

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

----- X

June 4, 2024
Start: 10:26 A.M.
Recess: 12:46 P.M.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 16th
Floor

B E F O R E: Crystal Hudson, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Chris Banks
Gale A. Brewer
Linda Lee
Darlene Mealy
Yusef Salaam
Lynn C. Schulman
Susan Zhuang

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

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez
Commissioner NYC Aging

Ryan Murray
Executive Deputy Commissioner NYC Aging

Xiher Li
Hamilton Madison House

Theodora Ziongas
Selfhelp Big Six NORC

Elizabeth Berger
40 Harrison Tenant Association

John Scott
IPN Senior Center

Tara Klein
UNH

Navneet Kaur
The Legal Aid Society

Sharon Brown
Self

Jeannine Cahill Jackson
Legal Aid Society

Jeannie Doherty
CenterLight PACE

Katherine Reilly
CenterLight PACE

Katy Bordonaro
Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition

Andrietta Sims
Self

Barbara Collins
Big Six Towers

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is a microphone check for
3 the Committee on Aging, recorded by Layla Lynch on
4 the 16th Floor on June 4, 2024.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
6 today's New York City Council Hearing for the
7 Committee on Aging. At this time, please silence all
8 cell phones and electronic devices. Once again,
9 please silence all cell phones and electronic
10 devices. If you have testimony you wish to submit
11 for the record, you may do so via email at
12 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that is
13 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

14 At any time throughout the hearing, please do not
15 approach the dais. We thank you for your kind
16 cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much. [GAVEL]
18 Good morning everyone. I'm Council Member Crystal
19 Hudson, Chair of the Committee on Aging. My pronouns
20 are she, her. Welcome to today's oversight hearing
21 on protecting, preserving and supporting naturally
22 occurring retirement communities in New York City.
23 We will also hear Resolution Number 232, sponsored by
24 Council Member Gale Brewer, calling on the New York
25 State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign

1
2 S.2960/A.5741, to provide for an annual adjustment of
3 the maximum income threshold eligibility for the
4 Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption or SCRIE,
5 Disability Rent Increase Exemption, DRIE, Senior
6 Citizen Homeowners' Exemption SCHE, and Disabled
7 Homeowners' Exemption, DHE by any increase in the
8 Consumer Price Index. We are joined this morning by
9 Council Members Brewer, Zhuang, Lee, and Salaam.

10 A Naturally Occurring Retirement Community or a
11 NORC is a community with a concentrated population of
12 older adults. Unlike retirement communities or
13 facilities specifically built for older adults,
14 NORC's evolve over time, such as through the aging in
15 place of existing residents. There are two NORC
16 models found in NYC, housing based NORC's and
17 neighborhood NORC's.

18 Housing based NORC's are in a single age
19 integrated apartment building, a housing complex with
20 multiple buildings under common management or an area
21 where several apartment buildings are clustered
22 together. A neighborhood based NORC or N NORC,
23 typically refers to one and two family homes found in
24 an age integrated neighborhood. NORC's supportive
25 service programs administered by nonprofit providers

1
2 are placed within a designated NORC to address the
3 health and social service needs of older adult
4 residents.

5 Such services may include assessment and case
6 management, health care and wellness, housekeeping,
7 social services and educational activities. In NYC,
8 both NYC Aging and the New York State Office for the
9 Aging contract with NORC's and in NORC's across the
10 city to provide crucial funding for these NORC
11 programs. Decades of research have shown that NORC's
12 provide a proven community based alternative that
13 allows older adults to stay safe and healthy in their
14 homes for longer.

15 In many cases, NORC programs help older people
16 avoid or delay entering institutional settings like
17 nursing homes or emergency rooms. NORC's are also
18 cost effective, as they serve residents on smaller
19 budgets while preventing more substantial costs to
20 the state. For example, the annual cost of a nursing
21 home stay for one individual in New York State can
22 approach \$159,000 per year, which amounts to nearly
23 the value of one NORC program contract that serves
24 hundreds of older adults and helps them remain in
25 their homes for longer.

1
2 More than one out of every four older New Yorkers
3 age 60 plus live alone. Between 2012 and 2022, the
4 number of older adult New Yorkers living alone has
5 increased by 21 percent from 1 million to 1.2 million
6 individuals. 51 percent of older New Yorkers in
7 poverty live alone, which is three times the share of
8 higher income older New Yorkers living alone. A 2024
9 report found that the COVID-19 pandemic worsened
10 exiting social isolation issues among older New
11 Yorkers particularly older adults of color.

12 The US Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey
13 date from fall 2023, shows that over 30 percent of
14 Asian older adult New Yorkers and 42 percent of
15 Latinx older adult New Yorkers reported feeling down,
16 depressed or hopeless.

17 NORC programs often help mitigate the negative
18 impacts of loneliness and social isolation that older
19 adults living alone experience by offering a variety
20 of services and activities, including civic
21 engagement and volunteer opportunities for older
22 adults that can help strengthen communities and
23 improve overall mental health.

24 These can include bus trips to local grocery
25 stores, hot meal deliveries, games, intergenerational

1
2 karaoke nights, dance and workout classes and so much
3 more. The physical health benefits of the NORC model
4 are clear too. As part of their contracts, many
5 NORC's provide critically important primary health
6 care to older adults through onsite NORC program
7 nurses. These leads to higher immunization and
8 screening rates among older adults in NORC's than in
9 older adult populations in New York City.

10 Unfortunately, many NORC programs are struggling to
11 meet their New York City aging contracted
12 requirements for onsite health care and nursing hours
13 because NORC contracts do not fully fund the required
14 nursing services. This has traditionally forced
15 providers to rely on pro bono nursing services
16 sourced from hospitals, nursing students or retired
17 volunteers but shifts in the health care sector have
18 made these arrangements untenable and have left
19 providers struggling with an unfunded mandate.

20 Despite repeated calls to baselined funding for
21 onsite nursing staff at NORC's to ensure continuous
22 access to primary and preventative care for older
23 adults, this administration has so far declined to do
24 so.

1
2 Recognizing the critical importance of promoting
3 easy access to high quality health care, this City
4 Council has stepped into provide supplemental funding
5 for NORC nursing at NYC aging contracted NORC's as
6 part of the boarder NORC Council initiative, which
7 was funded at \$5.2 million in Fiscal 2024. But
8 providers and older adults deserve the peace of mind
9 of permanent funding for this care.

10 At a time when New York City's older adult
11 population is growing exponentially, the city should
12 be investing more, not fewer resources into
13 supporting our older adults. NORC's allow older
14 adults to age in place with dignity in tightly bound
15 communities that foster social connections and
16 healthy lifestyles. These investments would have a
17 major impact on our city's public health outcomes,
18 alleviate the mental health crisis facing older adult
19 communities, and save the city and state a ton of
20 money in the longer term.

21 It is critical that the city commits to a
22 comprehensive plan to expand the number of NORC's
23 across the five boroughs to accommodate more older
24 adults and that it commits to providing the funding
25 and resources necessary for NORC's to provide high

1
2 quality and comprehensive supportive services
3 including onsite nursing care.

4 Our older adults need that commitment and
5 support. Thank you to the advocates, members of the
6 public and representatives from the Administration
7 who are joining us today and I would also like to
8 thank my staff Casey Addison and Andrew Write and
9 Aging Committee Staff Christopher Pepe, Chloë Rivera,
10 and Saiyemul Hamid.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Good
12 morning Commissioner and Executive Deputy
13 Commissioner. If you could please raise your right
14 hands for me. Now, in accordance with the rules of
15 the Council, I will administer the affirmation to the
16 witness from the Mayoral Administration. Do you
17 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing
18 but the truth in your testimony before this Committee
19 and to respond honestly to Council Members questions?
20 Commissioner?

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Executive Deputy
23 Commissioner?

24 RYAN MURRAY: I do.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may proceed.

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you. Thank you
3 for the gift of time that family obligations kept me
4 from being here promptly as I normally do.

5 So, good morning.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Good morning.

7 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Uhm, I am glad to be
8 sitting down and settled. Chair Hudson and members
9 of the Committee on Aging. As you know, I am
10 Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez, Commissioner of the New City
11 Department for the Aging and I am joined today by
12 Ryan Murray, our Executive Deputy Commissioner and
13 Chief Program Officer. I'm going to thank you for
14 this opportunity to discuss NORC's. The Naturally
15 Occurring Retirement Communities and how New York
16 City is working to protect, preserve and support
17 these important institutions.

18 Again, I always thank you for your advocacy. New
19 York City Aging funds thirty-six NORC's throughout
20 New York where we contract with providers to
21 administer aging services to their residents. This
22 is separate from the affordability components of
23 housing and older adult housing in New York City as
24 New York City does not construct, maintain, or place
25 older adults in housing. Instead, our primary focus

1
2 is on the social service provision to the residents
3 of a NORC.

4 As you know, New York City's population and you
5 have at least said in your opening remarks, it is
6 aging rapidly, and we expect that the share of older
7 adults in the five boroughs to grow as the entire
8 Baby Boom Generation is now over 60. New York City
9 is focused on ensuring that the social supports and
10 aging services, which allow older New Yorkers to stay
11 in the community and age in place, are available and
12 accessible where they live. This work, in addition
13 to the many other programs and services offered by
14 New York City Aging includes addressing ageism which
15 is still the last critically pervasive social
16 injustice with a level of acceptability for
17 discrimination in society.

18 That is why I am pleased to discuss this topic
19 with you today during June, which is Pride Month, and
20 also just after Older American Month, later this
21 month on June 15th, we will commemorate World Elder
22 Abuse Awareness Day which magnifies the achievements
23 we have made in combatting elder abuse.

24 NORC's play a special role in supporting LGBTQIA+
25 older adults and combatting elder abuse crimes by

1
2 creating the communities where neighbors look out for
3 one another, and where older adults can find support
4 services in the very buildings or blocks where they
5 live. NORC's come in different types and functions,
6 and I look forward to discussing these with you
7 today.

8 A Naturally Occurring Retirement Community

9 NORC's, or as they are commonly known, is a multi-age
10 housing development or a neighborhood which was not
11 originally intended to house older adults but now is
12 home to a significant number of them. Throughout New
13 York City, New York City Aging funded NORC's to
14 provide a range of services such as case assistance,
15 healthcare options, assistance with benefits and
16 entitlements, recreation or other activities, on-site
17 nursing services, and ways of connecting socially for
18 the residents.

19 NORC's help older adults remain in their
20 communities and age in place by utilizing these NYC
21 funded services and programs to provide the necessary
22 supports, which they may need possible. To be
23 considered a NORC, a building must have at least 350
24 senior residents with at least 40 percent of those
25 households including an older adult, or the complex

1 or the building has at least 1,500 older adult
2 residents regardless of the percentage of units they
3 occupy. We know that in Co-op city are examples of
4 those. A Neighborhood NORC is a geographically
5 defined area with no more than 2,000 residents aged
6 60+ who occupy at least 40 percent of the households,
7 the buildings must be 6 stories or less and/or single
8 or small multi-family housing. A majority of the
9 residents must be low to moderate income.
10

11 These standards were first defined through
12 practice in 1986 when New York City's Penn South
13 Houses in Chelsea became the first identified NORC
14 and set up a program with financial assistance from
15 UJA-federation agencies. This program, known as The
16 Penn South Program for Seniors, served the aging
17 population of the development 25 years after it had
18 been constructed. This first NORC program served as
19 the legislative model for New York State to establish
20 NORC's in the Elder Law of 1994, which formalized a
21 state process for identifying and funding NORC
22 services. New York City did the same in 1999 through
23 the FY 2000 City Council budget process, and
24 established funding based on the state's model and
25 definitions for a NORC.

1
2 As I said earlier, there are 36 NYC Aging-funded
3 NORC's and 24 discretionary funded NORC's from the
4 City Council which New York City Aging then
5 contracts out services to a provider. NORC's come in
6 a range of housing types including NYCHA, privately
7 run rental buildings, limited equity and Housing
8 Development Fund Corporation co-ops or Mitchel-Lama
9 or former Mitchel-Lama developments. NYC Aging
10 allocates services to providers through a Request for
11 Proposal process and that's timed, the last one was
12 timed with the Older Adult RFP.

13 While many of the social service functions found
14 in a NORC are similar to what you may see in OAC's or
15 Older Adult Club, a key difference is that NORC's do
16 not provide meals in a congregate setting for local
17 residents. Nonetheless, due to the size of a NORC
18 and its position within local communities or
19 neighborhoods, OAC's are frequently located nearby or
20 may even occupy the same buildings. There's a few
21 examples like that. Because NORC's are in fact
22 naturally occurring, there are often questions
23 surrounding what is identified first, the older
24 adults who make up the NORC, or the service provider

1
2 who can facilitate NORC aging services, and then the
3 group of older adult residents is identified.

