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Mark D. Levine, Borough President

**Testimony prepared for the Committee on Governmental Operations hearing: *Appointing and Supporting NYC's Community Boards* on Tuesday, February 28, 2023**

Good morning, Chair Ung and members of the Committee on Governmental Operations, my name is Tricia Shimamura, and I am the Director of Community Affairs in the Manhattan Borough President's Office. I'd like to submit the following testimony on behalf of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, who is unable to attend today's hearing.

Community Boards are one of our City's most local, essential elements of civic engagement and advocacy. Comprised of 50 volunteers who live, work, go to school, or have other significant interests in their neighborhoods, Community Boards provide important perspectives on local issues including transportation, parks and open space, education, street life, and land use, amongst many other elements of urban living. In accordance with the New York City Charter, board members are appointed to serve staggered 2-year terms. Half of the appointments are made after receiving nominations from the local Council Member.

The Manhattan Borough President's Office is committed to an equity agenda that prioritizes better supporting communities that have long been under-resourced and under-supported. This has included developing a robust outreach and engagement program to encourage Manhattanites who have historically been less represented on community boards to apply to their local board. Particular attention has been spent on outreach to youth 16 years or older, public housing residents, members of organized labor, people holding marginalized identities, caregivers, immigrants, non-native English speakers, people living with a disability, veterans and other Manhattanites who have long been under-represented. Our efforts to diversify the Manhattan boards are both data driven, using demographic information obtained through the US Census Bureau and the New York City Department of City Planning, and board-specific. We have taken extensive steps to meet with every community board and identify under-represented populations.

Reaching many of the under-represented populations requires proactive and creative communication strategies to ensure they are adequately included in the application process. Recognizing this, our office utilizes a broad range of communication tools in promoting the application process, including meeting with community-based organizations, high schools, labor unions, and other local groups asking for their help in promotion. Our office organizes community forums and information sessions focused on expanding the pool of applicants, and we also purchase ads in local news outlets, as well as advertisements on LinkNYC kiosks throughout the borough. We utilize social media ads as well, targeting specific neighborhoods that were showing lower numbers of applicants, and met with all 10 of our Manhattan Council Members to ask for their help in both putting the application in their virtual newsletters as well

as keeping physical copies in their offices for constituents who preferred to mail in their applications.

We know that creating diverse boards that reflect their neighborhoods and uplift marginalized communities also means taking a close look at the existing make-up of each community board. That is why we ask all applicants – regardless of whether they are returning board members or completely new – to submit a formal application and to participate in a 2-hour interview process. In order to carefully review and interview nearly 900 applications, we invite every Manhattan Council Member to also take part in this process. Last year, interviews were conducted in virtual group sessions, and applicants were judged based on their ability to communicate respectfully with one another, problem-solve, find consensus, and identify creative solutions to complex, multifaceted problems.

Our outreach efforts proved to be successful in 2022, with 892 applications – among the highest number of applicants ever recorded in Manhattan. We are on track to reach a similar number of applications during the 2023 application cycle as well.

The appointment statistics from last year reflect the success of our rigorous and extensive outreach and application process. We are proud to report that:

- Of the 91 first time appointees, 70% identify as BIPOC, including a greater percentage of individuals who identify as African Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, and AAPI Manhattanites
- 48% of first-time appointees identified as women, 42% identified as men, and 1% identified as gender nonconforming
- 26.4% of the new appointees are under the age of 30 years, with six individuals falling under the age of twenty
- 79% of first-time appointees do not own a car, a percentage more closely aligns with Manhattan communities

More information can be found on our website, [Manhattanbp.nyc.gov](https://manhattanbp.nyc.gov).

The New York City Charter not only mandates that Borough Presidents appoint members to community boards, but it also requires that we provide training and technical assistance to community board members in order to help them carry out their responsibilities.

Over the past 14 months, our office has taken ambitious steps towards fulfilling this mandate. When first coming into office, Manhattan Borough President Levine required all Board Members to take 3 trainings per year – a Conflicts of Interest Training, an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) training, and an Implicit Bias training, all of which have been coordinated through our office and in partnership with various other agencies and non-profit organizations. In addition, in the fall of 2022, the Manhattan Borough President's Office held a week-long series of virtual seminars called the "Leadership Training Series." Trainings focused on a range of topics aimed at helping professionalize community boards and giving them resources and guides to increase advocacy and understanding of complex issues. Seminar topics included conflict-resolution skills, environmental policy and sustainability, understanding the City's budget and cannabis licensing. The Leadership Training Series was so successful that we are planning on offering a more abbreviated version in the spring, and another week-long series next fall.

In addition to these formal trainings, the Manhattan Borough President's Office has made every effort to support Manhattan boards by providing access to MBPO staff and issue area experts, and through our monthly Borough Service Cabinet and Borough Board meetings. Each meeting features a different speaker focusing on topics relevant to community boards and their districts, and time is dedicated to share best practices amongst boards and strategize on issues impacting multiple districts. Borough Service Cabinet offers a forum for District Managers to exchange ideas about running a Community Board efficiently and effectively, including how best to handle public testimony, utilize technology that improves accessibility, or which agency is the best partner to solve a district-specific issue. Similarly, Borough Board offers Community Board Chairs the opportunity to share how their board is tackling issues such as access to public bathrooms, or share work their boards have done on improving sanitation issues in their district. Outside speakers have included labor leaders, city and state agencies, community board working groups, and environmental conservation groups, amongst many others. Next month, we are thrilled to be welcoming the US Census Bureau who will be conducting a training on helping boards access publicly available information through the 2020 Census, American Community Survey, and other data sets.

Beginning in 2022, Borough President Levine began providing specific "on-boarding trainings" to all new members, going into greater detail of the roles and responsibilities of board members, including HR responsibilities, parliamentary procedure, and conflicts of interest. These on-boarding sessions have been widely well-received and we look forward to continuing them with the 2023 cohort.

We know that the pandemic and New York's ongoing recovery continue to present unique challenges to community boards. Subject to the Open Meetings Law, boards are left with very little notice as to whether or not they can continue to meet virtually, as the decision is dependent upon a City or State emergency order. This has made it exceedingly difficult to plan meetings, conduct outreach, or secure venue spaces. When the final emergency order is lifted, boards will have the option of either fully returning in person, or adopting a hybrid model. The hybrid model will still require a majority of the board members to attend meetings in-person and will also require the use of audio and visual equipment to ensure fair participation. Both options will decrease accessibility for community board members and potentially have a negative impact on public participation as well. In order to mitigate these impacts, it is imperative that all of the Manhattan boards receive additional funding for technical equipment and personnel in order to conduct essential business, as well as continued support finding adequate space to conduct in-person or hybrid meetings. That is why Manhattan Borough President Levine has continued to advocate for increasing the budget for community boards, and why we also urge the State to consider amending the Open Meetings Law as it relates to hybrid meetings as we continue to adjust to the new normal.

