

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Start: 10:09 A. M.

Recess: 12:07 P. M.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Eric Dinowitz
Linda Lee
Christopher Marte
Darlene Mealy
Kristin Richardson Jordan
Lynn C. Schulman

COMMITTEE ON AGING

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jocelyn Groden,
Associate Commissioner for the Bureau of Social
Services and Active Aging at New York City
Department for the Aging

Jeremy Kaplan
Executive Director at Encore Community Services

Andrea Tan,
Director at Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS)

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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2 SERGEANT WONG: This is a sound check for the
3 Committee on Aging. Today's date is December 12,
4 2023, being recorded by Danny Wong in the Committee
5 Room.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
7 New York City Council Hearing of the Committee on
8 Aging. At this time, please place all electronic
9 devices to vibrate or silent mode.

10 If you wish to testify, please come up to the
11 Sergeant At Arms' Desk to fill out a Testimony Slip.

12 Written testimony can be emailed to
13 testimony@council.nyc.gov, again that is
14 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

15 At this time, and going forward, no one is to
16 approach the dais.

17 Chair, we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON:

19 [GAVEL SOUND] [GAVELING IN]

20 Good morning, and welcome to today's Committee on
21 Aging hearing on *Older Adult Workforce Programs* and
22 the future of work for our city's rapidly expanding
23 older adult population. I am Council Member Cystal
24 Hudson, Chair of the Committee on Aging; my pronouns
25 are she/her, and I would like to acknowledge that we

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2 are joined here by Council Member Marte and Council
3 Member Schulman.

4 As chair of the Committee on Aging, I strongly
5 believe that every older adult should have the
6 opportunity to succeed if they choose to continue
7 working or to reenter the workforce. This means
8 having companies actively recruit older employees,
9 training employers on the value of hiring older
10 workers, paying older workers a living wage, and
11 giving them access to comprehensive benefits,
12 protecting older adults for age discrimination in the
13 workplace, and providing the proper tools and
14 training to help them excel in their duties. Every
15 older adult should have the option to work if they
16 want to work, and they should be restricted in any
17 way from doing so. That is why we are hearing
18 Resolutions 758 and 760, which calls on the New York
19 State to enact legislation to empower individuals 50
20 years of age or older to establish small businesses,
21 and to establish an Office of Older Adult Workforce
22 Development within the State Office for the Aging for
23 provide targeted employment related information and
24 resources to older workers.

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2 Unfortunately, for many older New Yorkers
3 continuing to work or reentering the job market is
4 not a choice, it is a necessity. We must ask who
5 needs to work and why. More and more older adults
6 must continue working or must reenter the workforce
7 to stay out of poverty or remain in their homes.
8 Nationally about 26 percent of people between the
9 ages of 65 and 74, and about percent of people aged
10 75 and older continue to work. One in six retired
11 older adults in the US are considering returning to
12 the workforce. In a recent survey, a primary reason
13 cited for retired older adults returning to work was
14 needing more money. As the older adult population in
15 New York City has rapidly grown over the past decade,
16 it has grown significantly poorer. The number of
17 older adults in New York State living below the
18 poverty line increased by 37.4 percent over the past
19 decade - a startling and deeply upsetting statistic.
20 According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 19.5
21 percent of older adults 65 and older in New York City
22 live below the federal poverty line. The effects of
23 poverty and long term unemployment are particularly
24 hard on older adults who put at greater risk of
25 deferring medical care, losing their home,

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2 accumulating debt, and having lower retirement
3 savings due to the need to maintain current expenses
4 while unemployed. Unemployment also wears down
5 worker skills and undermines reemployment prospects
6 in part due to age discrimination. The City's older
7 adult population is quickly becoming more
8 linguistically and ethnically diverse, but it will
9 likely also be significantly less financially secure
10 with eroded access to social safety nets. Older
11 adults in immigrant communities will be more severely
12 impacted due to a lack of access of social safety
13 nets like social security and Medicare. Meanwhile,
14 19 percent of Black older adults and a similar share
15 of their Hispanic counterparts reported in a recent
16 United Neighborhood Houses survey that their
17 household did not have enough food to eat in the past
18 seven days, compared to four percent of white older
19 adults. This unsettling statistic underscores the
20 extremely difficult decisions that a growing number
21 of older adults have to make just to survive at a
22 basic level. Older adults have worked for decades
23 and paid into the support systems that are supposed
24 to keep them out of poverty. They helped my
25 generation and generations below me, providing for

1
2 us, keeping a roof over our heads, and putting the
3 food table. That it is our turn to provide for them,
4 we are failing at every level to ensure that older
5 adults have the means to live comfortably, to achieve
6 their retirement goals, to access quality health
7 care, and to age in place with dignity. This is the
8 all too common story of working as an older adult in
9 New York City - A high cost of living that eliminates
10 the potential for accumulating savings, an ever
11 growing pile of bills that delays or eliminates the
12 possibility of retirement, and the ever present
13 threat of homelessness. Half of New Yorkers aged 55
14 and older have no money in traditional retirement
15 accounts, while 40 percent of New Yorkers between 50
16 and 64, have less than \$10,000 saved. The number of
17 homeless individuals in New York City age 65 and
18 older increased over 300 percent between 2004 and
19 2017. New York City's older adults are weathering an
20 affordability crisis that is going off the rails.
21 They are struggling more than ever to afford daily
22 necessities. We urgently need to do more to ensure
23 that New York City's rapidly growing older adult
24 population can continue to live here, to retire here,
25 and to remain as valued and esteemed residents of our

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2 city. Offering employment opportunities for older
3 adults to engage and remain woven into the fabric of
4 communities is part of the equation. But, today's
5 hearing should be a reminder that aging is not just
6 an issue for older people, aging impacts all of us.
7 And we need to holistically address the many factors
8 contributing to older adult poverty and the growth of
9 the older adult workforce.

10 Thank you to New York City Aging for joining us
11 today. Thank you to the advocates and service
12 providers working to meet the needs of our city's
13 older adults every day. And I would also like to
14 thank my staff Casie Addison and Andrew Wright, and
15 Aging Committee staff Christopher Pepe, Chloë Rivera,
16 and Saiyemul Hamid for their work on this hearing.

17 I will now turn it over to committee counsel to
18 administer the oath.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning, Associate
20 Commissioner, please raise your right hand. Do you
21 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
22 nothing but the truth, before this committee, and to
23 respond honestly to council member questions?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.
25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin your testimony,
3 thank you.

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Good morning,
5 Chair Hudson and member of the Committee on Aging. I
6 am Jocelyn Groden, Associate Commissioner for the
7 Bureau of Social Services and Active Aging at New
8 York City Department for the Aging known as New York
9 City Aging.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today
11 regarding this incredibly important topic, showcasing
12 the work New York City Aging has done around older
13 adult workforce.

14 For five decades, New York City Aging has
15 supported older adults through our Older Adult
16 Workforce programs, which help both unemployed and
17 underemployed older adults find work opportunities
18 that utilize their skills and knowledge. Our current
19 workforce programs include Senior Community Service
20 Employment Program (SCSEP), Silver Corps, Silver
21 Stars, Civic Engagement Employment Service (ReServe),
22 and volunteer based Foster Grandparent Program.

23 Connecting older New Yorkers to meaningful
24 employment opportunities is critical. As the City's
25 population of adults 60 and older continues to grow,

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2 the need for employment later in life also continues
3 to grow. So, whether an older adult has to remain on
4 the workforce or wants to remain in the workforce,
5 New York City Aging remains focused on growing older
6 adult employment opportunities and finding ways to
7 continue investing in older adults through our
8 existing programs and services.

9 The older adult employment programs offered by
10 New York City Aging are intended to help supplement
11 the financial needs of older adults through
12 meaningful work. In addition to the monetary
13 benefits brought by employment, these programs also
14 combat social isolation in older adults and build
15 skills both in workplace situations as well as more
16 broadly - for example through the use of technology,
17 work also provides an avenue for connection to other
18 social services, and showcases the importance of
19 multi-generational diverse workplaces.

20 New York City Aging currently operates four main
21 older adult employment programs including a volunteer
22 program which pays older adults a small stipend for
23 their service and time. Two of our programs are
24 funded through federal grants, and other programs
25 connect older adults to employment opportunities and

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2 New York City agencies and local nonprofit
3 organizations to fill open positions.

4 I will quickly walk through the four programs:

5 The first and largest program is Senior Community
6 Service Employment Program, which we commonly call
7 SCSEP. The SCSEP program is for older adults aged 55
8 and older who are currently unemployed and have a
9 family income 125 percent or below the federal
10 poverty level, who are seeking to learn new skills,
11 and who are committed to actively seeking employment.
12 New York City Aging receives federal grant funding
13 for this program, and it is over subscribed in
14 Manhattan and Brooklyn, and almost completely
15 subscribed in Queens and the Bronx. We have had this
16 grant for many, many years, and it is key to our
17 workforce portfolio.

18 Our newest program is Silver Corp. Silver Corp
19 is funded by AmeriCorps Seniors. The Silver Corp
20 pilot program serves older New Yorkers aged 55 and
21 older. It is open to all older adults 55 and older,
22 and for those older adults, who are 400 percent or
23 below the federal poverty level, they are eligible to
24 receive a stipend and travel allowance. The
25 program's offerings include credentialing, job

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2 readiness training, support in securing employment,
3 and much more. Agism in the workplace, as you
4 mentioned, is pernicious throughout our society, and
5 this program came about following the obvious impact
6 of the job loss during the pandemic, as well as
7 providing opportunities to serve more older adults
8 who do not meet the income thresholds of the SCSEP
9 program.

10 Next, the Civic Engagement Employment Service
11 program commonly know throughout the City as ReServe,
12 in addition to SCSEP and Silver Corp, New York City
13 Aging contracts with ReServe Inc. to match retirees
14 who are age 50 and older, who are seeking part-time
15 work with New York City agencies. Retirees typically
16 come from an array of professional backgrounds that
17 include social work, law, marketing, accounting,
18 human resources, health care, education, retail,
19 finance, and trade - among others.

20 Third is Siver Stars, which also supports City
21 workforce needs by placing retired City workers in
22 city agencies and part-time project based, temporary
23 assignments. City government retirees help agencies
24 meet critical business needs and support
25 organizational growth by sharing their experience

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2 with newer workers without the demands and commitment
3 of full time employment.

