



TESTIMONY

TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

GENERAL WELFARE COMMITTEE

HRA PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING

BY STEVEN BANKS

COMMISSIONER

NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

MARCH 17, 2015

I would like to thank the City Council's General Welfare Committee and Chair Stephen Levin for giving us this opportunity to testify today about HRA's budget and our work to move forward with reforms of our policies and procedures.

My name is Steven Banks and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration. Joining me today are HRA's Chief Program Planning and Financial Management Officer Ellen Levine, Executive Deputy Commissioner for Finance Erin Villari, and HRA's Chief of Staff Jennifer Yeaw.

HRA is proud to be in the forefront of the de Blasio's Administration's efforts to address poverty and income inequality. HRA is committed to reforming its policies and procedures to achieve those goals by:

- Helping working families stay in the workforce when their jobs don't pay enough to live on by providing supports such as food aid and cash assistance, public health insurance, and emergency cash assistance and eviction prevention services.
- Aiding those struggling to return to or enter the workforce by providing a variety of employment-related services, including access to education and job skills training, help with job search and placement, and temporary cash assistance.
- Providing a safety net for those permanently or temporarily unable to work.

While most of the public focus tends to be on how many people receive cash assistance, it is important to note that a large number of the New Yorkers receiving some assistance from HRA are already working and that HRA's support helps them remain in the workforce. Living in a very expensive city, low-income workers, who are generally struggling to begin with, can be derailed by a variety of emergencies and unexpected expenses. Among other assistance, HRA provides these key work supports:

- There are 2.5 million New Yorkers receiving Medicaid through HRA and tens of thousands more through the new State health insurance exchange;
- 1.7 million New Yorkers receiving SNAP food assistance and millions of meals served through food pantries and community kitchens;
- 700,000 New Yorkers receiving home energy assistance every winter; and
- 100,000 receiving one-time cash assistance each year to prevent evictions and utility shutoffs or provide assistance with other emergencies.

For all these New Yorkers, these supports can be critical in maintaining employment. Having health insurance means workers can stay healthy and working and avoid the economic disaster that severe illness can impose on those with no insurance. Food and energy assistance, child support, and the Earned Income Tax Credit strengthen households and help families survive on low-income jobs. Emergency Cash Assistance and services to prevent homelessness can also stabilize families and individuals and keep them from losing employment in the face of sudden emergencies. Clearly, efforts aimed at keeping low-income workers in the workforce are much

less expensive and more efficient than having to help New Yorkers return to the workforce, especially after an extended absence.

Among those who do receive cash assistance, half are children, and nearly half of the adults are not subject to work requirements, as they were in prior Administrations, because they are seniors or people with permanent or temporary disabilities who have a barrier to employment.

HRA also helps thousands of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, providing shelter and supportive services to families recovering from the trauma of domestic violence, support for people living with HIV and AIDS, protective services for adults unable to care for themselves and home care services for seniors and individuals with physical or mental disabilities, and legal services to address the harassment of tenants, avert homelessness and help immigrants.

The breadth of our work explains the size of our budget and our staff.

HRA's Staff:

- 14,333 budgeted headcount in FY'16 paid for with a combination of City, State, and federal funds.
- Public servants who choose to work at HRA and help New Yorkers in need. Many dedicating their entire careers to public service.
- A diverse workforce: 70% women, 59% African-American, 18% Hispanic, 15% White, and 8% Asian.
- A unionized workforce with members of 13 different unions.

HRA's Budget:

- As of the February Plan, HRA's budget in FY'15 is \$9.88 billion, of which \$7.63 billion is City tax levy. In FY'16, it is \$9.7 billion, including \$7.56 billion City tax levy.
- The two biggest items in HRA's 2016 budget are:
 - \$6.4 billion for Medicaid, including \$6.3 billion City tax levy, or 66% of the total HRA budget and 84% of the HRA City funds budget.
 - \$1.4 billion, including \$584 million in City funds, for public assistance grants.
- HRA's five year capital budget of \$211 million includes:
 - \$113 million for facilities and construction.
 - \$78 million for information technology, including development related to Benefits Re-engineering, about which I will talk later.
 - \$20 million for telecommunications and other capital projects.

The two pie charts in the power point we have provided to you each show how the percent spending is currently estimated to change from year to year. But please keep in mind that there are still some issues that will not be resolved until the Executive Budget.

Changes to the February Financial Plan for HRA's budget mainly reflect the Administration's comprehensive effort to reduce homelessness, which I will also be discussing in more detail shortly.

The FY'16 budget increased by \$82 million in total funds and \$76 million in City funds in the November and February Plans combined. This includes five items totaling about \$69 million related to reducing or preventing homelessness through rental assistance or eviction prevention efforts. The other item is restoring staff working on the SNAP/food stamps program, which is part of our effort to ensure everyone who qualifies for federal food assistance receives it, which I will also be expanding on later in this testimony.

Now I would like to describe HRA's main new initiatives.

HOMELESSNESS

As part of the de Blasio Administration's effort to reduce homelessness, there has been a substantial expansion of HRA's homelessness prevention services.

- For the first time, HRA has a Homelessness Prevention Administration, bringing together and coordinating all our existing and new programs. It includes the following:
 - Homelessness Diversion Units (HDUs) located at all HRA Job Centers and at DHS' PATH facility are now utilizing new diversion tools that include short-term financial support.
 - HRA is now deploying on-site staff at DHS Homebase offices around the City and at the NYCHA administrative hearings office in addition to staff at the Housing Courts.
 - There is an Early Intervention Outreach Team (EIOT) for outreach to families and individuals in need of legal assistance or emergency rental assistance based on early warning referrals from the Housing Court.
 - Landlords are essential to fighting homelessness, so we created the Landlord Ombudsman Services Unit (LOSU) to address the needs and concerns of landlords and management companies that provide permanent housing for families and individuals receiving public assistance.
 - The Rental Assistance Program was formed to implement the new LINC initiatives.
 - The Legal Assistance Initiatives Program manages all the legal assistance programs that have been consolidated at HRA.

HRA also recently created the Family Independence Administration's Central Rent Processing Unit to centrally process, issue and deliver emergency rental assistance payments to landlords to prevent evictions.

Together with DHS, we continue to work on improving the LINC rental assistance program to make it more effective and ensure it reaches everyone in need. Since DHS Commissioner Taylor and I last testified about the LINC program in January, we have created three new LINC

programs, so there are now a total of six unique LINC programs for homeless New Yorkers. The new programs are:

- LINC IV Rental Assistance for 1,100 Homeless Seniors and for adults receiving SSI, SSD, or veterans disability benefits.
 - \$2.6 million in City funds in FY'15.
 - \$8.7 million City funds in FY'16.
- LINC V Rental Assistance for 1,000 Working Homeless Adults
 - Time limited rental assistance for working, homeless single adults and adult families without minor children
 - \$2.2 million in City funds in FY'15.
 - \$7.1 million in City funds in FY'16.
 - This program includes aftercare for working individuals and adult families to assist with employment and maintaining permanent housing after placement.
- LINC VI Rental Assistance for families with children already in shelter who exit to live with relatives or friends. Funding will be included as part of the Executive budget process.

The budget also includes other LINC related expenses to make the program more effective. These include:

- Landlord Bonus and Enhanced Security Funds: one-time incentive payments for landlords participating in LINC programs and a program to reimburse landlords for potential costs not covered by security deposits or rent grants.
- Broker's Fee for Shelter and HASA Move-Outs: increased broker's fee to one month's rent for families and individuals leaving shelter with LINC rental assistance and HASA clients moving into private apartments. The broker's fee is 15% of the annual rent for lease agreements of one year or more – currently until March 31.
- Enhanced Moving Allowances for Homeless Families: increased furniture allowances and additional funding for moving costs as we project an increase in spending as a result of LINC moves.
- We are also working with HPD to transfer HOME Section 8 funds to HRA to implement a new program to help alleviate homelessness. Subject to approval from HUD, HPD will allocate \$20 million of its Federal HOME grant to HRA for a Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program to move more than 1,200 homeless families out of shelters and into housing beginning in FY'16. This rental assistance will be targeted to families in homeless shelters receiving SSI and Social Security benefits. The program will begin operation this summer.

LEGAL SERVICES

As you know, the Administration has consolidated legal services from DHS, HPD, CJC, and DYCD at HRA in order to enhance coordination and effectiveness.

Contracted services include: anti-eviction, anti-harassment tenant protection, immigration, domestic violence, securing federal benefits, and other legal matters. We are also developing a study of the unmet needs in Housing Court to evaluate what programs will be most effective in preventing homelessness.

- Anti-Eviction Legal Services
 - Baseline increase in FY'15 from \$6.4 million to \$13.5 million.
 - Former DHS contracts focused on preventing homeless shelter entry.
 - Housing Help: nine community contracts; one court-based program.
 - Created new court referral system to ensure high-risk tenants are referred for services.
- Anti-Harassment Tenant Protection Program
 - Announced in the Mayor's State of the City address; \$36 million program when fully operational.
 - For residents currently living in six neighborhoods identified for rezoning and 13 zip codes in and around rezoning areas to:
 - prevent tenant harassment and displacement,
 - keep families and individuals in their homes,
 - maintain affordable housing, and
 - stabilize neighborhoods.
 - HRA received \$5 million in the February Plan to begin the initiative in FY'15; additional funds will be part of the Executive Budget process.
 - To ensure services began immediately in the remainder of FY'15, initial funding was allocated to two legal service providers, LSNY and Legal Aid, which already have citywide anti-eviction contracts.
 - Working together, the two legal service organizations have already set up a hotline for tenants to call if they are low-income and suffering harassment in the designated 13 zip codes.
 - HRA is preparing an RFP and will have new contracts in place by the Fall of 2015.
- Immigration Legal Services include:
 - Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI)
 - Former DYCD program, baselined at \$3.2 million.
 - Outreach, screening, application and legal representation services for immigrants.
 - HRA's RFP will be issued at the end of this month, with new contracts set to begin in FY'16.
 - Immigrant Services
 - Former DYCD program, funded with federal CSBG grant.

- Four service options: legal services, domestic violence and trafficking, youth, and worker's rights.
- HRA will soon issue an RFP, with new contracts set to begin in FY'16.
- Unaccompanied Minors Initiative:
 - \$1 million in City Council discretionary funding with an additional \$800,000 from Robin Hood and New York Community Trust.
- New York Immigrant Family Unification Project:
 - \$4.9 million in City Council discretionary funding.
 - This model program will provide legal representation to 1,000 low-income immigrants facing deportation
- New HRA Program: Federal Disability Benefits Program
 - Creating a new service to complete home-based federal disability benefit applications for homebound clients.
 - In addition, we are creating a new legal services program for clients to obtain federal disability benefits after denials through an Administrative Council review and in some cases appeals to the Federal Courts.
- There are also the number of important legal services contracts, thanks to the Council's FY' 15 discretionary funding, which provide additional services for veterans, domestic violence survivors and the working poor, to prevent evictions, and to address other needs.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SNAP/Food Stamps

During 2014, there were about 1.76 million New York City residents receiving federal SNAP benefits, including more than 650,000 children, and they purchased a total of more than \$3 billion in food. The federal government estimates that every \$1 of food stamp spending generates \$1.80 in economic activity. That means SNAP brought about \$5.4 billion to the City economy, much of it to small businesses in all five boroughs of the City.

Recently, the number of people receiving SNAP benefits has been declining nationally and in New York. That is probably because the improving economy means that some people's earnings have improved and they no longer qualify and because the Congress reduced the SNAP benefit, which makes the benefit less valuable for some people.

The official SNAP participation rate is 77% in New York City, which is a relatively high rate. HRA's own analysis shows that the participation rate among children is approximately 95% but it is closer to 70% for seniors and other adults. So we are not satisfied.

- HRA has a major effort to make enrollment for federal benefits easier.
 - As I mentioned, we are restoring headcount cut by the prior Administration to improve service in our centers.
 - At all but one of the HRA SNAP Centers, clients can use PCs to submit applications.

- Client Service Supervisors have also been placed at designated HRA SNAP Centers to assist clients with accessing services on-site.
- We are seeking a waiver for on-demand SNAP interviews, allowing clients to call at their convenience rather than have to spend days waiting at home for a worker to call.
- We are improving the AccessNYC website to make possible not only applying online, but also recertifying.
- We have put in place interim systems to submit documents to make sure they are not lost – later this year, clients will be able to use a smart phone to submit documents.
- We also have extensive outreach efforts.
 - HRA’s Office of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Outreach Services provided outreach services at more than 1,543 individual community events in FY’14.
 - With the Robin Hood Foundation, Benefits Data Trust and DFTA, we are conducting outreach to 100,000 seniors, 60 and over, who have Medicaid, but not SNAP benefits
 - We are working with NYCHA to identify residents who do not receive SNAP benefits and are likely to qualify for them.
 - In mid-April we will be launching a major outreach campaign and will seek your support in that effort.

HIV/AIDS Services

The HIV/AIDS Services Administration, known as HASA, provides intensive case management services to some of New York City’s most vulnerable residents – persons living with AIDS or clinically symptomatic HIV.

- In order to ensure that HASA clients receive the highest level of care possible, Local Law 49 of 1997 requires an overall staffing ratio of 1:34 for social work staff, which means case workers and supervisors. However, for staff assisting families, the ratio must be 1:25. Until recently, HRA was not meeting the requirements of the Local Law.

- Since HRA is committed to meeting these standards, since April 1, 2014, 40 new HASA case workers have been hired. Additional case workers will be hired this month.
- In addition to the case workers, since April 1, 2014 HASA has added 29 new supervisors and 23 eligibility specialists. Eligibility specialists play an important role in making sure that applications for assistance are processed efficiently and approved benefits are issued in a timely manner.
- HRA will continue to monitor staffing levels at HASA closely to make sure that Local Law 49 vacancies are filled as soon as possible.

30% Rent Cap

- After vigorous advocacy from the Mayor, community organizations and other elected officials, the State passed a new rule in April 2014 providing that eligible persons living with HIV/AIDS will pay only 30% of their earned or unearned income towards rent.
- This new law was implemented on July 1, 2014. Shortly thereafter, more than 7,500 HASA clients received “retro back to April 1st”.

IDNYC

- HRA was honored to be selected as the “back office” for the IDNYC municipal ID card program. The entire IDNYC infrastructure, including the front-facing enrollment staff as well as the back-end review staff and all equipment, sits within HRA. This is why the whole of the IDNYC budget is in HRA.
- In partnership with MOIA and the Mayor’s Office of Operations, HRA issued rules governing the application process and issued Commissioner’s Executive Orders on:
 - Security and confidentiality for applicants’ personal information.
 - Protocol for outside requests for information.
 - Limits on use of duplicate image search technology.
 - Administrative review of application denials.
- As you know, when the card was launched, the good news was that demand far exceeded our expectations – this past weekend, we issued our 50,000th card. Clearly, this is a card that hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers want. The challenging news is that demand far exceeded our expectations. Since then we have substantially increased our capacity.
- Currently operating in 21 locations, including 2 public facing HRA locations.

- HRA support includes: back end application processing, deployment of personnel, procurement and space renovation.

The IDNYC legislation requires quarterly reports to the Council. The first report is due March 31st and will provide you with details about the performance of the program.

ASSISTANCE FOR CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

HRA is implementing significant reforms to provide greater accessibility to clients with disabilities as part of a proposed Settlement that would end nine years of litigation. The class action lawsuit, *Lovely H. v. Eggleston*, filed by The Legal Aid Society in 2005 in the Southern District of New York, alleged that HRA's then-existing programs for clients with disabilities denied them meaningful access to those programs and related services in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). In December 2013, shortly before the scheduled trial, the prior Administration agreed to adjourn the case to permit the parties to proceed with a settlement process. On March 11, 2015, the parties submitted the proposed Settlement for the Court's review and approval.

As a result, HRA will develop and implement policies and procedures and modify programs to provide clients with disabilities meaningful access to our programs and services. Examples include:

- HRA, in conjunction with an expert consultant, will develop tools to assess whether clients need reasonable accommodations as the result of physical and/or mental health limitations or other impairments and then provide the appropriate accommodations, including referrals to HRA's Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment ("WeCARE") program or other services designed to assess and meet the needs of clients with disabilities.
- HRA will provide case management services, based on the needs of the client, in an effort to assist clients with disabilities to maintain their benefits.
- Before taking a negative action for failure to comply with required activities, HRA will review the case to ensure that the client's disability was not a factor in the non-compliance and that reasonable accommodations, if needed, were provided to enable the client to comply with required activities.
- HRA will assist eligible clients to apply for federal disability benefits.
- HRA will develop new training for its staff, including training on disability awareness and effective communication with people with disabilities.
- A community advisory panel will be formed to advise HRA on its policies and practices that affect clients with disabilities.

Even before the settlement, HRA had created a new ADA office with Jennifer Shaoul as Executive Director of Disability Affairs.

- Projects underway include:
 - Developing guidelines and best practices for web and print access.
 - Developing an agency-wide survey to assess systems, training, data collection and policies related to disability issues and reasonable accommodations, including a staff survey.
 - Establishing and building on relationships with various advocacy agencies and community organizations that assist people with disabilities with enrolling in benefits.
 - Developing trainings on reasonable accommodations and disability etiquette.
 - Working within HRA to ensure and support compliance with legal requirements, including the Lovely H. v. HRA settlement.

New LGBTQI Advocacy Office

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Intersex people have been identified as an underserved community, who may be disproportionately likely to live in poverty, and to have difficulty accessing public benefits. To address these client needs, HRA has created a new LGBTQI office with Elana Redfield as Director of LGBTQI Affairs.

- The goals of HRA's LGBTQI work are as follows:
 - Increase awareness and visibility of LGBTQI issues across HRA.
 - Identify, assess and implement solutions to specific obstacles to access and participation for LGBTQI clients in HRA's programs and services.
 - Serve as liaison with CBOs to increase collaboration and transparency regarding LGBTQI issues at HRA.
- Projects underway include:
 - Tracking and resolution of LGBTQI-related complaints.
 - Comprehensive needs assessment for LGBTQI clients, including research and stakeholder surveys, and changes to program areas to allow for increased visibility of LGBTQI issues.

- Coordinating a work group with community-based organizations and advocates that focus on LGBTQI concerns.
- Creating and implementing a training curriculum on LGBTQI issues that will provide both a baseline of knowledge and specific guidance for program areas.
- Developing HRA's day-to-day practices for working with LGBTQI community members, including structural changes in program areas, updates to existing policies and the creation of new resources for staff.

Language and Immigrant Access: Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs

Ensuring that clients and applicants have access no matter what language they speak is a high priority for HRA. The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (ORIA) works collaboratively with HRA's programs to advance language and immigrant access to public benefits.

- Anne Montesano, Executive Director, Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs
- The goals of HRA's Language and Immigrant Access work are as follows:
 - Provide guidance and expertise to HRA program areas to ensure access to services for immigrant and LEP New Yorkers.
 - Ensure that HRA's programs are in compliance with federal, state and local immigrant and language access laws.
 - Work with and support HRA programs to develop and promote policies and tools to help staff provide excellent service to immigrant and LEP New Yorkers.
 - Strengthen relationships with community groups to respond to inquiries and gather feedback on HRA services/programs.
- Projects underway at ORIA include:
 - Answer inquiries from frontline staff making immediate immigrant eligibility determinations and ensure training helps staff make accurate determinations.
 - Continue to build partnerships with immigrant serving CBOs and advocacy groups
 - Collect and analyze Agency and program data pertaining to immigrant and LEP clients and language service provision to determine that clients receive appropriate services.

- Work in partnership with program areas, to maximize client access to bilingual staff at HRA sites throughout the five boroughs
- Collaborate with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs to advance the Mayor’s priorities around immigrant and LEP access

Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety

- As part of the Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, HRA is a member of an interagency effort intended to improve safety and strengthen the community at fifteen (15) targeted NYCHA developments across the City.
- HRA is deploying outreach specialists at each development to meet with residents and provide guidance for benefits enrollment, help in navigating access to emergency services, troubleshoot existing cases with HRA and solicit feedback from the community.
- We currently have a presence in about half of the developments (7 of 15) and we expect to start in the other eight this spring.

Employment Plan

HRA spends approximately \$200 million a year on employment programs. As we have reported previously, every two years, we are required to file with New York State OTDA an employment plan for how we will be using those funds to help our clients. We submitted a new plan last year and it was approved by the State on December 31st. It will take us about two years to replace all of the current contracts and completely implement the new program.

The new Plan reflects a new approach based on these principles:

- **Improving assessments** to address each client’s actual strengths and needs will improve outcomes compared to the prior one-size-fits-all approach that led to one out of every four clients who are reported to have received employment assistance returning to the caseload within 12 months.
- **Maximizing education, training and employment-related services** will open job opportunities and create the basis for building career pathways out of poverty.
- **Eliminating unnecessary punitive and duplicative actions** that lead to preventable negative actions and fair hearings (that subject New York City to potentially \$10 million in financial penalties) will allow staff to focus on more effective problem solving and allow clients to avoid delays in accessing services, finding jobs and moving into sustainable employment.

In order to understand the data that we report about the size of the cash assistance caseload, it is important to understand that of the approximately 350,000 New Yorkers receiving assistance in any given month, most are not subject to work requirements, according to the same state and federal rules applied by prior Administrations. That is because about half are children and many more are seniors or clients who have barriers to employment because of either permanent or temporary disabilities.

That 350,000 number of New Yorkers receiving cash assistance fluctuates month-to-month, particularly as we increase the payment of rent arrears to prevent evictions and homelessness and we reduce the counter-productive churning of children and adults off and on and off the caseload, which now subjects us to a potential \$10 million New York State penalty for unnecessary fair hearings and is associated with shelter applications. As we testified previously, an analysis of DHS shelter applications during a six-month period in 2013 found that 23% of the applicants had an HRA case closing or case sanction within the prior 12 months.

In contrast to expected fluctuations in the monthly caseload, the annual unduplicated caseload of New Yorkers receiving recurring cash assistance has remained steady at 500,000 during the past year as it has since at least 2008.

Moreover, of the approximately 90,000 who are subject to work requirements, 25,000 actually have jobs; however, they make so little they still qualify for cash assistance. This underscores why the Mayor's call for an increase in the minimum wage is so important for addressing poverty and income inequality – as well as reducing our caseload.

During the phase-in of our OTDA-approved Employment Plan:

- The goal is to ensure HRA's employment and training programs are effective in connecting and/or reconnecting New Yorkers to the workforce.
- We want to maximize education, training, and employment-related services.
 - 60% of employable clients lack a high school diploma or equivalent degree.
 - So we will allow recipients up to age 24 to participate in full-time basic education.
 - As permitted under a new state law we supported, we will allow participation in a four-year college degree program. And we are putting supports in place to help clients successfully complete their education.
 - We will increase access to targeted training for jobs in high-growth industries and utilize available Career Pathway programs.
- As noted, instead of one-size-fits all, we are creating new employment strategies for youth, clients with limited English proficiency, shelter residents, those with work limitations, those with justice system involvement, and older clients.

- We are also working to enhance program participation and the resolution of disputes before a fair hearing is requested.

One specific goal is to phase out WEP and replace it with more effective and sustainable work activities. As we testified in October, our Employment Plan provides for a two-year WEP phase-out period.

- HRA has collaborated with CUNY to implement a paid work study program. In January 2015, we began a program to provide paid work study opportunities for CUNY students who are pursuing an undergraduate degree and need to meet an HRA work requirement.
- As a result of this collaboration, we have phased out approximately 500 CUNY WEP slots, about 10 percent of the total number of WEP slots throughout the City.
- We are developing additional initiatives to replace WEP in accordance with the Employment Plan.

The last few slides in our power point present a number of the reforms that we have implemented since I took office last April, some of which we have already discussed at prior hearings. We have accomplished a great deal over the past year, and we will continue with our reform initiatives during the coming year.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and I welcome your questions.

