



TESTIMONY

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND IMMIGRATION

HEARING ON

ADULT LITERACY AND RESOURCE

PRESENTED BY

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RONG ZHANG

JUNE 23, 2022

Good afternoon, Chairs Stevens and Hanif and members of the Youth Services and Immigration Committees. I am Associate Commissioner Rong Zhang for community development programs at the Department of Youth & Community Development. On behalf of Commissioner Keith Howard, thank you for the opportunity to comment on DYCD's Adult Literacy Services. We are pleased to be joined by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) Deputy Commissioners Colette Samman and Miosotis Munoz. Also with us today are Kareema Hussein, Program Director, and Project Coordinator Alejandro Cercas of We Speak NYC.

The ability to read and write is fundamental to a person's capacity to succeed in life. English proficiency is associated with the ability to find and keep employment that pays a living wage and provides opportunities for upward advancement, helps parents fully support and participate in their child's education and to actively engage in civic life. Recent census data for NYC show that there are 1.76 million or 22.4 percent of the individuals aged 5 years and over who "speak English less than very well" and 544,714 or 9.1% of persons aged 25 years and over who have less than a 9th grade education. These data point toward a high need for ESOL instruction and adult basic education classes. In neighborhoods with large, low-income immigrant populations the need is particularly high.

These findings are supported by DYCD's comprehensive Community Needs Assessment Survey, a survey that collected information from residents who were asked, among other questions, to identify the service gaps in their community. In NYC overall, survey respondents ranked "English classes" as the number two service gap from a listing of 28 items. In ten communities, residents ranked "English classes" as their number one service gap. Six communities ranked "Adult Education/Literacy" instruction as among their top five service gaps.

We thank the Council for its strong, long-standing partnership on Adult Literacy programs. It has been critical to funding programs across the City. In Fiscal 2023, DYCD has \$25.29 million to support Adult Literacy Programs from a mix of Federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and City tax levy funding. This work is complimented by other literacy programs supported by the Department of Education, the City University of New York and the public library systems.

DYCD's adult literacy programs include a variety of courses to meet the various needs of participants. For example, these adult literacy programs offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) that teaches both native and non-native English speakers reading, writing and math. We offer classes to prepare students for the GED exam, as well as ESOL/Civics classes, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) that teach listening, speaking, reading and writing to individuals whose primary language is not English.

In Fiscal 2022, our adult literacy programs are projected to enroll 16,062 participants. Students not only benefit academically by participating in our literacy programs, they also receive other much needed assistance such as referral to employment training, college assistance and individual support.

We are grateful that the City has made additional investments to support adult literacy services through Adult Literacy Expansion funds in the last few years. The Expansion funds have allowed literacy programs to enhance programming and increase enrollment. Providers have accumulatively served approximately 50,000 more New Yorkers through Expansion. In addition, we invested in expanded professional development in curriculum development, purchasing testing materials for providers and strengthening digital literacy, including two on-line programs which provide anytime and anywhere access to state-of-the-art interactive courses that feature basic English, reading, writing, math, civics, and career exploration.

We also partnered with MOIA to promote *We Speak NYC*, a video series produced by MOIA and CUNY to help English language learners improve their language skills while learning about City services and their rights. MOIA staff presented *WE Speak NYC* to literacy providers. A joint professional training session on best practices around integration of the video into English language classes has been offered to providers.

This year, we also launched two pilots to strengthen and enhance Adult Literacy services.

The first pilot added counselors to assist participants in identifying and overcoming class attendance barriers, accessing support resources and to make referrals. Policy Studies Associates (PSA) is conducting an evaluation of the pilot which we anticipate to be released in early Fall. Early feedback from our providers indicates that the counselor position has been helpful in better serving participants in advancing their goals.

The second pilot, funded by the Council, is to evaluate the impact of program enhancement through investing in higher price per participant. The Pilot has allowed funded programs to invest in a range of areas, such as staff capacity, technology, Support Services, Expanded Learning Options, and Professional Development. As you know, the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC) is funded to provide support to the 19 funded programs. The LAC is also responsible for collecting program data and they will submit a final report on the Pilot. According to the LAC's preliminary report, programs are achieving results, including increased daily attendance and retention and literacy level gains. We look forward to sharing the results of the evaluations with the Council, which will be helpful in helping shape the next Request for Proposals for Adult Literacy Services.

Once again, thank you for holding this hearing today. We look forward to continuing to work with the City Council on promoting Adult Literacy.



**New York City Council Committee on Immigration and Youth Services
Honorable Shahana Hanif, Chair of Immigration
Honorable Althea Stevens, Chair of Youth Services**

**Oversight Hearing on Adult Education
June 23, 2022**

**Testimony of the New York Immigration Coalition
Presented by Liza Schwartzwald, Manager of Education Policy**

Good afternoon and thank you Chairs Hanif and Stevens and members of the New York City Council Committee on Immigration and Youth Services for the opportunity to testify. My name is Liza Schwartzwald and I am a Senior Manager of Education Policy at the New York Immigration Coalition, an umbrella policy and advocacy organization of around 200 groups serving immigrants and refugees across New York State. The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) and our member organizations specifically serve the needs of marginalized immigrant communities - including newly-arrived immigrants, low-income families, and youth and adults with limited English proficiency.

The NYIC wishes to thank and express our deep appreciation to the City Council and the Mayor for the \$6.7M enhancement to adult literacy funding in the FY23 budget, and to congratulate Keith Howard on his appointment as the new commissioner of the DYCD.

In support of adult learners, we call on the City Council and the Mayor to support these three critical steps:

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- 1) **The additional \$6.7 million in funding in FY23 for RFP-contracted programs must be used to fund “enhancements” – i.e., additional wrap-around services, supports, and resources – for the same number of students as those programs served in FY22, and not be used to try to “expand” services to more students at the same unsustainably low rate.**
- 2) **DYCD must commit to increasing the per student funding rate in the next RFP from \$950 per student to at least \$1,900 per student.**
- 3) **DYCD must allow for remote and hybrid instruction both in FY23 AND in the upcoming adult literacy RFP.**

As part of the NYIC’s expansive approach to education, many of our members run adult literacy programs essential to ensuring the success of immigrant families. Currently, there are approximately 2.2 million adults in New York City who lack English language proficiency, a high school diploma or both, of which over 75% are immigrants. Yet public funding for adult literacy education is so limited that only 3% of these 2.2 million adults are able to access basic education, high school equivalency, or English language classes in any given year. Further, there are 456,000 Limited English Proficient parents of children under the age of 18 in NYC - that is 30% of all parents of minors in the city.

Unfortunately, the \$950 per student rate has not been raised in years, and programs struggle to supplement funding in order to continue paying qualified teachers and maintaining usable spaces for classes. The amount per student has not changed despite significant increases in the costs of running programs and maintaining living wages for staff. In December of 2017, the Literacy Assistance Center released a report entitled Investing in



Quality: A Blueprint for Adult Literacy Programs and Funders. Funded by DYCD, the report details 14 "Building Blocks" of a comprehensive, community-based adult literacy program, identifies the resources needed to fully implement the Building Blocks, and includes a first-of-its-kind cost model. It found that community-based adult literacy programs would need to have their current funding rates increased by at least four times in order to fully implement the components and services outlined in the report.

While we have not yet reached that goal, the \$2.5M Adult Literacy Pilot program passed by the council last year and that was renewed in the FY23 budget provides a template for what a fully funded adult literacy program could look like. The adult literacy pilot increased the amount of funding for students in those programs without requiring additional students served. This has enabled programs to make significant improvements to the quality of services they provided, including updating and expanding curriculum, adding and improving remote services, increasing focus on digital literacy, increased student outreach and support, and more. It has also allowed for a broadening of focus, allowing for programs to address particular populations like parents, or respond to immediate needs in their communities.

As the DYCD prepares the RFP for the upcoming term of adult literacy funding, it must honor the lessons learned through this pilot and increase the rates to programs who provide this essential service to their communities. By raising the rates per student from \$950 to at least \$1,900, the DYCD would remedy the current unsustainably low rates for adult literacy providers, both improving the quality of programming and creating financially sustainable contracts for providers. The additional \$6.7M provided as an enhancement in the budget this year must be used for this purpose.



Finally, the DYCD must allow for greater flexibility for remote and hybrid programming. Programs held remote classes throughout the pandemic, providing quality adult literacy support while themselves gaining expertise in remote learning pedagogy. While some students have been able to return to in-person classes, many have not been able to, or were provided an opportunity to take adult literacy classes for the first time only because of the availability of remote learning. For parents of young children who are unable to access affordable childcare, adults who work multiple shift jobs and have little free time to travel, elderly community members who have more limited mobility, and adults who do not have adult literacy classes available in their own districts, these remote classes have significantly expanded the accessibility of English language learning. Adult literacy classes must match the needs of different community members and allowing for hybrid and remote classes in addition to in-person provides a greater opportunity for New York's English language learners to access these wonderful and necessary resources.

Adult literacy classes provide the basis for our immigrant community to navigate every aspect of life in a new country, and we must do more for the one in three New Yorkers in need of adult literacy education. The NYIC and NYCCAL believe that being able to read and write, speak and understand English, obtain a high school or equivalency diploma, and successfully enter job training or post-secondary education are the rights of every New Yorker. We urge the City Council and DYCD to use the adult literacy enhancement funding to increase rates per student and to increase flexibility for remote learning to ensure that every adult in need is able to gain access to high-quality adult literacy services.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.



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My name is Noah Veloz. I am the current Program Director of the BronxWorks Adult ESOL program, one of the programs participating in the DYCD Adult Literacy Pilot Project. We have the privilege of offering free English and Civics classes to up to five hundred students a year, primarily in the South Bronx, though demand for classes greatly exceeds even that. I would like to speak today not about expanding enrollments, but on the importance of enhancing the rate of funding per participant.

In adult ESL classes, we don't just teach English or citizenship. We teach students how to navigate complex bureaucracies and registration processes. We teach students how to use their voice in their community. We teach students, some who have never learned to sign their name or set foot in a formal classroom, how to become lifelong learners, because their learning does not start with, and will not end with our program.