4 In reality, this happens in tandem through the
5 RFP process when funding is identified to provide
6 NORC services and NYC Aging completes educational and
7 outreach to non-profits or community-based
8 organizations who can provide necessary services to
9 these identified communities.

10 NORC programs in New York City have five primary
11 program expectations. These are: provide case
12 assistance through professional staff for older adult
13 needs and linkages to outside agencies or support;
14 provide healthcare assistance including consultation,
15 screenings, and monitoring; NORC specific case
16 management for all residents whether they are
17 homebound or not; NORC healthcare management
18 including the development of a care plan for
19 residents; and five, build and development health
20 promotions with outside providers to address negative
21 health impacts.

22 These program elements are fundamental to
23 preserving the long-term housing viability of New
24 York City's older adult population. NORC staff are
25 able to intervene when needed to ensure that older

1 adult residents are receiving appropriate services,
2 help to identify and prevent long-term healthcare
3 impacts which will move an older adult into
4 institutional care, and/or create connections to
5 healthcare providers in the area which can improve
6 the overall outcomes for all of the older adult's
7 health.
8

9 NORC's ultimately are population designated areas
10 which over time have naturally met the qualifying
11 criteria previously mentioned. This allows an
12 eligible provider to apply in an RFP for contracted
13 supportive services and programming in that
14 designated building or neighborhood. Because of New
15 York City's multi-generational housing makeup, it is
16 entirely possible and I've said this before in other
17 hearings, that the entire city is made up of 40
18 percent of households with at least one older person
19 residing who is 60+.

20 While this does not mean that New York City as a
21 whole is a neighborhood NORC, you can understand that
22 these elements which make up a NORC are present
23 throughout the city. I say or I project that at some
24 point after 2030, all of New York City will be a
25 NORC. That is why NYC other key services such as OAC

1
2 programming, Home Delivered Meals, Homecare and
3 Caregiving support, Legal Services, and Geriatric
4 Mental Health programs are fundamental to the success
5 of our overall programs and services.

6 In particular, intergenerational programming is a
7 key opportunity to expand programming in an impactful
8 way which NORC's are uniquely positioned to take on
9 in the future. You know and I've said that the
10 anchors of these two cities, the two anchors of the
11 city are the older population and the younger
12 population. Additionally, NORC's provide services
13 which are different from what is seen in OAC's
14 because of their unique position in people's homes
15 and communities. They include healthcare management
16 through nursing services, which is a really added but
17 valued, civic engagement through interactions with
18 the case assistance staff, and working with housing
19 management issues to address long-term housing issues
20 experienced by older adults.

21 These are key services which help to prevent
22 older adults from moving into institutional care and
23 keep them in their homes and the communities that
24 they have built for longer. I can give you a few
25 examples of some interesting success. At Educational

1
2 Alliance Co-Op Village NORC on the Lower East Side,
3 older adults were concerned that they may lose a bus
4 stop during the M14, Manhattan 14 bus redesign. NORC
5 staff helped to organize the older adults and develop
6 an advocacy campaign to interact with local elected
7 officials, community boards, and other partners to
8 maintain the stop on the route which, ultimately,
9 they were successful in doing. Another example is at
10 the Center Light Parkchester NORC in the Bronx, older
11 adults did not have a laundry facilities on site and
12 used the local laundromats. This became difficult
13 for older adults as time went on and the NORC staff
14 assisted them in working with the building management
15 to secure funding and a contract with a provider for
16 laundry facilities on site.

17 These two examples show how NORC's allow older
18 adults to age-in-place through access to items or
19 services that are necessary and that are a key
20 component of community care, which is what our montre
21 is for older New Yorkers. Through the work of the
22 Cabinet for Older New Yorkers, we have seen the power
23 of intergenerational relationships between young
24 people and older adults in combatting ageism. When
25 young people see what older adults experience and

1
2 feel they too are connected to an older adult's
3 experience, that bond is what breaks cycles of
4 ageism.

5 NORC's provide an opportunity for this
6 collaboration between older adults and young people
7 because they live in the same communities and many
8 times in the same building. Those linkages between
9 NORC programming and providers also work with young
10 people form a natural fit for fostering
11 Intergenerational Programming.

12 We recently held the My Story New York
13 culminating event on May 24th where intergenerational
14 projects were presented. Some of those projects took
15 place at NORC's with NORC residents and with
16 providers who run youth programs, older adults, as
17 well as NORC programs.

18 Overall, as the growing number of older adults
19 continues to increase in New York City and those
20 older adults want to age in place, we need to seek
21 innovative models of NORC programming in the future.
22 We appreciate the Council's partnership with NYC
23 Aging in funding 24 NORC's through discretionary
24 dollars. This investment continues to serve the
25 needs of the older New Yorkers. Because of that

1
2 historic investment over the years, I anticipate that
3 there is a lot of interest in how we identify or how
4 we can have more NORC's given the growing number of
5 older adults in the five boroughs.

6 We anticipate the release of an upcoming OAC/NORC
7 RFP, and we will have more information to share with
8 our providers and the Council on what can be expected
9 for NORC's and their service providers. We will also
10 have data on the demographics of particular
11 communities.

12 As always, NYC Aging is committed to providing
13 quality services and programming to New York's City's
14 older adult population. I look forward to answering
15 any of your questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much
17 Commissioner. I'd like to acknowledge that we've
18 also been joined by Council Members Banks, Brewer and
19 Mealy via Zoom and I want to turn it over to Council
20 Member Brewer to give her opening statement.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I'm
22 here in person just FYI. I do want to thank the
23 Chair for including Reso. 232 on the agenda today as
24 she said earlier, it calls on the Governor to sign
25 bills in Albany. Then called for the annual

1
2 adjustment of the maximum income threshold
3 eligibility for SCRIE and DRIE and SCHE and DHE by
4 increase in the consumer price index. I have to say
5 if you certainly in many districts, residents who are
6 older, this is a huge issue in the constituent
7 office.

8 While social security benefits increased to match
9 cost of living, the income thresholds of each one of
10 these programs do not. This puts older adults and
11 people with disabilities at risk to lose access to
12 these programs. As increases in social security
13 raise their incomes above the set thresholds, even a
14 dollar throws you off. So, I hope everyone will sign
15 on. We can ensure at the \$70,000 plus households in
16 New York City receiving SCRIE OR DRIE or other
17 benefits continue to do so but we hope and we'd love
18 to get a number of you have one Commissioner as to
19 how many more would be involved.

20 I do want to thank Hally Chu from the Office of
21 State Senator Brian Kavanagh who worked for me. They
22 both worked for me in the past and they are moving
23 the state bill forward. My guess according to the
24 bill but we don't know for sure, is it could move the
25 income up to \$61,224. That would make a huge

1
2 difference and I urge everybody to support this bill.
3 I know that Senator Liz Krueger has called because as
4 soon as we pass this, which I hope we do today,
5 tomorrow, then that will help the state pass the
6 bills and get the Governor to sign. Thank you very
7 much.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you Council Member
9 Brewer. Very meaningful legislation. We will be
10 voting on it tomorrow morning, so uhm, Thursday
11 morning sorry not tomorrow morning, Thursday morning.
12 I don't even know what day it is.

13 Alright, we'll start off with some questions.
14 Commissioner, can you discuss the history of NORC's
15 in New York City when and why did they start?

16 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The why did they start,
17 uh? I can't tell you the why that they started. I
18 think it was just Penn, uhm Manhattan Penn was the
19 first example of the NORC's. I can't give you that
20 history. I mean I just think it was exactly that.
21 It was a naturally occurring situation. Penn,
22 Manhattan Penn South started in 25 years after it was
23 built. It was designated as the first NORC and I
24 think that from there came the evolution.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Council Member
3 Brewer, did you have any color you wanted to add to
4 that?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I do.

6 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Good.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: There are two people,
8 Anita Altman who was working for UJA and Frederick
9 Bolduc who was working for the United Hospital Fund.
10 We call them the Godmothers of this program, and it
11 was pretty much hell in the biggening. Nobody
12 believed that it could happen. Penn South is a great
13 example but it was the easiest one because Mr. Smith
14 was head of the Co-op there and really believed in
15 both affordability and supporting the seniors. Other
16 buildings did not, so these two women pushed it
17 forward. When I say 500, 600 meetings, I am not
18 kidding. I think I was in most of them and so, it's
19 probably the greatest program for seniors ever and I
20 want to thank all of us for continuing it but they
21 need more money. Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you Council Member
23 Brewer. Alright, Commissioner I'm looking for some
24 data.

25 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Okay.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, the number of DFTA or
3 NYC Aging funded NORC's and their locations and then
4 you mentioned 36 NORC's that are funded by NYC Aging,
5 24 that are funded by us here in the City Council.
6 Are any of those overlapping or do any of those refer
7 to 36 completely separate from the 24 right?

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right and uhm I'll tell
9 you with - I can tell you where the 36 NORC's are by
10 borough, if you want that number?

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: In the Bronx, we have 5
13 NORC's. In Brooklyn, there are 6. In Manhattan
14 there are 16. In Queens we have 9 and there are none
15 in Staten Island. That probably will change in the
16 very near future. Uhm, New York Aging serves about
17 19,000, almost 20,000 older adults in FY23. Those
18 are the clients that we know that are receiving
19 services in the NORC's alright.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And can you just tell me how
21 that's calculated? Is it by the number of older
22 adults that are residents or those who utilize the
23 services and the programming?
24
25

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's been the number of
3 adults who utilize the services, working with clients
4 and that's a unique number. There's not duplicates.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you have any sense of
6 those who utilize the services versus those who
7 actually live in the building? Like of the number of
8 folks who utilize the services, do you have a
9 percentage or a number of who actually lives in the
10 building?

11 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes, we do. In the
12 Bronx, the number is around 3,000. It hovers around
13 3,300 and they represent 17 percent of the
14 population. In Brooklyn, the number is 3,500 and
15 they represent 19 percent. In Manhattan, it's about
16 8,000, a little tad over 8,000 clients, 8,300 and
17 they represent 44 percent of the residents.

18 In Queens, they represent 20 percent and -

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What's the number? Sorry
20 for Queens?

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: 3,836 and in Staten
22 Island -

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I'm sorry the percentage of
24 that 3,800?

25 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: 20.

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes. Uhm, I can give
3 you that now. Citywide 55 percent of the NORC
4 residence are 75 and older, which makes absolute
5 sense because they're aging in. And 45 percent are
6 between 60 and 74, which is the nature of a naturally
7 occurring retirement community. 74 percent of the
8 NORC residents are women, which makes sense. Women
9 are outlived men and 26 percent are men.

10 55 percent of NORC residents are White, 23
11 percent are Asian and 21 percent are African American
12 and Black. And the reason for that you can know is
13 the historical housing pattern from New York City.
14 And when some of the Mitchell Lama's and some of the
15 NORC's were first developed, they were not in
16 particular communities. And then 67 percent of the
17 NORCs speak English, 20 percent speak Chinese, 14
18 percent speak Spanish, 10 percent speak Russian and 1
19 percent speak Korean.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you, sorry, I'm
21 furiously writing my notes here. Do you know the
22 median cost of rent in an NYC NORC and then
23 disaggregated by a number of bedrooms and borough?

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I can't give you uhm-

25 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The disaggregated numbers?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, I can't give you
3 - I can't give you rent because you know we don't
4 place them in housing. We don't know, they're also
5 disparate. We could try to get - do an analysis and
6 try to figure out that rate but -

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Like in Lefrak City, it
9 would be dependent on someone's income, so it's very
10 hard to figure out what the average rate would be.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, well, I would
12 appreciate your best effort.

13 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, we will.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

15 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We'll give you the best
16 imperfect perfect answer.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, that sounds good. And
18 then similarly the median costs of a co-op or condo
19 in an NYC NORC?

20 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It goes, it's the same
21 thing.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, but if you could throw
23 that in there.

24

25

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We'll look at that, see
3 what the average is currently and give you some best
4 guesstimate.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, if you could also
6 share with us just the full number of the - I mean
7 the full list of the NORC's that you fund and that
8 would be helpful.

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, I have that.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, okay, thank you.

11 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And I have the list of
12 the NORC's that you fund also.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, we'll take both.

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Alright.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. With regard to
16 programming at NORC's, what measures are in place to
17 ensure all eligible residents are aware of the
18 services provided by their NORC?

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Uhm, as with older
20 adult clubs, it is much easier to I mean the outreach
21 and education is much easier. No one is prohibited
22 from participating in their NORC services but it's
23 the strength of the provider and engaging with the
24 community and the residents. That determines
25 participation more or less.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, you don't have any
3 formal measures in place to ensure that the providers
4 are doing specific outreach or anything like that?

