

OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

Oversight - Ensuring Equal Access to 311 – Reviewing the Experience of Limited-English Proficient New Yorkers and NYCHA Residents.

Int 0055-2022: Creation of a separate 311 category for COVID-19 testing site complaints.

Int 0167-2022: Number of steps to submit service requests or complaints on the 311 website and mobile application.

Int 0206-2022: Requiring report on wait times for the 311 customer service center to connect callers to an interpreter.

Int 0240-2022 : Updating 311 complaint types and reporting on such updates.

Int 0296-2022: Identification of languages spoken by callers to the 311 customer service center.

JUNE 30, 2022

Good afternoon, Chair Ung, Chair Gutiérrez, Chair Avilés and members of the City Council Committees on Governmental Operations, Technology and Public Housing. My name is Joe Morrisroe and I am Deputy Commissioner and Executive Director of New York City 311 under the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on 311 operations, language access, and the legislation before the committees. Here with me today is Eva Trimble, Executive Vice President for Strategy and Innovation at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and Tony Wooden, ASL Direct Program Supervisor at the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD).

It has been my honor to serve as Executive Director of 311 since 2008 and to represent the wonderful and diverse team of people that make up the customer service frontline of city government. 311 reports directly to the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI), an alignment that underscores the importance of this operation and its critical service to the City. OTI provides support for the 311 organization and works collaboratively with 311 on the continual evolution and enhancements to the service delivery and customer experience of 311. As Executive Director, I oversee all aspects of 311, from the operation of the most familiar component – the call center – to the creation and implementation of multiple customer-facing channels, performance results and quality control measures, interaction with City agencies, and data collection.

New York City is the one of the most multicultural places in the world and its diversity makes it the greatest place to live and work. I thank the Council for inviting me in to discuss how 311 provides quick and easy access to NYC government services and information with the highest possible level of customer service to New York’s various communities. As you may know, 311 reached a milestone in customer service this month when we received our 500 millionth customer contact, which was a call in Spanish for the IDNYC Card program.

311 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Customers can get help in 175 languages by calling 311. People who are D/deaf or hard of hearing or have a speech disability can text us at 311-692 or by using a Video Relay Service or using TTY or Text Telephone.

The 311 process relies on systems supported by OTI and partnerships with city agencies to ensure a customer has access to information, assistance, and services through a variety of channels including the call center, 311 Online, text, mobile app and social media. To understand 311 operation and customer experience, it is helpful to understand the flow of 311 service delivery, from customer inquiries and requests to the answers provided and actions taken, and the confirmation provided. With few exceptions, public interactions with 311 result in one of the following outcomes:

1. Information Request (when is my recycling pick-up day?)
2. Referral to an external entity (MTA, NY State, FCC)
3. Service Request (submitting a ticket)

Since 311's launch in March 2003, it has received over 345 million calls and an additional 155 million customer contacts in our digital channels. Originally launched as a call center, New York City 311 has evolved into the most comprehensive municipal government customer service platforms in the nation. 311 received 40 million customer contacts in 2021 and has been a vital resource for New Yorkers throughout the pandemic. On an average day, 311 interacts with over 100,000 customers and for an average month 311 receives 1.6 million calls, 1.4 million online visits to the companion 311 Online website, 187,000 mobile app touches, 30,000 text messages and serves 2,300 customers on social media, in addition to publishing city programs, information and services to our 433,000 social media followers. For further context, on an annual basis New York City 311 receives more calls than all other U.S. City 311 call centers combined.

The 311 mission is aligned with the Administration's goals and vision on equity. Most notably, it focuses on providing the public with equitable service delivery through quick, easy access to all New York City government services and information while maintaining the highest possible level of customer service.

The 311 team is focused on "*meeting our customers where they are*" by providing an array of channel options to contact the City, ranging from robust self-service solutions to outstanding customer service delivered by professional, polite, and well-trained representatives. In annual customer satisfaction surveys conducted by the CFI group over the past decade, 311 ranked equal to or better in delivering customer service than the *best contact centers in the private sector* and also far surpassed the best in government centers. Historically, 311's aggregate Net Promoter

Score (NPS), the leading metric for gauging customer satisfaction across all industries in the U.S., exceeded the scores of Apple, JetBlue and Trader Joe's.