Lastly, it must not be overlooked that the application processes, trainings and technical support are not the only ways in which we must work to make Community Boards more inclusive and accessible for all New Yorkers. If Manhattan boards are to truly and fully reflect the diversity and cultural vitality of our city, they will have to be fully language accessible. Language translation services are currently difficult and costly to access, and boards currently manage these services on an ad-hoc basis – not as a part of regular operations. Even in instances when language translation is requested, boards have struggled to meet these requests without significant lead time. The City must do better with regard to providing language translation

services for community boards, and we must continue to push for a change in culture that incorporates multiple languages as a part of regular business.

Community Boards are often the first point at which members of the broader public interact with local government, and the resolutions that emerge from community boards can have significant impacts and ripple effects across our City. The role and responsibilities of these boards in the city is inextricably linked to the mandated powers of the Borough President's Office. The Manhattan Borough President's Office takes this responsibility very seriously, and we know that there is still much work to be done to improve participation, access, and impact of community boards. We need broader promotion of community board application across the City, and throughout communities that continue to be underrepresented. Applications must continue to be carefully and thoughtfully reviewed, and boards should continue to work internally on creating opportunities for new voices to lead. The core functions of community boards continue to be threatened by limits in budget and an unknown future with regard to hybrid meetings. Implementing thoughtful trainings not only in our borough but across the City would also help create professional standards and improve participation in this essential civic body.

As always, the Manhattan Borough President's Office stands ready to assist the City Council, our fellow Borough Presidents, and of course our Manhattan community boards in improving representation and expanding support, for the sake of our collective future. Community Boards provide critical services to our city, and we remain committed to ensuring the future of these services for generations to come.





**OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT**

**ANTONIO REYNOSO**

Brooklyn Borough President

**City Council Committee on Governmental Operations  
Oversight – Appointing and Supporting NYC’s Community Boards  
February 28, 2023**

Good morning Chair Ung and thank you for holding this hearing today. My name is Carol-Ann Church, and I am the Director of Community Boards for Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso. Before taking on this new role last year, I served as Assistant District Manager of Brooklyn Community Board 2, so I am very familiar with the issues that community boards face.

Community boards are a critical link between the public and City government. They weigh in on extremely important issues that impact everything from small businesses, to street safety, to the availability of affordable housing. As Director of Community boards, I am not only the first point-of-contact for all of Brooklyn’s 18 boards when they need assistance, I also oversee the appointment process. I share the Borough President’s goal of ensuring that Brooklyn’s boards are diverse and that they accurately reflect the populations of the communities they represent.

We know we have a long way to go to achieve that goal. Although our office has struggled to quantify this due to a lack of available data reported by the Community Boards, we are aware that historically, board members tend to be older, more white, and more likely to own their home and drive a personal vehicle than the general population. To address this, our office has taken several steps to improve the appointment process. The first is utilizing an updated application designed to capture additional demographic information such as more precise age ranges, housing type, preferred transportation method(s), educational attainment, and comfort with technology.

This year, we also targeted our outreach efforts to two populations that we know remain underrepresented on our boards: public housing residents and youth. We met with 150 NYCHA Tenant Association presidents, youth leadership organizations, and many local colleges to enlist their assistance with promoting the applications. Our partners at CityTech sent out the form to 14,000 students. We also met with community-based organizations from across the borough, such as Chinese American Planning Council, Organization of Staff Analysts, 500 Men Making a Difference, and tabled at the Brooklyn Public Library. Finally, we advertised the opportunity to apply through the media, including partnering with BRIC on a public television episode, utilizing LinkNYC kiosks, and placing a series of radio, online, and local newspaper interviews and opinion pieces. Our application deadline was Thursday, February 23, and we have already started interviewing applicants on a rolling basis. I look forward to doing a robust demographic analysis of all the applicants and appointees so that we can quantify the impacts of these efforts.

In addition to implementing new outreach methods, our office is also working to codify best practices for appointments. We have drafted an interpretive statement on the requirements outlined in the City Charter. Our goal is to articulate standards that can inform the Comptroller's periodic audits. These standards include:

- All applicants must complete a full application by the posted deadline in order to be considered.
- Once selected for an interview, the applicant must attend; unexcused failure to attend the interview will remove the applicant from consideration.
- If an applicant is appointed by a Council Member, the Council Member must fill out a certification form in which they attest that the applicant meets the qualifications and that their appointment furthers the goal of having diverse and representative board membership. The Borough President will appoint those recommended by the Council Member unless they do not meet these standards, or in the case of reappointments, they have poor attendance.

In addition to making appointments, I know the Council is also interested in how we support our community boards. This has been a fraught subject for many years, as Borough Presidents' offices and City agencies have debated their roles and responsibilities, sometimes leaving boards with nowhere to turn. Our proposed interpretive statement will also address this by defining what types of "training and technical assistance" our office will provide, as opposed to what other agencies should provide. For example, the BP's office can provide connections to other City agencies, legal perspectives, and training on administrative tools; whereas agencies should provide trainings upon request about their areas of technical expertise. Our goal is to ensure that community boards will be able to obtain the assistance they need from the appropriate source. We understand that this will require buy-in from City agencies, and we will continue to advocate for them to have dedicated staff available to provide boards with meaningful assistance.

I want to end by noting that all of this only works if boards have the resources they need to function, and right now they are struggling. Staffing is a particular concern; the boards' existing budgets only provide for a minimal number of staff lines, and leave little room for competitive salaries, making recruitment and retention of professional staff difficult. Additionally, unlike many other City offices, they must handle many tasks with little external support and no dedicated staff. For example, Council Members' offices rely on a central staff for tasks such as HR, IT, and procurement, but the community boards do not have a similar resource. Increasing their staff budgets and providing more administrative support would allow the boards to be more efficient, and to connect more directly with their constituents and encourage engagement from more diverse populations, including youth. Advocates have also long been asking for professional planners to work with boards, which our office continues to support. The boards also need funding to support technology upgrades to facilitate holding and livestreaming hybrid meetings, as well as producing non-digital communication such as flyers and mailers, as well as translation services for those materials, for their websites, and for their meetings.

Thank you for your time today and for drawing attention to this very important issue. We look forward to working with the City Council and our fellow Borough Presidents' offices to diversify and support our community boards.