We employ trauma-informed communication methods to help stabilize relationships and try to help our students restore the autonomy lost through the immigration process. We connect our students to food, housing, workforce development, health insurance, and other wrap around services. We encourage our students to set goals towards GED, College and Employment and we prepare them for job interviews, citizenship exams and parent-teacher conferences. And of course, we teach English.

Very often, it is one or two people who are juggling all of these responsibilities for multiple classes, but we do it, because we understand that to learn, our students need more than a classroom, they need expert support. For many years now, Adult Literacy has worked miracles with funds that barely support the salaries of the instructors. We are asking for double our baselined funding, because we know that our students deserve it, and because we know what we can accomplish when adequately funded.

With our pilot project funding, we are able to bring on full-time staff and increase the hours of our instructors, to support education counselors who connect students to outside services and create plans for future goals. We can pay for admin assistants to help with labor intensive registration processes and we are able to offer supplemental programming to teach students how to learn how to read and write, when they have nowhere else in the borough who will teach them. As well as digital literacy classes, more necessary than ever in our post pandemic world.

We are grateful for the opportunity to show through this pilot project what we can do when we receive more appropriate funding for the program and hope that adult literacy continues to receive the support it needs. I am grateful, because I believe that we are doing more than teaching English, we are empowering the parents of our children and the leaders in our immigrant communities. And I believe that as a city and a society, we can only be as strong as our most vulnerable neighbors. Thank you.

**New York City Council
Committee on Immigration and Committee on Youth Services
Oversight Hearing – Adult Literacy Programming and Resources
June 23, 2022**

**Testify: Migdalia Cortes, Community School Director
Agency: Children’s Aid**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY: ADULT LITERACY ENHANCEMENT

Thank you to Chair Hanif, Chair Stevens and the members of the Immigration and Youth Services Committees for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Migdalia Cortes, Community School Director at the Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Campus (SU) in Washington Heights for Children’s Aid.

A key strategy for Children’s Aid, a multi-service, human services agency, is community schools. It is a way to leverage public school buildings as hubs of the community. And at the SU Campus, we provide after school, summer, comprehensive physical and behavioral health services to nearly 950 children and youth. We also connect their families and local community residents to food, housing, immigration, education and employment services.

For over 25 years, we have provided a range of adult literacy classes for immigrant adults 18 years or older. Since 2016, with the support of the City Council’s Adult Literacy Initiative, SU Campus has served nearly 700 students. This year, 118 parents and community residents developed English Language proficiency through instruction in listening, speaking, reading and writing. They graduated on June 1st!

In January, we received enhancement funding, and were able to provide individualized small group instruction for students who needed more help, as well as case management

and referral services. Before then, learners of various levels and abilities were grouped together, making it difficult to address the students' needs in the time allotted.

One student, who received the individualized tutoring, passed the High School Equivalency (HSE) exam this past spring. Similarly, another student who participated in specialized tutoring also passed the HSE exam and is now attending Brooklyn College. We have found that when parents succeed academically, it has a positive impact on their children.

We thank the city for the \$13.5 million in funding that is baselined for Adult Literacy education. However, that amount does not include the \$6.7 million in enhanced funding that made the additional tutoring support possible with our program at SU Campus. Without the enhanced funding, we will not be able to maintain the specialized tutoring.

These services are so crucial for the families and communities we serve and look forward to working with the City Council to restore this funding.

Again, thank you for the opportunity.

Good afternoon,

My name is Angie Rendon Caicedo. I am originally from Colombia; I live with my mom and my little brother. I am part of the Fifth Avenue Committee family; I'd like to tell you something about the impact of the adult literacy pilot project that you have included in the city budget. First, I got a job because of that money. So...Thank you.

I was hired at the Fifth Avenue Committee as a program assistant to help do deeper assessments on what services the ESL students might need and to help connect them to those services.

I worked with a great community of participants and colleagues to learn more about the challenges facing the immigrant community in Sunset Park (Something I already knew about being an immigrant myself). I know how hard it is when your own rights seem limited. But my colleagues and I learned even more, every day. We screened many many students for what is called wrap around services -we helped them get Covid info, get vaccinated, get food stamps, legal assistance, digital literacy services, get a Chromebook, a hotspot, and learn how to use them, we learn online banking and internet safety. We helped participants become bus drivers. We connected families with small children enrolled in Pre-k and 3-k. We partnered with another organization to offer know your rights workshops. We did self-defense workshops. We help connect participants with budget help and financial coaching. We did all this AND we did the normal stuff--we taught English and collected data and kept files and had parties and went to rallies and on and on.... We were able to do this because of this money--because of the idea that there is more to be done.

It is sometimes hard, I am learning, to look at data and get a picture of what happens in an English class. You can see attendance and test scores. You can see teachers' salaries and the number of staff. But what you can't see is what happens when a community of people really care about each other. It is hard to show in numbers. But when you get to know someone, you have a window into their life that is significant. You can talk with them and hear their struggles. And if you have the resources, you can help them. If you can help them, you have done so much more for them and their family than just teaching them English, it is something great seeing how a small change can do so much. Of course, speaking English is very important. This we all know. I learned English. My mom IS learning English. But we can do so much more. And if we can, we should.

I know this is true because I work in this field. Thanks to this pilot program I can work, so again, thank you for my job and thank you for your support of my community.

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Testimony

I teach beginner and intermediate level ESOL classes at the International Center of Catholic Charities Community Services. We have been participating in the Adult Literacy Pilot project this year and are looking forward to continuing this work in FY23. Thank you to the Council for your support for this program and Adult Literacy overall. We are currently using a hybrid model in our ESOL classes. This works well since many students are not able to attend in-person classes, primarily due to cost and time of commuting, health reasons, safety, and childcare. Additionally, since online classes promote digital literacy and get students used to checking their emails and using software for learning, I am able to send them additional study materials, exercises, and software that they can use to supplement their classes (e.g. PDFs, web-based exercises, Ellii accounts). The pilot program has allowed me to be responsive for my students, which is invaluable in remote classes. Because I have the ability to contact them individually to discuss their lives, goals, and needs, I am able to make more informed decisions when forming my curriculum, referring them to resources individually (e.g., Union Settlement and the YWCA for GED classes, LaGuardia Community College for nursing retraining, Streetwise Partners mentorship program, Restaurant Opportunities Center for job training), and inviting guest speakers to introduce the entire class to available resources (e.g., SUNY Attain, Emma's Torch, the Brooklyn Museum). I have the time and resources to follow through with referrals and make sure they are not just connected with the services they need, but that they actually receive them. Additionally, this referral process gives students opportunities to practice their English in real-world situations, but where they still have their teacher's support. I have seen many success stories that would not have been possible without this extra effort, including students finding work, creating a resume, receiving computer certifications, taking job trainings, visiting cultural institutions, starting a GED program, finding a tutor for their kids, and more.



**New York City Council
Committee on Immigration and Committee on Youth Services
Oversight Hearing – Adult Literacy Programming and Resources
June 23, 2022**

Testimony of Sierra Stoneman-Bell, Literacy Assistance Center

Thank you, Chair Hanif and Chair Stevens, for holding this hearing and for your leadership and support for adult literacy education. My name is Sierra Stoneman-Bell, and I am the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC), a 39-year-old not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening and expanding the adult education system and to advancing adult literacy as a core value in our society and a foundation for equal opportunity and social justice. The LAC is a proud member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL), a coalition comprised of adult literacy teachers, program managers, students, and allies from 40+ community-based organizations, CUNY campuses, and libraries across the five boroughs.

My testimony focuses on the \$2.5M Adult Literacy Pilot Project, created and funded by the City Council in FY2022 and renewed for FY2023. THANK YOU for supporting this groundbreaking initiative! This pilot has supported 19 community-based adult literacy programs to strengthen and enhance their services for adults studying English, adult basic education, and high school equivalency. It has shown that increased investment in each student can lead to greater outcomes for students and communities. Adult literacy programs have been inadequately funded for too long. Current contracts under the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) provide only \$850 - \$950 per student per year, when the average real cost is at least four times that amount (as outlined in the LAC's Investing in Quality report, 2017).

This pilot initiative provided each program with an award of \$70,000 - \$150,000, contracted via DYCD, to supplement their existing funding and enhance their programs. This allowed programs to invest in priority areas, including Staff Capacity, Technology, Support Services, Expanded Learning Options, Classroom Facilities and Infrastructure, Curriculum Development and Instructional Resources, and Professional Development. By the end of June, the pilot will have impacted 4,200 adult students in neighborhoods across the city.

The results have been overwhelmingly positive, with clear impacts for students, staff, programs, and communities. The LAC was funded to collect data and report on overall outcomes of the pilot. We are still collecting final program data but can report that the pilot is yielding important outcomes in a range of areas, including **Educational Development, Digital Literacy, Culturally Responsive Education, Work Readiness and Job Placement/Improvement, Legal and Social Services, Immigrant Rights, Workers Rights, Civic Participation, and Community Engagement.**

You will hear directly from several programs today. I will highlight a few trends.

Programs invested in their staff for maximum impact - adding hours, pay, and new team members to cover and expand critical program areas and student supports. They expanded academic support for their students – tutoring, additional class hours, and more individualized attention – and saw resulting gains in student engagement and literacy skills. Students also had increased access to career development and employment opportunities.

Student support services were another key focus, with programs providing increased outreach and follow-up, case management, social services, public health information,

transportation and food aid. This support enabled students to continue their education while juggling multiple responsibilities and challenges exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic.

Several programs updated and built new digital infrastructure, curriculum, and staff capacity for integrated digital literacy instruction, which has become so crucial these last 2.5 years. For some programs, this was the first time they had invested in their classrooms in over a decade, and the improvements had immediate impact on student engagement and learning. This new capacity will benefit students for years to come.

Several programs trained staff and created new culturally-responsive curricula and program practices that honor students' cultures, histories, and identities. Students gained new knowledge of immigrant rights and workers' rights. For example, the team at Adhikaar created industry-specific English for Empowerment classes for Nepali-speaking nail salon workers and domestic workers. Programs were also able to boost students' civic knowledge and engagement related to voting, advocacy, citizenship, engagement in children's schooling, tax filing, and more.

One program leader from Fifth Avenue Committee shared how the pilot provided an opportunity to build their staff team and services for students in ways they had always wanted and never had the resources to do. They hired new staff from the community. The pilot allowed them to take risks and try new models, leading to innovation, community connections, and new forward momentum that is reaching more community members and building collective strength.