BUDGET TESTIMONY

Steven Banks, Commissioner

March 17, 2015



**Human Resources
Administration**
Department of
Social Services

OVERVIEW: NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA)

- HRA serves more than 3 million low-income New Yorkers through a broad range of programs to address poverty and income inequality and prevent homelessness
- Operating budget of \$9.7 billion in 2016 (\$7.56b in City funds)
 - 78 percent is for Medicaid payments and cash assistance benefits
 - HRA continues to be responsible for much of the Medicaid program - which totals \$29 billion in NYC, although only 20 percent of these costs are part of the HRA budget
 - In addition, HRA administers \$3 billion in federal SNAP (food stamps) benefits that do not pass through the City budget

OVERVIEW: NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA)

Education, training, and job placement services to assist low-income New Yorkers in obtaining employment

Cash Assistance (CA) to meet basic human needs

Rental assistance to prevent homelessness

Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps benefits and emergency food assistance to food pantries and community kitchens to fight hunger

Services for survivors of domestic violence

Services for New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS

Services for children, including child support and child care

Protective services for adults unable to care for themselves

Home care for seniors and individuals with disabilities

Home energy assistance

Legal Services, including homelessness prevention, anti-harassment help, and immigration assistance

Enhanced client services through HRA's Infoline call center & the ACCESSNYC online portal

IDNYC – administers the “back office” and back end eligibility reviews and approvals

HRA is about more than cash assistance; we help low-income workers stay on the job

- Annually HRA provides critical support that helps many low-income New Yorkers remain in the workforce:

500,000 receive ongoing cash assistance annually; any given month 350,000 on cash assistance.

2.5 million receiving Medicaid

1.7 million receiving federally-funded food assistance

700,000 receiving home energy assistance

100,000 receiving one-time cash assistance annually to prevent evictions and utility shutoffs and assist with other emergencies

- Efforts aimed at keeping low-income workers in the workforce are much less expensive and more efficient than providing assistance to New Yorkers after they are out of the workforce, especially after an extended absence.

TABLE 1: Benefits and Services

Cash Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500,000 receive ongoing assistance over the course of a year, another 100,000 get one-time emergency grants. 350,000 recipients in any given month of whom about 8,500 are getting one-time assistance
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,742,730 recipients as of December 2014
HRA Administered Medicaid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,551,697 enrollees as of December 2014 (excludes enrollees in NYS Health Exchange beginning 1/1/14)
Emergency Food Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,120,031 average monthly meals/people served in fiscal year 2013
Home Energy Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 727,533 recipients in heat year 2014*
Child Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 284,624 cases with orders as of December 2014 • Over \$742 million in collections in 2014

*heat year runs from November to October.

TABLE 2: Support for Vulnerable Populations

Adult Protective Services

- 3,709 cases being assessed for services as of December 2014
- 6,202 undercare cases as of December 2014

Homecare

- 123,191 total home care enrollees as of December 2014

HIV/AIDS Services Administration

- 31,939 cases served as of December 2014

Domestic Violence

- Over 1,000 families served per day in emergency and transitional shelters in December 2014
- 3,482 non-residential cases served in December 2014

Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention Program

- 7,428 students received counseling in 2014

OVERVIEW: NYC HRA Staff

- 14,333 budgeted headcount, in FY'16 paid for with a combination of City, State, and federal funds
- Public servants who chose to work at HRA help New Yorkers in need; many dedicating their entire careers to public service
- Diverse workforce: 70% women, 59% African-American, 18% Hispanic, 15% White, and 8% Asian
- Unionized workforce

DC 37 Local 1549	DC 37 SSEU Local 371	DC 37 Local 2627	DC 37 Local 1407	DC 37 Local 924
CWA Local 1180	Teamsters Local 237	The Civil Services Bar Association of Local 237	The Organization of Staff Analysts	The New York State Nurses Association
	The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners	IBEW Local 3	Local 30 of the International Union of Operating Engineers	

CHART 1: HRA February Plan Budget FY 2015

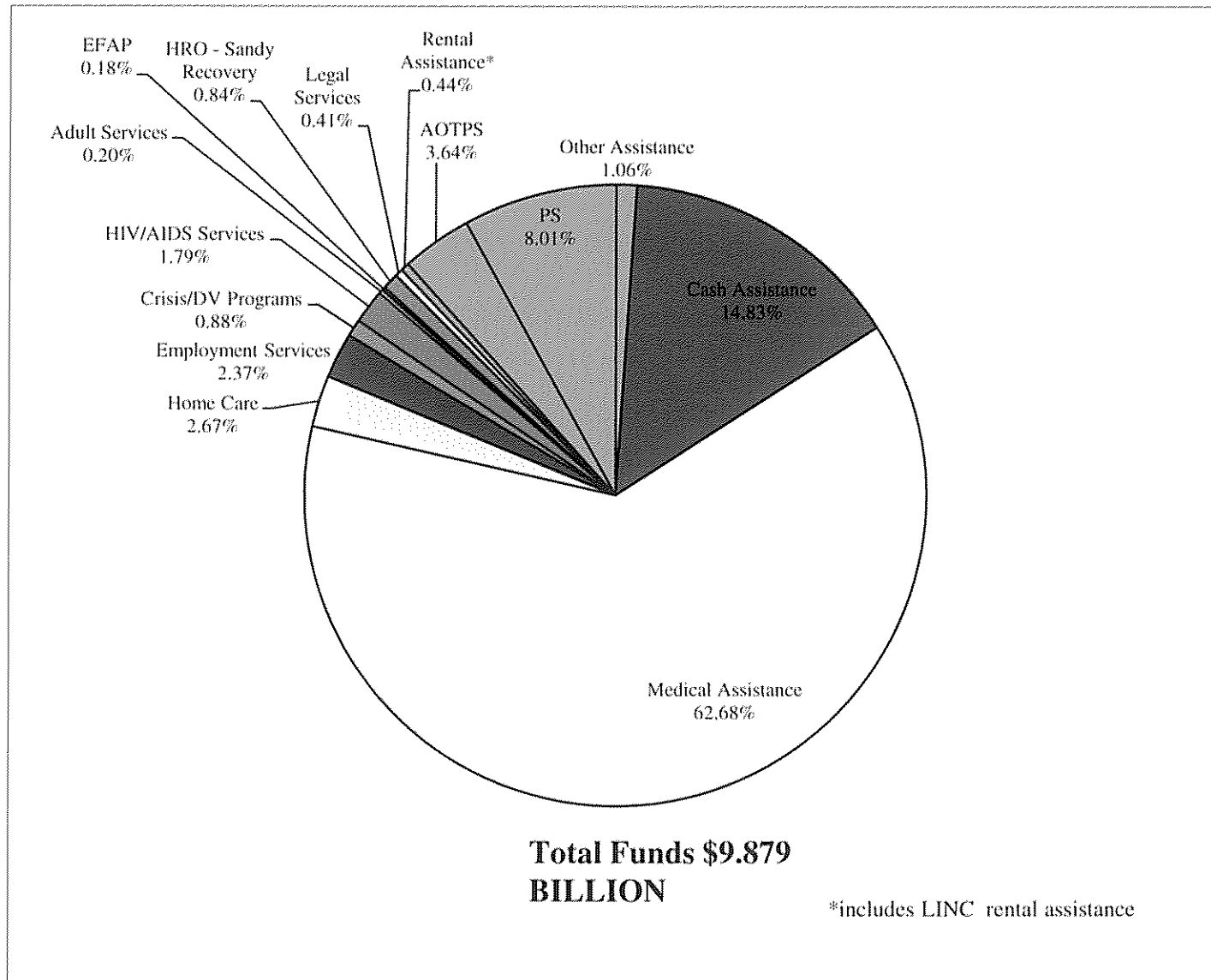
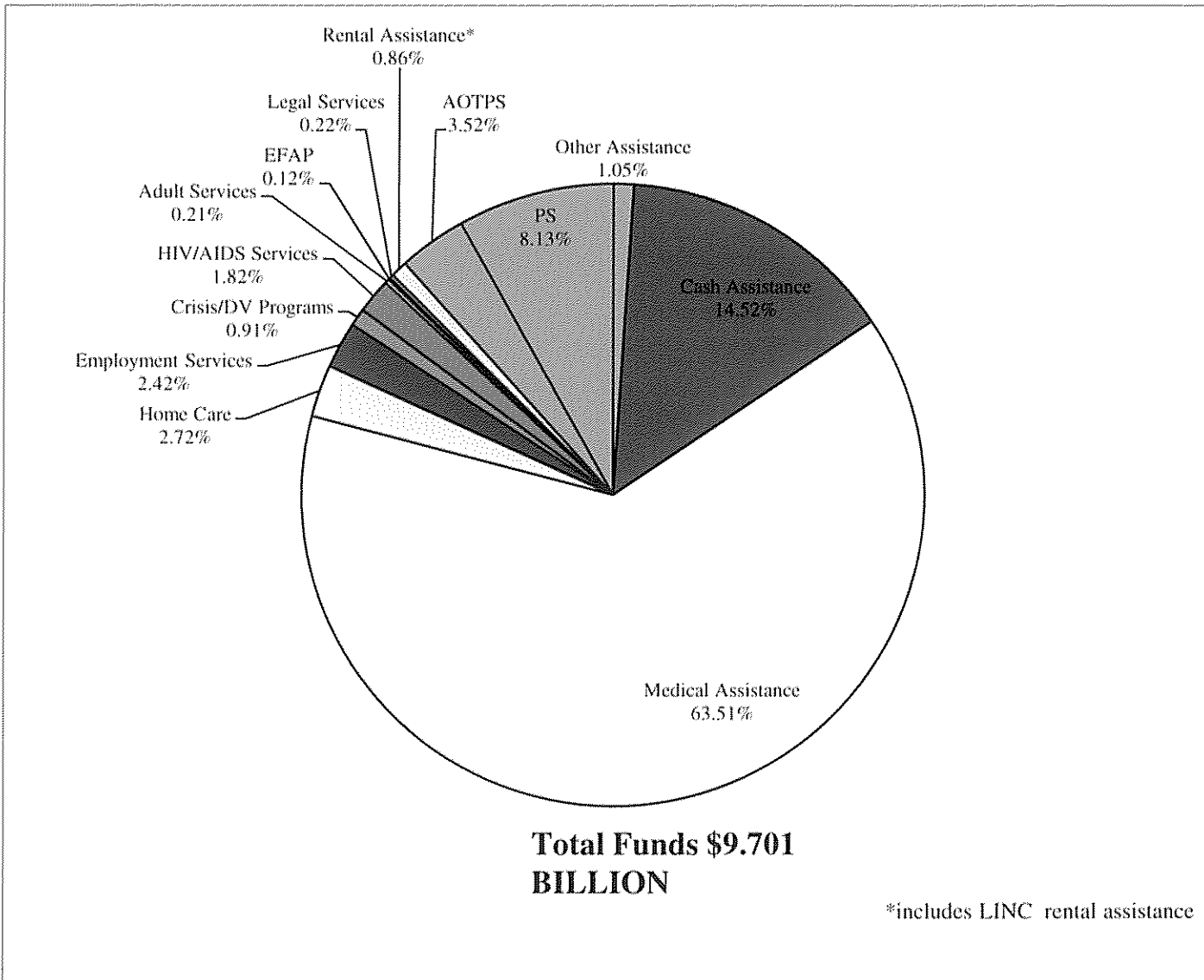


CHART 2: HRA February Plan Budget FY 2016



Budget Detail

- HRA budget* in FY'15 is \$9.88b (\$7.63b tax levy) declining to \$9.7b (\$7.56b tax levy) in FY'16.
- HRA's 2016 budget includes:
 - \$6.4 billion for **Medicaid** (\$6.3 billion tax levy, or 66% of the total HRA budget and 84% of the HRA City funds budget);
 - \$1.4 billion (\$584 million tax levy) for **public assistance grants**;
 - \$81 million (\$55 million tax levy) for **LINC rental assistance**;
 - \$21 million in **legal services** (\$7 million tax levy) – additional baseline funding being evaluated for Executive Budget
 - \$234 million (\$62 million tax levy) for **employment and related support services** such as transportation
 - \$177 million (\$86 million tax levy) for **HIV/AIDS housing and support services**
 - \$108 million (\$23 million tax levy) for **domestic violence, crisis and adult services**
 - \$11 million (\$9 million tax levy) for **emergency food**
 - \$789 million (\$232 million tax levy) for staff, working with clients in SNAP and Job Centers, child support offices, HIV/AIDS service centers, and Medicaid offices
 - \$341 million (\$129 million tax levy) for **administrative costs**: leases and supplies for HRA's 68 Job Centers, SNAP centers, HASA offices and other client serving locations.

*as of February Plan

Budget Detail

Capital Budget

- HRA's capital budget of \$211 million*:
 - \$113 million for facilities and construction
 - \$78 million for information technology, including development related to Benefits Re-engineering
 - \$20 million for telecommunications and other capital projects

* 5-year Capital Plan total funds

Budget Detail

February Financial Plan Changes

- The FY'16 budget increased by \$82 million* in total funds and \$76 million in City funds in the November and February Plans combined. This increase includes:
 - \$49 million (\$41.5 million tax levy) for **LINC rental assistance** to help families and adults move out of DHS and HRA shelters, which is in addition to the \$32 million (\$13 million tax levy) that was already included in the Adopted budget.
 - \$5.6 million (\$4.9 tax levy) for **shelter prevention and aftercare programs**;
 - \$9.8 million (\$9.1 million tax levy) for support for the **LINC program**, including apartment inspections, moving and furniture allowance enhancements, and funding for 127 staff to facilitate LINC moves, homeless prevention and processing of emergency rent payments.
 - \$6 million in total funds (\$3 million tax levy) added for additional **anti-eviction legal services**, on top of \$1million added to the Adopted Budget;
 - \$5 million was added in FY'15 for **anti-harassment legal services** and further implementation will be addressed for FY'16 in the Executive Budget
 - funding of \$13.8 million (\$6.9 million tax levy) was added to **restore 515 SNAP positions** that were slated to be cut by the prior Administration.

*excludes Medicaid technical adjustment of \$32m,
moving revenue that HRA claimed for HHC to HHC

New HRA Initiatives

Substantial Expansion of HRA's homelessness prevention services

- Creation of New Homelessness Prevention Administration for the expansion of existing and the creation of new programs
- Homelessness Diversion Units (HDUs) located at all HRA Job Centers and at DHS' PATH facility are now utilizing new diversion tools that include short-term financial support
- HRA is now deploying on-site staff at DHS Homebase offices around the City and at the NYCHA administrative hearings office in addition to staff at the Housing Courts
- The Early Intervention Outreach Team (EIOT) for outreach to families and individuals in need of legal assistance or emergency rental assistance based on early warning referrals from the Housing Court
- The Landlord Ombudsman Services Unit (LOSU) established to address the needs and concerns of landlords and management companies that provide permanent housing for families and individuals receiving public assistance
- The Rental Assistance Program to implement the new LINC initiative
- The Legal Assistance Initiatives Program to manage HRA's legal assistance programs
- HRA recently created the Family Independence Administration's Central Rent Processing Unit to centrally process, issue and deliver emergency rental assistance payments

New HRA Initiatives

LINC (Living In Communities)

Since we last testified, as we continue our efforts to prevent and alleviate homelessness, we have created three new LINC programs. There now exist six unique LINC programs for homeless New Yorkers.

- **LINC IV/Rental Assistance for 1,100 Homeless Seniors**
 - \$2.6m in City funds in FY15
 - \$8.7m City funds in FY16
- **LINC V**
 - Rental Assistance for 1,000 Working Homeless Adults
 - Time limited rental assistance for working, homeless single adults and adult families without minor children
 - \$2.2m in FY'15; \$7.1m in FY'16
 - Aftercare for working individuals and adult families to assist with employment and maintaining housing after placement in permanent housing
- **LINC VI**
 - Will pay rent on behalf of families with children already in shelter who exit to live with relatives or friends
 - Budget will be part of the Executive Budget discussion

New HRA Initiatives

November & February Plan Initiatives

Focus on expediting relocation from shelter:

- **Landlord Bonus and Enhanced Security Funds:**
 - one-time incentive payments for landlords participating in LINC programs and for a program to reimburse landlords for potential costs not covered by security deposits or rent grants
- **LINC Apartment Inspections:**
 - funding for HPD to perform inspections
- **Broker's Fee for Shelter and HASA Move-Outs:** increased broker's fee to one month's rent for families and individuals leaving shelter with LINC rental assistance and HASA clients moving into private apartments. The broker's fee is 15% of the annual rent for lease agreements of one year or more – currently until March 31.
- **Enhanced Moving Allowances for Homeless Families:** increased furniture allowances and additional funding for moving costs as we project an increase in spending as a result of LINC moves.

New HRA Initiatives

Additional Initiatives

- **Enhanced Homeless Program Support:** 79 staff will provide operational and administrative support as HRA and DHS continue to work on homelessness prevention and provide alternatives to shelter
- **HOME Section 8 Transfer:**
 - We are also working with HPD to transfer HOME Section 8 funds to HRA to implement a new program to help alleviate homelessness. Subject to approval from HUD, HPD will allocate \$20 million of its Federal HOME grant to HRA for a Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program to move more than 1,200 homeless families out of shelters and into housing beginning in FY'16.
 - This rental assistance will be targeted to families in homeless shelters receiving SSI and Social Security benefits. The program will begin operation this summer.

New HRA Initiatives

Legal Services Initiatives (LSI)

- Consolidated legal services from DHS, HPD, CJC, and DYCD at HRA in order to enhance coordination and effectiveness
- Contracted services include:
 - Anti-eviction
 - Anti-harassment tenant protection
 - Immigration
 - Domestic Violence
 - Securing federal benefits
 - And other legal matters
- Developing a study of the unmet needs in Housing Court so that we can evaluate what programs will be most effective in preventing homelessness

New HRA Initiatives

Legal Services Initiatives (LSI) (continued)

Anti-Eviction Legal Services

- Baseline increase in FY'15 from \$6.4 million to \$13.5 million
- Former DHS contracts focused on preventing homeless shelter entry
- Housing Help:
 - 9 community contracts;
 - 1 court-based program
- Created new court referral system to ensure high-risk tenants are referred for services

New HRA Initiatives

Legal Services Initiatives (LSI) (continued)

Anti-Harassment Tenant Protection Program

- Announced in the Mayor's State of the City address; \$36 million program when fully operational
- For residents currently living in 6 neighborhoods identified for rezoning and 13 zip codes in and around rezoning areas to:
 - prevent tenant harassment and displacement,
 - keep families and individuals in their homes,
 - maintain affordable housing and
 - stabilize neighborhoods.
- HRA received \$5 million in the February Plan to begin the initiative in FY'15; additional funds will be part of the Executive budget process.
- To ensure services began immediately, funds in the remainder of FY'15 were contracted to two legal service providers, LSNY and Legal Aid, who already have citywide anti-eviction contracts
- HRA is preparing an RFP and will have new contracts in place by the Fall of 2015.

New HRA Initiatives

Legal Services Initiatives (LSI) (continued)

Immigration Legal Services

- Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI)
 - Former DYCD program, baselined at \$3.2 million
 - Outreach, screening, application and legal representation services for immigrants
 - HRA's RFP will be issued at the end of this month, with new contracts set to begin in FY'16
- Immigrant Services
 - Former DYCD program, funded with federal CSBG grant
 - Four service options: legal services, domestic violence and trafficking, youth, and worker's rights
 - HRA will soon issue an RFP, with new contracts set to begin in FY'16

New HRA Initiatives

Legal Services Initiatives (LSI) (continued)

Immigration Legal Services (continued)

- Unaccompanied Minors Initiative:
 - \$1 million in City Council discretionary funding with additional \$800K from Robin Hood and New York Community Trust
- New York Immigrant Family Unification Project:
 - \$4.9 million in City Council discretionary funding
 - Model program that will provide legal representation to 1,000 low-income immigrants facing deportation

New HRA Initiatives

Legal Services Initiatives (LSI) (continued)

New HRA Program:

Federal Disability Benefits Program

- Creating a new service to complete home-based federal disability benefit applications for homebound clients
- Creating a new legal services program for clients to obtain federal disability benefits after denials through an Administrative Council Review and in some cases appeals to the Federal Courts

New HRA Initiatives

Legal Services Initiatives (LSI) (continued)

Additional Legal Services (Council FY'15 Discretionary Funding)

- Legal Services for the Working Poor:
 - \$1.7 million for a range of civil legal services for the working poor, including housing, benefits, immigration, employment, domestic violence, and consumer credit.
- Legal Services for Domestic Violence Survivors:
 - \$350,000 in legal services for survivors of domestic violence
- Legal Services for Veterans:
 - \$100,000 for family law, public benefits, healthcare, and financial planning for veterans
- US/SSI Advocacy:
 - \$1 million to help unemployed individuals and persons with disabilities receive federal benefits they have been denied
- Citywide Civil Legal Services
 - \$3.75 million for community legal education, hotlines, pro-bono programs, and direct legal assistance across a wide range of civil legal issues
- Anti-Eviction & SRO Legal Services
 - \$5.4 million for housing court representation, tenant organizing & anti-harassment services

New HRA Initiatives

Improving Access to SNAP/Food Stamps

- Nearly 1.7 million New Yorkers currently receive federal SNAP benefits from HRA
 - Data suggest that more qualify but don't receive benefits
- Major effort to make enrollment for federal benefits easier
 - Restoring headcount cut by prior Administration to improve service in our centers
 - At designated HRA SNAP Centers clients can use PCs to submit applications.
 - Client Service Supervisors have also been placed at designated HRA SNAP Centers to assist clients with accessing services on-site.
 - Seeking a waiver for on-demand SNAP interviews, allowing clients to call at their convenience
 - Improving AccessNYC to make possible not only applying online, but also recertifying.
 - Later this year, will be able to use a smart phone to submit documents
- Extensive outreach efforts
 - HRA's Office of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Outreach Services provided outreach services at more than 1,543 individual community events in FY'14
 - With Robin Hood Foundation Benefits Data Trust and DFTA, conducting outreach to 100,000 seniors, 60 and over, who have Medicaid, but not SNAP.
 - Working with NYCHA to identify residents who do not receive food stamps and are likely to qualify for them
 - Mid-April launching major outreach campaign

New HRA Initiatives

Local Law 49

- The HIV/AIDS Services Administration (“HASA”) provides intensive case management services to some of New York City’s most vulnerable residents – persons living with clinically symptomatic HIV or AIDS.
- In order to ensure that HASA clients receive the highest level of care possible, Local Law 49 of 1997 requires an overall staffing ratio of 1:34 for social work staff (case workers and supervisors) . However, for staff assisting families, the ratio must be 1:25.
- Since HRA is committed to meeting these standards, since April 1, 2014, 40 new HASA case workers have been hired. Additional case workers will be hired this month.
- In addition to the case workers, since April 1, 2014 HASA has added 29 new supervisors and 23 eligibility specialists. Eligibility specialists make sure that applications for assistance are processed efficiently and approved benefits are issued in a timely manner.
- HRA will continue to monitor staffing levels at HASA closely to make sure that all Local Law 49 vacancies are filled as soon as possible.

New HRA Initiatives

30% Rent Cap

- After vigorous advocacy from the Mayor, community organizations, and other elected officials, the State passed a new rule in April 2014 that eligible persons living with HIV/AIDS have to pay only 30% of their earned or unearned income towards rent.
- This new law was implemented on July 1, 2014. Shortly thereafter over 7,500 HASA clients received “retro payments” back to April 1.