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Other than them
6 developing each of our providers gets outreach and
7 education money and that's part of their plan.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And then do you know if
9 there are specific outreach efforts for non-English
10 speaking and digitally disconnected older adults?

11 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: All of our services, we
12 will provide everything in the language of that
13 particular community and/or the changing community.
14 If you are more than what's the number? 20 percent?
15 We then make sure that that population is addressed.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. How do
17 NORC administrators determine what type of
18 programming to offer?

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I would say no
20 different than in OACU based on client needs and
21 client interest and you have this array of services
22 and you provide those that are most adaptable. What
23 I will say is that most NORC's just because of the
24 nature of a NORC, have some health related component.
25 They'll either have a nursing, they'll have a

1
2 partnership with the community health facility. That
3 is integral to being a NORC, which is not, you do not
4 find that in OAC's.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And then how are NORC
6 residents engaged in the decision making process?

7 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Are there advisory
8 council's in each one of the NORC's? So, like the
9 older adult clubs, they are advisory council who also
10 participate in that process.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great and do you ensure such
12 programming is culturally appropriate and sensitive?

13 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes, we do.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Uhm, are you able to
15 describe any programming or services that are
16 provided in languages other than English?

17 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Oh God there's so many.
18 I can get you some examples of that alright.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

20 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: There's so many. I
21 mean.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Just give me like your top
23 three to five.

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: What would be
25 culturally appropriate that is not now norm right?

1
2 Like IG or Zomba or you know drumming, you know all
3 of that is culturally appropriate for somebody but
4 welcomed by all.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, absolutely, well I'll
6 take those as your examples for now and then we'll
7 follow up with a full list. That would be helpful.
8 And then can older adults who do not reside in a
9 particular NORC access its services and/or
10 programming?

11 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, no, for that, for
12 anybody who does not live in the NORC, we encourage
13 them to - we encourage them to participate in OAC's,
14 which are usually in the neighboring community.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And what are the most
16 in demand services in programming at NORC's? Oh,
17 tickets to Broadway.

18 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: My homecare service
19 needs. That's what I've been taking up my time.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Hmm, hmm, homecare service?

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, no, no, no,
22 that's my mother.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Oh gotcha.

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Let me get myself hmm.

25 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You need to take a minute?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, well yeah but no I
3 won't.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We can pause for a second.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, no problem.

7 [00:37:58] - [00:38:04]

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You can answer.

9 RYAN MURRAY: Good morning.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Good morning.

11 RYAN MURRAY: So, the in demand services in the
12 Commissioner's testimony we shared a range of
13 services from case management, case assistance. So,
14 there's from the top in demand programming when we
15 look at what folks are budgeted for and invoicing on.
16 We also have obviously info and referrals for various
17 services and education.

18 There's a ton of work that happens to your
19 question about programming available that's tailored
20 and culturally appropriate. A lot of that work is
21 health education, the case management, those are the
22 top services and we're happy to provide you with more
23 numbers.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great and if you can get
3 that disaggregated by borough too that would be
4 helpful.

5 RYAN MURRAY: Sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: There's a NORC services
7 provider finder on your website. Can you explain why
8 that would be up on your website if it's not
9 available to people who are not living in a NORC?

10 RYAN MURRAY: Sure, so the services finder I
11 believe that you're looking at on our website is for
12 all services available in New York City, what you
13 would acknowledge is for the providers who were
14 there, although we do require in our standards and in
15 our follow up that there is an annual plan to engage
16 folks who live there, we also want to make sure that
17 if there's anyone who is looking for those services,
18 say a caregiver, a friend, someone who might be in
19 the building whose somehow not aware of the services,
20 that as they're looking for various options that they
21 can find those services digitally as well as through
22 the old fashioned door to door engagement that
23 happens.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you.

1
2 RYAN MURRAY: We're not holding information
3 hostage and we want to make sure it's known to all.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Absolutely. Is it possible
5 to make that more clear on the website? Specifically
6 pertaining to NORC's and who the services at NORC's
7 are actually provided for?

8 RYAN MURRAY: Of course.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thanks. Alright, how
10 does the city intend to increase the number of NORC
11 residents served over the next 5 years, 10 years, and
12 15 years? As we know obviously we've both stated in
13 our testimonies the growing population.

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: One way that uhm, we're
15 look - obviously funding is a major determinant of
16 whatever increases and how it can increase. So,
17 that's a major determinant.

18 What we do as we do with older adult clubs, with
19 NORC's, is that we look at patterns of growth in
20 particular communities. We look at the demographics
21 of that growth and how best to serve it and we also
22 work and I think of Councilman Cornegy. Uhm, when he
23 wanted to have a NORC in his neighborhood, it took,
24 it was a three year process but we were able to
25 identify the housing that he was talking about and in

1
2 that one, I believe it was geographic NORC, not a
3 building and it was a three year process and then he
4 funded it. So, those are the ways that we can do
5 that but it's constantly looking at the - where the
6 growth is and where the shifts are because sometimes
7 it's decreasing in Manhattan or stable in Manhattan
8 but the growth is happening exponentially in Queens
9 and Brooklyn.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Hmm, hmm.

11 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And then in the West
12 Bronx. So, we're looking at you know at those
13 patterns constantly and where should resources be and
14 to whom those resources should go because it's also a
15 matter of and maybe I'm going a little more than what
16 you're asking but for me, it's also - for us, for all
17 of us, I know the intention is equity, so it is
18 reflective of that particular community and governed
19 by that community, so that that community can best
20 serve it's constituency.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But so you've outlined uhm,
22 essentially I guess what I am - what's missing is
23 like an actual plan. So, you follow the data, you
24 see the data, you see the data, you watch the data
25 but there isn't a plan where money specifically is

1
2 allocated or directly correlated with that data. So,
3 if we know in 10 or 15 years, that population is
4 going to increase in Queens or Staten Island for
5 example. So, in 10 or 15 years, we need to make sure
6 that the budget reflects the needs in that community.
7 There is no plan that says it's in place. That says
8 NORCs, we have 36 NORCs currently. In five years
9 we'll have 40 NORCs. In 10 years we'll have 50 NORCs
10 with probably the greatest increase in this borough
11 or that borough. That doesn't currently exist
12 correct?

13 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And that doesn't exist
14 for NORCs because it's tied to housing. So, not
15 knowing where all of the housing developments will
16 be. We can tell you where population will be.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

18 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We don't know what the
19 corresponding housing will be.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: There are NORCs that are you
21 know -

22 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well, yeah, but they're
23 geographic NORCs.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

25

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Like, with geographic
3 NORC's, it's manageable in the sense of projecting
4 just as we do for OAC's right? So, that is
5 population and geographically determined. The
6 component that is the distinction in NORC's is the
7 housing development part of it, so it's harder to do.
8 We do have a plan that we forecast where the growth
9 will be. Uhm, we don't and that's the missing
10 element in our planning process is and it will take
11 x-millions of dollars to support x-millions of OAC's.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

13 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We do that in the
14 shorter term when we're doing with the OAC and the
15 NORC RFP. When we release that, we say this is the
16 amount of money that we have. This is the number
17 that we could support and these are the areas where
18 we designate they should exist and uhm, based on that
19 but that's a shorter term. You're talking about a
20 longer term and we do that by doing population shifts
21 but we don't attach and which is attaching a dollar
22 amount to that growth pattern as to what would be the
23 services that correspond to that.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right because we know, you
25 know it's cheaper. The city would save money and

1
2 stay if we would actually invest in NORC's or
3 communities that we know will eventually become
4 NORC's rather than you know having folks that are
5 institutionalized or not able to age in place and all
6 of that so it would be great to say not only would
7 this be the number of dollars we would or should
8 allocate but it will also save us you know.

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, and that - you
10 just raised, it's something that we could raise in
11 that cabinet, which HPD say these are our
12 projections.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Look at us collaborating.

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, yeah what?

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I said, look at us
16 collaborating on the spot.

17 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, no, but we always
18 do that. Uhm, you gave me the idea. You stimulated
19 the idea - no you gave me but you stimulated the idea
20 of the kitchen renovation plan. I mean that to us
21 has been, it was like in a huh and then we looked at
22 each other like -

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Why don't we do that yeah.

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You know, so but it's
25 the same thing. But when you do that as part of the

1
2 cabinet with HPD and start saying, if you're going to
3 develop, these are the growth patterns. These are
4 the things that you should be looking at with these
5 older adults.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Absolutely, yeah great thank
7 you. Uhm, what metrics does the city utilize to
8 consider expansion with regard to population growth
9 and location? So, I know you mentioned it but do you
10 use any specific data like the American Community
11 Survey data from the Census Bureau or?

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, yeah, all of
13 those data limits. Latest census, American survey,
14 other, other health and health surveys and
15 demographics. They're our own needs assessment you
16 know, our own data.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Hmm, hmm, and is the city
18 aware of any NORC's that are not officially
19 designated as such?

20 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Not to my knowledge,
21 no.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No buildings or communities
23 that would qualify as NORC's but haven't been
24 designated?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, not to my knowledge
3 and the way that would happen is that they would
4 request to be considered a NORC and then there's a
5 process for that.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, but I guess so without
7 consideration, there's no data that you all have or
8 are looking at that would tell you whether or not?

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right. I'm trying to
10 wrap myself around the question.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, I'll give an example,
12 like you know in my district there are number of
13 Mitchell Lama buildings that are in one particular
14 area that I'm sure would qualify as a NORC but you
15 know they're not officially designated as such. Are
16 there other areas or buildings or communities like
17 that across the city that you all maybe aware of
18 might qualify but haven't been officially designated?

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I uhm, that is
20 interesting because it's a state designation. So,
21 what we could do is circle back to the state to see
22 if they have any in the queue that they are looking
23 to designate as NORC's but none to our knowledge at
24 this point.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay and then can you
3 describe the RFP process and any plans to expand
4 NORC's this year and over the next five years?

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Uhm, in the RFP
6 process, it will be determined by the availability of
7 funding. At a minimum, the goal is to retain what we
8 have and at a maximum is to increase some that have
9 had and are designated should funding allow.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay and when is the next
11 NORC RFP plan for?

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The NORC, the last one
13 was three years ago and it will be done sometime in
14 2025.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: 2020?

16 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: 5.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: 5 thank you.

18 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Probably the spring of
19 2025, yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay and will it be coupled
21 with the OAC RFP again?

22 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Despite being different
24 programs models?

25 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And the reason for that is because it gives us a wider view of services for older adults.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Beyond just the NORC. Got it. How many NORC's will be part of the next RFP? Do you have any idea?

LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: At a minimum, we will have the 36 we have and at a minimum, you will have the 16 or 24 that you have.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So-

LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Your NORC's are not considered part of the RFP. I do not believe they are. I was just corrected. I was just corrected. They are part of the RFP process.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Well, certainly we hope to have more than that total. Okay.

LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How would an older New Yorker who is interested in moving into a NORC do so and where would they find information about vacancies?

LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Like the housing question of the year of New York. NORC's - where

1
2 NORC's are you know, it's known. It's how do you get
3 into those complexes? Some of them are years you
4 know waiting lists and it's an elaborate process.
5 They vary so differently. Co-ops, NYCHA, Mitchell
6 Lama, so they have so many variables that determine
7 that. You know, income, availability, with a one
8 percent housing vacancy rate, that's a challenge.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, if someone were to call
10 Aging Connect, would they help match them to a NORC?
11 I guess to me seems like another project for the
12 cabinet because there should be some sort of -
13 especially for the programs, for the buildings or
14 programs that are managed by HPD as an example, if
15 HPD knows the vacancies, they should some how be
16 communicating that to you all so that you all might
17 be able to help or aid somebody in being connected.
18 I'm sure HPD does it but they may not ask the
19 question specifically about the NORC. They may just
20 say, "how do I get into this building?"

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So if someone calls
22 Aging Connect about where is a NORC in Brooklyn? We
23 can tell them that. What we cannot help them with -

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Is getting in.
25

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Is getting in. And
3 what we can tell them is how to get in and what the
4 process is.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Which would be the general,
6 either NYCHA or Mitchell Lama, whatever the process.

7 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right, Section 8, they
8 just open it. You know we can give the basic housing
9 information but there is absolutely no direct
10 correlation between making the request and where is
11 the NORC in my community and my moving into a NORC.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Uhm, I've got two or
13 three more questions and then I want to jump to some
14 of my colleagues or actually, before I jump to my
15 next question. Is the city engaged in any efforts to
16 preserve the affordability of units in established
17 NORCs? Both for existing tenants and vacant units?
18 So, NYC Aging isn't but -

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, we're not and I
20 can't answer for HPD. I'll be able to inform them
21 and -

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And why doesn't the city
23 fund neighborhood NORCs as the state does? Do you
24 know why?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The state funding for
3 NORC's comes through us. I don't think the state
4 designates and pays.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: For neighborhood NORC's
6 specifically.