All of this was accomplished despite the shortened 6-month timeframe for implementation. Programs are thrilled to have another full year to build on this progress –

100% of them said the continuation of this pilot funding was “very important” for their programs. All participating programs reported that the pilot had significant or moderate impact on program success and predicted further success with more time to show outcomes.

We look forward to working with DYCD and the City Council to apply what we have learned through the Pilot Project to the new city funding and the next DYCD Adult Literacy RFP, starting with these three priorities:

1. **Fund enhancements for greater impact:** Ensure that the added \$6.7 million for adult literacy in FY2023 be used to support program enhancements like those supported by the pilot for the same number of students served in FY2022, and NOT to enroll more students at the current inadequate funding rate.
2. **Increase the funding rate:** Secure a commitment from DYCD to increase the funding rate to *at least* \$1,900 per student per year in the next Adult Literacy RFP.
3. **Support continued remote and hybrid options:** Allow programs to offer in-person, remote, and hybrid instruction to effectively engage their adult students in FY2023 and beyond. The pilot has helped build program capacity to do this well.

Thank you for your time and support. We look forward to working with you to build a stronger adult literacy education system for a more equitable city.

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New York City Council

Committees on Immigration & Youth Services

Hearing on Adult Literacy

June 23, 2022

Testimony from Literacy Partners

Anthony Tassi, CEO

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Summary

Literacy Partners is an adult literacy program serving 1,700 immigrant and low-income parents of young children in 42 council districts across the City and in several other cities. We applaud the Council's leadership in strengthening the City's approach to adult literacy which, together with program leaders at DYCD will achieve better results for immigrant and low-income communities. We recommend that:

1. **DYCD issue a new RFP with a start date this fiscal year** instead of extending current contracts for yet another year.
2. **The per-student rate in the new RFP be at least \$2,000.** The new funds in the DYCD budget should be used to improve the quality of services through a higher per student rate, rather than increase the quantity of students to be served on the current shoe-string budgets. With the continued success of We Speak NYC, the City has a large-scale, very low cost program so DYCD can afford to focus on a more intensive approach that produces more significant and more sustainable results.
3. **Remote and hybrid instruction be permitted with one set of expected student outcomes for both in-person and remote learning.** There are far too many adults who benefit from remote learning because in-person classes are inaccessible to them (due to the cost and time of commuting, the lack of childcare and other factors) to not permit remote learning under the new RFP. It would create dislocations among current students and cause major equity issues going forward.

Introduction

Good afternoon Chairperson Hanif, Chairperson Stevens and distinguished members of the Committee on Immigration and the Committee on Youth Services. What a powerful combination of oversight and legislative leaders we have coming together in this important hearing today.

My name is Anthony Tassi and I am the CEO of [Literacy Partners](#), an adult literacy program focused on parents of young children.

Literacy Partners & Social Transformation

Parents come to Literacy Partners to transform their lives and create a brighter future for their children through the power of literacy.

We create the conditions for parents to build literacy and language skills that are essential to solve problems, achieve goals, and have success in today's economy and society. At the same time, with our curricular emphasis on child development, parents boost their capacity to promote their children's early learning, social emotional growth, and school readiness.

In this way, we are using the tools of adult literacy to not only address today's problem today, but also to "go upstream" and prevent tomorrow's problem from ever occurring. By promoting early learning and social emotional growth at home, parents close the achievement gap among their children before they even begin school and, ultimately, break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

After 20 years in the field of adult literacy education and as the parent of a child in NYC public schools, it is abundantly clear to me that parents are the essential levers of social change and progress. With this insight, we take a trauma-informed approach with anti-racist assumptions to building confidence, competence, and community among our students that enables their inherent resiliency to power their learning for the benefit of themselves and their children.

I encourage the Council to focus its social change agenda and investments on parents, especially in the area of adult literacy. The benefit beyond the people directly served is immediate and long-lasting: we know from research and from experience that "two-generation" approaches to education are more effective than the traditional approach to K-to-12 that engages children outside their cultural and family context.

Essential Adult Literacy Services

In school year 2021-2022, Literacy Partners served approximately 1,700 immigrant and low-income parents in 41 Council districts and several other cities in 4 programs:

1. English for Immigrant Parents

Our year-long classes emphasize basic English communication together with insights into child development and parenting, and health literacy skill development. Our students are referred to us by Head Start and Pre-K programs, and by health care providers who screen their patients for the social determinants of health and find that language and literacy issues are the number

one barrier to family health.

Despite all the challenges of Covid-19 last academic year, parents achieved the following results:

- 78% graduated to the next level of English proficiency
- 68% increased the frequency of reading with their children (the number one predictor of children's early academic success)
- 88% felt more prepared talking with a doctor about their child's health – including their mental health
- 94% said the program helped them reduce their stress levels

2. Reading for Adults

We offer highly structured one-on-one tutoring for absolute beginning readers –an offering not found elsewhere among the City's community based organizations providing adult literacy programs. Many of our students are motivated by the desire to share reading with a child or grandchild. Our reading students have moved their lives forward in many ways – several have gone on to graduate from college and [one student recently published his memoir](#) after working on it for nearly 10 years.

3. College Transition for Young Adult Moms

There is no “higher leverage” population than young adult moms who dropped out of high school, but have made the hard decision to go back to school to finish their degree. However, as young adult parents there's nothing out there to support them on a GED-to-College track – until now. We created a small program several years ago to engage cohorts of women as mothers and future college students – addressing social emotional (ie, non-cognitive) skills that drive both college readiness and positive parenting outcomes. We offer a supportive environment in which young mothers find each other and build relationships that endure.

To do this work, we created a unique partnership with Future Now at Bronx Community College and Power of Two home visiting program to address the academic and non-academic potential of the participants in a comprehensive integrated fashion. As a result, in comparison to a group of parenting students not in our program, our participating moms are

- 55% more likely to earn a GED

- 41% more likely to begin college

And once they are in college, they earn 5 times as many college credits.

4. La Fuerza de Familias Latinas

In partnership with Univision, our national parent engagement program for Spanish-speaking parents and caregivers ([La Fuerza de Familias Latinas](#)) inspires and supports parents to create powerful moments of connection with their children. Our free 5-session workshop series helps parents and caregivers better promote their children's early learning, social emotional development and school readiness.

Our external evaluator, NYU Professor of Early Childhood Literacy Susan Neuman, called our program "uniquely effective" among programs for Spanish speaking parents. We've found that 94% of participants implement at least 2 workshop activities at home with their children and we have seen across all groups a 71% increase in the number of parents that think of themselves as their child's best teacher. All of the program facilitators are parent leaders who have been through the program themselves. Program participants receive a bundle of Spanish and bilingual age-appropriate books for their children.

COVID-19 Recovery

When the pandemic began, Literacy Partners did not make short-term changes to our program while we waited for the opportunity to meet together in-person with our students. We radically changed our approach to meet the immediate needs of our students and found ways of achieving outstanding results with Zoom, WhatsApp and Google Classroom. We did not attempt to replicate our previous classroom dynamics, but rather we looked at the available tools and we thought about how we could best use them to engage our students and address their immediate concerns.

We've had a lot of success with this approach – our enrollment has increased and our student achievement has been consistent year over year. To address the immediate and growing health care concerns of immigrant families, we built a referral network among health care providers and because we are digital, we've been able to serve students from all over the city (no longer limited by geography). Our classes have focused more on health literacy skills and our grant-funded staff have helped our students navigate the healthcare system and take advantage of other social services.

With Zoom breakout rooms, we are able to meet simultaneously with individuals and small groups, in ways we never could have before due to space and personnel restrictions. Because we operate remotely, we were able to increase the number of volunteers serving our students from 23 pre-pandemic to 115 this year, enabling us to provide more personalized instruction and case management support while still in the

context of masters level teachers leading the classes.

As the City grapples with an uneven economic recovery, continued racial disparities in all measures of family wellbeing, and widespread learning loss among low-income and limited English proficient children, the case for investing in the skills development of low-income parents of color is more compelling than ever.

Recommendations

The Council has a unique opportunity to create a more effective and more equitable adult literacy system with immediate benefits that are sustainable over the long term. To do so, we recommend the following:

1. **DYCD should issue a new RFP with a start date this fiscal year** instead of extending current contracts yet another year.
2. **The per-student rate in the new RFP should be at least \$2,000.** The new funds in the DYCD budget should be used to improve the quality of services through a higher per student rate, rather than increase the quantity of students served on the current shoe-string budgets. With the continued success of We Speak NYC, the City has a low cost program that can reach tens of thousands of students. DYCD can afford to focus on a more intensive approach that produces more significant and more sustainable results.

For comparison sake, our English for Parents classes with their outstanding results have a per-student cost of approximately \$2,400.

3. **Remote and hybrid instruction should be permitted with one set of expected student outcomes/results for both in-person and remote learning.** There are far too many adults who benefit from remote learning because in-person classes are inaccessible to them (due to the cost and time of commuting, the lack of childcare and other factors) to not permit remote learning under the new RFP. It would create dislocations among current students and cause major equity issues going forward.

Make the Road New York

Immigration Committee Budget Hearing Testimony (Adult Literacy Programs)

Good afternoon! My name's Julie Quinton and I direct Make the Road New York's Adult Literacy Programs. We've got over 25,000 members and serve over 800 Adult Lit students a year. Thanks for the opportunity to speak today!

We want to work with the Council and Administration to ensure that the city's adult literacy budget addresses the depth of the need in a thoughtful and effective manner.

This means funding providers in ways that don't put us at financial risk and trusting our ability to deliver programming effectively whether in person or virtually.

First we would like to see newly allocated adult lit. funding be distributed as ENHANCEMENT funding to providers, rather than to serve additional students.

Enhancement funding would allow Make the Road to expand teacher curriculum writing & professional development time, to purchase hardware for classes, as well as to keep case managers on staff who started only 6 months ago with funds from a short term DYCD initiative.

Secondly, I'm asking that this commitment to enhanced funding be CODIFIED by DYCD in the Adult Literacy RFP for FY 24. We're requesting *at minimum* a doubling of the per student funding rate in that RFP. This rate

increase is a long time in coming, having not been updated since the last RFP was released many years ago. We would love to have funds cover our costs! Right now that's only a dream.