This outstanding performance reflects the dedication and commitment of the customer service professionals who work at 311 and proudly serve their fellow New Yorkers. It is for these reasons that New York City 311 is the recognized model for service delivery and performance reporting for governments across the nation and around the world who study the “New York City 311 model” when considering launching their customer service platforms.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

Local Law 30 requires covered agencies to appoint language access coordinators, translate commonly distributed documents into 10 designated languages, provide telephonic interpretation in at least 100 languages, and develop a language access implementation plan, among other requirements. 311 is in compliance with this law.

311 provides telephonic interpretation in up to 175 languages through a third-party vendor, Language Line. Language Line provides interpretation and translation services for up to 175 languages and is available for free to the customer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

311 also provides additional options for customers who speak a language other than English or may be limited English proficient. For the phone channel, a customer can access announcements and messages in the language Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system; Spanish speakers can utilize the Natural Language Understanding (NLU) application to receive information and answers to frequently asked questions without having to wait to speak with an agent. Spanish speakers may also receive assistance from a 311 customer service representative who speaks Spanish.

Annually, 311 services approximately 1 million calls in languages other than English and provided service in 92 non-English languages in 2021.

LANGUAGE ACCESS INITIATIVES

We understand that serving such a diverse customer base comes with challenges and that there is more work to be done. To address this, 311 has partnered with The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to review how 311 engages with customers with limited English proficiency. We have already made improvements to customer experience handling as a result.

Based on Council feedback, 311 implemented a technology enhancement that allows the language name to be passed to the call center representative when a customer selects a language option.

Now, when a customer presses a language prompt option, like Russian or Korean, the representative receives a “pop-up” that indicates the language preference. This allows faster connection to an interpreter and a better customer experience.

311 implemented customer satisfaction surveys in 2021 in the 10 designated Citywide languages that leveraged our technology and align with our business practices. We are learning directly from the LEP community where we excel and where we need improvement.

Lastly, I’m excited to announce that 311 is working to roll out a pilot program in FY2023 to expand our service to the WhatsApp messaging platform. Keeping with our motto “*meeting our customers where they are,*” 311 will expand the number of customer service channels available to the public to better reach all New Yorkers.

I will now turn to the legislation under consideration today.

Int. 55 (the creation of a COVID-19 testing site complaint)

We understand the intent of this bill and support a more streamlined approach to reporting complaints related to COVID-19 testing sites. However, as currently written, 311 would not be able to meet the requirements to fulfill this legislation due to the multitude of agencies covering COVID test sites. We are open to discussing ways to achieve the intent of the legislation within the parameters of the 311 system’s complaint feedback loop.

Int. 167 (the number of steps to submit 311 service requests on the website and mobile application)

I understand and appreciate the desire to streamline the process for submitting complaints, and where possible, we encourage agencies to collect information in an efficient way. Whenever the service request form is driven by 311, it’s always four steps or under. Circumstances under which it may be more than four steps depends on whether the form is on an agency’s legacy platform. For many complaints via the website, 311 presents the four-step process as “what,” “where,” “who,” and “review.” This allows for a consistent customer experience across many service requests. On mobile, there may be even fewer steps. There are circumstances under which an agency’s form is used for intake that may not follow the same four-step pattern. If there are specific complaints that require more than four steps, I will take that back to our team to discuss with the agency in charge of addressing those service requests.

Int. 206 (reporting on wait times for interpreters)

We support the idea of creating more transparency and accountability of language access. We are currently reviewing available data with our vendor and believe we may be able to report monthly averages of wait times per language. We look forward to discussing this bill further to reach an agreement on level of data to share based on availability.

Int. 240 (requiring 311 to update the complaint types available by the effective date of a new local law that involves service requests)

Having 311 monitoring all citywide legislation is not a core competency of 311. 311 does not create service requests unilaterally; we work hand-in-hand with agencies on new service requests to make sure they sync up with the agency’s technology and with their internal workflows. 311 relies on agencies to review legislation impacting them and define how to meet the requirements of the law. When an agency decides they will accept complaints through the 311 system, they contact 311 and OTI to create, test and deploy the complaint form with the objective of meeting the laws required implementation date.

Int. 296 (requiring 311 to develop a protocol for identifying the language spoken by a customer to 311 using automated language recognition software)

We embrace the spirit of this bill and understand the eagerness to employ artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance 311 customer service. However, as written, the legislation requires the use of automated language recognition software that, to our knowledge, is not yet available. We will continue to monitor new technologies as they become commercially accessible. However, if Council Members have any suggestions, we are eager to learn more about technologies that could help us improve current customer service operations.

Finally, on behalf of my colleagues, I thank Chairs Ung, Gutiérrez and Avilés, and Committee Members for your time and the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions.