New HRA Initiatives

IDNYC

- In partnership with MOIA and Mayor's Office of Operations, issued rules governing the application process and issued Commissioner's Executive Order on:
 - Security and confidentiality for applicants' personal information
 - Protocol for outside requests for information
 - Limits on use of duplicate image search technology
 - Administrative review of application denials
- Currently operating in 21 locations, including 2 public facing HRA locations
- IDNYC's entire infrastructure sits within HRA from staffing and equipment, including the front-facing enrollment staff as well as the back-end review staff.
- HRA support includes: back end application processing, deployment of personnel, procurement and space renovation

New HRA Initiatives

IDNYC

PERFORMANCE DATA AS OF MARCH 15, 2015

Total appointments made to submit applications	312,820
Total applications accepted	68,665
Total applications completed	66,239
Total applications approved	63,242
Total cards printed/mailed	55,805 (50,000 th card was printed March 14)
Overall denial rate	Approximately 2% of applications are denied
Next available appointment	March 25 – Corona, Queens

New HRA Initiatives

Lovely H Settlement

- HRA will implement significant reforms to provide greater accessibility to clients with disabilities as part of a proposed Settlement that would end the nine years of litigation of the Lovely H case.
- HRA will develop and implement policies and procedures and modify programs to provide clients with disabilities meaningful access to its programs and services. Examples:
 - HRA, in conjunction with an expert consultant, will develop tools to assess whether clients need reasonable accommodations as the result of physical and/or mental health limitations or other impairments and then provide the appropriate accommodations, including referrals to HRA's Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment ("WeCARE") program or other services designed to assess and meet the needs of clients with disabilities.
 - HRA will provide case management services, based on the needs of the client, in an effort to assist clients with disabilities to maintain their benefits.
 - Before taking a negative action for failure to comply with required activities, HRA will review the case to ensure that the client's disability was not a factor in the non-compliance and that reasonable accommodations, if needed, were provided to enable the client to comply with required activities.
 - HRA will assist eligible clients to apply for federal disability benefits.
 - HRA will develop new training for its staff, including training on disability awareness and effective communication with people with disabilities.
 - A community advisory panel will be formed to advise HRA on its policies and practices that affect clients with disabilities.

New HRA Initiatives

New ADA Office

Some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers are often people with disabilities who require accommodations and support to access the benefits they need to maintain healthy and fulfilling lives.

- The goals of HRA's ADA work are as follows:
 - Improve methods to capture information on people with disabilities who require special accommodations and ensure equal access to services
 - Improve compliance with requests for reasonable accommodations
 - Improve tracking of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues across HRA
 - Assess current *ADA/Disability Etiquette* Training & make revisions
 - Evaluate & revise printed materials & forms to improve accessibility
 - Increase relationships with community partners
- Even before the settlement, HRA had created a new ADA office with Jennifer Shaoul as Executive Director of Disability Affairs.
- Projects underway include:
 - Developing guidelines and best practices for web and print access.
 - Developing an agencywide survey to assess systems, training, data collection and policies related to disability issues and reasonable accommodations, including a staff survey.
 - Establishing and building on relationships with various advocacy agencies and community organizations that assist people with disabilities with enrolling in benefits.
 - Developing trainings on reasonable accommodations and disability etiquette.
 - Working within HRA to ensure and support compliance with legal requirements, including the *Lovely H. v. HRA* settlement.

New HRA Initiatives

New LGBTQI Advocacy Office

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Intersex people have been identified as an underserved community, who may be disproportionately likely to live in poverty, and to have difficulty accessing public benefits. To address these client needs, HRA has created a new LGBTQI office with Elana Redfield as Director of LGBTQI Affairs.
- The goals of HRA's LGBTQI work are as follows:
 - Increase awareness and visibility of LGBTQI issues across HRA.
 - Identify, assess and implement solutions to specific obstacles to access and participation for LGBTQI clients in HRA's programs and services.
 - Serve as liaison with CBOs to increase collaboration and transparency regarding LGBTQI issues at HRA.
- Projects underway include:
 - Tracking and resolution of LGBTQI-related complaints.
 - Comprehensive needs assessment for LGBTQI clients, including research and stakeholder surveys, and changes to program areas to allow for increased visibility of LGBTQI issues.
 - Coordinating a work group with community-based organizations and advocates that focus on LGBTQI concerns.
 - Creating and implementing a training curriculum on LGBTQI issues that will provide both a baseline of knowledge and specific guidance for program areas.
 - Developing HRA's day-to-day practices for working with LGBTQI community members, including structural changes in program areas, updates to existing policies and the creation of new resources for staff.

Continuing HRA Initiatives

Language and Immigrant Access: Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs

- The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (ORIA) works collaboratively with HRA's programs to advance language and immigrant access to public benefits.
- Anne Montesano, Executive Director, Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs
- The goals of HRA's Language and Immigrant Access work are as follows:
 - Provide guidance and expertise to HRA program areas to ensure access to services for immigrant and LEP New Yorkers
 - Ensure that HRA's programs are in compliance with federal, state and local immigrant and language access laws
 - Work with and support HRA programs to develop and promote policies and tools to help staff provide excellent service to immigrant and LEP New Yorkers
 - Strengthen relationships with community groups to respond to inquiries and gather feedback on HRA services/programs
- Projects underway at ORIA include:
 - Answer inquiries from frontline staff making immediate immigrant eligibility determinations
 - Assess and revise current immigrant eligibility training curricula with program areas to ensure that frontline staff continue to make accurate eligibility determinations
 - Continue to build partnerships with immigrant serving CBOs and advocacy groups
 - Collect and analyze Agency and program data pertaining to immigrant and LEP clients and language service provision to determine that clients receive appropriate services
 - Work in partnership with program areas, to maximize client access to bilingual staff at HRA sites throughout the five boroughs
 - Collaborate with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to advance the Mayor's priorities around immigrant and LEP access
 - Work to improve the Agency's site and service monitoring process
 - Manage the Agency's interpretation, translation and bilingual testing contracts and processes

New HRA Initiatives

Mayor's Action Plan

- As part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, HRA is part of an interagency effort intended to improve safety and strengthen the community at fifteen (15) target NYCHA developments across the City.
- HRA is deploying outreach specialists at each development to meet with residents and provide guidance for benefits enrollment, help in navigating access to emergency services, troubleshoot existing cases with HRA and solicit feedback from the community.
- We currently have a presence in about half of the developments (7 of 15) and we expect to start in the rest (8 of 15) this spring.

HRA Reforms

Employment Plan

Background

- Recurring annual assistance in a given year is provided to 500,000 clients and 350,000 in any month; about half are children, many more are seniors or either permanently or temporarily disabled and for that reason not subject to work requirements.
- Of the approximately 90,000 who are subject to work requirements, 25,000 have jobs; however, they make so little they still qualify for public assistance
- A 2015 State budget provision subjects HRA to a \$10 million charge back for unnecessary fair hearings
- HRA's past approach was to track job placements for *only* 6 months, but 25% of HRA's reported placements & assistance ended up with clients returning to seek recurring Cash Assistance again within 12 months.
- 23% of applicants* for Department of Homeless Services' shelters had a Cash Assistance case that closed or had a case sanction in the previous 12 months.

*during the first 6 months of 2013

HRA Reforms

New Employment Plan

- Approved by State supervising authority; HRA is developing implementation plans
- Goal: to ensure HRA's employment & training programs are effective in connecting and/or reconnecting New Yorkers to the workforce.
- The reforms to HRA's employment programs are based on these principles:
 - Maximize Education, Training, And Employment-Related Services
 - 60% of employable clients lack a high school diploma
 - Allow recipients up to age 24 to participate in full-time basic education
 - Increase access to targeted training for jobs in high-growth industries and utilize available Career Pathway programs.
 - Allow participation in 4-year college degree
 - Replace “One-Size-Fits-All” Approach With Improved Assessments & Programs That Address Specific Clients’ Needs & Abilities
 - Create New Employment Strategies for Youth, Clients with Limited English Proficiency, Shelter Residents, Those with Work Limitations, Those with Justice System Involvement, and Older Clients
 - Enhance Program Participation and Dispute Resolution

HRA Reforms

Phase Out WEP and Replace it With More Effective And Sustainable Work Activities

- HRA has collaborated with CUNY to implement a paid work study program. In January 2015, we began a program to provide paid work study opportunities for CUNY students who are pursuing an undergraduate degree and need to meet an HRA work requirement.
- As a result of this collaboration, we have phased out approximately 500 CUNY WEP slots, about 10 percent of the total number of WEP slots throughout the City.
- We are developing additional initiatives to replace WEP in accordance with the Employment Plan.

HRA Reforms

Examples of Reforms to Date and Key Impacts

- Reforms to address HRA policies that have harmed clients, have had an adverse impact on staff workload and morale, and subject the City to potential financial penalties:

Joining every other social services district in New York State and 43 other States by accepting the federal SNAP/Food Stamp waiver for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) who are unemployed or underemployed.

Changing HRA's position and supporting the provision in the 2015 State budget that offers four years of college as an option to HRA clients as part of HRA's training and employment initiatives.

Disbanding the counterproductive Center 71 program that resulted in unnecessary case sanctions and closings.

Discontinuing the Immigrant Sponsor Recovery Program that harmed sponsors of low-income legal immigrants and implementing a process to return all payments that had been collected.

Working with the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to resolve substantial numbers of pending fair hearings.

Phasing out the requirement that all homeless New Yorkers seek services at a single center in Queens.

HRA Reforms

Increasing access to services for homeless New Yorkers by working with DHS to accept applications for Cash Assistance at DHS intake centers, to process recertifications for assistance at DHS shelters, and to provide rent arrears assistance directly at DHS HomeBase locations.

Created a centralized HRA rent check processing unit to improve the timely processing of rent arrears payments to prevent evictions and homelessness.

Working with the Mayor's Office, the Office of Management and Budget, and DHS to develop new rental assistance initiatives to prevent and alleviate homelessness, including initiatives targeted for survivors of domestic violence who seek shelter from HRA.

Developed an expedited implementation plan for the new 30% rent cap for HASA clients living with HIV and AIDS pursuant to the requirements of the 2015 State budget.

Developed and implemented a letter for landlords specifying the rental assistance levels for which HASA clients are eligible to maximize access to permanent housing.

Implemented reminder and missed appointment calls for Cash Assistance and SNAP recipients to improve client compliance and reduce unnecessary fair hearings

Developed a new initiative with the Robin Hood Foundation to maximize access to SNAP/Food Stamps for senior citizens who are in receipt of Medicaid or LiHEAP but not SNAP/Food Stamps.

Developed a pilot program to reduce unnecessary case sanctions and resulting fair hearings by providing participants in employment programs with five excused absences for illness or a family emergency prior to the implementation of a sanction, like the standard in the recently enacted Local Law requiring the provision of five paid sick days.

Maximizing access to federal SNAP benefits by seeking a waiver from the USDA to allow applicants to self-attest their housing expenses.

HRA Reforms

Seeking additional SNAP waivers to allow SNAP applicants and recipients to schedule telephone interviews at a time of their own choosing.

Extended the time Cash Assistance applicants have to find appropriate child care arrangements from 5 days to 15 days, with an additional 5 day extension.

Consolidated and substantially expanded civil legal services programs at HRA to enhance the provision of legal assistance to fight poverty and income inequality and prevent homelessness.

Worked with OMB and DHS to make sure that adequate broker's fees are in place to alleviate homelessness.

Worked with HPD on a new initiative to address inadequate housing conditions in buildings where substantial numbers of Cash Assistance recipients reside.

Working with NYCHA to ensure that HRA makes timely rent payments to avert the eviction of NYCHA tenants.

Worked with the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinator to develop a new initiative to outstation HRA staff on Rikers Island to make sure that necessary HRA assistance and services are available upon discharge.

Expanded HRA's plan for an online portal for applicants and recipients of SNAP/Food Stamps by using the system's existing capacity to include an online portal for Cash Assistance applicants and recipients.

Developed a new client advocacy unit for clients, community members and elected officials, including an ADA coordinator, a Language Access coordinator, and a LGBTQI Services coordinator, to expedite inquiries about client service needs and the resolution of client concerns about their cases.

Thank you!



**Human Resources
Administration**
Department of
Social Services

*City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing
For Fiscal Year 2016*

General Welfare Committee

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Introduction

Good afternoon Chairman Levin and members of the General Welfare Committee. I am Gilbert Taylor, Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). Joining me today are Lula Urquhart, Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal, Procurement Operations and Audits, Diana Rodela, Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Revenue and Donald Brosen, Deputy Commissioner for Administration.

In my testimony this afternoon I will outline Mayor de Blasio's Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget for DHS. Mayor de Blasio's leadership and commitment to homeless issues in this city have enabled DHS to make significant strides in the past year. When I came to DHS it was quite clear that there were challenges ahead. Over the past year, DHS has embarked on an ambitious plan to improve the quality of life for clients within our system. At the same time, we are committed to creating a clear path for individuals to rejoin their communities. Our clients deserve the highest quality of services, and we will settle for nothing less.

Over the last year we have made substantial advances to reduce homelessness and to improve the lives of our clients. We have increased

the financial investment into the Homebase program; we have increased our funding to do outreach for homeless New Yorkers in the streets and subways, and have committed significant resources to helping our clients make the journey from shelter to home. The Mayor's Preliminary Budget reflects over \$18 million in new needs to support our efforts to reduce our census and to ensure there is sufficient capacity in the system. This includes funding for LINC Support and Aftercare, the PATH Community-Based Model, Permanency Specialists, Routine Site Review Inspections, and to expand the hours at Drop In Centers.

DHS' current Fiscal Year 2015 expense budget is \$1.1 billion; for next year, Fiscal Year 2016, the budget will be \$1 billion. The \$1 billion for 2016 is comprised of:

- \$518.5 million in City funds
- \$132 million in State funds
- \$378. Million in federal funds
- \$4.1 million in CD grant funding
- \$851,000 in intra-City funding

The \$1 billion budget allocates \$505 million to services for families \$361 million to services for single adults, \$26 million to supportive administration services and \$141 million to agency-wide personnel services.

The DHS Capital Plan for the five-year period of Fiscal Year 2015 through Fiscal Year 2019 is currently \$107.6 million. Capital projects for homeless families total \$29 million; projects for single adults total \$56 million; \$12.9

million has been allocated for administrative supportive services; and \$9.3 million is designated for City Council-funded projects.

As you know, this Administration truly believes we have a tale of two cities. New York City is facing pronounced economic inequality because of low wages, the lack of affordable housing, and the increased cost of living. Today approximately 46-percent of New Yorkers live near poverty and approximately 22-percent live below the poverty line. The reality of this income inequality, combined with the drivers of homelessness such as eviction, domestic violence, and overcrowding, manifests itself in the City's shelter system. At DHS we have a commitment to reducing homelessness and improving lives for all our clients.

On Monday, March 16th, DHS' total shelter census was 57,727 including over 24,000 children living in shelters throughout the five boroughs. With our \$1.1 billion budget we have the opportunity to substantially enhance our programmatic efforts and to develop effective strategies to reduce our census. We recognize that we must use every tool at our disposal to get our clients out of shelters and into permanent housing.

To that end, DHS recently introduced its 2015-2017 Operational Plan, which will be a roadmap for how our agency will do its work going forward. The Operational Plan delineates five goals: prevention, outreach, shelter, housing permanency, and organizational excellence. The plan encompasses the entirety of the work being done at DHS which is to guide

clients on their journey home. The Operational Plan seeks to build upon and refocus our efforts to assist New Yorkers who are threatened with housing instability and homelessness. The plan requires us to coordinate services across the DHS system of care, use our existing resources to best serve our clients, improve case management, and identify long term-sustainable strategies to reduce our census and assist clients to achieve housing self-sufficiency.

Prevention Services

As I've testified to previously, prevention is the cornerstone of DHS' efforts to combat homelessness. We believe that shelter is a last resort. In collaboration with our partners, we provide comprehensive services that combat the many drivers of homelessness.

Our Homebase Prevention Program is nationally-recognized and proven to be 95-percent effective in helping clients remain stably housed and out of shelter. In FY15, a \$20 million investment allowed us to increase Homebase's offices from 14 to 23. These are located in the neighborhoods where DHS sees the largest number of shelter entrants. We know Homebase works, which is why we recently launched our largest media campaign called "Imagine" to raise public awareness of Homebase and the prevention services it offers. The "Imagine" campaign is targeted to the communities with the most shelter entrants and urges those at risk of homelessness to reach out for assistance, before shelter is the only

remaining option. We are being extremely aggressive in our marketing efforts for Homebase with ads featured on subways and buses, local establishments, faith-based institutions, and community based organizations. In addition, we have recently launched a 30 second television ad for there to be greater awareness of the program and what it has to offer.

DHS is also seeking to strengthen our work by pursuing a new community based family shelter intake model. The Community-Based Demonstration Project for PATH (Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing) aims to improve services to families, with the ultimate goal of keeping them stably housed in their communities of origin and making shelter an option of last resort. Instead of using a single point of access for family intake as we do now, we will be opening additional family shelter intake offices – with an emphasis on prevention first- in four of the five boroughs, which will be co-located with HRA and Homebase. Community-based family shelter intake will allow for a more effective diversion model focused on counseling, prevention, and other resources in a community-based context in order to enable families to remain stably housed in their own boroughs and neighborhoods.

In addition to the prevention and diversion efforts being made through Homebase and the new community based family intake model, DHS received \$200K in funding to enhance diversion efforts at the front door of the single adult system. These funds are administered through our

partnership with Palladia Homebase, which provides on-site diversion services and aftercare. The clients will continue to receive these benefits if they remain out of shelter and maintain regular contact with the provider for aftercare services. We have been able to rapidly return clients to the community who we otherwise would not have been able to divert.

Street Outreach

In addition to prevention, DHS is committed to serving all unsheltered individuals across the city. This work came into particular focus this past winter, one of the coldest on record. Throughout the city, we deployed teams around the clock to encourage people living on the streets and in subways to move into transitional and permanent housing. We have expanded our street and subway outreach work within the past year, and developed a network of transitional housing specifically to serve this population.

DHS added more Safe Haven and stabilization beds to our system in FY15. Stabilization beds provide an alternative housing option for individuals who are unwilling to enter traditional shelter. Safe Havens are shelter options for street homeless individuals who do not want to enter traditional shelter. Clients are referred to Safe Havens by outreach teams, who prioritize Safe Haven beds for street homeless individuals who are the most vulnerable and who have been outdoors for the longest period of time. DHS has also increased its efforts to work collaboratively with

community organizations and religious institutions across the City to help expand the reach of this valuable program.

Similar to Safe Havens, DHS also added stabilization beds, which are also a low-threshold shelter option. Outreach providers are able to place clients directly from the streets into these beds and provide on-site services.

There are 545 Safe Haven beds and 326 stabilization beds in the DHS system. Street homeless clients also have access to overnight respite beds, which are linked to drop-in centers at houses of worship. These respite beds are usually located in extra spaces at churches or synagogues and are staffed by volunteers who provide dinner and breakfast.

Last year, as part of a new contract with the MTA, DHS combined funding with the MTA to invest \$6 million for outreach services to be provided in all 468 subway stations. DHS now has outreach teams working in subways 24/7, ensuring that all subway stations and train cars are assessed for homeless activity on a routine basis. Thus far we have been able to successfully place 30% of these chronically homeless individual into shelter, which is a significant increase from the previous year. Our goal is to get as many people as possible off of the streets and subways and into shelter.

Shelter

Providing shelter and social services for those in need continues to be DHS' core function and mandate. We provide temporary, emergency, and safe transitional housing to eligible families and all individuals presenting needing shelter.

Social Services

DHS is seeking to improve social service delivery in shelter by creating a new model of practice. Using already established methods, the new model will be a four layered approach to providing quality services to all clients in shelter.

This model of practice will require that going forward all DHS shelter providers use the following things in their work with DHS clients.

1. Consistent and comprehensive documentation in the Client Assistance and Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES)
2. Critical Time Intervention Services.
3. Rapid Rehousing Techniques and Principles
4. Motivational Interviewing Techniques and Best Practices in work with Clients.

The CARES System (Client Assistance and Rehousing Enterprise System) is an electronic case management system that is used by all DHS providers and direct run shelter staff to document all work that is being done with

clients who we serve. We will be strengthening case work documentation requirements throughout the system and upgrading the CARES system itself to keep pace with practice refinements that will be taking place within the agency. All case management services provided to clients are required to be documented in CARES.

Critical Time Intervention is an evidence-informed model of practice used to work with homeless clients. NYC will be using two versions of CTI in our practice with clients in shelter. A full intensity version of CTI will be delivered to clients who have the most substantial barriers to housing and who are most likely to return to shelter after locating permanent housing. A lesser intense version of CTI will be made available to all clients who are in temporary emergency shelter. CTI is a means by which customized services can be offered to families and individuals so that they can exit shelter into permanent housing faster. An assessment tool will be used to determine the level of CTI required.

Principles and best practices of Rapid Rehousing will be incorporated into all of our work with clients in shelter. Now that there are more housing resources available to assist homeless New York City residents to exit shelter- we will require that rapid-rehousing efforts be pursued more aggressively for all clients in our shelter system. Rapid re-housing will include identifying a housing resource and will begin as soon as an individual enters shelter.

Motivational Interviewing techniques will be incorporated into our system-wide work with all clients in shelter. This practice of meeting clients where they are at and focusing on collaborative conversations with clients to strengthen their motivation and commitment to change is at the center of Motivational Interviewing. It is a person-centered counseling style that is not directive, but rather allows the client to identify his/her own needs to achieve change; in this case permanent housing. This method of delivering services has demonstrated success in helping clients achieve their goals across many systems. As such it permeates all layers of our proposed model of practice.

The combination of all four of these elements will strengthen our system wide work and will improve outcomes for our clients.

DHS will also be creating Permanency Specialist Teams within the agency to work with program and shelter staff to support their work of helping clients to obtain housing independence. These highly trained teams will be comprised of 30 licensed social workers who will review cases; offer technical assistance to providers and DHS staff and will support agency efforts to create Independent Living Plans for all clients in shelter. The Permanency Specialist Teams will also be available to support our agency after care efforts to connect clients to community based supports and services to help them maintain housing

The continued support of the Safety First Team is a major part of this Administration's vision and efforts to improve shelter conditions and social services. As my staff testified to on February 27th, the safety of all children in shelter is of the utmost importance. Due to the significant number of children in our system it is critically necessary that our agency be attentive to child safety and well-being. The additional 19 Safety First Social workers will engage and assess high risk families with children to determine an appropriate plan of action and services when needed. The Safety First staff will coordinate with DHS Family Services and shelter providers through case conferencing, effective case management, coaching, and interventions to support the family in keeping children safe with their parents and caretakers while they are in shelter. The Safety First staff will identify necessary services and interventions to assist families in need.

Shelter Conditions

Preventative maintenance and necessary repairs are essential components of our agency's work to improve shelter conditions for individuals and families within our system. As such, DHS has expanded its budget for maintenance and repair work. The Routine Site Review Inspection (RSRI) is DHS' primary tool to inspect and assess the physical plant conditions of our shelters to ensure that they are in compliance with codes, regulations and laws governing Temporary Housing. The RSRI allows our agency to evaluate providers' use of City funds budgeted for the maintenance of shelters. The RSRI also identifies problematic building conditions.

Preventative maintenance can be used to minimize larger issues down the line, and has recently been revamped to more efficiently predict the physical plant needs of shelters. Additionally we recently updated and strengthened our agency's policy guidance on shelter inspections to raise standards across our system. We are also in the process of creating a new regulatory compliance unit to ensure that appropriate and safe conditions are maintained at all of our sites.

As part of the Mayor's "One City" initiative to reduce energy costs by nearly 30-percent, expanding our in-house preventative maintenance programs will help further the work by properly maintaining and replacing mechanical systems with new and improved technologies. In doing so, DHS will see a reduction in equipment failures as well as a reduction in fuel usage and costs. With the investment of Capital Funds, DHS will be able to maintain its investment in new mechanical equipment and ensure its full life expectancy.