4 Finally, our Foster Grandparent Program, New York
5 City Aging administers a volunteer based program for
6 New Yorkers 55 and older at or below 200 percent of
7 the poverty level to provide one on one support to
8 children with special needs, with the objective of
9 improving academic, social, and emotional development
10 for youth through volunteer assignments most commonly
11 in school-based settings. These older adults work
12 with children ages three to 12; although, more
13 commonly on the younger side, to support outcomes for
14 youth.

15 In addition to the direct work we do to support
16 the employment needs of older adults, New York City
17 Aging also partners with other agencies through
18 larger initiatives like the Cabinet for Older New
19 Yorkers and the initiatives seen in Executive Order
20 22, to further support the needs and growing needs of
21 older New Yorkers.

22 In September of 2022, New York City Aging was
23 appointed chair of the New York City Cabinet for
24 Older New Yorkers. The New York City Cabinet for
25 older New Yorkers is a first of a kind multi-agency

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2 collaborative convened by Mayor Adams to support
3 services, projects, and polices benefitting older
4 adults across New York City.

5 Through the Cabinet and its 23 member agencies,
6 we have facilitate coordination and efficiency
7 across city agencies and departments, leverage
8 resources, and shape the current and future services
9 to better serve the broad and varied need of older
10 adults as they age in place. Cabinet members cover
11 multiple facets of City services and resources. Some
12 include public safety, housing, transportation,
13 health, and social services. Collectively, these
14 agencies work together to eliminate silos and create
15 joint action and innovation to ensure that New York
16 City is a city for all ages.

17 As part of the Cabinet, city agencies collaborate
18 to eliminate age based barriers and inequalities and
19 services, and develop cross agency solutions to
20 address challenges facing older New Yorkers.

21 The Cabinet also reviews current and future City
22 initiatives and projects to ensure that they are age
23 inclusive and accessible to older adults aged 60 and
24 older.

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2 Additionally, in August 2022, Mayor Adams signed
3 Executive Order 22, which established a new vision
4 for workforce development in the city of New Yorker,
5 and formally established the newly named Mayors
6 Office of Talant and Workforce Development.

7 Executive Order 22, stipulated the creation of a
8 mayoral taskforce comprised of individuals outside of
9 government agencies including representatives for
10 business, labor unions, nonprofits, funders, and
11 other types of organizations charged with
12 recommending citywide goals, devising a framework for
13 public investments, and making recommendations for
14 improving employment outcomes for New Yorkers,
15 including older workers.

16 Through Executive Order 22, Mayor Adams also
17 established the Interagency Talent and Workforce
18 Development Cabinet, known simply as the "Talent
19 Cabinet." This body, comprised of representatives
20 from 40+ City agencies that have a stake in talent
21 and workforce development efforts, has been meeting
22 monthly since November 2022 and is coordinated by New
23 York City Talent.

24 Finally, as alluded to earlier, NYC Aging
25 established a new partnership with AmeriCorps

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2 Seniors—a Federally funded partner—to launch Silver
3 Corps. New York City Aging was selected as one of two
4 Workforce Development Senior Demonstration Program
5 grantees in the country. This pilot serves as the
6 precursor to a national federal funding opportunity
7 for the AmeriCorps Seniors Workforce Development
8 Senior Demonstration Program to support older
9 workers. New York City Aging has also worked to
10 cultivate public-private partnerships to serve older
11 workers and establish training and career pathways.
12 We work with a number of local and regional employer
13 partners to understand and fill their hiring needs.
14 New York City Aging ultimately helps to facilitate
15 linkages between older workers seeking employment to
16 employers seeking talent.

17 In conclusion, as you can see, there are many
18 opportunities provided through programs run by NYC
19 Aging which serve the workforce needs of older
20 adults. We remain committed to further cultivating
21 the necessary supports that older adults need. While
22 these programs have seen successful outcomes in
23 training older adults and placing them in long-term
24 permanent employment, we are still combatting the
25

1 effects of the pandemic and the continual presence of
2 ageism in the workforce.

3
4 Thank you again for this opportunity to discuss
5 this with you today. I am here to address any
6 questions you may have about our workforce programs.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Wonderful, thank you so much.

8 Before I get into my prepared questions, I have a
9 couple of questions from your testimony if I may.

10 Uh, you mentioned with the SCSEP, that Manhattan and
11 Brooklyn are oversubscribed, but Queens and the Bronx
12 are not quite?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We are almost at
14 capacity.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Almost at capacity? And,
16 then, what about Staten Island?

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We do have slots
18 in Staten Island, which is our smallest number of
19 borough slots. But, we do have... [CROSS-TALK]

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But you do have capacity
21 available there, too?

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, we do, mm-
23 hmm.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. For ReServe and Silver
25 Stars, I am curious to know if there are any specific

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2 eligibility requirements... other than for Silver
3 Stars, I know former City employees, but any
4 household income or anything like that?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: No. So...

6 [CROSS-TALK]

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Open to everyone?

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, for Silver
9 Stars, you have to be a retired City employee on
10 pension, as well as have exhausted your sick and
11 vacation leave balances. In terms of ResServe, and
12 ReServe is our youngest eligibility with an
13 eligibility of 50 and older, and there are not
14 specific income requirements connected to that
15 program.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. And, then,
17 for the Foster Grandparents programs, uh, is there
18 compensation or not?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, there is...

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Oh...

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: There is a stipend
22 of \$4.00 an hour, as well... Which is the agreement
23 we have with AmeriCorps, who funds and oversees the
24 program, which we have had for about 50 years. And
25 there is also a travel allowance.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so, I mean, just
3 forgive me, I am trying to wrap head around this.
4 So, you have to be at or below 200 percent of the
5 poverty level, which means that you're low-income.

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And you are getting paid
8 \$4.00 an hour?

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: To... Okay... [CROSS-TALK]

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, the...

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I just want to make sure I
13 am...

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Those are
15 [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I am hearing this
17 correctly...

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Completely
19 understandable questions.

20 It is really a volunteer based stipend program,
21 as we often think of the AmeriCorps Landscape in
22 general. I will say despite what you just said,
23 which is all accurate, we have many participants who
24 have been in this program for many, many years. So,
25 it is an opportunity to make a small subsidy and to

1
2 really impact the lives of children, which is so
3 meaningful for so many of our participants that they
4 often stay involved in for 20 years, thirty years,
5 and so on.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, do you know what the
7 rationale is the income restriction than? I know you
8 said it was... Oh, no, I think that's for a
9 different program... What is the rationale for the
10 income restriction for the Foster Grandparent
11 Program?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: This is all
13 dictated by our funder AmeriCorps... [CROSS-TALK]

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: AmeriCorps? Okay. Sorry, I
15 wasn't sure... Because I know AmeriCorps is also for
16 Silver Corps. Okay. Okay, great, thank you.

17 Can you describe any interagency collaboration
18 related to workforce development programming and
19 support available to older New Yorkers? I know you
20 had a bit of that in your testimony.

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, uh, so, a
22 few things to highlight - The Cabinet for Older New
23 Yorkers, which I know we have talked about and some
24 of our partnerships there, is one example of
25 opportunities to collaborate as city to you know

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2 continue to drive opportunities. We also have a
3 close collaboration with workforce one and the career
4 center. As well as working with New York City Talant.
5 And that is one way to look at it in terms of
6 innovation and program development collaboration.

7 Another way to think about it is where do we
8 place older adults? And in that case, just a few
9 things to highlight for you - we work with borough
10 presidents' offices, Department of Finance,
11 Department of Youth and Community Development, New
12 York City Health + Hospitals, we work with the CUNY
13 network to support training opportunities for older
14 adults, and, then, of course, when we talk about
15 programs like Silver Stars and ReServe, our
16 placements are in city agencies, and we have a number
17 of city partners who employ our older adults.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. And could you
19 please detail the ways in which the City's PEGs will
20 impact workforce programming for older adults?

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Thank you. So, of
22 course, our priority is continuity of care and to
23 support the programming and the needs of older
24 adults. Needs always outpace existing resources.
25 That said, most of our programs, if we walk through

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2 or look at the funding, are federally funded. So, I
3 think overall Foster Grandparents, Silver Corps,
4 SCSEP, all are reliant on federal funding. There is
5 some CTL match, but most of what we are talking about
6 is the federal funds.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great. So, those programs
8 are safe?

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We have no
10 information today to indicate that there is a current
11 impact. I mean, of course, uh, as you know, there
12 will be budget hearings in the winter and spring to
13 further talk about the impact to the City Budget.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. Could you
15 please describe how older New Yorkers may seek
16 information related to aging discrimination in the
17 workplace?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, we do a
19 number of work (sic) with our City partners to make
20 sure that older adults are aware of agism as part of
21 the work we do through all of our older adult
22 employment programs, as well as their rights. So,
23 one of our partners is Human Rights, and we do a lot
24 of training and support with them in English and then
25 in Spanish.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And is there a hotline for
3 folks to get information about older adult workforce
4 programs?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, uh, it's the
6 same pathway, one door to all of our older adult
7 programs including older adult workforce. So, one is
8 311, and another New York City Aging Connect. So, in
9 fact, it is a pretty common call that we get to that
10 hotline. And, then, from there, you would be routed
11 to the Workforce team, and they would talk to you
12 about who you are, your needs and interests, and so
13 on, and, then, from there, they will figure out ,you
14 know, which of the menu of programs is the best
15 match.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. And, then,
17 just going back to my last question, I think we
18 established; although you unofficially, uh, that the
19 programs that are federally funded are safe at least
20 for now? What about staffing for those programs? Is
21 the staffing federally funded?

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: The staffing, uh,
23 most of the... So, overall, just to walk through the
24 numbers with you for one second, so what I have in
25 front of me right here is for Fiscal Year 2022, 2023,

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2 2024, and I think this is helpful, to my thinking,
3 uh, funding in Fiscal Year 2022, which is largely
4 federally funded, there is a CTL match. In 2022, it
5 was, and I am rounding, uh, \$6.6 million, in 2023,
6 because of our excellent performance on these
7 programs, we received increase federal funding, and
8 now in 2023, we are up to \$9.3 million, rounding, and
9 then, in the current year, we are up to \$11 million.
10 So, what you will see in terms of our relationship
11 with our federal funder, is that our performances
12 drive increase funding in the years. Can I tell you
13 with absolute certainty of what is going to happen in
14 the outyears? No, but this is the pattern we have
15 observed so far, and it [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But, that funding, though,
17 includes staffing for the programs or, yes? [CROSS-
18 TALK]

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes...