7 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But why doesn't the city
9 fund the neighborhood NORC's?

10 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The geographic ones
11 you're talking about?

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

13 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Okay. So, we fund
14 geographic NORC's through the construct that we
15 called older adult clubs. And so, if you think about
16 an area where more than 20 percent of the population
17 are older adults, we have this other opportunity for
18 older adults to participate.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. The state NORC's
20 statute was recently updated to allow for
21 neighborhood NORC's to include residential buildings
22 more than six stories tall. This change in the law
23 if adopted by NYC Aging would allow for less dense
24 areas of New York City to benefit from the NORC
25 program. With this in mind, will NYC Aging consider

1
2 expanding the NORC program to include neighborhood
3 NORC's?

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We've never excluded
5 neighborhood NORC's. We work directly with the state
6 definition. We don't have a different definition for
7 NORC's in New York City. We follow the state, which
8 is modeled after the federal and so, there's no
9 distinction there.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Uhm, one last
11 question. In your testimony, in the very last bit,
12 you mentioned the need to seek innovative models in
13 NORC programming in the future and I was just
14 wondering what you meant by that specifically and if
15 you could provide examples of what innovative models
16 a NORC program might include?

17 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well expanding - the
18 goal is community care and to avoid
19 institutionalization until the individuals desires
20 otherwise. So, it would be adding transportation,
21 stronger affiliations with health services, stronger
22 mental health supports, and I have a team that's
23 going to have eight eyes just burning at me when I
24 say this. Also, to consider some kind of
25 supplemental meal service there. And there I did, I

1
2 knew that. That's why I didn't look over that way
3 but.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That's okay, you're the only
5 one with the mic.

6 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: But if I were to think
7 of a full service operation at NORC's as more and
8 more of them grow, that is what I would - and
9 particularly because people from the outside cannot
10 go there. Even though anyone could go to an older
11 adult club, but there is something about my
12 neighborhood you know.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, okay. Thank you.
14 I'm going to turn it over to Council Member Brewer
15 followed by Council Member Lee.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, thank you very
17 much. On the NORC's, I got a couple of NORC
18 questions. So, my understanding as you suggested is
19 the contracts do require health management services
20 but they don't all have the money for a nurse and you
21 know, I do know, I think I know all 44 percent of the
22 ones in Manhattan.

23 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I don't doubt that you
24 do.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, I think I started
3 most of them but uhm, but they don't all have a nurse
4 and they want a nurse, so that's a funding issue.
5 Are you considering that? What's the story?

6 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's one of the primary
7 services that when we issue the RFP that we look for
8 and at a minimum, that they have a strong
9 relationship with the community health provider.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah but they want a
11 nurse.

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know so is that in
14 others words, as we're talking and there's a budget
15 discussion, maybe not for this year but for next
16 year, it seems to me that the NORC should be getting
17 more money. That would be a really good advocacy.
18 Is that something that as an agency, you're pushing?
19 I know you're going to think about a new RFP but I
20 want to make sure that new RFP doesn't cut what
21 already exists. That's what happened with the
22 clubhouses.

23 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That's not an accurate
24 statement.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The clubhouses, yes they
3 were cut.

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We did not cut services
5 in the older adult clubs. What I will say is that as
6 part of the RFP-

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well, not your
8 clubhouses, mental health clubhouses, not yours, not
9 yours, not yours don't worry, not yours. I was going
10 to say as an Administration, there was another
11 situation where current programs got cut. I don't
12 want that to happen with the NORC's, that's what I'm
13 trying to say.

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, our goal is not
15 to have NORC's defunded either. Our goal is to have
16 no older adult services defunded and I believe that
17 we have common cause on that.

18 As part of the RFP, we always include that
19 nursing is the required service - I mean, it's a
20 preferred service but at a minimum, they have to have
21 a relationship with the health -

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I'm letting you
23 know that they are asking me that nurses, to be
24 funded because going to the new center, to the Ryan
25 or anywhere else is great, but on site of course,

1
2 part time even is incredibly important so I would say
3 that's something to be a goal.

4 The second issue is, one of the reasons that I
5 think if you don't have as many is the building has
6 to contribute too. In other words, it's not like
7 okay, you or I, the Council or the Administration put
8 the money in and that's it. The building has to
9 contribute and I must admit, I have some buildings
10 that won't.

11 So, my question is and I'm just reading this here
12 because I don't know the percentages. The city NORC
13 requires a 50 percent funding match by community
14 partners and the state is 25 percent. So, I just
15 didn't know if that's going to change because
16 obviously the less the building puts in, maybe more
17 of the city or the Council have to put in but we're
18 more likely to get a NORC. So, I just wanted to
19 understand that percentage.

20 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I don't believe that
21 there will be changes to those percentages.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, so we'll stop at 50
23 percent and the state will be 25 percent, alright.
24 That presents, just so you, that presents a no
25 sometimes from the owner of these buildings. That's

1
2 what I get. So, I would say that's a challenge. And
3 then the other issue is -

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: But even that's a
5 challenge. I would say Council Member that there has
6 to - one of the things that makes NORC's viable and
7 flourish is the partnership.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I agree.

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And so, if there's no -
10 if there's no investment, you know you could always
11 look to somebody else.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I agree.

13 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The only issue is the
15 state puts in 25 percent and we put in 50 or mandates
16 25 and we mandate 50, so they still have skin in the
17 game in terms of the owners, and which is important.

18 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well, we've had the
19 conversation about the state share that we feel it's
20 inadequate for New York City around not only in
21 NORC's but in all services, so that's why I keep
22 asking you to advocate with your state partners to
23 make sure that aging get, New York City Aging or
24 older adults in New York City get their fair share.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, the other thing, I
3 really love the way in which the NORC's working with
4 the NYCHA residents take place.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So, I guess one of my
7 questions, do you know how many NYCHA developments or
8 residents participate. Because in my experience,
9 they have been phenomenal. Early detection on mental
10 health challenges, isolation etc., have been profound
11 and then addressed. Fantastic.

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We could give you - I
13 don't have that in front of me right now, which one
14 was NYCHA's and which one is - but I can get you by
15 borough those NORC's that are NYCHA related.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Because I have to say,
17 they have been phenomenal. In terms of Resolution
18 232, I want to know if you support it? I want to
19 know if you know how many more older adults would be
20 eligible if we did you know along the lines of Social
21 Security with a CPI. Would that be a number that you
22 would know? How many more people would be eligible
23 for SCRIE, DRIE, etc.?

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Oh, for SCRIE and DRIE,
25 no I can get you that number.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: If the law passes in
3 Albany with how many more people.

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, right now, we can
5 get you that number. Right now, the threshold is
6 50,000. I know the goal now is to get it up to 61 or
7 62.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 62.

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: But we could, we could,
10 we could do a number of who would be deemed eligible
11 for that.

12 The one thing that I would ask all of us to have
13 partnership around in SCRIE and DRIE, regardless of
14 whether the income goes up or not, is to really do a
15 strong educational campaign around SCRIE and DRIE.
16 The faster and the earlier that someone enrolls in
17 SCRIE or DRIE, the more financially impactful it is
18 to that older adult. So, like if you've been living
19 somewhere and you are eligible for SCRIE, and you've
20 not applied for it, that's years that you have lost
21 economic support.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right, I totally agree.
23 How much funding if anything does the city put toward
24 telling people about this program?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I can get you that. I
3 don't know exactly what we do.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Probably not very much.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I don't know that I
6 would even say that because I don't know the number.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, but I'm saying if
8 you don't know the number, my guess is it's not very
9 much because you would know it if it was substantial.

10 One other question I have is uh, if you had your
11 druthers about this program in terms of the NORC's,
12 I'm going back to the NORC's now. What would be -
13 uhm, how would you determine what buildings, how to
14 do the outreach, because no question, anybody who is
15 in a NORC is ecstatic. They just love it. They love
16 going to the museums together. They love going to
17 the knitting classes together. They love doing the
18 reading programs together but it doesn't seem to have
19 much traction in terms of new ones and when the RFP
20 goes out maybe it will. Lincoln Towers does it,
21 that's an example of not being in the program per se
22 because they're all higher income but they love it.
23 So, I mean the issue would be for me not only does it
24 have to be within the program but I'd like to see a

1
2 lot more effort toward building NORC's. What do you
3 say about that?

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I would say that those
5 developments and those communities, they find
6 themselves in a situation where they meet the
7 requirements to become a NORC, there is a process by
8 which you get designated. And as we did with your
9 former colleague, the one that I know, the experience
10 that I have with Carnegie was to start that process
11 with that particular area.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Uhm, one of the
13 questions just like everywhere else, they're having
14 trouble staffing them because of the cost of the
15 program and the large you know gap delta between a
16 social worker and a NORC and perhaps a social worker
17 at a hospital. So, again, is there any advocacy for
18 more money for NORC's? They need more money.

19 Obviously partnership is important but while we're
20 trying expand, is there anything going on to try to
21 increase the amount of money allocated to NORC's?
22 Even if you do new RFP, you still have to increase
23 the funding for those that exist in my opinion.

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So, the partial answer
25 to that is the good news that the city just did by

1
2 giving all the nonprofits COLA as well Retro Active
3 Pay.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 333.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And it almost matches
6 the city employees package. And so, that is an
7 attempt to retain staff and possibly recruit
8 additional staff but there's a labor shortage in
9 aging services precisely because of what you said
10 Council Member Brewer. It is when we compete with
11 the school social worker or hospital social worker
12 pay, it is very, very challenging. We are working
13 currently with the schools of social work to
14 encourage people to go into aging services.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I mean I think it's
16 an ongoing problem and I want to just highlight the
17 nurses because every single NORC has contacted me
18 about the fact that they either can't pay them
19 because of the allocation or they you know, they
20 can't find them. So, we've got to focus on that and
21 not say oh, they can go to the Ryan House Center or
22 whatever. I really hope that you will focus on that.
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much Council
25 Member Brewer. Council Member Lee.

1

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Sure. Hi Commissioner.

2

3

LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Hi.

4

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Good to be with you. Uhm,

5

so I'll start where sort of Council Member Brewer

6

left off around the outreach piece because that was a

7

question I had as well because I'm in Eastern Queens

8

right by Nassau. We're a transit desert. I have

9

probably the most number of co-ops and condos in my

10

district than any other district in the city but our

11

co-ops and condos are not necessarily high rise

12

buildings in one single unit but it's literally

13

sprawled out. Two story, three story units, they are

14

more garden apartments and some of these co-ops are

15

spread over a certain radius of miles and have about

16

3,000 units just under one co-op board. So, these

17

are very large complexes and I also have between my

18

district 23, as well as Council Member Palladino in

19

19, Nantasha Williams also in 27, we have a lot of

20

uhm I would say in Eastern Queens in general, there's

21

a large older adult population that's growing. We

22

have probably I would say, between that part of

23

Queens, we have probably one of the higher rates of

24

increases in terms of demographics.

25

1
2 So, uhm, how would that work? You know because I
3 know you said the RFP is coming out next year, so
4 would it be us recommending units or building or
5 complexes to you all or you have that data already
6 because they're situated already-

7 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think it's a
8 combination Council Member.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

10 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think it's uhm to the
11 fact that we identify an area, it's to the fact that
12 we will go to the state to advocate you know for
13 designation so that they can be ready when the RFP
14 comes out so that they would be able to apply but
15 it's a process you know.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yeah.

17 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I do think that the
18 best way is both ways. We identify from our data but
19 also, there's certain areas or development than we
20 could look at that and by the way Council Member
21 Brewer just for the record, there are eight of the
22 NORC's are in NYCHA.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You're welcome.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yeah, okay so when that time
3 comes, once the RFP is released, I'll keep a look out
4 for it as well because I'd love to also see what we
5 can do to get more of them into -

6 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And I think that you
7 will uh, Council Member Salaam, you will have the
8 same issue probably. So, it might be something that
9 we could look at particularly given all of the
10 changes in the Harlem community. I have an opinion
11 about some of those but anyway, given all of those
12 changes in the Harlem community, it might be us
13 looking at that demographic also.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, uhm, so sorry, I'm
15 going to jump a little bit. So, the other point that
16 Council Member Brewer mentioned, staffing shortage
17 because when I was running KCS, that was like the
18 number one issue is, I'm a social worker myself. We
19 can't find enough people in the mental health sector,
20 public health sector and we would always have people
21 I mean, don't get me wrong, we need the hospital
22 systems of course but we kept losing staff training
23 them and then losing them to the hospital staff
24 because we are pay salary and pay scale is not high
25 enough to compete with those salaries.

