

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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June 22, 2012
Start: 10:07 am
Recess: 11:28 am

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Committee Room, 14th Floor

B E F O R E:
LEWIS A. FIDLER
ALBERT VANN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Peter Koo
Sara M. Gonzalez
Annabel Palma
Melissa Mark-Viverito
Fernando Cabrera
Diana Reyna
G. Oliver Koppell
Jumaane D. Williams

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

Suzanne Lynn
Deputy Commissioner
New York City Department of Youth and Community
Development

Joe Catrambone
Senior Director
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Development

Cindy Colter
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Sandy Myers
Save CSBG New York City

Shana Mosner
Human Services Council

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United Neighborhood Houses

Kathy Fitzgibbons
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Elena Strizhevekd
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Paul Vaysberg

Larisa Peidi
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Michael Lee
Executive Director
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Aaron Halegua
Staff Attorney, Employment Law unit
Legal Aid Society

Karen Cacace
Supervisor, Employment Law unit
Legal Aid Society

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 4
DEVELOPMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: ...For the Youth
3 Services Committee, I'm joined by Councilman Al
4 Vann, who chairs the Community Development
5 Committee.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Not picking you
7 up.

8 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: You're not
9 picking me up.

10 [Pause]

11 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Hello?
12 Picking me up now? Okay. All right, so I'll
13 start over again.

14 I'm Lew Fidler, I chair the Youth
15 Services Committee and I'm joined by Councilman Al
16 Vann, who chairs the Community Development
17 Committee, Councilman Peter Koo, and Committee
18 staff. As everybody knows, we're in the midst--I
19 wouldn't even say the midst, we're in the throes
20 of budget season, so Council Members have numbers
21 of obligations and, as a matter of fact, Council
22 Member Vann and I have budget negotiating around
23 the noontime hour, so we're going to try and keep
24 this hearing reasonably concise. I apologize if
25 members are in and out, but even when negotiations

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 5
DEVELOPMENT

2 aren't actually going on, there are a number of
3 budget related activities and, quite frankly,
4 there's really nothing more important than the
5 budget, and, frankly, that's kind of irrelevant to
6 this hearing, but I do want to say upfront to
7 anyone who's waiting here to testify today that we
8 are taking testimony only on the resolution,
9 Community Service Block Grant resolution. I know
10 there's a great temptation during budget time to
11 come in and try and shoehorn comments about budget
12 related issues that are not relevant to this
13 resolution, please, because we have so many things
14 going on, I ask you to be respectful of that
15 limit, that we're only taking testimony on the
16 resolution today.

17 Speaking of the resolution, we are
18 hearing Proposed Resolution number 687-A, which
19 calls on the New York City Congressional
20 Delegation and President Barack Obama to prevent
21 cuts and other changes to the Community Service
22 Block Grant program. By way of background, in New
23 York City the Department of Youth and Community
24 Development administers the CSBG program by
25 distributing funds to over 150 community and

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 6
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 faith-based organizations that provide services to
4 residents in 43 lower income neighborhood
5 development areas. In the current federal fiscal
6 year, New York City received \$31 million in CSBG
7 funds which allowed the City to provide services
8 to 30,000 people. CSBG-funded programs in New
9 York City provided 5,500 youth with educational
10 and job readiness services, 3,500 seniors with
11 independent living assistance, 3,000 adults with
12 literacy instruction, and 5,500 families with
13 referrals for domestic violence prevention,
14 substance abuse treatment, HIV/AIDS support
15 services, and other issues.

16 To most of the persons served under
17 the CSBG program, be they youth, seniors, or
18 families in the middle, these programs provide a
19 lifeline and safety net for a better life.

20 Administering CSBG would be penny-wise and pound-
21 foolish and would seriously harm vulnerable New
22 Yorkers.

23 Under Commissioner Mullgrav, the
24 youth, adults, and families of this great city are
25 well served as a dollar given to DYCD will provide
more than a dollar's worth of quality programming.

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 7
DEVELOPMENT

2 I'd like to thank staff for
3 preparing--by helping this report Jen Wilcox, my
4 counsel, Mike Benjamin, my policy analyst, and
5 Crystal Coston, our very, very busy finance
6 analyst.

7 And I will turn it over to Chairman
8 Vann for his opening statement.

9 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Yeah, good
10 morning, thank you, Chairman Fidler. As
11 indicated, I'm Al Vann, I chair the Committee on
12 Community Development.

13 The Community Service Block Grant,
14 known as CSBG program, as you have heard, provides
15 federal and anti-poverty funding to states and
16 local municipalities in order to revitalize and
17 empower low income communities. The program began
18 as a part of a federal Economic Opportunity Act of
19 1964, and that was when Congress declared war on
20 poverty. The CSBG funding aims to provide a range
21 of services to ameliorate the causes and effects
22 of poverty. The Department of Youth and Community
23 Development serves as the designated community
24 action agency for New York City and administers
25 federal CSBG funds locally.

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 8
DEVELOPMENT

2 As indicated, New York City
3 received \$31 million in CSBG funds in this current
4 year and, as indicated, they have 200 community-
5 based organizations which serve over 30,000 New
6 Yorkers that currently benefit from this program.
7 The funding supports a wide range of social
8 service needs, including youth development, family
9 support programs, immigrant needs, literacy
10 assistance, and senior services.

11 In recent years, the program has
12 been jeopardized with threats of funding cuts.
13 Most recently, the Obama Administration has
14 proposed a sharp reduction in CSBG funding from
15 677 million to 350 million for fiscal year 2013.
16 In addition, the administration has indicated its
17 intent to change CSBG into a competitive program
18 in which states would compete for awarded block
19 grant funds as opposed to the current mandatory
20 pass through method.

21 Today, the Committee on Community
22 Development, jointly with Committee on Youth
23 Services, will consider Proposed Resolution number
24 687-A, which calls upon the New York City
25 Congress--New York City Congressional Delegation

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 9
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 and President Barack Obama to prevent cuts to
4 Community Service Block Grant. Such reduction in
5 this critically needed funding, funding that
6 supports the development of human capital in our
7 city, is really or particularly disturbing in
8 light of the sustained reductions to social
9 service programs, those programs that benefit low
10 income people. For example, this past January,
11 the Human Services Council released a report that
12 revealed that in just the last two years, New York
13 State has cut approximately \$800 million in
14 funding for social services at various levels of
15 government.

16 During this period, when both our
17 city and country at large is still facing the
18 challenge of economic recovery, it is government's
19 role to invest not divest in human capital so that
20 people are empowered to participate fully in the
21 economy. In this difficult fiscal climate, human
22 services needs have escalated. Reductions such as
23 proposed cuts to CSBG are counterproductive and,
24 in fact, harmful to economic growth.

25 Look forward to today's testimony
to gain a better understanding of the impact of

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 10

2 CSBG funding has had on our city and what current
3 efforts are being made, being conducted to oppose
4 the proposed cut.

5 Thank you very much, and back to
6 our chair--co-chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you, Al.
8 We've been joined by Councilwoman Sara Gonzalez
9 from Brooklyn. And with that, I will turn it over
10 to Deputy Commissioner Lynn and her staff from
11 DYCD.

12 [Pause]

13 SUZANNE LYNN: Sorry. Good
14 morning, Chairs Fidler and Vann and Members of the
15 Youth Services and Community Development
16 Committees, I'm Suzanne Lynn, Deputy Commissioner
17 for the New York City Department of Youth and
18 Community Development, and on behalf of
19 Commissioner Mullgrav, I want to thank you for
20 this opportunity to discuss the City's use of its
21 \$30.9 million from the Community Services Block
22 Grant funding to provide services for the most
23 vulnerable New Yorkers.

24 Through these funds, DYCD aims to
25 reduce poverty and empower people to achieve self-

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2 sufficiency in 43 low income neighborhoods
3 throughout the City's five boroughs. CSBG
4 supports 200 community-based organizations serving
5 30,000 low income New Yorkers annually.

6 In our city, where almost 40% of
7 our population was born outside the United States,
8 DYCD plays a vital role in serving immigrant New
9 Yorkers and their families. DYCD strategically
10 invests CSBG funds to support a holistic, family-
11 focused approach to assist immigrants in meeting
12 the challenges of adapting to unfamiliar
13 surroundings. CSBG is one of very few federal
14 funding streams that are available for immigrant
15 services.