Lastly, I want to call for DYCD to increase instructional delivery flexibility for FY 23 and in the years ahead. While programs had a greenlight to deliver virtual instruction for 2 years, DYCD has all but withdrawn permission for next year/setting very specific and narrow parameters for the exceptions they'd consider. This is in contrast to the NYState Ed Dept which just today gave adult literacy programs the opportunity to propose hybrid models of delivery for FY 23.

Many students prefer virtual or hybrid delivery because they don't have programs in their communities, can't afford subway or bus fare, have childcare responsibilities or other reasons. Those who've had very successful outcomes this year in our virtual classes want the option of offering a mix of virtual and hybrid classes, as well as in person classes in the years ahead.

Thank you for your consideration.

Investments that lead to the development of English language, literacy & numeracy skills, and to high school diplomas and beyond, have a transformative effect on every aspect of public life for our community members:

-Literacy skills are the most permanent language access tools there are, allowing immigrants who have them to more effectively access housing, health, legal, and transportation services

-Funding literacy well will create conditions where immigrants are more able to also vote under new laws, access jobs or push back against wage theft, support children's learning, and engage in cultural life.

-Most importantly, adult Literacy classes, especially in community based spaces, are excellently positioned to be front line spaces for know your rights health, education, legal services info sharing and doors to community engagement and organizing opportunities.

Thanks for uplifting the NYC Coalition for Adult Literacy's budget recommendations and strengthening the quality and delivery of Adult Literacy Services in the years ahead. Thank you!

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

It is no secret that the past two and a half years have been challenging in many ways. The barriers and difficulties directly caused by the pandemic have been well documented at this point. What I wish to speak about are the pre-existing challenges in adult education that were exposed and exacerbated in the past two years and how, with sufficient support, programs like NMIC can do to overcome these challenges.

In New York City, 20 percent of adults 25 and older lack a high school diploma – that translates into 1.2 million people. Furthermore, an additional 25 percent of adults in New York City have limited English proficiency – that is 1.8 million individuals. What does this mean? This means limited opportunities for a quarter of our neighbors. This means parents who have difficulty providing for their families because of limited job opportunities. This means immigrants who cannot venture out of their community because of communication barriers. This means unjust limitation on more than 2 million of our fellow New Yorkers. Providing access to high quality literacy instruction is not only a good idea – it's necessary to ensure the success of our fellow citizens and ensure the health of our recovering economy.

Adult literacy classes provide a vital lifeline to many people in this city. Recent immigrants oftentimes get their first introduction to their new community and all the opportunities that come with it while participating in an English class. People who did not finish high school learn to see themselves as capable and imagine new futures in our classes.

City council pilot funding is essential to ensure that our programs can meet the challenges of a post-Pandemic city. Time and time again our students' biggest barriers during the pandemic were technology access and skill. As work and learning move to an online world, many of our students risk being left behind due to lack of skills in technology. With the City Council pilot funding our program was, for the first time, able to meaningfully engage this problem and create a contextual curriculum that reduces the digital divide for our students and prepares them for the realities of a post-pandemic New York.

Furthermore, pilot funding has allowed us to recruit and retrain high quality teachers with a deep tie to our community. A perennial challenge in adult education is the high turnover rate of instructors, for a variety of reasons including inconsistent schedules and low pay. Consistency is the cornerstone of successful education programs – students come to rely on instructors and learning communities are built overtime. The additional funding has allowed us to make a long-time instructor a full-time staff member – deepening connections between our program and our community.

As we move into a post-pandemic New York, additional support for adult literacy programs is more important than ever. This support looks different from 2019 – adult literacy programs need support to offer a broader curriculum and more holistic services. Continued pilot support will let us pivot in a nimble and meaningful way to serve the needs of our communities as they face new challenges and adapt to new city

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

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Testimony of Jimmy Meagher, Policy Director
Safe Horizon

Committee on Youth Services
Hon. Althea Stevens, Chair

Safe Horizon's Testimony re:
Runaway and Homeless Youth

6.21.2022

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the Committee on Youth Services today. My name is Jimmy Meagher, and I am Policy Director at Safe Horizon, the nation's largest non-profit victim services organization. Safe Horizon offers a client-centered, trauma-informed response to 250,000 New Yorkers each year who have experienced violence or abuse. We are increasingly using a lens of racial equity and justice to guide our work with clients, with each other, and in developing the positions we hold.

Safe Horizon has programs across New York City's five boroughs where we provide critical support and services to victims and survivors of all forms of violence and abuse. All of our programs serve young New Yorkers, but our Streetwork Project is specifically dedicated to serving runaway and homeless youth (RHY).

Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project provides shelter, showers, hot meals, therapy, service linkage, safer sex supports, case management, and so much more, in a therapeutic harm reduction community serving homeless youth ages 13 to 25. We work with homeless and street-involved young people to help them find safety and stability. Many homeless young people face a day-to-day struggle to survive, which can lead to physical and emotional harm. Homeless youth may have experienced family abuse, violence, rejection, and instability that led to their homelessness. We welcome these young people, help them navigate complex systems, and provide essential resources at our drop-in centers, at our overnight shelter, and through our street outreach teams. This work can be incredibly challenging but also rewarding. Our work at Streetwork did not pause during this pandemic. Rather, our dedicated team continued to respond to homeless and at-risk young people in need of shelter, services, and understanding. Streetwork has been doing this community-based work since 1984, and we will continue to do so for as long as our services are needed. In FY21, Streetwork provided services to nearly 600 clients across our drop-in centers and overnight shelter, while our overnight street outreach team engaged in over 4,300 contacts with homeless and at-risk young people.

Additionally, Safe Horizon is a proud member of the New York Coalition for Homeless Youth (CHY), which is a consortium of 65 agencies working to improve the lives of runaway, homeless, and street-involved youth across New York State. We work to recognize and uphold the plight of homelessness among young people across ethnicities, genders, and orientations and promote the safety, health, and future of unhoused youth across New York State. We echo the testimony CHY provided during this hearing.

We are grateful that the committee is holding this hearing today, as too often RHY and their needs are ignored and dismissed. My testimony today will focus on areas where this committee can hold our city to account in addressing the needs of RHY and ultimately ending youth homelessness.

Meeting the needs of older youth (21–24-year-olds)

DYCD drop-in centers are often one of the first points of contact for newly homeless young adults who just became homeless and have nowhere to go. These young people may have spent one or two nights on the street, but oftentimes they have not been street homeless. DYCD drop-in centers also serve a significant number of young adults who are couch-surfing and need a shelter referral because they have run out of people to stay with.

Many young adults refuse to go to or return to DHS shelters because these shelters can be traumatizing and violent for them. When youth shelter placement is not available, many young people opt for street homelessness or risky housing options (like living with an abusive intimate partner). NYC must continue to increase the number of DYCD RHY beds available for youth aged 21-24 years. There are currently only 60 beds in the DYCD system for 21–24-year-olds; however, this is an inadequate amount to meet the overwhelming need. And it can take up to 6 months for youth aged 21-24 to be placed into these beds. To ensure that older youth can benefit from the safety and security of youth-specific shelter supports, we need more RHY shelter beds for this population.

What we and our partner RHY organizations have come to understand is that RHY often have higher rates of experiences with trauma and mental health issues. Even folks who do access RHY beds have limited options for next steps – limited income and economic options, limited access to permanent affordable housing options, etc. – which results in these young people returning to homelessness and/or cycling in and out of homelessness. This is retraumatizing and perpetuates a dangerous, violent, damaging cycle for unhoused folks. While we advocate for additional shelter options, we also desperately need to prioritize connecting RHY to affordable subsidized housing options for young adults and to making all subsidized housing options accessible to all New Yorkers across our multiple shelter systems. For example, young people in homeless youth shelters have no priority status to apply for public housing, unlike their peers in the other shelter systems.

In our agreement to do referrals to Safe Havens & stabilization beds, we are required to offer a young adult a referral to traditional congregate DHS shelters first. And we do so. We have worked with many young adults who are willing to reside in a young adult DHS shelter but for whom the large, intimidating intake shelters are a real barrier to accessing shelter. Some clients flat out refuse to go back to a DHS intake shelter because they have already been to one and experienced violence, harassment, and/or other forms of mistreatment. Other clients have attempted to complete the intake process but gave up before their intake was complete because they did not feel safe there. We have seen much greater success when we have been able to complete the DHS intake form for a client, send in the intake form to generate a CARES ID, and directly request a transfer to a youth shelter. To put it more directly: drop-in centers need to have access to do "streamlined referrals" directly to the DHS young adult shelters, bypassing the intake shelters entirely. However, DHS is making this difficult at the moment.

Our clients have benefited from access to stabilization beds, but there remain some issues:

- Stabilization beds and Safe Havens are significantly more expensive than congregate young adult shelters. This results in the city preferring to invest in congregate shelter over stabilization beds and Safe Havens, which are safer options for many of our clients. While the City has added Safe Haven capacity over the last several years, which we appreciate, there is still not nearly enough capacity to respond to youth, LGBTQ+ folks, and women.
- People are only eligible for Safe Havens if we can document that they are chronically street homeless – 9 out of the last 24 months – which is a real challenge to prove.

- NYC does not have enough stabilization beds. There are hardly any Safe Haven and stabilization beds for women.
- NYC does not have LGBTQ-specific Safe Havens and stabilization beds, which is a real need that we see. We consistently hear from many LGBTQ+-identified clients that they do not feel safe or respected in the existing Safe Havens and stabilization bed sites. This is particularly true in Safe Havens. We hear this feedback most from transgender and gender-non-conforming clients.
- And there are no young adult-specific Safe Havens and stabilization beds. It is especially disheartening that with the expansion of Safe Havens and stabilization beds, the city explicitly declined to make a young adult-specific site.

We are open to ongoing feedback with the shelters to increase the chances of a successful placement. We continue working with our clients after they are placed (on a voluntary basis). A consent form could be part of the referral process so we can work with the young adult shelter to help support a successful placement/outcome. This is part of the process we developed with Safe Havens and stabilization beds to increase the chances of a successful placement.