**New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations**

**Chair: Sandra Ung**

**Committee Members: Gale Brewer, Lincoln Restler, Lynn Schulman, Shahana Hanif**

**February 28, 2023**

Good morning and thank you to Chair Ung and the members of the Committee on Governmental Operations for convening this hearing today. I am Deputy Bronx Borough President Janet Peguero testifying on behalf of Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson. The task of supporting The Bronx's 12 community boards is an essential function of our office and one that we are continually working to improve. We are also looking to the Administration for more technical assistance and stronger support in order for us to reach our mission of community involvement and local democracy.

This year, our office has transitioned to an electronic application portal that will help streamline the appointment process. The electronic application provides broader access to our residents, will improve collaboration with the Council Members by providing real time updates, and will improve the Office's ability to compile the annual Community Board demographic report. Additionally, we offer the application in Spanish, the only Borough to do so. We are conducting outreach through the Spanish-language press to ensure that we engage all communities. Our goal is to recruit residents who reflect the diversity of The Bronx – and that includes the 46% of Bronxites who speak Spanish at home. These new processes will enable us to accomplish this and give more people the opportunity to apply. This highlights the need for the Administration to provide more assistance for language access to support our community boards.

Furthermore, we are aiming to recruit more young people to participate in their community boards. We are conducting social media outreach and reaching out directly to students through the schools. We want to improve retention among young people as well; however, it has been our office's experience that young community board members are harder to retain, often due to them going away for college. We encourage seasoned board members to mentor new and younger board members.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made great strides with holding meetings remotely and livestreaming them. Remote meetings tend to increase attendance and participation, especially for individuals who have conflicting work schedules and those who have issues travelling to the meeting space. However, they can also prove more difficult for individuals without the appropriate

technology. In the post-pandemic period, moving to a hybrid model can be a way to get the best of both worlds, while still adhering to New York State Open Meetings Law.

Continuing hybrid meetings will require more investments in technology to help the boards maintain this option. We have had conversations with BronxNet to improve the boards' access to streaming, broadcasting, and recording, but that is not a complete solution, since BronxNet cannot be everywhere. The City should do more to fund the technology and services required for the boards to be able to stream and record their meetings. This could include cameras, microphones, and internet hotspots as well as the training to operate this technology appropriately. We hope that OTI will be able to fulfill this role.

Another challenge that the community boards are facing has to do with location – both their offices and their meeting spaces. Meeting spaces need to be large enough to handle a full community board or committee meeting, be accessible to the members of the public, and able to be equipped with AV technology and internet access. These challenges significantly limit where meetings can take place. There are also security concerns that many members have expressed travelling to meetings.

Community Board offices are often the first stop for residents facing an issue, but inaccessible, distant, and ill-equipped office spaces are a hindrance to the boards' operations. For example, Bronx Community Board 8's office is located at the northern part of the district, bordering Yonkers, and it is not handicap-accessible. Community Board 8 has worked with DCAS since 2017 to secure a new office. This board was in negotiations with a landlord for four years when the landlord gave up waiting on the city to sign the lease and the board was forced to start the process over. No landlord can afford to wait around due to the bureaucratic red tape. Another example is Community Board 4, which is located in the nurses' wing of a hospital. Now more than ever, Community Boards need accessible space to operate and serve the public in an efficient manner.

Presently, at least four of our boards are seeking new district office space. This has become a challenge due to limited space availability and the onerous process to secure new space. We are asking DCAS to work with our boards to provide available space and additional support to accommodate this process.

Another common issue for many of the boards citywide is that the members do not have the requisite planning experience to evaluate land use proposals that come before them. Boards require access to planning services that will be able to assist them in this process by providing professional expertise and provide guidance on these types of land use issues. This cannot be done solely through DCP as the boards

have to provide an independent recommendation on projects. The City Council should consider funding for additional planners that would work directly with the board.

Our office hopes to increase the number of trainings that board members receive and expand our new member orientation. While board members are volunteers and not city employees, they are bound by numerous city policies and require training to fulfill these requirements. Our office has provided trainings on FOIL, COIB, records retention, Roberts Rules of Order, EEO/sexual harassment, interview best practices, conflict resolution, open meetings law, and social media usage. We hope to continue working with DCAS and the Civic Engagement Commission to provide additional opportunities for trainings. We are asking that the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit update the Community Board Handbook, a vital resource for board members that has not been updated 2010.

Overall, the City needs to provide more assistance to community boards to help them achieve their essential mission: ensuring that community voices can be heard in our local government. We need to cut through the red tape and help the boards get the resources, training, and services that they need to fulfill their mandates. Together we can ensure that community boards – and the hardworking and passionate board members who fill them – work even better going forward. Thank you.

Good morning, Council Members:

Thank you for holding this hearing.

My name is Jeremy Warneke, and I've been the district manager (DM) of Bronx Community Board 11 for the past 12 years. I'm currently the longest active-serving DM in the Bronx. Prior to that, I had worked for City Council Member James Vacca, who himself was a DM for 25 years. Although I'm originally from a small town in Illinois, I moved to Manhattan in 2004 following a 14-month military deployment to Iraq, for which I received the U.S. Army Commendation Medal. Since 2005, I have also lived in Queens and the Bronx, spending a good amount of time visiting family and friends in Brooklyn and Staten Island, also traveling there for work and other causes.

I say all of this because I understand and appreciate the work you do in your respective boroughs. Life as a public servant, especially in New York, can be difficult and demanding, which is the reason my colleagues citywide asked me to testify today regarding training for community board (CB) members.

2018 was the first year that CB staff were required to take individual computerized Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training, and in taking that training, a scenario came across my computer screen, which had played out in my office just two years prior. I was not the only one who noticed. A member of my staff, who was the recipient of hostile, sexist remarks by a CB member, also recognized the scenario, pointing it out to me during their training.

Unfortunately, the matter did not end there. In 2019, I was compelled to file several EEO complaints because I too was discriminated against based on sex and familial status by the same CB member. In 2020, the New York State Division of Human Rights investigated my complaints and determined “probable cause,” which led to the removal of the CB member days before what would have been their uncontested re-election for First Vice Chair. Things never should have gotten to that point, which is why I am passionate about the subject of mandatory trainings for volunteer public servants also known as CB members. They should be required to undergo the same training all CB staff members are required to take.\*

As you know—some of you having once served as CB members—many members do not possess management experience before they assume their positions. Even though Sexual Harassment Prevention Training is required of many CB members, it has not been required of all of them, the situation of which calls for action sooner rather than later, especially in the wake of the Me Too movement. Every time I take training, I am reminded of proper conduct. But the goal of training should be to contribute toward an overall better working environment for CB members, staff, and those who interact with CBs.

