adequately support their programs and ensure the need is being met. Therefore, Citymeals is requesting \$3 million dollars from NYC Council for FY 21 in order to help get us to the necessary reimbursement rate.

Citymeals as a not-for-profit will continue to raise private dollars in order to meet the needs of our partners in the years to come; with a strategic plan we have just embarked upon as well as new development personnel and goals. However, we also need the support of our partners in city government to help us reach all of our recipients consistently and without a disruption in service. This kind of partnership is even more crucial in times of uncertainty or when facing potential crises like the COVID-19. Citymeals, through our Bronx warehouse, has the capacity to pre-supply both clients and senior centers with shelf stable food in the event of an emergency closure of centers or a suspension of delivery services. We keep 50,000 meals on hand and can package more if necessary to assist those we normally serve and those who are older and in need.

Citymeals on Wheels together with the Department for the Aging, and The New York City Council, are determined to keep older adults living safely in their own communities and at least 18,000 elderly New Yorkers who receive meals on wheels, fed 365 days a year plus some extra. We hope you, our partner in city government, will help us to continue to advocate on behalf of those who are often

**forgotten and marginalized and support solvency for senior services
and Citymeals on Wheels.**

**As we move through our 38th year, we thank you for consistently
working with us and I hope we can count on all of your support once
again this year.**

**¹ Aging with Dignity, a Blueprint for serving NYC's growing senior population
² Population Reference Bureau, Population Bulletin, Vol. 70 No 2, Dec 2015 ³ AHIP Issue Brief,
Access to Health Foods: Social Determinants of Health, May 2008**



Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses Before the New York City Council

FY 2021 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Aging
Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair

Presented by Tara Klein, Policy Analyst
March 6, 2020

Thank you for convening today's hearing. My name is Tara Klein, and I am a Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses (UNH). UNH is a policy and social change organization representing 40 neighborhood settlement houses in New York City and three in upstate New York. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies, and we promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all.

The work we do strengthens the capacity of more than 30,000 employees and volunteers working across 680 locations to continue providing necessary services for people of multiple generations with programs that provide skills, education, social services, health, arts, and connection to community and civic engagement opportunities for over 765,000 New Yorkers who visit settlement houses each year. UNH members provide a wide variety of services to support older adults, including operating senior centers, home delivered meals programs, NORCs, case management, homecare and other programs.

Overview

In FY 2021, there are a number of funding needs to support older New Yorkers. UNH urges the City to take the following actions:

- Invest **\$16 million** in the **home delivered meals** program to provide daily meals to homebound seniors, including \$13 million for weekday meals and \$3 million for weekend and holiday meals.
- Enhance **NORC staff salaries** by at least **\$1.7 million** to ensure parity with other DFTA-funded contracts.
- Increase the **Geriatric Mental Health Initiative** by **\$950,000** to expand services to at least ten new sites.
- Add **\$5 million** for DFTA-funded programs to invest in **building repairs, upgrades, and new systems**, including \$3 million in capital funding and \$2 million in an innovation expense fund.
- Include **\$10 million** in previously-promised "**model budget**" funding for senior centers.
- Baseline **\$9.7 million** in recurring one-year Administration funds.
- Restore Council Aging Initiatives at FY 2020 levels.
- Support a **3% COLA** on all human services sector contracts.

Home Delivered Meals

Home delivered meal programs provide a daily nutritious meal to vulnerable homebound older adults who are unable to prepare their own food, while also providing important social supports for those who may be at risk of social isolation. Despite its overwhelming success in maintaining health and nutrition, this program is systematically underfunded, with DFTA contracts failing to cover the full cost of providing meals. Nonprofit providers struggle with rising costs for purchasing raw food, maintaining competitive wages for delivery staff, and dealing with unplanned expenses like vehicle maintenance and parking tickets. This causes significant financial damage to providers; with many incurring deficits to meet the demands of their communities and ensure seniors receive meals. This problem is dire: some settlement house contractors and subcontractors have individually reported losing *hundreds of thousands of dollars* each year on their contracts. Ultimately this can impact the quality and availability of services for the older adults who rely on these meals.

According to a report by Mathematica Policy Research, the average cost for a home delivered meal for urban areas in the United States, using 2015 data, was \$11.78.¹ DFTA is proposing an across the board rate of \$9.58 per meal under its new RFP, leaving New York City approximately 25% below the national average cost of a home delivered meal. Notably, the Mathematica data does not consider factors such as the higher minimum wage in New York City and the U.S. Consumer Price Index for food, which has increased each year since 2015.² An independent analysis of true costs by UNH and LiveOn NY, utilizing a framework developed with assistance from SeaChange Capital Partners, confirms the Mathematica figure as close to the accurate true cost of a home delivered meal.

This funding challenge is particularly urgent as DFTA undergoes an RFP for the system this spring. This RFP has received a 75% overall risk rating from the Human Services Council's RFP Rater – the riskiest an RFP has ever been ranked – primarily due to inadequate funding.³

To meet the nutritional needs of vulnerable, homebound older New Yorkers and ensure program stability in FY 2021, the City should infuse \$16 million in new funding into the home delivered meals system, including \$13 million for weekday meals and \$3 million for weekend and holiday meals (the latter which have experienced stagnant investment for a decade). It must also include annual cost escalators to account for rising food and labor costs plus the rising number of older adults, allow higher rates for programs that spend more on specialized cultural or therapeutic meals, and invest in a capital fund so programs can make key infrastructure upgrades and repairs in their programs.

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)

NORCs are multi-age housing developments or neighborhoods that were not originally designed for older adults, but are now home to a significant number of older people. NORCs help thousands of older adults remain healthy, stable, and able to age in place by offering health care, social services, and socialization opportunities right at home. NORCs receive contracts from DFTA and/or the City Council.

Thank you to the Council for supporting a major investment in the City's Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) last year, particularly to support nursing services. Because of the

¹ Mathematica Policy Research, "Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs Evaluation: Meal Cost Analysis," September 2015: www.acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2016-11/NSP-Meal-Cost-Analysis.pdf

²<https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/food-inflation-in-the-united-states/>

³ <https://humanservicescouncil.org/rater/home-delivered-meals-program-rfp/>

Council's enthusiasm for this program, we have been able to bring resources and attention to the needs of a large and rapidly growing older adult population.

In a budget year where the Medicaid deficit is front and center, it is important to remember that NORC programs serve residents on relatively small budgets while helping defer more substantial costs to the Medicaid system. For example, the annual cost of a nursing home stay for one individual in New York City can be as high as \$150,000 per year;⁴ this amounts to nearly the value of an entire NORC program contract, generally serving hundreds of older adults and helping them remain in their homes. Investing in NORCs can thus help limit these increased costs to the Medicaid system.

Unfortunately, the City's NORCs have been struggling with chronically low staff salaries, as contracts have not allowed for meaningful raises in many years. Recently the NORC network has seen high turnover rates for all positions, including directors and case managers. This is particularly challenging given recent increases to senior center staff. In many cases, especially in settlement houses, senior center and NORC staff work side by side doing similar work. However, the case worker in the senior center will often make far more money than the case worker in the NORC. This has negative ramifications for staff morale and retention.

An analysis of existing staff salaries by UNH, UJA-Federation, and LiveOn NY has found that NORC salaries are roughly \$15,000 lower, on average, than senior center salaries. Systemwide, an investment of at least \$1.7 million is needed to ensure NORC salary parity for DFTA-funded NORCs.

Geriatric Mental Health Initiative (GMHI)

UNH is a long-time supporter of the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative (GMHI), a Council Initiative funded under DOHMH. GMHI funds mental health services in community spaces where older adults gather, such as senior centers, NORCs, and food pantries, and also supports in-home services for homebound seniors. GMHI increases the capacity of community-based organizations serving older adults to identify mental health needs, provide immediate mental health interventions, and refer clients for further psychiatric treatment when necessary. By placing mental health services in nonclinical settings, GMHI providers are able improve access to mental health services in the community, and providers can adapt their programs to meet the needs of the community they serve without stigma. GMHI currently supports 22 organizations, 7 of which are UNH members.

Across the aging network, there is an overwhelming demand to expand mental health services for older adults, especially at senior centers and NORCs. GMHI is an accessible funding source for small and mid-size community-based organizations. At an average of \$86,000 per program, it is also very affordable for the City. By growing this \$1.9 million initiative by 50% - investing an additional \$950,000 for a \$2.86 million total program cost - GMHI could expand to at least 10 new sites, plus allow modest cost of living adjustments for existing programs which have not seen increases in many years.

Notably, GMHI is distinct from the DFTA Geriatric Mental Health program (DGMH), which is administered through ThriveNYC. DGMH contracts with four borough-based providers who place mental health clinicians in senior center host sites. This program is currently undergoing an RFP. While four UNH members currently serve as host sites for this program and report very positive results, DGMH is limited in its scope. Significantly, under the current RFP providers were not given a meaningful opportunity to express interest in serving as a host site. DFTA administered a survey to

⁴ NYS Department of Financial Services: https://www.dfs.ny.gov/consumer/ltc/ltc_about_cost.htm

senior centers asking limited questions such as office space availability, but ultimately selected the host sites non-competitively and many programs that wanted to serve as host sites were excluded. Expanding GMHI is a way to offer services to the many programs that were denied the opportunity to participate in DGMH.

Building Repairs and Upgrades

DFTA-funded programs often face major difficulties with aging buildings and equipment upkeep, which is especially problematic for programs located in NYCHA facilities. Building maintenance, repairs, and upgrades are not covered in DFTA contracts, and available funding comes from a confusing range of agencies and pots of money. The FY 2020 Budget included a \$4 million baselined investment into emergency repairs at NYCHA senior centers for DFTA. This was an important first step that has covered repairs for many HVAC units, though many more structural repairs and replacements are needed such as accessibility projects, home delivered meals equipment, and technology systems.

An additional \$5 million should be baselined to support repairs and upgrades in both NYCHA and non-NYCHA facilities. This should break down as \$3 million for DFTA Infrastructure Funds to support capital projects and \$2 million for a DFTA Innovation Fund to support more flexible expense projects. These funds should also support a new NYCHA Coordinator position at DFTA who could troubleshoot joint agency issues, as currently exists in other agencies such as DYCD. Finally, the City should move toward a funding model that includes repair and maintenance costs in its contracts with community spaces, perhaps through a per-square-foot or categorical funding model.

Invoice: Senior Centers

The FY 2018 “model budget” process for senior centers allocated \$20 million in baselined funding to programs across the City to begin to address the chronic underfunding of senior center contracts. \$10 million was allocated that year, while the remaining \$10 million was promised by FY 2021. Unfortunately, these funds were not included in the FY 2021 Preliminary Budget. It is time for the City to pay its bills and allocate these funds to support senior centers.

As the City looks to allocate this second round of \$10 million, and as it considers future investments in older adult services, it is important to learn from past challenges of the model budget process:

- First, there was inadequate transparency from the City surrounding its methodology and rationale. In the future, DFTA must engage providers more meaningfully, similarly to how agencies like ACS have conducted model budget processes.
- Key cost drivers such as food, rent, and OTPS were excluded from receiving model budget funding, and these need to be addressed in the future. Fortunately, food was addressed with additional funds in FY 2020 (see below), but these other categories are still not addressed.
- Several senior centers were excluded from receiving model budget funds in the first round, often based on technicalities around funding sources. While we understand the second round of funding will be allocated identically to the first, we hope minor adjustments can be made to address these deficiencies. Further, we urge the City to invest additional dollars to support centers that were excluded from the first round of funding.

On a positive note, the FY 2020 budget included a \$15 million baselined increase to senior centers specifically to support congregate meals, as kitchens and food were excluded from the original model budget process. This was meant to be phased in as \$10 million in FY 2020 and \$15 million in FY 2021 and future years. These funds were fully included in the FY 2021 Preliminary Budget.

One-Time Administration Funds

For several years, the Administration has been adding one-year funds to support key programs but has failed to baseline these funds. This leaves advocates and the City in a position of having to do a “budget dance” to restore these funds, while there are more urgent systemic needs that require our attention. This year’s needs include \$9.7 million, broken down as \$2.84 million for home delivered meals, \$2.8 million for senior centers, \$2.1 million for NYCHA social clubs that were converted to senior centers last year, \$1 million for NORCs, and \$1 million for case management (the latter which was funded through the Council last year).

Council Aging Initiatives

The Council must restore all of its Citywide Initiatives for aging, which provide enormous supports for older adults and the programs that support them. Providers cite these initiatives as allowing them to offer holistic supports to older adults. These include \$5.3 million for NORCs (which includes supports for nursing), \$5.1 million for Support Our Seniors, Healthy Aging at \$2.04 million, and Senior Centers, Programs & Enhancements at \$3.4 million. Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations, funded at \$1.5 million, is an especially critical aging program this year in light of increased attacks from the federal government on our immigrants, most notably through the public charge rule change.

Fair Contracts

In addition to our requests on behalf of older adults and the settlement houses that serve them, it is essential that the City recognize and address the larger-scale underfunding of city contracts across the nonprofit human services sector as a whole, which is calling into question the solvency of nonprofits and their ability to provide services in their communities. We thank the City Council for your strong support of the human services sector, and for your commitment to finding solutions to support the workforce and in turn the individuals and families they serve.

Years of underfunding have resulted in the human services workforce being some of the lowest compensated workers in New York City’s economy. A 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) on the personal services line of all human services contracts, at a total cost of \$48 million, is needed in the FY 2021 budget to ensure this vital workforce does not slip further into poverty.

Finally, we urge the City to support timely contract registration and establishing a transparent process for tracking contract actions, and provide sample budgets in procurements so providers can accurately assess the feasibility and level of risk in bidding for contracts.

Thank you for your time. For questions, I can be contacted at 917-484-9326 or tklein@unhny.org.



Making New York a better place to age

**New York City Council
Committee on Aging, Chair, Council Member Chin
March 6, 2020
Preliminary Budget and Oversight Hearing**

Thank you, Chair Chin and the Aging Committee, for the opportunity to testify today. LiveOn NY also thanks Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, DFTA Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez, and the entire City Council for their consideration of the needs of older adults in the FY21 budget.