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Uh, so, the vast
22 majority of our internal staff are budgeted through
23 these grants.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, perfect, thank you.
25

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2 While the number and proportion of older adults
3 in New York City is growing fast, the number of older
4 adults of color and immigrant older adults is growing
5 even faster. And while the City's older adult
6 population as a whole faces economic challenges,
7 poverty, joblessness, limited income, and outdated
8 skills that threaten their chances of secure
9 retirement and aging in place with dignity, Black
10 workers ages 51 to 64, are the least likely to among
11 all racial and ethnic groups to have a retirement
12 account - according to the US Government
13 Accountability Office. And immigrant older adults
14 who have minimal access to financial safety nets are
15 among the poorest in New York State. In what ways is
16 New York City Aging working to better serve older
17 adults of color and immigrant older adults?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, that is a
19 great question. And I think, just to take a step
20 back, retirement is a three legged stool which relies
21 on social security, savings, and pensions. We all
22 know, since they 80's we have seen a decrease in
23 pensions, which really drive people for greater
24 economic need, including work, later in life. So,
25 some of the... As we look at poverty as well as we

1 look at the changing demographics of older adults in
2 New York City, our programs reflect exactly that.
3 So, just to walk through this with you quickly, the
4 vast majority of participants are women, 74 percent,
5 compared to 26 percent of men. The vast majority of
6 our participants are Black at 48 percent, 27 percent
7 Hispanic-Latino, 13 percent of white, 12 percent of
8 Asian. Also, we can talk about other factors, but a
9 couple of other things to highlight for you, 22
10 percent of our program participants are English as a
11 second language learners, something we work on and
12 tie into our programs in terms of supporting to drive
13 job readiness. So, we are always committed to
14 supporting the diversity of older New Yorkers. And
15 our programs know the cultural needs of those that we
16 serve.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you for that. Those
19 are great numbers. Glad to know that participants
20 are so incredibly diverse. You mentioned that one of
21 the programs was available in English and Spanish.
22 Are all of the programs available in languages other
23 than English?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, our staff are
25 diverse and speak a variety of languages, which we

1
2 think is essential to delivering multicultural
3 linguistically appropriate services. Also, as we
4 talk about things like outreach, we know that we need
5 multilingual outreach materials, as well as to
6 leverage resources like multicultural ethnic media,
7 and, T.V. and so on to reach the clients that we
8 are... who represent this diverse population.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. And, then, just
10 going back to the statistics you shared, have those
11 numbers increased, decreased, remained the same over
12 the last couple of fiscal years to your knowledge?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I don't have that
14 right in front of me, but we can certainly circle
15 back to you... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, I would just be curious
17 to know... [CROSS-TALK]

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes...

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: which populations have
20 increased in your participants... [CROSS-TALK]

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Absolutely.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do New York City workforce
23 development programs, uh, do any targeted outreach to
24 older adults of color or immigrant older adults?

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2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes. So, I mean,
3 first, at the highest level, it is our goal to make
4 sure that the older adults of New York City know who
5 we are and what we do. As you know, we have a
6 variety of programs and services who are always
7 looking to partner with elected officials, with
8 community boards, with business improvement districts
9 to get the word out there. So, we are constantly
10 thinking about how to do that and how to spread the
11 word, how to be linguistically appropriate. Some
12 examples, we have a strong presence in the community
13 through over a 100 community partnerships and have
14 presence online also, which details the variety of
15 workforce programs we have, and then ,you know,
16 reminds everybody how they can reach us through Aging
17 Connect and 311. We also connect, uh, we support job
18 fairs, we are out there as much as possible, and we
19 also focus very particularly on historically
20 underserved communities. So, some of the recent
21 events, uh, where we have had hundreds of
22 participants, one was with PSS in the Bronx, and then
23 another was with the YMCA in Flushing, again, with
24 the exact intention that I think your question evokes
25

1
2 about how we reach communities that are sometimes
3 being left behind.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. How do eligible
5 New Yorkers learn about The Older Adult Employment
6 Program?

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It is really
8 through the efforts that I have just described.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So the ongoing
11 community outreach, I mean we need our foot on the
12 ground as often as possible. And a couple of other
13 things to highlight, in addition to that ,you know,
14 feet on the ground outreach in community and being
15 culturally and linguistically informed. We have also
16 had some spectacular press with a couple of things to
17 highlight, recently the Silver Corps Program was
18 highlighted on CBS News featuring our commissioner,
19 Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, who was also interviewed for
20 New York One about aging in the workplace, and
21 probably, intuitively, uh, when we get these big
22 media events, it drives a lot of interest and
23 connection to our program.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That's great. Specifically,
25 about the Older Adult Employment Program, your

1
2 website says that one must "commit to actively
3 seeking employment". What does that mean exactly?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, that means...
5 So, it is a stipended program. So, with the ultimate
6 goal of moving you towards permanent employment,
7 which the nomenclature we use is unsubsidized
8 employment. So, that idea is that when you are in
9 our program, we are going to work with you, we are
10 going to meet you where you're at. Of course, we are
11 working with people often ,you know, women, for
12 example, who were caregivers for years, outside of
13 the workforce, so there is a lot of how to prepare
14 for an interview, how to write a résumé, how to skill
15 up. And, then, of course we all came into this
16 technical era in different places and in different
17 starting points, so it is starting where the person
18 is, upscaling from there while receiving a stipend.
19 But the goal is to move your towards permanent
20 employment, so you have to be actively participating
21 in job search activities as we work with you to skill
22 up. So, [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But, it is like a time limit
24 or anything?

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, there are
3 some time limits on the program. So, they are
4 working 20 hours a week, uh, 15 - 20 hours a week and
5 skilling up. The time limits, and, again, this is
6 dictated, if you will, by our federal funder, which
7 requires a program duration no more than 48 months.
8 And, then, a particularity is that they give a 12-
9 month extension to participants who were active
10 during the pandemic in 2020, because of some of the
11 complexities there.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, and another eligibility
13 requirement is to have a family income of no more
14 than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. How
15 much is that in actual dollars? Do you know?

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, I do, and it
17 is a low income. So, participants, uhm, a 125
18 percent or below of the federal poverty level amounts
19 to roughly \$18,225 a year for somebody living on
20 their own. For a household of our people, this
21 amounts to no more than \$37,500. And, again, you can
22 see that this a very low income, and it is a
23 requirement of the funder.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. How many New
25 Yorkers has The Older Adult Employment Program served

1
2 this year? And if you have it, also over the past
3 three years, five years?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Absolutely, and I
5 am happy to talk about that. So, let me get those
6 numbers... I can tell you right away that in the
7 current... Last year in 2023, we served over 800...
8 Okay, we served over 800 participants... Oh, I will
9 started with Fiscal Year 2022... [CROSS-TALK]

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great...

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: If that's okay so
12 we can see the pattern.

13 So, in Fiscal Year 2022, we... Across all
14 programs, the ones that we walked through, we served
15 564 participants. In Fiscal Year 2023, we exceeded
16 800 participants. And in the current fiscal year of
17 2024, we ran the data through end of November, so
18 clearly we are still in the year, we are just about
19 at 700. So, again, similar to what we talked about
20 with the federal funding and those increases over the
21 years, that is what you see here as well.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Are you able to
23 disaggregate New Yorkers served by age, gender,
24 borough, residents, disability status, race,
25 ethnicity, or any other demographic pockets?

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, so we talked
3 about some of that. So, I am going to highlight,
4 unless you want me to go back, some things perhaps
5 that we didn't talk about... [CROSS-TALK]

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, just the ones that you
7 have not mentioned already.

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, I am not sure
9 if I mentioned, I think this is quite compelling, 74
10 percent are women, and 26 percent are men. In terms
11 of age, the average age is 65, but 63 percent are
12 under 75, and just to pause there for a second - when
13 we talk about averages, of course there is a range,
14 and our oldest participant is almost 90. So, just to
15 give a sense of that. In terms of educational
16 attainment, 22 percent have a bachelor or graduate
17 degree, 9 percent have some college education, and
18 almost half have a high school diploma or a GED,
19 about 20 percent have less than a high school
20 education, 22 percent are English as a second
21 language, and then if you would like kind of a
22 geographic flavor, 33 percent live in the Bronx, 26
23 percent live in Brooklyn, 23 percent in Queens, 16
24 percent in Manhattan, and 2 percent in Staten Island.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And, uhm, for the... The
3 average age, is that trending up or down, do you
4 know? Are people coming in and participating in
5 these programs, are they getting older or is the...
6 the average age skewing younger?

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I don't have those
8 trend in front of me. So, as I mentioned, the
9 average age is 65, but I do think it is really
10 important when you talk about averages that in the
11 young side of our service could be in her early
12 fifties, and older on the older side we have
13 participants that are close to 90. We can certainly
14 get back to you with the three-year trend line.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That would be great, thank
16 you.

17 And at what rate do program participants secure
18 employment? Does NYC Aging track the employment
19 status of program participants? And, if so, how long
20 do you track that for?

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, some things to
22 highlight, were always... our priority is always to
23 move people towards permanent employment. Again, ,you
24 know, there are different starting points. We...
25 You know, I can talk about the data, but I cannot

1
2 talk about it with complete certainty, because what
3 we know is those participants that we're engaged with
4 that stay with us, meaning they don't move, you know
5 they don't pass away, there is not some unforeseen
6 event that would disrupt the program. Also, there
7 are definitely participants that begin with us, they
8 skill up, they get the experience and then they will
9 go find a job on their own. So, it really is a mix.
10 Of those in the SCSEP Program, it is about, again,
11 our data, with all of those limitations and
12 imperfections that I just names, it is about a
13 quarter that move to permanent employment. And,
14 then, it works differently with some of the... Silver
15 Corps is too new to even be able to answer that
16 question ,you know, we look foreword to having
17 conversations in the future, but we are pretty early
18 into the program, so we are not there yet to look at
19 that data. And, then, of course, ReServe and Silver
20 Stars, it has a different aim to it. And when I say
21 that, people are coming in with different interests.
22 So, ReServe is someone who is looking for part time
23 project based work, and similar with the Silver Star.
24 It is really about part time project based work, and
25 this is what the participant was looking for.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do program participants have
3 the option of reaching out to program administrators
4 or staff for guidance upon employment? So, are there
5 ,you know, further resources for them once they have
6 found employment?