The Need for Mental Health Shelters for RHY:

We are concerned that DHS does not have a completely accurate picture of what street homelessness looks like, what street homeless young adults look like, or what their service needs are. We, of course, work with young adults who are truly chronically street homeless – and we generally refer them to stabilization beds and Safe Havens because those are the appropriate referrals for those folks. We desperately needed a way to directly refer our clients to Safe Havens and stabilization beds because DHS outreach teams (and DHS-contracted outreach teams) were not seeing or serving our clients – even when they were chronically street homeless. The most common scenario that leads to young adults becoming chronically street homeless is a young adult being placed into a DHS mental health shelter and leaving because they are not comfortable and do not feel safe in a shelter with older adults. They feel safer on the streets.

New York City needs a youth shelter that has the capacity to work with youth who have serious mental illness and/or substance use issues. This currently does not exist in NYC. As the agency that works with more street homeless youth than any other, the most common pathway that we see to chronic street homelessness is that our clients try to access DHS shelter, are assigned to an adult mental health shelter, they do not feel safe there (and the primary reason we hear that they do not feel safe is due to the older adults who are also residents there), and they leave for their own safety. In our experience, RHY with serious mental health needs feel safer on the street than in their assigned shelter, so they remain on the street. Because they have an assigned shelter, that shelter is the only one they are allowed to access. This leads to chronic street homelessness amongst youth and young adults. The creation of a mental health shelter for youth can interrupt this pipeline to chronic street homelessness. Additionally, the longer someone remains on the street, the greater likelihood they will experience additional trauma(s), which only exacerbates and worsens mental health and substance use issues.

The Dangerousness of Sweeps of Unhoused New Yorkers:

Sweeps of homeless encampments disrupt and destabilize our clients' lives and often result in them losing their belongings, including important documents, medications, and items of personal value. Sweeps drive people further underground which makes it that much harder to connect with them, engage with them around their needs, and help them access services.

Youth Count:

Our experience of the Youth Count is that it is blatantly inaccurate and a drain on time and resources. If the Administration would like to ensure an accurate count, the city must intentionally invest much more funding. An accurate count also requires intentional and purposeful collaboration with youth.

The 2021 Youth Count found 7 street homeless youth in NYC. When added to the HOPE count, which found 125 street homeless youth, only 132 street homeless youth supposedly reside in NYC. For service providers like Streetwork, the Youth Count is unfunded, which is especially frustrating because our staff must complete Youth Count surveys while continuing to provide services to street homeless youth in the middle of winter. Our dedicated staff would rather focus all attention on assisting with shelter referrals and other crisis services, and our clients, who come to us in crisis in the middle of winter, are focused on survival needs rather than a survey. To then see a completely inaccurate undercount published by the city makes the process that much more demoralizing and frustrating.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Our Safe Horizon and Streetwork Project teams are always happy to answer any questions you may have and provide additional context and insight.



June 23, 2022

To Members of the Committee on Immigration and the Committee on Youth Services,

My name is Johan Lopez. I'm the Director of Adult and Immigrant Services at Sunnyside Community Services (SCS).

As we have just crossed the two-year anniversary of the first shutdown due to COVID-19, it is important to reflect on what immigrant New Yorkers experienced and how integral community-based organizations were in keeping communities together.

While some within the community-at-large were able to transition to remote work, immigrant New Yorkers were far less likely to have this option. They continued to work in-person throughout the pandemic. They prepared and delivered meals to our front doors, stocked our shelves, cared for our children and our homebound family members, and did countless other jobs that kept the city functional for people who *did* have the flexibility to stay home. Advocates always understood that their work was essential. But because of the pandemic, all were able to recognize the value that immigrant New Yorkers bring to our city.

But immigrant New Yorkers have struggled the last two years, some lost their jobs and others saw a significant reduction in their wages. Community-based organizations, like ours, set-up food pantries for those who were food insecure. And when immigrant New Yorkers struggled to pay rent and utilities, our team members were present to help them navigate complex benefits systems and to help them secure hundreds of thousands of dollars in emergency relief.

The next few months will continue to be a challenge for most of our participants. To address many of the challenges that immigrant New Yorkers face (unaffordable housing, precarious immigration status, subminimum wage) requires coordination efforts between local organizations, the City of New York, New York State, and the federal government.

The New York City Council, however, took an incredible step to further supporting immigrant New Yorkers. In the budget handshake, Speaker Adams announced a doubling of baseline adult literacy funding. The New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL) had been integral in advocating for increased funding. As a member of NYCCAL, **SCS must ensure that the \$6.7 million in additional funding be used for program enhancements such as additional supports, services, and resources to the same number of students served in fiscal year 2022.**

In FY 22, SCS was able to further support our students by offering counseling services in addition to other wrap-around services. Our team members have been able to help students navigate public benefits including SNAP, NYC Care, and housing and financial supports. If we are not permitted to use additional funding as program enhancements, we will be unable to provide these services to our students. **We must also reject any suggestion that providers must use funding to expand services to more students at the same \$949 per student rate.**

Additionally, SCS seeks to ensure that remote and hybrid instruction are still available to immigrant New Yorkers. Students who participate in our remote instruction courses have had mobility/accessibility issues that limit their ability to access in person classes. Other students are parents with young children or caregivers of older adults. We also encounter students who are unable to afford commuting costs associated with traveling throughout the City of New York. **We must ensure that remote and hybrid instruction are permitted in our scope of services for our ESOL programming.**

I urge the Committee on Immigration and the Committee on Youth Services to:

1. Ensure that the additional \$6.7 million in funding in FY 23 for RFP-contracted programs are used to fund enhancements; including additional wrap-around services, supports, and resources – **for the same number of students that providers served in FY 22.**
2. Commit to increasing the cost per student to at least **\$1,900** per student in the forthcoming DYCD Adult Literacy RFP for fiscal year 24 and beyond.
3. Ensure that DYCD **allows remote and hybrid instruction** for FY 23 and in the next RFP.

Thank you,

Johan Lopez
Director of Adult and Immigrant Services
Sunnyside Community Services

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City Council Hearing on Adult literacy written testimony

Andrea Negret

6/22/2022

As a program assistant within the ESOL Program at Sunnyside Community Services. I am in direct contact with students on a daily basis. I have learned about their needs and interests throughout my work. Since I started this position in Fall 2020, I have witnessed the transition from 100% remote education to a hybrid model where we offer the option to study in-person and remotely. It is clear that there are many students who prefer and benefit from in-person education since they can communicate directly with their instructors and build stronger connections with their classmates. Some students who don't have access to devices or have difficulty using technology can also benefit from in-person instruction.

However, I have also witnessed that many of our students who choose in-person instruction have inconsistent attendance or drop from the program because of schedule conflicts and family responsibilities. Students with full-time jobs or students who are parents with young children have a difficult time attending in-person classes even when they have a strong desire and need to learn English. There have been some cases where in-person students can't commit to in-person classes because of health related conditions. This is why I consider that keeping a flexible model in which students have the option to learn remotely is not just convenient but it's necessary to offer an accessible and truly inclusive program to immigrant New Yorkers in our city. Remote instruction provides flexibility to both students. It also increases attendance and retention.



Written Testimony of Teresa Baik
Director of Education at Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (KCS)
Before the
New York City Council Committees on Immigration and Youth Services
Regarding
Executive Budget Hearings – Adult Literacy
June 22nd, 2022

Thank you to Committee Chair Hanif, Committee Chair Stevens, and all council members of the Committee on Immigration and those of Youth Services for this opportunity to testify on behalf of our students and community members. My name is Teresa Baik and I am the Director of Education for Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (KCS). I am grateful for this opportunity to testify on the needs of our community, particularly on adult literacy. We'd like to thank the members of the city council that saw the need for increased funding for the coming fiscal year and advocated on our behalf during the budget cycle.

Founded in 1973, Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York (KCS) is the first Korean community-based social service organization in New York City. KCS' mission is to be a bridge for Korean immigrants and the wider Asian American community. Our services focus on assisting our community members in overcoming any economic, health, and linguistic barriers to become independent and thriving members of the community. KCS serves over 1,300 individuals daily from six different locations throughout New York City, with culturally competent programs focusing on aging, immigration, public health and research, senior employment, education, and mental health. For over 20 years, KCS has provided adult literacy classes through city and state funding. Each year, the number of students that we serve has increased and the number of classes we now provide is evidence of the success for our ESOL program and the constant need for adult literacy programming in our communities. Prior to the pandemic, our in-person classes operated Mondays through Saturdays, with flexible class times in the morning, afternoon, and evening to best accommodate our students and their busy schedules.

However, due to the effects of COVID-19, many programs like ours have had to navigate difficult challenges but the resiliency of community-based service organizations with the support of city agencies provided opportunity for us to adapt quickly and continue services with as little disruption as possible through remote learning, technological support, and our dedicated staff. Using online platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and YouTube, our instructors have been able to help our students build their confidence in their English skills to fulfill the mission of providing our clients to overcome the barriers to a secure future as well as being a productive member of their community.

KCS Main Office Adult Daycare Education Immigration	Corona Senior Center	Flushing Senior Center	Public Health and Research Center Workforce Development	Brooklyn Project	Mental Health Clinic
203-05 32 nd Avenue Bayside, NY 11361	37-06 111 th Street Corona, NY 11368 Tel: (718) 651-9220	42-15 166th Street Flushing, NY 11358 Tel: (718) 886-8203	325 W 38th Street, Ste. 1210 New York, NY 10018	8710 5th Ave. 1FL Bay Ridge, NY 11209 Tel: (718) 630-0001 Fax: (718) 630-0002	42-16 162nd Street, 2FL Flushing, NY 11358 Tel: (718) 366-9540 Fax: (718) 534-4149



Many of our students have shared how remote classes have helped them since we began this new method. First, students were better able to cope with isolation and mental health issues during the height of the pandemic. Secondly, students were better able to manage their time since they did not have to be on location to take classes and could manage their time for family and work responsibilities while being able to take classes. This gave many immigrant families a much-needed reprieve and an opportunity to pursue their goals in learning and improving their English skills. The unique change to our learning and working culture across the world has given KCS and other organizations the opportunity to reach out to a great number of students who are now able to find time to advance their English journey.