My colleagues and I understand that training is not a silver bullet to the problem of unlawful conduct by CB members, but it is our hope that training can be required as a condition of membership for all 59 CBs, just as it is a condition of CB staff's employment. This is not to say

that CB members are inexperienced regarding EEO and related matters, but in my 15 years of working for the City of New York, it is CB members who need this type of training the most.\*\*

Thank you.

\*Not the exact same training ideally. Board members, while public servants, are not paid City employees. Therefore, training for their **2,950 seats** should be tailored toward their positions as volunteer supervisors/employers.

\*\*Within the past two years, CB staff have been required to take the following trainings, a version of which CB members should also be required to take:

- Everybody Matters: EEO & Diversity and Inclusion for NYC Employees
- Sexual Harassment Prevention: What to Know About Unlawful and Inappropriate Behaviors in the Workplace
- lgbTq: The Power of Inclusion

To: New York City Council - Committee on Government Operation  
From: Noel Hidalgo, BetaNYC's Executive Director  
Re: Oversight - Community Boards and Appointments



Tuesday, February 28th 2023

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Good morning Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for creating an option for us to participate remotely. We believe that remote communication tools are fundamentals for the Government in the digital age. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, Community Boards and Borough Presidents turned to BetaNYC to learn how to do remote meetings. In partnership with Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, BetaNYC stood up a centralized online meeting solution and was conducting virtual meeting trainings before DOITT even selected a platform.<sup>1</sup> Within a few weeks of the pandemic, Manhattan Community Boards were conducting monthly meetings and sharing important pandemic related information long before DOITT's "official" solutions for Community Boards was rolled out. Once it was rolled out, several Boards turned to BetaNYC for alternative solutions.

For the past eight years, BetaNYC has worked out of the Manhattan Borough President's office. We have provided front line technical, analytical, and staffing support to Borough Presidents and Community Boards. We have outlined very clear needs and have developed prototypes to address these needs. Every year, we advocate for our community of 5,000+ members to join their local community board.

We come before you today with a deep understanding of how community boards and staff are underfunded, under resourced, and ill prepared to work into the 21st Century.

## Introduction

BetaNYC is a public interest technology non-profit dedicated to helping New Yorkers access information and use technology. Our work equips New Yorkers with digital and data literacy while providing for an honest and inclusive government.

- We believe in a government for the people, by the people, for the digital age.
- We empower the public with tools, education, and data.
- We demystify government, technology, design, and data with the goal of improving access to services and information.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://beta.nyc/products/virtual-meeting-support-for-community-boards/>



- We explore a world of possibilities by providing a safe space for individuals and government to collaborate and organize an open community for all to improve the city.

BetaNYC demystifies design, technology, and data to the point where anyone can use it, create it, and participate in the decision making process. We host a number of online platforms that provide the general public a mechanism to share ideas and data.

For the last ten years, we have helped NYC government agencies explore and adapt to new technologies. For the last eight, we have dedicated our efforts to modernize Community Boards. We have researched their needs and documented technology and data literacy gaps across the five boroughs.<sup>23</sup> We bridge these gaps via a service we call Research and Data Assistance Requests - RADAR for short. RADARs help provide in-depth technology and analytical services to borough presidents, council members, community boards, and community based organizations.<sup>4</sup>

In 2019, we sat in front of this committee and testified on the needs of Community Boards. Based on two years of interviews, we outlined gaps in information technology, data challenges, digital literacy, social media, websites, help desk support, and business information tools.<sup>5</sup> Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and we were forced to layer on another set of digital literacy and process management issues.

We could spend two hours talking about Community Boards, their lack of diversity, ineffective representation of actual community needs, and lack of digital and data literacy, but I can't spend two hours talking about my own transit rich community board which bought an SUV.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for Community Boards and their district offices to be restructured for the 21st century. Additionally, Borough Presidents need more resources to support Board operations.

For the next few mins, we want to talk about our research supporting Borough Presidents, District Offices, and Community Boards. We should first note, BetaNYC provides a custom built process to four of the five Borough Presidents. The four largest boroughs use a secure digital application process to take in applicants, screen, interview, share out for nominations from Council Members, and summarize demographics and spatial statistics. We have worked with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to ensure that the public facing web tools are accessible. While we do get compensated for our labor, we must discount our work because none of the Borough Presidents can pay the actual cost.

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<sup>2</sup> BetaNYC's Civic Innovation Fellows Community Board Technology Needs Report 2018, Emily Goldman, Noel Hidalgo, and Lindsay Poirier. 2018. BetaNYC.

<https://beta.nyc/publications/betanycs-civic-innovation-fellows-community-board-technology-needs-report-2018/>

<sup>3</sup> Data Design Challenges and Opportunities for NYC Community Boards. Lindsay Poirier, Noel Hidalgo, and Emily Goldman. 2018. <https://beta.nyc/publications/data-design-challenges-and-opportunities-for-nyc-community-boards/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://beta.nyc/products/research-and-data-assistance-requests/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://beta.nyc/2019/02/25/testimony-oversight-committee-on-governmental-operations-transparency/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/brooklyn/2019/5/23/21211060/brooklyn-community-board-roils-over-26-000-suv-splurge>

## Recommendations for Borough Presidents

- Resources to support digital government work
  - Each Borough President should receive a \$500,000 boost in funding to provide district offices and boards technical support, ensure that community board websites are kept up to date, virtual meetings are supported, ongoing training is conducted, and a small amount of money is available for external organizations to support boards and their district offices.
- Improving the appointment process
  - We want a unified baseline process for appointments. This process should be digital, accessible, and well resourced with staff time. The current Microsoft toolkit from OTI is inadequate for this process.
  - Standards regarding training of new members. Land Use, Open Data, Resolution Writing, Bias and Conflict of Interest, and Parliamentary Procedures.
  - While we respect each board's desire to have their own attendance tracking, it is not unified across the city. This has a significant impact on reappointments. NYC needs standardized attendance tracking across the City's 59 community boards.
  - The eight year term limits, which we think are too short, are going to significantly affect expertise, capacity, and community knowledge. We need clear guidelines and tools on how term limited board members can share their institutional and community knowledge across generations.
- Holding agencies accountable
  - Every Borough President has a huge opportunity to shape how agencies respond to community needs. It should go beyond having agency representatives attend Borough Service Cabinet. There should be a citywide practice where the Borough Statement of Needs, the Mayor's Management Report, and Borough Service Cabinet are connected via data driven reports.