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We do a lot with
8 the participants on a lot of different levels. So,
9 one facet is to talk about training and upscaling,
10 which is a huge part of the work - is doing a career
11 map journey with the participant to see ,you know,
12 "who are you"? "what is your interest?" *9"what
13 drives you?", and to upscale in those ways. And
14 then, as we talked a little bit about, some of it is
15 also preparing for interviews. Again, we have
16 participants who have been out of the workforce for a
17 really long time. So, how to do a job search; how to
18 show up at a career fair, résumé, interviewing
19 skills. Participants were assigned to Job Developer
20 who provides ongoing support. And, then, our
21 participants, as you see, are typically low income
22 people who also have other needs that may need to be
23 addressed - which could be anything - food
24 insecurity, case management, mental health - anything
25 as with any New Yorker. And, so, we also have a

1
2 component to support them with those casework needs
3 if it is relevant to the participant, and link them
4 with our other... with our network of services or
5 through some of the services we directly support to
6 make sure that we are doing everything we can to
7 partner with them so that they are positioned for
8 success and permanent employment if that is what they
9 are seeking.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. What metrics does
11 NYC Aging use to determine efficacy of the program?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: A... A number
13 of... [CROSS-TALK]

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How do you... How do you
15 measure success?

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I'm sorry? I
17 didn't hear... [CROSS-TALK]

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How do you measure success?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yeah, that's a
20 great question. So, I mean, in a variety of ways, so
21 we certainly look at the... some of what we talked
22 about, right? How many people are we serving? A
23 basic output. And how that relates to our funding.
24 So ,you know, we talked about two measures that I
25 think are inherently connected, which is we are

1
2 serving more and more people, and we are getting more
3 and more funding, which are both kind of intertwined
4 in different ways. And, then, we look - exactly to
5 your question, Chair, what is the move to permanent
6 placement? And, then, the client experience, the
7 participant experience of us and ,you know, what does
8 that do to the person's well-being and confidence
9 [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you survey them?

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We have in the
12 past, uh, done some satisfaction with them. And they
13 also have their job development specialist connected
14 directly to them through that one on one relationship
15 to provide direct feedback on their needs and
16 anything we can do to better assist them.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How often are eligible New
18 Yorkers admitted to the program? So, is there a
19 schedule? Can anyone start at any time? Is there a
20 calendar?

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, again, we are
22 talking about a few different programs. I mean, I
23 guess my short answer is anyone can start at any
24 time. I mean, for a foster grandparent, if you are
25

1 placed in a school, it is certainly advantageous for
2 you to start right [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

3 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: At the beginning of the
4 school year?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Exactly.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, that would be
8 something particular, in terms of SCSEP, it is
9 really... It is rolling enrolment, that said, we are
10 somewhat limited. We are limited by the available
11 slots we have in each of the boroughs. And, then,
12 for Silver Stars and ReServe, anyone is welcome any
13 time.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Could you just, uhm, do you
15 know how many slots are available in those boroughs
16 that you mentioned before for them, uhm, SCSEP? For,
17 uh, the Bronx, and Queens, and Staten Island, do you
18 have how many slots you have available?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, just give me
20 one moment. And, in Staten Island it is a very small
21 number of slots, so... [CROSS-TALK]

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Total you mean?

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Oh, total at the
24 onset of [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No, no, no, I am asking for
3 the available slots, but are you saying the total
4 number of slots available in Staten Island are... Is
5 it a small number... [CROSS-TALK]

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It's small. So, I
7 believe we have eight remaining and... [CROSS-TALK]

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Eight, okay...

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: in Staten Island.
10 And, then, as we talked about before, in Manhattan
11 and Brooklyn, there are none...

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: And we can get
14 back to you with the specific numbers in Bronx and
15 Queens and... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It's very low. We
18 are almost at a capacity.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

20 I just visit older adult centers all the time,
21 and ,you know, if I am in a particular borough and I
22 know there are a couple of slots, and somebody is
23 interested, then I would love to send them your way.

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Thank you. I am
25 happy to take you up on that, not so much for SCSEP,

1
2 which we are almost at a 100 percent, but in terms of
3 our newest program, Silver Corps, which we don't have
4 the same kind of constraints by borough...

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes...

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: and we are looking
7 to bring more people in. It's a different type of
8 program, uh, following the AmeriCorps model, it is a
9 service to work model. So, there is a period of
10 volunteering, and you will get a stipend if you meet
11 the income threshold that we talked about earlier.

12 But, otherwise it is a [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Volunteer...

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: to work model.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

16 Uhm, according to NYC Aging's website, program
17 participants can secure employment in a variety of
18 areas including Administration, Human and Social
19 Services, Customer Service, Health Sector, Security,
20 Home Care, Food Services, and other professional
21 opportunities - as you mentioned. How does the
22 program identify and work with potential employers?

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, we are always
24 doing employer outreach to bring more employers in.
25 One example of that is that we have done a number of

1
2 employer roundtables ,you know, to bring in different
3 private sectors. Of course, we do a lot of outreach
4 with city agencies connected to some of our other
5 programs. And we do that in a variety of ways. We
6 do that citywide HR meetings, citywide fiscal
7 meetings, and then outreach to particular hiring
8 managers. And, then, of course, within our own
9 network ,you know, which we have hundreds of
10 providers in the aging network, we are always talking
11 to them. So, some very recent examples, in addition
12 to some of the things that we talked about earlier
13 with YMCA and PSS and the bids and just pushing that
14 message out there. The workforce team and leadership
15 come to our case management meetings, they come to
16 our older adult center meetings, they go out to the
17 older adult centers. And we are always looking for
18 opportunities to do those matches and we have
19 placements at hundred of agencies. We hear often
20 that the nonprofit sector has staffing challenges.
21 So, whenever we are talking to our providers, which
22 of course is all of the time, we are encountering
23 opportunities to connect and thinking about
24 leveraging the experience, wisdom, of our older adult
25 workforce and cultivating those multigenerational

1
2 workforce environments, and really capitalizing on
3 the emotional intelligence and maturity and skillset
4 of our older workers. And we have had a lot of
5 success with that. And, again, I think you have to
6 repeat the message again, and again, and again, which
7 we are always looking to do and create more
8 opportunities.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. And do you have
10 how many program participants have been employed in
11 the different areas listed, like the breakdown over
12 the last few years?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, most of them
14 are office administrative worker in terms of getting
15 you an actual... although it really does run the
16 gambit and it varies depending on the programs as we
17 talked about. And we certainly have people in Food,
18 and Customer Service, and in Home Care, and Early
19 Childhood just a few examples. But, in terms of the
20 particular breakdown by program and which industries,
21 we can certainly circle back to.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, that would be great.

23 And, then, how much are participants generally
24 paid upon employment? At what rate are they paid?
25

1
2 And are these largely minimum wage jobs would you
3 say?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It is higher than
5 minimum wage. I believe that it is \$19.00... Oh,
6 sorry, \$21.00 an hour.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

8 New York City Aging's website also says that
9 program participants are assigned an internship at a
10 nonprofit to train and build their skills. Are all
11 participants assigned an internship?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: No, you... What
13 that reads like is Silver Corps. So, that is the
14 service to work model. That is promoted through
15 AmeriCorps. [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, they are only paid if
17 they meet the threshold?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Exactly, yes
19 [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And is there any, uhm,
21 indication whether those internships could lead to
22 full or part-time employment?

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Well, the program
24 is very new. But we can say, based on experience,
25 uhm, somewhat similar experience with the other

1
2 programs, for example, SCSEP and participant
3 placements in our nonprofit, which is a very common
4 story that often it does lead to permanent placement.
5 So, it is an opportunity to kind of soft launch into
6 employment with wraparound supports as you get
7 reacquainted to being back in the workforce and what
8 that feels like. And then maybe even to try
9 something different, right? So, in the past you were
10 a bookkeeper, and now you are doing case work at a
11 nonprofit, uh, it is a way to ease into that feel out
12 if this is the job that you want, and then
13 ultimately, to see if it is the right fit -and if
14 that particular agency has an opening. Otherwise,
15 now certainly you are much more marketable and
16 employable at any agency that has that type of job
17 opportunity.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And then do you consider any
19 remote work opportunities or think about homebound
20 older adults who might also want to take advantage of
21 workforce programs?

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: That is a great
23 question. In this case it is really about the needs
24 of the employer. And I will say that... And I think
25 this is intuitive, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we

1
2 had to move everything remotely including the Foster
3 Grandparent program. So, there was a lot of pivoting
4 and upscaling around technology. And in general, of
5 course there are exceptions, our older workers really
6 want to come to a job. And I think a lot of that is
7 that it is not just an income, it is an opportunity
8 to connect and be a part of something. And I think
9 ,you know, for some people the technology is always a
10 little bit uncomfortable and feels differently. You
11 know, one thing we definitely prioritize is travel
12 burden and looking for opportunities to find matches,
13 employment including training and so on ,you know,
14 that's fairly close to where you live to limit some
15 of those burdens. But ,you know, certainly employers
16 who have virtual opportunities ,you know, those are
17 all possibilities in our menu of placements.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. And, uhm, you
19 mentioned this earlier, but according to the website,
20 program participants can attend classes on digital
21 and financial literacy, customer service, job search
22 techniques, résumé writing, job interview
23 preparation, as well as job fairs, workshops, and
24 meet with potential employers as they look to secure
25

1
2 permanent employment. Are those classes mandatory
3 for program participants?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Uh, it... [CROSS-
5 TALK]

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Or just available to them?

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: depends. So, it
8 begins your career map journey and seeing who you
9 are, where your starting point is, where you want to
10 go. So, depending on that, we are going to adapt the
11 trainings to be particular to your particular journey
12 to employment. [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But they're not... They're
14 not mandatory?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: No. I will say in
16 general... In general SCSEP does require four weeks
17 of training and upscaling. And Foster Grandparent
18 Program requires 20 hours a week. And it is pretty
19 common that as so many of our older adult workers
20 want to be in office administrative type of settings,
21 the technical skills training is generally pretty
22 essential. And it also a good opportunity, too, I
23 mean even outside of the workforce. And we talked
24 about this in other settings, ,you know, to upskill
25 technology as a tool for connection, whether it is

1
2 with the broader world or with our grandkids. So,
3 definitely there are opportunities to skill more
4 broadly.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. So, with regards
6 to those classes, how many are offered annually and
7 to how many participants?