16 DYCD, through its Immigrant
17 Services Initiative, provides CSBG funding to
18 community-based organizations with 20 contracts
19 totaling \$2.68 million to serve almost 3,000
20 immigrants annually. The initiative includes five
21 program areas: Legal Services for Immigrant Youth
22 to help undocumented youth in foster care and
23 unaccompanied immigrant youth obtain legal status
24 through the attainment of Special Immigrant
25 Juvenile Status. Providers now also provide case

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY12
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 management services to address participants' needs
4 for housing, education, and health benefits.

5 Our second program area is legal
6 services for immigrants to assist immigrant adults
7 and youth to attain citizenship and lawful
8 immigration status, according them greater access
9 to benefits and services.

10 Our third area is services for
11 victims of domestic violence and trafficking. To
12 provide domestic violence services to immigrant
13 victims and help them obtain lawful immigrant
14 status. We have recently expanded the program to
15 serve victims of trafficking and domestic violence
16 victims in same-sex relationships.

17 Our fourth program area is services
18 for immigrant families, which has been re-focused
19 on families with children in middle school or high
20 school since parents of English Language Learners
21 have a more difficult time supporting their
22 children's education.

23 The last area is services for
24 immigrant workers, which is a new area for us and
25 it addresses concerns about exploitation of low
wage immigrant workers. All workers, regardless

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY13
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 of their status, have the right to be paid minimum
4 wage and work in safe conditions, and this program
5 educates immigrants on their employment rights, as
6 well as providing advocacy and legal services.

7 CSBG funds provide a strong
8 foundation to leverage the Council's \$3.66 million
9 in the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, so
10 combined, these fundings--the CSBG represents a
11 large portion of funding dedicated to help
12 immigrants in the city.

13 Similarly, DYCD has invested a
14 blend of federal, city tax levy, and Council
15 funding totaling \$9.8 million this year to serve
16 over 7,545 young people and adults in literacy
17 programs. Over one-quarter of the total funding,
18 \$2.55 million, is from CSBG.

19 Adolescent Literacy after school
20 programs use a range of educational approaches to
21 help struggling 6th, 7th and 8th graders develop
22 heir reading, writing, and oral communication
23 skills to ensure that they stay in school and are
24 prepared for high school. This program's success
25 is rooted in collaborative relationships with
parents, principals, and teachers, and the CUNY

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 14
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 Creative Art Team, which provides technical
4 assistance. The program is supported by \$1
5 million annually in CSBG funds.

6 Adult Literacy program participants
7 attain the writing, reading, and communication
8 skills they want and need to gain employment or
9 pursue further education. Adult Basic Education
10 programs provide instruction in reading, writing,
11 and math to native English or English-fluent
12 speakers, and GED programs prepare students for
13 the tests required for a high school equivalency
14 diploma. English for Speakers of Other Languages
15 classes help students to improve their English
16 language communication skills. Working Adult
17 Literacy students benefit in the workplace too.
18 For example, in fiscal year 2011, out of 1,735
19 working student program participants, 781 obtained
20 their jobs through the program and 206 were
21 granted raises. The program receives 1.55 million
22 in CSBG funds.

23 Another innovative citywide
24 initiative supported by CSBG is DYCD's Fatherhood
25 program, which encourages fathers to become
personally involved with their children and helps

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 15
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 them to relate to their co-parents. The
4 Fatherhood Initiative was established in 2002 in
5 recognition of the positive influence that fathers
6 have on their children. Children who have strong
7 relationships with their fathers are far less
8 likely to get into trouble at home, school, or the
9 community. An active and nurturing style of
10 fathering is also associated with better verbal
11 skills and academic achievement among young
12 people. Fathers also benefit from positive,
13 healthy, and supportive relationships with their
14 children.

15 Many non-custodial fathers face
16 challenges in establishing close relationships
17 with their children and in providing support for
18 them. The Fatherhood Initiative targets three
19 distinct groups: Young fathers, older fathers,
20 and fathers with prior involvement in the criminal
21 justice system to promote their involvement with
22 and economic support for their children. The
23 program's \$3 million budget supports 11 contracts
24 with various and diverse CBOs, which specialize in
25 disconnected youth, foster care youth, working
with the formerly incarcerated, and workforce

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 16
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 development. These programs are located in
4 targeted community districts with a high need for
5 fatherhood services based on the number of
6 children born to unmarried women and the number of
7 individuals on probation.

8 Another way we help fathers
9 reconnect with their children is by creating
10 opportunities for new experiences. For example,
11 last Saturday, DYCD held its annual Father's Day
12 Celebration at the New York Aquarium. Over 160
13 dads and children attended and explored nature and
14 learned together. Additionally, last month, dads
15 and children participated in the Mother's
16 Recognition Day event at various cornerstone
17 programs at NYCHA facilities where they created
18 artwork together to present as gifts on Mother's
19 Day.

20 Additionally, \$1.6 million from
21 CSBG supports 1,100 jobs for young people through
22 the Summer Youth Employment Program. These funds
23 are particularly necessary, given that 132,500
24 youth applied for SYEP this year. Combined with
25 other funding sources, including the City's
investment of \$20 million, the State's commitment

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 17
DEVELOPMENT

2 of \$13.5, million and the Mayor's third annual
3 public-private partnership campaign, we estimate
4 that we may serve 29,000 youth this summer.

5 The other half of CSBG, \$16
6 million, is invested in the NDA Initiative, that
7 stands for Neighborhood Development Area, which
8 fosters community-level engagement and provides
9 residents with opportunities to contribute to
10 change in their neighborhoods. Through resident
11 input and the community's identification of
12 priorities, NDA targets services to the most
13 pressing needs of each community. They are
14 provided through contracts with approximately 200
15 organizations and serve residents of 43 low-income
16 communities throughout the city. The program
17 areas include middle school youth, educational
18 support and leadership activities for them;
19 educational and support and pre-employment
20 activities for high school-aged youth; adult
21 literacy, which includes adult basic education and
22 General Education Development, or GED test prep;
23 senior services to help seniors maintain
24 independent living; housing advocacy and
25 assistance to help individuals and families facing

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 18
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 foreclosure, eviction, and other such issues;
4 immigrant support services; healthy family support
5 services, working with families to address issues
6 concerning domestic violence, substance abuse,
7 HIV/AIDS, and health and nutrition.

8 So I hope that what I've
9 demonstrated today is that CSBG is incredibly
10 important to the city in serving the unique needs
11 of New Yorkers through a variety of innovative
12 local and citywide programs. We thank the Council
13 for holding this hearing, especially given the
14 President's budget proposal for federal fiscal
15 year 2013, which again proposes to cut CSBG in
16 half to only \$350 million. Further, it includes a
17 proposal to allocate the remaining funding through
18 a competitive process instead of the existing
19 formula allocation that considers both needs and
20 population. Last month, we concluded a series of
21 five borough-wide meetings concerning CSBG. The
22 meetings highlighted our strategic use of CSBG to
23 support community-based organizations serving
24 30,000 low income New Yorkers. During these
25 meetings, we heard moving testimony from many
whose lives have been improved by these programs,

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 19
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 such as a senior who was able to stay in her home,
4 an immigrant who learned English, a young adult
5 who received her GED, and fathers taking
6 responsibility for their children.

7 I want to share the story of one
8 young woman who has benefited from a CSBG-
9 supported program. Nineteen-year-old Melina
10 arrived in the U.S. from the Dominican Republic on
11 Christmas Day 2011, joining her mother and two
12 brothers in the Bronx. Melina enrolled in ESOL
13 classes at SOBRO within weeks of her arrival. It
14 was quickly apparent that Melina was a very
15 bright, committed, and conscientious young woman
16 who completed her assignments before others, yet
17 she was hesitant to participate in class. As she
18 gained confidence in her ability to learn English,
19 Melina began to involve herself more in classroom
20 activities. In May of this year, Melina
21 successfully completed Home Health Aide training
22 and will soon be working. But her aspirations do
23 not end there, she is enrolled in the CLIP program
24 at the Bronx Community College where she hopes to
25 pursue a degree in accounting. Her dream also
includes helping her family financially and

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 20
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 becoming an American citizen.