## Recommendations for Boards and District Offices

- Resources to support digital government work
  - With much respect to district office staff, many are not trained to deal with complexities of a digital first government. While the best have staffed up or taught themselves how to access new tools, district managers need to increase their data and technical literacy.
  - Many need to hire data and technology literate talent and have urban planners at the ready.
  - Each board and district offices should be able to apply for a \$150,000 - 200,000 renewable grant to support their digital and data literacy development.
- Holding agencies accountable

- District Service Cabinet - Need to hold agencies more accountable through the data agencies publish on the open data portal. There should be a citywide practice where District Statement of Needs, the Mayor's Management Report, and District Service Cabinet are connected via data driven reports.
- District statement of needs is broken.
  - Timelines need to be rethought and every community meeting should have a seamless workflow that integrates into the district statement of needs.
  - This is the greatest toolkit for participatory decision making and budgeting. We should be leaning into this process, not abandoning it.
- Technical support
  - Boards need help publishing their calendars on the City Record.
  - Every staff member should be well equipped and trained to run virtual meetings from the district office and their home. We continue to come across district staff who do not have appropriate equipment for digital era government operations.
  - Boards need support writing resolutions that link to process management tools. Let us STOP using PDFs for moving data around.
  - Every single board should move away from TeamSite and move to Wordpress.<sup>7</sup> Every single board needs ongoing Website support and development. This is on top of the ONE technical support person driving around to each board.
  - They need custom application development and no one has resources for this.
- We currently provide the following tools and would love support to improve them.
  - BoardStat<sup>8</sup> - An interactive tool that empowers community boards to discover issues and trends within NYC 311 data. BoardStat was designed with community boards and for community boards.
  - Boundaries Map<sup>9</sup> - An interactive tool that empowers community boards to discover issues and trends within NYC 311 data. BoardStat was designed with community boards and for community boards.
  - SLAM (State Liquor Authority Map)<sup>10</sup> - A platform that saves community boards time and resources by aggregating data they use to review liquor license applications and sidewalk cafe applications in an easily accessible and unified view.
  - AirTable Support & Community Board Database (CBDB)<sup>11</sup> - A database template built with Community Boards to track community issues, resolution, and attendance.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to give our story.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://beta.nyc/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Reports-Executive-Summay.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://boardstat.beta.nyc/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://boundaries.beta.nyc/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://slam.beta.nyc/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://beta.nyc/products/cbdb/>



Julio Pena III  
Chairperson

Jeremy Laufer  
District Manager

**THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN  
COMMUNITY BOARD #7**

Antonio Reynoso  
Borough President

**Brooklyn Community Board 7 Testimony before the  
NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations**

**February 28, 2023**

Good morning. My name is Jeremy Laufer and I am the District Manager for Brooklyn Community Board 7. I have previously testified before this committee and others about our Board's support of Intro. 570, so I can spare you my biography. I join many of my colleagues today to discuss community board resources and needs, but I want to be clear that each of us is an independent agency, serving different populations and geographic areas. Our needs are not exactly the same in all areas. Today I would like to reiterate our request for assistance in providing interpretation and translation services at the community board level as well as a request for security evaluations for all of our public offices.

In previous testimony, I discussed two public meetings in which interpretation was left to our board so that other agencies could communicate with the public. In October, 2020, our Board invited DOT to present on major plans to change two avenues in the heart of Brooklyn Chinatown. Despite our request for interpretation, DOT informed us that it was entirely up to us. We paid an outside service nearly 5% of our entire OTPS for the year for a single meeting to provide interpretation services. And, by the way, DOT did not translate its presentation so much of it was useless for a huge plurality, if not majority, of our audience. The other meeting was at the request of MTA, to inform the community about an elevator installation at the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue subway station, again in the heart of Brooklyn Chinatown. The \$50 billion dollar agency refused to provide interpretation and left that to the quarter million dollar agency. As it was at the end of the fiscal year, we did not have enough money in our budget for this unexpected cost, and we needed to rely on board members and the public to provide interpretation, which is not particularly reliable.

Our Board holds 8 to 12 public meetings a month. Currently our need for interpretation is impossible to meet. And its not like we have been quiet on this issue, having testified before the City Council, requested assistance from the Mayor's office and the CEC, lobbied Borough Presidents and other elected officials and many of us have made it a high priority in our annual budget requests, so far to no avail.

We have also recently learned that the Comptroller has created a form to report language access problems with City agencies, including community boards. Ironically, our boards can now be officially reprimanded for not providing the unfunded mandate for which we have been requesting funding and/or resources. Our 59 tiny, independent agencies cannot self-fund this mandate.

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*Serving Sunset Park and Windsor Terrace*

In addition to the necessity for interpretation and translation resources for our agencies, I also want to bring to your attention the need for security evaluations for all of our offices. Recently, one of my staff members was confronted by an angry patron of the Brooklyn Public Library, with whom my agency temporarily shares a building. Often we are confused for the library. It didn't strike me until recently why the library has a security guard, a resource we do not have. Community Boards have very small staffs, some with only a single employee and some, like mine, with only a single person in the office at various times. Incidentally, the person who confronted my staff member was banned from the library for three months due to behavior.

The recent confrontation alerted me to the need for a simple change in our office lock, allowing us to lock it from the inside, which we quickly got done. However, I have no training in security and little knowledge of measures which could be taken to prevent tragedy. Twenty years ago City Councilman James Davis was assassinated by a constituent. Among the City's responses was a hardening of security at City Hall, Borough Halls and courthouses. Community Boards deal with the same issues and same constituents, but we do not have the same security standards for our offices. We have 59 independent agencies seeking 59 independent strategies and measures for such instances, some better and some worse, without the benefit of expertise. Throughout the country we have seen a rise in threats to government agencies and employees and we have seen, on occasion, these threats lead to violence but these are recorded instances of public meetings. I can request the NYPD to send officers to any particular meeting, but they cannot cover the majority of our interactions with the public, during the day at our offices. A security evaluation of each of our individual offices should be undertaken immediately by appropriate parties with individual security strategies developed, as our offices are not uniform. For my own staff, we are also planning to undertake de-escalation training, but we believe that this is a half measure that does not fully address a growing security need. The City Council should provide an appropriate budget for planning, training and, perhaps even a dedicated capital program, for security measures.

I thank you once again for allowing us time to testify on the needs of community board. I ask that you take seriously the experiences of my colleagues.



Good morning. My name is Barry Spitzer and I am the District Manager of Brooklyn's Community Board 12. Thank you Madam chair and the committee for taking the time to hold this hearing and listen to our testimony.