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, we have such a
9 variety of trainings that we do directly as well as
10 through our training partners. So, I think I could
11 [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Well, that actually leads me
13 to my next question, which is are the classes
14 contracted out, and who teaches them?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It's a mix. So,
16 we have a lot of... where we are based in Lower
17 Manhattan, we have a floor in the building that, uh,
18 Older Adult Workshops... [CROSS-TALK]

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: There's training... [CROSS-
20 TALK]

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Team is on, and we
22 provide a lot of direct training. And we have pretty
23 beautiful facilities to do tech training and things
24 on site. [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are those classes remotely
3 accessible?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: They are on site;
5 however, to your question, let's say you live in Far
6 Rockaway or something that you would assume would be
7 a big burden to get to Lower Manhattan, then we are
8 going to link you with a training partner much closer
9 to your home, assuming that is what you want.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: For an in person
11 participation?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, sorry, and then do you
14 know how many classes are offered annually and to how
15 many participants?

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We could get back
17 to you, but I think the important thing is really to
18 go back a step about the numbers we talked about
19 earlier. And the numbers that are enrolled in our
20 program ,you know, the current... So, right now we
21 are working with ,you know, we have worked with about
22 700 people in the current fiscal year. And most of
23 them are going to receive some sort of training...

24 [CROSS-TALK]

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: One of those classes. One of
3 those classes... [CROSS-TALK]

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes...

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: you're saying? Okay.

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, most of them,
7 I mean ,you know, there might be a couple of outliers
8 with let's say a reservist, for example, you're a
9 retired accountant, you're coming into help... So, I
10 mean that might look a little bit different.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, okay.

12 Are the job fairs and workshops you mentioned
13 sponsored by NYC Aging? Are those run directly
14 through a partner, or?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: The job fairs?

16 [CROSS-TALK]

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Job fairs and... [CROSS-
18 TALK]

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: No, they are...
20 They are typically run through outside partners.
21 And, then we are coming... So, one example might be,
22 I am sure you are aware that the City has promoted a
23 lot of different job fairs to address the need of the
24 City workforce, so we push into those spaces...

25 [CROSS-TALK]

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CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I see.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: as well as, uh,
market them to our older adults.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And do you have a sense of
how many job fairs the typical program participant
attends?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I can get back to
you on that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Or how frequently are the...
So, you mentioned the City's job fairs, right? Which
I think, I don't know, just from my recollection
earlier this year and maybe last year, there are a
few a year or something? Uhm, if you are plugging in
to those, and there are not any additional...
assuming there are not any additional ones, do you
think the average participant is going to all of
those job fairs? Are they going to one job fair? Is
it based on ,you know, just anecdotally, do you think
it is based on location and things like that?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, that is not
how most of our placements are made. The job fairs
are part of a menu of things we could offer to our
participants. But, overall, it is happening much
more commonly through a matching process. So, on

1
2 this side, we know all of the jobs that we have, that
3 we have some home care, some early childhood, some
4 customer service, some administrative, in a variety
5 of settings, and then, over here we have the
6 participants who need to be placed.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I see.

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, we are looking
9 at a variety of... [CROSS-TALK]

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You're working within an
11 established system already, where you have your
12 employment partners, you know the... the jobs that
13 they are offering, and then you have your
14 participants?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Generally...

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes. And, then,
18 as talked about before, and how that lines up with
19 where you live and so on, but that said, we want to
20 have the largest menu of options and opportunities
21 for our participants, so job fair is another tool in
22 our toolbox.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you.

24 According... I want to go into Silver Corps now
25 for a moment.

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: According to NYC Aging's
4 website, one of the eligibility requirements is to
5 currently be unemployed or under employed. How does
6 NYC Aging determinate that someone is under employed?

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yeah, that is a
8 good question. It is really somebody who ,you know,
9 sees themselves as under employed and is looking to
10 ,you know, upskill and step into a different range of
11 employment options.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, would you classify under
13 employment, according to that definition, by one not
14 making enough money or not having enough hours?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yeah, most
16 commonly, we see in the under employed cohort, people
17 that are doing seasonal work, for example, and are
18 making low wages.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. And, then,
20 forgive me if you mentioned before, but do you know
21 how many New Yorkers have joined Silver Corps this
22 year?

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, just going
24 back to that number... So, in the current year so
25 far 65 participants have joined. As mentioned, it is

1 a new program, and we are looking to scale this

2 [CROSS-TALK]

3 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: To grow...

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: going forward...

5 [CROSS-TALK]

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

7 Do you know, are you able to disaggregate that by
8 all of the demographic information, age, gender,
9 borough of residence, disability status, race,
10 ethnicity, et cetera?

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We would have to
12 get back to you. The numbers that I shared with you
13 are generalized and not disaggregated by each program
14 type.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And I know I asked a similar
16 question before pertaining to another program, but
17 what... How do you measure success for this program
18 specifically? And are program participants generally
19 seeking fulltime employment?

20 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, it is a new
21 program, they grant itself and the funder, AmeriCorps
22 requires an evaluation component. So, as mentioned,
23 we are one of two demonstration programs in the
24 nation. So, this is really an opportunity to figure
25

1
2 out what that evaluation and what those outcomes
3 are.... [CROSS-TALK]

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: which is something
6 we are working with them, as well as our data team
7 and some outside academics to really figure out a
8 robust evaluation component that transcends some of
9 those outputs that we talked about before and informs
10 ,you know, the movement of AmeriCorps seniors, as
11 well as funding for the outyear.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Where else is the program?
13 Do you know the other location?

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Somewhere in
15 Upstate New York I think.... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Rochester...

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Rochester I think
18 they're... [CROSS-TALK]

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [LAUGHTER] Okay.

20 All right, so, two in the country are both in New
21 York State?

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, I guess that means we
24 are doing something right.

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: [LAUGHTER] I think
3 so.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are Silver Corps participants
5 paid?

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, it depends.
7 If you meet that threshold of 400 percent or below
8 the poverty level, then, yes, you receive a stipend.
9 I mean, let's just say we just talked about 125
10 percent, that's a very low income. Otherwise, they
11 are not receiving a stipend. So, it is that classic
12 service to work model where you are volunteering,
13 you're supporting nonprofits, and, you know, gaining
14 skills and experience yourself. And for some people
15 I think it is important, we talk a lot about income,
16 but when I think about older adult workforce, I also
17 think about a second act, right? If you spent your
18 life doing something administrative in an office,
19 like maybe now you always wanted to help the homeless
20 or work in a domestic violence shelter, or whatever
21 it is, to really feel that impact and sense of
22 purpose.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Absolutely. I'm in my second
24 career now, so...

25 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Okay.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: When I got to schools, I tell
3 people all the time ,you know, you can have more than
4 one career, you don't have to settle into one thing
5 and stay in that one thing forever. Uh...

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: And I will say,
7 even though they also, AmeriCorps, provides the
8 travel and meal reimbursement, which is... [CROSS-
9 TALK]

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And what's the...

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: paid during
12 training... [CROSS-TALK]

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What's the amount of the
14 stipend, do you know?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: The amount of the
16 stipend is \$25.00.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: \$25.00 an hour?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

20 And I asked this before... I have some... some
21 questions repeat for each program.

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Uh, so for Silver Corps
24 specifically, is... just going back to that, like,
25 type of acceptance throughout the year, is there a

1
2 particular time? Could people join the program at
3 any time during throughout the year?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, absolutely.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

6 And, currently, NYC Aging's budget includes \$1.6
7 million in Fiscal Year 2024 for Silver Corps and \$1.7
8 million in Fiscal Year 2025. With no baselined
9 funding for this program, how does NYC Aging plan to
10 maintain the program and the older adults it serves?
11 And will additional funding be added in a future
12 financial plan? And, if so, how much and when?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, this is a
14 federally funded grant, uh, it is a three-year
15 AmeriCorps grant, which also includes a rollover.
16 And ,you know, we had a wonderful initial meeting
17 with AmeriCorps to look at our progress and received
18 fantastic feedback from them. And ,you know, we are
19 certainly hopeful to work with them as a federal
20 partner to continue to develop in scale and learn
21 from this program to be a model throughout the
22 country in terms of supporting older adults' return
23 to the workforce.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. And my apologies,
3 Council Member, I would like to acknowledge that you
4 have joined us, Council Member Linda Lee.

5 And now moving onto the Silver Stars Program, how
6 do eligible New Yorkers learn about the Silver Stars
7 Program? How are agencies made aware of Silver
8 Stars? And could you describe the hiring process?

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, so, you asked
10 a few things. So, hopefully I can remember...

11 [CROSS-TALK]

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I can repeat them if you need
13 me to later.

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, you will tell
15 me if I missed anything. The first that I recall
16 that you said, is how do the city agencies learn
17 about the program? So, that is continual outreach.
18 So, some of the things we do, we talked about the
19 City job fairs. We have pushed in a number of times
20 to the CFO meetings, the budget folks, who are good
21 people, to get buy in from and have understanding.
22 And we certainly view this program as a wonderful
23 cost savings for agencies. Which certainly the
24 Finance and budget people understand. Another... We
25 shoot it from a number of different directions if you

1
2 will. So, another key stakeholder are the Human
3 Resources teams. So, we are always talking to them so
4 they can spread the word within their own agencies.
5 And, then, we talk to hiring managers. And another
6 opportunity is through our Cabinet for Older New
7 Yorkers where this is also a great opportunity to
8 spread the word with our 23 partner agencies that are
9 there. And, then, through New York City Talent as
10 well. So, there are a number of avenues for
11 outreach, including word of mouth. So, for example,
12 ACS who has supported a number of Silver Stars. You
13 know, once you have the experience, and how seamless
14 it can be, so you have a project, you have to move,
15 let's say a number of procurement actions, like, you
16 can bring on retired procurement staff who at day one
17 are pretty much ready to go. So, that can be really
18 enticing to moving some of the City work... [CROSS-
19 TALK]

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Can you... [CROSS-TALK]

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: And then if you
22 could remind me of your other questions?

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes, could you describe the
24 hiring process?