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Asian American Federation

Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Government Operations
June 30th 2022

Written Testimony

I want to thank Chairs Ung, Gutiérrez, Aviles and the Council Members of the Committees for holding this hearing and giving the Asian American Federation (AAF) the opportunity to testify on the language access needs of our community. My name is Ravi Reddi, I'll be speaking in place of Lisha Luo Cai, and I am the Associate Director of Advocacy and Policy at AAF, where we proudly represent the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

Since 2010, the Asian population in New York City has increased 34%, growing from over 1.1 million in 2010 to over 1.5 million in 2020, making up 17.3% of our city's total population. Overwhelmingly, Asian New Yorkers are immigrants, with two out of three in the city being foreign-born. Of those Asian immigrants, 47% arrived in 2010 or after. Additionally, language barriers remain high among Asian New Yorkers. Overall, 48% of Asians have limited English proficiency in New York City, compared to a citywide rate of 23%.

Legislation like Intro 206 and Intro 296 introduced by Chair Ung will help illuminate the barriers our LEP New Yorkers face in accessing the most basic government services via 311. At a time when our LEP communities are in crisis, from accessing mental health services, to navigating City inspection codes as small business owners, to accessing food delivery services, providing additional information on the experiences of our LEP New Yorkers is critical.

Language access has always been a primary barrier between our community and the services they need access to. While 311 is a primary gateway, issues with telephonic interpretation have been consistent and well-understood by community-based organizations that have always shown up to help our most vulnerable when city systems couldn't. Having language capacities already within the City systems that our community members depend on, and their staff, is absolutely critical.

To that point, for the first time, the City Budget will support critical proposals like a Community Interpreter Bank and worker co-ops that address the need for language access capacity by centering the communities who have it. With these proposals, we will see the payoff in multiple ways: from providing employment opportunities in our immigrant communities, to relieving strains on existing CBO capacity to provide interpretation, to addressing the serious gap in quality language interpretation for the communities that need it the most.

As we mentioned on Monday at a Contracts Committee hearing, immigration policies are in such a state of flux that our communities will need sustained in-language engagement to stay abreast of changing policies, processes, and documents.

And when it comes to assisting our small businesses in crisis— even when a service is much needed, it is crucial to provide an ease of accessibility for LEP immigrant business owners to access it.



Asian American Federation

Throughout the pandemic, our community has been in crisis, seeking out assistance, seeking out mental health resources and basic needs services. They've consistently come to our member organizations first and when attempting to reach City services, have had difficult experiences that reinforce the need to reinforce the work our CBOs are doing and treat them as the experts in providing culturally-competent and language access services.

In our work and the work of our member and partner organizations, we are consistently reminded that much of the language accessibility issues our community is grappling with relate to issues of capacity. Our communities are often the last to know about key information, and the pandemic has demonstrated that there is still much work to be done in making sure our communities, many of whom are our frontline workers, benefit from the work of our city agencies.

Legislation like Intro 206 and 296 are steps in illuminating where the need is and validating and addressing the experiences of our community members. AAF stands ready to work with City Council to make sure city services are as responsive as our community members need them to be. Thank you.

To: New York City Council - Committee on Technology
From: Noel Hidalgo, Executive Director of BetaNYC
Re: NYC 311 Oversight Hearing



Thursday, 30 June 2022

Dear Chairs and Council Members,

Introduction

BetaNYC is a civic organization dedicated to improving all lives in New York through civic design, technology, and data.¹ We envision an informed and empowered public that can leverage technology, data, and design to hold government accountable, and improve their economic opportunity.

We were founded in 2008 as a “meetup” to discuss open government in NYC. Our work empowers individuals and local communities to build a civically-engaged technology ecosystem and provide for an honest and inclusive government. We want New York’s governments to work for the people, by the people, for the 21st century.

BetaNYC demystifies technology, data, and design to the point where anyone can use these tools and participate in the decision making process. We help New York City community groups, journalists, community boards, and elected officials derive insight from open data — this form of tech support is called RADAR, research and data assistance requests.² Since launching in 2019, we’ve addressed 165 requests and 29 (16%) have worked with NYC 311 open data.

Since we started teaching our neighbors how to use open data, we have centered NYC 311 open data as “The People’s Dataset.” We have taught over 10,000 people (middle schoolers, high schoolers, CUNY students, non-profits, community board members, City Council staff, Borough Presidents and their staff, etc) how to sort, filter, group, count, and pivot this data.³ We have trained hundreds how to teach and incorporate NYC 311 data into their curriculum. Through 311’s open data, you can see and derive New York City’s tapestry, not only can you feel the cultural fabric, and you can see who is underserved or chooses not to access city services.