My testimony is going to focus on our autonomy as independent city agencies as established in the city charter.

In recent years it has become commonplace for other city agencies to impose on community boards rules, regulations, and procedures that are entirely made up, without any basis in law or it being within their authority to do so.

This practice has had negative impacts on our boards, our staff and our ability to manage our agencies effectively.

There are many examples, but in the interest of time I will just highlight a few. In July of 2019 Brooklyn Borough Hall issued a decree that they will only process PAR's (Planned Action Reports) if they receive a, "copy of the boards minutes at which the action was presented to and approved by the entire board." Many boards raised objections to this new rule, simply stating that every board operates under their own by-laws and have their own policies & procedures for personnel matters. It took many months for them to acknowledge that indeed the boards have a duty to follow their own by-laws. But the damage was done. Many boards who have filed PARs with OMB were left hanging. Due to these actions, I personally lost thousands of dollars in wages.

(In my case, my chair approved a PAR on May 10, 2019. OMB refused to process it because as they said they are coming out with new rules. They came out with the new rules in July which was after the new fiscal year had begun. They then forced my chair to submit a new PAR, which they approved. Now, the Borough President's office refused to process it because it didn't comply with their rules. After going back and forth for months and after the Law Department issued a ruling that BH can't impose anything contrary to our by-laws, they finally acquiesced and processed it in February of 2020. Nine months after the original PAR was submitted, thus resulting in thousands of dollars in lost wages.)

Another rule that was arbitrarily imposed is the need for a justification letter submitted in conjunction with a PAR. This may seem trivial, but I know from my colleagues that this has already held up some board staff from getting payed. In one instance, OMB approved my colleague's PAR but BH asked for a letter of justification, and not wanting to fight the issue, she sent the letter. BH did not accept it because, they now said, it needs to come from the chair. The chair sent the

justification in an email (under protest because she didn't want to set precedent). BH again refused to accept it because it wasn't on letterhead. Meanwhile this staffer, who is not making much to begin with, her raise is being held up for something that BH has no right to ask for to begin with.

Additionally, OMB got into the habit of not honoring the PAR dates boards are submitting. I quote from an email I saw when a board inquired why OMB changed the effective date: "The effective date for PARs are either at the time they are signed and approved by OMB or after." I submit, no they are not. As the agency who's budget it is, it is their decision, not OMB's. By changing the dates, board staff have lost thousands of dollars.

I also know of a case that OMB and BH refused to process a wage increase for a staff member of a board who was going back to school because of the adjustment in the weekly hours. This went on for over a year and was based on nothing. The staffer lost that money.

(I can go on and on but to illustrate the mentality I will quote from an email exchange I had with an individual at OMB. I wasn't even challenging the validity of a rule he was insisting that OMB made, although I held it to be invalid. All I was asking for is the memo or something in writing stating this policy:

OMB: My understanding is this information was previously communicated to you. If not, this communication is sufficient. The policy was in effect for FY20, FY21 and it continues today.

Me: It was not. But regardless, if there was a change in policy there must have been a memo outlining it. Kindly forward it to me at your earliest convenience.

OMB: Maybe I'm not being clear. But again, this email communication is sufficient.

That, right there, is a lack of transparency and an agency acting beyond their authority.)

It is time that these agencies operate within the laws, policies and procedures outlined in the NYC Charter.

I thank the committee.



## THE CITY OF NEW YORK BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARDS

July 27, 2022

Gregory E. Louis, Esq.  
General Counsel  
Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso  
209 Joralemon Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Re: Advisory Memorandum to Community Boards on PARs

Dear Mr. Louis,

We would like to take this opportunity to respond to your memo, dated June 15, 2022 and issued to Brooklyn Community Boards on June 28, 2022, titled Procedures for Specified Personnel Actions. As you know, each community board is an independent city agency that is governed by the NYC Charter and their own by-laws. We believe that the New York City Charter is clear on Community Boards' autonomy in enacting personnel decisions as per Section 2800 (g) (f).

You cite Section 82(12) which states, "The president of a borough shall provide training and technical assistance to the members of community boards within the borough," as the basis for your memo. This memo represents neither training nor technical assistance. In fact, it would be helpful to have Borough Hall's technical assistance in supporting our request that OMB substantiate its authority in imposing rules on another city agency. Failing that, they should have to promulgate new rules through CAPA (City Administrative Procedure Act). In the meantime, they should cease and desist in these impositions.

OMB's habit of unilaterally making policy has cost many board employees thousands of dollars with no recourse. We would expect Borough Hall to ally with us to curb OMB's encroachment on our autonomy. When the previous Borough Hall administration tried to impose arbitrary rules on community boards, the City Law Department agreed that personnel actions are governed by each Community Board's respective by-laws. Now, OMB is trying to impose its will on us by using a new administration. Borough Hall's involvement should be limited to processing the paperwork once received from OMB.

We are still hopeful that Borough Hall will support our efforts to ensure OMB operates within the laws, policies and procedures outlined in the New York City Charter.

We are looking forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Henry Butler  
District Manager  
Community Board 3

Celestina Leon  
District Manager  
Community Board 4

Melinda Perkins  
District Manager  
Community Board 5



Jeremy Laufer  
District Manager  
Community Board 7

Michelle George  
District Manager  
Community Board 8

Dante Arnwine  
District Manager  
Community Board 9

Barry Spitzer  
District Manager  
Community Board 12

Eddie Mark  
District Manager  
Community Board 13

Shawn Campbell  
District Manager  
Community Board 14

Laura Singer  
District Manager  
Community Board 15

Sherif Fraser  
District Manager  
Community Board 17

Sue Ann Partnow  
District Manager  
Community Board 18

cc: Asher Freeman, Chief of Staff  
Tameisha Honeygan, Director of Human Resources



**BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 14**  
**FLATBUSH-MIDWOOD COMMUNITY DISTRICT**  
810 East 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11230

Brooklyn Community Board 14 Testimony before the  
NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations

February 28, 2023

Good morning. My name is Shawn Campbell and I am the District Manager for Brooklyn Community Board 14. I am here on behalf of boards in general to speak about the baseline budget. Community Boards are historically under-resourced. Today a typical board is currently allocated \$231,100 for staff and \$26,407 per year for OTPS, including office supplies, printing, mailing, consultants, and other needs, leaving little room for adding more staff, obtaining technical assistance, or upgrading communications and technology.