25

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, so, it goes
3 through the City hiring process. So, first, of
4 course, I do want to callout that this is part-time
5 project based, and not meant to.... and cannot
6 replace the work of City workers. So, the hiring
7 process looks pretty similar to the City hiring
8 process. If you go onto CityShare, the City's hiring
9 website, you will see our Silver Star postings that
10 should be delineated with Silver Star. You can even
11 search and look at them. And, then, we work... So,
12 just to go back a step. We have a queue of retirees
13 who are interested in coming back to work, who come
14 from a variety of different backgrounds. And, then,
15 we have the city agencies that we are working with.
16 And unless they... It comes in a number of different
17 ways. You might want very specifically procurement
18 staff who know the work of agency X, and so that is
19 exactly what they are looking for. And, from there,
20 you might work with your known retiree pool, who can
21 ,you know, work in and do a quick time intensive job.
22 Conversely, that may not exist, and it is really
23 working with the queue to find that match.
24 Ultimately, the [INAUDIBLE] have to be approved, and
25 the Personal Action Request has to be approved in the

1
2 same way that any City job would be approved. And,
3 then, the hiring and onboarding process does require
4 the same administrative oversight and City oversight
5 and partners that you would see with hiring any City
6 employees.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I would assume that if people
8 are coming out of City service and then trying to
9 reenter City service and going through that same
10 process, there are probably not too many folks who
11 are turned away from the program?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We haven't... I
13 mean, in... Once you have gotten to that step of,
14 "Now I have interviewed, and we're a fit, and I am
15 sending you", we have not had any particular problem
16 processing the paperwork. But, it is still subject
17 to that process and some of those timeframes, which
18 frankly are slower than our other programs.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And you many New Yorkers has
20 the Silver Stars Program served this year?

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, this year has
22 been modest, because of some of the challenges that
23 the City has been experiencing.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Mmmm...
25

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, this year, we
3 have only served eight. However, we look forward to
4 scaling up. We brought on a new director recently to
5 help us really scale and grow this program.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How does that number compare
7 to other years?

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, it is pretty a
9 new program... [CROSS-TALK]

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, there is not
12 this history that you are seeing with some of our
13 other programs,

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But, it started this fiscal
15 year?

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: No, it started in
17 Fiscal Year 2022, so there were ten in 2022, 49 in
18 2023, and then as of November this year, we have
19 eight.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What do you think you can
21 attribute to the huge growth from 2022 to 2023 - ten
22 to 49?

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: That is a great
24 question. A lot of hard work and outreach. And
25 outreach has to be on both sides. So, it is

1
2 fundamentally a matching process, unless, again, as
3 the story I just said, like, maybe there is somebody
4 who retired that you know who is ready to go into the
5 job. So, that would be very clean and seamless and
6 elegant. It doesn't typically work that way, so we
7 need to keep recruiting participants, which we have
8 done in some of the ways that we talked about before.
9 We have had some great effect from media, local media
10 that City retirees then learned about the program and
11 they applied, and now we have them in our queue.
12 And, then, on the other side, we are working with the
13 agencies who we are always talking to through some of
14 those mechanisms that we just walked through - H R,
15 Finance, and so on, to let them know that this
16 program is a cost savings, and an opportunity to
17 address of the City workforce needs and challenges
18 sometimes. And, then, ultimately, it is a matching
19 process. And, so if there... and meeting those
20 business needs. Which could mean some upscaling and
21 some creative thinking about how we look at your
22 skills. For example, if you are a retired teacher,
23 we are not going to necessarily have teaching
24 opportunities, but we look at where we could leverage
25 those skills, which are so many - public speaking,

1
2 and planning, and classroom management - we look at
3 where those skills fit into the jobs we have.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you have fewer jobs
5 available of fewer partners this fiscal year than you
6 had last fiscal year?

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We do have fewer
8 jobs available than we did last fiscal year due to
9 some of the challenges that the City has been
10 experiencing.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It's all these budget cuts.
12 That was a joke.

13 [LAUGHTER]

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Although, it's a very serious
15 joke. Please disaggregate New Yorkers served by age,
16 gender, borough of residence, disability status,
17 race, ethnicity. It's only eight folks. Do you
18 have...

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, certainly we
20 could get back to you. I have the disaggregated data
21 that I shared before.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Although, I...

24 [CROSS-TALK]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Although, I would be curious
3 to know for the other years as well.

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Say, that one more
5 time?

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I would be curious to have
7 those numbers for the other years as well. So...

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, absolutely,
9 we will get back to you. Because, I have broad
10 patterns here. And, certainly, it might look
11 different when you are talking about retired City
12 employees, so we will circle back.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. At what rate do
14 program participants secure employment, and,
15 apologies again, some of these questions are
16 redundant. I am going to ask them all for different
17 programs.

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, you are
19 talking about Silver Stars?

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: In general what
22 people are looking for with Silver Stars is part-time
23 project based employment.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Mm-hmm
25

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, and that is
3 part of what can be attractive about it, is that you
4 are not necessarily looking to secure permanent full
5 time employment... [CROSS-TALK]

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But, even for those part-
7 time... I mean if the goal is to secure part-time
8 projected based employment, are a 100 percent of
9 participants securing that or not quite?

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: No, it is not a
11 100 percent.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I don't have that
14 right in front of me. We can certainly get back to
15 you. But, again, it has to be... It really is three
16 legs, right? The participants, the jobs, and how
17 they come together in terms of a good match and fit.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Uh, do you... Are they...
19 If they were to secure that part-time project based
20 employment, do you know what time of reimbursement
21 they are getting or how much they are being paid for
22 that? Is that like a contract kind of based salary
23 or a onetime fee, or?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, top... Big
25 picture, if you are 65 or under, you want to protect

1
2 your City pension. So, the annual cap is \$35,000 a
3 year. It is more expansive if you are over 65, which
4 gives us more flexibility. It is... Unlike our other
5 programs, it really has to do with the job and the
6 City's availability for that job. So, how that
7 \$35,000, let's just say they are 65 or under, maps to
8 an hourly wage is hugely variable, and it is set by
9 the agency. And I will say, you know, having seen an
10 hired Silver Stars myself, it is typically a higher
11 wage than for example the \$25.00 an hour we talked
12 about earlier.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You mentioned you have Silver
14 Stars?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes! I have one
16 now... [CROSS-TALK]

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I would love to have a Silver
18 Star. And, actually for the last two years, my
19 office has been working with NYC Aging and trying to
20 secure a Silver Star for my office. Do you know why
21 I haven't been able to get one yet?

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, so, thank
23 you, and that sounds very frustrating, and we are
24 certainly eager to work with you address that and get
25 somebody placed with you. So, it really depends in

1
2 terms of the... We are always happy to work with our
3 elected officials, and city agencies, and employers
4 in general, in terms of Silver Stars, to place
5 positions, to place participants in needed positions.
6 We have signed [INAUDIBLE] memo used with a number of
7 agencies, and we will continue to work with you. Uh,
8 as I mentioned... [CROSS-TALK]

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You need a MOU from the City
10 Council?

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: That...

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Is that the holdup?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We will work with
14 you particularly offline to understand exactly what
15 type of work you need. I... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: And look at the
18 pool that we have of Silver Stars and how to get the
19 best match for you.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: As we talked about
22 earlier, just to make it clear, it is... they do go
23 through the City hiring process, so that can take a
24 little bit of time. But, we are happy to talk to you
25 after this meeting and... [CROSS-TALK]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. I am just ,you know,
3 it has been two years that we have been trying to get
4 one. So, I can't imagine it's just the City hiring
5 process. But, we will figure it out, and hopefully,
6 I don't want to say by the next hearing, but maybe
7 before the end of the fiscal year we can get one
8 secured.

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Absolutely...

10 [CROSS-TALK]

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: In my office.

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: And we can talk
13 to... We will talk to you about what you need, which
14 program makes the most sense, what participants we
15 have... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, great...

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: And work actively
18 to accelerate that.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how often are eligible
20 New Yorkers admitted to the program? Same question as
21 before. Is there a particular for... Yeah, they can
22 come in any time in the year, right?

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We would be
24 thrilled to [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

25 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: To take then year-round?

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, absolutely.

3 So, we are always looking to spread the word, and I
4 think it is great for retirees, again for the reasons
5 that we talked about, whether it is the income, which
6 is not insignificant. Right? Particularly if they
7 are over 65, and it is such a great benefit to the
8 city agencies. And I think a lot of people sometimes
9 are not prepared for retirement in the ways that they
10 think they are. Which can mean a variety of things.
11 It could be economic. I mean, City employees, unlike
12 so many others typically do have a pensions which is
13 great. But, even having a sense of purpose and
14 challenge and social connections, or like you were
15 sharing, that second act, "I always... To
16 [INAUDIBLE] on my own, but now I want to know what is
17 like to work directly with people and help people who
18 are suffering and lift them." So, these are all
19 opportunities for agencies and for City retirees....

20 [CROSS-TALK]

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Uhm... [CROSS-TALK]

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: [INAUDIBLE] Silver
23 Stars.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And NYC Aging's budget
25 includes baselined funding of \$406,520.00 for the

1
2 Silver Star Program. How much was actually spent in
3 Fiscal Year 2023, and how much has been spent thus
4 far in Fiscal Year 2024?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Could you say that
6 one more time?

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah. NYC Aging's budget
8 includes baselined funding of \$406,520.00 for the
9 Silver Star Program - that's baselined funding. So,
10 do you know how much was actually spent in Fiscal
11 Year 2023, and how much has been spent thus far in
12 Fiscal Year 2024?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I am little thrown
14 by numbers you're citing. So, this program operates
15 based on funding from other city agencies. So, if
16 you want a Silver Star, that would include you, for
17 example, Chair Hudson... [CROSS-TALK]

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah....

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Then you're
20 funding the line. So, for example, you could say, I
21 want an hourly wage of X and I am capping it at
22 \$35,000,00 for the year. So, those would be funding
23 that we are receiving from you to deploy that Silver
24 Star. So, I am happy to get back to you, but I am...

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, we will double check
3 and... And I will see if I have an answer for you
4 before we end... [CROSS-TALK]

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Okay, great
6 [BACKGROUND NOISE] [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: before we end here today.

8 Do you feel that you are meeting demand for the
9 program with the current funding? And how much
10 additional capacity is there if demand were to
11 increase?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, as I said,
13 the... The funding really works really differently
14 than it does for Foster Grandparents, Silver Corps,
15 SCSEP... [CROSS-TALK]

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, I guess based on the
17 number of employer partners or city agency partners,
18 or?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We are working
20 actively to increase the engagement from city
21 agencies, which the metric, if you will, would be a
22 job posting and a job placement - as well as to
23 increase the number of participants that are coming
24 into our programs. And you will see us continue to
25 champion and drive this work... [CROSS-TALK]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay...