LiveOn NY would not want to miss an opportunity to testify on record to the significant budgetary investments needed to best serve New York's older adult population.

With a base of more than 100 community-based organizations, LiveOn NY's members provide core services that allow older adults to thrive in their communities, including senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, affordable senior housing, caregiver supports, NORCs and case management. DFTA's network provides services to over 50,000 older adults daily. *Let's be clear: these services are vital to the well-being of older adults.* Studies have shown that services such as senior centers, home delivered meals, and others help prevent social isolation and positively impact health outcomes.

LiveOn NY recognizes and is encouraged by initial investments in senior services by the de Blasio Administration and ongoing investments by City Council. With that said, the DFTA budget still accounts for less than half of 1% of the total City budget, a point that is only exacerbated by the fact that aging New Yorkers now outnumber school-aged children. It is imperative that we continue to develop and maintain a robust system that will serve the rising number of older adults in the City. Aging is a multifaceted process, and supports need to be in place to address the nutrition, housing, and overall well-being of older New Yorkers. As the City continues to grow and prosper, we must not leave behind the people who helped build it. The need is urgent; according to a study by the Center for an Urban Future, 20% of older adults in New York City are living in poverty.¹ **To truly show our commitment to the older adult population, the City must properly invest in the Department for the Aging, and go #AllInForAging.**

LiveOn NY's priorities are attached to our testimony, and are briefly highlighted below:

Invest \$16 Million for Home Delivered Meals

First, it is important to note that the Home-Delivered Meals program is currently in the middle of an RFP solicitation, in which nonprofits are poised to determine their ability to continue participating in the program. From a mission driven standpoint, this is an easy decision. The program is invaluable, as the majority of individuals utilizing the program are women of limited means who live alone, and on average, these meals account at least half of their total food for the day. For many, the person delivering the meal is often the only person they will see that day and providing much needed social interaction.² However, despite the clear importance of this work, from an economic standpoint the decision to continue participating in the City's home-delivered meal program becomes much more treacherous.

¹ Center for an Urban Future, *New York's Older Adult Population is Booming Statewide*, February 2019

² Meals on Wheels of America, *Delivering So Much More than Just a Meal Fact Sheet*, United States, 2018



Making New York a better place to age

Currently, providers are losing hundreds of thousands of dollars each year through these contracts. At the \$9.58 funding rate provided in the current RFP, nonprofits will continue to lose money on every meal they serve. At this rate, NYC will be reimbursing providers approximately **20% below the national average of what a meal cost in urban areas five years ago.**³ Evidence of the inadequate funding available is also displayed through the Human Services Council RFP rating, which scored the RFP at 75% in overall risk — the highest scoring of risk in the history of the rater — with financial adequacy being the greatest driver of risk.

With more than 27,000 older adults having received these life sustaining meals in 2019 alone, we must ensure that the program is kept solvent for years to come by making the necessary investments. According to the Mayor's FY19 Management report, 4,554,828 meals were delivered to 27,065 homebound older New Yorkers, numbers that have consistently grown over the past few years.

An investment of \$16 million in new funding is needed to support the home-delivered meals system across the five boroughs. Of this, \$13 million is needed to solve the shortfall for weekday meals and \$3 million will support weekend meals. These funds will help account for increases in raw food costs, including the associated costs of providing more diverse, culturally competent meals, and to support increase in costs for environmentally conscious disposables to serve food. Further, funding is necessary to account for the overall increase in meals served and rising costs of labor. It is critical that funds are provided to support fair salaries for home delivered meals staff, without whom this incredible program would not be possible.

Fulfill Existing Promise of \$10 Million in New Funds For Senior Centers

In 2017, \$10 million was promised in the Model Senior Center process in FY21. Senior Centers even received documentation from DFTA and OMB indicating the amount of funding that they would receive. **However, this \$10 million promised was not included in the preliminary budget.** This must be rectified, especially given the upcoming senior center RFP. Senior centers are cornerstones in their communities for older adults that provide everything from congregate meals to mental health services. Undercutting their funding would mean undercutting the seniors that frequent them.

Restore and Baseline One-Time \$9.7 million funds

As the older adult population steadily grows, funding for services need to be maintained permanently to prevent any sort of disruption in critical programs. The \$2.8 million for senior centers, \$2.84 million for home delivered meals, \$1 million for NORCs, and the \$2.1 million for NYCHA community spaces should all be baselined and to sustain these programs moving forward. Further, by only making these investments on an annual basis rather than baselining the investments, providers are unable to use them to increase salaries or fill budgetary gaps as is most urgently needed.

Further, City Council's \$1 million case management investment should be baselined, as waiting lists for this program continue to grow, as they have done for years, indicating continued investment will be required to meet demand. LiveOn NY's current analysis shows that there are more than 1,000 older adults on waiting lists for Case Management services and roughly 400 older adults on waiting lists for home care throughout the city, findings that are largely similar to previous budget years.

³ For home delivered meals, in FY17 DFTA reimbursed providers on the average \$9.58 compared to the national average rate of \$11.06.



Making New York a better place to age

Invest \$1.7 Million to Achieve Pay Parity for NORC Staff

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) are housing developments or neighborhoods where a large number of older adults are aging in place. By providing support services such as case management, assistance with benefits applications, support groups, health and wellness services, older New Yorkers are able to remain in their homes and communities. NORCs help older adults avoid nursing home stays that can cost as much as \$142,000 annually per person. Currently, there are 11,000 older adults spread across dozens of NORCs across New York City.

However, the NORC staff that provide who these critical support services earn, on average, \$15,000 less than their DFTA-funded senior center counterparts, even if they are performing the same duties. As a result, the nonprofit organizations who run these critical programs often grapple with staff recruitment and retention. \$1.7 million in new funding is necessary to achieve pay parity across DFTA programs and ensure fairness not only for staff, but for the older adults living in these NORCs.

Invest \$3.2 Million to Further Increase Equity Across Senior Centers

In 2017, when the Department for the Aging analyzed the budgetary needs of senior centers as part of the 'Model Budget' process, 38 centers were left out of this analysis. These were satellite senior centers and social clubs that will need to compete in the forthcoming RFP process, yet will be hamstrung from doing so due to the upfront disparity of funding. Using the average funds received by senior centers during the initial process, **LiveOn NY estimates that \$3.2 million in new senior center funding is needed to promote equity within these spaces.**

Invest \$3 Million for DFTA Infrastructure Funds

The FY19 Mayor's Management Report saw an "increased utilization" of of the 249 DFTA contracted and 38 affiliated senior centers that served more than 124,000 older adults. Over 30,000 New Yorkers frequented these centers for activities and meals daily. A baselined *capital* fund is necessary for replacements, repairs, and upgrades that are critical to the continued functioning and ADA friendliness of the facility. For example, the release of the new home delivered meals RFP introduced the chilled or refrigerated meals format in addition to hot and frozen meals. In order to accommodate the production and the storage of this new format, home delivered meal providers need funding for equipment and increase their capacity to supply these meals. Meanwhile, as the hot summer moments approach and senior centers are often requisitioned into doubling as cooling centers, aging HVAC will need to be replaced or repaired especially because older adults are more vulnerable to heat stress. **This \$3 million new, baselined capital investment will ensure that the services contracted through the Department for the Aging are able to make needed repairs or investments, and do not fall into disrepair, today or in the years to come.**

Invest \$2 Million for DFTA Innovation Funds

Likewise, in order for senior centers to implement age-friendly improvements to their facilities, innovation *expense* funds are essential. In addition to more modest age-friendly improvements, funding can streamline the home delivered meal process and enhance efficiency with the purchase of new technology. For instance, home delivered meal providers are still tediously tracking their routes using



Making New York a better place to age

pen and paper. Software would enable meal providers to track their deliveries in real time and allow for GPS mapping. Data would also be easier to see, collate, and analyze, which can be used to improve service delivery to the client and prioritize their needs. **Further, the continued availability of \$2 million in innovation expense funds will ensure that DFTA contract programs can continue to invest as new technology becomes available that can enhance the wellbeing of the older adult population.**

Council Restorations and Investments in Senior Services Through Schedule C

City Council has long been a staunch supporter of City and district-wide senior services programs through allocations in Schedule C. **We thank you for your investments and advocate for full restoration for all Senior Service Programs funded in Schedule C.** These include NORCs, Support our Seniors, SuCasa, Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations, Health Aging Initiative, Social Adult Day, and others. We also support the growing call for an expansion of the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative by adding \$950,000 to this Council initiative.

Continued Investments in Human Services Sector

Years of underfunding the sector have resulted in the entire human services workforce being some of the lowest compensated workers in New York City's economy. A 3% COLA on the personal services line of all human services contracts at the cost of \$48 million is needed in the FY21 budget to ensure this vital workforce does not slip further into poverty. The Mayor and City Council have taken important steps to begin to address this crisis with previous multi-year cost-of-living investments, but there is no COLA in place for future years. The 3% COLA is a needed investment while workers, advocates, providers, and elected officials continue to work together on more comprehensive solutions to ensure that human services workers finally earn fair pay for their labor.

LiveOn NY looks forward to working with Mayor de Blasio, City Council, DFTA, and all City agencies to make New York City a better place to age through a strong network of community-based services.

LiveOn NY's members provide the core, community-based services that allow older adults to thrive in their communities. With a base of more than 100 community-based organizations serving at least 300,000 older New Yorkers annually. Our members provide services ranging from senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, affordable senior housing with services, elder abuse prevention services, caregiver supports, case management, transportation, and NORCs. LiveOn NY advocates for increased funding for these vital services to improve both the solvency of the system and the overall capacity of community-based service providers.

LiveOn NY also administers a citywide outreach program and staffs a hotline that educates, screens and helps with benefit enrollment including SNAP, SCRIE and others, and also administers the Rights and Information for Senior Empowerment (RISE) program to bring critical information directly to seniors on important topics to help them age well in their communities.

FY21 ALL IN FOR AGING

\$27.7 MILLION IN FY21 NEW NEEDS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET PLAN



\$16 million for Home Delivered Meals Programs

Currently, an estimated 18,000 homebound older adults receive home delivered meals across NYC. However, many of the community-based organizations who administer this program lose thousands of dollars every year providing these meals. \$13 million is needed to help close the gap for weekday meals and \$3 million is needed for weekend meals, so that our city's nonprofits can do what they do best – meet the needs in their communities – without incurring significant losses.



\$1.7 million to achieve salary parity for NORC Staff

NORC program staff make, on average, \$15,000 less than their senior center counterparts. Because of this, the nonprofit organizations who run these important programs have trouble recruiting and retaining staff. \$1.7 million is needed to achieve equity across DFTA-funded programs.



\$1.8 million to expand Service Coordination in Senior Housing

The Senior Affordable Rental Assistance Program (SARA) administered by HRA currently does not provide service coordination funds for seniors being referred to the program for the general lottery system. A \$1.8 million investment would allow for expanded services to an initial cohort of roughly 600 SARA units.



\$3.2 million to further increase equity across Senior Centers

A total of 38 senior centers were not given consideration for new funds during the "model senior center budget process." To remedy this so that all centers can compete in the upcoming RFP, an estimated \$3.2 million is needed.

\$3 million for DFTA Infrastructure Funds

A baselined capital fund is needed for nonprofits to address key replacements, repairs, and upgrades, such as purchasing modern Home Delivered Meals equipment, HVAC replacements, and ADA-friendly facility improvements.

\$2 million for DFTA Innovation Funds

- This baselined expense fund would allow, for example, centers to make age-friendly improvements, to purchase new technologies, and allow Home Delivered Meal providers to purchase software to create efficiency and improve routes.

BASELINE ONE-TIME ADMINISTRATION FUNDS & FULFILL EXISTING PROMISES



\$9.7 million restoration & baselining of previous one-time funds

This includes \$2.8 million for Senior Centers, \$2.84 for Home Delivered Meals, \$1 million for NORCs, and \$2.1 million for NYCHA community spaces. Additionally, the City Council's \$1 million Case Management initiative should be baselined.



\$10 million in new funds promised for Senior Centers

Not included in the preliminary budget, but promised as part of the Model Senior Center Budget process that took place in 2017, the Administration must add the remaining \$10 million for Department for the Aging (DFTA) senior centers in FY21.

FY21 COUNCIL DISCRETIONARY FUNDING

Schedule C Funding

Thank you to the New York City Council for the continued, significant investment in senior services throughout the five boroughs. Each year, the Council puts in more than \$28 million in funding for senior services initiatives, in addition to individual discretionary investments. Below are a few of the major initiatives that are integral to the success of this sector:

\$5,100,000 for Support Our Seniors



Currently, 1 in 5 New Yorkers are over the age of 60. Continue to support senior services through the Support Our Seniors Initiative.

.....

\$2,000,000 for Immigrant Senior Centers



Continue to provide culturally competent and sensitive programs and services to our City's diverse older adults.

.....

\$5,325,325 for NORCs



Continue supporting NORCs throughout the City. This investment would include \$1.3 million in new funds for nursing supports.

.....

\$3,315,000 for SU-CASA



Continue to support the City's community arts engagement initiative serving older adults in senior centers in the five boroughs.

.....

\$2,040,000 for Healthy Aging Initiative



Continue to support health promotion programming for older adults.

.....

\$2,860,000 for Geriatric Mental Health Initiative



Expand mental health services for older New Yorkers by restoring \$1.9 million and adding \$950,000 in new funds.

Questions?

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Mohammad Razvi CEO of COPO 917-416-2664 mrazvi@copo.org

Date March 6, 2020

Good afternoon.