Community boards have not had a significant baseline budget expansion since 2014. Yet, staffing needs and responsibilities have grown. Future of Community Board working group participants reported having challenges with hiring and retaining staff due to budget constraints. Given that the boards already have very small staffs, the inability to hire and retain employees has a much larger impact on their work than in a larger agency.

The baseline budgets of many city agencies saw double digit percentage increases in the last decade. The headcount at many of our sister agencies has increased accordingly. For example, from 2001 to 2021 headcount at DOB increased by 138%, DYCD by 131%, Parks by 104%, DOT by 29%. At the same time community boards' headcount decreased by 11%. Yet, our responsibilities increased. We have been assigned additional responsibilities for accounting with FMS and Passport, District Managers are now agency privacy officers, the city has introduced several new EEO trainings, there have been no less than eight zoning text amendments proposed in the past three years, service delivery requests are up, and our meetings are held in various combinations of remote, in person and hybrid requiring new technical skills.

City council provided two allocations of \$42,500 in 2018 and 2019 but these were not baselined funds and could not be used to hire staff or plan or make long term plans. The city recaptured some of this funding from those boards that had not spent it prior to the pandemic shutdown. In December 2020, the city threatened to cut community boards' budgets by approximately 19%, which would have been devastating to the boards. However, the City Council intervened to support the community boards by restoring their budgets.

Some boards have addressed budget challenges by creating 501c-3 non-profit organizations or informal "Friends of" groups, which give the boards the option to independently fundraise. However, not all boards have the capacity to do this, or constituencies with extra income to donate, creating inequities across boroughs and from board to board. Some boards have expressed a concern about the optics of a city agency having to go hat in hand to the very community it is charged to serve.

Also inconsistent are the offices the city provides for community boards. While the city covers rent costs, the quality of offices varies widely. One district manager reported not having light switches in their office for a decade, while another has been waiting ten years for their bathrooms to be made accessible. Another reported being evicted from their space, only to be moved into a non-ADA-accessible basement where the bathroom had no door, and where they remained for over a year. Some boards have meeting spaces included with their office, while others must turn to local institutions to provide space for them, creating an additional administrative burden to identify, secure, and coordinate the use of space.

Needs vary from board to board. Some require additional funding for technology upgrades, others for investment in translation services and equipment if the city will not provide direct support. Boards have different funding needs for events, trainings, meeting space, office equipment. Nearly all boards would increase the number and or pay rate for staff if able. While the city has made fleeting attempts to provide some of this support, a baseline budget increase is the only sustainable way to allow for each board to dedicate resources for the needs that best equip them to support their respective communities.

In a time of budget austerity, community boards are a good investment for city dollars. The city has the advantage of 50 community members on each Board throughout the City, who serve voluntarily. We work closely with elected officials, partner with all city agencies ensuring they know of issues in the community and that the community is aware of agency initiatives, rules, programs and services.

In 2018 the Charter Revision Commission established the Civic Engagement Commission as evidence that local input is a value this city espouses. Just last week the Department of City Planning announced a new civic engagement unit. A new agency and a new department within the land use agency, where CBs already have a role, are lost efficiencies when Community Boards are the established liaison to local communities; our District Offices are already on the ground, and our District Needs Statements already a well-documented expression of local needs.

Citywide, district office staff address tens of thousands of service delivery requests annually. Many organize community events such as CB14's annual youth conference and nonprofit roundtable. Increasing responsibilities have been assigned and hiring staff and specialists, such as planners, policy analysts, IT assistance, would help to introduce more initiatives and develop longer range projects. Ultimately, we could better complement a complaint driven role with more proactive, grass roots plans.

As the most local city agency, we give voice to the individuals who make up our communities. City agencies have expressed a desire to reach the most local levels and communities. We are their liaison, and the value of this role should be reflected in our baseline budget.

Thank you.



**Antonio Reynoso**  
*Borough President*

# COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

1291 ST. MARKS AVENUE • BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11213

(718) 467-5620/5574 • BROOKLYNCB8.ORG • BROOKLYNCB8@GMAIL.COM

**Irsa Weatherspoon**  
*Chairperson*

**Michelle T. George**  
*District Manager*

## **Testimony of Brooklyn Community Board No. 8 Before the City Council Committee on Governmental Operations**

**February 28, 2023**

Good Afternoon Chairperson Sandra Ung and members of the Committee. Thank you for holding the hearing on “Appointing and Supporting NYC’s Community Boards.”

We at Community Board No. 8 would like to thank the City Council for the opportunity to express our concerns. We are certain that the Committee agrees that New York City’s 59 Community Boards are vital liaisons between government, city agencies, and their respective communities. Our effectiveness in handling and mediating a wide variety of problems cannot be over emphasized and should be remembered during the budget season, especially considering that Community Boards are the gateway to local democracy.

To be effective in our roles as the most local level of government and civic participation, it is imperative that all 59 boards receive a baseline budget increase, additional funding for technical support in the form of equipment such as cameras, audio/visual equipment, access to mobile networks (hotspots) for internet and streaming access, as well as additional staff. Currently, Brooklyn Community Board 8 is a staff of two, consisting of the District Manager and Community Coordinator. Additional staff is needed to handle the growing number of complaints and meetings where attendance is required by staff to access the needs of the community and even for language translation services at our meetings. Currently, our budget has disallowed us from hiring an additional staffer and paying a living wage.

Although Community Boards are autonomous entities, the Brooklyn Borough President’s office has been tasked with assisting the Brooklyn Boards in several areas including human resources, EEO training, and budget issues when a Board does not have the requisite three staffers to navigate the city’s Financial Management Systems (FMS). This is because our current baseline budgets are so miniscule.

As Community Boards are the gateway to local levels of government, we need a way to inform residents of the importance of our existence. The best and most effective way to do this and spread the word is for PSA’s, print advertisements, television and radio ads, and a strong marketing campaign. The funding for this should come out of the Civic Engagement Commission’s (CEC) budget as that is the agency that has been specifically created to enhance civic participation, promote civic trust, and strengthen democracy in New York City. For all that the CEC claims to provide, informing District office staff of services and offerings is tantamount to our and the agency’s success.

NYC Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) does not offer the necessary support to the Boards that they claimed to offer during the hearing. One person to handle the desktop support needs and services for all 59 Boards is insufficient. This leads to longer than necessary appointment times and waits for service to get up and running again. Furthermore, the fact that OTI offers training is new news to us as we have not been apprised of trainings. However, we will avail ourselves to these trainings in the future.

For decades, Community Boards remain the only city agency that has not received a baseline budget increase. A one-time funding allocation has been helpful in the past and can be helpful for immediate needs and purchases presently. However, a true baseline increase would give us the opportunity to fully evolve as the gateway to local democracy that we are and embrace as our identity. It would also give us the opportunity to grow our staff to keep in line with the needs of the growing community.