¹ <https://beta.nyc/about/>

² <https://www.beta.nyc/radar>

³ <https://beta.nyc/classes>

We see 311 services as a fundamental component of a modern democracy and are in general support of the bills presented today.⁴⁵⁶⁷⁸⁹ Sadly, this hearing is yet another annual reminder that Council must force EVERY Administration to respond to neighborhood needs through service design and modern technology.

What we have been asking for...

Chair Gutiérrez, thank you for reintroducing [Int 0240-2022](#) / Int 2303-2021.¹⁰ Last year, we supported this bill and have championed NYC 311 posting every service request and descriptor to the web. There is a great “dataset” on [NYC 311 web content services](#), but the data hasn’t been updated since 27 June 2019. If we could just get this dataset updated on a regular basis, we would have a better understanding of where service requests are going.

With insights from the COVID-19 pandemic, we outlined the following questions to steer NYC 311 toward an equitable and inclusive future.¹¹

- With unprecedented service requests, how is NYC 311 adapting/improving its interfaces – phone, web, and app? What type of metrics does 311 use to improve response times?
- Does NYC 311 perform public user experience testing? Btw, this is different than sending out a post-service request / call inquiry survey. Is NYC 311 talking directly to its users?
- When will the mobile app be available in languages other than english?
- Many community members have requested a publicly accessible API and were promised an API years ago, when will the public have access to an API?

⁴ <https://on.nyc.gov/3a0wmJb>

⁵ <https://on.nyc.gov/3nqQpn1>

⁶ <https://on.nyc.gov/3ugbOTT>

⁷ <https://on.nyc.gov/3uauF2n>

⁸ <https://on.nyc.gov/3Nzcsme>

⁹ <https://on.nyc.gov/3abyIES>

¹⁰ <https://on.nyc.gov/3npvgd3>

¹¹ <https://beta.nyc/2021/10/27/nyc-311-oversight-hearing-2021/>

After nearly 20 years of operation, we're seeing massive cracks in 311's utility and purpose. Today, we find NYC 311 and Agency integration at a fundamental crossroads. Is NYC 311 designed to “get stuff done” or is it a sorting hat for future affairs?

If this Administration does not invest in 311 and Agencies' ability to appropriately respond, it will be a blatant admission that they do not want the government to work effectively, efficiently, and intelligently.

What we need

- **We need NYCHA and other state authorities that operate in NYC, to tie into 311 or publish their service request data as transparently as NYC 311 publishes its data.** There is nothing stopping them from doing this today.
- **We need a comprehensive list of complaint types, descriptors, and how information is passed into these service requests.**
- **We need a single sign-on across all platforms.**¹² The public should have one login that shows the user all of their 311 service requests.
- **API access** — let us start with a small group of verified developers who can help make service requests more useful.¹³ There are existing plans and infrastructure in place. We've been talking about this since 2018.
- **ALL service requests must be easily accessible via the “311 Mobile” app,** we don't care if it is a native or responsive web app. No more 23 SRs accessible via the mobile app and the rest accessible via phone or website.
- Lastly, we would like NYC to **participate in a global conversation on setting service request standards and participate in the Open311 discussion.**¹⁴

Why?

- By not improving 311, you should be skeptical of any Mayor's Management Report.¹⁵ **How can you trust the data if it isn't open and verifiable?**
- There is natural tension between agencies setting their own agenda vs being responsive to neighborhood needs. Just look at any Community District statement of needs. Neighbors don't work for

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_sign-on

¹³ <https://reportedly.weebly.com/>

¹⁴ <http://nycroadmap.us/#22>

¹⁵ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/operations/performance/mmr.page>

agencies. Agencies MUST work for neighbors. **Making 311 work for everyone ensures public accountability.**

- **Every Borough President should leverage their Borough Service Cabinet meeting for a complete rundown on agency service trends and service issues.**
- Lastly, agencies need resources to better manage reporting systems and that ties directly into being an API driven system. **We need continued investment into ticket tracking / service request systems.**

Conclusion

Not properly resourcing 311, everyone fails — by continuing to hold 311 back, every Administration is telling you they are not interested in building modern tools to help neighbors address local issues. Also, it is the largest admission that they do not want public oversight of public services.