My name is Mohammad Razvi I am the CEO of Council Of Peoples Organization-COPO. I would like to thank the Council Members, and DFTA representatives. COPO is the largest Muslim Arab South Asian (MASA) servicing organization in Brooklyn, our center is over 20,000 sqft. With a staff and volunteers of 75. COPO serves over 25,000 community members annually. Our programs consist of Voter registration, Universal PreK, Afterschool, Adult Literacy, Immigration services, SNAP enrollment, Health insurance, halal food pantry and a halal senior center. We are a one stop shop. There are over 1 million Muslims in the city and growing. Many are becoming seniors and like all seniors they have worked hard in the city, they have provided for their families and they have paid taxes, yet they receive little to no services. There are no senior centers to provide them with culturally sensitive and dietary appropriate meals for them. There is no culturally appropriate Mental Health services for the community.

Our center provides much as possible with very, very, very, very, little funding. Our program is depended on discretionary resources that is the only way we are able to run our program; we need support to provide these services to our aging community. Their needs are many, from time to time seniors share their hardships with us, after all the years of providing for their children they could not save money for themselves now in their time of need the children are not able to support them. In the years, it has become expensive to live in the city, even in my neighborhood in Brooklyn. The seniors have to make a decision whether to pay for food or pay for rent, medicine or other expenses. As I mentioned last year's testimony we have started the first ever Halal Meals on Wheels Program in the State.

I humbly request you to allocate more resources to DFTA and DFTA to support our program and other community programs like this. I know that there are many large senior centers and programs. They serve everyone, God Bless them for their efforts.

Let me and other ethnic community senior centers service our own ethnic communities. Like said before this is not rocket science, we are not putting a man on the moon, we are not performing heart surgery, it is simply helping community members in their time of need.

Let us serve our community with dietary appropriate and culturally sensitive services.

God Bless,

Mohammad Razvi



New York City Council
Committee on Aging
FY 2021 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 06, 2020

Testimony of Hallie Yee ,
Policy Coordinator, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)

My name is Hallie Yee, and I am a Policy Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). Thank you, Chair Chin and members of the Committee on Aging for giving us the opportunity to testify today.

Since 1986, CACF has been the nation's only pan-Asian children and families' advocacy organization and leads the fight for improved and equitable policies, systems, funding, and services to support those in need. The Asian Pacific American (APA) population comprises over 15% of New York City, over 1.3 million people. Yet, the needs of the APA community are consistently overlooked, misunderstood, and uncounted. We are constantly fighting the harmful impacts of the model minority myth, which prevents our needs from being recognized and understood. Our communities, as well as the organizations that serve the community, too often lack the resources to provide critical services to the most marginalized APAs. Working with almost 50 member organizations across the City to identify and speak out on the many common challenges our community faces, CACF is building a community too powerful to ignore.

CACF also leads the 15% and Growing Campaign, a group of over 45 Asian led and serving organizations that work together to ensure that New York City's budget protects the most vulnerable Asian Pacific American New Yorkers. Campaign members employ thousands of New Yorkers and serve hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Currently, the Asian Pacific American community is by percentage the fastest growing group in New York City, nearly doubling every decade since 1970 and making up 15% of the population. Unfortunately, current levels of public funding for the Asian Pacific American community remain disproportionate to our community's needs.

Consider that Asian led and serving organizations receive only 1.5% of the City's social service contract dollars. Yet, while many 15% and Growing Campaign members have long relied on City Council discretionary dollars to provide vital services in Asian Pacific American ethnic enclaves in Council districts throughout the City, our analysis of publicly available budget documents from the FY2020 Adopted Budget revealed that Asian led and serving organizations received only less than 5% of City Council discretionary dollars. In addition, zero to very few APA led organizations are allocated certain Citywide Initiatives that can be used to address community needs, including Support our Seniors. The City needs to invest more in key initiatives like this and programs that could potentially provide services and resources that our community would otherwise be unable to access.

Seniors in the Asian American communities in NYC have some of the highest limited English proficiency rates. More than 2 in 3 APA seniors are limited English Proficient. Many of our seniors have no Social Security income because language inaccessibility is a barrier to applying. Asian American seniors are often left out of the conversation in poverty, yet in NYC, 23% of APA seniors live in poverty. Many APA seniors have limited access to the social safety net despite growing poverty rates. Social isolation, inadequate community outreach, and limited English proficiency play a large role in keeping Asian American seniors from accessing social services, which is exactly why our community organizations' services are vitally needed. Yet in the last fiscal year only 2 APA

organizations received funding under the Support our Seniors Initiative. This is **not** an equitable distribution of resources to meet or communities' needs.

Budget Recommendations:

- ❖ **ENHANCE AND GRANT SUPPORT OUR SENIORS CITYWIDE INITIATIVE** funding to asian Pacific American led and serving community based organizations so they can provide vital services to our aging population.
- ❖ **RESTORE \$2 MILLION TO SENIOR CENTERS FOR IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS** that provides operational support to culturally competent and linguistically accessible non-DFTA senior centers and programmatic support for DFTA senior centers that predominantly serve immigrant seniors.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and we look forward to working with the City Council to ensure that all aging New Yorkers have access to the services and support they need to lead healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives.



Asian American Federation

Testimony for New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on FY2021 Preliminary Budget

**Submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Aging
March 6, 2019**

Thank you to Chair Margaret Chin and the rest of the Committee on Aging for convening this hearing and for the opportunity to share this testimony. My name is Howard Shih, Research and Policy Director at the Asian American Federation (AAF).

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

We are here to highlight the needs of Asian seniors, who are the fastest growing senior population in New York City and in the state. From 2000 to 2018, the Asian senior population in the City more than doubled, increasing faster than all other major race and ethnic groups. There are now more than 147,000 Asians aged 65 and older living in New York City, up from over 59,000.

Immigrants are driving growth in the senior population.

The Department of City Planning's most recent Newest New Yorkers report tracks the changing demographics of the senior population in New York City. Immigrants are becoming a bigger share of the senior population in the City due to two demographic trends. First, the large wave of immigrants who arrived after the immigration reforms of 1965 are now aging into the senior population. Second, some seniors are also immigrating later in life, with about 10% of the City's immigrant seniors arriving since 2000.

While Chinese are still the majority of Asian seniors, immigration and settlement trends are increasingly diversifying and dispersing the Asian senior population.

- Both the South Asian and Southeast Asian senior populations more than doubled in size since 2000, while the Chinese senior population grew by more than 80% and the Korean senior population grew by more than 75%.
- The Asian senior population has essentially tripled in all boroughs with the exception of Manhattan, where growth was still a healthy 91% from 2000 to 2018. There are more than 7,000 Asian seniors in Staten Island, 8,000 in the Bronx, over 30,000 in Manhattan, nearly 40,000 in Brooklyn, and 88,000 in Queens.
- Geographically, each of the major Asian groups in the city has settled in several distinct patterns. Chinese seniors are nearly equally split between the Chinatowns of Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. Indian and Korean seniors were largely in neighborhoods in

Manhattan:
120 Wall Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10005

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

Queens. Bangladeshi and Pakistani seniors are found in neighborhoods in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Japanese seniors are concentrated within neighborhoods of Manhattan.

Asian seniors are uniquely burdened by linguistic and economic challenges.

The needs of Asian seniors are great. Overall 1 in 4 Asian seniors live in poverty, with poverty rates reaching as high as 35% for Bangladeshi seniors and 30% for Chinese seniors. Additionally, language barriers remain high among Asian seniors and present an added complication in poverty alleviation efforts. More than 90% of Chinese and Korean speaking seniors had limited English proficiency (LEP). Among Bengali speakers, 77% were LEP. More than 65% Urdu speakers and half of Hindi speakers were also LEP. Even among Filipinos who have a reputation of high English proficiency, 39% of Tagalog speakers identified themselves as LEP. For seniors living in poverty, LEP rates were 83% for Asians, compared to 48% for non-Asians.

Poverty and immigration status also hurt Asian seniors' ability to access affordable health insurance. Overall 2.4% of Asian seniors did not have health insurance coverage, compared to 1.3% of all seniors. And only 24% of Asian seniors had additional private coverage, compared to 44% of all seniors.

Asian seniors need culturally competent services in order to thrive.

Asian seniors are more likely to utilize services that reflect their traditional values and ethnic identities. Thus, community-based organizations with roots in their neighborhoods are best placed to get Asian seniors the help they need. Asian seniors, particularly more recently arrived ones, are less likely to know what services and programs are available to help them acclimate to life in New York City and to address life events as they occur. Culturally competent programs will also understand the cultural and generational barriers that stop seniors from seeking help, particularly mental health services. This is critical since 40% of Asian seniors report experiencing depression, and Asian women ages 65 and older have the highest suicide rate across all racial and ethnic groups.

Recommendations:

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

- **Increase funding for the Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations Initiative from \$1.5 to \$2 million to support Asian senior centers in both existing and emerging neighborhoods.** Immigration and integration trends are diversifying and dispersing the Asian senior population. Our member agencies need funding to expand existing senior centers, create new senior services in emerging communities and neighborhoods, and provide opportunities to improve the cultural and linguistic competency of senior programming across the city, not just in traditionally Asian neighborhoods.
- **Ensure that DFTA receives the funding they need to fully implement the new citywide languages covered in the new Local Law 30.**
- **Address the growing need for in-language and culturally competent health care and mental health services for Asian seniors.** In particular, overcoming cultural

stigma surrounding mental health services requires a multipronged approach to incorporating mental health services into existing services such as homebound meal delivery or adult social day care to reach Asian seniors where they are. This approach would gradually introduce mental health concepts into their lives to avoid socially stigmatizing terms and concepts.

- **Amend contracting process to allow Asian-led nonprofits to more accurately reflect the cultural and language expertise they bring when serving Asian seniors.**
- **Establish protections for subcontractors or restructure contracts to enable Asian senior centers to contract directly with the City for homebound meals.** Despite the fact that 1 in 10 seniors in New York City is Asian, no Asian-led homebound meal provider has a direct contract with the city, and instead often find their programs are cut first when the city's budget axe falls on the contracting agency.
- **Raise reimbursement rates for ethnic home-delivered meals**

**Testimony of Sunnyside Community Services
New York City Council Hearing
Aging Committee-Margaret Chin, Chair
Prepared by: Shyvonne Noboa, Division Director for Sunnyside Community Services
Friday March 6, 2020**

Good Morning. My name is Shyvonne Noboa and I'm the Division Director for Senior Services at Sunnyside Community Services (SCS). Thank you, Chairwoman Margaret Chin, for her leadership and the support of the entire Aging Committee. At Sunnyside Community Services we envision a diverse, inclusive, and caring community where all people thrive and reach their fullest potential and it's with your partnership that we are able fulfill that vision.

Through our services for older adults, we are able to offer a continuum of vital services that help them remain in their homes through our Senior Center, Friendly Visiting, Caregivers, Case Management, Social Adult Day programming and Home Care. We also provide Geriatric Mental Health, Long Term Care (including Medicaid Enrollment) and a newly launched Care Connections team, which offers a single point of entry for assessment, referral and connection to any one of our services for older adults.

In today's testimony, I will highlight our priorities areas that necessitate swift action so that together, we can continue to support not just those seniors we serve, but to those who work in their service.

Model budget funding for Senior Centers

In our vibrant senior center, we provide over 250 meals daily, a monthly activity menu of over 25 exercise and education opportunities and 1900 hours of case assistance annually. And we need your partnership to continue doing so. The first priority area is requesting City Council release the previously promised 10 million from the model budget so centers can plan and execute necessary program operations in a timely manner. This funding is necessary to support the day to day core supports we provide, allow our staff to plan daily activities, retain consultants and we did not see those funds in the preliminary budget.

Infrastructure

Our second priority area is infrastructure. Our staff in the senior center continue to work on computers that haven't been upgraded for years. Our senior center members spend an average of five hours daily in our center and they do so on tables and chairs that were last purchased in 2003-and are in dire need of upgrades. Current resources don't come close to covering a recent estimate of \$42,286.08 to replace these tables and chairs. We are also doing our part to ensure ever person is counted in the Census, and the cost to install upgrades to our firewall and antivirus protection comes at a cost of \$2000. We need your support in making investments that allow us to thrive, not just survive. As such, we support adding \$5 million for DFTA-funded programs to invest in infrastructure, including building repairs, upgrades, and new systems.

COLA

I also can't think of a better time to offer testimony advocating on behalf of critical investments to the human services sector than during National Social Work month. For perspective, in FY19, our staff provided 43,841 nutritious center-cooked meals, delivered 2,725 hours of case assistance, and screened 1,108 individuals for eligibility for benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, and Medicare Extra Help, among others. And there going to continue that dedication now in FY20, FY21, FY22 and beyond. We join The Human Services Council with the ask to invest in lives of the frontline champion's that are committed and dedicated to supporting the needs of older New Yorkers. Years of underfunding of the sector have resulted in the entire human services workforce being some of the lowest compensated workers in New York City's economy. A 3% COLA on the personal services line of all human services contracts at the cost of \$48 million is needed in the FY21 budget to ensure this vital workforce does not slip further into poverty. The Mayor and City Council have taken important steps to begin to address this crisis with previous multi-year cost-of-living investments, but there is no COLA in place for future years. The 3% COLA is a needed investment while workers, advocates, providers, and elected officials continue to work together on more comprehensive solutions to ensure that human services workers finally earn fair pay for their labor.

I close by saying, you and I hold a very powerful secret that most don't know. And that secret is: when those aging around us are able to do so with the respect, dignity, and compassion that everyone deserves, they can continue to lead meaningful and active lives as vibrant individuals contributing back to their community. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today and your continued commitment to our programs that support our work and the needs of older New Yorkers.



**GOD'S LOVE WE DELIVER
TESTIMONY FOR NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON AGING
MARGARET S. CHIN, CHAIR
MARCH 6, 2020**

God's Love We Deliver is New York City's leading not-for-profit provider of medically tailored home-delivered meals and nutritional counseling for people living with life-threatening illnesses. Over 34 years ago God's Love began with one person's simple, compassionate response to hunger. God's Love provides services to the most underserved and isolated populations in our City: those who are sick and unable to take care of their most basic need – the need for food and nutrition. God's Love is an integral part of the City's safety net. As a key service agency within the local care continuum, we maintain relationships with 200 community organizations to reach those in need. God's Love has a network, a reach and a program that greatly benefits coordination of care for the elderly.