1
2 Okay, uhm and so, you know also what we're
3 thinking through the mental health roadmap is how do
4 we get more social workers through the pipeline with
5 scholarships, loan forgiveness opportunities. So,
6 have you spoken to some of the nursing schools about
7 that or my other question is and this is just me
8 thinking outside the box in terms of efficiency. But
9 between the older adult centers, the geriatric mental
10 health partners as well as you know the NORC's, is
11 there a way and I understand that they're all under
12 separate RFP's but is there a way to sort of almost
13 share staff, right? So, if I have a full time social
14 worker or a nurse practitioner at one of my mental
15 health clinics, they're not here full time or they're
16 not stacked up with clients per se, which I doubt is
17 the case. But and you know if there are options or
18 ways to -

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Absolutely. The idea
20 of circuit riding, shared resources, whether it's a
21 van, whether it's a nurse, whether it's a laundromat,
22 you know uhm, those kind of - that's sort of like the
23 innovation. Like where is that we build, so that we
24 each don't have to build the same thing. How do we
25 maximize that but I'm going to implore all of you

1
2 given from where you sit is that it's parity for
3 social work staff and case assistance staff. You
4 know we should have parity in salaries across those
5 just as we are demanding parity for homecare workers.
6 You know these are - and for kitchen staff. We
7 worked hard to have a kitchen staff study so that we
8 can bring kitchen staff. We're even a little
9 outdated now but we brought up kitchen staff to
10 market rate, so that we would not be losing them
11 after they learned all nutrition and everything. We
12 were losing them to the hospitals.

13 The cooks, all of the kitchen staff, so I'm
14 asking that we start taking a very deliberate
15 approach citywide but also particularly in older
16 adult services is expecting salary parity for those
17 people who make that decision to work in older
18 services.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Definitely. Definitely.
20 Uhm, okay and then also given that - this is more of
21 a specific question around transit because you know
22 with the MTA, I know that we had this conversation at
23 one of the last hearings you know. In terms of for
24 the sake of efficiency, I think what they were doing
25 was perhaps skipping some stops but in districts like

1
2 mine where there's a lot of students and seniors that
3 need every single stop. Yes, it may take longer but
4 we don't want to sacrifice you know having seniors
5 take transportation versus efficiency sake, for
6 efficiency sake. So, uhm, in terms of transportation
7 because I know at some of the social adult programs,
8 adult day programs it's different because they have
9 the transportation that's included in the Medicaid,
10 Medicare. That's one of the benefits but for the
11 NORC's like the OAC's; I know that the OAC's, some of
12 them have vans. They may or may not do those
13 services but how are the NORC's in terms of the
14 transportation? I know for geographic the idea is
15 that a lot of them are in the same neighborhood but
16 are there opportunities for us to expand on the
17 transportation within the NORC's as well if they need
18 to go out?

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The current
20 opportunity, limited as it is, the current
21 opportunity is in those boroughwide transportation
22 programs that we provide. I mean supplement what
23 Access A Ride does or does not do. Uhm but the
24 current opportunity is to use those borough
25 transportation services for other than portal to

1
2 portal, I mean portal to portal is a local centers
3 responsibility but if people in a NORC might need
4 appointments to go to a doctor or as a group going to
5 go somewhere, if that is that limited opportunity we
6 have, we have already talked of that is you know,
7 that's limited because of the amount of money that we
8 have. The \$5 million or \$5.2 million dollars for
9 transportation citywide but those are the models that
10 we would be looking to expand to augment those
11 alternative mobility areas, particularly in
12 transportation deserts and Southeast Queens is a
13 major transportation desert. Bronx, my community,
14 Northeast Bronx is a transportation desert and
15 handicap accessibility even afraid of desert.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yup, definitely. Uhm, okay,
17 two more quick questions sorry. So, in terms of the
18 handoff, like let's just say you come across a senior
19 or older adult that's in a NORC and they need further
20 services that goes beyond what the services are that
21 you have onsite. What does that hand off look like?
22 I mean because I know that you have so many nonprofit
23 partners that offer probably maybe some of those
24 services but is there uhm you know what's sort of
25 like the flow chart I guess?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Hold on, this is going
3 to sound lofty but I don't mean it to be. I really
4 have the greatest respect and admiration for the case
5 management staff in all of them, whether you're a
6 NORC, whether you're an older adult club or they're a
7 case management agency. They talk to each other and
8 that kind of network. Should we be doing more to
9 foster that? Possibly and it might be something that
10 we could really look at but those handoffs are
11 usually really, really well coordinated where one
12 brings you for this service and then that or this or
13 this one has the housing expertise or this one has
14 the mental health services. So, I'm really proud of
15 what the network does with each other.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: And they have the lists of
17 which groups speak what language. Which services
18 they provide whether it's mental, okay.

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: But what I hear is what
20 are we doing structurally to encourage that? And
21 that's something that we can take a stronger step on
22 because we know it happens. You know I'm always in
23 this balance between dictating and encouraging and
24 supporting. But you know somewhere in between all of
25 that, it's something that we could probably put out

1
2 the message. That coordination is welcomed,
3 encouraged and incentivizing.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, and then uhm, I know
5 that every time the RFP comes out, is there room for
6 suggestions, recommendations on perhaps regul- not
7 the regulations but the requirements because as the
8 population changes, you know maybe some of the
9 requirements that were in the previous RFP no longer
10 exist or maybe we need to add more. And so, I just
11 wanted to know what that timeline looks like in terms
12 of the white paper coming out and when we can get
13 feedback on that.

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well, we're going to
15 base it on the experiences that we have. We will
16 have several community conversations around it before
17 we release the RFP to share with people what we
18 think, what we've learned and then people will tell
19 us what we still have not been able to learn. And
20 from there, the construct will not be different. You
21 know what I'm saying? Like the basic operation will
22 not be different. So, there's probably not a need
23 for a concept paper because we're not moving into a
24 new area. We're probably defining within the margins

1
2 of what the population is, so we will do a lot of
3 community conversations to get as much information.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, great thank you.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, and we're giving
6 ourselves enough time even if we have to extend
7 contracts to give ourselves enough time, so that we
8 can build and we also need the time to make sure that
9 what the funding resources are and how many we can
10 let, alright release contract.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you Council Member.

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Did you want to say
13 something Ryan?

14 RYAN MURRAY: Sure. The additional thing I would
15 add is that part of the NORC program that is special
16 and I think where we structure a lot of the
17 collaboration is they have not just the usual
18 advisory boards but partner boards as well where
19 they're always looking at what serve shifts need to
20 be. So, as the Commissioner said, absolutely the
21 case, manager case assistance staff director, social
22 workers where they exist, the visiting nurse service,
23 where that's a shared partnership, all of them are
24 working with the housing provider with everyone on
25 site to think about what new linkages might be

1
2 required in a particular community. So, while our
3 standards dictate as the Commissioner would say, how
4 often one meets to encourage that collaboration, what
5 happens often is, folks are required and doing the
6 work on the ground as the original NORC's did by the
7 way because it was organizing in labor and folks
8 saying there are different services needed here going
9 out and thinking about what additional services are
10 needed for that particular NORC. Some of those
11 investments as the Commissioner mentioned, are the
12 formal match, others are in kind and that is part of
13 the expectation.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you for that. Uhm,
15 okay, so I just wanted to clarify, you do or do not
16 fund neighborhood NORC's?

17 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: How many NORC's are
18 geographic NORC's? Do we have that? No, none.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: None, okay.

20 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Is it? No, okay?

22 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Uhm, and then I wanted -

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Even in co-op city,
25 even though you would consider that. Like, I've

1
2 always gotten that confused and they always correct
3 me. I always think of co-op city as a neighborhood
4 NORC.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right but we have
6 buildings in Co-op City rather than NORC's.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So -

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, that's an important
10 distinction and then just to recap. The state has
11 exclusive designation authority for NORC's?

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And then what is the state's
14 criteria for designation and does it match the
15 criteria for the RFP that you put out?

16 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It would have to. The
17 RFP would have to match the state.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The state designation.

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So, the state
20 designation is 50 percent of the housing units have
21 an older adult 60 and the complex or building has at
22 least 2,500 older adults. That's the New York
23 classic NORC definition, right? New York State. And
24 then they have - if it were geographically defined
25 area, it has to have 20,000 residents 60 plus and or

1
2 occupy at least of those, which occupy 40 percent of
3 the households. And I can see that happening in one
4 the rural areas where they have those kind of
5 designations and the building must be six story but
6 you know that that has just changed, and the majority
7 of the income must be moderate to low income defined
8 by HUD guidelines.

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Okay, I think there's
10 some confusion with past RFP's and what's been
11 required with reference specifically to the state
12 designation of NORC's. So, moving forward, will the
13 RFP's match the state designation or the RFP
14 requirements?

15 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: There was some
16 confusion. I'll look into that but that is not my
17 understanding. So, if you believe there is some,
18 point that out to us so that we can see where that
19 happened but we would follow the state requirement
20 because we don't have a city NORC definition.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, great. Okay, that's
22 helpful. Uhm, and then can you work with Department
23 of City Planning on anticipating needs for NORC's?
24 This is just going back to the conversation we had
25 earlier about -

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, that's a data,
3 that's a sourced of data for us always.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Uhm, the Council
5 funds several standalone NORC's through the NORC
6 initiative. Will NYC Aging consider baselining them
7 or contracting with them in the near future?

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That would be looking
9 at funding availability and see if they could be
10 baselined in the future. I mean we welcome the
11 partnership.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So do we.

13 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Good answer. Fast
14 answer.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Has NYC Aging assessed the
16 true cost of expansion and what this would take? I'm
17 going to guess no based on a previous conversation
18 but.

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, no, we look at - we
20 look at what -

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The cost of expansion for
22 the NORC program?

23 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We look at where we
24 would like to be uhm but we do not do what you said.

1
2 A plan based on funding availability following the
3 pattern of the growth.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Okay but we know we do
6 do a designation of this is an older adult club in
7 this community. It is over utilized. What would
8 expansion look like there? Same thing with a NORC.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: In the Executive Plan, NYC
10 Aging's Fiscal 2024 budget includes \$12.3 million for
11 NORC's, which decreases in Fiscal 2025 budget to \$7.2
12 million. In both fiscal's 2024 and 2025, \$7 million
13 in funding is from federal COVID-19 funding sources.
14 For Fiscal 2026, and in the out years, the funding
15 for NORC's drops considerably with approximately
16 \$155,000 budgeted for each fiscal year. How much did
17 NYC Aging actually spend on NORC's in Fiscal 2023?
18 And how much as been spent to date in Fiscal 2024?

19 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I can give you the 2023
20 number in a minute. Uh, in 2023, we spent \$13.6
21 million in NORC's. In 2024, it is to date, it is
22 \$12.9.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so I just want to
24 point out that in Fiscal 2023, you spent more than
25 has been allocated in Fiscal 2024 and in Fiscal 2024,

1
2 you've spent more than was allocated at the \$12.3
3 million. Just as a -

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: In 20- right, we are
5 over, we have overspent in NORC's thus far for 2024.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Which, I mean I of course
7 would argue that there's clearly a need for that and
8 so, instead of reducing the dollars allocated for
9 NORC's that we should be increasing the dollars.

10 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I don't think anyone of
11 us would disagree with that but uh-

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, I'm just stating for
13 the record.

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, the issue with
15 that is uhm we're looking at you know two things to
16 manage these overages and that's you know the
17 performance, reallocation review that we're doing
18 across the board. And so, that would be one and then
19 of course, we are all aware that in 2025, there's
20 some challenges that we all have to address and I'm
21 confident that we will all address.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, how specifically does
23 NYC Aging plan to utilize the federal pandemic
24 related funding budgeted for NORC's in Fiscal 2024
25 and 2025?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: My understanding and I
3 confirm that, is that our stimulus dollars were put
4 into transfer to tax levy dollars, so that that has
5 been baselined and I will confirm that but that is
6 what we said at the Executive Budget hearing and
7 you'll correct me if I'm overstating it.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Most certainly I will.

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I was looking at the
10 Council.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No, but I'm pretty sure
12 yeah, the Council will also correct you or they will
13 tell me to correct you.

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We said that the money
15 was transferred to city tax levy.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, I do recall. Uhm is
17 there a plan to replace this funding starting in
18 Fiscal 2026 and from which funding sources and if
19 not, do you know the impact on the NORC's?