We want to also ensure that all viable shelter sites are contracted and that such contracts contain provisions for active enforcement of any code or regulatory violations. DHS has reviewed lease and other site control agreements between provider agencies and landlords to ensure that they contain repair clauses and have language consistent with the standards promulgated in the shelter Inspection Policy and Procedure. During the FY16 contracting process, DHS will review contract language with provider agencies and will ensure that there is a separate allocation for

ongoing maintenance and repair. A contract clause will be included prohibiting providers from using these funds for non-related maintenance expenses. DHS understands that we are judged by the performance of our shelter providers, and we are establishing clear expectations and accountability for all who do this work.

Housing Permanency

The LINC rental assistance program helps move individuals and families who need additional assistance from shelter into permanent housing. Our Homebase Program provides initial support to all clients who exit shelter with LINC vouchers.

- LINC I – assist families in shelter who are working full-time but are unable to afford stable housing on their own to relocate from the City shelter system.
- LINC II - assist families in shelter with multiple shelters that need additional assistance and support.
- LINC III - provide rental assistance for families recently affected by domestic violence.
- LINC IV – assist single adults and adult families shelters, safe havens and drop in centers that are working that include someone who is age 60 or above.
- LINC V – assist single adults and adult families in shelters, safe havens and drop in centers that are working

- LINC VI - assist families with children who exit shelter by moving in with relatives or friends

For LINC I families and LINC V single adults, the Human Resources Administration's (HRA) employment vendors will be available to support these clients with after care when they exit shelter.

We have been granted \$2.1 Million for LINC II Family Aftercare Services in FY2015 and 6.3 million in 2016 to support families who have multiple shelter stay. DHS issued a Request for Proposals and awarded four providers with contracts to deliver aftercare services following the Critical Time Intervention model.

LINC III families can receive services from HRA's Non-Residential DV Service contracts. For LINC IV, DHS is in discussions with the Department for the Aging (DFTA) to provide aftercare support to seniors, singles, and adult families, through their subcontract providers.

In addition, we are also moving forward with LINC VI, which will be targeted to families with children who exit shelter and move in with relatives or friends.

Organizational Excellence

The final goal of our operational plan is striving towards organizational excellence in all of the work that we do. We are striving to ensure that we have systems in place within DHS to support best practices in all aspects of

our work to improve outcomes for our clients. This includes training for DHS staff and shelter staff; clear and consistent policies and procedures on the various aspects of our work and professional development opportunities for all DHS and provider staff.

We must invest in DHS staff and provider agency staff to ensure that they have what they need to do their best work. Human service work and specifically work in DHS shelters is difficult and not without complication. Countertransference and emotional fatigue can take a toll on our staff who work with clients in shelter and clients threatened with housing instability. We must be attentive and responsive to the vicarious traumatic effects of our systems work on those who do this critically important and necessary work each and every day.

Organizational excellence must include strategies to support both our system and our staff who are committed to doing the work of reducing homelessness and improving lives.

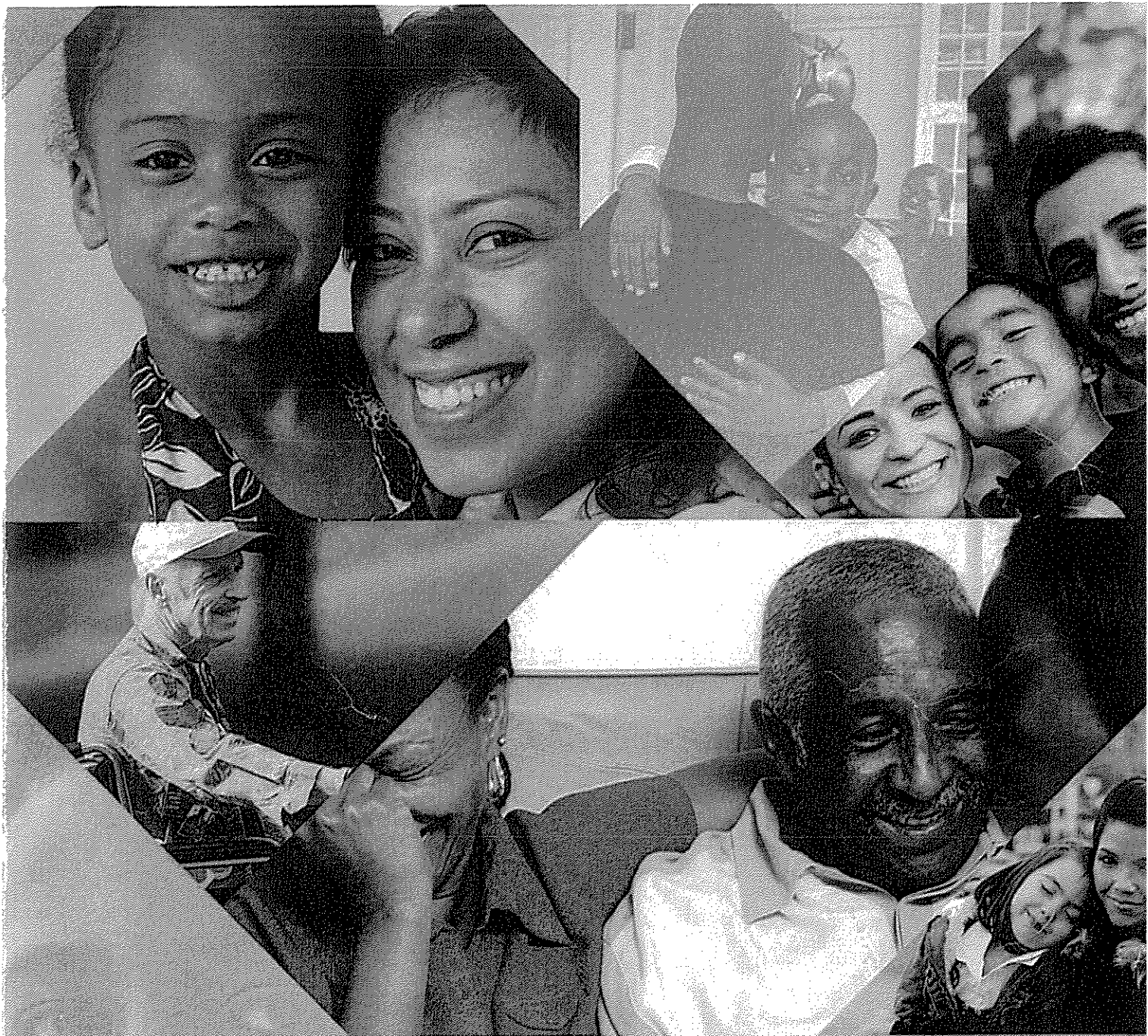
Conclusion

The Mayor's Fiscal Year 2016 budget builds upon this past year's efforts to reduce the census, improve conditions, and enhance services for our homeless clients across the city. This budget invests in the necessary supports to ensure that homeless clients are safe, have access to

comprehensive social services, and are able to achieve housing stability, independence, and permanency.

DHS' partnership with City Council is vital to ensuring we are successful in reducing homelessness and improving lives. I know that all of you on this Committee, and the Council as a whole, are equally committed to ensuring our most vulnerable New Yorkers are assisted on their journey home. I look forward to talking with all of you over the coming weeks and months to solicit your input and ideas on how we can improve upon this collaboration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My colleagues and I will now answer any questions you may have.



Department of
Homeless Services

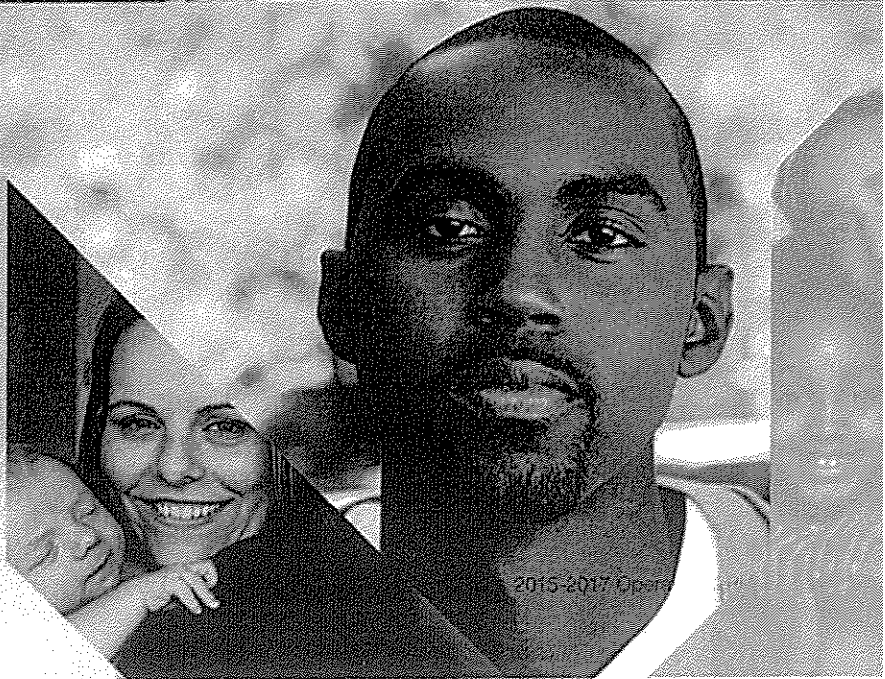
Reducing Homelessness, Improving Lives.

2015-2017 Operational Plan

Mayor Bill de Blasio

Commissioner Gilbert Taylor

Guiding the
journey home.



2015-2017 Operational Plan

March 2015

Over the past year, I've met with so many DHS staff and partners who taught me a great deal. I've seen your commitment. I've heard your input. And now it's time to realign the vision of DHS with our collective aspirations to reduce homelessness and improve lives.

With that input and purpose in mind, I am pleased to present the New York City Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) 2015 – 2017 Operational Plan. A new vision, a mission statement, core values, operating principles, and key strategies are at the heart of this document. All of these will serve to guide our work going forward.

Homelessness is a complex social issue that impacts communities at every level and is a source of grave concern to policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels. The common threads among homeless families and individuals are poverty, sub-living wages, and lack of affordable housing. In New York City, the lack of affordable housing, low wages, and rising rates of poverty tend to cause homelessness more so than they do in many other places. In addition, the unique right-to-shelter law in NYC vests us with a moral and legal obligation to assist homeless New Yorkers during their time of need. As Commissioner, I am committed to advancing our agency's vision and mission as well as to supporting the work that our dedicated staff and partners do each and every day to assist individuals and families in crisis.

Mayor de Blasio's leadership and commitment to homeless issues in this city have enabled DHS to make significant strides within the past year.

1. DHS has expanded our homelessness prevention initiatives by doubling the financial investment into the Homebase program to increase the number of Homebase offices in New York City to the highest levels in the history of the program.
2. DHS has expanded our agency's outreach work for unsheltered homeless New Yorkers to include subway outreach—which we took over from the MTA—and has more than doubled the level of funding to enhance and strengthen their work.
3. DHS has strengthened the work that is being done in shelter with homeless individuals and families by focusing on improving physical plant conditions and by improving social service programming in all DHS shelter types.
4. DHS has increased the number of available housing resources for homeless individuals and families to help them exit shelter and move into permanent and stable housing by creating rental assistance programs and by making access to public housing available once again for qualified homeless families.

The most important thing I learned in the listening tour that I embarked on when I became Commissioner is that being homeless is about much more than just not having a place to sleep or shelter. It's about not having a home.

What is a home, really? The word means so much to us because we know it means so much more than a roof and four walls.

- A home is a center of connection
- A home is a foundation of community
- A home is a source of support

And when you don't have these things, it is truly a time of crisis.

The Journey Home

During the next three years, we will build on the foundation that we have created from our first year and refocus our efforts to meet the challenges facing New Yorkers who are threatened with housing instability and homelessness. Specifically, this plan will enable us to identify long-term sustainable strategies to assist people to achieve housing self-sufficiency; use the existing system of resources and services established as a safety net to best serve our clients; improve case management; and achieve more efficient coordination of services across the DHS system of care.

There are no easy answers to this complex problem. Each individual and family is on a long and difficult journey home. It's our mission to make that journey easier with the support, connection, and community that they need to take each step.

When we work together, we can guide their journey home.

Sincerely,

Gilbert Taylor

Gilbert Taylor
Commissioner



Our Vision

Vision Statement

Reducing Homelessness, Improving Lives

Mission Statement

With our partners, our goal is to prevent homelessness when possible; to provide temporary, emergency shelter when needed; and to help individuals and families transition rapidly into permanent housing. We do this through providing coordinated, compassionate, high-quality services and supports.

Operating Principles

- Implementing our legal mandate to temporarily house those in need.
- Informing communities about the drivers and dynamics of homelessness.
- Recognizing that poverty in New York City often manifests itself as homelessness.
- Supporting the creation of affordable housing and living wages.
- Implementing the New York City model of practice for homeless services.

Core Values

Excellence.

Provide the highest quality services to all clients.

Compassion.

Provide services with empathy.

Hope.

Inspire or encourage all clients to achieve their goals.

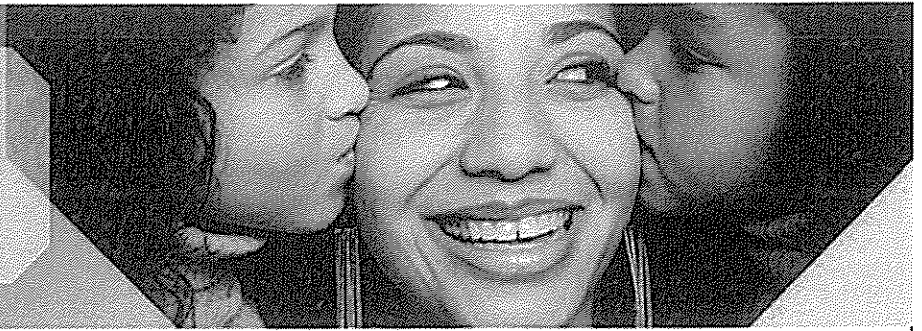
Integrity.

Provide all services to clients with reliability and consistency.

Resilience.

Provide strength and support to our clients in the face of adversity.

Our Goals



Our Goals

Prevention.

In collaboration with our partners, we provide comprehensive services that combat the many drivers of homelessness.

Outreach.

We deploy teams throughout the city 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, to engage and move people living on the streets and in subways into transitional and permanent housing.

Shelter.

We provide temporary, emergency, and safe transitional housing to eligible individuals and families.

Housing Permanency.

We help our clients maintain their housing, and we transition clients who are in shelter into permanent and stable housing.

Organizational Excellence.

We provide the best possible training, tools, opportunities, and supervision to all of our employees and our provider network. We are developing a culture where our model of practice is informed by data and results.



Prevention

In collaboration with our partners, we provide comprehensive services that combat the many drivers of homelessness.

1. Deliver prevention services through existing community networks and neighborhood-based organizations.

- Partner with a wide variety of community-based, faith-based, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations to provide a network of support for people facing housing instability.
- Enhance and expand Homebase services to address and reduce single adult and family homelessness.
- Implement an ongoing communication strategy about homelessness and the services available to individuals and families through the Homebase program.

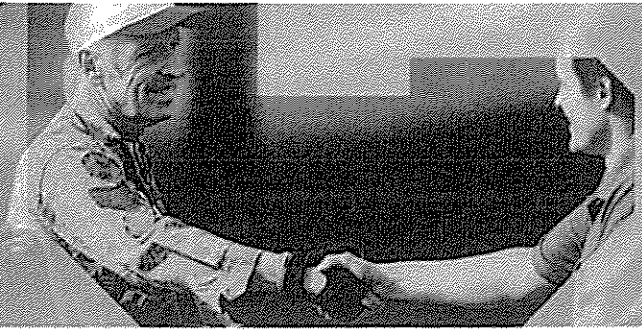
2. Deliver prevention services through strong coordination across government agencies at city, state, and federal levels.

- Convene quarterly meetings of the Deputy Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Homelessness to share, promote, and implement best practices.
- Coordinate with other agencies to enhance the effectiveness of homeless prevention services.

3. Define and deliver the New York City model for preventing homelessness.

- Connect clients to services and supports that ensure that they can remain housed in their communities.
- Develop consistent intake and assessment tools across all relevant agencies and organizations.
- Identify alternatives to shelter for adults, adult families, and families with children.
- Inform and engage communities across the city about the services available to prevent homelessness.
- Implement quality assurance measures to ensure that preventive services are of the highest quality.

Outreach



Throughout the city, we deploy teams around the clock to encourage people living on the streets and in subways to move into transitional and permanent housing.

1. Increase the number of quality services delivered in safe havens, drop-in centers, and stabilization beds for street and subway homeless.

- Identify additional resources and beds for street and subway homeless clients, including the services of the faith-based community and the interests of philanthropic foundations.
- Strategically place safe havens and drop-in centers in areas of high concentration of street homeless individuals.
- Inform the public about how to connect street and subway homeless individuals to DHS services.

2. Develop and coordinate a multi-agency approach to addressing street and subway homeless.

- Develop policies, procedures, and strategies with other agencies to reduce the number of unsheltered individuals living on the streets and in subways.
- Develop and implement policies, procedures, and strategies to most effectively work with chronic street homeless individuals.
- Augment existing models of outreach services to better incorporate health and mental health services.
- Inform and engage communities around the city about the services available to individuals sleeping on the streets and in the subways.



Shelter

We provide temporary, emergency, and safe transitional housing to eligible individuals and families.

1. Reenvision the models of shelter provided in New York City.

- Develop shelters with services that benefit communities.
- Develop flexible financing models for shelter that promote increased pathways to permanency.
- Coordinate with city, private, philanthropic, and stakeholders in communities that host DHS shelters throughout New York City.
- Expand the DHS network of developers, brokers, landlords, and nonprofit service providers.
- Promote shared responsibility and accountability between clients and providers.
- Reduce focus on cluster sites, focus instead on purpose-built shelters.
- Examine security practices across the shelter system, with particular emphasis on cluster site temporary housing.

2. Develop a model of practice that provides a full range of high-quality services and supports in all shelters.

- Provide services that are tailored to individuals and families, allowing access to vocational, educational, recreational, childcare, and health-related services.
- Staff shelters appropriately to meet client needs and to strengthen the provision of social services, case management, housing placement, and security.
- Create provider system of accountability that focuses on quality services and safety for clients.
- Implement plan to ensure that cluster site operators provide the appropriate level of social services for our clients.

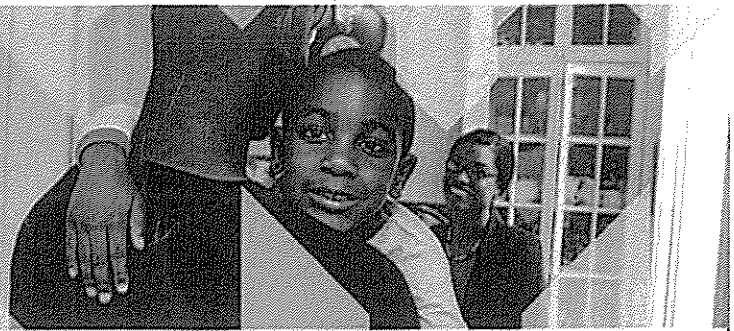
3. Improve physical plant conditions throughout the DHS shelter system.

- Create a regulatory compliance / internal audit unit to oversee building and code compliance at DHS and provider-run shelters.
- Ensure that the physical conditions of all facilities are assessed by the agency's Maintenance and Repair Unit.
- Use capital funding to improve aging and hard-used infrastructure.
- Work with providers to improve and assess community and recreational spaces for clients in shelters.
- Engage nonprofit institutions and volunteer organizations to help beautify public spaces in shelters.
- Develop and implement the best practices for design standards for shelter.

4. Build stronger partnerships with multiple government agencies and community-based organizations to provide services.

- Establish memorandums of understanding to clarify the role of government agencies that work with special client populations.
- Strengthen coordination with community networks and program services to assist individuals and families with reintegration into their community.

Housing Permanency



We help our clients maintain housing, and we transition clients who are in shelter into permanent and stable housing.

1. Identify and connect clients to housing opportunities.

- Administer rental assistance programs for eligible shelter clients.
- Reduce the agency's reliance on cluster sites for shelter and, when possible, return those units to the affordable housing market.
- Develop tailored Independent Living Plans (ILPs) for clients in shelter and connect them to appropriate housing.

2. Build strong partnerships with community organizations to provide aftercare and support to our clients as they transition out of shelter.

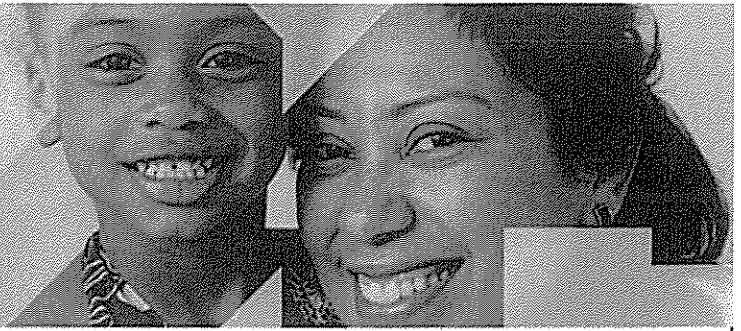
- Connect all clients who exit shelter to high-quality community-based programs and resources.
- Engage faith-based, community, and civic leaders across the city to support individuals and families who need assistance transitioning out of shelter.

3. Design and implement effective aftercare models for all clients.

- Create a model of practice for aftercare services that is tailored to meet the needs of clients who exit shelter.
- Highlight the importance of coordination across government agencies and community organizations to support transition from shelter.

Guiding the
journey home.

Organizational Excellence



We provide the best possible training, tools, opportunities, and supervision to all our employees and our provider network. We are developing a culture where our model of practice is informed by data and results.

1. Enhance and strengthen system-wide trainings for all staff and providers.

- Create a curriculum to train all staff and providers on the New York City model of practice for homeless services.
- Emphasize skills needed to serve clients and include such modules as new staff orientation, project management, mentoring, team building, case management, motivational interviewing, and team conferencing.

2. Establish clear expectations and accountability for all provider agencies.

- Ensure all shelter sites are contracted and contain provisions for active enforcement.
- Develop and implement quality assurance standards and indicators.
- Develop a continuous quality improvement model.
- Deliver technical assistance and resource supports to all staff providers.
- Collaborate with other agencies to inspect, preserve, and expand DHS's shelter stock, while simultaneously creating housing opportunities for clients.
- Develop inspection and monitoring protocols that are uniform system-wide to ensure that shelters are in compliance with safety and security mandates.