Additionally, we support all appointed Community members receiving the same trainings that district office staff receives. This will better assist members with understanding appropriate behaviors and methods of engagement.

Finally, we appreciate being heard during this hearing. However, this hearing was about "Community Boards," and yet community board representatives were called upon last as members of public rather than as official agencies to testify. We should be acknowledged as the city agencies that we are, and treated accordingly.

Again, thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Michelle George  
District Manager

  
Irsa Weatherspoon  
Chairperson

**TESTIMONY**  
presented by  
**Dr. Sarah Sayeed, Chair & Executive Director**  
**New York City Civic Engagement Commission**  
before the  
**New York City Council**  
**Committee on Governmental Operations**  
on the subject of  
**Oversight – Appointing and Supporting NYC’s Community Boards**  
on  
Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 10 AM

Thank you, Chair Ung and members of the Committee on Governmental Operations, for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony about the support provided to Community Boards by the Civic Engagement Commission (CEC). I’m delighted to be here again nearly one year since last testifying before the Committee about the role that CEC plays within our city and our mission to build trust in democracy.

As you know, the City Charter grants the CEC broad authorization to support civic engagement throughout the city, in partnership with community organizations and civic leaders in the public and private sectors. The Charter also defines specific programs and activities that CEC is to create and support, including participatory budgeting, language assistance at poll sites and assistance to community boards. Pursuant to Mayoral Executive Order 88, DemocracyNYC is also a program of the CEC and works to increase voter participation

The Charter requires the Commission to provide assistance and training to community boards. The Commission provides support for identifying and providing access to urban planning and land use professionals who have no involvement in the proposals being considered by community boards; providing services and tools to address the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency; training in the use of technological tools; and providing guidance on uniform meeting procedures. Training sessions offered by the CEC are not mandatory for board members but complement the training session coordinated by Borough Presidents.

As it pertains to support of community boards, the CEC has continued to expand the breadth of our work since we last spoke before this committee in April of 2022. Between the agency’s inception in 2019 through the end of fiscal year 2022, we have served nearly 1,000 community board members by providing trainings in many topics including: Community Board Committees; How to Conduct Efficient Meetings; Motions and Amendments; Nominations and Elections; Citywide Secretary Workshop; Conflict Resolution; and Primer on Public Engagement.

In the summer of 2022, the CEC hired the first Community Board Advisor to coordinate and manage programming for our work to support community boards. The Advisor has been focused on building relationships with district managers citywide, attending borough board meetings, reviewing prior trainings and prior needs assessments, including the Future of Community Boards report by community boards who served on the Future of Community Boards Working Group.

Since publishing our annual report in September 2022, the CEC held the following training sessions for community board members:

- Understanding the City Budget, in partnership with the Independent Budget Office.
- Using the Open Data Portal, in partnership with the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI).
- The Power of Youth, in partnership with the NYC Youth Agenda.

In the area of language access, the CEC provided all 59 community boards with access to individual Language Line accounts with on-demand telephonic interpretation in over 200 languages. We also worked with the OTI to produce the first citywide language map that provides information about the top five languages spoken in their community district. This resource is a first of its kind and has now been published on the Commission's website for public use. The map can be found at this link:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/civicingagement/html/CEC-Language-Profiles-Map.html>

The CEC created a Community Board Resource page on our NYC.gov page to provide easy access to all community board members to our archives of prior workshops. We also published content on social media encouraging New Yorkers to apply to serve on their local community board, along with educational information on the role community boards play in our city.

Over the coming months in 2023, we have announced a robust series of trainings and support efforts:

- Following up on our youth engagement workshops, which was one of the top interests indicated in our needs assessment, and in service of our continuing efforts to engage more diverse communities in the work of community boards, we will be hosting a series of workshops in partnership with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. These trainings will focus on improving disability access with topics such as Disability Etiquette and Awareness, Document Accessibility, and Accessible Virtual Meetings.
- In line with our charter mandates, we will be hosting land use workshops with the Association of Neighborhood & Housing Development around Equity in Land Use Decisions, as well as updated workshops from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on Fair Housing and Affordable Housing.
- Recognizing that there will be new board members onboarded this Spring, we will be bringing back the popular series of Parliamentary Procedure workshops.
- In an effort to increase access and participation, this year we will be running some workshops during the midday from 12:00pm - 1:00pm, a practice used by the Manhattan Borough President's Office. We will conduct workshops targeted to specific committees such as Land Use and Executive Committees, along with others for general board members.
- Regarding language access, we will be coordinating a meeting on March 9th with the CEC's Language Access Coordinator and members of the Future of Community Boards coalition to discuss in detail how we can improve access for more of our Language Communities across NYC.
- As you know, in 2020 the CEC conducted a needs assessment with district managers and board chairs, which surpassed our initial goals in participation with 49 of the 59 community boards responding or an 83% response rate. We will conduct a follow-up in the coming months to assess new needs from boards.
- Finally, we are working with OTI and DCAS to explore the possibility of making several EEO trainings easily available to all Community Board members, Sexual Harassment Prevention, LGBTQIA: The Power of Inclusion, and Everybody Matters: EEO and Diversity & Inclusion

Training for NYC Employees. We have heard from many boards' interests on providing these to all board members, not just paid staff.

The CEC is proud to work to support our city's community boards. We are in contact with the Community Affairs Unit, Department of City Planning, as well as the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, the Office of Technology and Innovation, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak about the work of the CEC to support and assist community boards, and I look forward to answering your questions.



**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: 2/28/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Celestina Leon

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: The Future of Community Boards working group

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: 02/28/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Comacho

Address: ST Anthony St.

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 02/28/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeremy Laufer

Address: 14th Ave, Bklyn

I represent: Bklyn CB 7

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: 02/28/93

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: SHAWN CAMPBELL

Address: BK NY 11230

I represent: BK CB 14

Address: 810 E 165 11230

**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: ISROEL HECHT, Deputy Commissioner

Address: (OTI)

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: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: BENJAMIN SOLOTAIDE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: SEC

Address: Community Board Advisor

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: Dr Sarah Sayeed, Chair & Executive Director

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Civic Engagement Commission

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: Barry Spitzer

Address: Brooklyn

I represent: Brooklyn Community Board 12

Address: 5910 13<sup>th</sup> Ave, Brooklyn

**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: Tricia Shimamura

Address: One Centre Street

I represent: Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine

Address: \_\_\_\_\_