4 We appreciate the efforts of the
5 many advocacy and community-based organizations
6 that have spearheaded these important forums to
7 educate the public and policy makers on the
8 importance of CSBG funding to people like Melina.
9 Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss
10 DYCD's efforts to serve New York's low income
11 individuals, families, and communities through
12 CSBG. I am joined today by Assistant Commissioner
13 Cindy Colter, and we would be pleased to answer
14 any questions or address any comments you may
15 have.

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you,
17 Deputy Commissioner, and it's perfectly clear from
18 your comprehensive testimony that CSBG funds many,
19 many important programs and services in our city.

20 We've been joined by Council
21 Members Palma and Mark-Viverito. I just have a
22 few questions, and then I'll turn it over to
23 Chairman Vann for his--any questions he might
24 have.

25 Just the Summer Youth Employment
piece that's being paid--used to support the

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 21
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 program, the proposed funding cut won't affect
4 this summer, will it?

5 SUZANNE LYNN: No, any proposed
6 funding cut would not take effect until the
7 beginning of the coming fiscal year--

8 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]
9 Next fiscal year.

10 SUZANNE LYNN: --October 1st.

11 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. So
12 that's--we don't have to deal with that right now.
13 Council Members have appointment NDA boards, am I
14 correct?

15 SUZANNE LYNN: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And I know,
17 you know, back at the beginning of my history as
18 the chair of this Committee, we had an issue with
19 many, many vacancies on NDA boards and Council
20 Members were encouraged to make their
21 appointments. Where do we stand on that now? Are
22 the boards full, are Council Members making their
23 appointments?

24 SUZANNE LYNN: It's always a
25 constant challenge to keep the board membership
full because there are so many boards and there

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 22
DEVELOPMENT

2 are many, many seats, but we are in much better
3 shape than we used to be. And perhaps Joe
4 Catrambone, who is senior director in charge of
5 our neighborhood advisory boards could give a
6 little bit more. Introduce yourself before you--

7 [Crosstalk]

8 JOE CATRAMBONE: [Interposing] Joe
9 Catrambone, I'm the senior director at DYCD and I
10 oversee the NAB program.

11 It's getting better with elected
12 officials in general, not just City Council
13 people, but we still have an issue with vacancies,
14 so anything you can do to help us fill those
15 vacancies would be appreciated.

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Well I'd be
17 happy to help you if you would get to me a list of
18 Council Members who have appointments--

19 JOE CATRAMBONE: Sure.

20 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --available on
21 NDAs, I will reach out to those Council Members
22 and make them aware. Truthfully, I had no idea if
23 I have vacancies on my NDA and I'm about as on top
24 of it as most, right? I mean, I made sure they
25 were filled a long time ago, but I haven't heard

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 23
DEVELOPMENT

2 in five years at least about whether or not I have
3 any vacancies. So I think maybe a little more
4 outreach would be good and, hopefully, we'll have,
5 you know, the NDAs will be full and they'll have
6 money to spend, so we'll have full funding and
7 full participation.

8 JOE CATRAMBONE: Yeah, I'll make
9 sure you get all the information, thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you.
11 And I guess the only really significant question I
12 have for you is, so what are we doing about it?
13 What is the City doing to lobby on behalf of CSBG?
14 You know, you know the Mayor has some serious
15 clout in Washington, he certainly has
16 relationships with our Congressional delegation, I
17 think he may even be able to get the President of
18 the United States on the phone. What are we
19 doing?

20 SUZANNE LYNN: Well the City
21 actually has been very supportive of CSBG. In
22 years past, the Mayor has signed letters in
23 support of CSBG, as well as CDBG, which is sort of
24 a sister program. Last month, Commissioner
25 Mullgrav traveled to Washington and met with

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 24
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 members of the New York Congressional Delegation
4 to talk specifically about CSBG. And, as I said
5 in my testimony, we just completed a series of
6 five borough-wide meetings in partnership with
7 advocacy organizations, some of which are here
8 today, to really educate the public about all of
9 the programs funded through CSBG, and I believe
10 you'll be hearing more about those borough-wide
11 meetings in other testimony. But the Washington
12 legislative office is working closely with us and
13 we will be doing whatever we can to express the
14 City's and the Mayor's support for CSBG.

15 [Off mic]

16 SUZANNE LYNN: I wish I had that
17 crystal ball, Council Member, but I don't.

18 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I didn't think
19 you--

20 [background noise]

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: We've been
22 joined by Council Member Cabrera.

23 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Right. Just a
24 couple of questions, Commissioner. Before I
25 forget, you mentioned 200 organizations that are
receiving funding, is that list available of those

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 25
DEVELOPMENT

2 organizations, you make that--

3 SUZANNE LYNN: [Interposing]

4 Absolutely.

5 CHAIRPERSON VANN: --available to--

6 SUZANNE LYNN: [Interposing] We can
7 get that to you, if you'd like.

8 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Very good, thank
9 you. You know, since funding can be used by
10 localities for a variety services as long as it
11 serves low-income people?

12 SUZANNE LYNN: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON VANN: How does the
14 department target, effectively target low-income
15 communities with CSBG money?

16 SUZANNE LYNN: Well what we have
17 done is in the last two NDA RFPs, the neighborhood
18 development area RFPs, we have actually defined
19 the 43 lowest income areas in New York City using
20 census, the most recently available census data,
21 and what we've done is we, in years past, in the
22 2004 and then the 2007 RFP, we looked at census
23 data from 2000 by census tract, and we counted up
24 the number of people living at or below the
25 federal poverty level and then we counted those

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 26
DEVELOPMENT

2 numbers and then what we did was we created a ring
3 of census tracts around those that had the highest
4 number of people living in poverty, and on that
5 basis, we determined which were the areas of
6 greatest concentrations of poverty throughout the
7 city. And then the NDA RFP that I talked about,
8 the NDA initiative that I talked about, is used
9 for funding in those areas.

10 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. Yeah,
11 that's good, that's a good answer. How does the
12 community action board really help you, assist you
13 in the administration of the funding, CSBG
14 funding?

15 SUZANNE LYNN: Well we have a
16 citywide community action board, it's made up of
17 45 members and as per federal law, they are
18 divided into three categories: Representatives of
19 elected officials, representatives of the private
20 sector, and representatives of the poor, that's
21 the term that is used in the federal law. And to
22 determine the representatives of the poor, we have
23 regional gatherings of our neighborhood advisory
24 boards and they elect representatives to the CAB.

25 [Crosstalk]

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 27
DEVELOPMENT

2 SUZANNE LYNN: And, yes, so there
3 are 45 members of that board, they meet five times
4 a year--or is it six?

5 [Off mic]

6 SUZANNE LYNN: It's every ten
7 weeks, they meet every ten weeks, and they give
8 us--they give DYCD overall policy guidance. Their
9 work takes place, not only at the full board
10 meetings, but we have a series of committees,
11 including a program committee, that meets
12 regularly and we get advice and counsel from the
13 members around the policy directions for our
14 programming.

15 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. Can you
16 tell me a little bit about the families, how many
17 participating families are at or below the poverty
18 guidelines, any other?

19 SUZANNE LYNN: I'm sorry?

20 [crosstalk]

21 SUZANNE LYNN: In what way?

22 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Any demographic
23 information that the agency used that deal with
24 the participating families that benefit from DYCD
25 funding, programming funding?

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 28
DEVELOPMENT

2 SUZANNE LYNN: I'm sorry,
3 Councilman, I didn't hear the first part of your
4 question.

5 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. Would you
6 share any demographic information that the agency
7 has available on participating families that
8 benefit from DYCD programming funds that--

9 SUZANNE LYNN: [Interposing] We
10 have demographic information that is collected in
11 our database as a matter of course during the
12 regular course of business and we can certainly
13 share with you whatever demographic information
14 you think is relevant, I'm not sure exactly what--

15 [Crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON VANN: [Interposing]
17 Well for instance, how many are at or below
18 federal poverty guidelines? Is that something
19 that--

20 SUZANNE LYNN: [Interposing] Okay.
21 Well actually I'm going to let Assistant
22 Commissioner Colter answer this question.

23 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Sure.

24 CINDY COLTER: Assistant
25 Commissioner Cindy Colter and I oversee the CSBG

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 29
DEVELOPMENT

2 funding at DYCD.