If we want to be a smart, compassionate, progressive city, we must be a responsive city. If we don't focus on service design practices in 311 and corresponding agencies, the flood waters of climate change and fiscal irresponsibility will wash over us and drag us out into The Narrows.

Twenty years into NYC 311, we are at an existential crossroads. If this Administration does not center 311 services and integration, it is not centering our ability to address the needs of the neediest, and it is dooming this city to failure.



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**Center for Court Innovation
New York City Council
Joint Hearing: Committee on Public Housing & Committee on Governmental Operations
& Committee on Technology
Oversight - Ensuring Equal Access to 311
June 30, 2022**

Good afternoon Chair Avilés, Chair Ung, Chair Gutiérrez, and esteemed members of the Public Housing, Governmental Operations, and Technology Committees. Since its inception, the Center for Court Innovation (the Center) has supported the vision embraced by Council of a fair, effective, and humane justice system and building public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions. The Center’s longstanding partnership with Council over the past twenty-five years has helped bring this vision to life through evidence-based and racially just programming that spans the entire justice continuum, which includes expanding access to comprehensive housing supports to ensure quality and safe housing for all and prevention of evictions and homelessness.

Red Hook Community Justice Center

The Red Hook Community Justice Center (RHCJC) is a project of the Center, which has many projects working with NYCHA communities; including the Harlem, Brownsville and Far Rockaway Community Justice Centers, as well as Neighborhood Safety Initiatives, a lead implementation partner on the Mayor's Action Plan in 17 NYCHA communities.

In Red Hook, the housing court has jurisdiction over landlord-tenant issues between NYCHA and tenant families and RHCJC’s Housing Resource Center has operated for more than 20 years, supporting residents on rent and repair issues, improving access to justice, and preventing evictions. We have seen the impact of hazardous repair conditions in NYCHA that would otherwise go unaddressed if not for city inspections by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

The Center strongly believes that every New Yorker who rents, including the many working families and retired seniors who live in public housing, have the right to a habitable, well-maintained, and safe apartment. A tenant’s responsibility to pay rent is coextensive and equal with the landlord’s responsibility to make timely repairs, as defined by New York State’s Warranty of Habitability law. Furthermore, HUD directs Housing Authorities nationwide to stay in compliance with state and local laws relating to maintenance and building codes.

New York City Council has passed, over the years, many local laws to increase tenant home safety and ensure minimum quality in multi-dwelling housing. These local laws are codified as the NYC Housing Maintenance Code. The legislative declaration of the Housing Maintenance Code promises all New Yorkers: *“The sound enforcement of minimum housing standards is essential: (1) to preserve decent housing; (2) to prevent adequate or salvageable housing from deteriorating to the point where it can no longer be reclaimed; and (3) to bring about the basic decencies and minimal standards of healthful living in already deteriorated dwellings, which, although no longer salvageable, must serve as habitations until they can be replaced.”* Despite NYCHA requiring over \$40 billion in capital planning to address its substantial backlog of repairs, NYCHA continues to serve as habitations for 600,000 current residents and new applicants alike.

Yet, when your NYCHA apartment loses power, a chronic water leak goes unaddressed for months leading to black mold, or you fear lead exposure for your child from the peeling paint on your walls, who can tenants call for help at the City? Tenant families are directed and redirected back to the same NYCHA ticket hotline. The only way for a NYCHA tenant to obtain a housing inspection from the City is to bring their repair issues to their local housing court. Tenants can file a “HP Action” to list their repair needs in a court petition, request an inspection from HPD, and schedule a court date for a repair plan to then be ordered by a judge.

At the Red Hook Community Justice Center, NYCHA tenants have filed, this year alone, 54 HP Actions that have resulted in HPD citing NYCHA with an alarming 401 violations of the Housing Maintenance Code. Notably, HPD Code Enforcement inspectors have discovered 46 immediately hazardous “Class C” violations at the Red Hook Houses, as well as home health related hazards, including: 44 violations related to water leaks within walls/ceilings, 28 violations on mold, and 164 violations on peeling paint and plaster. Tenants living in these unlawful conditions often have had open NYCHA tickets reported for months, if not years.