Yet, there are continuous needs in adult literacy programming for the community that put many of our students at risk of disruption of the resources they need. As a means to continue and improve the level of services that are available to the community, KCS recommends the following actions to be considered by the committee:

1. Remote and Hybrid Options: As mentioned above, the importance of having a remote option for classes is important for many of our working families and those who are still at risk of COVID-19 and the prevalence of fear stemming from the ongoing threats from anti-Asian sentiments throughout the city. For some students, it is impossible to find services in a culturally relevant organization that can help provide them the services they need, requiring them to travel across multiple boroughs to get assistance. Additionally, hybrid options allow for students to schedule only certain days to come on location for their classes, allowing students to benefit from in-person interaction and instruction while also managing their schedules for work or home. Currently, DYCD and city policy is barring remote options from consideration for FY23, which may result many students negatively. FY23 and future RFPs should continue to allow remote and hybrid options that best fit the community that needs these critical services.
2. Quality over Quantity: The additional \$6.7 million in funding for FY23 is a welcome support for many organizations like ours, but the allocation of those funds should be used to fund enhancements such as wrap-around services, support, resources, and other efforts that improve and promote the level of quality in education for adult literacy. By expanding the services to more students at the same low rate may reach additional potential students but would not offer the same or better level of quality to the students. Additional funding per student ensures better support and services for students to make better outcomes in their classes.
3. Investing in Students: DYCD’s RFP currently states that there is \$950 per student for support through adult literacy programs but is inadequate with the level of support community organizations are expected to provide. We recommend increasing that amount to at least \$1900

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per student to provide higher quality services through support and resources that benefit the community overall.

We at KCS are grateful that the City Council continues to support our adult literacy students and others as well. As the city continues to bolster our communities, it is important that we ask the committee to consider the new needs of students and community members. These past few years have created an unprecedented shift that we expect to persist onwards, and so we ask the committee members to continue supporting our communities and organizations as dedicatedly as always with the well-being of residents in mind.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

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TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

Oversight – Adult Literacy Programming and Resources

**New York City Council Committee on Immigration
New York City Council Committee on Youth Services
Honorable Rita Joseph, Chair**

**Submitted by:
Ariel Savransky, UJA-Federation of New York**

June 23rd, 2022

Good afternoon and thank you Chairs Hanif and Stevens and members of the New York City Council Committee on Immigration and Youth Services for the opportunity to testify. My name is Ariel Savransky and I am a Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA-Federation of NY.

Established more than 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation’s largest local philanthropies. Central to UJA’s mission is to care for those in need—identifying and meeting the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. UJA has more than 50 thousand engaged donors in the New York area, supports an expansive network of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services, and allocates over \$150 million each year to strengthen Jewish life, combat poverty and food insecurity, nurture mental health and well-being and respond to crises here and across the globe.

UJA thanks the City Council and the Mayor for the \$6.7M enhancement to adult literacy funding in the FY23 budget, and also congratulates Keith Howard on his appointment as the new commissioner of the DYCD.

There are more than 2.2 million adults in New York City with limited English proficiency or who lack a high school diploma. Many of these New Yorkers have been on the frontlines of the pandemic, performing the essential work that has been sustaining our communities – as grocery workers, delivery workers, home care workers, and parents. Others are service workers and domestic workers who lost their jobs and incomes and have faced a harsh reality with little or no safety net. While adult literacy education is only one part of the solution, it is essential to a fair, just, and sustainable recovery.

The majority of adults in NYC with limited literacy skills are women and people of color. Over 75% are immigrants, including many who are undocumented. Others are BIPOC who were born in the US and underserved by the public school system. Adult literacy education can provide the foundation for greater security and autonomy, as well as the tools to access, navigate, analyze –

and ultimately transform – social, political, and economic systems and conditions.

When it comes to city and state funding for adult literacy education, there are a number of challenges. The first is that combined city and state funding is so limited that fewer than 4% of the 2.2 million adults who could benefit from adult basic education, high school equivalency, or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are able to access seats in any given year. The second is that the level of investment per student is so low that programs are unable to provide the full range supports, services, and resources that students need and deserve. The last is that the funding places such an emphasis on increasing test scores, accruing credentials, and achieving workforce outcomes that it fails to recognize and honor the full breadth of students' goals and the myriad ways that programs work to build the collective power of individuals, families, and communities.

Adult literacy education is the key to economic security and social mobility. Median wages for adults with a high school diploma or its equivalent are 24% greater than for those without a diploma. Furthermore, higher levels of literacy are associated with greater health knowledge, more efficient use of healthcare services, and the ability to manage chronic health conditions and communicate with healthcare providers. Increased literacy not only benefits individuals, it also drives broader economic growth. A national study from Gallup found that “getting all U.S. adults to at least a Level 3 literacy proficiency would generate an additional \$2.2 trillion in annual income for the country,” and that large cities like New York would see a 10% increase in gross domestic product.

UJA thanks the Administration and the City Council for continuing to invest in adult literacy programs in the FY23 budget. UJA was grateful to see that the council renewed the \$4 million of **Council Adult Literacy Discretionary funding for program continuity as well as the \$2.5 million to continue the NYC Council Adult Literacy Pilot Program** to continue to provide 20 programs with between \$70,000 and \$150,000 of additional funds to invest in full-time teachers, counselors, expanded student support services, professional development and planning time for staff, and upgrades to technology to support digital literacy development. The pilot also recognizes and encourages a broader range of outcomes, including support for health literacy, financial literacy, immigrant rights, workers' rights, housing advocacy, culturally responsive education, and student leadership development. UJA was also grateful to see an additional \$6.7 million from the Administration in one year funding for adult literacy programs.

In support of adult learners, we call on the City Council and the Administration to support these three critical steps:

- 1) **The additional \$6.7 million in funding in FY23 for RFP-contracted programs must be used to fund “enhancements” – i.e., additional wrap-around services, supports, and resources – for the same number of students as those programs served in FY22, and NOT to try to “expand” services to more students at the same low rate.**
- 2) **DYCD must commit to increasing the per student funding rate in the next RFP from \$950 per student to at least \$1,900 per student.**

In December 2017, the Literacy Assistance Center released [*Investing in Quality: A Blueprint for Adult Literacy Programs and Funders*](#). Funded by DYCD, the report details 14 "Building Blocks" of a comprehensive, community-based adult literacy program, identifies the resources needed to fully implement the Building Blocks, and includes a first-of-its-kind cost model and budget. Based on the budget, the cost of implementing all the Building Blocks would be approximately \$7,400 per seat (or "slot") for 400 hours of instruction a year. Assuming that an average of two students would move through each slot in any given year, the cost per student would be approximately \$3,700 annually. This is roughly four times DYCD's current rate of approximately \$950 per student.

Unfortunately, the \$950 per student rate has not been increased in years, and programs struggle to supplement funding in order to continue to pay qualified teachers and maintain usable spaces for classes. The per student rate has not changed despite significant increases in the costs of running programs and maintaining living wages for staff. While the goal of \$3700 per student has not yet been reached, the \$2.5 million Adult Literacy Pilot program passed by the council last year and renewed in the FY23 budget provides a template for what a fully funded adult literacy program could look like. The adult literacy pilot doubled the amount of funding for students in those programs without requiring additional students to be served. This has enabled programs to make significant improvements to the quality of services they provided, including updating and expanding curriculum, adding and improving remote services, increasing focus on digital literacy, increased student outreach and support, and more. It has also allowed for a broadening of focus, allowing for programs to address particular populations like parents, or respond to immediate needs in the community.

As DYCD prepares the RFP for the upcoming term of adult literacy funding, it must honor the lessons learned through this pilot and increase the rates for programs who provide this essential service to their communities. By raising the rates per student from \$950 to at least \$1,900, DYCD would remedy the unsustainably low rates for adult literacy providers, both improving the quality of programming and creating financially sustainable contracts for providers. The additional \$6.7M provided as an enhancement in the budget this year must be used for this purpose.

3) DYCD must allow for remote and hybrid instruction BOTH in FY23 AND in the next RFP.

Programs held remote classes throughout the pandemic, providing quality adult literacy supports while themselves gaining expertise in remote learning practices. While some students have been able to return to in-person classes, many have not, or were provided an opportunity to take adult literacy classes for the first time only because of the availability of remote learning. Allowing students to continue studying remotely is effective and beneficial, irrespective of the impacts of the public health crisis. Member organizations who have polled their students show that many students who studied in virtual classes never took an adult education class before the pandemic. They also indicate that the majority of students will find another provider that offers remote instruction or stop taking classes altogether if the organization where they're studying stops offering remote learning. Adult learners function very differently than young children. They are capable of determining a learning style that works best for them.

There are many barriers that can prevent adult students from attending in-person classes. These may include: mental health barriers, child or elder care responsibilities, insufficient funds to pay for commuting costs, and/or lack of geographical access to nearby adult literacy providers with the culturally competent services that meet their needs.

Over the past two years, CBOs have seen the value, impact, and potential of remote and hybrid models of adult literacy education for some of the most marginalized and difficult-to-reach students. What we have witnessed in New York City is consistent with the findings of adult literacy programs across the country, and we are seeing remote and hybrid models being promoted nationally.

Given all of the above, and in order to enable CBO adult literacy providers to continue to serve all those in need of these programs, UJA urges the Council and the Administration to allow for hybrid and remote classes, in addition to in-person, to provide greater opportunity for New York's English language learners to access these necessary resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. UJA looks forward to working with the Council and the Administration to ensure that New York City is effectively serving its English language learners. Please contact Ariel Savransky at savranskya@ujafedny.org with any questions.



45 Broadway, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10006
212-967-0322 | www.unhny.org

New York City Council Hearing on Adult Literacy Programming
Chair Shahana Hanif, Immigration Committee
Chair Althea Stevens, Youth Services Committee
June 23, 2022

Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Submitted by Lena Cohen, Senior Policy Analyst

Thank you, Chairs Hanif and Stevens and members of the New York City Council Committees on Immigration and Youth Services for the opportunity to testify. My name is Lena Cohen, and I am a Senior Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses (UNH). UNH is a policy and social change organization representing 45 neighborhood settlement houses, 40 in New York City, that reach 765,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life.

A progressive leader for more than 100 years, UNH is stewarding a new era for New York's settlement house movement. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies and promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all New Yorkers. UNH leads advocacy and partners with our members on a broad range of issues including civic and community engagement, neighborhood affordability, healthy aging, early childhood education, adult literacy, and youth development. We also provide customized professional development and peer learning to build the skills and leadership capabilities of settlement house staff at all levels.