20 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think the Executive
21 Budget for 2025, the projection right now we know
22 that it shows some challenges and that we are going
23 to be working and we're in conversations with OMB,
24 the implication of those challenges for 2025 and
25 2026.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay and are you seeking
3 assistance from the state for NORC's that are
4 eligible for state funding?

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I'm seeking assistance
6 from the state and everybody in the area.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: From everybody.

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And trying to get our
9 colleagues in the Aging Committee there to say, I
10 mean of all of the state funding and I'll say this
11 for the record. With the federal dollars that passed
12 through the state, we get the 47, the 45 to 47
13 percent that is due us based on population. If I
14 look at the state designated funding, we get as low
15 as 23 percent and as high as 27 percent. That is
16 quite a drop of what we are given a pro round of
17 basis.

18 It's interesting to me because the state has
19 always, the State Office at Aging, has always asked
20 for consideration on a pro round of basis from the
21 federal government. I asked them to follow their own
22 example and their own advocacy for New York City.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: As they should. Uhm, do you
24 know how many NORC's in your network are eligible for
25 state funding?

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I can get you that
3 number. We have it somewhere but I can get that.
4 I'll get back to you. All of them.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes, okay, thank you.

6 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Do all of them get it?
7 Alright.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: They're all eligible but
9 they don't always -

10 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That they all don't get
11 it, okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, date contracts require
13 a 25 percent matching?

14 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes, the state matches
15 25 percent.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The state matches 25 percent
17 but you're saying the state-

18 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Doesn't fund all of
19 them.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Does not do that.

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: In all situations. Is
22 that accurate? Alright, I'll get back to you on that
23 because we have some clarity that I need to get from

24 -

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, maybe we can circle
3 back before we wrap today?

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, okay great.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We just want to get clarity
6 around the state stuff. What they should be doing
7 versus what they are doing.

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Absolutely, that's the
9 point.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But in the meantime, uhm
11 according to the United Neighborhood Houses, March
12 2024 report titled NORC's and Antidote to Social
13 Isolation, NORC programs are facing challenges with
14 hiring and retaining qualified bilingual and
15 trilingual staff as salaries cannot compete with
16 those of hospitals. There's also a need for more
17 mental health counselors while case managers and
18 social workers are asking for higher pay. What if
19 anything is the city doing to address these growing
20 professional staffing needs at NORC's?

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think it's a staffing
22 question all the way around and I believe that one of
23 the opportunities that the city has enabled is the
24 salary increases and the COLA that we've just given
25 nonprofits and I think that's a step in the right

1
2 direction, to try to mitigate the staffing crisis
3 that we have in older adult services.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay and how does the NORC
5 nursing component work? What are the requirements
6 for health care and NORC's and how are those
7 positions filled? How are they funded specifically
8 for nursing?

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I am not - I am not
10 that involved in the nursing part of the NORC and
11 Ryan who oversees that program is going to be
12 answering that question.

13 RYAN MURRAY: I think we got part of the answer
14 earlier when we talked about ensuring that where
15 there are - so your first part of the question, where
16 there are opportunities to leverage existing staff,
17 that we do that.

18 Council Member Brewer flagged an important point,
19 which is there are nursing shortages and challenges
20 recruiting and retaining professional staff across
21 the board.

22 So, one of the things that we, so visiting our
23 service, right which is also funded in partnership
24 with the Council is one of the ways in which we
25 ensure that there are staff - there's a nurse who

1
2 might be at a particular development for a certain
3 number of hours a week, and we look at that. So, you
4 see the numbers in terms of health care management,
5 health care assistance, where you're counseling folks
6 on meds.

7 You may not always need a nurse to provide some
8 of those services, but we know that this is preferred
9 in many communities, right? You also have community
10 health and education workers. Lots of debate in the
11 field. We've done a lot of work to get there but you
12 would have for visiting nurse service or the
13 partners, a certain amount of hours allocated to each
14 development. For those programs that have what we
15 call a network contract, so they have multiple
16 buildings that are part of their contracts and that
17 that's not an insignificant number in our portfolio
18 but you have some sharing of staff.

19 So, that's kind of the model that is currently in
20 place but of course, we go back to absolutely, we
21 want to make sure that we are building pipelines for
22 staffing, making sure that folks are paid and the
23 COLA that we expect to go through the nonprofits to
24 staff, where there's these kinds of needs, is one the
25 things that we've recently invested in.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great, thank you. How does
3 the Council's NORC initiative funding help pay for
4 nurses?

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: There was uhm it's
6 included as part of the funding for the NORC's. The
7 other initiative that you had a few years ago, uhm,
8 was that you funded us for a suite of nurses for the
9 NORC's and you increased those dollars. It's
10 something that we would love to see repeated as we
11 have seen for the vehicles.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Noted. So, does it go
13 directly to the NORC providers then or to essential
14 nursing provider?

15 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, it goes to the NORC
16 providers.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: NORC providers, right?

18 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And they determine
19 whether they're part of a pool or shared services.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And is that working well?

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, research shows that
23 having access to onsite primary health care improves
24 health outcomes for older adults living in NORC's.
25 Unfortunately, while many NORC's are contractually

1
2 required to offer onsite primary care, this
3 requirement does not come with guaranteed funding
4 from the city. Rather as previous mentioned,
5 providers have relied on funding from the state
6 legislature and the City Council's NORC Council
7 initiative to fill in the gaps. What is NYC Aging
8 doing to alleviate nursing staff concerns that
9 advocates have repeatedly raised at the local and
10 state level so that providers are not faced with an
11 unfunded mandate to provide this critical care?

12 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think this is the
13 conversation we're having because we know what the
14 need is, we know what the requirement is, we know the
15 benefit of that particular service on the outcome of
16 the older adult and uhm working with all parties
17 involved to secure those services.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Have you been able to assess
19 the true cost of health care services provided by the
20 NORC programs and what those services are valued at?

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: What they're valued at
22 or what we would need to continue them.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What they're valued at?

24 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: What they're valued at,
25 no we do not but we have looked at what the needs are

1
2 and what the cost is so we can give you that. We did
3 that in preparation I remember for the funding that
4 we got from the City Council.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay and are you advocating
6 to the Mayor and OMB for baselined funding for onsite
7 nursing care at NORC's?

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We are in constant
9 communication with OMB around the needs of older
10 adults including the need of - the specific needs of
11 NORC and OAC's.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, you're constantly in
13 communication but are you constantly advocating for
14 baselining that funding and that communication?

15 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I always advocate for
16 baselining funding because that is structural and not
17 a time limited.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Uhm, and then do
19 you communicate with the city's hospital systems and
20 other health care providers to negotiate on behalf of
21 contracted NORC programs for onsite nursing care?

22 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, that's part of -
23 a lot of that work has been even strengthened because
24 of the cabinet.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes, can you talk a little
3 bit about that and share examples of where such
4 communications made an impact in securing agreements?
5 If you have any? And maybe how the cabinet -

6 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I can get - I would
7 love to get you those specific areas and I'll get
8 back to you on that because we have had some really -
9 uhm, we've had some really good impact and inner
10 roads in that and I think one of the other ways that
11 we've done that that is indirect but has a lasting
12 affect is the number of frontline health workers at
13 H&H that we've trained on all of the services for
14 older adults. All of the arrangements and the
15 agencies that we have, which makes it easier for them
16 to sort of create partnerships and arm themselves
17 with information that they didn't have before. And I
18 believe that it's the upwards of 27,000 that we've
19 already trained and so, and giving them some insight,
20 so.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That's great, thank you.
22 Are NORC provider programs required to share the
23 health data of older adults living in their NORC's
24 such as immunization rates or the percentage of older
25

1
2 adults who have had a well visit or annual physical
3 in the past year or even cancer screenings?

4 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I am so sorry, I was
5 just -

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That's okay, I'll repeat it.
7 That's okay.

8 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are NORC program providers
10 required to share the health data of older adults
11 living in their NORC's, such as immunization rates or
12 the percentage of older adults who have had a well
13 visit or annual physical in the past year or even
14 cancer screenings?

15 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, I mean given HIPAA
16 laws, I'm sure we have a lot of restrictions on what
17 they can't share, don't share. We could probably get
18 overview but I doubt that we can get data that would
19 have an impact on him, me or one of us.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, I think just general -

21 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Patterns.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, general overview
23 numbers. Like all of the residents of this
24 particular NORC have received a cancer screening or
25 an annual checkup or what have you.

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, we could do that.

3 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay and have providers
4 shared data with you reflecting any impact to the
5 health of older adults living in NORC's due to
6 decreased access to onsite nurses and primary care?
7 If it have a detrimental or negative impact on folks
8 as far as you're aware?

9 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Uh, no but it's part of
10 our regular monitoring and contract relationship. We
11 get a sense of what the health and wellbeing is of
12 that particular area.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Do you want to add
14 something?

15 RYAN MURRAY: Yeah, I would just add that as the
16 Commissioner said, for those who are participating in
17 our program, we work really closely with the
18 providers to have a health survey in particular where
19 we understand the services delivered. As we
20 mentioned before, we have info referrals, health
21 promotion, health care management programs in place
22 and for those services we deliver directly, not
23 necessarily the census of the entire building, we can
24 speak to the impact of those services.

25

1
2 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you. Do you have
3 the state numbers by chance?

4 RYAN MURRAY: Yeah, so what I would say about the
5 state, so when we spoke earlier about the match,
6 what's required in the funding process from the state
7 is a 25 percent match by the building. For us, we
8 have a 50 percent match and I heard the advocacy to
9 look at those numbers a little differently in the
10 future but in spirit of partnership and putting some
11 skin in the game, the building we are talking about a
12 50 percent match. So, that match is distinct from
13 the other piece which is when you're looking at fair
14 share of money coming to the city. But the match is
15 really speaking about to the NORC's what's required
16 by the RFP and that's a different criteria than when
17 we say, we need additional dollars from the state.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Copy but that 25 percent
19 isn't a match?

20 RYAN MURRY: At the state level, they would have
21 to speak to that. I would assume it is as part of
22 our 50 percent match, we monitor that. Again, some
23 of that is sometimes in kind services, space and
24 others that match is met by our providers. The state
25 would have to speak to their number.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. That
3 concludes our questions. Thank you so much to the
4 both of you and your teams.

5 LORRAINE CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you for
6 accommodating my uh family situation today.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Not a problem at all. Uhm
8 I'll now open the hearing for public testimony. I
9 remind members of the public that this is a
10 government proceeding and that decorum shall be
11 observed at all times. As such, members of the
12 public shall remain silent at all times. The witness
13 table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No
14 video recording or photography is allowed from the
15 witness table. Further, members of the public may
16 not present audio or video recordings as testimony
17 but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the
18 Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.
19 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill
20 out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and
21 wait to be recognized. When recognized, you'll have
22 two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic of
23 protecting, preserving, and supporting naturally
24 occurring retirement communities in New York City or
25 on the Resolution being considered today, Resolution

1
2 Number 232. If you have a written statement or
3 additional written testimony you wish to submit for
4 the record, please provide a copy of that testimony
5 to the Sergeant at Arms. You may also email written
6 testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72
7 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings
8 will not be accepted. And I'll like to call the
9 first panel. Xiher Li and Theodora Ziongias. You may
10 begin.

11 THEODORA ZIONGAS: I'll go first.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

13 THEODORA ZIONGAS: My name is Theodora Ziongias.
14 Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on
15 the impact of NORC programs. My name is Theodora
16 Ziongias and I am the Program Director for Selfhelp's
17 Big Six Towers NORC in Woodside, Queens. Big Six
18 Towers is a Mitchell-Lama development with close to
19 1,000 apartments.

20 For those who don't know Selfhelp, we believe
21 that individuals deserve to live with dignity and
22 independence and every day we provide care that
23 responds to the needs of each person our approach is
24 you know based on the extensive work we've done with
25 Holocaust survivors.

1
2 Thank you for the past investment and services
3 for older adults and hopefully you'll be able to
4 continue and expand them. As we know, NORCs were
5 founded with the goal of meeting the needs of a
6 growing cohort of older neighbors. We provide a wide
7 range of services and uhm we also support uhm so, we
8 provide case management, health management, quite a
9 few recreational and educational programs which are
10 vital in helping reduce isolation.

11 Secondly, we also support trying the SCRIE, SCHE,
12 DRIE, etc., to the consumer price index and
13 increasing the income level to I was hoping \$75,000
14 but I believe it's \$62,000. This is hugely important
15 for our NORC program. Bix Six Towers had a 23
16 percent increase in maintenance charges last year and
17 scheduled to have a 10 percent increase this -

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can continue.