3 We collect that information
4 regularly and we report on an annual report to the
5 state and we could get that information available,
6 we have all those--that demographic information.

7 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Thank you,
8 appreciate that. What's the competitive process
9 for applying for CSBG funding, what is the
10 competitive process, how does that work?

11 SUZANNE LYNN: Well CSBG funding,
12 as I said in my testimony, it's made up--basically
13 the programming is divided into half of--roughly
14 half of it goes into the neighborhood development
15 area initiative. We've had two RFPs since we've
16 been at DYCD, in 2004 and 2007, and we're looking
17 at doing another RFP, hopefully soon. And the
18 other programs that I talked about are citywide
19 initiatives, that is the Fatherhood program, the
20 Adolescent Literacy program, and the Immigrant
21 Services Initiative. Those are all citywide
22 programs and they each have a separate RFP.

23 The Immigrant Services RFP came out
24 last year and we are in the first year of
25 programming for Immigrant Services. The

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 30
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 Fatherhood program RFP came out--

4 FEMALE VOICE: This is the first
5 year of it.

6 SUZANNE LYNN: --okay, also last
7 year so we're in the first year of services for
8 that as well. And the Adolescent Literacy RFP--
9 Richard, do you remember when that--

10 [Crosstalk]

11 CINDY COLTER: --adolescent. I
12 think we're on the third year of that one.

13 RICHARD: No, I'm not--

14 [Crosstalk]

15 SUZANNE LYNN: Okay. We're not
16 sure what--we're either in the second or third
17 year of Adolescent Literacy.

18 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. There's
19 something called the Results Outcome Management
20 and Accountability Outcome Reporting System, what
21 is that?

22 SUZANNE LYNN: I'm going to let
23 Assistant Commissioner Colter answer that.

24 CINDY COLTER: Okay. ROMA, it's
25 known as ROMA, is the outcome reporting system for
all CSBG agencies across the United States, so an

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 31
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 outcome might be gets a job and all the agencies
4 that receive CSBG funding will report on that ROMA
5 category. We take our outcomes in at DYCD and
6 translate them into ROMA outcomes and report to
7 the state on that. The categories are individual
8 self-sufficiency, family's overcome poverty,
9 increasing capacity in communities, vulnerable
10 people have greater opportunities, see, they're
11 rather general categories, then we take our
12 specific outcomes, translate them into those
13 general categories, and report to the state.

14 CHAIRPERSON VANN: So how are we
15 doing?

16 CINDY COLTER: We're doing very
17 well.

18 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Give me an
19 example.

20 CINDY COLTER: I think at this
21 point--and the numbers aren't in, but say in our
22 youth programs we had about a 50% in the middle
23 school youth program, a 50% outcome rate for youth
24 that had improved in their academic performance at
25 least three points, or one grade point average.
This is for this year and we don't have all the

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 32
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 outcomes in yet, so it'll probably be even higher.

4 SUZANNE LYNN: I can actually give
5 you some outcomes for the Immigrant Services
6 program. This year, we've had 31% of youth
7 enrolled in the legal services for immigrants
8 achieving a positive outcome, that may not sound
9 very high, but if you understand the nature of the
10 program services, that's actually quite
11 impressive. The 51% of all immigrant adults and
12 youth who got services through legal services for
13 immigrants achieved a positive outcome, and in the
14 NDA initiative overall, 50% of all participants in
15 the programs achieved some positive outcome.

16 CHAIRPERSON VANN: What does the
17 state do with this report and how do you use this
18 data, how does it help the program--

19 [Crosstalk]

20 SUZANNE LYNN: [Interposing] Well
21 we run a CSBG in a spirit of continuous
22 improvement so we are always looking at the
23 outcomes, making sure that the outcomes that we've
24 come up with actually reflect the goals of the
25 program, these are what we really want to achieve,
we're always interrogating and making sure that

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 33
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 the goals that we have set are realistic, that
4 they're high enough to be challenging, but not so
5 high as to be unrealistic, and we're always
6 looking to see whether, you know, these are--the
7 nature of--and there's a complex calculus that
8 goes into that because some programs are more
9 difficult to run than others. So let's say for
10 instance, the Legal Services for Immigrant Youth
11 involves a lot of services that can take place
12 over many months, so the outcomes may not seem
13 high, but if you take into account that it can
14 take many months and maybe even more than a year
15 to achieve an outcome, the outcomes look very
16 reasonable.

17 What the state with the--and we
18 report quarterly, as well as annually, to the
19 state on our progress towards our outcomes. What
20 the state, in turn, does is report these outcomes
21 and the state is overlooking 52 community action
22 agencies throughout New York state, they will in
23 turn report this to the federal government.

24 And so HHS is the federal agency
25 that oversees the Community Services Block Grant.

CHAIRPERSON VANN: All right.

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 34
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 Thank you. I think you mentioned a figure of 16
4 million that goes into the NDA?

5 SUZANNE LYNN: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON VANN: How do you
7 determine how much goes to each individual NDA,
8 what's the basis of that distribution?

9 SUZANNE LYNN: Well what we do is
10 we--as I said earlier, when we determine which are
11 the low--the concentrations of poverty that become
12 the basis for the NDAs, we count up the number of
13 poor people in each of these, and then what we do
14 is we take the proportion in an individual NDA of
15 poor people to--in relationship to the total
16 number of people living in poverty in the city,
17 and then the funding is allocated based on that
18 number. So an NDA with a comparatively fewer
19 number of poor people is going to get a smaller
20 allocation than an NDA with comparatively, a
21 larger proportion of the city's poor.

22 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. So a
23 formula based on poverty actually. And finally,
24 there's a proposed 50% cut, which is why we're
25 here dealing with the resolution, how are you
preparing for that? How will it affect the

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 35
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 employment, how will it affect lost programs of--
4 what are you doing to avoid it?

5 SUZANNE LYNN: Well right now I
6 think we're really focused on trying to maintain
7 support for CSBG, that's why we've done--we've
8 participated in these borough-wide meetings,
9 that's why the commissioner went down to
10 Washington, we're working with the Washington
11 legislative office. So I think all of our energy
12 right now is dedicated to combating some of the
13 myths about CSBG that are out there that undermine
14 support for it, such as that it's not a program
15 that's accountable. I mean, your last series of
16 questions really talks to the fact that we, you
17 know, that we are accountable. And so that's a
18 myth that we need to really counteract. We also
19 need to combat the low profile of CSBG because it
20 doesn't have a distinct profile because it's many
21 programs, and so we need to do a really good job
22 of raising its public profile.

23 So it's really too early to ask us
24 what we would do in the event of a 50% cut because
25 it's not only about, you know, as several of--you
know, as you, yourself have made note of, the

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 36
DEVELOPMENT

2 proposal is not only to cut CSBG by 50%, but to
3 subject the remaining 50% to a competitive process
4 so, therefore, it's not like we're looking at, oh,
5 now we'll be get--you know, if this proposal
6 passes, we'll be getting 50% of what we've had
7 before, we don't know what we might get because if
8 it's subjected to a competition, we don't know how
9 we might do in a competition, there's much more
10 uncertainty attached to it.

11 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Chairman, open
12 it up?

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you. I
14 believe Council Member Gonzalez has a question,
15 followed by Council Member Cabrera.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Thank
17 you, Chairs. Good morning--

18 SUZANNE LYNN: Good morning.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: --
20 Commissioner, how are you doing? First of all, I
21 want to congratulate DYCD on the work do with the
22 children in our city, thank you so much, and
23 people in our city. Thank you so much.

24 SUZANNE LYNN: Thank you.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Now with

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 37
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 the understanding, let's just say, for me anyway,
4 that this is going to come through full force,
5 community grant is going to come through, the
6 question I have is because adult literacy is one
7 of my passions and my love, would you consider in
8 the areas that you work with--adolescent literacy
9 and adult literacy--or in reviewing and doing--
10 looking at outcomes and so on and so forth moving
11 towards the future, there's a real influx of
12 immigrants in the city of New York so the numbers
13 have changed drastically. Is there any thought to
14 possibly changing and increasing the funding in
15 respect to this grant for these services?