We believe that being sick and hungry is a crisis that demands an urgent response. When someone calls us for help, we deliver their first meal on the next delivery day, we never charge clients for their meals and we have never had a waiting list. Each year, God's Love continues to grow to meet the demand, last year alone, we delivered nearly 2 million meals to over 8,200 men, women and children living with severe illness throughout the NYC metropolitan area. As NYC's population ages, senior New Yorkers are increasingly relying on God's Love We Deliver for meals to meet their specific medical needs. For seniors in New York City who are living with complex illnesses, God's Love is the only service that stands between them and hunger. People living with serious illnesses that require very specific diets (like Renal Failure) are unable to be served by DFTA-contracted meal providers and due to their lack of mobility, are unable to use SNAP benefits. As a result, these clients are regularly referred to God's Love from DFTA-contracted meal providers who cannot address the clients' complicated nutritional needs. These factors have contributed to an enormous increase in demand for our services for seniors. **Over the last 5 years, we have seen a 43% growth in our older adult clients (60+) and currently, 69% of the people we serve are older adults (60+). Despite receiving referrals from the Department for the Aging, we have no contractual relationship with DFTA and are not reimbursed for the meals we provide to those that they refer to us. Despite our advocacy efforts, DFTA did not include medically tailored meals in its 2020 RFP.**

At God's Love, nutrition is our signature difference. Although some seniors can tolerate regular food, aging and illness can lead to a variety of complications that require a specialized diet. We are able to meet this need as part of our commitment to food as medicine. God's Love clients receive services from our 7 Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) who tailor each meal to meet each client's specific medical needs. All of our meals are well-balanced: low in sodium, free of highly allergenic foods such as nuts and shellfish, and immune supporting. Our menu allows for individualization of meals according to dietary needs, including texture restrictions such as minced and pureed diets, and renal diets. Based on a client's nutrition assessment with an RDN, additional restrictions may be added to the client's diet for medical, nutritional, or cultural reasons. Our goal is to provide clients with the least restrictive meals possible that meet their medical needs and nutritional requirements.

To date, the New York City Council and Borough President's offices have been responsible for any City funding to support our work. While we greatly appreciate their support, the cost of meeting the need for our services for seniors far exceeds discretionary funding available from these resources. In addition, in this current political climate, the resources that are currently available to fund our services are being threatened. Last year, 5,181 New York City seniors

received over 1.2 million meals from God's Love. Over 70% of these services were supported with private funding, which gets harder and harder to raise each year. For certain populations, this percent is higher. For seniors with end stage renal disease, which disqualifies individuals from eating meals from DFTA-funded agencies, over 93% of the meals we deliver to this population (about 90,000 meals last year) are funded through private donations.

Research has shown that food and nutrition services are key to accomplishing better health outcomes, lower cost of care and improved patient satisfaction, especially for the elderly. When people get access to medically-tailored meals like those provided by God's Love We Deliver, they are more likely to stay in care, manage their medications successfully and remain in their homes and out of institutions, resulting in significant cost savings to the healthcare system.

There is a service gap in the DFTA model for severely ill seniors who need customized nutrition. **Chronic illness is on the rise for older adults: 80% of seniors in the United States are living with at least one chronic illness, 77% are living with more than one chronic illnessⁱ.** Individuals with chronic health conditions count for approximately 75% of all health care spending.ⁱⁱ Combined with the fact that 75% of seniors were unable to shop for food on their own and 58% were unable to prepare their own food, means risk factors align for malnutrition.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition, half of seniors recently discharged from the hospital are malnourished, and hospitalization within the previous six months is a risk factor for malnutrition in some seniors.

Of the 1.1 million older adults living in NYC, **93% report not having enough food to eat and 32% indicate that they live alone.** In addition, people are also getting sicker, **28% report having diabetes, 12% indicate that they are living with COPD, and 65% report having high blood pressure.** These factors, combined with the increasing amount of ADL limitations that occur as a person ages, demonstrates a current and increasing need for medically tailored food and nutrition.

Despite receiving referrals from the Department for the Aging, we have no direct contractual relationship with DFTA and are not reimbursed for the meals we provide to those that they refer to us. Furthermore, despite our advocacy efforts, DFTA did not include medically tailored meals in its 2020 RFP. God's Love is currently serving New Yorkers living in every zip code throughout the five boroughs and we have enclosed a table reflecting our services for older adults by New York City zip code, which demonstrates that there is an existing, and ever growing need for medically tailored meals among older New Yorkers throughout all five boroughs. Accordingly, we are respectfully asking that the Department of the Aging either amend the existing RFP to include funding for medically tailored citywide or issue a separate RFP specifically for medically tailored meals for older adults living with life altering illnesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

For further information please contact:

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| God's Love We Deliver Meals Delivered to Older Adults in NYC in FY19 (7/1/2018 – 60/30/2019) | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Zip Codes | # of Clients age 60+ | # of Meals Delivered |
| 11001 | 4 | 1038 |
| Bayside - Little Neck | | |
| 11361 | 16 | 4962 |
| 11362 | 16 | 4980 |
| 11363 | 4 | 635 |
| 11364 | 33 | 9914 |
| Bedford Stuyvesant - Crown Heights | | |
| 11212 | 64 | 15357 |
| 11213 | 53 | 11076 |
| 11216 | 36 | 9705 |
| 11233 | 44 | 9760 |
| 11238 | 43 | 9566 |
| Bensonhurst - Bay Ridge | | |
| 11209 | 22 | 6438 |
| 11214 | 20 | 3776 |
| 11228 | 9 | 1744 |
| Borough Park | | |
| 11204 | 22 | 5380 |
| 11218 | 16 | 3374 |
| 11219 | 5 | 907 |
| 11230 | 9 | 1797 |
| Canarsie - Flatlands | | |
| 11234 | 47 | 10135 |
| 11236 | 52 | 9088 |
| 11239 | 23 | 6359 |
| Central Harlem - Morningside Heights | | |
| 10026 | 44 | 11015 |
| 10027 | 43 | 10454 |
| 10030 | 45 | 10665 |
| 10037 | 33 | 9352 |
| 10039 | 19 | 3195 |
| Chelsea - Clinton | | |
| 10001 | 24 | 6756 |
| 10011 | 54 | 14985 |
| 10018 | 2 | 480 |
| 10019 | 36 | 11089 |
| 10036 | 28 | 8839 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|-------|
| Coney Island - Sheepshead Bay | | |
| 11223 | 27 | 7726 |
| 11224 | 22 | 5131 |
| 11229 | 24 | 6096 |
| 11235 | 13 | 2791 |
| Crotona - Tremont | | |
| 10453 | 79 | 17541 |
| 10457 | 72 | 20101 |
| 10460 | 51 | 10963 |
| Downtown - Heights - Slope | | |
| 11201 | 24 | 7692 |
| 11205 | 35 | 8493 |
| 11215 | 21 | 5337 |
| 11217 | 31 | 8452 |
| 11231 | 28 | 5128 |
| East Flatbush - Flatbush | | |
| 11203 | 55 | 12936 |
| 11210 | 22 | 4714 |
| 11225 | 41 | 8750 |
| 11226 | 49 | 13653 |
| East Harlem | | |
| 10029 | 85 | 21354 |
| 10035 | 56 | 16809 |
| East New York | | |
| 11207 | 74 | 17649 |
| 11208 | 59 | 12170 |
| Flushing - Clearview | | |
| 11354 | 20 | 6107 |
| 11355 | 43 | 9491 |
| 11356 | 13 | 3045 |
| 11357 | 32 | 8588 |
| 11358 | 21 | 3993 |
| 11360 | 16 | 5121 |
| Fordham - Bronx Park | | |
| 10458 | 55 | 14981 |
| 10467 | 93 | 21237 |
| 10468 | 39 | 10731 |
| Fresh Meadows | | |
| 11365 | 35 | 12183 |
| 11366 | 9 | 1231 |
| 11367 | 25 | 6669 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|----|-------|
| Gramercy Park - Murray Hill | | |
| 10010 | 37 | 11532 |
| 10016 | 40 | 11486 |
| 10017 | 5 | 1468 |
| 10022 | 17 | 3314 |
| Greenpoint | | |
| 11211 | 9 | 1309 |
| 11222 | 10 | 1704 |
| Greenwich Village - Soho | | |
| 10012 | 19 | 4990 |
| 10013 | 18 | 7613 |
| 10014 | 34 | 13000 |
| High Bridge - Morrisania | | |
| 10451 | 40 | 9227 |
| 10452 | 73 | 21111 |
| 10456 | 81 | 18726 |
| Hunts Point - Mott Haven | | |
| 10454 | 38 | 6524 |
| 10455 | 34 | 8601 |
| 10459 | 37 | 5652 |
| 10474 | 7 | 1226 |
| Jamaica | | |
| 11412 | 35 | 7332 |
| 11423 | 30 | 7384 |
| 11432 | 32 | 6773 |
| 11433 | 24 | 6812 |
| 11434 | 62 | 12993 |
| 11435 | 29 | 7303 |
| 11436 | 16 | 5211 |
| Kingsbridge - Riverdale | | |
| 10463 | 48 | 11788 |
| 10471 | 9 | 2444 |
| Long Island City - Astoria | | |
| 11101 | 17 | 3760 |
| 11102 | 13 | 4119 |
| 11103 | 10 | 2187 |
| 11104 | 14 | 4149 |
| 11105 | 17 | 3993 |
| 11106 | 23 | 6160 |
| Lower Manhattan | | |
| 10007 | 1 | 368 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 10038 | 25 | 7357 |
| 10280 | 3 | 103 |
| 10282 | 1 | 100 |
| Northeast Bronx | | |
| 10466 | 53 | 12152 |
| 10469 | 53 | 12226 |
| 10470 | 12 | 3171 |
| 10475 | 120 | 34426 |
| Pelham - Throgs Neck | | |
| 10461 | 48 | 9988 |
| 10462 | 66 | 15866 |
| 10464 | 1 | 44 |
| 10465 | 51 | 10503 |
| 10472 | 58 | 13679 |
| 10473 | 63 | 17336 |
| Port Richmond | | |
| 10302 | 13 | 2902 |
| 10303 | 9 | 1723 |
| 10310 | 14 | 4358 |
| Ridgewood - Forest Hills | | |
| 11374 | 19 | 4435 |
| 11375 | 28 | 4884 |
| 11379 | 14 | 4024 |
| 11385 | 28 | 6047 |
| Rockaway | | |
| 11691 | 33 | 5473 |
| 11692 | 5 | 1055 |
| 11693 | 7 | 1586 |
| 11694 | 12 | 4131 |
| South Beach - Tottenville | | |
| 10306 | 30 | 7835 |
| 10307 | 4 | 512 |
| 10308 | 7 | 582 |
| 10309 | 7 | 1589 |
| 10312 | 21 | 3737 |
| Southeast Queens | | |
| 11004 | 17 | 3804 |
| 11005 | 3 | 335 |
| 11411 | 36 | 9010 |
| 11413 | 39 | 10752 |
| 11422 | 17 | 4246 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 11426 | 16 | 2672 |
| 11427 | 22 | 5113 |
| 11428 | 18 | 4279 |
| 11429 | 40 | 10771 |
| Southwest Queens | | |
| 11414 | 18 | 4989 |
| 11415 | 11 | 3660 |
| 11416 | 11 | 3218 |
| 11417 | 18 | 2402 |
| 11418 | 20 | 4177 |
| 11419 | 19 | 5090 |
| 11420 | 28 | 4320 |
| 11421 | 11 | 1586 |
| Stapleton - St. George | | |
| 10301 | 29 | 7522 |
| 10304 | 19 | 4207 |
| 10305 | 35 | 8473 |
| Sunset Park | | |
| 11220 | 26 | 5118 |
| 11232 | 5 | 615 |
| Union Square - Lower East Side | | |
| 10002 | 70 | 20115 |
| 10003 | 42 | 12109 |
| 10009 | 68 | 16116 |
| Upper East Side | | |
| 10021 | 17 | 3032 |
| 10028 | 19 | 3927 |
| 10044 | 7 | 1706 |
| 10065 | 13 | 4042 |
| 10075 | 12 | 3044 |
| 10128 | 26 | 8791 |
| Upper West Side | | |
| 10023 | 43 | 12021 |
| 10024 | 38 | 9357 |
| 10025 | 101 | 26461 |
| Washington Heights - Inwood | | |
| 10031 | 45 | 11964 |
| 10032 | 52 | 14963 |
| 10033 | 39 | 6285 |
| 10034 | 24 | 5646 |
| 10040 | 20 | 4568 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| West Queens | | |
| 11368 | 36 | 7878 |
| 11369 | 20 | 3713 |
| 11370 | 7 | 2184 |
| 11372 | 18 | 3860 |
| 11373 | 25 | 6935 |
| 11377 | 29 | 5863 |
| 11378 | 13 | 2537 |
| Williamsburg - Bushwick | | |
| 11206 | 40 | 6856 |
| 11221 | 34 | 8571 |
| 11237 | 11 | 1689 |
| 11249 | 10 | 1900 |
| Willowbrook | | |
| 10314 | 27 | 7222 |
| Grand Total | 5,183 | 1,271,481 |

ⁱ According to the National Council on Aging. Available at <https://www.ncoa.org/news/resources-for-reporters/get-the-facts/healthy-aging-facts/>. Accessed July 24, 2017).

ⁱⁱ According to 2010 data. *Chronic Disease Overview*, CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/>. Accessed Mar. 28, 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. Phipps et al.

**Visiting Neighbors' Testimony
for
New York City Council Budget Hearing -- FY 2021
Aging Committee - March 6th, 2020**

My name is Dr. Cynthia Maurer and I am the Executive Director of Visiting Neighbors, which has been serving our city's homebound and frail elderly since 1972. Visiting Neighbors, a non-profit organization, enables individuals age 60+ to remain independent and safe in their own homes and a vital part of the New York Community. Through programs of "neighbors helping neighbors," volunteers, supported by Visiting Neighbors' professional staff, help older adults alleviate loneliness and isolation, provide mental stimulation and emotional security, share information about wellness and health related concerns and encourage physical independence and quality of life at home. Visiting Neighbors champions the power of the volunteer and encourages interdependence – so that mutual learning and understanding bring generations together to share life experiences and gain respect for each individual's uniqueness. The organization promotes a positive acceptance of life after sixty and the value of the elderly in society.