Unlike private tenants, HPD does not appear in housing court to support public housing tenants with their repair complaints, and does not provide direct notice to NYCHA of cited violations as they do all other landlords. More concerning, HPD administratively “cancels” public housing complaints reported to the agency, does not currently maintain public data of these cited code violations, and does not maintain accurate residential addresses of NYCHA buildings. HPD Code Enforcement inspectors are regularly sent into the field to a wrong “AKA” address of a NYCHA building, showing up at the apartment of a neighbor and submitting a “wrong tenant” report to the court, causing frustration for tenants, NYCHA staff, and the court alike and wasting valuable City inspector time. When HPD does complete an inspection, they do not follow up to ensure cited violations are cured – even immediate Hazardous Class C violations that private landlords are required by law to address within 24 hours. In Red Hook, we see the health and safety effects of this neglect and lack of oversight on a daily basis, leading to black mold, infestation, and increasingly frequent electrical fires.

When asked, HPD Housing Litigation staff have responded that the New York City Charter’s Conflict of Interest does not allow HPD to correct these address issues, and be involved in public housing repair hazards; yet, City Council established in the preamble of the

Charter’s Conflict of Interest chapter that “*public service is a public trust*” and “*enacted to preserve the trust placed in the public servants of the city, to promote public confidence in government, to protect the integrity of government decision-making and to enhance government efficiency.*” HPD’s cancelling of public housing tenant complaints does not advance public trust, frustrates the integrity of the Housing Maintenance Code and wastes tax-dollars through the inefficiency of the HPD-NYCHA interagency code of silence.

Last year, the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing took action by introducing and passing Int. No. 2330-A to require the 311 to track complaints or requests for service it receives from all members of the public, including NYCHA residents. Unfortunately, 311 has yet to implement these changes and this policy change falls short. Int. No. 2330-A does not allow NYCHA tenants to reach HPD Code Enforcement through 311. Public and private housing tenants alike should have equal access to call 311 and request a HPD city inspection when hazardous repairs go unaddressed in their apartment homes.

Furthermore, the New York State Legislature took action this year passing A09387/S72 that enacts new open data requirements on HPD to maintain and publish code violations cited in NYCHA. This is a promising step toward transparency, but without HPD code enforcement infrastructure, the persistent City treatment towards public housing resident families as second-class citizens will only continue.

New York City Council has an important history over the decades of strengthening minimum housing quality standards, from requiring light and air to reach into tenement housing, to modern and evolving standards such as integrated pest management under the impactful Local Law 55 of 2018. The Center is hopeful that City Council will take action to ensure public housing tenants are not left outside the protection of City local laws enforced by HPD and accessible through 311.

Conclusion

The Center stands ready to work with City Council to improve access to housing stability, affordability, and legal protections for New York City tenants. By partnering with the Center, Council can go beyond transforming the housing system to cultivating vibrant and prosperous communities that center public safety and security for all its members. We thank the Council for its continued partnership and are available to answer any questions you may have.

From: Rich Laine <ccrichlaine33@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2022 10:03 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] June 30 Public Hearing

testimony@council.nyc.gov

June 23, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope that, when considering how to make the 311 system and other services more accessible to foreign language speakers, city government remembers that it has a duty as well to provide excellent service to its English-speaking patrons.

I'm blind, grew up in New York City, and currently live in Westchester. I often come into the city by MTA to attend Broadway shows, to visit friends and restaurants, and sometimes to stay overnight. To get around the city I generally use taxis.

As I'm sure you know, the City Council adopted a policy several years ago that dropped the requirement that taxi drivers speak at least a functional level of English. This policy has resulted repeatedly in putting me, and several of my blind friends who live in NYC, in dangerous situations. There have been numerous instances when we have been dropped off at a wrong address, sometimes blocks away from our true destination, sometimes late at night, sometimes in deserted areas. This problem is directly related to being unable to communicate with the driver in English to get information about the location we have arrived at.

Please don't forget your English-speaking patrons when trying to make 311 and other services more accessible to foreign language speakers.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input to the Council,

Richard Laine

Carpenter Avenue

Mount Kisco, NY 10549

**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: AIXA TORRES

Address: NYCHA RESIDENT

I represent: _____

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: 06/30/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Toni Wooden

Address: _____

I represent: MOPD

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: 06/30/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Frankie Short INTERPRETER

Address: _____

I represent: _____

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: 6/30/22

Name: Tim Smith. (PLEASE PRINT) INTERPRETER

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 3,167240 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition 296, 203

Date: _____

Name: JOE MORRISADE (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 59 MAIDEN LN - 14th FLR

I represent: 311

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/30/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eva Trimble, EVP Strategy & Innovation

Address: 90 Church

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ross Jay

Address: 88 Visitation Place, Bklyn, NY 11231

I represent: Red Hook Community Justice Center

Address: _____

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