3. Encourage employee engagement, incentives, and appreciation.

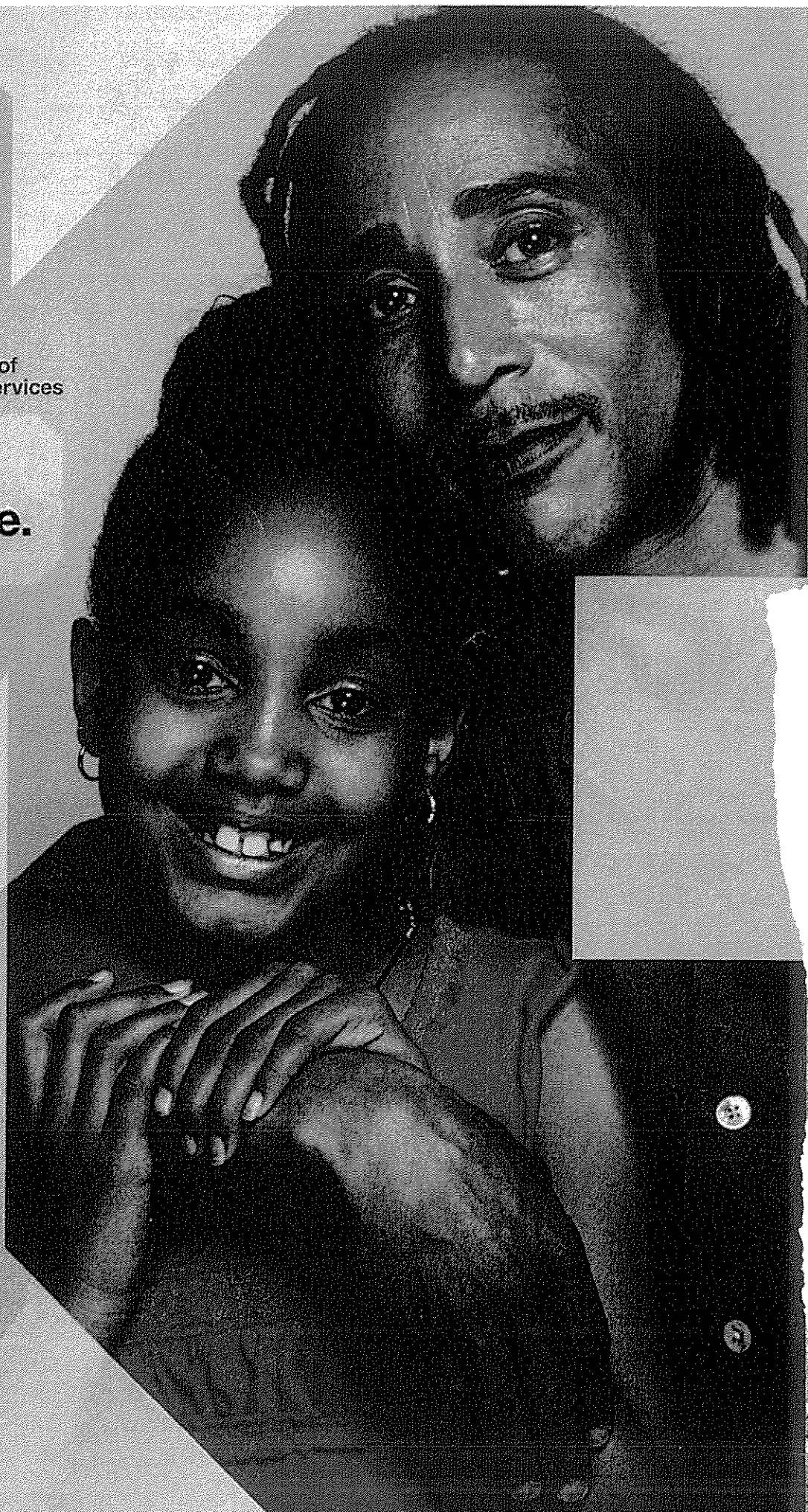
- Engage employees and managers in discussions about career ladders, training, and educational incentives to improve the work environment.
- Develop mentoring models for staff.

4. Establish Home.Stat for performance measurement and quality assurance.

- Pursue data-driven strategies, evidence-informed practices, a culture of accountability, and shared responsibility with all employees and providers.
- Establish a uniform case management system across the service continuum.
- Implement performance evaluations and provider accountability.
- Implement uniform facility standards to improve health and safety.

NYC Department of
Homeless Services

Guiding the
journey home.





Gladys Carrión, Commissioner
Testimony to the New York City Council
Committees on General Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Women's Issues
March 17, 2015

"New York City Council Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget Hearing"

Good morning Chairs Levin, Cumbo, and Cabrera, and members of the Finance, General Welfare, Women's Issues, and Juvenile Justice Committees. I am Gladys Carrión, Commissioner of New York City's Administration for Children's Services. With me today is Susan Nuccio, Deputy Commissioner of Financial Services. I appreciate having this opportunity to brief you on the preliminary budget and to update you on Children's Services' ongoing work to protect and support New York's vulnerable children and families.

Overview

Children's Services budget for the 2016 preliminary budget plan provides for operating expenses of \$2.95 billion, of which approximately \$907 million is city tax levy. This is an increase of last year's Adopted 2015 budget of \$2.91 billion and approximate \$895 million city tax levy funding. The twelve million dollar City Tax Levy increase is due to the new funding added in the 2015 Executive and the 2016 Preliminary Budgets – funding that has been added primarily to support child welfare reforms.

Child Welfare and Reform Efforts

For too long, the world of child welfare has focused on protecting children without paying attention to how they are *doing*. Promoting the well-being of the children must be as important as keeping them safe and stable. All of the initiatives that comprise our preliminary 2016 budget are oriented toward these goals: safety, permanency **and** well-being.

ACS' child welfare work is threefold and involves protective, preventive and foster care services. Each year we investigate over 60,000 reports of maltreatment, and

we provide preventive services to over 25,000 families so children can remain safely at home. And, when out-of-home placements are necessary, we oversee approximately 11,000 children in foster care. ACS depends on over 2,000 dedicated frontline staff to make difficult decisions that have profound consequences in the lives of children and families. I am so pleased to announce that the preliminary 2016 budget positions ACS to make the most significant investment in our workforce and child welfare practice in over decade. As proposed, the budget will also help ACS strengthen our ability to provide intensive services to families, and to better identify which families could benefit the most from these services.

Early in the de Blasio administration, ACS embarked on a series of reforms to bolster our child welfare practice. All of the initiatives related to last year's Operation S.A.F.E are well underway: we are in the process of hiring 362 new positions, including 130 new Child Protective Specialists; creating 23 new Family Services Units, which oversee our highest risk cases; and adding three new units in Emergency Children's Services, which initiate child protective investigations overnight and during weekends. ACS has also hired 35 new attorney and administrative staff within our Division of Family Court Legal Services to support our legal efforts in Family Court to promote positive outcomes for vulnerable children and families and to help assess the appropriate level of supervision in high risk cases.

As we expand our frontline staff, we must make sure they are constantly strengthened, developed and supported throughout their careers. The Preliminary Budget allocates \$9.79 million to establish an ACS Workforce Institute, in partnership with CUNY and our nonprofit provider agencies. This institute will support professional

development opportunities similar to those offered by other helping professions, such as teaching and medicine. Every child welfare worker will have meaningful educational opportunities, from the latest in brain science and evidence-based mental health programs, to the most effective family engagement strategies. In addition to serving all of our frontline staff, the institute will also support our provider partners, which include more than 2,000 preventive and foster care case workers employed by our contracted providers. The institute will feature a curriculum developed by experts in the child welfare and educational fields and provide a full catalogue of courses with simulated and experiential learning. ACS is also developing a comprehensive coaching model which will reinforce a culture of supportive supervision and continuous improvement in our work.

The most important and challenging decisions our child protective professionals must make relate to assessing risk. The preliminary budget funds ACS to develop a “predictive” risk-assessment data tool that will bolster our capacity to target appropriate support services and interventions. We will join other jurisdictions, like California, Michigan, and Florida, who already use aggregated data compiled from hundreds of thousands of child welfare cases to understand what factors predict whether a family may be the subject of a future substantiated report. Some of these factors include histories of foster care placement, past incidence of domestic violence, level of prior ACS involvement, and incidents of homelessness. By combining these factors in an analytic database, frontline staff at different stages of a case will be better able to identify highest risk families and ensure that they receive a higher level of supportive interventions that can help prevent maltreatment and future system involvement.

Experiencing the stress and trauma of poverty, homelessness, depression, substance abuse, and violence places extraordinary challenges on parents and their children, especially those who are under five years of age. Research shows that children at highest risk of severe neglect or injury are those whose bond with their caregivers is not strong. The 2016 budget proposes that ACS adds 240 new slots of evidenced-based preventive services focused on these high-risk families with young children. We believe that the additional investment in evidence-based clinical mental health services for parents with trauma, as well as mental health services for parents and very young children, will provide tremendous support to this vulnerable population.

Families and children experiencing housing instability and homelessness are among the city's most vulnerable citizens. At any given time, about one quarter of the families in homeless shelters are actively involved with ACS. Since the beginning of Mayor de Blasio's administration, ACS has, in close collaboration with DHS, developed a series of new measures to better understand the needs of ACS child welfare-involved families in shelters and to increase interagency coordination to ensure proper services and supports. Under the 2016 budget, ACS will re-establish two Child Protection Units at the PATH Center in the Bronx. These new units will be comprised of one Child Protection Manager, two Child Protective Supervisors, and ten Child Protective Specialists. Working in tandem with DHS intake staff, these units will assess the needs and risk of incoming ACS involved families and help them access a wide array of preventive services, community supports, and childcare. In addition, this spring, ACS will conduct an enrollment drive to ensure that every child in a DHS shelter under five has access to child care.

Finally, of all the fatalities of children known to our child welfare system, half involved infant deaths related to unsafe sleeping conditions. Practices like sharing a bed with an infant, having objects in the crib, and placing infants on their stomachs can be dangerous. Using a public health approach, we are working with agencies like the Health and Hospitals Corporation, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, community based organizations, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the private sector, to develop a coordinated public awareness campaign. The proposed budget allows ACS to hire outreach liaisons, whose work will include engaging community members, developing local strategies, and distributing educational materials related to safe sleeping practices. We look forward to partnering with the Council on this important initiative.

Early Care and Education

Considering the impact that quality early education has on the development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills for all children, especially those coming from highly stressed environments is integral to ACS' work of strengthening and supporting families. ACS is deeply invested in moving toward a coordinated and aligned early care and education system that provides quality services for all children.

As many of you know, in December ACS issued an RFP to award \$56 million in new *EarlyLearn* NYC services. The RFP targeted 39 zip codes in locations where the City Council has funded child care services for the past several years. ACS is currently reviewing the submissions and we expect to announce recommended awards for approximately 4,800 *EarlyLearn* NYC seats by the end of April. We recognize that the

transition to *EarlyLearn* may present new challenges for some providers and so we look forward to continued communication with the Council in the months ahead. We are excited to bring in new providers and serve additional communities with quality early care and education services.

Juvenile Justice

The time has come for New York State to offer developmentally appropriate services to the 16 and 17 year olds who come to the attention of the justice system. This will be accomplished when the state passes the proposed legislation raising the age of criminal responsibility, which ACS strongly supports. One of the existing functions of ACS is to work with juvenile justice involved youth to promote public safety and improve the lives of young people, families, and communities by providing therapeutic treatment, safe and secure custodial care, responsive health care, effective re-entry services, and promoting educational achievement. Raise the Age will allow our agency to extend these interventions, services and care to the 16 and 17 year olds who need and can benefit from them.

ACS is committed to providing young people in our juvenile justice programs with safe and secure environments as well as programming and exposure to experiences that encourage youth to thrive. We firmly believe that preventive services for youth in crisis are imperative and out-of-home juvenile justice placement is, and should be, our last option. As such, I am happy to report that the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services extended their contract with ACS, NY Foundling and the Center for Court Innovation, to provide alternative to detention (ATD) services to youth in Queens.

These services address the needs of youth who are at risk of detention due solely to family instability or conflict rather than public safety or failure-to-appear. The initial funding timeline for this program was March 2013 through December 2014 and was recently extended by DCJS through December 2015 with an additional \$ 333,000 in funding.

To better serve youth in secure detention, we are looking to add significant funding to improve the infrastructures of the two facilities that we directly operate. We are moving forward with large scale renovations that will include: the creation of a psychiatric medical suite in both Crossroads and Horizon; classroom updates and upgrades; energy, lighting, roofing and plumbing upgrades; kitchen equipment upgrades; and outdoor recreation area enhancements. We believe these physical enhancements will greatly improve young people's experience while in our care.

I am excited to announce that Limited Secure Placement (LSP), Phase II of Close to Home, will officially launch next month. We experienced some challenges with respect to construction and renovation of the LSP sites, however our three non-profit partner provider agencies have hired over 300 staff, conducted numerous trainings during the past 6 weeks and are on track to begin accepting LSP youth. Each of the six sites will serve twelve to twenty youth, for a total projected census of approximately 100 young people in the LSP system.

Conclusion

It is my sincere hope that as I endeavor to continue to strengthen the work of ACS, I can also reframe our work to impact on well-being that speak to the success of

our young people. I would also like to thank our dedicated workforce for their tireless efforts to support the children and families of New York City. I look forward to a continued productive collaboration with the City Council. Thank you for your time this morning. I welcome your comments and questions.

TESTIMONY

**New York City Council Fiscal Year 2015 Preliminary Budget.
Mayor's FY'16 Preliminary Management Report and
Agency Oversight Hearings**

**Committee on General Welfare
Stephen Levin, Chair**

**Presented on
*Tuesday, March 17, 2015***



**The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators
Ernest Logan, President
Mark Cannizzaro, Executive Vice President
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Preliminary Budget Hearing – General Welfare, March 17, 2015

Good morning. We would like to thank Chairs Levin, Cabrera and Cumbo, and distinguished members of the City Council for the opportunity to add our voice to today's hearing. On behalf of the Council Supervisors and Administrators (CSA), President Ernest Logan and the nearly 16,000 school leaders and retirees represented by CSA, I thank you.

CSA continues to support the City's plan to establish high quality universal pre-kindergarten (UPK) and high quality after-school programs for middle school youth. With these initiatives now in place, we have an excellent opportunity to build and strengthen these established programs. We must ensure we provide the funding and resources that will allow these programs to thrive.

Early Education

The importance of Early Childhood Education and middle school after-school program in the city budget cannot be overstated. EarlyLearn can be strengthened by increasing the provider rate, and research has shown that children who have enjoyed the benefits of universal pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are not only better prepared for first grade, but perform better throughout their school experience. UPK is not only a worthwhile investment in our children; it is an investment in the future of our city.

CSA was among the earliest supporters of the mayor's UPK initiative and we continue to applaud his passionate advocacy and tenacity. We continue to encourage the City to pursue a UPK initiative that is the product of thoughtful consideration and planning. Much has been accomplished, but much still needs to be improved. Before we can bring UPK to a sustainable scale, we must focus on what CSA calls the three Qs: quality oversight, quality teaching and quality content. We need to get this right.

Current oversight of the UPK program has not been centralized and therefore is not sufficiently accountable. Some UPK contracts come under the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and others under the Department of Education. In other cases, overseen private enterprises are also involved. If UPK is to be of the highest quality, it must oversee by a single agency, one with expertise in education and the ability to set high standards. The Department of Education is clearly that agency. It has an existing structure for early childhood education, can assure alignment with the public schools' K-12 practices, and provide consistent supervision of teaching and learning in every early childhood classroom.

We must have a DOE-administered, unified continuum of superb Early Childhood Education. That unified program must be supported by a budget that fully covers the cost of center operation, health care and contracted salaries. We must also ensure that we attract and retain skilled and caring educators. Currently, Early Childhood educators are not only subjected to salary inequities, but must cope with conflicting city, state and federal licensing requirements. Those who are represented by CSA are working under an expired contract. Their plight was entirely overlooked by the previous administration; we expect more of the current mayor. In the

interest of these educators and the children they serve, and in the interest of justice, the City must provide a contract at last.

Budget Dance

We could not be more passionate about our call for all oversight of early childhood education to be brought under the control of the Department of Education. Such a move would streamline the complex contracting process and be more likely to result in an Early Childhood Education budget that fully covers the costs of center based-operations, healthcare, and collective bargaining agreements.

The current pay-to-play approach of the Early Childhood Education Centers results in a 5% shortfall that makes it difficult for centers to pay for staff and invest in facilities. Families, children and educators deserve better than this.

When the previous administration attempted to cut \$210 million of city funding from children's programs, including the elimination of more than \$47,000 in child care and after school slots, the City Council put its foot down.

We are forever grateful for the Council's support in maintaining the commitment to our youngest children and negotiating a budget that restored the funding that was essential to maintaining critical services. This included more than \$60 million for the Out-of-School Time After-School program and more than \$62 million for child care.

Unfortunately, nearly all these restorations were one year commitments and will vanish at the end of June. City Council funding restorations spared many Early Childhood Education Centers and family childcare networks, but that funding is also due to expire on June 30th. Clearly, a more constant source of funding is urgently needed.

We are hopeful that the City Council will continue to support the city funded centers. We are aware that the City Council is engaged in discussions about whether to incorporate slots into the EarlyLearn model; however, we continue to have reservations about this financially blended structure of Early Childhood Education.

We also urge the New York City Council to explore the possibility of increasing discretionary funding so that Early Childhood Education Centers can remain open during the summer months.

EarlyLearn NYC

EarlyLearn was intended to be an efficient way of merging child care and early education into a single, seamless system. Yet, since its implementation in 2012, a lack of space has left eligible families scrambling for seats. EarlyLearn has been a source of confusion, frustration, and anxiety for both families and child care providers.

We continue to ask for fiscal transparency and accountability. There is a significant discrepancy in the amount of money per child that contracted providers receive for UPK from both DOE and ACS. We raise that here, because the ACS EarlyLearn model incorporates and leverages a blended funding model that included UPK. How can we expect the same standards for UPK in

an EarlyLearn center that offers less than 25% of the funding that DOE contracted centers receive?

The EarlyLearn system is underfunded, which affects the overall quality that Early Childhood Education Centers are able to provide, such as classroom supplies, training for staff and facility upgrades. Again, the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators would like to ultimately see the oversight of ECE centers transferred to the DOE for more efficiency. The Department of Education is the umbrella that manages education; therefore, this transfer seems logical. Also, EarlyLearn needs to be linked to the elementary schools and brought under the DOE umbrella so that this goal can be achieved easily.

The current administration prides itself on promoting equity and access to quality public education. We hope that the administration will note that the underfunded EarlyLearn initiative is clearly moving the city in the wrong direction. Although research to document the educational efficacy of the EarlyLearn model hasn't been offered, there is much discussion of the fiscal efficiency that the blended funding model has generated. But, we should be paying more attention to the educational component of EarlyLearn and asking for the research to support the educational aspect of the model.

It is a daunting task to figure out a sustainable budgetary support structure without making cuts elsewhere that might diminish the gains made by the early childhood advantage. We are acutely aware of the financial and ethical challenges facing this committee as you grapple with the decisions that need to be made. We know that you want to make decisions that are both fiscally prudent and at the same time supportive of children and families. As always, CSA remains committed to working with our partners on the committee, and with the various agencies to ensure we are doing what's best for our city's children and families. If we can be of any assistance in planning for the future, we hope that you will call on us to be a part of the solution.

Let's end ACS oversight of EarlyLearn and transfer ECE contract administration to the DOE, achieve salary parity and get a fair contract in place. Also, expediting the repair of NYCHA facilities that house Early Childhood Education programs is crucial.

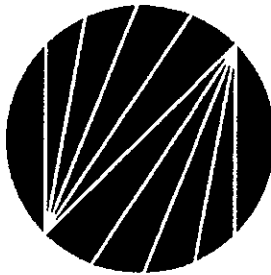
A more human approach must be taken because Early Childhood Education makes a meaningful difference in people's lives, but the centers and educators simply have not been treated fairly. The future of early childhood education is at a crossroads, and as a city we must make the right choices going forward so that every child is assured a bright future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Randi Herman

1st Vice President

FOR THE RECORD



New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

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Good afternoon and thank you, Chairs of the General Welfare, Women's and Juvenile Justice Committees and members of the committees for allowing me to submit this testimony on behalf of the New York City Sexual Assault Initiative. My name is Mary Haviland and I am the Executive Director of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault. Founded in 2000, our mission is to prevent sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes through prevention and intervention.

Sexual assault is a serious public health and public safety issue in our community. Despite continued efforts from the community and increased visibility in media, sexual violence remains a pervasive issue. New York City has experienced a five-year upward trend in forcible rapes, with a total of **1,537 rapes reported to the NYPD in 2014**. The forcible rapes reported in 2013 represents nearly **65% of the total number of reported rapes in New York State**. Moreover, using the CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) prevalence figures, New York City has almost 840,000 women and men who have experienced rape in their lifetimes, about 2.72 million who have experienced other rape victimization in their lifetimes, and 47,220 women who have experienced rape in the last 12 months.

I am here today to talk about the Sexual Assault Initiative which is comprised of four of the city's leading service providers including **Kingsbridge Heights Community Center**,

Mount Sinai's Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI), the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, and Mount Sinai St. Luke's-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment Center (CVTC). Collectively the Initiative provides free and comprehensive services to over 2,000 victims of sexual assault, including **children, women, and men**, and conducts over 10,000 **counseling and training session** across the five boroughs.

The New York City Sexual Assault Initiative respectfully requests funding in a total of \$600,000 – \$150,000 for each of the four programs in FY2016. Demand for services rises and shifts each year. Our request is to address the **current waitlists of all groups** as well as to **effectively respond to the increased demand for services and training from colleges and universities.** For instance, the Alliance in partnership with Kings County District Attorney's Office trained 90 professionals from CUNY including Title IX Coordinators as well as related personnel. However, with the limited staff and resources the Initiative is unable to effectively respond to all victims who are calling for assistance or to the current training requests that are coming to our programs from college campuses. We believe that no sexual assault victim should have to wait to receive services. With the proposed funding amount of \$600,000, the Sexual Assault Initiative seeks to:

- Hire a Mandarin-speaking Master's level trauma therapist to meet the needs of the growing population of Mandarin-speaking trafficking survivors in Queens at **Mount Sinai's Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI)**
- Hire a Spanish-speaking trauma counselor with experience working with male victims, and intimate partner violence in Manhattan at **Mount Sinai St. Luke's-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment Center (CVTC).**

- Hire a bilingual Spanish-speaking Master's level trauma therapist to provide individual therapy sessions to children and families in Bronx at **Kingsbridge Heights Community Center**;
- Respond to the increased need for training and certification of emergency room professionals treating sexual assault victims in all five boroughs at the **New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault**; and
- For each of our programs to respond to the increased demand for services and training from colleges and universities to help better handle sexual assault cases in all five boroughs.

I would like to add a few more words about the Sexual Assault initiative and the role of the Alliance in that initiative. The Alliance has been in the leadership of the Initiative over the last 3 years and we would like to acknowledge that the Council generously increased the initiative by 50% last year from \$200,000 to 300,000. This has allowed our council-funded, Sexual Assault Forensic Training Institute to be that much more effective in the last year. For the Alliance's part, we have been able to train 90 medical professionals so far this year, and individually certify 59 of those as Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (26 applications are pending). We have also been able to bring a new Center of Excellence on line, the Lenox Hill Health Plex, located on 7th Ave. and 13th St. in Manhattan. A Center of Excellence is willing to provide best practice acute care to survivors of sexual assault through its emergency department. The Alliance facilitated this certification process through the NYS Department of Health, adding the first new Center since 2011, bringing the total in NYC to 18. In addition, the Alliance has training 190 human services workers including 90 CUNY title IX, safety and student affairs staff in trauma centered approaches to survivors of sexual assault. This is a snap shot of what just one of us in the Sexual Assault Initiative was able to do in the last 8 months as a result of City Council funding.

At this time, I would like to turn your attention to the state funding crisis. Rape Crisis Network statewide has been destabilized by the state funding cut in a total of over \$4million. As the network faces the largest staff layoff in its history, 15 rape crisis programs in New York City are also immediately affected. The Alliance on behalf of the rape crisis program network, are proposing a three-part initiative to further address the urgent needs faced by the network that serves thousands of victims and survivors annually. The network asks the following support:

- Provide grants of **\$50,000 to 15 qualifying, certified rape crisis centers** that provide direct services to survivors of sexual assault.
- Create **2 SAFE Centers of Excellence** and **2 rape crisis services in Brooklyn and Bronx**, the boroughs with the most limited acute care services for victims of sexual violence.
- Create **on-campus technical assistance, back-up centers** to provide training and capacity building and **centralized call centers** that provide **crisis intervention counseling** and serve as **referral hubs to campuses, universities, and their students** in New York City.

More detailed information on this proposal is available from Mary Haviland, mhaviland@svfreenyc.org

On behalf of survivors of sexual assault, I thank you for your reading this testimony.

**Testimony of the
United Federation of Teachers**

**Before the
New York City Council
Committee on General Welfare
Committee on Women's Issues
And the
Committee on Juvenile Justice**

**Regarding the Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget – NYC Administration of Children
Services**

March 17, 2015

Good afternoon Chairman Levin, Chairwoman Cumbo, Chairman Cabrera and members of the General Welfare, Women's Issues and Juvenile Justice committees. My name is Jeremy Hoffman and I am Director of Child Care Policy at the United Federation of Teachers. On behalf of our union's more than 200,000 members, including roughly 20,000 home-based Family Child Care providers, I want to thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on the mayor's fiscal year 2016 preliminary budget as it relates to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and child care specifically.