3 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: in order to
4 increase the placements. I mean, there is always so
5 much more to do in the workforce space and with older
6 adults, not only today, but certainly the Aging
7 Committee knows that the shifting demographics and
8 the rising aging population, and in the future, I
9 think that there will be more and more need and
10 interest for placement. And we are also working very
11 closely with the Office of Management and Budget to
12 develop and [BACKGROUND NOISE]... to develop our
13 needs and look forward to talking further with The
14 City Council in the spring as we get more into the
15 budget.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, great. And I got a
17 little bit more information, it seems like maybe this
18 is staff funding?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Uh... [CROSS-
20 TALK]

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: This baselined funding, but
22 it is through the... [CROSS-TALK]

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Okay...

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It is FY27... [CROSS-TALK]

25

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, it is
3 through... So, we had... We have had some vacancies
4 in the program. We had... This is a very small
5 staff. So, I am assuming, without seeing all of the
6 numbers, that that includes friends and what have
7 you. So, we were funding two FTEs, and right now we
8 have one FTE. So, it doesn't immediately tie to that
9 number. So, we can take it offline [INAUDIBLE]...

10 [CROSS-TALK]

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, we can follow up...

12 [CROSS-TALK]

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: with that. Uh, I would like
15 to acknowledge that we have been joined by Council
16 Member Mealy. And I am actually going to turn it to
17 Council Member Lee for some questions before I finish
18 mine out, thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi, good morning. Sorry if
20 you all went over this already, because I had
21 questions more about the SCSEP Program, but I know I
22 came in a bit late, so apologies about that. But, the
23 SCSEP Program, by the way, was super valuable when it
24 was at KCS and we had participants for the DFTA SCSEP
25 Program as well as NACA, but just out of curiosity,

1
2 is there still that rule, and forgive me if my memory
3 is fuzzy, where if you have funding sources that are
4 different, you can't have the participants be part of
5 this... in the same location, is that correct?
6 Because, I remember that we always had to distinguish
7 between the DFTA SCSEP participants versus our NACA
8 SCSEP participants. And I just wanted to see if that
9 was still the case.

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I mean, that makes
11 sense just in terms of a funder perspective, which is
12 know you are well acquainted, that they are usually
13 looking for those lines of delineation and who is
14 attached to which funding source, so that you have
15 those fiscal controls.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: But, it is that they can't be
17 physically at the same location or part of the same
18 program?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: I mean, that... I
20 am happy to get back to you... [CROSS-TALK]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay...

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: That doesn't
23 immediately resonate... [CROSS-TALK]

24

25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, just because, yeah, I
3 think that was sort of a barrier for us in terms of
4 placing them in...

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Mm-hmm

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: in different programs.
7 Because, I believe that that was the case where there
8 was that actual, not just like in terms of the
9 budget, but they physically had to be in different
10 locations. So, I just wanted to double check on
11 that. And, also, how many contracts do... Does DFTA
12 currently have right now for the SCSEP Program? Like
13 how many placements do you? Because I know that
14 varies across different sites, and I just wanted to
15 know how many... What the numbers were. Because I
16 remember at one point it decreased a bit. But,
17 then... Because, uh, I think maybe because of
18 capacity issues on DFTA'S side, a lot of contracts
19 were given up to different various other agencies to
20 run that. And I just wanted to know... Because at
21 some point I think you guys were starting to take the
22 numbers back. And, so I wanted to see if where it
23 was at right now... Which is a good thing I think,
24 but...

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Right, absolutely,
3 looking at... I mean, yes, so we were talking
4 earlier that we are currently at capacity in
5 Manhattan, Brooklyn, or very close to capacity in
6 Queens and the Bronx.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We have actually
9 seen... I mean, and there have been disruptions, if
10 we go back in time and talk about the pandemic, that
11 was certainly very complicated and presented a number
12 of challenges for SCSEP as well as the Foster
13 Grandparent Program. But starting at with Fiscal
14 Year 2022, what you will see looking at 2022, 2023,
15 and 2024 for SCSEP in 2022, we had 221 participants,
16 in 2023, and I feel like you are saying this... We
17 got to 392, close to double. And, then, the Fiscal
18 Year 2024 data is as of end of November, and we are
19 already at 300. So, you see the...

20 Exactly...[CROSS-TALK]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Across the City? Across the
22 City? Sorry... for the...

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, okay. Okay, great.
25 All right, that's it for now. But, thank you,

1
2 sorry... And if you... Oh, sorry, one last thing,
3 but I am guessing that you have a breakdown of where
4 they are placed and how many are placed at each site,
5 right?

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, well we can
7 certainly get that to you... [CROSS-TALK]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you, Council Member
10 Lee.

11 How do... So, this is about ReServe, how do
12 eligible New Yorkers learn about the program?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It is similar.
14 When we are out there [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [INAUDIBLE] everything...
16 [CROSS-TALK]

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, exactly...

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: And in general,
20 every touch with people that come into contact with
21 older adults, or best, perhaps, older adults
22 themselves, is an opportunity for us to market our
23 wonderful programs and bring more people in.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are participants allowed to
25 receive a pension while participating in ReServe?

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

4 And how many participants do you have this year?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Currently, same
6 timeline, Fiscal Year 2024, end of November, we are
7 currently at a 140. And I do want to highlight,
8 similar to the pattern we talked about with SCSEP,
9 you see that climbing, Fiscal Year 2022, we are at
10 97, Fiscal Year 2023, 146, and then here we are only
11 partially through the year at 140. And I also want
12 to clarify that unlike Silver Stars, I appreciate
13 that there are things that sound and feel similar,
14 most notably that they are typically placed in city
15 agencies, the ReServist are more retirees who are not
16 previous City employees.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, I mean, they
19 might have a pension, but it doesn't look like Silver
20 Stars... [CROSS-TALK]

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It's not necessarily a City
22 Pension... [CROSS-TALK]

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Exactly.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: that you all are aware of.
25 So... Okay, that makes sense, thank you. And

1
2 similarly to the other questions are you able to
3 disaggregate those participants by all of the
4 demographic data?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We will get back
6 to you. I have... [CROSS-TALK]

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Sure.

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It's all
9 aggregated.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No problem.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And, then at what rate do
13 program participants secure employment?

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, this has ,you
15 know, a lot of similar features to Silver Stars, in
16 that these are... [CROSS-TALK]

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Part-time?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

20 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Exactly. And, in
21 fact, I think particular with ReServe from... You
22 are seeing differences from across the programs.
23 These are people that we see ,you know, retired
24 accountants and professionals coming in want to be
25 part of the workforce and have that connection and

1
2 sense of purpose. And we have a number, and NYC
3 Aging is one example, I mean, I think the City has so
4 valued this talent and infusion of multigenerational
5 experience into the work place. And the ReServist
6 ,you know, are happy to add their experience and
7 skills to contribute.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you track employment
9 status of program participants? Or, like ,you know,
10 just through general success in participation in the
11 program - how many people are being placed, how long
12 they are being placed? And, I guess because of the
13 part-time nature, is someone going to an agency
14 working part-time, and then ,you know, finishing a
15 project, for example, and then coming back into the
16 program, and then getting placed somewhere else?

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, I mean it is
18 really a mix. We do have the data and can get back
19 to you. Sometimes you see a ReServist staying quite
20 a while. And, I mean, I work very closely with a
21 number of ReServist who have been there a long time
22 and they add so much to the work and to the
23 environment. It is certainly a win for everybody.
24 But, again, the particular data, we are happy to get
25

1
2 back to you about those trends and timelines that you
3 are asking about.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, and then similarly to
5 other questions, how do you measure success of this
6 program?

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Placement is the
8 key metric. And, then the key metric is really
9 placement. Although, I do think it is important to
10 some degree to look at length of placement to make
11 sure that we are driving that good fit, that we are
12 looking towards... And that the employer is happy,
13 the participants are happy, we've made the right
14 match.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And, uh, similarly to before,
16 are participants able to join the program during any
17 point in the year?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

20 And, then my last couple of questions pertaining
21 to the Foster Grandparent Program, can you tell me
22 about the participation rate there? How many folks
23 do you have participating annually for the last
24 three... Usually you give me Fiscal, 22, 23, 24, if
25 you have that for this program as well?

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, I will do it
3 the same way. So, in Fiscal Year 2022, 236; Fiscal
4 Year 2023, 198; Fiscal Year 2024, through end of
5 November, 186.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, not a huge drop off but
7 some drop off from 2022 to 2023. Can you attribute
8 that to anything in particular

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes, so, because
10 of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as some other
11 requirements from our funder and public safety, and
12 health and what have you, we pivoted all of the
13 Foster Grandparent placements virtually. So...
14 which really had a mixed result. We certainly had
15 drop off and participants who didn't want to work
16 virtually. I think one of the key drivers of the
17 interests to this program is shaping the life of a
18 very young child. They often work as a teacher's
19 aide in Head Start Early Childhood settings. So,
20 ,you know, it was obviously a challenge and feels
21 really different to the participant to pivot
22 something like that online. And we really had to
23 reshape the work. And, conversely, some of the folks
24 that we upscaled and gave them the tech training and
25 move into those types of placements, when we went

1
2 back to requiring that it had to be in person, we had
3 a drop off of some of that cohort... [CROSS-TALK]

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Naturally... [CROSS-TALK]

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, it really is
6 that you are seeing some of that effect. However,
7 looking specifically at Fiscal Year 2024 and where we
8 are right now, you see that rebound [INAUDIBLE]...

9 [CROSS-TALK]

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: that we're looking
12 forward to.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And you will be able to
14 follow up with the disaggregated data? [CROSS-TALK]

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Was the in person
17 participation a federal requirement?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Well, the move to
19 virtual placement during the pandemic was a federal
20 requirement. In terms of the move back to in person,
21 yes... I mean, and it also just beyond a federal
22 requirements, it's the nature of the program. And
23 the data, which is super interesting to me, that we
24 look at, it is different than everything else we
25

1
2 talked about. When you asked a few times about how
3 we measure success... [CROSS-TALK]

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes... [CROSS-TALK]

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: So, interestingly,
6 and this program, there is very explicitly two
7 clients, and one of them is that child. So, we are
8 looking at things like reading attainment, and early
9 childhood skill development, and we see pretty
10 incredible impacts that are older adults have on the
11 educational, as well as social, emotional well-being
12 of these young children.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how many youth have been
14 engaged through the program? The same numbers? Equal
15 numbers?

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: It typically is,
17 but I would have to get back to you with that level
18 of precision, because there might be some... To your
19 question, when you start, or if you have to be
20 shifted to another kid. And it is not all school
21 based. Most of it is in Early Childhood, but there
22 are some other placements, which include, for
23 example, hospital, so we can get back to you.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how are youth in that
25 program selected to participate in the program?