UNH advocates for an adult literacy system that provides quality, comprehensive, and accessible educational services for New Yorkers to improve their literacy skills, learn English, obtain a High School Equivalency diploma, and enter training and post-secondary education.

Adult Literacy in FY23

UNH appreciates the leadership and commitment of the New York City Council and the Mayor to support and enhance community-based adult education programs in the city. In particular, we thank our champions in the City Council for the \$6.7 million enhancement to adult literacy funding in the FY23 budget.

To make the most of this adult literacy enhancement in FY23, UNH calls on the City Council and the Mayor to support these three critical steps:

1. The additional \$6.7 million in funding for RFP-contracted programs must be used to fund “enhancements” – i.e., additional wrap-around services, supports, and resources – for the same number of students as those programs served in FY22, and not be used to try to “expand” services to more students at the same unsustainably low rate.
2. DYCD must commit to increasing the per student funding rate in the next RFP from \$950 per student to at least \$1,900 per student.
3. DYCD must allow for remote and hybrid instruction both in FY23 and in the upcoming adult literacy RFP.

Increase Per-Student Rates

As a whole, the city’s adult literacy system provides over two hundred classes that reach New Yorkers in need of English literacy, health literacy, digital literacy, and the ability for parents to independently support their children’s education. The success of adult learners is often predicated on how well programs can accommodate their other social service needs. A working parent without reliable access to childcare, an adult learner with mental health challenges, or a skilled professional from abroad in need of immediate employment, can more easily commit and benefit from classes if those needs are met. While the level of support services offered vary by provider, resources in community-based organizations like settlement houses include case management, workforce development programming, child care assistance, college planning guidance, legal assistance, behavioral health services, and housing assistance.

One of the significant challenges of the adult literacy system is that it is seriously underfunded, and where funding does exist, it is at reimbursement rates that do not fully cover the cost of delivering high-quality adult literacy classes. A 2017 DYCD-commissioned report conducted by the Literacy Assistance Center -- titled *Investing in Quality* -- analyzed the true costs of providing quality adult literacy programming and found that on average, adult literacy programs cost about \$3,600 to provide instruction and support to each student they serve¹. Instead, the city’s current reimbursement rate is about \$950 per student. This rate has not been raised in years, despite significant increases in the costs of running programs and maintaining living wages for staff. This means that many adult literacy providers are actually experiencing a loss on contracts when they provide literacy services to their community and must raise private dollars to support this program.

While we have not yet reached that goal, the \$2.5 million Adult Literacy Pilot program passed by the City Council last year and that was renewed in the FY23 budget provides a template for what a fully funded adult literacy program looks like. The adult literacy pilot increases the amount of funding for students in those programs without requiring additional students served. This has enabled programs to make significant improvements to the quality of services they provide, including updating and expanding curriculum, adding and improving remote services, increasing focus on digital literacy, increased student outreach and support, and more. It has also allowed for programs to address the needs of particular populations like parents, or respond to immediate needs in their communities.

¹ Literacy Assistance Center, 2017. *Investing in Quality, A Blueprint for Adult Literacy Programs and Funders*: <http://www.lacnyc.org/investing-in-quality.html>.

As DYCD prepares an RFP for the upcoming term of adult literacy funding, it must honor the lessons learned through this pilot and increase the rates to programs who provide this essential service in their communities. By raising the per-student rate from \$950 to at least \$1,900, DYCD would remedy the current unsustainably low rates for adult literacy providers, both improving the quality of programming and creating financially sustainable contracts for providers. The additional \$6.7 million provided as an enhancement in the FY23 budget must be used for this purpose.

Support Digital Literacy

UNH also urges DYCD to consider remote learning and digital literacy skills as core components of a successful adult education program. Since March of 2020, following the start of the pandemic, adult literacy programs transitioned to remote and hybrid instruction models with positive results. Community members who had previously been unable to attend in-person classes due to needing to take care of family members and/or children have found remote learning to be a more convenient opportunity for educational gains.

Remote learning has allowed students to balance consistent participation in literacy classes with supporting their children in school, meeting work responsibilities, and providing care to family members. Additionally, through remote classes, students gain much-needed digital literacy skills through new learning tools such as video conferencing, online task management, and information searching as they navigate new platforms. These skills will help put our community members in a stronger position as New York City rebuilds its post-COVID economy.

In closing, UNH calls on DYCD to use the \$6.7 million enhancement for adult literacy in FY23 to increase rates per student and to increase flexibility for remote learning to ensure that every adult in need is able to gain access to high-quality adult literacy services. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and for your efforts to ensure that adult literacy programs are funded to provide vital education and wrap-around support to vulnerable New Yorkers.

For questions, please contact Lena Cohen at lcohen@unhny.org.

Abdoul Bachirou Sanoussi

bachsanoussi@yahoo.com

Testimony

Joining IC was an incredible opportunity and an amazing experience. Beside improving English which was my main purpose, I realized that IC wasn't a single type of program with only one topic. We had chance as students to learn and discuss many topics such as laws, immigration status, jobs search, certifications through presentations of SUNY attain, Streetwise program (SWP), etc...

I earned a Microsoft 365 subscriptions for life and more than 5 certificates with SUNY attain. I also got help with my resume at IC witch allowed me to apply to SWP program. I am currently a SWP program mentee.

I'm not going to end without mentioning the friends I made at IC.

Thanks and congratulations to all IC members and Teachers.

Alma González

06-18-22.

My adult education program is important to me because. I need to speak English. When I go to the hospitals with my family. I need to speak English. For to find a good job. and can I help to my son his home work. For my is very important to learn more English in this country.

The virtual classes give me a opportunity. to learn English. I'm very happy For to studying English in this program is no easy for mi to go to the school in person. I would like but I can't because I have my kids and I don't have to someone take care then is very important to me can I receive my lessons on line.

From: Артём Чишкин <artem.web.ch@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 26, 2022 11:13 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I ask you to allocate funds for remote classes.

Hi.
I am Artem Chishkin.
I study American English in remote classes at school "COPE".
I live with my old grandparents.
They are 76 years old, so they are not recommended to leave for a long time alone.
I ask you to allocate funds for remote classes.

To Whom it May Concern

I am Bagdagul Alisherova. I have been an ESL student at Mrs Linda's classes remotely for the past 6 month.

For me, these courses are very necessary, because without knowledge of the English language it is very difficult in everyday life.

I have benefited a lot from Mrs Linda's clases. My vocabulary has increased, I began to understand speech better when communicating with people. Thanks to Mrs Linda's clases, I learned a lot about the history of the USA. I also learned how to answer interview questions when looking for a job and many other necessary topics.

I would like remote classes to continue because I have 3 children, and one of them has cerebral palsy. So it would be convenient for me to continue my studies remotely.

Thank you for this opportunity.

With best regards - Bagdagul Alisherova.

To Whom it May Concern,

I have been an ESL student studying remotely for more than a year (about 14 months).

During this time, I have benefited a lot from Linda's, and Katya's classes. Before these classes I had difficulties with communication since I could not speak English well. Now, I have a massive improvement in speaking, listening, and writing, and also was able to get a part-time job (I also work remotely).

I would like remote classes to continue:

- Since I'm a single mother and can't leave my kid without care, I find remote classes beneficial.
- If the classes were not remote, I would spend time on transportation and would not be able to work, which is very important for my financial situation.

Yours sincerely,

Tamar Magaldadze

06/22/2022

Hi. My name is Farojan Saeed, but my friends call me Joty. I live in the neighborhood of Kensington in Brooklyn.

You may not know much about my neighborhood, however it is a beautiful community. I am proud to be a member of this community, and I'm proud of both where I come from and where I live.

One thing about our community is that we stick close together. We are part of a culture that has specific customs. When it comes to bringing adult literacy to our community, it must be very careful and thoughtful. If you just start an English class without first involving the community members, you may likely not be very successful.

Because of this Adult Literacy Pilot project, members of the Fifth Avenue Committee, through Council Member Hanif's office, reached out to us in the community to involve us in the planning and development of an Adult Literacy and Digital Skills program. Catherine, Eric, Brian, Angie have taken the time and made the effort to understand the needs of this community and involve me, along with other community members, including the Bangladeshi Ladies Club, in gathering important information towards building a curriculum and scheduling programming that reflect that involvement. They were able to do this because of the resources provided through the Adult Literacy pilot project.

If something (anything) is going to work in a community, it needs to be well thought out and based on real knowledge of that community. Because of your support, both FAC and the community members of Kensington have a real chance at building something that will be meaningful and will last.

Thank you.

To Whom it May Concern,

I have been an ESL student studying remotely for the past two years. I have benefited a lot from Linda's class.

This class have helped me to improve my English to get a job in the future, which is too important to me. In particular, earlier I had more Language barrier and after the class, I have improvements in this regard. But, of course I definitely need language courses to achieve better results. Also, from these lessons I get a knowledge not only about the language but also a huge information about the current challenges and culture in USA and the world. When you do not live in your natural country and don't know their culture and habits, you meet a lot of problems and situations and it's really help me.

I would like remote classes to continue because I had a little baby, she's two years and I take care of her. The second reason why I would like remote classes is that I have moved far from the city center and to get there I need to change 3 kind of transports and of course, I need a huge time. In addition, I do not feel safe in the NYC subway. Therefore, it is critically important to me to be in touch with the English Language. At that time, I feel like the class is my "job", because I know I have to attend the class in the afternoon and then make the homework. When I do my homework, I feel that I do something important for me, for my family and the future.

Please, if there is a little chance let us continue studding remotely.

Sincerely,

Ia Chkhaidze
22.06.2022

Josep
Avila

Saturday 18 June 2022

Sixth Class

1) What does my adult education program mean to me?

Is important for me because is the form for prepared me for the life learn study can by someone in the life in this world.

2) How have virtual classes helped me?

I think that classes should continue to be virtual because is the form are safe and protect me for the COVI-19 but it's okay one day in person can be a trip or a meeting in a park.