First, I would like to thank the New York City Council for its fierce advocacy fighting for the rights of children and families and for its leadership ensuring the necessary checks and balances to protect the interests of those in our city who have the smallest voice but the greatest need. We appreciate your oversight of the budget process and of the agencies responsible for our children's education and well-being, including through your important hearing earlier this year on EarlyLearn NYC.

We again look to you to lead in the effort to gain more funding for subsidized child care and for your continued advocacy on behalf of parents' rights to high-quality child care options. As the City Council begins its deliberation over the city's proposed fiscal year 2016 Administration for Children's Services budget we urge this body to place a greater emphasis on expanding access to quality child care and respecting parents' rights to choose the child care which best fits their needs.

Support Investment in Early Child Care Education

Early learners may span in age from 6 months through preschool and the first two grades of elementary school. Our focus in today's hearing is those early learners cared for by our members, family child care providers, whose families receive New York City child care subsidies. Our members are licensed by the state of New York and can take care of as many as 14 children, age six months to 13 years, in programs that look like miniature child care centers. Most however, operate from their homes and, depending on space and staffing levels, care for far fewer children.

A small segment of our members are affiliated with a family child care network, but the vast majority are independent providers who work directly with parents. The child care subsidy for most parents is awarded in the form of a voucher as part of their Human Resources Administration cash assistance. Ostensibly, vouchers afford parents the flexibility to choose the child care provider that best fits their need. However, a number of parents receive their subsidy in the form of a slot in the city's EarlyLearn system of child care centers and family child care networks. Many parents choose family child care for a variety of reasons including, the flexibility of non-traditional hours, the cultural competency of the providers and the opportunity for their children to receive care in a smaller setting.

Our union, like the City Council, has championed Mayor de Blasio's universal prekindergarten (UPK) expansion. As the city continues to build and develop the UPK program, we seek your support to make concurrent investments in child care. A stronger benefit accrues to children and families when efforts targeted to early learners are prioritized in the city's budget. The foundation for prekindergarten learning is laid in a child's earliest years. We strongly believe that insufficient child care investment undermines our city's ability to help every child fully develop to his or her fullest potential. By the time children are enrolled in a pre-K program they are already 4 years old, and those who come to prekindergarten without any prior, structured early care and education enter at a disadvantage compared to their peers.

Furthermore, families do not neatly fit within only one program or funding stream. Many parents have two or more children, one of whom may be enrolled in pre-K and the other younger one in child care. Many of these families turn to family child care for their younger children. But at a time when the number of families needing child care far outstrips the number of city child care subsidies available, children whose families are unable to access this service fall behind. It must be noted, that low-income and disproportionately families of color are dependent on the availability of both programs in order to meet their need.

The trend for access to family child care is moving in the wrong direction. The number of children enrolled in the family child care programs of our members has dropped precipitously from nearly 68,000 in fiscal year 2006 to roughly 45,000 this fiscal year. That is 23,000 fewer children receiving child care subsidies because of limited funding for the program. By ACS' own estimates, only 27 percent of income-eligible families receive a child care subsidy.

By better aligning child care and pre-K we can actually strengthen both. The UFT, in partnership with our national union, the AFT, is already beginning to develop new approaches to

kindergarten readiness that has pre-K and child care working together. Strategic funding increases would help balance out the cost structure by facilitating some technical changes to the rates and realigning them. As one example, the city has the authority to institute an enhanced rate for non-traditional hours for child care vouchers, which is hours of care that many low-income working parents need and which Family Child Care is able to provide.

The Complex Funding Landscape of Family Child Care

To increase access to quality care and education we need to look holistically at early care and education. Because parents access early care and education services at schools and community-based organizations as well as at home-based family child care, the city needs to stabilize and strengthen each. Unfortunately, a fundamental restructuring of early care and education is occurring which is rising operational costs for family child care. Last November the federal government, for the first time since 1996, reauthorized the Child Care Development Block Grant, the nation's primary funding source for child care. It includes a number of new, costly and unfunded mandates that will be implemented over the next several years. Concurrent with that, the pre-K expansion in New York City, while critically important for child development, creates a bit of uncertainty for family child care providers who now need to enroll an increased number of younger children. This change in the cost structure creates a snowball effect by raising the costs for our members; specifically, more staff is required to supervise younger children. Historically, our family child care members have relied on having a mixed-age group of children, all with different payment rates and required staffing levels, to piece together a financially viable program.

For family child care providers who participate in the EarlyLearn NYC system the situation is even more complicated. Although they represent a relatively small segment of family child care providers — roughly 1,700 out of the 20,000 total providers — they face a number of additional challenges. As I testified in January, Bloomberg's EarlyLearn NYC redesign of the contracted child care system resulted in most family child care networks becoming sub-entities of child care centers. Previously, each network had been its own separate organization and together they in many respects constituted a child care system parallel to the city's child care centers. But the finances of centers and networks have become interlocked. In order to make themselves financially whole or closer to whole, many networks have lowered the rates that they pay to their affiliated family child care providers and have increased the various administrative fees that they deduct from the providers' earnings. Over the last year we have seen an alarming increase in this practice.

The irony of this situation is that providers affiliated with family child care networks, which ACS believes offer a higher quality of care, are now paid less, in some cases significantly less, than providers serving subsidized children who have vouchers. This disparity in pay rate exists despite the higher per-child rate for EarlyLearn family child care providers in networks which is generally higher than the per-child rate that the voucher serving family child care providers are paid.

I will not rehash the entirety of the UFT's concerns regarding EarlyLearn and instead I will simply refer you to the testimony that I provided to the General Welfare Committee back in

January. However it is worth reiterating today that it is of critical importance that every family child care network pay its affiliated providers the same market rate, as calculated by the State of New York in accordance with federal requirements, paid to those providers serving children with a child care voucher. This “salary parity” is as important to the overall early education system and is a vital component of stabilizing family child care.

A New Era in Early Care and Education

As we have testified before, child care as a whole and family child care in particular, suffered greatly under the former mayor. In stark contrast, Mayor de Blasio’s second budget, like his first, includes no cuts to child care. I cannot overstate the importance of the funding stabilization created by last year’s base-lining of the Council’s previous restorations. Now instead of the City Council leading the fight to restore tens of millions of dollars in cuts year after year, we can finally begin to talk about how to move child care forward and how to begin to serve the thousands of hard working families who financially qualify for subsidized child care, but currently are unable to receive it.

The city has now entered a new era with a mayor deeply committed to early education and with Commissioner Gladys Carrion, a champion of collaboration and partnership leading the Administration for Children’s Services. I was proud to serve on mayor’s Early Care and Education Task Force as the UFT’s representative together with several child care advocates who will likely offer valuable insights during today’s hearing. Our union deeply appreciates that the administration is waiting for the conclusion of the State budget in order to guide its funding priorities for the fiscal year 2016 Executive Budget. The UFT has lobbied Albany lawmakers in an effort to secure a significant increase in both State child care funds as well as pre-K funding. We are happy that the Assembly has included a \$25 million increase for child care in their one-house budget resolution and are hopeful that the State Senate and the governor will agree that an increased investment in child care is needed. Likewise, we are hopeful that the mayor and the City Council will meet the urgent need and significantly increase child care funding.

Increase Family Access

Working families depend on child care to maintain their employment and to ensure their children receive quality early education. For parents and guardians working to support families at the lowest income levels, affordable, high quality and reliable child care is crucial. New York City’s high cost of living can place even basic needs out of reach for those living at or under the poverty line. The statistics on poverty and the working poor in our city in the aftermath of the country’s recession are staggering. A recent report published by the Coalition for the Homeless found the number of children sleeping in shelters rose eight percent last year, reaching a level of 22,712 in January 2014 — the highest in history.

Our city’s families need greater access to child care and quality early education. Every year that eligible families don’t receive subsidies, we allow the gap to widen placing vulnerable children at a significant disadvantage. Additionally, a parent’s right to choose the type of child care that best fits their family’s need, as granted in federal law, must be respected by the administration. Quite simply, if a parent chooses to send their child to a center, they should be allowed to do so.

And if they prefer to send their child to family child care, that should be their choice. The administration has previously testified that it has engaged in the practice of steering children who are voucher recipients to the under-enrolled EarlyLearn system. In our view, these efforts not only infringe upon parents' rights, but these disturbing practices often result in limiting the overall number of children receiving subsidized care. At a time when the need for child care subsidies far outpaces its availability, sending a voucher child to an unfilled contracted EarlyLearn seat City effectively collapses two different child care slots into one. As you deliberate during the budget process please recognize that early child care is an economic and educational imperative and expanding access should remain a top priority.

Closing Thoughts

Educating and caring for our earliest learners is a high priority for the UFT and the professional development support we provide to our union's family child care providers is evidence of our commitment. Through UFT Teacher Center we've partnered with a number of organizations to develop a diverse professional development program including the State's nine mandated topics, health and safety, a literacy program specifically designed for the home-based setting, and child mental health and trauma.

We are excited to have an administration that engages all stakeholders in making our city's child care system work better. Strengthening early child care options and expanding access for families seeking educationally sound, subsidized care is smart policy for our city's future. We know that investing now in our city's children and families will reap long-term economic and social benefits.

In closing, I reiterate our gratitude to the City Council for your strong leadership and advocacy on behalf of the children we care for, especially with respect to their rights to a high-quality education in a safe and caring environment.

Center for Court Innovation Testimony
New York City Council
Committee on Juvenile Justice, Committee on General Welfare, and Committee on
Women's Issues
Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 17, 2015

Good morning Chairperson Cabrera, Chairperson Levin, and Chairperson Cumbo. My name is Amy Ellenbogen and I am the Project Director at the Crown Heights Mediation Center, a project of the Center for Court Innovation. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am here today to urge the Juvenile Justice, General Welfare and Women's Issues Committees to support the Center for Court Innovation's groundbreaking efforts to promote and expand the use of community-based alternatives to incarceration, divert young people out of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, improve services and outcomes for victims of crimes, and increase equal access to justice for vulnerable New Yorkers.

The Center has a deep commitment to improving outcomes for young people impacted by the justice system – working with more than 2,300 youth each year. Our Alternative-to-Detention programs in Queens, Staten Island, Harlem, Red Hook and Brownsville, serve as critical off-ramps from the justice system for young people. They also serve as vibrant neighborhood resource centers – helping youth build core skills and competencies, promoting accountability, offering support and encouragement, nurturing positive connections to family and community, sparking civic engagement, and offering participants new pathways that lead away from system involvement and towards academic, social and vocational success. Our Youth Futures programs offer wrap-around case coordination for justice-involved young people who need mental health services. Programs like Make it Happen, in Crown Heights Brooklyn, provide culturally-appropriate counseling and strengths-focused support to help young men of color manage trauma arising from violence they may have experienced in their communities. And all of our Youth and Community Justice Centers engage participants in community benefits projects that combine service work with education, training kids to be leaders and promoting a lasting investment in overall community well-being.

The Center for Court Innovation also works hard to improve the lives of women and youth trapped in the world of prostitution and trafficking. In 2013, New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman announced the launch of the New York State court system's Human Trafficking Intervention Initiative to ensure that individuals caught in the cycle of exploitation and trafficking are treated as *victims* and not as criminals. Instead of jail time, Center for Court Innovation clinicians identify and address each person's complex needs and shape a plan to stop the cycle of re-arrest and re-victimization. The Center also helps children involved in sex trafficking. A recent study by John Jay and the Center found that there were approximately 4,000 commercially sexually-exploited children ages 18 and younger in New York City. In response, we are testing a new initiative in family court called Creating Change for Children, which works to promote on-going identification strategies among legal stakeholders; sustain on-going training of judges and legal staff; increase services for exploited child victims; and successfully engage young people in services that can help them gain a foothold on a safer and healthier future. The Center is also launching a specialized court project for infants in the Bronx Family Court. Research shows that trauma in infancy and the disruption of critical attachments during early development can result in life-long impairments. The Infant Court will provide developmentally appropriate, evidence-based services for infants, while also harnessing resources to help parents build skills, manage stress, and develop economic self-sufficiency. These services, coordinated under the watchful eye of a Judge, will help parents chart a course towards safe, supportive, and successful futures for their children.

The Council's support has been invaluable to the success of the Center for Court Innovation, helping us maintain core operations and launch new initiatives at our demonstration projects throughout the city, including youth justice programming, Infant Court and our work assisting human trafficking victims. This year, the Center for Court Innovation is seeking the City Council's support in the amount of \$775,000 – \$400,000 to continue the Center's core community justice work as described above, and an additional \$375,000 to support critical new initiatives focused on youth diversion, police-youth-community relations, and enhanced access to equal and fair justice for the city's most vulnerable citizens.

- Earlier this month, the Center for Court Innovation, together with the NYPD and the District Attorney's Offices in Manhattan and Brooklyn, launched Project Reset, an early diversion pilot in Brownsville and East Harlem, that will divert 16- and 17-year-olds arrested for minor non-violent offenses to counseling or community service before they ever come before a judge – avoiding any chance of a criminal record or time in jail. This is a fundamental shift in the way that law enforcement approaches minor offending, and with the council's help, we hope to expand this critical initiative to many additional precincts and young people around the city.
- At our Community and Youth Justice Centers we are working to expand and promote procedural fairness and equal access to justice. In Red Hook, our Peacemaking program seeks to empower an isolated, historically underserved community with high rates of justice system involvement to play an active role in solving its local problems by using traditional Native American techniques. Working in partnership with New York State Chief Judge Lippman, Poverty Justice Solutions, a recently launched new program, will help low-income New Yorkers preserve their housing and prevent homelessness by recruiting law school graduates to be two-year fellows working with New York City civil legal service providers. With the Council's support, we hope to expand these new programs and initiatives that increase procedural fairness, increase access to representation, and engage communities in local problem-solving.
- Finally, the Center develops ways for communities and justice systems to work together, promote understanding and accountability, and reduce distrust. Currently, at the Crown Heights Community Mediation Center and the Brownsville Community Justice Center, police-youth-community dialogues are regularly convened. These unscripted conversations among teens, cops, and residents have helped to not only build trust and understanding, but advance common goals. At the Staten Island Youth Justice Center, a new program, the Neighborhood Youth Justice Council, provides a platform where young people can engage deeply with community residents, civic groups, agencies, providers, elected officials, and police to better understand community dynamics and conditions. Together with other community members, Youth Justice Council participants design and

implement projects to not just *talk* about police-community dynamics, but actually create positive change. With the Council's help, we hope to expand our police-youth dialogue work and create Neighborhood Youth Justice Councils in Jamaica Queens, East Harlem, and other communities.

The Center for Court Innovation looks forward to continuing to work with the New York City Council to improve public safety and victim services, support healthy futures for men, women, and youth trapped by crime, prostitution and exploitation, create new alternatives to incarceration, steer young people toward leadership and academic progress and promote community collaboration that results in a fairer, more accessible system of justice for all New Yorkers. We respectfully urge you to continue to support our work and thank again for the opportunity to speak. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

TESTIMONY

New York City Council Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget, Mayor's FY'15 Preliminary Management Report and Agency Oversight Hearings

Committee on General Welfare

Stephen T. Levin, Chair

March 17th, 2015



Shaun D. Francois I – President
Trina Pryor – Local 372 Member
Local 372 –Board of Education Employees
District Council 372 – AFSCME, AFL-CIO
125 Barclay Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10007
Local372.org

Good morning, General Welfare Committee Chair Levin and Finance Committee Chair Ferreras and distinguished members of the committee. My name is David Keye and I am the Secretary Treasurer here on behalf of Local 372. However I am here to testify under my capacity as a Parent Coordinator in district 79. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Mayor's proposed budget for 2016.

Local 372 represents close to 23,000 New York City Department of Education Employees. Our members are dedicated and hardworking support staff in New York City schools. They are School Crossing Guards, School Aides, Health Aides, Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS), Paraprofessionals, Parent Coordinators, Annual School Lunch Employees and Hourly School Lunch Employees. These are some of the lowest paid municipal workers; making less than \$15 an hour and some are working less than 5 hours a day.

With the cost of living continuously rising, housing has become a major hardship for our members. Low wages, too few hours, loss of spousal income, and the rising cost of housing are what our members struggle with as the city's working poor.

Every week, our office receives members who are living in shelters, or staying with family members and others are sleeping on the subway while still reporting to work each day in the New York City's School System. They come into our office; the city's working poor, to ask for help to keep them in their homes. The city's lack of affordable housing with the rising cost of rent and their low wages are causing our members to become homeless.

According to the Coalition for the Homeless, homelessness in New York City has reached its highest levels since the Great Depression; with 14,519 of families and 25,640 children sleeping each night in a municipal shelter. Our Paraprofessionals serve as the liaison between the schools and shelter system to make sure these children make it safely from the shelters to schools each day. Our 1,479 Paraprofessionals is not enough to handle the needs of a school and the needs of children in shelters. We respectfully request 500 more Paraprofessionals to handle the increased need.

It's unconscionable that in the richest city, in the wealthiest country in the world that our members continue to earn less than a living wage. We are asking the city to work with us to help alleviate this housing crisis by providing a dedicated shelter in each borough to all municipal employees. Every city worker deserves a safe space where they can come back to each day after serving our great city. That city worker should have a place that is open 24 hours a day so that they can come in straight from work and not have to wander the streets until a shelter opens.

It is unfair to uproot these hard working municipal employees, who are doing their best to get back on their feet. We have members in school district 27 in Queens, a family paraprofessional, a cooks and school aides that are homeless, however they are make every effort to make sure they make it to work every day even if it means sleeping on trains in an effort to hold on to their jobs. They fear being late to work and being reprimanded. Let's be honest, our members cannot afford to live in NYC with such low wages. Our union is doing the best they can to help our struggling members, but we need your help. Again, we need shelters that are open 24 hours a day, safe for worker New Yorkers.

While our members struggle with homelessness, the other members are waiting for an opening in NYCHA or for a housing lottery opportunity to open up. We respectfully request the city set aside NYCHA housing or 15% of HPD housing for municipal workers suffering from homelessness.

In closing, I want to draw your attention to the desperation, homelessness, low wages and hardships Local 372 members endure, yet they continue to work every day with pride and dedication to their job which is to protect, serve and feed the over 1.1 million school children of New York City.

Affordable housing for our members should not be viewed as a luxury but as a Human Rights issue that we must address not next week or next year but Right Now. We at Local 372 stand ready to join hands and minds to help remove the scourge of homelessness and the lack of affordable housing experienced by our members and the City.



**City Council Testimony by Jeff Foreman, Care for the Homeless Director of Policy
Tuesday, March 17, 2015**

I am Jeff Foreman, Policy Director at Care for the Homeless, the oldest and largest provider of health care exclusively to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness of all ages. Care for the Homeless provides health care and other services from 33 Federally Qualified Health Centers located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens, through street medical teams who seek out unsheltered people in need, and now from our mobile health clinic. We also operate a 200-bed shelter in the Bronx for medically frail and mentally ill women and advocate for policies to prevent, ameliorate and end homelessness.

There are four critical points we ask you to take into account in considering homeless policy and the New York City budget. Each point directly impacts the outcomes most important in the city's shelter operation and DHS clients' opportunity to successfully transition to permanent housing. They are:

- Providing every individual and family in the DHS shelter system all appropriate medical and mental health services ;
- Providing more and better human services, skills development programs and other enhancing programming in shelters;
- Adequately meeting capital infrastructure needs so every resident has safe, secure and decent housing and our shelters can provide appropriate food, care and programming;
- Developing absolutely necessary supports for our human resource infrastructure – our shelter staffs and service providers – including the long overdue commitment for a living wage, regular COLAs and career ladders, which are required to successfully recruit and retain the all-important staff for these challenging positions.

Budgets are moral documents laying out our societal values and what we believe is important or vital. We hope providing for the neediest and most vulnerable among us is a shared societal value. We hope housing and access to appropriate health care as a basic human right are shared values. But even if they are not, we should all agree to the needs we are testifying about today because each of them is the most efficient, cost-effective path to better outcomes in helping people experiencing homelessness transition from shelter to permanent housing and better lives. These expenditures are investments in better outcomes which, over time, dramatically save public resources.

We have often testified and provided studies and documentation about the need to provide all appropriate medical and mental health care to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Homelessness is a public health issue and an epidemic that shortens lives, aggravates medical and mental conditions and causes preventable hospitalizations, disabilities and deaths. The well documented impacts on children include developmental delays, behavioral problems, poor academic performance, depression and mental illness and other negative outcomes, many of which will last a lifetime.

Appropriate medical care including preventative medicine, ongoing treatment, and necessary specialty medical care such as podiatry, optometry and dentistry are vital services, especially to vulnerable and

often underserved populations like New York City's homeless population. But residents in the city's shelter system often don't have easy or convenient access to those needed health services. Failure to receive these services adversely impacts residents' opportunity to work, to have and maintain healthy lives and to obtain and keep permanent housing.

Health care should be viewed as a basic human right. But today many New Yorkers experiencing homelessness do not adequately receive medical and mental health services. And as is true with each concern we are testifying about today, good health care is necessary to produce better outcomes and will pay for itself in reduced public health costs.

Need for more robust and better programming in shelters is an almost constant comment we hear from our Care for the Homeless clients. Many shelter residents want work or other life skills training, computer training and computer access, human services and cultural programs. Parents in family shelters want more and better programming for their children. The programming we're talking about is a crucial support giving residents the opportunity to be more productive, to lead meaningful lives and to be able to transition from shelter to permanent housing.

The required long term maintenance and improvement of shelters is an investment. Our goal must be to deliver safe, secure and decent shelter to every resident in the system in facilitates able to provide the food and services every shelter should provide. But our capital funding of these facilities has not been equal to that task.

Some shelters are becoming more decrepit each year with no funding available for needed repairs. Even excellently maintained shelters need investment to continue maximizing good outcomes. The failure to adequately maintain and upgrade facilities is not an effective cost savings; it's a cause of poorer services, poorer health and safety. And worse outcomes that cost us dearly. Capital projects delayed are typically more costly when finally undertaken. Properly equipping, maintaining and upgrading our shelter system is the right and the efficient thing to do.

Just as important, possibly more important, is adequately developing our human infrastructure. Shelter services can never be better than the front line staff that daily delivers those services, in very trying and difficult circumstances. That staff is often there because of the rewarding experience of helping people – but in the real world the rewards that allow recruiting and retaining that staff must be fair wages, too.

Many of our shelter staff have far too low wages and have gone years without COLAs or salary increases. This Council should do for these important workers what you have done for workers in so many city subsidized development projects: require that they earn a living wage. They should also be guaranteed regular cost of living increases to protect their wages from the annual creep of inflation and we should have a career ladder program offering staff opportunity for advancement and professionalizing work.

We recognize that resources are tight, because resources are always scarce. But these reasonable and necessary expenditures are really investments promising better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and our communities; they are both the right thing to do and will pay for themselves.

Testimony of Anthony Turner

General Welfare Committee

Hearing on New York City Council Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget,
Mayor's FY'15 Preliminary Management Report and Agency Oversight Hearings
March 17, 2015

I came to YGB! because I believe in the vision. With my own eyes I've seen many friends of mine who fell through the cracks because they didn't have the necessary support like a loving family that they can rely on. Many thought that the foster care system would provide them with housing like NYCHA and NY/NY 3. And while I'm sure my friends took the necessary steps to get their housing in place, when 21 came they were faced with the grueling reality of abandonment and loneliness. Usually with no relatives and friends living their own life there forced to take to the shelter.

No longer do the foster parents want you when the checks stop coming in and your taking up space. Suddenly overnight your an adult and now your expected to completely take care of yourself and have nearly everything figured out by then. By having a family that forever supports you, you'll gain the confidence and reassurance that there's someone backing you up every step of the way.