1
2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: We work directly
3 with, uh, again, the vast majority of these Head
4 Start Programs, so these are youth who have IEPs
5 typically or have some need for an increased level of
6 support in that Early Childhood setting. And we work
7 with the school officials and teachers to identify
8 those opportunities in the youth that are the right
9 fit

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. Those are
11 all of my questions. Council Member Lee, do you have
12 any other questions?

13 [PAUSE]

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: All right, well, thank you
15 for your testimony and your participation. I think
16 ,you know, overall, we want to make sure that older
17 adults are able to reenter the workforce should the
18 so choose to reenter the workforce. Thought is
19 usually, unfortunately, uhm ,you know, the
20 circumstances force them sort of back into the
21 workforce. And, so, you know, I hope that together
22 we can do more to ensure that older adults are being
23 taken care of and don't feel that they have to enter
24 or reenter the workforce ,you know, in their second
25 act if you will. But, we appreciate all of the work

1
2 that you all do to support older adults in their
3 second act. I think we only have two folks in person
4 to testify. So, we would love it if you can hang out
5 for a just a few more minutes, but we understand if
6 you have to get back. Thank you.

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER GRODEN: Great, thank you.
8 Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here and
9 talk about the important programs and older adult
10 workforce.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Happy Holidays.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much, Associate
13 Commissioner.

14 At this time, we will be moving to public
15 testimony. Each person testifying will have two
16 minutes. We will have two folks, so far, in person.
17 If there is anyone else in the room who wishes to
18 testify, please make sure that you fill out an
19 appearance card with the Sergeant At Arms.

20 We are going to be calling up Jeremy Kaplan and
21 Andrea Tan, please.

22 [PAUSE]

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And, whenever you are ready,
24 we can start with Jeremy, please.

1
2 JEREMY KAPLAN: Thank you, Chair Hudson and
3 Council Member Lee for having us today.

4 My name is Jeremy Kaplan, and I serve as
5 Executive Director at Encore Community Services, one
6 of the City's largest nonprofits whose only focuses
7 is on improving the lives of older adults by offering
8 them access to healthy food choices and services to
9 age and thrive in community for as long as possible.

10 Encore wholeheartedly supports investments in
11 workforce for older adults, and especially with
12 sweeping 15 percent budget cuts to NYC Aging, it is
13 going to be more needed than ever, because just to
14 scrape by, people are going to need jobs, despite
15 wanting to enjoy their retirement - as you said
16 earlier.

17 Aging services are facing a multi-faceted
18 financial crisis. Reimbursement rates fall far behind
19 as inflation dramatically increases our core
20 operating costs. We continue to face staffing
21 challenges as pay for human service workers remains
22 impossibly low. Against all odds and despite being
23 among the lowest paid of any sector in the city,
24 Human Service Employees continue to deliver nutrition
25 and vital socialization services for older adults.

1
2 Yet the City continues to turn a blind eye to the cry
3 of tens of thousands of essential workers who have
4 begged the City to just pay them an equitable cost of
5 living adjustment.

6 Our city has made commitments to older neighbors,
7 particularly through the NYC Aging Community Care
8 Plan. Now, despite the fact that increasing access to
9 food and community care for older adults was a
10 fundamental campaign promise made by the majority of
11 our elected officials; with these indiscriminate
12 budget cuts, the government of the City of New York
13 seems to be considering denying older adults' access
14 to these services.

15 To be clear, we understand that sometimes budget
16 cuts are unavoidable. But equal cuts are not
17 equitable cuts. To propose a sweeping 15 percent cut,
18 indiscriminately and universally, is not fiscally
19 [TIMER CHIMES] savvy financial management but fiscal
20 irresponsibility.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Please continue, yes.

22 JEREMY KAPLAN: Thank you.

23 Older adults, especially those who face isolation
24 and high nutritional risk, need more community care
25 support - not less. Community Care is the fundamental

1
2 service provided by Older Adult Centers which is at
3 most immediate risk with this sweeping budget cut.
4 The population of older adults in our city is the
5 fastest-growing demographic. Just this year, the
6 surgeon general declared loneliness an epidemic -
7 shining a light on the needs of socially isolated
8 older adults. This is a population in desperate need
9 of support and connection and for whom a reduction in
10 services would cause significant harm.

11 The additional 5 percent planned cut in January
12 would be detrimental to the continued running of our
13 Older Adult Center community care programs. The City
14 has an obligation to carefully evaluate the budget
15 and surgically implement reductions. Anything less
16 will result in disaster for human service providers,
17 and more importantly, cause harm to the older adults
18 who built this city.

19 Human Service Organizations like Encore touch
20 every aspect of daily life - from public education,
21 health and nutrition, and cultural enrichment to
22 language access. We call on the City to partner with
23 the nonprofit sector and work toward creative
24 solutions.
25

1
2 The Human Services Sector cannot withstand a 15
3 percent cut to its budget. Any additional cuts will
4 only undermine the public safety, health, and
5 cleanliness of New York City.

6 I urge this committee to refuse the
7 indiscriminate cuts proposed by the Administration
8 and to advance a budget that balances fiscal
9 responsibility with care and compassion to the older
10 adults that rely on us for nutrition, enrichment, and
11 support as we age.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you, Jeremy, we
14 appreciate that.

15 ANDREA TAN: Good morning, Chair Hudson, Council
16 Member Lee, and Committee Counsel. My name is Andrea
17 Tan, my pronouns are she/her. I am the the
18 Microenterprise Project Director at Volunteers we of
19 Legal Service - we also known as VOLS. We are a legal
20 services nonprofit founded in 1984. Our mission is to
21 bridge the justice gap in underserved communities
22 through increased pro bono legal services. Our
23 project spans two decades, supports small business
24 owners with free legal services, aiding in forming
25 businesses, drafting contracts, and handling other

1
2 transactional legal needs. We collaborate with
3 community organizations, prioritizing minority,
4 women, immigrant, and veteran-owned businesses. Our
5 goal is to empower entrepreneurs for financial
6 stability and independence.

7 VOLS is dedicated to addressing the legal needs
8 of older adults through targeted initiatives. The
9 Microenterprise Project assists encore entrepreneurs
10 in formalizing their businesses, ensuring compliance,
11 and protecting personal and business assets to
12 mitigate legal risks. Concurrently, the Senior Law
13 Project aids New Yorkers aged 60 and over in creating
14 essential life planning documents. Together, these
15 projects deliver comprehensive advocacy for our older
16 adult clients.

17 This year, a significant portion of our clients –
18 over one third – were aged 50 and above, they were
19 seeking legal assistance for their new or established
20 businesses.

21 Allow me to share inspiring stories of some
22 encore entrepreneurs that we've supported in the past
23 year. We guided a 54-year-old Bronx entrepreneur in
24 safeguarding her sweet tea trade secrets and
25 registering a trademark. For two cousins in their

1
2 60's embarking on a traditional Caribbean food
3 catering business, we're currently drafting a
4 partnership agreement. In Harlem, we assisted a 64-
5 year-old entrepreneur in launching a pottery making
6 business. And remarkably, we're advising a 90-year-
7 old inventor on patent-related inquiries for one of
8 his inventions. So, [TIMER CHIMES] these diverse
9 examples underscore the breadth...

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can continue, please.

11 ANDREA TAN: Thank you... these diverse examples
12 underscore the breadth and impact of our support for
13 entrepreneurs of all ages.

14 In our engagement with Encore entrepreneurs,
15 we've recognized two distinct client profiles: those
16 opting to postpone retirement or re-enter the
17 workforce post-retirement, driven either by financial
18 necessity or a desire to stay professionally active.
19 Many discover that starting their own business is the
20 most viable path, considering the challenges older
21 adults often face in securing traditional employment.
22 Their wealth of life skills and experience uniquely
23 positions them as exceptional entrepreneurs. Despite
24 this, accessing technical and legal assistance can be
25 challenging and expensive for older adults. At VOLS,

1
2 we bridge this gap by not only providing top-notch,
3 free legal services facilitated by our network of law
4 firm volunteers but also by adopting a client-centric
5 approach where we prioritize individual needs,
6 including language access and overall accessibility,
7 ensuring our support is tailored to each
8 entrepreneur's unique journey.

9 And, finally, drawing from our experience, VOLS
10 believes that the proposed bills in the resolution
11 will be beneficial for our clients. The introduction
12 of a focused program providing education and training
13 customized for individuals aged 50 and above,
14 managing transitions from current employment,
15 retirement, or other life statuses to becoming encore
16 entrepreneurs, is expected to enhance opportunities
17 for our clients. By encouraging individuals to
18 explore entrepreneurship, these initiatives not only
19 promote economic self-sufficiency but also contribute
20 to stimulating the local economy.

21 So, thank you for accepting our testimony and
22 supporting New York City's encore entrepreneurs.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for your
24 testimony, and thank you for your work
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much to this in
3 person panel

4 Just a plug to submit written testimony to
5 testimony@council.nyc.gov, you can do up to 72 hours
6 after the close of this hearing. Thank you very
7 much.

8 We are now going to move to virtual panelists. I
9 am going to call names and the Zoom panelists will
10 have two minutes to testify after the Sergeant At
11 Arms calls time. And, so, at this time, I am going
12 call Christian González-Rivera. Please wait for the
13 Sergeant At Arms to call time before you begin your
14 testimony.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Christian is not currently
17 present on Zoom. So, at this time, if there is
18 anyone who is wishing to testify virtually, and your
19 name has not been called, please use the Zoom Raise
20 Hand Function to indicate that you would like to
21 testify. Seeing no hands, turning it back to the
22 chair for closing remarks.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much again for
24 everyone's testimony. I think that it goes without
25 saying that we need to do more for our older adults.

1
2 You know, whether it is by way of our City budget or
3 the programs and services that are afforded to them
4 or overall how we provide supports or don't provide
5 supports to ensure that everybody can age with
6 dignity and economic security and everything that
7 they need. We all need to just be doing a whole lot
8 more across the city, across the state, and across
9 this country. But, one way that we are supporting
10 and providing resources for older adults is through
11 some of the workforce programs that we have at NYC
12 Aging. So, I thank NYC Aging for your work. I think
13 some of our providers and volunteer service
14 organizations for their work as well in supporting
15 our older adults. And thank you all for your time
16 today.

17 And I hereby announce this hearing as adjourned,
18 thank you.

19 [GAVEL SOUND] [GAVELING OUT]
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24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date December 29, 2023