First and foremost, we want to thank the Council as a whole, the Speaker and each of our City Council's respective members for acknowledging our work and the importance of our mission. We know you "get it" and care about the needs of our city's elderly. In fact, it's because of the support of our City Council that we are able to continue to help so many seniors live healthier, safer and happier lives staying in their own homes. We respectfully urge your continued support for our life-line services to homebound and frail seniors, as well as the young seniors first dealing with aspects of growing older.

Description of the Population we help:

Visiting Neighbors' clients are age 60 and over our eldest is 105, and average age is 89 (Just over a decade ago it was age 79). They tend to be frail and have one or more ailments. They are from all walks of life and backgrounds, but most live on fixed incomes and can't afford to pay for help. All of our clients are able to self-direct, however we have every personality type you can imagine and a few that are a bit offbeat or eccentric. The senior who comes to us usually lives alone, has little or no family nearby that they can turn to for help. Some have family that do not care. Some have family that care, but are not in a position to help. They are all proud and determined to remain independent and in their own homes. Most of their friends are either elderly and often frail themselves and not able to assist them or have passed. Before they come to us, the seniors are most often isolated and nervous about crossing the streets and getting to and from their appointments safely, frightened about health concerns, have little or poor communication with their doctors and need help with errands. Like any of us, they all want to be valued, understood and respected.

Our society too often overlooks the frail and the oldest old, the seniors 85+ who spend their days alone behind the confines of their apartments. They have lost their family and friends and cannot go to senior centers for companionship, stimulation or assistance. These seniors need human contact to help sustain their will to take care of themselves, eat or even live and to encourage them as they face the challenges of aging. They need someone to talk to, and also someone who can listen with a trained professional ear, someone who can connect them with the help they need and expresses that they care.

Health Advocacy

Our Health Advocate helps our existing clients better communicate with their doctors, as well as formulate key questions to ask medical professionals to ensure they understand instructions when leaving their offices (including how to take medications, what they are for, what to expect and side effects). Our Health Advocate and trained cadre of volunteers also encourages seniors to go to see their doctors in the first place, as well as advocate for them when they are going into the hospital or rehab. It always helps a patient to let medical personnel know someone is watching. When a senior comes home from a hospital, we are there to make sure they have what they need. We will pick up medications, go shopping and provide emotional reassurance and a chance to vent about their experience.

Caregiver Support

We receive calls from relatives who are anxious because their elderly family member has no one nearby to look in on them. Family members, friends and neighbors call because they want to help but don't know how. They are often nervous, exhausted and overwhelmed. They don't know what their senior needs, how to get them to accept help, how to manage the burden of care-giving, or how to engage the senior in a difficult conversation about what is going on and/or planning for what lies ahead. We talk to caregivers when they are overwhelmed, providing information and support. We work closely with other agencies that provide services to frail seniors, referring clients to them and accepting referrals from them.

Student Nursing Program

Student nurses from the NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing, under the guidance of their professor and Visiting Neighbors' staff discuss with our seniors; heart health, fall prevention, nutrition, staying flexible, advanced directives and many other wellness topics, as well as do medication reconciliation, hazard in home assessments and blood pressure screenings. Every student in our nursing program finishes their semester with a newfound appreciation for the challenges and struggles seniors face as they age. They leave as advocates for their care should they see an older adult neglected in a hospital setting.

Remembering Special Occasions

We remember and celebrate special occasions. Local school children make handmade birthday, Valentines and other holiday cards. We are starting a pen pal program with some of the seniors and students. We work with another organization that prepares meals for the Thanksgiving holiday for our seniors. Our volunteers deliver the meals. In the month of December, we had volunteers put together care packages of donated items. Volunteers later deliver these packages to clients during the holiday season, which can often be a time that is especially lonely for seniors who otherwise have no one to share in the joys of the season with. For many seniors our gifts and visits are the only ones they receive.

Wellness Programs

We plan on having more free public wellness events in the coming fiscal year to engage seniors and volunteers in group discussions and wellness activities/ programs. All are welcome. The workshops and discussions will include the following topics:

- stretching/chair exercises/staying flexible
- stress management
- nutrition/incorporating super foods
- the importance of staying connected with others
- staying strong as the seniors face physical changes/venting frustrations in healthy ways
- beating the blues
- fall prevention
- advanced directives
- communicating more effectively with medical professionals
- mental stimulation through games and conversation
- emergency preparedness
- heart health
- pedestrian safety

Some Demographics of our clients:

*77% are female, 22% are male and 1% define themselves as non-binary.

*90% live alone

*75% of our clients are over 80 and 33% are over 90.

*98% percent of our clients can neither pay for private services, nor eligible for Medicaid. There are no fees for our services.

*73% are homebound, but can get outside with assistance and 4% are fully bedbound.

* Last year our Centenarian Club had fifteen members. We lost two of them, but we celebrated them while they were here, and we have two more seniors turning 100 this Spring.

Visiting Neighbors' addresses the following needs of seniors in our community

1. Seniors will be less lonely, know they are not alone and have someone they can turn to, will be less depressed and isolated.
2. Seniors will have better communications with their health professionals, ask important questions, will be better informed about their illnesses, ailments and diseases, take their medications as instructed and follow up with their appointments.
3. Seniors will get their shopping done as well as other vital errands done so they can retain their independence, remain in their homes and not be forced into a nursing home.
4. Seniors will be safely walking outside and avoiding potential street hazards.
5. To celebrate special occasions like birthdays and holidays with clients.
6. To have seniors better informed on a variety of wellness issues and get them asking more questions.
7. To reach to a larger number of seniors who could benefit from our services.
8. To identify and engage more volunteers.
9. Seniors will be provided information to help prevent falls, including safety tips at home and outside.
10. To foster better understanding and communications between student interns, volunteers and seniors' so they can appreciate each other more.

New York City Council
FY 2021 Preliminary Budget Hearing

Aging Committee
Hon. Margaret Chin, Chair

Friday, March 6, 2020

Submitted on behalf of:
New York Junior Tennis & Learning (NYJTL)
3636 33rd Street
Long Island City, NY 11106

George Guimaraes
President and CEO

Presented by
James R. O'Neill
Director of Government Relations & External Affairs

On behalf of the Board and Staff of ***New York Junior Tennis & Learning (NYJTL)***, legally incorporated and funded as the New York Junior Tennis League, Inc., I am here to urge the continued funding of the Council's ***Healthy Aging Initiative***, an initiative designed to, among other outcomes, promote healthy behaviors such as physical activity and strength training among senior citizens.

With the longstanding support of the New York City Council, NYJTL has become the largest and most successful scholastic tennis program in the country, serving as a model for other states. For nearly 50 years, NYJTL has been a driving force for New York City's youth and tennis communities, annually reaching over **85,000** youngsters throughout the five boroughs. **More recently, however, we have begun to expand our outreach and programming to the seniors of the Bronx.**

Singles, doubles or against a wall, tennis is a great activity whether you're age 5 or 95, offering numerous physical and psychological benefits. Among older populations, tennis has been demonstrated to:

- **Lower blood pressure;**
- **Lower risk of heart disease;**
- **Increase bone strength and density thereby helping to prevent bone fractures and osteoporosis;**
- **Improve flexibility, balance, mobility and coordination;**
- **Improve memory and boost brain power;**
- **Improve discipline and social skills.**

Under our pilot program, which we hope to expand with funding under the ***Healthy Aging Initiative***, NYJTL offered 4 FREE three-hour tennis and health & wellness workshops at its flagship facility in the Bronx, the ***Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Education (CLC)***, during the month of January.

Participating Bronx seniors received a light breakfast, top level tennis instruction by certified United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) coaches supervised by world ranked tennis player and three time Olympian Liezel Huber (CLC Executive Director of Tennis), and participated in supervised drills, games and low-key competition ALL while have a fun and engaging experience.

Numerous studies have proven that seniors who participate in activities such as tennis build bone and muscle, have stronger immune systems, more efficient lungs, better blood pressure, and have counteracted the weakness that comes with age. Seniors who work out regularly can also ease the symptoms of arthritis, osteoporosis, pulmonary diseases, and Type 2 diabetes.

With the New York City Council as our partner, NYJTL is offering the youth of our city much more than the chance to learn tennis. NYJTL helps young people build self-esteem and learn the affirmative values of perseverance, cooperation, fairness and respect. Funded under the Council's *Physical Education and Fitness Initiative*, NYJTL provides quality tennis, educational programming, and character development in **EVERY** Council District throughout the city.

Funding under the Council's *Healthy Aging Initiative* will enable us to expand our reach to Senior Centers throughout the Bronx, providing them with much needed physical activity and health & wellness enrichment.

We could not do what we do without the strong funding support of the New York City Council. On behalf of the youngsters, and now seniors, served by NYJTL, I thank you for the New York City Council's sustained support of NYJTL.

New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
160 Sixth Avenue Suite 2
NY NY 10013

Lucy Sexton, Executive Director
lucy@ny4ca.org

City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing on Aging
March 6, 2020

Good morning Chair and City Council members---and thank you for your critical and greatly appreciated work supporting seniors in our city. My name is Lucy Sexton and I am the head of the cultural advocacy group New Yorkers for Culture & Arts. We are a coalition of groups and individuals across the five boroughs working to ensure every New Yorker has the right and opportunity to engage in culture, express their humanity, and strengthen their community.

I am also a Su Casa teaching artist, which is one of the joys and honors of my life. Two years ago I worked at the CPC Open Door Center in Chinatown and today I am working at Project Find Clinton on W 55th Street. The people in my classes get to dance, tell stories from their lives, and create

and perform their own theater pieces. I often give prompts for their storytelling. In response to the question “when in your life have you felt most loved”, a Cantonese-speaking participant cried as he said that that he’d been working in factories since he was 14. And doing these classes with this group of people in the Open Door center was the most loving and happiest time of his life.

I recently asked a group of women in my class to tell a story from their childhood. Astoundingly to me each woman’s story involved waking up early to travel to get water for their family. These were African American

woman and I had no idea they had not been born her--- more importantly they didn’t know they shared this experience with each other. Yvette, from Barbados, talked about how she hated filling buckets at the ‘standpipe’ a few miles away, and that when she finally moved to her own place, she saved all her money to get a pipe in her backyard. Victory.

I tell these stories not just because they are powerful and moving but because they are the meat on the bones of the irrefutable data: when seniors are involved in the arts they live longer happier lives. Culture is a critical piece of eldercare, a proven supporter of their physical and mental health. Speaking of health, it is often the gardening, painting, dance, and music classes that get the seniors coming to the centers. And it's in the centers that they get access to healthcare information, that they are seen by others who can direct them to care if they are getting sick. I don't need to remind us how important this is during this frightening pandemic, of particular danger to seniors. And those who are in economically vulnerable communities depend even more on the connection that cultural classes in our senior centers provides.

So I encourage each of you to fight for access to culture and arts for every senior in our city. By supporting culture you are supporting better education, better aging, improved mental health, stronger communities, and a city that respects the dignity and humanity of every one of its citizens.



Visiting Nurse Service of New York
220 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
www.vnsny.org

New York City Council Budget Meeting for the Committee on Aging Presentation
Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY)

Friday, March 6, 2020

Good Morning Chair Dromm, Chair Chin and Members of the Committee on Aging. My name is Rhonda Soberman, Manager of Program Development for VNSNY and I appreciate the opportunity to testify today. Each year I look forward to having this opportunity to speak to you about VNSNY and our work, as well as discuss our commitment to the community, and our Neighborhood/Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (N/NORCs) social service partners.

VNSNY is the largest not-for-profit home and community-based health care organization in the United States, but we are rooted in our commitment to New Yorkers and those most vulnerable among us. We work to ensure these populations have access to cost-effective health care services in their communities and in the comfort of their own homes. Every day, our organization touches the lives of more than 44,000 people who are faced with a wide range of health care challenges that are managed either with short-term intervention, ongoing chronic care services or with end of life care support.

This year is a first, as I am asking the New York City (NYC) Council to ***reallocate \$1.3 million in funding for NORC nursing services***, thanks in large part to the work last year by Chair Chin, the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA), and the Council Finance Staff. As a result of the City's funding, VNSNY has been able to provide nursing support to 27 NORC programs throughout the five boroughs. By the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, VNSNY will have provided more than 12, 612 hours of nursing services in support of seniors at these programs. VNSNY is also a frontline NNORC provider in the Chinatown community, serving more than 800 low income, non-English speaking residents residing in tenement housing.

Impact of NORC Nursing

We believe that NORC Programs are able to provide critical social services and health care linkages that support successful community living. The NORC model focuses on both the health and social needs of senior residents in their housing community and is one of the most effective ways of providing support for a growing aging population. NORC programs develop "community" and promote the concept of neighbors helping neighbors to encourage healthy aging in their community.

NORC nursing focuses on client assessment, health education, health resources, health care advocacy and linkages to necessary health care services. The concept of a "team approach to care" is very significant in the NORC model. The nurse is a valued and important member of the interdisciplinary team, helping staff and clients alike better understand health-related issues and concerns and their impact on the client's ability to remain at home. NORC nurses develop important relationships with community residents and work to empower residents to manage their chronic health conditions. All these efforts are aimed at reducing unnecessary emergency

room visits and avoidable hospitalizations, while increasing positive health outcomes and resident satisfaction.

As the concerns, and misinformation, continue to grow about the coronavirus (COVID-19), VNSNY NORC nurses, in coordination with our social service partners, have sponsored informational events, based on the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) information and protocols, within the NORC Communities – to dispel myths and educate residents of practical ways to stay healthy and address their health concerns.