When I was about to age out myself my Aunt had my back. I didn't worry to much about housing because I knew I was going to live with my Aunt. It felt good not to have to worry about rushing to a world I'm not completely ready for. Through the year after aging out my Aunt encouraged college , saving money, and cooking. (Because a microwave can only get you so far.)

Now, my Aunt plans to retire and move out of New York and while I do want to move with her my school, my friends, and what I know is in New York. I myself have to think of the next steps to preserve my future like sitting down and talking to my Aunt about possible housing alternatives, living with other relatives, or like my peers becoming adopted. I just want to leave you with my own quote that says Everyone needs a house to live in, but a supportive family is what builds a home.

Testimony of Valerie Ana Lynch

General Welfare Committee

Administration for Children's Services

Hearing on New York City Council Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget

Mayor's FY'15 Preliminary Management Report and Agency Oversight Hearings

March 17, 2015

Chairman Levin and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am testifying today in hope that these older youth in foster care will continue to be given a shot at finding forever families. Youth that lives are just like mine, who in no longer then just two weeks are about to lose this major resource that's helps us find permanent homes. You Gotta Believe (YGB).

I entered Foster care at the age of 13 years old because my adoptive mom would abuse me until one day her friend called ACS on her and then they came one night to take me away. I then remained in care from the age 13 until I was 21, moving through 12 different foster homes in many different boroughs of New York.

The only goal that I saw for myself was independent living because returning to family was the only option they offered and it didnt feel safe or comfortable enough for me to stay there. For as long as long as I was in care, no worker had ever explained the possibility of having a forever home, actual loving parents, a safe environment to put my head down and for the rest of my life around those I knew who truly cared and loved me for me. Not for who they wanted their ideal child to be. I was merely given independent living training and I believed I didn't need anyone to help nor did I want any help after going through what I've been through. I thought that I could do it all by myself and that I would. Even now, as a young adult trying and wanting to live on my own without understanding the needs of some sort of safety shield in this world. That someone- some family out there could take me in, care, and give me what I needed which was much more then just the 40 or 80 dollars a month that I received for allowance. A family who wouldn't make me feel like I was staying at another temporary "hotel", who wouldn't keep reminding me every day that I was a part of the system, who actually showed me affection and treated me like I was their own child. That I was human too.

Instead, I wound up aging out of Foster care in October of 2013. Often hopping from a friends house to another, struggling to find a job on my own, making sure I wouldn't go hungry or wind up having to be wanderering the streets at night with nowhere to stay. All the while waiting for NYCHA housing to call me or someone that knew to tell me that I would finally get to move into my own apartment. Not until the end of January of this year, 2015, did I finally get notified that I was able to move into my new apartment.

Now I spend my time willingly advocating for other youth because I personally feel that they deserve to understand what I never got the chance to understand myself. I was recently told that the ACS is soon

going to unfortunately discontinue funding You Gotta Believe and other agencies that have been dedicated and working so hard to find loving, permanent homes for older youth in foster care throughout New York City. All the while hundreds of kids are aging out of Foster care every day in New York City with nowhere to go and no one in their corner.

I understand that ACS might reconsider working with older adoption agencies in the future. That is too late. I am all too familiar with where they may end up, back in the system as a statistic. Please have ACS reconsider cutting off older foster youth from the chance at permanent families that they deserve. I am here to tell you that foster care agencies do not pursue this option for us. Please ask them to extend the YGB contract. Our lives are at risk and we deserve better. We should not be hurt and abandoned again by the system that should be helping us.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read what I have sent to you today. If any questions please feel free to contact me through my cell or by email at: Valynch7987@gmail.com - (646)-841-6245

Testimony of Brianna M. Hayes

General Welfare Committee

Administration for Children's Services

Hearing on New York City Council Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget

Mayor's FY'15 Preliminary Management Report and Agency Oversight Hearings

March 17, 2015

Dear Chairman Levin and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am speaking to you today in the hope that you can assist older youth in care, just like me, who in just two weeks are about to lose a critical resource that helps us get forever homes, families, love and respect. You Gotta believe (YGB).

I entered foster care at age 15 due to a PINS Warrant. My mother said she had washed her hands of me and before I knew it I was immediately placed in foster care. I'm still in foster care until this day on pending Exception To Policy. For the seven year that I've been in NYC foster care, **no case worker has ever told me that I had the possibility of having a forever home, an actual parent who makes me feel safe and wanted forever.** I first got connected with You Gotta Believe at an awards ceremony at ACS I was there with a non-profit organization called Voices Unbroken. I remember the staff from You Gotta Believe being so welcoming and embracing.

One of them, a woman who already has provided forever homes to several older foster children, wore her heart on her sleeve and I would never know how much of an impact she would have on my life now today. If it had not been for her and a few other staff at You Gotta Believe, I wouldn't have two dedicated woman willing to love and be fully committed to me. I also wouldn't have a group of adults that I look to as mentors that were always there to mold me into the young lady I've grown to be. It waters my eyes to just have learned that the Administration for Children's Services is stopping work with YGB and other agencies that have worked to find loving, forever homes for older youths in foster care throughout New York City.

This could only happen at a worse time when thousands of youth such as myself are about to age out of foster care right into New York City streets with no permanent families as a safety net. I've also learned that ACS might possibly reconsider working with older adoption agencies some time in the near future. This will be too late because from this day on there will be another child that goes hungry, another child that struggles day by day, another child that goes homeless and most of all another child that is denied their right to a forever family. How can we continuously see the

number of homeless foster youth grow? It hurts to see my fellow peers panhandle money on a train just to eat. My last dollar goes to them every time.

Please ask ACS to reconsider cutting off older youth in care from forever homes that they so deserve. Please ask them to extend YGB contract. Young lives will begin to be more and more at risk each day. No one should be alone nor should they age out alone.

Testimony of Brezan Gowie

General Welfare Committee
Administration for Children's Services

Hearing on New York City Council Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget
Mayor's FY'15 Preliminary Management Report and Agency Oversight Hearings

March 17, 2015

Chairman Levin and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am here today with hope that you can assist older foster youth, just like me, who in just 2 weeks are about to lose a critical resource that helps us get forever homes, You Gotta Believe (YGB).

I entered foster care at age 16 due to unspeakable abuse inflicted upon me by my parent. I was immediately placed in care and remained there until I aged out at the age of 21 last September. Through my own perseverance, tenacity and optimism I began college at age 17 at Mercy College and am now just 2 semesters away from graduating. **For the five years that I was in NYC foster care, no case worker ever told me that I had the possibility of having a forever home, a parent, a safe place to put my head down for the rest of my life.** I was merely giving independent living training with the hopes that that simple gesture would aid me as a young adult living on my own without a safety net in this world.

Last August, just one month before I aged out, it was my therapist who told me that I was not too old to get parent. My therapist learned that I could have a parent regardless of my age because she wants to adopt a foster child and began attending training classes to get certified at YGB. She learned through her training that YGB matches parents with youth of any age. Once I learned this from my therapist, not any NYC caseworker, I quickly contacted YGB on my own. Shortly thereafter, YGB contacted Janice Huff and had me appear on Wednesday's Child. From that appearance and my continuing relationship with YGB I not only have a prospective family but have also met other adults who are now serving as resources to alleviate the feeling of isolation aged out youth have once they are removed from the system. In the very short time I have been in contact with YGB my life has substantially changed which is why I am writing you.

I just learned that the Administration for Children's Services is stopping work with YGB and other agencies that have worked to find loving, forever homes for older youths in foster care throughout New York City. They are doing this when thousands of other youth like me are about to age out of foster care and into life in New York City with no permanent family as a safety net. Although I am in college and working as a home health aid to try to keep my head above water, I also know

that I am one step away from homelessness and public assistance dependency. Because if I lose my job, I would have had no one to help me. But it is with YGB that I now have prospective parents for the rest of my life and other YGB adults who care about me. That is more than I had just a mere 7 months ago.

I just learned that ACS is also saying that maybe they will possibly reconsider working with older adoption agencies one day in the future. That is too late - because everyday until then there will be thousands of my fellow foster youth who will be denied the opportunity of a forever home and unfortunately I am all too familiar with where they may end up, back in the system as a statistic. Please have ACS reconsider taking such drastic measures of cutting off older foster youth from forever homes that they so deserve. Please ask them to extend the YGB contract. Young lives are at risk. Foster children have already been dealt bad hands by their parents who abused, neglected or abandoned them. Now they will again be hurt and abandoned by the system that should be helping them.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or let me know how I can be of assistance in ensuring that YGB's contract is extended. brezango@gmail.com

I am here today to bring to your attention a tragic decision by ACS to end its partnership with the only outside agencies in this city that help place abandoned or neglected, older youths into adoption before they age out of foster care.

The final, remaining outside agency to provide that service is You Gotta Believe, based in Coney Island. You Gotta Believe's contract with ACS is set to expire at the end of this month and ACS has indicated the contract will not be renewed.

I am a foster parent – I have remained a foster parent only because of the support I've gotten from YGB – they give support for foster parents that no other agency I've worked with is able to do and is essentially to a successful placement. The toll of this decision will be immediate, and for many older teen-agers seeking the love and security of an adoptive, forever family, it may be devastating.

For every dollar spent on agencies that find adoptive, forever homes for youth who are about to age out of foster care, taxpayers are saved many times that in lifetime costs including the savings when they leave large institutional settings and group homes that cost a great deal more than families, as well as the cost of social services – like homelessness and even jail - for those who age out of the system and are forced to go it alone in New York City.

But the toll isn't just financial. Every child who ages out of foster care without the support system of a forever family stands to be a missed opportunity for that youth to thrive into adulthood, go to college, learn a trade, get a job, or even start his or her own family with the safety net of a loving home. That, in turn, stands to be a tremendous missed opportunity for the City of New York.

You, as members of this council, have a golden opportunity to stand behind these youth by giving your emphatic endorsement to their adoption into forever homes. While ACS has begun to reverse course on years of slow progress, end its partnership with agencies like You Gotta Believe, and return to a policy that de-emphasizes adoption and forever homes, your collective voice on behalf of these youth should cause ACS to pause and rethink this flawed strategy.

Gretchen Beidl



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Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council Committee on Finance
Honorable Julissa Ferreras, Chair and
Committee on General Welfare
Honorable Stephen Levin, Chair

At the FY 2016 Budget Hearing

Presented By Gregory Brender
Co-Director of Policy & Advocacy

March 17th 2015

Good morning Chair Levin and members of the General Welfare Committee. My name is Gregory Brender and I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH). UNH is New York City's federation of settlement houses and community centers. UNH member agencies have a deep commitment to early childhood education and 20 UNH member agencies are Early Learn providers while others provide early childhood education through other funding streams including Pre-Kindergarten and federal Head Start contracts. UNH is part of Campaign for Children- a coalition of more than 150 organizations working for high quality early childhood education and after-school for every child in New York City.

I want to thank the General Welfare Committee for its own commitment to New York City's early childhood education system. Many of you were in the trenches fighting drastic cuts to early childhood education when they were proposed by the previous administration. It is inspiring that many of you continue to work to strengthen and stabilize New York City's early childhood education.

Sadly, despite the advances that have been made in achieving a historic expansion in Pre-Kindergarten programs, the Early Learn system- the system that is for many low-income working families the only option for a high quality early childhood education remains unstable with many programs in crisis. We hope that Mayor de Blasio's executive budget includes significant new investments to strengthen the Early Learn system and address the disparities in both salary and benefits between staff in the Early

Learn system and those doing the same or comparable work in the public school systems.

Early Learn Design

At its inception, UNH and other early childhood education advocates applauded the goals of Early Learn particularly its plan to increase program quality by expanding blended funding programs, an innovative model pioneered by UNH member agencies. Through blended funding, programs would be able to offer both the extended hours offered in child care programs as well as the more comprehensive service model offered in half day Head Start programs. UNH as well as providers and other advocates also applauded ACS and the Bloomberg Administration for its goals of:

- Increasing teacher-child ratios
- Expanding hours of service
- Increasing training and professional development of staff and Family Child Care providers
- Increasing administrative staff in child care centers
- Expanding access to Head Start family support services to more children including some whose families do not meet Head Start's very low income eligibility levels
- Expanding availability of infant and toddler care
- Establishing a unified assessment system to rate program quality and effectiveness

Early Learn also came with significant problems including:

A reduction of nearly 6,000 slots. The Early Learn awards left many centers which had records of providing quality services in their communities without a contract. It was only through the leadership of the City Council that many programs were saved. This nonetheless led to a bifurcated system where a significant part of the system depended on one year funding from the New York City Council. Providers have just recently responded to a new RFP for the system capacity which formerly was funded by the City Council but is now baselined.

The elimination of the Central Insurance Program. Prior to Early Learn's start in October 2012, staff in ACS contracted child care programs as well as agencies contracted through Department for the Aging and Department of Cultural Affairs, received health

insurance through the City's Central Insurance Program. With Early Learn, ACS left it up to providers to offer health insurance to their employees stating that the rate would cover a plan. Providers through their representatives on the Day Care Council and the Head Start Sponsoring Boards Council were only able to offer a plan that has a 15% employee contribution. Many employees could not afford this contribution and in some center 50%-80% have opted out of insurance.

A new fixed-rate payment system. Early Learn sought to systematize the reimbursement of providers through implementing an hourly rate system. This system ignored variable costs such as facilities and has left many programs in neighborhoods with more expensive real estate in financial peril.

A provider match requirement. Early Learn included a requirement that contractors contribute a 6.7% provider match by raising other resources to cover the full cost of care. This match requirement has been a challenge for many providers.

A pay for enrollment system. Early Learn replaced a pay for capacity system with a pay for enrollment system. This system makes it harder for programs that are under-enrolled to recruit more children as they are often struggling to make ends meet.

These challenges continue to confront the Early Learn system.

Staff Salary and Benefits

Early Learn providers' largest concern is with the compensation of their staff. Early Childhood educators are among the lowest paid professionals of any field and the situation for Early Learn teachers and staff is particularly stark.

As mentioned above, many Early Learn staff can not afford health insurance due to the employee contribution. Moreover, their salaries are considerably lower than similarly credentialed teachers in the public school systems. These disparities will only grow if the wages of Early Learn teachers continue to stagnate. The charts on the following pages show the disparities in early childhood salaries and how they will continue to grow over the next several years.

May 2015 Salary Disparities for Early Childhood Educators

Teachers with a BA

Status	BA	BA+5 Years	BA+10 Years	BA+13 Years	BA+15 Years	BA+20 Years
Department of Education	49,908	52,706	70,511	72,720	77,385	87,658
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	36,542	39,665	40,565	41,065	41,265	41,265
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	44,033	45,233	45,733	45,733	45,733	45,733
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	44,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	13,366	13,041	29,946	31,655	36,120	46,393
Difference (DOE- Head Start)	5,875	7,473	24,778	26,987	31,652	41,925
Difference (DOE- PreK Lead Teacher in a CBO)	5,908	8,706	26,511	28,720	33,385	43,658

Teachers with an MA

Status	MA	MA+5 Years	MA+10 Years	MA+13 Years	MA+15 Years	MA+20 Years
Department of Education	56,103	58,901	76,706	78,915	83,580	93,853
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	39,350	40,750	41,550	42,150	42,350	42,350
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	48,509	49,709	50,209	50,209	50,209	50,209
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	50,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	16,753	18,151	35,156	36,765	41,230	51,503
Difference (DOE- Head Start)	7,594	9,192	26,497	28,706	33,371	43,644
Difference (DOE- PreK Lead Teacher in a CBO)	6,103	8,901	26,706	28,915	33,580	43,853

May 2016 Salary Disparities for Early Childhood Educators

Teachers with a BA

Status	BA	BA+5 Years	BA+10 Years	BA+13 Years	BA+15 Years	BA+20 Years
Department of Education	51,649	54,545	72,971	75,257	80,085	90,717
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	36,542	39,665	40,565	41,065	41,265	41,265
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	44,033	45,233	45,733	45,733	45,733	45,733
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	44,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	15,107	14,880	32,406	34,192	38,820	49,452
Difference (DOE- Head Start)	7,616	9,312	27,238	29,524	34,352	44,984
Difference (DOE- PreK Lead Teacher in a CBO)	7,649	10,545	28,971	31,257	36,085	46,717

Teachers with an MA

Status	MA	MA+5 Years	MA+10 Years	MA+13 Years	MA+15 Years	MA+20 Years
Department of Education	58,060	60,957	79,382	81,668	86,496	97,128
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	39,350	40,750	41,550	42,150	42,350	42,350
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	48,509	49,709	50,209	50,209	50,209	50,209
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	50,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	18,710	20,207	37,832	39,518	44,146	54,778
Difference (DOE- Head Start)	9,551	11,248	29,173	31,459	36,287	46,919
Difference (DOE- PreK Lead Teacher in a CBO)	8,060	10,957	29,382	31,668	36,496	47,128

May 2017 Salary Disparities for Early Childhood Educators

Teachers with a BA

Status	BA	BA+5 Years	BA+10 Years	BA+13 Years	BA+15 Years	BA+20 Years
Department of Education	54,000	57,028	76,292	78,682	83,730	94,846
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	36,542	39,665	40,565	41,065	41,265	41,265
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	44,033	45,233	45,733	45,733	45,733	45,733
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	44,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	17,458	17,363	35,727	37,617	42,465	53,581
Difference (DOE- Head Start)	9,967	11,795	30,559	32,949	37,997	53,113
Difference (DOE- PreK Lead Teacher in a CBO)	10,000	13,028	32,292	34,682	39,730	50,846

Teachers with an MA

Status	MA	MA+5 Years	MA+10 Years	MA+13 Years	MA+15 Years	MA+20 Years
Department of Education	60,703	63,731	82,995	85,385	90,433	101,549
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	39,350	40,750	41,550	42,150	42,350	42,350
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	48,509	49,709	50,209	50,209	50,209	50,209
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	50,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	21,353	22,981	41,445	43,235	48,083	59,199
Difference (DOE- Head Start)	12,194	14,022	32,786	35,176	40,224	51,340
Difference (DOE- PreK Lead Teacher in a CBO)	10,703	13,731	32,995	35,385	40,433	51,549

May 2018 Salary Disparities for Early Childhood Educators

Teachers with a BA

Status	BA	BA+5 Years	BA+10 Years	BA+13 Years	BA+15 Years	BA+20 Years
Department of Education	56,709	59,889	80,120	82,630	87,931	99,605
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	36,542	39,665	40,565	41,065	41,265	41,265
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	44,033	45,233	45,733	45,733	45,733	45,733
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	44,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	20,167	20,224	39,555	41,565	46,666	58,340
Difference (DOE- Head Start)	12,676	14,656	34,387	36,897	42,198	53,872
Difference (DOE- PreK Lead Teacher in a CBO)	12,709	15,889	36,120	38,630	43,931	55,605

Teachers with an MA

Status	MA	MA+5 Years	MA+10 Years	MA+13 Years	MA+15 Years	MA+20 Years
Department of Education	63,749	66,929	87,159	89,670	94,970	106,644
ACS Child Care (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	39,350	40,750	41,550	42,150	42,350	42,350
ACS Head Start (Excluding PreK Lead Teachers)	48,509	49,709	50,209	50,209	50,209	50,209
CBO PreK Lead Teachers (ACS or DOE Contracted)	50,000	**	**	**	**	**
Difference (DOE- ACS Child Care)	24,399	26,179	45,609	47,520	52,620	64,294

The City has now has the opportunity to continue the positive movement we have already begun with Pre Kindergarten expansion and work to stabilize and strengthen the Early Learn system.

In order to improve Early Learn, UNH makes the following recommendations:

- Increase salaries for child care staff including ensuring salary and benefit parity for teachers with teachers in the public school system.
- Allow flexibility in the Early Learn rate to account for differing facilities costs.
- Develop a capital fund to repair and improve facilities used by Early Learn programs including the many programs operating in old buildings that are part of New York City Housing Authority developments.
- Increase the Early Learn rate to allow for investment in classroom materials and technology. Consider investing funding from the Smart Schools Bond Act in order to support funding for technology in Early Learn classrooms.
- Adjust the rate to ensure that all Early Learn staff is able to afford health insurance without an excessive employee contribution.
- Eliminate the 6.7% provider match.
- Reform the current pay for enrollment system to recognize the sometimes necessary fluctuations in enrollment without leaving providers unable to pay for fixed costs such as rent and utilities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I am glad to take any questions.



Testimony of

Stephanie Gendell
Associate Executive Director
Policy and Government Relations

Before the
New York City Council
Finance, General Welfare, Women's Issues and Juvenile Justice Committees

Regarding the
New York City
Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget

March 17, 2015

Good evening. My name is Stephanie Gendell and I am the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations at Citizens' Committee for Children. CCC is a 71-year-old, privately supported, independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chairs Ferreras, Levin, Cumbo and Cabrera, as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Finance, General Welfare, Women's Issues and Juvenile Justice for holding today's hearing regarding the City's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2016.

CCC is incredibly grateful to the City Council for its long-standing commitment to the needs of the vulnerable families who interact with these three City agencies. Your relentless efforts to protect child care and preventive service capacity, strengthen the quality of shelter services, ensure there is a housing subsidy for families, ensure children and families have access to healthy affordable food, and help families attain economic security, have helped countless children and their families.

The Preliminary Budget takes important steps to address income inequality and improve child safety and well-being in New York City. Mayor de Blasio made clear at the budget briefing that the Preliminary Budget is just a first step towards developing the Fiscal Year 2016 budget and that there is a great deal more to look at and evaluate as we move towards the Executive Budget in April. This is good news because there are a number of areas that must be addressed in Fiscal Year 2016 in order to improve outcomes for New York's children and families.

Specifically, we look forward to an Executive Budget that makes the investments needed to: improve access to high quality early childhood education and after-school services; bring school breakfast to all classrooms and universal lunch programs to all schools; support primary preventive services that strengthen families and prevent abuse and neglect; and expand access to children's health and mental health services in schools and communities.

This testimony focuses on the new investments in the Preliminary Budget related to the children served by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Human Resources Administration (HRA), which we urge the City Council to support. In addition, the testimony highlights the City Council initiatives we hope to see restored and baselined, as well as the areas where we hope to see additional investments. We urge the City Council to focus on these areas as you develop your priorities and that you also urge the Administration to use the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget to make NYC a better place to be a child.

Administration for Children's Services- Child Welfare

The children and families of New York City are fortunate to have a Mayor who cares so deeply about children touched by the child welfare system, as well as a Commissioner who could not be any more well-versed in these issues. In addition, there has tremendous progress in child welfare over the past decade—significantly decreasing the number of children in foster care (now to about 11,000) while increasing access to high-quality preventive services.

While there has been much progress, there are tremendous challenges. The system still needs to do a better job of identifying which children are at the most risk and need to be in foster care, which children are safe in their homes, and which families need services to reduce the risks to

children. This is no easy feat. In addition, children in New York City still face very long lengths of stay in foster care and too many youth age out of the system with no family and poor outcomes.

The most recent federal Child and Family Services Review data, released in 2014, documents that New York's child welfare challenges have not improved over time, nor in comparison to other states. In fact, New York ranked in the bottom 5 states for 4 out of 7 of the indicators and only met the national standards for one indicator:

- Maltreatment in care (rate): 46 out of 48 ranked states (did not meet national standards)
- Recurrence of maltreatment (%): 48 out of 48 ranked states (did not meet national standards)
- Permanency in 12 months (%): 35 out of 49 ranked states (did not meet national standards)
- Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12-23 months (%): 50 out of 51 ranked states (did not meet national standards)
- Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more (%): 48 out of 51 ranked states (did not meet national standards)
- Re-entry to foster care in 12 months (%): 40 out of 48 ranked states (did not meet national standards)
- Placement stability (rate): 3 out of 46 ranked states (met national standards)

Given how poorly New York performs on permanency (and notably the majority of the children touched by NY's child welfare system are from New York City), it is not surprising that far too many youth age out of New York City's foster care system without a family. It is similarly unsurprising, that these young people who age out of the system sometime between ages 18-21, after facing a number of traumas (including the child welfare system and the incident(s) that led to foster care) and do not have the support of a family, have poor outcomes related to housing, employment, education, parenting, etc.