16 SUZANNE LYNN: Well as I said, we
17 are always interrogating our CSBG programming,
18 it's something that we're always looking at to
19 make sure that we are being responsive to the
20 priority needs of low-income New Yorkers. Having
21 said that, so we're always open to input about
22 whether we're allocating our money in the best
23 possible way, however, that said, I will point out
24 that quite a bit of CSBG right now does go to
25 immigrants, a lot of it does go for ESOL services.
We're very proud of that because there are very

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 38
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 few dedicated funding streams that are targeted
4 specifically at immigrants, and we're proud of the
5 programming in that and we--but we're always open
6 to more feedback and, you know, we will certainly
7 take any comments you have in this area under
8 advisement.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Thank
10 you. And then I just want to ask, are you often
11 or who often speaks to the Washington legislative
12 office in respect to this? Is there, you know, I
13 just was wondering about that.

14 SUZANNE LYNN: Oh, well Andrew
15 Miller is our external--

16 [Crosstalk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: --Andrew.

18 SUZANNE LYNN: --affairs director
19 and he is in regular contact with the--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Okay.

21 SUZANNE LYNN: --Washington
22 legislative office.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Thank
24 you, Chairs.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you
to the chairs. Welcome. I just have two brief

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 39
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 questions. Do you have a breakdown as to how many
4 of the people that are serviced through this
5 funding, do you have a breakdown by borough?

6 SUZANNE LYNN: Absolutely.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And can
8 you--

9 [Crosstalk]

10 SUZANNE LYNN: [Interposing] But
11 understand that we have a borough-wide breakdown
12 in terms of the NDA initiative. Our citywide
13 initiatives, however, are really truly citywide
14 initiatives. So Fatherhood, Immigrant Services,
15 and Adolescent Literacy are not necessarily funded
16 in a borough-wide way, there may be areas in
17 neighborhoods that are targeted, but that's
18 different from a borough-wide analysis.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yeah, and
20 that's why I didn't--

21 SUZANNE LYNN: [Interposing] I
22 mean, in other words, we could count up--what we
23 could do is certainly count up the number of CBOs
24 in a given borough and count up the amount of
25 money, but that would not necessarily reflect a
conscious decision on our part around whether this

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 40
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 borough gets X amount of money.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yeah, I
5 specifically didn't ask how many community
6 organizations are getting funded 'cause I
7 understand some of them operate at one borough
8 this service citywide, but what I'm interested to
9 know is how many people per borough receive
10 services as a direct result of the funding.

11 SUZANNE LYNN: Well we certainly
12 for our community--the borough-wide community
13 meetings that I was talking about earlier, we
14 actually went into our database and we counted up
15 the total number of people served per borough and
16 we told the people who came to those meetings what
17 the totals were. So if you want the total number
18 of people served per borough, we've got that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Can you
20 share those?

21 SUZANNE LYNN: Yeah, absolutely we
22 can.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yeah, can
24 you share with us what--

25 [Crosstalk]

[Interposing] Oh, I

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 41
DEVELOPMENT

2 don't have the PowerPoint slides--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Oh, okay.

4 SUZANNE LYNN: --with me right now-

5 -

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay.

7 SUZANNE LYNN: --but they were--you
8 know, we can certainly share what we shared at the
9 community borough-wide meetings.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And my
11 second question, I notice here Summer Youth
12 Employment Program--

13 SUZANNE LYNN: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: --is the
15 Administration--let's suppose we don't get fully
16 funded by the federal government as we will hope--

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I just asked
18 this question.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Oh, okay.
20 I figured you will ask that, Mr. Chair, I
21 apologize, so I retract my question. Thank you so
22 much. All right, thank you, thank you, and keep
23 up the great work.

24 SUZANNE LYNN: Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. Any

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 42
DEVELOPMENT

2 other members with a question? If not, thank you,
3 Deputy Commissioner, we appreciate your testimony,
4 we know that there's a lot of work going on at
5 DYCD and I will say that I expect that we're going
6 to be shoving a lot of money back in your
7 direction in the next couple of days. I know
8 it'll be well spent. Please give our best to the
9 commissioner.

10 SUZANNE LYNN: Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. All
12 right. We have a number of people who want to
13 testify, as I did indicate, because we have so
14 much going on here budget-wise, we are going to
15 have to be as quick as possible so we're going to
16 set a three-minute clock on each witness, I ask
17 you to be respectful of that. Again, remind you
18 to resist the temptation to stray off the topic,
19 I'm not going to allow that. I'm going to call
20 people up in panels.

21 The first panel is Sandy Myers,
22 Sharon Mosher, and Kathy Fitzgibbons from Save
23 CSBG NYC.

24 SANDY MYERS: Is this on? Yeah,
25 okay.

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 43
DEVELOPMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: You call three
3 people, I see four.

4 SANDY MYERS: Four.

5 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. Someone
6 did not fill out a slip.

7 SANDY MYERS: All four names should
8 be on there, but I apologize.

9 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Oh, sorry, we
10 stuck--

11 SANDY MYERS: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --another name
13 in.

14 SANDY MYERS: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Ms. Hamilton,
16 okay. I'm sorry.

17 SANDY MYERS: Sure, well thank you
18 for the opportunity--

19 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: All right.

20 SANDY MYERS: --to testify. My
21 name is Sandy Myers, I'm from UJA Federation of
22 New York and part of the Save CSBG New York City
23 Coalition. My other colleagues will introduce
24 themselves, but we are all members of this
25 coalition. We'd like to thank Chair Fidler and

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 44
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 Chair Vann for the opportunity to testify and for
4 considering this resolution.

5 So as representatives from DYCD
6 mentioned, the coalition held a series of five
7 meetings throughout the month of April and May
8 where we partnered with a whole range of
9 community-based organizations and advocacy
10 partners represented by the folks up here where we
11 had DYCD present about CSBG and the programs that
12 it facilitates and the advocacy partners
13 encouraged folks to get involved in advocacy and
14 contacting their elected representatives and
15 signing petitions and whatnot. We had great
16 turnout, a lot of the meetings had upwards of 500
17 people, also people were very engaged, we heard a
18 lot of very passionate testimony from individuals
19 who are participants in these programs, and we
20 were able to engage them in advocacy.

21 In the next few months we will
22 continue with that, we are still figuring out what
23 next steps we want to take, but we have had great
24 success in the last few months and we look forward
25 to working with the Council and future advocacy.

And I will hand it over to my

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 45
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 colleagues to speak a little bit more about the
4 cuts and others.

5 SHANA MOSNER: Great, thanks,
6 Sandy. My name is Shana Mosner, I'm with the
7 Human Services Council, and as you all know, the
8 Obama Administration has proposed a 50% cut for
9 fiscal year 2013 to the CSBG funding. If this cut
10 is realized here in New York City, I mean, we
11 stand to lose up to \$31.9 million. As we all
12 know, there was also a 50%--

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Speak more
14 closely into the mic.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Speak into the
16 mic, please.

17 SHANA MOSNER: Sorry. Is that
18 better?

19 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Yeah.

20 SHANA MOSNER: Okay. Apologies.
21 We've also seen a 50% cut since that was proposed
22 last year to the \$677 million.

23 As DYCD testified earlier, they are
24 the conduit which administers the CSBG funding for
25 programs like Adult Literacy, Immigrant Support
Services, the Fatherhood initiative, many after

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 46
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 school programs, healthy families, senior
4 services, and housing assistance programs.

5 In 2012, DYCD allocated funding to
6 all of the above-mentioned programs and, as we all
7 know, this year for 2013, that funding is more
8 critical than ever. We're seeing cuts in many
9 programs, specifically after school. And as we
10 were able to see through our borough-wide
11 meetings, many of these after school programs are
12 lifelines for many families across the city. And
13 with additional cuts to CSBG, many families will
14 either have to leave their jobs, and these after
15 school programs provide supports for those
16 families to stay employed, or any parents may have
17 to choose to leave their children at home. So as
18 I said, those programs are very important for
19 families in the city and are a critical piece of
20 the safety net here in New York.