From: Jillian Vigon <JVigon@henrystreet.org>
Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2022 1:23 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Vigon

I'm here today to testify on behalf of the need to increase funding for each adult student in NYC. Although I was able to achieve my High School Equivalency Diploma through the Henry Street Workforce Development Center, I believe that this was despite the funding at the time; it was a result of determined teachers. Increasing student funding will provide more tools and time to ensure tremendous success in achieving GED diplomas.

I realize I am the exception to the general demographics of adult literacy programs. The profile I carry of a NYC native Caucasian female often worked to my disadvantage. The assumptions are that someone with my characteristics would not need additional support. My inability to finish high school was not a result of a lack of learning but rather a lack of support. My education pitfalls resulted from life circumstances that included family issues, financial challenges, and health complexities. I also lacked a general belief in myself, especially when compared to those in my community. This became not a case of conquering science and math but rather conquering myself.

I enrolled in the HSE preparation program at Henry Street Settlement 9 years after high school. I was pursued outside of program hours to get myself to commit to a process of learning that I thought I would fail at. I was seen as capable and worthwhile. This was the most essential piece of my success - increasing my sense of my own worth. The program motivated me to commit to myself. Additionally, the use of remote learning was a value add for this process for those like myself with health limitations.

If my struggle was as hard as it was, what was it like for people with more significant challenges? Like immigrants? People without English, family, income, or housing? People with emotional, mental, or learning disabilities? How would they go the distance without more support from the city?

I'm presenting my story today of mixed struggle and privilege as an example of someone who was luckier than most; I still almost failed. I almost failed myself. The great city of New York must step up and provide greater funding per student so that they can succeed sooner, faster, and more completely. Ultimately, this will cost the city less, as fewer people cycle in and out.

Today I stand here proud to be a product of these resources, but I feel more is needed. I have a newfound passion for social impact to improve the lives of others like myself. I was inspired by the support I received at Henry Street and am paying it forward by working with and for them today and appealing to you to do more. Please do not fail the thousands like me who want to succeed.

Jillian Vigon
Business & Employment Developer
Summer Youth Employment Program
Henry Street Settlement
301 Henry Street | New York, NY 10002
Office: (212) 254-3100

Hello my name is Kettly Louisaint, and I'm a student in English Class.

For me this program is very very important because everyday you meet the people who have a different language with you, how are you can't talk to them, if you not study English , me my family and others people we ere immigrants people. Of program helps to improve my English because you in a country which is not yours, how you can speak to the people with your colleagues of work, of program it's really important for me and for the other students ,this program allows you to make the effort. Thank you.

Linda Ling

My name is Linda. I think that class should continue to be virtual because my kids has at home, I can take them at the same time learn English. During the pandemic, I keep learning English, my English improved a lot. Learning English is very important for me, a few years ago I couldn't understand what did people say. I didn't go outside alone, I didn't understand anything, I couldn't speak English, I am scared to talk people. I don't have a good communication. I can't find a good job. So I hope to keep learning English, I want to go to the high school and college. I want to get a high school diploma and a college diploma, this is my dream. I want to teach my son's homework and join their teachers parents conference. English can change my life. I hope to find a great job. I hope leaning English too much. I want to practices my English with my classmates.

Ludovica Moreau

Written Testimony for Immigration Hearing

- 1) *MY Adult Education program is important to me because I need to learn more English go to the college and then get a better job.*

- 2) *The virtual classes help me about the technology because I can using better my computer*

- 3) *I Think classes should continue to be virtual because I can save time, money no train no bus ,no mask because, some people have allergies with mask specially me but sometimes I don't have choice I put it Thanks God I can take my classes*

NAME: MARIE MICHELINE TAYLOR CHARLES

The adult education program means a lot to me. It helps me understand when someone speaks with me, how to better understand the English language, how to speak, how to write a correct sentence, understand the American and other countries culture, and it is helping me to achieve one of my goals.

The virtual classes helped me because it is more flexible for me to participate in virtual than in person. It is better for me to be at home and take the class. I have three children and no babysitter. With this program I do not miss any virtual cases.

From: Metrorussia Pcsmoskva <metropcsmoskva@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 26, 2022 11:22 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] classes of COPE

Good day,
My name is Natalay.
I was hurt in the car accident. After this I have problems with my back and leg so I can visit only online classes.
So I ask to support our school and don't close our ZOOM class.

Natalya Ivanova



Без вирусов. www.avast.ru

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Nonna Agaronova and I have been a remote learning student for the past 7 months. I have benefited a lot from Linda's classes. I would like remote classes continue because this is only opportunity for me to learn English ,since I am a housewife with children who need care, I am the only one who can take them to school and pick them up.

Before I started Linda's classes I was ashamed to communicate with my children's teachers because I didn't know the language at all, but now I really improved my English skills and I confidently began to speak and do not avoid communication, I attend parent teachers conferences with confidence. I really hope I can continue my remote studying and improve my language skills further.

Thank you for your understanding!

To Whom it May Concern,

I have been an ESL student for 1.5 years and my teacher is Mrs. Linda. Her lessons helped me a lot to understand, speak, and read better in English. I still need to study to improve my English and feel more confident in a new country.

I am a family woman. I have two children who need to be taken and picked up from school.

I do not have the opportunity to go to school and study in person. It will be a big loss for me if online lessons are transferred to face-to-face. I can't let my kids go to school alone. It is not safe.

I ask you not to change the format of our education and give me and all the students in my class the opportunity to study online.

Sincerely,
Dilnoza Lyuftilaeva

From: Olga Mtveeva <stavmtv@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2022 7:35 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Online course

I, Olga Matveeva, appeal to you with a big request to leave the online course at Cope Esl. With the help of your wise and highly professional teachers, Mrs. Katya and Mrs. Linda, in a year I began to speak a little and understand a lot. I won't be able to go to classes because it's far and expensive for me. Thank you for this academic year and I really hope that our online lessons will continue.

Olga Mtveeva

To whom it may concern,

I have been a remote learning student for the past 3 months. I have benefited a lot from Linda's classes. I would like remote classes to continue because of childcare issues. I have a 10 month old daughter. For me this is the only way to continue to learn English.

Sincerely,

Ripsime Ayrapetyan

6/22/2022

To Whom it May Concern,

I have been an ESL student studying remotely for the past 2 years.

I have benefited a lot from these classes because I can get information like American histories, current events and current affair of politics etc. Also I get to know about opinions from multinational classmates. These have helped my English level and everyday life to improve.

I would like remote classes to continue because I feel uncomfortable on NYC subway system. I am Japanese so I am afraid of Asian Hate and crimes whenever I take subway alone. If the classes continue remotely, I will learn English safely.

Thank you for your consideration.

Setsuko Yoshikawa

From: Татьяна Чишкина <tatyachishkina@mail.ru>
Sent: Saturday, June 25, 2022 1:19 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] online classes in COPE

Good day, dears.

My name is Tatiana Chishkina.

My family (my mom, my son and I) are students ESL Cope.

We learn English in COPE via ZOOM.

It's a bad news that our classes online can be closed.

My mom is person with disability and for her personal classes is difficult because she has problem with moving.

When online classes became — it was really help for her.

I'd rather online-classes because I try don't leave my mom for long time. The way to the personal classes takes time.

My son also prefer online classes. He knows English no good and online classes give opportunity to learn English better because there are less people then in personal class and he can take more information.

We are asking don't close online classes.

We hope for your undestanding and support.

Best regards,

Tatiana Chishkina

From: Julia Ostromogilskaya <ostromogil@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2022 2:55 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My testimony

Hello, my name is Yulia Ostromogilskaya, I am 74 years old, was born in Ukrain.
I moved in the USA New York at 2014, where lived my family (my daughter, son in law and three daughters). All these years I have been learning English language. Two years ago I became an America's citizen.
I am continuing to learn English by Zoom, it became a part of my life.
My teachers, Yekaterina Bergmans and Nana Rankell, are helping me to be a real citizen of this country. I want to speak in English with my neighbors, with my grandchildrens, friends from church. It's also difficult for me to understand correspondence that I get from medical offices, banks, coop, etc.
I can see my teachers by Zoom, listen the pronunciation, answer to their questions , send my homework. I can see my classmates, we became the friends.
I invited my three friends to our classes by Zoom.
It will be very hard for me to travel to in person classes.
Please don't cancel our classes by Zoom.
Thank you for your time.
Yulia
Ostromogil@gmail.com.

Sent from my iPad

- What does my adult education
Program mean to me?

It means a lot for me, It helps me
understand how the Country works, it
allowed me to find my citizenship. I
learned another language. It allowed
me to make the difference between
the Educational pedagogy of the US
and that of my native Country.

Testimony:

Joining IC (**the International Center of Catholic Charities Community Services**) was an incredible opportunity and an amazing experience. Beside improving English, which was my main purpose, I realized that IC wasn't a single type of program with only one topic. We had chance as students to learn and discuss many topics such as laws, immigration status, jobs search, certifications through presentations of SUNY attain, Streetwise Partners program (SWP), etc...

I earned a Microsoft 365 subscriptions for life and more than 5 certificates with SUNY attain. I also got help with my resume at IC which allowed me to apply to SWP program. I am currently a SWP program mentee.

I'm not going to end without mentioning the friends I made at IC.

Thanks, and congratulations to all IC members and Teachers.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Assoc Commissioner Rong

Address: zheng

I represent: Dy CD

Address: 123 William St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KARFEMA HUSSEIN

Address: 253 BROADWAY, 4TH FL NY, NY 10007

I represent: Administration (MOIA)

Address: 253 BROADWAY, 4TH FL NY NY 10007

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Miosotis Minor

Address: 253 Broadway 4th Fl, NY 10007

I represent: Mayor's Office of Temporary Affairs

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: C. Lette Simonian

Address: 253 Broadway

I represent: The Advertiser

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Diomande

Address: _____

I represent: Henry Street Workforce Development

Address: 178 Broome St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/23/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jillian Vign

Address: East 65th St. 11th Fl. NY, NY 10065

I represent: Henry Street Settlement

Address: 265 Henry Street NY, NY 10002

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/23/72

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yekaterina Benkmans

Address: Darrows Pl Apt Bronx NY

I represent: Agudath Israel of America

Address: 225 Broadway

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALEJANDRO CERCAS

Address: 253 BROADWAY, 4TH FL, NY, NY, 10007

I represent: WE SPEAK NYC, MOIA

Address: _____

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