The benefits to the community to have a consistent on-site nurse who is familiar with each location's unique cultural needs cannot be overstated, as it helps to build trust between the nurse and residents. Y** was an elderly woman in her 80s living by herself and who was constantly fatigued with no energy or mood - and disconnected from the outside world. She refused to go outside of her apartment or do anything. According to the client, her Primary Care Physician prescribed depression medication for her as a solution to this issue. After evaluation and an individual discussion, the NORC nurse encouraged her to attend the nurse's regularly scheduled health presentations. She was then introduced to the social gatherings that the NORC provides to decrease social isolation. As a result of these interventions, Y now regularly attends NORC programs - joking, smiling and engaging and energetic with her fellow NORC members. Her interaction with the nurse and the NORC team truly impacted her life.

The impact of a consist nursing relationship can be exemplified in the story of D**, and the programs most positive outcome, which led to quality interventions, client satisfaction – and ultimately helped to manage the healthcare costs of this individual.**

D was referred by NORC staff to the nurse for evaluation. She was a resident of public housing and was coming to the senior program at the NORC in flip flops and a cotton dress in the middle of winter. She suffered from a long-standing learning disorder, exhibited an eating disorder and had extremely impulsive behavior. The NORC team met regularly to discuss the best way to assist her. Through the development of a trusting relationship, the nurse was able to assist D in better managing her health care needs, which included securing a home health aide, and linking her with referrals to psychiatry, pulmonary and cardiology specialists. When she was later diagnosed with Diabetes, the nurse reinforced the diet changes that were necessary to stabilize her situation. The nurse's ongoing involvement and reinforcement with D led to a reduction of her weight from 300 pounds to 160 pounds in the course of 9 months and allowed her to discontinue insulin use. While she still continues to struggle with her chronic illnesses, she continues to seek out the nurse and the NORC team to help her with these issues and get proper direction for her health.

We know our social service partners share our concerns about the potential gaps in care if the appropriate funding is not continued in FY2021 to support NORC nursing. With the change in demographics, NORC programs need sufficient funding to provide nursing services aimed at addressing the increased needs of those aging in place.

**Patient's name changed for their privacy

Community Partnership with NORCs

We also support our NORC partners' request for *\$1.7 million in City funding to address the NORC salary parity for DFTA-funded NORCs*. UNH, UJA-Federation of New York and LiveOn NY have found that NORC staff salaries are roughly \$15,000 lower, on average than senior center salaries. We witness every day the strong commitment of the NORC staff, however, faced with below-average salaries, they leave for other positions. NORC programs need to retain talented staff in order to provide the critical services required by our seniors.

Conclusion

In summary, we urge the City Council *to renew the \$1.3 million in funding for the NORC nursing services* so that VNSNY and other local healthcare providers can continue to promote health services in these communities. In addition, we ask that the Council provide the necessary funding to allow salary parity for NORC workers. This will strengthen the interdisciplinary team and help to stabilize the care for a growing aging population in NORC communities throughout NYC.

More than 125 years ago, VNSNY founder Lillian Wald, brought compassionate care to low-income, needy families living in the tenements of lower Manhattan. N/NORCs are the "natural" outgrowth of the longstanding commitment the City and DFTA have demonstrated to help our seniors live and thrive in the communities they call home.

We thank you for your continued investment and look forward to working with the Council to ensure that our seniors have the appropriate nursing and social services they deserve.



New York Road Runners
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**TESTIMONY BEFORE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON AGING**

**FISCAL YEAR 2021 PRELIMINARY BUDGET
FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2020**

**PREPARED BY
WESLEY DAVIS
ASSISTANT MANAGER, NYRR STRIDERS
NEW YORK ROAD RUNNERS**

Good morning Chair Chin. My name is Wesley Davis and I serve as Assistant Manager of the NYRR STRIDERS at New York Road Runners. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Committee on Aging on the FY 2021 Preliminary Budget.

INTRODUCTION

New York Road Runners' (NYRR) mission is to help and inspire people through running. We achieve our mission by creating running and fitness opportunities and programming for people of all ages and abilities.

NYRR demonstrates its commitment to keeping New York City's five boroughs healthy through races, community events, youth initiatives, school programs, senior programs, and training resources that provide hundreds of thousands of people each year with the motivation, know-how, and opportunity to run and be active for life.

NYRR's premier event, the TCS New York City Marathon, is not only a celebration of New York City but is a powerful contributor to its betterment. The Marathon generates over \$450 million in economic impact for New York City annually, and in 2019, a record 10,000 charity runners raised \$45 million on behalf of hundreds of not-for-profit organizations.

NYRR is woven into the fabric of our city, with programming across all age groups and an activated constituency. We engage over 25,000 volunteers annually, providing free time, talent, and energy to keep our events safe, and parks and communities clean and beautiful. Our free community running and walking initiative, NYRR Open Run, is getting thousands of New Yorkers out running and walking weekly in 18 local New York City Parks in all five boroughs, with one more site set to open in a New York City park this year. NYRR is also working with local stakeholders to identify areas with high health disparities, participating in local health fairs, walking with over 2,500 seniors as part of our NYRR Striders walking program, and serving as a resource and partner to public officials, community boards, business improvement districts, hospitals, community health organizations, and grassroots community groups.



New York Road Runners
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While NYRR is best known for producing the TCS New York City Marathon and our free school-based programs, our organization is also **a dedicated provider of free community programming for parks in all five boroughs of New York City.**

In 2019, our weekly senior walking program **NYRR Striders**, operated in 38 unique senior and community centers, and our other free programming and resources—like our **Walking 101** workshops coordinated in partnership with New York City’s Department for the Aging—combined to touch the lives of over 2,500 older adults and seniors throughout New York City.

THE NEED FOR HEALTH AND FITNESS SERVICES FOR NEW YORK CITY SENIORS

Maintaining and increasing access to free health and fitness services is an imperative for the wellbeing of our City’s seniors and the people who call them friends, parents, grandparents, and loved ones. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recognizes physical activity as critical for both preventing and treating many chronic conditions that affect people of all ages and abilities. You may be aware that the Surgeon General formalized a call to action surrounding this issue called *Step It Up!*, which promotes walking and walkable communities to improve the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all Americans. There is an abundance of evidence that active older adults are less likely to suffer from falls, and that walking is an easy way to help seniors enjoy better quality of life and live independently for longer. Additionally, walking programs and walkable communities are good for social connectedness, good for business, and good for the environment.

NYRR respectfully asks the New York City Council to consider a request of \$100,000 to support our free health services to over 2,500 seniors in all five boroughs through the Healthy Aging Initiative during the 2021 Fiscal year.

NYRR is asking the New York City Council to support our free services for seniors, which in 2019, operated in 34 New York City Council Districts. NYRR received generous support from the New York City Council last budget year under the Healthy Aging Initiative in the amount of \$50,000. With this FY2021 request, we are hoping to continue to provide, at no cost, the organized and supportive program environment that helps our weekly NYRR Striders participants across New York City take the steps necessary to make fitness and wellness part of daily life. We also hope to continue to, in partnership with the New York City Department for the Aging, provide free Walking 101 workshops to senior centers surrounding Heart Health Month in February and Fall Prevention Awareness Week in September.

NYRR Striders

The NYRR Striders program serves adults and seniors in predominantly low-income and under-resourced communities in New York City with free, weekly walking and fitness programs. Currently, NYRR is offering this coach-led walking program every week in 38 unique senior centers, community facilities, and neighborhood parks across all five

boroughs to more than 2,500 seniors. While we are operating the program in almost every single New York City Council District, more than half of our participants hail from Districts 3, 8, 9, 18, 22, 36, 41, and 49. The program is geared toward adults aged 50 years and older and aims to improve attitudes toward exercise, to make running and walking more accessible, and to build and contribute to communities. Each session includes:

- 30-45 minutes of walking or physical activity (indoor or outdoor)
- Active conversations on nutrition and best practices for healthy living
- An opportunity to gather with peers in a fun, social environment

In 2020, we are expecting to serve more than 2,500 seniors with the Striders program and select a number of participating senior and community centers to serve as “Striders Neighborhood Hubs,” with the goal of increasing local participation at each site by inviting and engaging the larger aging communities that surround them.

NYRR Walking 101

Walking 101s are free, on-site, wellness education workshops provided by NYRR to senior and community centers in New York City. These one-hour interactive sessions, led by one of the NYRR Striders certified running coaches and fitness instructors, focus on critical areas of adults' health, nutrition, and independence. Walking 101 workshops are usually requested by the New York City Department for the Aging senior centers twice a year surrounding Heart Health Month (February) and Fall Prevention Awareness Week (September). In addition to a fun and active session, NYRR also gives each attendee a free walking journal, nutrition guide, and chair exercise guide. Technical Assistance is also provided to senior and neighborhood centers that want to start walking programs at their locations. In 2019, NYRR held Walking 101s for nearly 500 unique participants in all five boroughs.

CONCLUSION

As the premier non-profit community running organization of our great city, NYRR recognizes that health disparities and inequities stifle growth opportunities within communities. Running and walking is something that almost everyone can do and is an activity that empowers you in your day-to-day life. NYRR is committed to working with and in every community to bring opportunities for physical activity and fitness to every aging adult and senior who wants and needs it.

NYRR looks forward to continuing our commitment to New York City's aging population and growing our relationship with the New York City Council. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about the work of New York Road Runners, and I urge you to prioritize the funding of health and fitness programs for our City's seniors.

March 6, 2020

New York City Council FY 2021 Preliminary Budget Hearing

New York City Council Committee on Aging

Testimony of Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc.

Hi, my name is Helen Ahn, and I am from the KCS. Today I am here to speak about our ethnic homebound meal program and the need for more flexible special funding for our DFTA-funded senior center.

The ethnic Home-Delivered Meal Program is an important lifeline of nutrition for home bound immigrant seniors. Healthy meals are a vital component in improving mental and physical health among older adults. Homebound Asian American immigrants are particularly isolated due to the lack of caregivers, existing language barriers, cultural differences, and lack of social contact.

Although we try to fulfill the needs of this community, our unique HDML struggles to continue our services because of a serious financial gap caused by the rising cost of meals. These costs which need to cover increased hourly wages, special raw food cost, high maintenance of special hotshot vehicle, high insurance cost of program, and very low reimbursement rates. The financial discrepancy and deficits generated by the low reimbursement rate and low funding jeopardizes unique, ethnic HDML providers like us and discourage all HDML providers.

Under the current system in place since 2009 and the new DFTA RFP, the existing HDML program will continue struggling to provide essential nutrition because of the far below national average (\$11.06) cost of meal reimbursement rate of DFTA, which is \$9.58.

Recently, we got a call from a contractor that they can work with us if we accept \$6.70, a new rate for new fiscal year.

There needs to be a requirement to ensure that subcontractors like us will be guaranteed a certain rate in order to help with increased costs and continue the service. In order to do that, all contractors should be supported at least national average.

And new HDML standard with under \$10 rate will make the work for the providers more difficult if these new requirements are to be mandatory –especially because it might not fit the cultural appropriateness of some ethnic meals like ours, although it is always great to offer different options to homebound seniors. Instead of being more inclusive, which is the intention, it would result in more difficulties around food preparation/cost, which would ultimately limit the options given to homebound seniors. In addition, more funding should be available for investing in infrastructure, like building repairs, improvements, and HDML equipment.

We urge you to consider some of the potential unintended difficult consequences that may result if these requirements are to be strictly followed on top of current financial difficulties of all HDML providers.

Testimony of The Joan and Alan Bernikow JCC of Staten Island

**Preliminary Budget Hearings for Fiscal Year 2021
New York City Council Committee on Aging
Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair**

**Submitted by Amelia Winter, Director of Senior Centers, JCC of Staten Island
March 6, 2020**

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, or NORCs, are multi-age housing developments or neighborhoods that were not originally designed for older adults, but are now home to a significant number of older people. NORCs help thousands of older adults remain healthy, stable, and able to age in place by offering health care, social services, and socialization opportunities right at home. NORCs receive funds either through DFTA contracts or City Council Initiative designations.

Thank you to the Council for supporting a major investment in the City's Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) last year, particularly to support nursing services. Because of the Council's enthusiasm for this program, we have been able to bring resources and attention to the needs of a large and rapidly growing older adult population.

The JCC of Staten Island's GO KOSSAH (Keeping Our Seniors Safe and Healthy) Neighborhood NORC received its first year's funding this fiscal year through Councilwoman Debi Rose's discretionary contract. GO KOSSAH is the first ever NORC on Staten Island and services older adults who reside in the Stapleton/Rosebank Community on the North Shore of the island. We are currently funded to provide a community needs assessment to determine the most pressing needs of older adults who live in this area. In addition, we are offering monthly special events to keep the community engaged and informed of the assistance we wish to provide to them with year two funding. GO KOSSAH NNORC also serves as a supplementary service provider to the Stapleton Neighborhood Senior Center, which the JCC operates. Older adults are referred to the senior center for the congregate meal program, case assistance needs, as well as physical, educational, and recreational programming.

In a budget year where the Medicaid deficit is front and center, it is important to remember that NORC programs serve residents on relatively small budgets while helping defer more substantial costs to the Medicaid system. For example, the annual cost of a nursing home stay for one individual in New York City can be as high as \$150,000 per year according to the NYS Department of Financial Services; this amounts to nearly the value of an entire NORC program contract, generally serving hundreds of older adults and helping them remain in their homes. Investing in NORCs can thus help limit these increased costs to the Medicaid system.

Unfortunately, the City's NORCs have been struggling with chronically low staff salaries, as contracts have not allowed for meaningful raises in many years. Recently the NORC network has seen high turnover rates for all positions, including directors and case managers. This is particularly challenging given recent increases to senior center staff. In many cases, especially in settlement houses, senior center and NORC staff work side by side doing similar work. However,

the case worker in the senior center will often make far more money than the case worker in the NORC. This has negative ramifications for staff morale and retention.

Year one funding for the JCC's GO KOSSAH NNORC is \$100,000. This amount funds a full-time coordinator, monthly special events, and the completion and analysis of the community needs assessment. In order to offer the needed services to community, we require additional funding to support the salary of a master's level social worker who can complete comprehensive assessments and provide needed case management. We are also in need of funding to support nursing services, including, health assistance and health screenings. We will continue to require an outreach coordinator to inform and educate residents about the services that are available to them.