21 So I'll turn it over to--

22 [background noise]

23 GLENDEAN HAMILTON: My name is
24 Glendean Hamilton, I represent United Neighborhood
25 Houses.

In line with its mission to

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 47
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 alleviate poverty and empower individuals, CSBG
4 funding is especially critical to adult literacy
5 services provided within New York City. In fact,
6 in fiscal year 2012, DYCD's Adult Literacy RFP
7 entirely \$2 million of it in federal funding, with
8 nearly \$500,000 of it and 25% of that allocation
9 comprised of CSBG funding. Federal funding stood
10 as the sole source of DYCD's adult literacy
11 programming until City Council acted to restore \$1
12 million in city tax level funding.

13 Adult Basic Education, English
14 Speakers of Other Languages, and GED preparation
15 are vital components to the City's strategy to
16 develop a skilled workforce and engaged citizenry.
17 Currently, New York City is home to a staggering
18 1.2 million people who are out of school and
19 without high school credentials. Adult literacy
20 programs have the power to increase their median
21 wages and the city's tax base, with 2012 census
22 data revealing that those who obtain a high school
23 diploma and a GED earn 25% more than those without
24 said credential. Adult literacy is also
25 invaluable for our city's children, given the fact
that parental education levels and teacher--

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 48
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 engagement with teachers are the strongest
4 indicator of whether or not a child will be raised
5 in poverty and succeed in school.

6 Unfortunately, the Mayor's
7 Executive Budget for fiscal year 2013, it contains
8 no city funding for DYCD's adult literacy
9 programs, which, again, magnifies the importance
10 of federal CSBG funding to provide these critical
11 services to disadvantaged New York City
12 communities.

13 And I'll turn it over.

14 KATHY FITZGIBBONS: Thank you.

15 Good morning, I'm Kathy Fitzgibbons from the
16 Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.

17 By providing critical services to
18 our most vulnerable populations, CSBG enables New
19 Yorkers to overcome poverty and social immobility.
20 It's a lifeline for 30,000 New York families:
21 1,350 men participate in the fatherhood programs
22 and 5,500 youth are enrolled in education support
23 systems, 5,700 immigrants receive citizenship
24 education.

25 Now more than ever, New York's
youth and adults need to access further education,

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 49
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 our seniors need safe and appropriate housing, and
4 our families need substance abuse and HIV/AIDS
5 support services. They need these array of
6 services. Eliminating CSBG funds takes away from
7 those who cannot afford to lose our help; it
8 strips our citizens of the tools they need to be
9 economically, socially, and politically
10 independent.

11 While the importance of CSBG is
12 undeniable to the aforementioned programs in our
13 city and the Save CSBG Coalition strongly supports
14 the City Council in calling on the New York State
15 Congressional Delegation and the President to
16 preserve this funding, it's important to note that
17 the City should always seek first to make
18 appropriate investments in serving its vulnerable
19 population. The coalition commends the Council
20 for acting to safeguard this crucial funding and
21 looks forward to the Council's continued
22 leadership in restoring the base City funding on
23 which CSBG is layered.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Any questions
from any colleagues? I want to thank you for your

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 50
DEVELOPMENT

2 testimony and for your advocacy [background noise]

3 CSBG, keep it up and--

4 [background noise]

5 KATHY FITZGIBBONS: Thank you.

6 SANDY MYERS: Thank.

7 CHAIRPERSON VANN: We've been
8 joined by Council Member Diana Reyna to my--

9 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Oh.

10 CHAIRPERSON VANN: --extreme left.

11 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thanks. We
12 have a large contingency here from Coney Island,
13 I'm going to break you up into two panels and call
14 one of you now and one of you a little bit later,
15 try and be fair to everybody. Igor Kupershmit,
16 Ira Strizhevekd--I hope I got that right--and
17 Larisa Peidi, that's the first panel.

18 [Off mic]

19 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Three at a
20 time.

21 PAUL VAYSBERG: And they need a
22 interpreter.

23 [Crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: They need an
25 interpreter, oh well, I don't believe we have one.

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 51
DEVELOPMENT

2 PAUL VAYSBERG: Oh, you have

3 Russian--

4 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I don't--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: He's telling

6 you--

7 [Crosstalk]

8 PAUL VAYSBERG: From Russian to

9 English.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]

11 Are you going to interpret? Okay.

12 PAUL VAYSBERG: Yes, I believe I

13 can.

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay.

15 PAUL VAYSBERG: Who would you like

16 to start from?

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: The three that

18 I called.

19 PAUL VAYSBERG: Igor--

20 [Crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]

22 Yes, the three that I called, please.

23 [Foreign language]

24 PAUL VAYSBERG: You know, his wife

25 will testify for him because he's not--

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 52
DEVELOPMENT

2 [Crosstalk]

3 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. All
4 right, all right, we got you all up here, let's
5 go. All right, we'll do it. I appreciate that
6 you came here from Coney Island, so I'm sure
7 Councilman Recchia appreciates it too.

8 [Foreign language]

9 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Just identify
10 yourself before you--

11 [Crosstalk]

12 ELENA STRIZHEVEKD: [Interposing]
13 We are here in America--

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: We have to
15 start--

16 ELENA STRIZHEVEKD: --for one year
17 and a half.

18 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: We have to
19 start with a name.

20 [Foreign language]

21 ELENA STRIZHEVEKD: In two months
22 after our--

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Hello?

24 ELENA STRIZHEVEKD: --arrival in
25 the United States--

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 53
DEVELOPMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]

3 Excuse me, excuse me, we have to start with her
4 name.

5 PAUL VAYSBERG: Oh, I'm sorry.

6 ELENA STRIZHEVEKD: My name is
7 Elena Strizhevekd [phonetic]. We arrived year and
8 a half in the United States of America as
9 immigrants, and after two months after our arrival
10 into this country, our son who was living here, he
11 died. We were left here without any relatives and
12 friends and we just could not know how to live
13 next.

14 And the only organization that
15 could help us, it was Shorefront Family Service
16 and the workers of this Shorefront help us to live
17 and sustain our life here. We have to apply for
18 any our questions to the workers of this
19 organization and we are always getting
20 understanding from their side and their desire to
21 help us.

22 They take seriously and closely
23 individual needs of the people and our personal
24 and they take our problems very seriously, and we
25 have a lot of them. Unfortunately, our age does

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 54
DEVELOPMENT

2 not allow us, I am 76 years old, my husband is 80
3 years old, we cannot learn English, it's hard for
4 us and Shorefront help us to translate any
5 official letters and apply and help us to apply
6 any forms and connect to organization that provide
7 us with a living. And apartment question is very
8 important for us and without help of Shorefront
9 organization, we were not able to get application
10 and to get Section 8 program.

11 It's hard to embrace all the scope
12 of the questions which arise into our everyday
13 life. We are in a very needy situation, we just
14 cannot overestimate the help of the Shorefront
15 organization in our life. We just cannot imagine
16 our life without this organization. For us, it's
17 the happiness. And until the organization exist,
18 we are existing.

19 Thank you for your attention.

20 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Foreign
21 language] Next?

22 PAUL VAYSBERG: Who should be next?

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Whoever you
24 want. That's, you know, start with his name.

25 IGOR BROZGOL: My name is Igor

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 55
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 Brozgol. I'm with my wife arrived in America in
4 2003. Here in America, we are already for nine
5 years. From our first day in life here in
6 America, all help that we need we receive from the
7 Shorefront organization. Such questions as green
8 card, citizenship, during first our year and a
9 half, thanks due to help of this organization, we
10 got help with a reunion of our family. And during
11 those years, our family was reunited.

12 Without help of Shorefront, it
13 happens that we are not able to master English--we
14 won't, but we can't due to our age--this
15 organization help us constantly in consideration
16 of any our life sustaining questions. During all
17 those years, these years, I don't remember even
18 one case that I was denied in my needs. All
19 questions or problems, without any exceptions,
20 were solved timely and without any mistakes.

21 We are just not cannot imagine
22 without help of this organization how to continue
23 our life. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Before you
25 continue, I want to acknowledge that Councilman
Koppell has joined us. I need you to identify

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 56
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 yourself for the record as well. You didn't give
4 us your name.

5 PAUL VAYSBERG: My name personally,
6 right? My name is Paul Vaysberg, I arrived as an
7 immigrant into this country 14 years ago, I was
8 the happiest person with big hopes, and my full
9 four first years in this country was just
10 glorious. I was 100% healthy person, I was a
11 mechanical design engineer and I managed to join
12 the family of American engineers. My first
13 working place was in Connecticut, Norwalk, with a
14 company original mechanical design of the
15 machines.