19 THEODORA ZIONGAS: Okay. A 10 percent increase
20 beginning in July. This has had a huge impact on our
21 NORC. We have had many new older adults you know
22 coming to us for assistance with applying for
23 services. As you can imagine, such a huge increase
24 on people with fixed incomes is prohibitive and some
25 of them, especially for those who are at an aid, some

1
2 of them don't qualify by just a few dollars while
3 meeting the \$50,000 threshold. So, increasing that
4 will be hugely important and tying subsidy.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you and if you can
6 just wrap up if you don't mind.

7 THEODORA ZIONGAS: Yes, okay. Uhm, so uhm our
8 services have a direct and positive impact on the
9 health. 47 percent of the NORC members live alone
10 and we, approximately 45 percent of the residents who
11 are 60 and over are members of the NORC in our
12 community. We provided over 15,000 hours of case
13 management last year and over 2,500 participants in
14 our health promotion programs.

15 So, on behalf of all our older adults, we really
16 thank you for this opportunity to testify.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for
18 testifying.

19 THEODORA ZIONGAS: You're welcome.

20 XIHER LI: Good morning.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Just make sure your - yup.

22 XIHER LI: Yeah, good morning Chairperson Crystal
23 Hudson and members of the NYC Council Committee
24 Aging. Thank you for this opportunity to deliver
25 testimony on protecting and preserving and supporting

1
2 naturally occurring retirement community in New York
3 City.

4 My name is Xiher Li and I am the MSW intern of
5 [INAUDIBLE 01:46:16] NORC at Hamilton Madison House.
6 Today, I would like to discuss the senior citizen
7 rent increase extensions program and it's significant
8 impact on the lives of other adults in our community.
9 The SCRIE program has been a lifeline of many seniors
10 in our community. Allowing them to remain in their
11 homes, despite rising living costs. As we all know,
12 housing is one of the most critical aspect of a
13 natural subsidy, especially for older adults who
14 often lived on fixed incomes. The SCRIE subsidy
15 ensures that seniors are not forced out of their home
16 to rents increase. It provides them in ways the
17 security and the piece of mind they deserve.

18 For instance, I have personally witnessed the
19 positive effects of SCRIE on many of our clients.
20 One particularly impactful case in a 77 year old
21 client who have been on disability since she was 33
22 years old. She was born [INAUDIBLE 01:47:43], has
23 never married, has no children and recently lost her
24 only relative. With her limited income, she
25 struggled to offer her rent. Since the SCRIE

1
2 program, she has been able to remain stable in the
3 situation, continue to offer the basic necessity and
4 why stress and uncertainty of potential displacement.
5 This program has provided her with the security and
6 peace of mind she desperately needed, allowing her to
7 remain in the home she has known for her entire life.
8 However, with recent economic change, many of our
9 other adults are finding it's increasingly difficult
10 to make current financial eligibility requirements
11 for SCRIE.

12 As a result, many recently lost their SCRIE
13 subsidy due to a slight increase of their income,
14 which led to significant financial burden. This is
15 why I am advocating for an annual increase in the
16 financial eligibility threshold.

17 By doing so, we can ensure that more seniors can
18 assess and maintain this crucial support. Securing
19 their shelter and overall wellbeing. The SCRIE
20 program not only helps individuals but also
21 addressing our community by ensuring that our older
22 adults can age in place.

23 I urge this consideration of adjusting the
24 financial eligibility criteria to reflect the current
25 economic [INAUDIBLE 01:49:38] and continue supporting

1
2 our seniors effectively. Thank you for your
3 attention to the matters and for your ongoing
4 commitment for supporting our communities.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for your
6 testimony. I'd like to next call up Elizabeth Berger
7 and John Scott.

8 ELIZABETH BERGER: Okay, so hi, my name is
9 Elizabeth Berger. You can call me Liz.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And I just want to confirm
11 that microphone is on. Is the red light on there at
12 the bottom?

13 ELIZABETH BERGER: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

15 ELIZABETH BERGER: Okay now?

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

17 ELIZABETH BERGER: Okay. I've lived at
18 Independence Plaza since 1976 and I'm not the only
19 one. Many of us who are seniors now moved in when
20 these buildings opened. And it was Mitchell-Lama.
21 Just a little background, in 2004 when it became
22 free market for several reasons, the new landlord
23 made us a deal. Tenants who earned over a certain
24 amount would be considered LAP, which is Landlord
25 Assisted Program.

1
2 At that point, he raised our rent as much as
3 possible under our agreement and then tracked the
4 rent stabilization annual increases plus one percent
5 but the including an extra addition every few years
6 to our rent, which adds a lot more. We were not rent
7 stabilized. We did not have access to SCRIE, so at
8 62 our rent continued to rise proportionately. Where
9 am I here?

10 In these last five or ten years, many of us were
11 paying more than \$2,000, \$2,500 a month for our
12 apartments. If you do the math, it's obvious that if
13 you make less than \$50,000, this rent is basically
14 unaffordable. When we had to retire, most of us were
15 using our life savings to stay afloat. To change the
16 cap to \$60,000 or more would allow more seniors, many
17 in their 70's and their 80's to make just over
18 \$50,000 and are really struggling to get SCRIE and
19 survive. We are, one more paragraph, uh were able to
20 SCRIE thanks to and appreciate the law passed about
21 two years ago.

22 Okay, so the additional CPI would be a great help
23 during sickness or other unforeseen crises and maybe,
24 maybe even have a tiny bit extra. Thank you very
25 much.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 ELIZABETH BERGER: And that's that.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

6 JOHN SCOTT: Hi, my name is John Scott. I'm the
7 President of the older adult senior center at IPN. I
8 just wanted to put a face on people that need SCRIE
9 and Elizabeth is one of those people that is the
10 face. And what the feel is, it's a no brainer and I
11 know that the City Council is going to pass this
12 Resolution. I will say you know listening about all
13 the NORC stuff, I'm very impressed with the City
14 Councilman and I'm impressed with our Speaker.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Chair, thank you.

16 JOHN SCOTT: Thank you. We'll make you Speaker
17 but uhm, the thing is we need to put a face on it.
18 You know I deal with seniors that are 97 years old.
19 So, now let's take a look at this. Mitchell-Lama's
20 were built for affordability. The city and state
21 allowed them to buy out of the system. We were
22 willing to buy the building and keep it affordable
23 but no, the Mayor at that time and we're not going to
24 talk about that, he let this other unit buy it and
25 now there's no affordability and people are leaving

1
2 and we had to fight tooth and nail to get it last
3 year to come under SCRIE because Mitchell-Lama's come
4 under SCRIE but private doesn't. So, we're post
5 Mitchell-Lama.

6 So, what is the face? People are paying \$2,000 a
7 month. If you do the math, that's \$24,000. \$50,000,
8 they're paying 50 percent of their rent. So, in the
9 past, I've worked with our previous Asian Commission
10 Margaret Chin and we went from 19 you know to 50 and
11 now we're kind of like begging, can we go up a little
12 bit? But people can't live on this little bit of
13 increase. Now, if this was done years like we were
14 fighting, it would be up to 71 guests. So, I'd like
15 to first of all thank you. I know you're going to
16 pass this Resolution and I'd like to thank you for
17 all the work you do. I thank you for helping us
18 seniors and as I said, our centers are needed and you
19 do a great job with us and we have a lot of people
20 that need these services. Thank you so much.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for saying
22 all that and thank you for your testimony. I'd like
23 to next call up Tara Klein and Navneet Kaur. Tara,
24 you can start.

1
2 TARA KLEIN: Okay, thank you so much for
3 convening today's Oversight Hearings on Naturally
4 Occurring Retirement Communities. I was recently
5 told that the last time the Council did a hearing on
6 NORC's, it was 2017. So, this is really great.
7 Thank you so much for holding this hearing.

8 I'm Tara Klein, I'm the Deputy Director of Policy
9 and Advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses. UNH is a
10 policy and social change organization that represents
11 neighborhood settlement houses in New York. UNH has
12 been a champion for the NORC program for decades in
13 New York. Our members operate 21 NORC's located in
14 New York City that serve over 15,000 older adults.
15 These NORC's are either contracted by the State
16 Office for the Aging or New York City Aging, many
17 receive funding from the Council either as
18 supplemental nursing dollars or as it's full funding
19 support.

20 So thank you for mentioning on our report that we
21 recently put out NORC's an antidote to social
22 isolation. I have a copy of it here if anyone wants
23 to read it. It's also available at unhny.org. The
24 report details the harmful effects of loneliness in
25 older adults and lifts up supportive programs in

1
2 NORC's as a cost effective way to bring older adults
3 into meaningful connection with their neighbors and
4 help them stay in their home safely.

5 The report features a census analysis that
6 highlights the growth in New York States older adult
7 population and it compares that with where there are
8 or are not NORC's currently. So, for example, the
9 older adult share of the population in Queens
10 Community District 13, which is Queens Village,
11 Cambria Heights and Rosedale rose from about 19
12 percent to 27 percent over the last decade but
13 there's no NORC in that community district. So, we
14 have that analysis available to help with future
15 growth analysis.

16 The report also looks at the health care benefits
17 of NORC's and talks with some of our members to
18 demonstrate how these programs are ineffective and
19 proven program model that should be invested in and
20 expanded to more communities throughout the state and
21 the city. So, for our recommendations, really two
22 big things we want to highlight. The first is just
23 let's expand NORC's. Let's build some more of them.

24 In the city, as we heard today, that means money.
25 That means a budget campaign so thank you for

1 highlighting that. We are also leading a campaign at
2 the state level to try and get some funding for more
3 statewide NORC's and we hope you'll join us in
4 support of that campaign in the next year. And then
5 we are also requesting the Council initiative be
6 funded at \$6.4 million in the FY25 budget. This was
7 a historic high a couple of years ago. It includes
8 again nursing and standalone NORC's and sort of our
9 vision and this is what happened during the last NORC
10 RFP is that some of these NORC's that the Council
11 funds and starts up, can go for a couple of years and
12 then through an RFP, New York City can absorb them
13 into baselined contracts and the Council can keep
14 building new ones.

16 So, that's sort of what we're thinking about for
17 expansion. So, I'll end there and also just say we
18 support Council Member Brewer's Resolution on the
19 SCRIE and DRIE being tied to the CPI. Thank you very
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

22 NAVNEET KAUR: Good afternoon. My name is
23 Navneet Kaur, I'm a Staff Attorney in the Elder Law
24 unit in the Legal Aid Society in the Bronx office.

1
2 The Legal Aid Society appreciates the opportunity to
3 provide testimony on the proposed Resolution.

4 My unit represents vulnerable elders in Bronx
5 Housing Court and we work to preserve their housing
6 and we help with maximizing their benefits. One of
7 the benefits we assist with is applying for SCRIE and
8 DRIE benefits during our representation. We support
9 the Resolution calling on the New York State
10 Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the
11 bill, which provides for annual adjustments of the
12 maximum income threshold eligibility for the SCRIE
13 and DRIE program.

14 The passing of the bill emphasizes the importance
15 of how laws should be modified to serve the need of
16 the current society and the bill will allow more
17 tenants to become eligible who are on fixed income
18 that were currently over the current threshold. The
19 SCRIE and DRIE program is a very valuable benefit
20 program to our clients because it assists with
21 keeping their apartments affordable. However, we
22 have three recommendations on how the program could
23 be more effective.

24 First, under the current construction of the
25 program when a senior applies at 62, the rent is

1 frozen at the legal regulated rent at that time. In
2 amounts which may or may not be affordable and it's
3 already a rent burden for the senior on the fixed
4 income. For example, a senior could be receiving the
5 maximum SSI, which is \$1034. They applied for SCRIE
6 and their rent is frozen at \$994.
7

8 This only leaves the senior about \$40 to pay
9 towards their other expenses each month. There's no
10 option under the current law for this frozen rent to
11 be lowered, despite the severe rent burden.

12 Therefore, in order to make sure that the amount the
13 rent is frozen at is an affordable amount, we suggest
14 the frozen SCRIE rent -

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can continue.

16 NAVNEET KAUR: Thank you. The frozen SCRIE rent
17 should be set to 30 percent of their income, ensuring
18 true affordability for seniors on low fixed incomes.
19 Second, many seniors miss the chance to submit their
20 SCRIE application when they turn 62 for many reasons.
21 In order to combat this issue, we propose that the
22 rent be frozen at the amount when the tenant was 62
23 years old even if they apply at a later date. The
24 importance of rolling back the rents is to ensure
25

1
2 that we do not penalize the tenant for not submitting
3 an application on time.