An analysis of existing staff salaries by UNH, UJA-Federation of New York, and LiveOn NY has found that NORC salaries are roughly \$15,000 lower, on average, than senior center salaries. Systemwide, an investment of at least \$1.7 million is needed to ensure NORC salary parity for DFTA-funded NORCs.

Additionally, each year the Administration adds \$1 million for NORCs into the City Budget, but once again these funds are not included in the Preliminary Budget proposal. These must be restored and baselined to ensure programmatic stability. Finally, the Council must restore the NORC Initiative at last year's level of \$5.3 million, which includes \$1.3 million in support for nursing.

Thank you for your time and support of New York City's NORCs.



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Testimony of Penn South Social Services

**Preliminary Budget Hearings for Fiscal Year 2021
New York City Council Committee on Aging
Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair**

**Submitted by Gary Schoichet, President
March 6, 2020**

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, or NORCs, are multi-age housing developments or neighborhoods that were not originally designed for older adults, but are now home to a significant number of older people. NORCs help thousands of older adults remain healthy, stable, and able to age in place by offering health care, social services, and socialization opportunities right at home. NORCs receive funds either through DFTA contracts or City Council Initiative designations.

Thank you to the Council for supporting a major investment in the City's Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) last year, particularly to support nursing services. Because of the Council's enthusiasm for this program, we have been able to bring resources and attention to the needs of a large and rapidly growing older adult population.

The Penn South NORC was created in 1986, when the community of Penn South in NYC with 2,820 Apartments and more than 5,000 residents' older population, the largest and most vulnerable group living in our community at the time needed assistance aging in place. We developed comprehensive on-site social and health services to help seniors live independently in their own homes. A wide array of programs and services were created, never before made available in a housing cooperative.

With the establishment of Penn South Social Services, Inc (PSSS), the organization funded the Penn South Program for Seniors (PSPS) to help resolve the social services needs of older adults in the community. The program, driven by the needs and interests of the senior cooperators, assists nearly 1,200 individuals and their families each year with case management, case assistance, healthcare assistance and management, health promotion, comprehensive group programs and ancillary services.

In a budget year where the Medicaid deficit is front and center, it is important to remember that NORC programs serve residents on relatively small budgets while helping defer more substantial costs to the Medicaid system. For example, the annual cost of a nursing home stay for one individual in New York City can be as high as \$150,000 per year according to the NYS Department of Financial Services; this amounts to nearly the value of an entire NORC program contract, generally serving hundreds of older adults and helping them remain in their homes. Investing in NORCs can thus help limit these increased costs to the Medicaid system.

Unfortunately, the City's NORCs have been struggling with chronically low staff salaries, as contracts have not allowed for meaningful raises in many years. Recently the NORC network has seen high turnover rates for all

positions, including directors and case managers. This is particularly challenging given recent increases to senior center staff. In many cases, especially in settlement houses, senior center and NORC staff work side by side doing similar work. However, the case worker in the senior center will often make far more money than the case worker in the NORC. This has negative ramifications for staff morale and retention.

Penn South Program for Seniors (PSPS) sponsored by Penn South Social Services, Inc. (PSSS) is for NYC residents, 55 years of age and older without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender or sexual orientation. It is available to all to take part in its recreational, cultural and educational activities.

PSPS provides free social work services including advocacy, information and referral, homecare coordination and long-term care assistance to those within the co-op aged 60 years and older. The program comprehensively addresses service needs and also affirms the strengths and skilled contributions of older adults of any age and capability. We aim to support even the frailest older adults and prevent crises so that they may live as fully as possible at home. PSPS invites the experience and talents of all members to enhance our community.

Presently, the PSPS staff consists of a Program director, four full-time social workers that offer a variety of services to enable seniors to remain at home, the equivalent of one full time nurse as well as some support staff. PSPS also offers a large list of programs presented each month for all our members 60 and older. These include trips, classes, movies, lectures, workshops, parties, and many other activities.

An analysis of existing staff salaries by UNH, UJA-Federation of New York, and LiveOn NY has found that NORC salaries are roughly \$15,000 lower, on average, than senior center salaries. System wide, an investment of at least \$1.7 million is needed to ensure NORC salary parity for DFTA-funded NORCs.

Additionally, each year the Administration adds \$1 million for NORCs into the City Budget, but once again these funds are not included in the Preliminary Budget proposal. These must be restored and baselined to ensure programmatic stability. Finally, the Council must restore the NORC Initiative at last year's level of \$5.3 million, which includes \$1.3 million in support for nursing.

Thank you for your time and support of New York City's NORCs.



Gary Schoichet
President
212-255-3570
president@psss.org



Commitment to Improve Quality of Life

Friday March 6, 2020

To: New York City Council Committee on Aging
From: India Home, Inc.
Re: FY21 Preliminary Budget Hearing

We thank Councilmember Margaret Chin and the Committee on Aging for helping India Home provide better senior center services.

India Home is a non-profit organization founded by community members to serve South Asian older adults. The mission of India Home is to improve the quality of life for older adults by providing culturally appropriate social services.

India Home has been on the forefront of advocating for increased senior services and programs and especially highlighting the needs of immigrant older adults. We have regularly testified in front of the Committee on Aging for many years now. We believe that all service providers need help keeping up with the large demand for senior services. Our larger partners such as Queens Community House, Sunnyside Community Services, and others deserve these increases because they are doing important work and support our work by incubating and nurturing organizations such as India Home. We are here today to advocate for greater increases to the DFTA budget in the coming years.

We must note that despite our continued advocacy, grassroots, community-led programs such as India Home has only minimally received the benefits of the baseline budget increase. India Home and other immigrant-led organizations that serve seniors fill a critical gap in serving an intersectionally vulnerable population – those who are immigrants, LEP, and low-income. We are laying the foundation for services that will only be more in demand in the coming years. Every week, we receive a multitude of phone calls and inquiries on behalf of seniors who are looking to attend our centers and receive our services. The demand is undeniably palpable, and we are being creative to best meet their needs. The City Council has been an invaluable partner in our efforts to provide these critical services to immigrant older adults. However, our community resources are running thin.

India Home started in 2008 and our largest most successful center, Desi Senior Center, which gets on average over 100 immigrant Bangladeshi Muslim seniors a day, was started in 2014. Each day, we see our congregate meal programs filled to capacity. We try to address the growing need for case assistance and various one-on-one services, however, we are understaffed and unable to meet the high demand of cases that come to us. Furthermore, even though we do not receive fully adequate support to sustain all our innovative programming, we are expected to be compliant to DFTA standards and regulations.

178-36 Wexford Terrace Suite 2C Jamaica, NY 11432 ▪ Phone: (917) 288 7600 ▪ Fax: (718) 425 0891 ▪
www.indiahome.org ▪ info@indiahome.org ▪ Tax ID: 20-8747291

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

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



Commitment to Improve Quality of Life

We have started to offer new Creative Aging Programs, ESL classes, and technology classes and will be starting our senior center activities and Social Adult Day Program at our new location in Jamaica Estates. We ask for increased funding for this expansion of our senior center activities and to support our case management. We ask for expanded support for the Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations Initiative, as well as the Support Our Seniors, Healthy Aging, Social Adult Daycare, Access to Critical Services for Seniors, and Case Management Initiatives. We ask for equity in resource allocation and distribution. Our communities cannot continue to be shortchanged especially when they exist at the intersections of marginalization. The need is urgent and the time to act is now!

We thank the Council for your leadership in pushing the city budget, the council budget, the Department for the Aging, and various other stakeholders and for listening to our needs and concerns. We want to make New York City a better place to age for everyone, and we appreciate your support in our journey to do so.

Sincerely,

Vasundhara D. Kalasapudi, M.D.

Executive Director

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Commitment to Improve Quality of Life

DFTA Budget Requests for FY 2021

| Item | Description | Amount |
|---|--|------------------|
| Senior Center Immigrant Population | Funds to support linguistically and culturally appropriate program expansion | \$250,000 |
| Healthy Aging | Funds to support India Home's culturally appropriate health and wellness programs | \$50,000 |
| Support Our Seniors | Funds to support India Home's creative aging programs such as writing, public speaking, & more | \$70,000 |
| Speaker Initiative | Funds to support linguistically and culturally appropriate program expansion and case management | \$50,000 |
| Local/Aging | Funds to support India Home's congregate meal program | \$150,000 |
| Access to Critical Services for Seniors | Funds to support India Home's case management activities | \$50,000 |
| Social Adult Day Care Enhancement | Funds to support India Home's new Social Adult Day Care program for dementia patients | \$100,000 |
| Queens Delegation | Funds to support linguistically and culturally appropriate senior center services | \$50,000 |
| Case Management | Funds to support Case Management staff salaries, and other relevant programming needs. | \$100,000 |
| Total: | | \$870,000 |

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Testimony Presented by Karen Zhou

Executive Director, Homecrest Community Services

Margaret Chin, Chair of Aging Committee

Corey Johnson, Speaker

NYC Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on the FY2021 Preliminary Budget

Submitted to the NYC Council Committee on Aging

March 06, 2020

Good morning. I want to thank the NYC Council and Chair of Aging, Margaret Chin for this opportunity to testify on senior services at today's preliminary budget hearing.

My name is Karen Zhou and I am the Executive Director at Homecrest Community Services (HCS), a multi-social service agency with a 22-year track record of serving the Asian American immigrant community in Brooklyn. We operate two community senior centers in Sheepshead Bay and Bensonhurst, Brooklyn.

According to the Asian American Federation of NY 2016 study, "Asian American Seniors in NY. An Updated Snapshot", Asians are the fastest growing senior population in NY. They now make up 16% of the senior population. Growth have resulted in more demand for senior services. For example, in a month alone, we had over 90 new members, all retirees joining our center. At this pace, we are already at a space capacity and in need of expanding our facility.

Senior centers have become essential for every community since it is inevitable that we will all age and eventually become a senior one day. In today's modern times, more seniors need special assistance than ever before as they are living longer past their retirement age and need senior centers to help reduce social isolation and in some instances provide emotional and mental support. Many like HCS immigrant seniors live on fix income, worry about rent and food insecurities, and are living alone. Their best connection to society is through a senior center like HCS.

One of the goals at our centers is to help older adults reduce social isolation and increase mental well-being. We serve a large population of Asian immigrant seniors who are retiring and are joining our senior centers each year. In particular, we see many who are

without families, widowers who have lost their partners after many years of marriage and those who are living alone or abandoned by their families.

Earlier last year we had a senior, Mr. Law whose beloved wife passed away. Mr. Law was devastated by the sudden loss. He used to come daily with his wife to play Mahjong and to participate in activities at our center. Now he comes by himself.

For our pre-Thanksgiving party, we had donated turkeys which we raffled at the center and to Mr. Law's surprise, he won a turkey for the very first time. He couldn't believe he had won and he was so happy!!!

A few days later, he came to the center with the turkey. He had marinated it Chinese style using Chinese Hoisin sauce, salt and sugar and asked us if we could cook the turkey to share with the other seniors at the center.

He said that the turkey is great but he can't eat it by himself. It is too much food. His wife is gone. His kids live far and they don't have plans to come home for the holidays. Suddenly he felt alone and then he thought about the center at HCS. He's got good friends here and had countless happy memories. HCS felt like a second home. We honored his request and cooked the turkey, carved it and served it to all our seniors. It was a special surprise that we did not expect!!! We saw joy on everyone's faces including Mr. Law. We knew that this holiday and those to come, whether he wins a turkey or not, he'll have us there for support!

This is one of the many examples of why senior centers play a vital role in the lives of our community seniors. While we live in one of the richest cities of this nation, our city's overall budget of less than 1% for aging is simply not enough despite the fact that more than 16% of the city's population is now comprised of older adults.

HCS is in particular need. Though we have two senior centers, it is not funded in the same way. We are thankful to have been the first Brooklyn Asian American led organization to get funding through New York City's Department for the Aging (DFTA) for our Bensonhurst neighborhood senior center and for DFTA to recognize demographic shifts and needs in the community. However, our Sheepshead Bay senior center is not DFTA funded and has yet to receive the same levels of funding that is needed and have relied on the "**Senior Centers for Immigrant Population Initiative**" to keep our doors open. We are thankful to the City Council for restoring this initiative in the prior year's fiscal budget.

Additionally, I'd like to recommend an **investment in funding more Asian-serving non-profits who can provide culturally competent health and mental health services for seniors**. By funding more Asian-serving providers, we can help support families who desperately need places to send their loved ones for help.

Asian immigrant seniors in particular have one of the highest risks for suicide nationwide. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Asian American women ages 65 and older had a higher suicide rate—6.5 per 100,000—than any other racial or

ethnic group in that age bracket between 2004 and 2007. There are a lot of factors including the presence of depression and anxiety disorders, feeling isolated, loneliness, difficulties adjusting to language and cultural barriers, family conflict, viewing one's self as a burden to others, experiences of discrimination, physical illness, limited economic opportunities and social isolation. For Asian Americans, suicide was the 10th leading cause of death. If an individual is socially isolated, the changes are even higher for mental and physical health issues. By having a caring, safe and loving environment where seniors can come to a senior center for support and activities, it connects them back to a larger community, thereby helping to reduce social isolation.

The limited places and resources that are currently available is discouraging and we should find more solutions to fund more culturally competent service providers that have language and cultural competency to serve the Asian immigrant population that is the fastest growing senior population in NYC.

The Asian American population continues to grow at 15%, we anticipate an increasing need for resources. We are at a time when over a million plus baby boomers are retiring nationwide. We hope that the city budget will be inclusive of funding to support senior services!!! Leaving senior funding such as the **“Senior Centers for Immigrant Population Initiative”**, **“Healthy Aging Initiative”** and **“Support Our Senior Initiative”** out of the budget would be unconscionable and would create more wait list for services and put older immigrant adults at risk.