16 After two years, I was promoted and
17 I moved to city of Poughkeepsie, New York state.
18 And so as I said, four glorious years. And then
19 suddenly disaster struck me. I was attacked by a
20 group of teenagers, beaten, and then soon I got my
21 first stroke which affected my eyesight, I became
22 partially blind. So without any hope to continue
23 my work as an engineer and just without having the
24 possibility to use computer in my--with any job,
25 not just in engineering job, my inability to drive
a car anymore moved me to Brooklyn, the only New

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 57
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 York City, the only place when person can live
4 without having a car.

5 Then--yes--then in two months, I
6 got my second stroke, which affected completely
7 left side of my body. So if only you can imagine,
8 just in one morning, you're partially blind
9 without one hand, without leg, without having an
10 ability just to stand. So four month I spent in
11 medical and rehabilitation facilities. The brain
12 surgery was performed on me thanks to doctors.
13 But then I was discharged from rehabilitation
14 facility in a wheelchair, barely able to stand.

15 I was discharged to my home to live
16 on my own, I was single, I am single, to live in
17 my home in my studio apartment in Brooklyn. I was
18 struggling for more than a year to get home
19 attendant service, to get food stamps, any
20 support. I paid from my savings for pay for rent
21 deals and so on, and this is it. For more than a
22 year, I was struggling and struggling and bouncing
23 around from one phone number to another phone
24 number, from one organization to another.

25 And then somebody told me, you
know, you should apply to Shorefront for help. In

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 58
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 a week, after social worker from Shorefront
4 visited me, homebound person, in a week from her
5 visit, I had home attendant service, 12 hours a
6 day 7 days a week. Then back then it was eight
7 years ago, then in maybe two weeks, I got food
8 stamps and then little by little my life started
9 to come back but I developed very heavy
10 depression, I was suicidal, not just thinking
11 about suicide, I was committing. Thanks to the
12 Lord, he prevented me from committing suicide.
13 Panic attacks.

14 I tried maybe five, seven different
15 psychiatrists, nobody could help me. And then I
16 found about from a friend of mine, I found the
17 [off mic] great doctor, and when I called to the
18 doctor, he told me, you know, I just cannot accept
19 your Medicaid, I do not accept. And then social
20 worker from Shorefront, I don't know how she
21 managed to talk the doctor into accepting me as a
22 patient. So right now, my depression, my panic
23 attacks are under control.

24 Then Section 8 program, I would
25 never have learned about this wonderful program.
Shorefront filled out the application. But it's

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 59
DEVELOPMENT

2 not the end of the story--

3 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]

4 Let me ask you a question, I was--

5 PAUL VAYSBERG: Yes, yeah, yes, go-

6 -

7 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --listening to
8 all of this testimony, which--

9 PAUL VAYSBERG: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --is very
11 compelling, I assume the one thing that hasn't
12 been mentioned is that Shorefront is providing
13 these services with CSBG funding?

14 PAUL VAYSBERG: I believe so, I
15 believe so--

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay.

17 PAUL VAYSBERG: --because--

18 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Because that's
19 what the hearing today is about, CSBG funding--

20 [Crosstalk]

21 PAUL VAYSBERG: [Interposing] But
22 we were told that this organization is about to be
23 eliminated, so we are just scared to death.

24 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: But I--

25 PAUL VAYSBERG: We are scared to

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 60
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 death.

4 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --as we
5 discussed before the hearing, I told you that
6 we're discussing today only the resolution before
7 the Council on the Community Services Block Grant
8 funding, so I'm going to permit--

9 PAUL VAYSBERG: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --the rest of
11 the witnesses to testify briefly, but please--

12 PAUL VAYSBERG: Well I am sorry for
13 being--

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --please--

15 [Crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: No, I
17 understand, and everything you've had to say is
18 very compelling and--

19 PAUL VAYSBERG: Yes, it's very
20 important.

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I wanted to
22 give everyone an opportunity to be heard, but--

23 [Crosstalk]

24 PAUL VAYSBERG: [Interposing] You
25 see, for us, this idea to cut this services is
just barbaric idea--

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 61
DEVELOPMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And well--

3 PAUL VAYSBERG: --just barbaric.

4 For us, it's--

5 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I think the-

6 -we're--

7 PAUL VAYSBERG: [Interposing] I'm
8 sorry, maybe I was too-

9 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I have to
10 tell you, that those--

11 PAUL VAYSBERG: --emotional.

12 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --those
13 Council Members from Brooklyn, at least those are
14 from southern Brooklyn are very well aware of the
15 Shorefront Y and the great services that--

16 PAUL VAYSBERG: Yes, yes, sir.

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --are
18 providing the critical services that they provide--
19 -

20 PAUL VAYSBERG: Absolutely,
21 absolute.

22 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I know that
23 Council Members Recchia and Nelson and Greenfield
24 are well aware of it, we've been, you know, we are
25 working to do everything we can to make sure that

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 62
DEVELOPMENT

2 those services are--

3 PAUL VAYSBERG: Yes, please.

4 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --provided,
5 all of us on the Council are working to make sure
6 that many of the other programs that are provided
7 through the Shorefront Y, the case management
8 services, and whatnot are restored in the budget,
9 the transportation services, I've gotten the
10 petition--I, even though I do not represent your
11 community, got a petition about the transportation
12 services from members of the Shorefront Y and
13 we're, you know, we're working to restore the
14 services as well. So I want you to know that all
15 of us are working on that very, very seriously
16 and--

17 [Crosstalk]

18 PAUL VAYSBERG: [Interposing] Thank
19 you, thank you, sir. Thank you all of us, ladies
20 and--

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And we
22 appreciate that they're critical to you so--

23 PAUL VAYSBERG: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --if anyone
25 else wishes to testify, that's great, but I'd like

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 63
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 to keep it to the topic of the resolution as much
4 as possible.

5 PAUL VAYSBERG: Okay. So--

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Anybody else?

7 LARISA PEIDI: I can add some more--

8 -

9 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Sure.

10 LARISA PEIDI: --words. My name is
11 Larisa Peidi, I also was forced to seek help in
12 Shorefront. Everything worse started from my
13 depression because when you arrived in the age in
14 another country, you are lost, everything is
15 different. We just don't know laws. And it
16 happened that I arrived with my husband and son,
17 son moved to another state and my husband died,
18 unfortunately, and my depression and all of the
19 problems that overwhelmed me. So beginning from
20 rent stabilization--I don't want to occupy your
21 time, I applied for many times to Shorefront and I
22 want to tell you how wonderful and good-hearted
23 people are working there.

24 And I saw another elderly people
25 with different problems, and I remember a old lady
that applied for help to Shorefront, that Section

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 64
DEVELOPMENT

2 8 suddenly, for some mistakes closed her program
3 and she told that only what she she's left is just
4 to commit suicide because she's very old. And
5 exactly in this cases, Shorefront helps to support
6 our elderly people.

7 And I consider this exactly and
8 this is exactly how I think the social protection
9 of this country should go in this direction.

10 Thank you so much.

11 PAUL VAYSBERG: Thank you very
12 much. Thank you. Thank you.

13 [Crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Does this
15 gentleman wish to testifying as well or?

16 PAUL VAYSBERG: No, that's all.

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. Thank
18 you all for your testimony, I appreciate your
19 coming here, I know it's always an effort, a
20 special effort when you don't speak the language,
21 the English language, I appreciate that. [Foreign
22 language] and have a great day. Thank you.

23 PAUL VAYSBERG: Thank you. Thank
24 you very much.

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. So we

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 65
DEVELOPMENT

2 have one final panel, Michael Lee, Karen, it looks
3 like Cacace, and Aaron Halegua. [Off mic] did not
4 testify.

5 One of you jump in there.

6 MICHAEL LEE: Would you like to go
7 for it?

8 AARON HALEGUA: Sorry [off mic].

9 MICHAEL LEE: Hello everyone, my
10 name is Michael Lee, I'm executive director of
11 Asian Professional Extension, which we're soon
12 renaming to Apex for Youth. I'd like to thank the
13 Council Members for holding this public hearing.