4 Third, we propose that the SCRIE and DRIE should
5 be expanded to units now covered by the Good Cause
6 Eviction Law. The Good Cause Eviction Law limits
7 landlords from enforcing a rent high, greater than
8 150 percent of the consumer price index without an
9 explanation. Expanding the program to cover these
10 units would increase the number of potential
11 affordable apartments where seniors could maintain a
12 long term tenancy.

13 And lastly, uhm, the NORC's we believe should
14 play a role in timely submitting the SCRIE
15 applications and recertifications. Although we
16 ensure our clients submit their recertification
17 timely when we represent them in housing court,
18 unfortunately, we are not able to help with their
19 annual recertifications after the housing court case
20 is over.

21 So, the NORC's can assist with maintaining this
22 very important benefit to prevent unnecessary risk of
23 eviction in the future. I just would like to thank
24 you for the opportunity and we will be submitting a
25 written testimony with more details.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for your
3 testimony and then Tara, I just wanted to ask a
4 question. If you can go into a little bit about the
5 state match 25 percent versus NYC Aging's 50 percent
6 requirement?

7 TRA KLEIN: Sure and thank you for raising this
8 earlier. So, by state law, NORC's that are
9 contracted by New York State Office for the Aging,
10 require a 25 percent match. 50 percent of that match
11 has to be by the housing provider. In New York City
12 Aging, what we saw in the last RFP was that the match
13 requirement is 50 percent. Half of that 50 percent
14 has to be by the housing provider. So, this is the
15 discrepancy we are looking at, so according to New
16 York City Aging, they follow the state law in their
17 contracts in terms of the definition of a NORC. You
18 know the density and what makes a NORC, but they are
19 not following the state law about the match.

20 So, that 25 percent state match is in state law
21 and that was actually changed several years ago. It
22 was 50 percent and brought back down to 25, so it
23 could have just gotten lost in that process but
24 that's where we're at.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you. That's
3 very helpful and we'll make sure we follow up with
4 them on that with regards to the RFP. Thank you.
5 Thank you both for your testimony, appreciate it.

6 I'd like to next call up Sharon Brown and
7 Jeannine Cahill Jackson. Okay, great thank you. You
8 are the only one but you are still limited to the two
9 minutes. You can begin whenever you are ready and
10 we'll start the clock.

11 SHARON BROWN: My name is Sharon Brown and I am
12 going to be running for public office. I'm going to
13 have a rally on June 21, 2024 on the steps of City
14 Hall. This is the aging situation here.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Aging Committee, correct.

16 SHARON BROWN: Aging Committee. So, you are
17 Crystal Hudson, you are in charge of -

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Correct, I am the Chair of
19 the Committee.

20 SHARON BROWN: Yes, okay so there was someone
21 here who spoke about people that are aging,
22 loneliness and things like that. In order to make
23 sure people aren't forced to be around other people
24 who don't have the same morals, values, biblical
25 values, we don't want to do that to elderly people.

1
2 If people are of a certain faith and they want to
3 bring people in to help them with their Judaism or
4 Christianity, they can bring people in to see them
5 and help them but they can't force people to -

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, apologies but uhm the
7 topic of today's hearing is Protecting, Preserving,
8 and Supporting Naturally Occurring Retirement
9 Communities in New York City and we're also
10 collecting comments and testimony pertaining to the
11 Resolution that we're looking to hear. So, if your
12 comments are not germane either of those topics, I do
13 have to ask you to end your testimony.

14 SHARON BROWN: Okay, so the fact that you want to
15 make sure you maintain these communities, I'm telling
16 you the problems in those communities. The reason
17 why the funding is not going to be proper and there's
18 always going to be interruptions with the way people
19 are funding these places is because of the fact that
20 these - they're not meeting the needs of the aging
21 population. So, these places are going to go away
22 because they're not meeting what people need. This
23 includes the nursing homes, the different places that
24 the aged are at.

25 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

1

SHARON BROWN: They're not meeting their needs.

2

3

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

4

SHARON BROWN: Yes.

5

6

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, on Zoom, I'd like to call Jeannie Doherty and Katherine Reilly. Oh sorry, in person Jeannie Doherty and Katherine Reilly.

7

8

Okay, is there anyone else in the room that would like to testify and if so, you'd have to fill out an appearance card?

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

You have to fill out the card. I'm happy to hear your sentence after the hearing but just for formality purposes. I understand but you already gave your testimony and we have to do everything according to the rules. Okay, now turning to Zoom, Katy Bordonaro, Barbara Collins and Andrietta Sims. So, we'll start with Katy.

17

18

KATY BORDONARO: Hello, can you hear me?

19

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes, we can.

20

21

KATY BORDONARO: If you turn on my Zoom, my Zoom is on too if you want to. My camera is on.

22

23

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I think you have the ability to turn on your camera.

24

25

KATY BORDONARO: It said you stopped it.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, it's on, you would
3 have to turn it on yeah.

4 KATY BORDONARO: Okay well, I can't seem to do
5 that. Okay, thank you anyway. I thank you to
6 Committee Chair Hudson for holding this hearing and
7 thank you Council Member Brewer for Sponsoring the
8 Reso. 232. Thank you to the now 15 members who are
9 co-sponsors of to date. Four have added today, I
10 think.

11 My name is Katy Bordonaro and I serve as the
12 Corresponding Secretary of the Mitchell-Lama
13 Residents Coalition, MLRC, a grassroots, all-
14 volunteer organization working since 1972 to
15 represent the interests and needs of Mitchell-Lama
16 renters, Mitchell-Lama co-operators, and residents
17 living in former Mitchell-Lama developments. Like IPN
18 Independence Plaza, which testified earlier.

19 The MLRC has long advocated for changes in the
20 SCRIE/DRIE program to allow it to keep up with
21 inflation and expand the number of beneficiaries.
22 These modifications will keep more New Yorkers in
23 their homes for a longer period of time. There are
24 several pieces of legislation before the New York
25 State Legislature today to enhance the SCRIE and DRIE

1
2 and the Mitchell-Lama community is very grateful that
3 the City Council is sending a strong message to
4 Albany to make an automatic, annual increase in the
5 income cap for eligibility. This increase would
6 equal any increase in the Consumer Price Index or
7 CPI.

8 In 2014 the cap was set at \$50,000, ten years
9 ago. If the cap had been raised by the CPI every
10 year since then, it might be as high as \$70,000 today
11 just to keep up with the extraordinary inflation we
12 have seen recently. This would mean that our most
13 vulnerable residents would be able to stay in their
14 homes. Passing this resolution, as you know, tells
15 the state legislature that the City is ready to
16 approve the funds needed to strengthen SCRIE and
17 DRIE.

18 Thank you for making the future of SCRIE and DRIE
19 a priority.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for your
21 testimony. I'd like to call Andrietta Sims.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is starting.

23 ANDRIETTA SIMS: Hello. I can't tell if I'm on.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We can hear you. Can you
25 hear us? Andrietta, can you hear me?

1

ANDRIETTA SIMS: Hello?

2

3

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Hello, can you hear me?

4

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is started.

5

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can begin your testimony

6

Andrietta if you can hear me.

7

ANDRIETTA SIMS: Okay, I'm now unmuted?

8

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

9

ANDRIETTA SIMS: Okay.

10

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can begin your

11

testimony.

12

ANDRIETTA SIMS: Okay, thank you. So, I feel

13

like I'm going to be redundant because so many other

14

folks have said what I wanted to say. So, uhm, thank

15

you for holding this hearing. Thank you Council

16

Member Brewer for sponsoring this bill. So, we are

17

all aware that rent is the biggest expense for New

18

York City residents. I'm a retiree living on a fixed

19

income. I've lived in my building for over 50 years

20

and seniors such as myself living off of a fixed

21

income have limited financial resources and rent

22

increases have taken up a larger proportion of my

23

income, leaving less money available for necessities

24

such as food, health care and transportation.

25

1
2 Additionally, rent increases also make it
3 difficult for people like myself. Someone depending
4 on a fixed income to maintain stable housing, and
5 this is why having programs such as SCRIE are vital.
6 However, the current threshold limit of \$50,000 has
7 prevented me from accessing SCRIE as a resource as I
8 am one of the people that Council Member Brewer
9 mentioned in her opening comment that makes a few
10 dollars over that threshold.

11 In order for SCRIE to remain sustainable long
12 term and to be relevant and effective, income
13 thresholds must reflect changes in the cost of living
14 allowing more seniors such as myself to qualify for
15 rent protection and I urge all Council Members to
16 support the Resolution. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for your
18 testimony. Is there anyone else on Zoom that would
19 like to testify? If so, you can use the raise hand
20 function. Okay, seeing no hands raised at this time,
21 I would like to address - one second. Okay, there's
22 somebody with a phone number who's raised their hand.
23 Phone number ending in 4036. If you're logged in
24 with a phone number ending in 4036, please state your
25 name.

1

BARBARA COLLINS: Hi, can you hear me now?

2

3

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes, is that Barbara

4

Collins?

5

BARBARA COLLINS: Hello?

6

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

7

BARBARA COLLINS: Yes, it is. Thank you very

8

much for calling on me and thank you Council very

9

much for having this hearing both for the Assembly

10

and the City Council. Thank you very much for the

11

Council people. You are the very best and we do

12

appreciate this help.

13

My name is Barbara Collins of course and I live

14

in Queens in Woodside at the big six towers and am a

15

senior citizen, a Native New Yorker and so, I've been

16

here a long time. And in addition to all of the

17

issues that have been raised by their current bills

18

and presented and I support and I'm grateful for the

19

people who are living in rent stabilized, the free

20

market rent housing. However, we have a community of

21

people who live in Mitchell-Lama developments. It

22

has been there over 50 years or more. There aren't,

23

that don't get into, that are not eligible for SCRIE

24

believe it or not and their income is much lower and

25

that's simply because not only do they have their

1
2 annual income but your monthly also is included in
3 what makes you eligible or ineligible. So, one third
4 of your income must be less than your monthly
5 maintenance or rent.

6 In a Mitchell-Lama development, the maintenance
7 and the rent is much lower than fair market and those
8 same tenants moved into Mitchell-Lama development
9 from 50 years ago when their income may have been
10 between \$6,000 to \$10,000 a year. Over the years,
11 the cost of moving into a Mitchell-Lama development
12 has now increased all the incomes coming in to
13 \$65,000, to \$70,000, even \$100,000 a year. This
14 makes their income possibly more than those who've
15 been there 50 years. They get to be turned down for
16 -

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

18 BARBARA COLLINS: Or \$10 for a month for not
19 being able to qualify for SCRIE simply because their
20 income is lower and their maintenance is lower or
21 their rent is lower.

22 I ask that you consider all including the cost of
23 Mitchell - not Mitchell, the cost of Medicare charged
24 to the ground \$160 a month that is required of all
25 people, persons, senior citizens who aren't receiving

1
2 Social Security. It's a part of what should be
3 deducted from their monthly income. It does not seem
4 fair if you started at a lower amount. It does not
5 seem fair if you start a lower amount, you must be
6 able to get - it is a current amount. It is
7 required. That is, 50 years ago, I moved into a
8 Mitchell-Lama development and I think my income was
9 about \$65,000. Over the years, to get into a
10 Mitchell-Lama development today - did I say \$65,000;
11 I meant \$6,500. Today, it would cost - you could get
12 in for an income of maybe \$75,000 or more. My income
13 over the years has decreased, increased and then
14 decreased after I retired. This means that my income
15 was lower anyway and lower than anybody \$75,000 was
16 even lower than what it was \$50,000 before.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.

18 BARBARA COLLINS: Please reconsider and include
19 the cost of Medicare that takes the individuals
20 monthly income. In addition that HPD should be
21 required to say there is a limit. If you are less
22 than \$1 over, that should not keep you from getting a
23 what do you call it? From getting SCRIE, which is
24 why it includes, going to increase your maintenance

25

1
2 for about \$200 because of a 21 percent increase, over
3 a 10 percent increase and etc..

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for your
5 testimony.

6 BARBARA COLLINS: That's just asking to be fair.
7 Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much for your
9 testimony.

10 BARBARA COLLINS: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Last call for testimony. Is
12 there anyone in person or on Zoom that would like to
13 testify? On Zoom, you can raise - use the raise hand
14 function. In person, you can fill out an appearance
15 form.

16 No hands and no new appearance forms, I would
17 like to just thank everybody for their testimonies.
18 We heard a lot of compelling stories today about why
19 we should expand the eligibility requirements for
20 SCRIE with pertaining specifically to the consumer
21 price index, and also expansion of our naturally
22 occurring retirement communities and adequate funding
23 for them as well. So, thank you again to everybody
24 who testified including the Commissioner and Deputy
25 Commissioner.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMITTEE ON AGING

With that, I would like to adjourn the meeting.

[GAVEL] Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date July 8, 2024