I urge today's city council members to consider restoring these initiatives that support seniors in FY2021 city's budget!!!

Thank you!

**TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK
New York City Council Committee on Aging
Honorable Margaret Chin, Chair**

FY21 Preliminary Budget Hearing

**Submitted by:
Hillary Stuchin**

March 6, 2020

On behalf of UJA-Federation of New York, our network of nonprofit partners and those we serve, thank you, Chairperson Chin and members of the Aging Committee, for the opportunity to submit testimony on the importance of supporting New York City's older adults. I am Hillary Stuchin, Director of Government and External Relations at UJA-Federation of New York.

Established more than 100 years ago, UJA is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. UJA's mission is to fight poverty; connect people to their communities and respond to crises both locally and around the world. UJA supports nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are the most vulnerable and in need of programs and services.

UJA-Federation's network of nonprofit partners oversees DFTA and Council-funded programs for older adults, including senior centers, home delivered meals programs, NORCs, services for Holocaust survivors and case management. We thank the City Council the significant support it has provided for older adult services and Initiatives in past budgets and hope to see it continue.

UJA offers to the following recommendations for the FY 2021 budget:

Supporting the Human Services Sector

UJA thanks the Council and the Administration for their transformative support for nonprofits in FY20, including the Indirect Cost Rate adjustment process currently underway. This investment, along with the previous cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) show the City's commitment to addressing underfunding in nonprofit contracts, and we hope that commitment will continue through the FY21 budget. When programs are not sustainably funded, the workforce is disproportionately impacted.

UJA stands with the Human Services Council in their request for a 3% COLA on the personal services line of all human services contracts. This request comes at a cost of \$48 million to ensure this vital workforce does not slip further into poverty.

The Mayor and City Council have taken important steps to begin to address human services wages and contract values. They have implemented multi-year cost-of-living investments, but there is

currently no COLA in place for future years. The 3% COLA is a needed investment while workers, advocates, providers, and elected officials continue to work together on more comprehensive solutions to ensure that human services workers finally earn fair pay for their labor.

Supporting New York City's Older Adults

UJA applauds the Council's ongoing support for New York City's seniors and the programs and services on which they rely. According to Comptroller Stringer's March 2017 report, *Aging with Dignity: A Blueprint for Serving NYC's Growing Senior Population*, a growing number of seniors live at or below the poverty line; more than 40% of New York City's senior-headed households depend on government programs, and 25.5% of adults over 65 rely on nutrition assistance programs like SNAP.¹ As this population grows, their needs will increase. The Council's investments in this population help bolster the Department for the Aging's core services, and through Initiatives, maintain vital programs for older adults, many of whom might otherwise not have access to these resources.

UJA, along with a coalition of organizations and providers dedicated to ensuring support for New York City's older adults, respectfully requests the Council to consider the following investments for seniors in FY21:

Senior Centers

The senior center "model budget process" that began in 2017 remains unfulfilled. To date, only half of the \$20 million allocated to this exercise has been released; the remaining \$10 million promised for FY21 was not included in the Mayor's preliminary budget proposal.

With nearly 30,000 individuals visiting senior centers daily, these sites play an important role in connecting older adults to services and community supports. The "model budget process" was meant to right-size senior center budgets; however, these funds neither supported all of New York City's senior centers, nor did they cover the full cost of services.

In addition to the remaining \$10 million promised, UJA supports an additional \$3.2 million investment in senior centers to increase equity across the system. A total of 38 centers were not included in the "model process" and have gone without funding increases.

Home Delivered Meals

Beyond simple meal provision, the Home Delivered Meals (HDM) Program provides important social contact for an estimated 18,000 homebound older adults. Recipients of home delivered meals are chronically disabled due to heart disease, mobility challenges, diabetes, arthritis or severe vision impairment and are reliant on these supports. Regular meal deliveries provide health and psychological benefits beyond nutrition and can act as an access point for other critical support services, which help older adults continue to live in their homes.

¹ [https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/aging-with-dignity-a-blueprint-for-serving-nycs-growing-senior-population/#Aging by the Numbers](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/aging-with-dignity-a-blueprint-for-serving-nycs-growing-senior-population/#Aging%20by%20the%20Numbers)

However, New York City funds home delivered meals at a reimbursement rate that is far below the national per meal average. This low rate does not reflect the actual cost of meal provision and delivery, nor does it account for the high cost of culturally competent meals, such as kosher or halal.

Many of the community-based organizations that administer this program lose thousands of dollars every year providing home-delivered meals. **With the new HDM RFP, recently released by DFTA, an investment of \$16 million is needed--\$13 million is needed to help close the gap for weekday meals and \$3 million is needed for weekend meals—so that that our city's nonprofits can meet the needs of their communities without incurring significant losses.**

UJA also thanks the Council for working with the Administration to invest \$2.8 million in one-time funding in FY19 for home delivered meals for seniors, and request that this investment be restored and baselined in FY21.

NORC Supportive Service Program (NORCs)

NORC Support Service Programs, are multi-age housing developments or neighborhoods that were not originally designed for older adults but are now home to a significant number of older people. NORCs help thousands of older adults remain healthy, stable, and able to age in place by offering health care, social services, and socialization opportunities right at home. NORCs receive funds either through DFTA contracts or City Council Initiative designations.

Thank you to the Council for supporting a major investment in the City's NORCs last year, particularly to support nursing services. Because of the Council's enthusiasm for this program, we have been able to bring resources and attention to the needs of a large and rapidly growing older adult population.

In a budget year where the Medicaid deficit is front and center, it is important to remember that NORC programs serve residents on relatively small budgets while helping defer more substantial costs to the Medicaid system. For example, the annual cost of a nursing home stay for one individual in New York City can be as high as \$150,000 per year according to the NYS Department of Financial Services. Investing in NORCs can help limit these increased costs to the Medicaid system.

Unfortunately, the City's NORCs have been struggling with chronically low staff salaries, as contracts have not allowed for meaningful raises in many years. Recently the NORC network has seen high turnover rates for all positions, including directors and case managers. This is particularly challenging given recent salary increases provided to senior center staff in the "model budget process". In many cases, especially in JCCs and settlement houses, senior center and NORC staff work side by side doing similar work. However, the case worker in the senior center will often make far more money than the case worker in the NORC. This has negative ramifications for staff morale and retention.

An analysis of existing staff salaries by UNH, UJA of New York, and LiveOn NY has found that NORC salaries are on average roughly \$15,000 lower than senior center salaries. **Systemwide, an**

investment of at least \$1.7 million is needed to ensure NORC salary parity for DFTA-funded NORCs.

Additionally, each year the Administration adds \$1 million for NORCs into the City Budget, but once again these funds are not included in the Preliminary Budget proposal. Restoration and baselining of these funds is critical to ensuring program stability. **Finally, the Council must restore the NORC Initiative at last year's level of \$5.3 million, which includes \$1.3 million in support for nursing services.**

Elie Wiesel Holocaust Survivor Initiative

New York City is home to roughly 35,000 Holocaust survivors, 40 percent of whom are living in poverty. A survivor is an individual, Jewish or non-Jewish, who experienced persecution at the hands of the Nazi regime. They were targeted due to race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disabilities, as well as political ideology. They survived concentration camps or were forced to flee their homes and countries. Sixty-one percent of Holocaust survivors emigrated from the former Soviet Union before coming to the United States; they receive little-to-no Social Security income and are extremely poor.

As New York City continues to support its immigrant communities and address the rise of anti-Semitism and hate crimes, it is imperative that we not leave Holocaust survivors behind. UJA thanks the City Council for providing \$4 million in FY20 to support services for Holocaust survivors, but more must be done. UJA asks that the City invest \$4.5 million to fund care, services and resources for Holocaust survivors living in poverty.

Today, the youngest survivors are in their mid-70s, and as they age, they require even more care. The terrible trials and traumas they suffered in their earlier years show dire effects with age. While every year the number of Holocaust survivors declines, the cost of care significantly increases.

Survivors require individualized, home-based care to improve their quality of life and avoid institutionalization, which is especially traumatic for them. An increasing number of survivors are suffering from Alzheimer's and other dementias. They are triggered by everyday circumstances, such as blaring sirens and people knocking on doors, and the documented rise in hate crimes and anti-Semitism as well as the amplified scrutiny of immigrant populations leaves many survivors increasingly fearful and vulnerable. As a result, their anxieties and mental health challenges are further increased. This can cause survivors to revert to their most traumatic memories.

An investment of \$4.5 Million will support:

- **Case Management** to access benefits and support. Case Managers are specially trained in the psychological impact of the Holocaust.
- **Mental Health Services** including home visits to help survivors work through the traumas that now manifest in sleep disturbance, anxiety, depression and inability to trust
- **Trauma Informed Care** provided by professionals who recognize and avoid possible triggers, thereby reducing the potential for re-traumatization
- **Crisis Prevention** to help stave off eviction and hunger

- **Legal Services** and entitlement counseling
- **Emergency Financial Assistance** for food, housing, prescriptions, medical and dental care
- **Socialization Programs** to reduce isolation
- **Transportation** to doctors, family, synagogues and senior activities
- **Socialization Programs** to reduce isolation
- **Training & Support** for Caregivers and home health aides working with survivors
- **End of Life Care** including hospice and ethical wills

As 2020 marks 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz, New York City must continue to show its commitment to Holocaust survivors. It is crucial to provide specialized care and support programs for survivors to enhance their quality of life and allow them to live out their remaining years with dignity. **UJA asks that \$4.5 million be allocated to support Holocaust survivors living in poverty.**

Service Coordination in Senior Housing

UJA requests \$1.8 million to expand Service Coordination in Senior Housing. The Senior Affordable Rental Assistance Program (SARA) administered by HRA currently does not provide service coordination funds for seniors being referred to the program for the general lottery system. A \$1.8 million investment would allow for expanded services to an initial cohort of roughly 600 SARA units.

Geriatric Mental Health

UJA supports increasing funding for the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative to \$2.86 million. This funding supports organizations that provide a range of mental health services to older adults in non-clinical settings, including senior centers, religious institutions and homes. The number of New Yorkers 65+ grew by 24% in the past decade we must increase funding to ensure services for our older adults. This initiative was funded at \$1,905,540 in FY2020.

Funds for DFTA

Despite servicing a growing cohort with enhanced needs, DFTA remains one of New York City's lowest funded agencies. UJA supports the following investments in DFTA's FY21 budget:

- **DFTA Infrastructure Fund: \$3 Million**
 - A baselined capital fund is needed for nonprofits to address key replacements, repairs, and upgrades, such as purchasing modern Home Delivered Meals equipment, HVAC replacements, and ADA-friendly facility improvements.
- **DFTA Innovation Fund: \$2 Million**
 - A baselined expense fund would allow, for example, community centers to make age-friendly improvements, purchase new technologies, and allow Home Delivered Meal providers purchase software to create efficiency and improve routes.

Conclusion

UJA-Federation of New York respectfully urges your consideration and support of these vital programs, services and resources that assist our City's most vulnerable and neediest older adults and the organizations that serve them.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/6/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carmen Perez, Dir Cooper Sq. Committee NYC

Address: 61 East 4 Street

I represent: Cooper Square Committee NYC

Address: SAME

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JIM O'NEILL

Address: 36-36 33 St. L.L.C. NY

I represent: NEW YORK JUNIOR TENNIS + LEARNING

Address: 36-36 33 St. L.L.C. NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Sklarz

Address: 305 7th Ave

I represent: SAGE

Address: 305 7th Avenue

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LUCY SEXTON

Address: 160 SIXTH AVE 10013

I represent: New Yorkers for Culture & Arts

Address: Same

Asian panel

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karen Chau

Address: _____

I represent: Homecrest Community Services

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sandra Christian

Address: 1175 Gates Ave.

I represent: RiseBoro Comm Partnership

Address: 565 Bushwick Ave.

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Cynthia M. Harper

Address: 36 Wallingford Square Village Park

I represent: Visiting Delegates, Inc. IF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mohammad Razvi

Address: 1081 Corey Island Ave

I represent: COUNCIL OF Peoples Org

Address: 1081 Corey Island Ave

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LUAY SEXTON

Address: _____

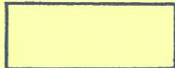
I represent: SU CASA teachz

Address: artist

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 03-06-20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HEIDI SIEGTRIED

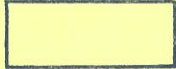
Address: 841 BROADWAY, SUITE 301, 10003

I represent: CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF

Address: THE DISABLED (CIDNY)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/6/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rhonda Soberman

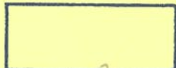
Address: 220 E 42 Street

I represent: The Visiting Nurse Service of NY

Address: 220 E 42 Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Budget Appropriations Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/6/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beth Fyval

Address: 750 Third Avenue

I represent: AARP

Address: 750 3rd Avenue

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/6/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danielle Christenson

Address: 1166 Avenue of the Americas

I represent: God's Love We Deliver

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 03/04/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hallie Yee

Address: _____

I represent: Coalition for Asian American children & families

Address: 50 Broacl

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katelyn Andrews

Address: _____

I represent: Live On NY

Address: 49 W. 45th St., 7th floor

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katie Foley

Address: _____

I represent: Selfhelp Community Services

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 03/04/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karen Zhou

Address: _____

I represent: Homecrest

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez

Address: Commissioner

I represent: DFTA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: José Meradó

Address: DTA

I represent: Chief Finance Officer

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/6/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Sherron Aging

Address: _____

I represent: Citymeals on wheels

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wesley Davis

Address: _____

I represent: New York Road Runners

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nancy Jenkins

Address: _____

I represent: NY Road Runners

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shyvonne Noboa

Address: _____

I represent: Sunnyside Community Services

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tara Klein

Address: _____

I represent: United Neighborhood Houses

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

Asian panel

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mo Kazui

Address: _____

I represent: COPO (Council of People's

Address: Organization)

Asian panel

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hauwei Shih

Address: _____

I represent: Asian American Federation

Address: _____

Asian panel

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Helen Ahn

Address: _____

I represent: Korean Community Services

Address: _____