14 Apex for Youth is a 20-year old
15 community-based organization that delivers
16 possibilities to youth from low income immigrant
17 backgrounds by connecting them with professionals
18 who volunteer as their mentors and teachers.
19 Three years ago, Apex was awarded an NDA contract
20 by DYCD to provide after school program to 25 to
21 30 high school students a year at Murry Bergtraum
22 High School for Business Careers. The contract is
23 funded by Community Services Block Grant. The
24 program targets at-risk youth who are either
25 scoring below a 70 in one of their classes or

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 66
DEVELOPMENT

2 currently classified as an English as a second
3 language, or ESL, student. The average SAT score
4 at Murry Bergtraum is 1,246 out of 2,400. The
5 average score of our students last year starting
6 the program was 958. Last year, one-third of the
7 students resided in households where the income is
8 between zero and \$10,000, and 23 are receiving
9 Medicaid and three have no medical insurance. A
10 total of 18 students were recent immigrants from
11 China and 12 were native English speakers.
12 Thirteen males, seventeen females.

13 The program provides SAT test prep,
14 public speaking, and music, jazz classes that help
15 them with career preparation by teaching them
16 improvisation and structure.

17 The success of the program is last
18 year, the program was rated excellent by DYCD,
19 which means it's exemplary and a model for other
20 programs. Eighty-six percent of the students
21 increased their SAT scores by 160 points. All of
22 the students raised their English or math scores
23 by at least three--or English or math grades by at
24 least three points, and 70% of our students
25 enrolled in college, compared with the 43% of the

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 67
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 entire school that usually enrolled in college.
4 On case in particular, David P. participated in
5 our program in 2009-2010. He grew up in the
6 Chinatown area and started the program with a SAT
7 score of 880 out of 2,400. He realized how much
8 work he needed to do to get into school after
9 taking the course and took this SAT several times.
10 He is now a student at the Ivy League school Brown
11 University. You know, if this is not youth
12 empowerment, I don't know what is.

13 I understand these are difficult
14 times and the national deficit's on the mind of
15 many Americans, but when I voted for President
16 Barack Obama and his administration, I thought
17 they stood for not cutting programs that help
18 empower the most needy in our country. And so I'm
19 in favor of the resolution that you are proposing
20 and I welcome to join the City Council in
21 advocating to restore these very important funds.

22 Thank you for permitting me to
23 submit this testimony, and we will look forward to
24 working with all of you.

25 AARON HALEGUA: Good morning,
Chairman Fidler and Members of the Council, my

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 68
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 name is Aaron Halegua, I'm a staff attorney at the
4 Legal Aid Society's Employment Law unit, and I'm
5 here to speak in favor of the proposed resolution.

6 The Legal Aid Society is a not-for-
7 profit public interest law firm that delivers the
8 full range of legal services to low-income
9 individuals in New York City. The Society has
10 local neighborhood offices in all five boroughs,
11 along with centralized citywide law reform,
12 employment law, immigration law, health law, and
13 homeless rights practices. Funds from the
14 Community Services Block Grant program have been
15 instrumental in allowing the Society to provide
16 legal advice, advocacy, and representation to
17 countless New York City residents who desperately
18 need the assistance. In particular, the Society's
19 Employment Law unit and Immigration Law units have
20 received from such funds. Today I will describe
21 just some of the critical services that these
22 units perform for city residents--services that
23 would be placed in jeopardy without this federal
24 funding.

25 The Employment Law unit provides
representation, community education, and advice to

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 69
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 low wage workers regarding employment issues,
4 including, unemployment insurance benefits;
5 minimum wage, overtime, and other wage and hour
6 issues; employment discrimination based on race,
7 national origin, and gender, or other protected
8 categories, based on a person's criminal record,
9 or due to a person's medical or family
10 responsibility issues; and retaliation against
11 whistleblowers or others who complain about unfair
12 or illegal practices at their workplace. Many of
13 these clients represented are immigrants. The
14 Employment Law unit, with one supervising
15 attorney, five staff attorneys, and three
16 paralegals serves the entire city and directly
17 helps thousands of New Yorkers each year by
18 providing advice through its telephone hotline,
19 conducting trainings and outreach at community
20 groups throughout the city, and providing in-
21 person counseling. The unit indirectly assists
22 countless more city residents by providing
23 information about employees' rights in the media,
24 advocacy efforts to make government agencies more
25 accessible to immigrants, and policy advocacy on
behalf of low wage workers.

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 70
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 While the unit assists many
4 individuals each year to settle claims against
5 their employers without resorting to litigation,
6 when necessary, the unit also zealously represents
7 workers either as individual, as classes, or as
8 groups before city, state or federal
9 administrative agencies and the courts.

10 The written testimony that we've
11 submitted highlights some of these cases and we
12 encourage you to read through them to learn about
13 the important work that we're doing. For
14 instance, one case we recently had involved six
15 immigrants from China who were working at a nail
16 salon often paid 20 or \$30 a day, never paid a
17 penny of overtime, and after almost three years of
18 litigation in federal court, we got a verdict for
19 over \$200,000 against the employers for not
20 paying, for retaliating against them after they
21 complained about it. And so finally, some justice
22 will be done, hopefully, in cases like this and
23 other cases that the Society is working on.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you.

We've been joined by Council Member Jumaane

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 71
DEVELOPMENT

2 Williams.

3 KAREN CACACE: Good morning, I'm
4 Karen Cacace, I'm the supervisor for the
5 Employment Law unit at the Legal Aid Society, I'll
6 just continue with one more example from our
7 written testimony, if that's okay.

8 The Employment Law unit has also
9 represented numerous domestic workers who were
10 often trafficked into the United States by their
11 employers, who then pay them far below the minimum
12 wage. In one case, the Society and a pro bono
13 firm serving as co-counsel were able to resolve a
14 lawsuit filed on behalf of two such domestic
15 workers with the workers receiving over--with one
16 worker receiving over 100,000 and the other
17 receiving over \$70,000. The claims in the case
18 were both for minimum wage and overtime and for
19 the trafficking.

20 Then, in conjunction with the
21 Society's immigration unit, we are representing
22 these women in petitions for T-Visas, which
23 provide them with status to stay and work in this
24 country.

25 We also have substantial testimony

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 72
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 in the written testimony about the services that
4 our immigration unit provides. I'll give you just
5 a brief summary of that. The Immigration Law unit
6 at the Legal Aid Society is the only citywide
7 provider of free comprehensive legal services to
8 low-income immigrants in New York City. The unit
9 works collaboratively in all practice areas to
10 serve the Society's diverse immigrant clients
11 through an integrated service model. Unit staff
12 represent immigrants before U.S. Citizenship and
13 Immigration Services, before immigration judges in
14 removal proceedings, in federal court on habeas
15 corpus petitions and petitions for review, and on
16 administrative and judicial appeals. The unit
17 also partners with 14 based community
18 organizations in New York City to provide
19 application assistance, comprehensive advice, and
20 workshops to low income immigrants. In 2011, the
21 unit provided direct legal representation and/or
22 advice in over 4,200 client matters. And there
23 are some specific examples of the success that the
24 immigration unit has had in the testimony.

24 And I would just close by saying
25 that the extensive personal and legal challenges

1 COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 73
2 DEVELOPMENT

3 faced by many of the Society's clients require a
4 significant expenditure of time and resources to
5 provide adequate representation and achieve
6 exceptional outcomes. The Society believes that
7 where a legal remedy exists for a city resident,
8 the individual should not be denied access to that
9 because they cannot afford a competent attorney or
10 any attorney at all. The federal funding in
11 question makes it possible for the Society to have
12 a profound positive impact on these individuals'
13 lives in such situations. Therefore, for the
14 benefit of the residents of this city, we urge
15 that the City Council to adopt this resolution.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you.

18 Does anyone have any questions for this panel?
19 Thank you very much for your testimony and for
20 your advocacy.

21 That concludes our hearing today.

22 Obviously, we have a lot of work to do, we kind of
23 wonder whether or not the folks in Washington are
24 in their right mind when we hear this testimony.
25 Hopefully, the President will come to his senses
and our delegation will stand strong and we will

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COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY 74
DEVELOPMENT

not see a cut in CSBG funds.

And with that, Chairman Vann, do
you have anything you want to say in conclusion?

We are adjourned.

[Gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature *Tammy Wittman*

Date July 19, 2012