The recent data supplied by ACS as a result of Local Laws 46, 48 and 49 begin to document the poor outcomes faced by youth in foster care. While the data takes some time to parse through, what is clear is that too many children age out (660 discharged to Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement in CY 2014), too few are on track for high school graduation (24.1% of 17-19 year olds and 35.9% of 20-21 year olds), too few have permanent housing when they leave, a fair amount are parents, and few are enrolled in college.

We must do better. We must strengthen the foster care system to reduce lengths of stay, ensure children have family connections, and provide the services parents and children need. And we must ensure that there are after-care services—for families reunifying from foster care, adopting from foster care and for relative families who have permanent subsidized guardianship (KinGAP). Currently there are almost no post-adoption or post Kin-GAP services in New York City and foster care agencies are not reimbursed for the trial discharge period (time when children are reunified with their families but supervised by foster care agencies.)

We also need to ensure that children are safer and the child protective workers have the best possible training and supervision. This includes continued attention to court ordered supervision cases, which we believe are the highest risk cases—cases where court-intervention is warranted, the children remain in the home, and the family is often referred to services by a child protective

worker rather than a preventive service program. Furthermore, the services in these cases are no longer voluntary, significantly changing the dynamic and the model for prevention.

We must also strengthen the preventive service system to ensure that there are enough slots in every community to meet the community's needs. These services need to be culturally competent and easily available. As will be discussed in more detail, we also need services that families can access *before* there is a report of abuse or neglect.

With regard to preventive services, we believe ACS needs to look at its model for performance-based contracting whereby providers must open 25% of their contracted capacity every quarter or else lose funding for their program (i.e. the children and families they serve.) We also believe that ACS must look at its 12 month average length of service expectation and determine whether this arbitrary length of service cut-off is impacting child safety. We continue to believe that it is critical for agencies to assess families individually to determine when it is safe to close cases. Notably, CCC is in the process of conducting a survey of preventive service providers where we look more closely at these issues. We anticipate a report and results this summer.

We understand that ACS is reviewing many of its initiatives including Improved Outcomes for Children (delegation of case management), Child Success NYC (the IV-E waiver related to foster care), ChildStat, court-ordered supervision, FAR (ACS's model of dual track/Family Assessment Response), and foster parent recruitment (e.g. its contract with You Gotta Believe!). **CCC urges the Administration and ACS to be more transparent and collaborative with the advocacy community about child welfare, both so that we have more information about the status, strengths and challenges of various initiatives, and so we can lend our expertise where appropriate.**

With that as background, we turn to the Preliminary Budget as it relates to child welfare:

CCC supports the Preliminary Budget proposal to add \$11.034 million City funds (\$27.7 million with state matching funds) for child welfare reforms including a training institute and 200 additional preventive services slots for families where there is a young child and a parent with a mental illness. CCC looks forward to learning more about these reforms, but believes that enhanced training and additional preventive service slots are important investments. We urge the City Council to support these investments.

The Preliminary Budget failed to restore the City Council's Fiscal Year 2015 investments of \$500,000 for child advocacy centers and \$600,000 for CONNECT (domestic violence program). CCC will be urging the Administration to restore and baseline this funding in the Executive Budget.

Finally, we believe that the City needs to make additional investments in child welfare to better address safety, permanency and well-being for the children and families touched by the child welfare system. We will be urging the Administration to invest resources in the following in the Executive Budget and we hope that the City Council will make these items priorities as well.

Primary Preventive Services (Family Success Initiative): CCC and some of our colleagues have been urging ACS and the Administration to create a model of preventive services that is targeted at high-risk families BEFORE there is a report of abuse or neglect. Using data, the City could identify schools, NYCHA facilities, homeless shelters, etc. and based on the needs identified offer services for families and children. Services could include a parenting program for youth fathers, mentoring, tutoring, domestic violence programs, substance abuse programs, etc. These various services could be provided by ACS's preventive service programs, but without the need to open a preventive case. We think there is an opportunity to develop some pilot programs within the City's Beacons (15 have general preventive service contracts), the City's homeless shelters and perhaps some NYCHA facilities with Cornerstone programs and/or EarlyLearn sites.

Post-Permanency Services: The City needs to invest in post-permanency services, which assist families in achieving more timely permanency and maintaining permanency once it is achieved. This would be for reunifications, adoptions and Kin-GAP.

Preventing Youth from Aging Out and Better Meeting the Needs of Those Who Do: ACS needs to do much more to ensure youth who age out have families. This starts with renewing their contract with You Gotta Believe! which is due to expire on March 31, 2015. In addition, ACS needs to review the approaches taken by its foster care agencies and expand the initiatives and pilots that work. For example, Graham Windham has the Graham Slam program, funded by grant funds, which provides youth ages 21-24 who have aged out, with additional services and support. CCC also suggests that the City create an inter-agency taskforce (that includes stakeholders and advocates) to better address the needs of the youth who are failed by the child welfare system.

Administration for Children's Services- Juvenile Justice

CCC appreciates the attention the new administration has paid to strengthening the juvenile justice system, including the elimination of punitive segregation for the youth ages 16-17 years old on Riker's Island.

We remain cautiously optimistic that the State will raise the age of criminal responsibility as part of the State Budget negotiations. We urge the City Council to support the Governor's Plan and ensure the State Legislature, particularly the New York City delegations in both the Assembly and Senate, know that you feel it is critical that legislation be passed as part of the Budget. In this regard, we appreciate the City being planful about implementation by already having an implementation workgroup, led by Vincent Schiraldi.

CCC supports the Preliminary Budget proposal to invest \$25.3 million to provide a 1:15 staff ratio and programming for young adult housing areas (youth ages 18-21) in the Department of Corrections facilities and we urge the City Council to support this proposal as well. In addition, CCC is supportive of the City's capital investment in improvements for Crossroads and Horizons Secure Detention Centers.

CCC was disappointed to see that several City Council initiatives from FY15 were not included in the Preliminary Budget. CCC will be urging the Administration to restore and baseline these

items and we look forward to the City Council's support. Specifically, we will be urging the administration to support and baseline:

- \$250,000 for Vera Adolescent Portable Therapy Program
- \$4.1 million for Alternatives to Incarceration Programs
- \$400,000 for the Center for Court Innovation
- \$1.0 million for Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative.
- \$1.0 million for the Juvenile Robbery Intervention Program.

In addition, we believe that there are additional investments needed in the Executive Budget to further strengthen the Juvenile Justice System:

Limited Secure/Close to Home:

We are aware that limited secure placement should soon be transferring from the State to the City as part of the Close to Home initiative. The Preliminary Budget does not include any additional funding for this transition. If more funding is needed, we hope to see this in the Executive Budget.

Raise the Age: We look forward to seeing the inclusion of state funds in the Executive Budget for implementing Raise the Age. Notably, the City will need to develop new facilities, identify new services, increase juvenile probation and be ready to start placing 16 and 17 year olds in youth facilities in December 2015 (although the rest of the statute should be implemented in 2017 and 2018.)

Administration for Children's Services- Early Education

CCC was deeply disappointed that there was no additional investment in early childhood education in the Preliminary Budget beyond the second year of the pre-k expansion. This MUST change by the Executive Budget. We also eagerly await the Recommendations that stem from Deputy Mayor Barrios-Paoli's Task Force on Early Care and Education. We hope these recommendations will address the concerns raised in this testimony and include the investments needed to address the fiscal challenges in the system.

As part of CCC's work with the Campaign for Children, we conducted a survey of EarlyLearn providers, issued a report, and recently testified before the City Council on the fiscal challenges in the EarlyLearn system.

While the goals and model of EarlyLearn have always been laudable, the implementation has been problematic in a number of areas including: the reduced capacity of the system; the distribution of the slots; the rate providers are paid; the full enrollment payment policy; the low salaries and reduced benefits for staff in centers; and the implementation of the pre-k expansion by a network of providers already struggling and fragile.

EarlyLearn created several notable fiscal changes related to the contracts between the City and the CBO providers of child care, Head Start and pre-kindergarten at ACS centers:

- Blended funding and new models for contracted center-based care: Prior to EarlyLearn, rates to providers were individually negotiated based on program costs. The funding formula now is for three center-based models with three different rates: child care and pre-kindergarten;

Head Start and pre-kindergarten; and child care, Head Start and pre-kindergarten. These rates do not take into account different program needs such as facility costs or repairs.

- Family child care networks: Family child care subsidized by ACS became limited to children 0-3 and all selected networks have centers to which their 4-year olds transition. Notably, the rate paid to family providers pursuant to EarlyLearn is significantly less than the rate a family child provider receives when accepting a voucher.
- Facility costs: Prior to EarlyLearn, due to budget constraints, ACS stopped adjusting rates for rent increases. With Earlylearn, the rate is no longer individually adjusted to accommodate varying facility costs such as rent. The city holds the lease on direct lease sites and pays the rent still. For all other sites, ACS provides a facility add-on, which is the average cost of the rent costs pre-EarlyLearn. Thus some sites receive more than they did before EarlyLearn while the others receive less. Facility costs are not adjusted for rent increases, maintenance or repairs. In a recent Campaign for Children report based on a survey of providers, the providers reported facility costs as a tremendous challenge to the fiscal viability of their programs and their ability to direct resources towards educational programming.¹
- Insurance: The City eliminated the Central Insurance Program, which prior to EarlyLearn provided health insurance to staff and general liability and worker's compensation for programs. The EarlyLearn rate is supposed to accommodate agencies' purchase of insurance, but notably the health insurance program was selected through an RFP process after the EarlyLearn rate was already established. The new health insurance program is expensive for child care employers and child care staff. The program requires a 15% employer contribution, and providers pay 80% and the DC 1707 Welfare Fund contributes 5%. Many staff (estimates of 40-60%) have opted out of health insurance. It is unknown how many of these staff are now covered by their partner's plan, how many are on Medicaid, nor how many are uninsured. In addition, in the Campaign for Children survey, several providers reported that if their staff had availed themselves of health insurance, they would not have been able to continue to operate their program due to insufficient funding.² Finally, an insurance broker familiar with the ACS system estimated that the funds for the worker's compensation and general liability insurance only cover 60% of the cost.³
- Contractor contribution: Prior to EarlyLearn, the City reimbursed programs for 100% of the contract. Now the City factors in a 6.7% contractor contribution and thus only pays agencies 93.3% of the contract amount. The 6.7% contractor contribution can be monetary, in-kind or both.
- Pay-for-Enrollment: Prior to EarlyLearn, center-based providers were paid based on their contracted capacity. Now the contracted amount is based on 100% enrollment and agencies are no longer paid for vacant seats. Currently, according to ACS, the system is operating at

¹ Campaign for Children. *EarlyLearn rate is too low to sustain high quality early childhood education programs in NYC*. January 2015.

² Id.

³ Id.

approximately 82% enrollment and only 105 of the 368 EarlyLearn centers are 95-100% enrolled.⁴ This means that many programs are losing significant funding.

These fiscal changes have led to tremendous fiscal challenges for providers, some of whom are operating at deficits. In the recent Campaign for Children survey and report, 83% of the surveyed agencies (35 out of 42) reported struggling with the EarlyLearn rate and 17 reported that they operate on a deficit, spending more on their EarlyLearn programs than they receive from ACS.⁵

Perhaps not surprising then, when the federal government recently conducted a Head Start audit they found a number of serious safety-related violations that the City is currently responding to. Many of these are related to the facility issues that the programs reporting struggling to address.

Beyond the EarlyLearn system and the rate, there are still a number of other issues in the early childhood system. These include: a structural deficit; the increased salary for 4-year old lead teachers pursuant to the pre-k expansion but not for other staff (including center directors and 3-year olds teachers); the need to negotiate the leases for the direct lease sites; high parent fees; and the need to expand capacity for children ages 0-3.

CCC submits the following recommendations (many of which were in our January EarlyLearn testimony). We hope to see these addressed in the Executive Budget and we urge the City Council to make these priorities in your budget response to the administration:

- The unions, Day Care Council and the City must negotiate a contract expeditiously. Salaries must be increased for child care staff, including salary parity with DOE. The EarlyLearn rate must be adjusted accordingly.
- The City needs to make adjustments to how insurance is paid for and provided for child care staff, and then adjust the EarlyLearn rate accordingly. Agencies need to be paid a rate that is high enough that they are able to purchase health insurance for ALL of their staff, as well as for general liability and worker's compensation. The City, the union, the Day Care Council and the Head Start Council must work together to ensure that the new union contract includes adequate salary and benefits for child care staff.
- The EarlyLearn rate must be increased and should be indexed to inflation.
- The new EarlyLearn rate must do a better job of addressing disparate facility costs, including rent, rent increases, repairs, and maintenance. Instead of using the average facility cost add on, ACS should pay agencies in a manner more consistent with their costs.
- The City should create a capital fund to pay for repairs at child care centers and family child care homes so that these costs do not come out of the funding that could otherwise be spent on programming for children.
- The City needs to expand the capacity of the contracted system, particularly for children 0-3.

⁴ Personal communication between CCC and ACS.

⁵ Campaign for Children. *EarlyLearn rate is too low to sustain high quality early childhood education programs in NYC*. January 2015.

- To ensure a high quality classroom experience, the City needs to ensure the EarlyLearn rate is sufficient to enable agencies to invest in necessary classroom materials and technology. The City should consider using some of the State Smart Bond funds for the purchase of technology in the classrooms.
- The City should reconsider the current metrics used for full enrollment and implement a reimbursement system that better ensures agencies have funding for their fixed costs, as well as more certainty about their reimbursement so that they can better plan for their programs. The City should consider 100% reimbursement to programs meeting a lower threshold.
- The City should consider reducing the parent fee and determine a way to eliminate the parent fee for all 4-year olds. In addition, as DOE and DYCD build and strengthen the free elementary after-school program for young children and/or extend COMPASS to four-year olds, consideration must be given to ensure 4-year olds still enroll in CBOs.
- In the currently open EarlyLearn RFP, we urge ACS to select centers and family child care networks with a history of serving the communities so that the majority of the high quality programs and networks funded by the City Council receive contracts.
- It will be critical for the Administration and the City Council to advocate for additional state funds to help cover costs, particularly if the State attempts to cut capacity to implement the new CCDBG requirements.
- The City needs to eliminate ACS's structural deficit.

In addition, CCC will be urging the Administration to restore and baseline the child care initiatives funded by the City Council in FY15:

- \$5.0 million for Discretionary Child Care Programs (that did not receive a negotiated acquisition extension contract from the Administration)
- \$1.5 million for the Early Literacy Initiative
- \$10.0 million for Priority 5 child care vouchers for low-income families with school-aged children
- \$1.5 million for Technical Assistance for Child Care Providers
- \$210,000 for WHEDCO to train 500 low-income informal child care providers

Family Homelessness- Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Human Resources Administration (HRA)

Today's Preliminary Budget hearing comes at a time when homelessness is still at crisis levels in New York City. As of March 10, 2015, there were over 11,000 families with over 24,000 children sleeping in DHS homeless shelters each night.⁶ Additionally, the average length of stay for families with children in shelter has been steadily increasing over the years from 337 days in Fiscal Year 2012, to 375 days in Fiscal Year 2013 to 427 days last year.⁷

CCC supports the Preliminary Budget proposals that address the current homelessness crisis with a multi-prong approach by committing resources to prevent homelessness, helping the homeless leave shelter to permanent housing through the Living in Communities program (LINC), and ensuring supports and services are available when families exit the shelter system. We urge the City Council to also support these proposals. We remain hopeful that these strategies and those the Mayor, DHS and HRA have already put into place will soon lead to a decrease in the shelter census.

CCC has long advocated that the best way to reduce the number of families in the shelter system, and eliminate the trauma homelessness causes children, is to prevent families from becoming homeless in the first place. CCC applauds the administration for the recent wave of television commercials aimed at ensuring families are aware of the HomeBase program and urging them to seek help before they become homeless.

In addition, CCC supports the preliminary budget proposals aimed at preventing family homelessness, including:

- \$656,000 for the Early Warning Homeless Prevention program at HRA, which will include outreach and preventive services to families and individuals known to be at risk of entering shelter;
- \$4.3 million for the PATH Community-Based Demonstration Project at DHS, which will improve homeless prevention efforts at family shelter intake;
- \$342,000 for 5 new DHS staff to form the Prevention Team.

A focus on homeless prevention is a critical step to ensuring families and children stay out of the shelter system and CCC believes these initiatives will result in fewer families and children seeking shelter. We urge the City Council to support these proposals.

Unfortunately, however, it is not possible to prevent all family homelessness. CCC was very pleased that one of the first measures the de Blasio administration was to secure state funding for a new rental assistance program and then put the program into place. Rental assistance programs have proven to be an effective way to enable homeless families to move out of shelter and into affordable housing. Therefore, LINC is a critical step in decreasing the homeless shelter censuses.

⁶ New York City Department of Homeless Services, Daily Report, March 10, 2015. Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>

⁷ New York City Mayor's Management Report, Department of Homeless Services. Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/downloads/pdf/pmmr2015/dhs.pdf>

We would like to thank the Administration for its efforts to improve landlord participation in LINC so that now families are moving from shelter to affordable housing. We are also grateful for the Mayor's support for after-care services for families in the LINC I and III programs, as we believe this is crucial to helping families stay stably housed. Through this commitment to stable, permanent, affordable housing shelter residents now have an exit strategy and the average length of stay in shelter should begin to decrease as families finally have a plan in place to leave the shelter system.

Specifically, CCC supports the following Preliminary Budget proposals aimed at helping homeless families secure and maintain permanent housing and we urge the City Council to support these as well:

- \$2.1 million for employment and after-care services for families receiving LINC I (working families) rental assistance (HRA);
- \$495,000 for after-care services for families receiving LINC III (domestic violence survivors) rental assistance (HRA);
- \$1.4 million to increase the furniture allowance for families moving from shelter to permanent housing (HRA);
- \$1.0 million for one-time incentive payments to landlords for participating in LINC programs and to create a security fund to reimburse landlords for costs not covered by security deposits (HRA);
- \$2.9 million for 79 new HRA staff to provide operational and administrative support for LINC and homeless prevention programs (HRA);
- \$3.1 million for 44 new DHS staff to provide operational and administrative support for the LINC programs (DHS);
- \$1.9 million for Permanency Specialists to provide advocacy, support, assistance, oversight and training to shelter providers related to housing permanency (DHS).

While we believe the Mayor's preliminary budget takes great steps to address the overwhelming number of families and children in shelter, we believe more can be done.

First, there are several City Council initiatives that were not included in the preliminary budget that we believe should be restored and baselined, including:

- \$500,000 for the Citywide Homeless Prevention Fund
- \$550,000 for the Citywide Task Force on Housing Court/Housing Court Answers
- \$2 million total for the Housing Preservation Initiative
- \$1.1 million total for Community Consultants
- \$750,000 for the Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Initiative
- \$750,000 for the HPD Alternative Enforcement Program to identify 200 most distressed multiple dwelling and make repairs
- \$1.0 million for Stabilizing NYC, a citywide coalition to prevent the loss of affordable housing
- \$5 million for anti-eviction legal services

In addition, we believe that there are a number of additional investments that the City must make in the Executive Budget to strengthen its ability to prevent homelessness, keep homeless families safe, and help expedite permanent housing.

While CCC appreciates the administration's efforts to create a new rental assistance program, we believe the program could be even more successful if it was increased to be able to serve more families and children annually. Currently, funding allows for 4,000 families to be placed annually through LINC I, II and III. While this is tremendous start, we hope that in the future there will not need to be caps on the annual number of families who can take advantage of the program.

We will also be urging the Administration to ensure the Executive Budget includes funding for after-care services for LINC II (as there is money provided for aftercare for LINC I and III in the preliminary budget). Families in the shelter system, particularly the vulnerable families served by LINC II, typically have a myriad of challenges to overcome in addition to housing. These issues often can be what led to housing instability in the first place. With an average stay of 427 days, many families in shelter have had the most housing stability of their lives while in the shelter system. Thus, the move out of shelter can create stress for families as they adjust to being independent. In order to ensure that families in LINC remain safely and stably housed it is essential that families receive supportive after-care services, in addition to their housing assistance. In addition, supportive services should be available to families even when their subsidy ends in order to help families remain permanently housed. Services should include, but not be limited to case management, access to child care, and health and mental health services.

Additionally, CCC urges DHS to baseline \$2 million to maintain social work staff who are currently reviewing high-risk families in shelter to ensure child safety. CCC was very pleased last year when DHS temporarily employed MSWs to review the cases of 2,500 high risk families in shelter to determine what support services the families might need. DHS defined high risk families to include families with past or current ACS involvement, single parents with three or more children, a parent who is 18-24 years old, families with a man living in the household who is not the biological father, and families with a child with medical needs. The goal is for the MSWs to assess the families, meet with the families and then help families access any services they might need. Notably, most of these families have not been accused of abuse or neglect nor have ACS involvement, so many of the families are being referred to services through DHS providers rather than ACS providers. This is important because of the stigma and fear that often times accompanies accessing ACS's services.

We also support the creation of a new Child Safety initiative for children living in shelter. We believe that the Administration, the City Council, ACS, DHS, ACS preventive providers, and DHS shelter providers could collaborate to develop a new initiative to provide on-site services aimed at reducing risk and keeping children safe during this traumatic time for their families.

Lastly, CCC requests that the Administration include adding additional resources to address the health and safety concerns in shelters for families and children in the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2016. According to a March 2015 New York City Department of Investigation (DOI)

report, the shelter facilities are in need of investments in maintenance and repair due to decades of neglect.

DOI inspected 25 Tier II shelters, hotels and cluster sites and found 621 City issued violations.⁸ They determined that cluster sites are in need of the most immediate action and were unsafe and unhealthy. Some of the violations include seeing a dead rat in an apartment where children live, roaches throughout buildings, garbage in the stairs and hallway, urine on the floor of an elevator, lax security, and lack of an onsite caseworker.”⁹

CCC has long-advocated against the use of cluster sites as shelter, especially for families and children. In fact, last year in our budget testimony we asked the Administration to add funding in order to inspect health and safety concerns at shelters for families and children, address the health and safety concerns, and eliminate the use of cluster sites as shelter for families. This year we are here asking for the same request. Additionally, we support DOI’s recommendations, which include: improving shelter conditions by strengthening inspections and holding providers accountable for violations; reducing the use of cluster sites and improving social services at existing cluster sites; bringing on new shelters pursuant to procurement and contract; and working to close down non-contracted shelters or bring them to contract.¹⁰

We are optimistic that the Mayor’s focus on preventing homelessness, ensuring the homeless have a path out of shelter through the LINC program, and providing supports and services when families leave the shelter system will soon lead to a decrease in the homeless shelter census. We look forward to continuing our work with the Administration and City Council to help homeless families and children in New York City.

Human Resources Administration (HRA)- Income Support

CCC is very pleased with the direction and initiatives being pursued by HRA in support of families and children. We are hopeful that the new policies and procedures related to work-requirements will help bring families both short-term and long-term economic security.

Far too many hard-working New Yorkers are living in poverty. According to the most recent U.S. Census data, New York City’s overall poverty rate is 20.9%, which means that one in every five New Yorkers lives in poverty.¹¹ Even more sobering, the child poverty rate in New York City is 29.8%, meaning 520,000 NYC children lived in poverty in 2013. Many New Yorkers who live in poverty work at minimum wage jobs, and need higher wages in order to support themselves and their families. CCC supports the Mayor’s proposal to raise NYC’s minimum wage to \$13.00 and allow it to be adjusted for inflation. We will continue to advocate for this as part of the state budget and urge the Council to do the same. Ultimately, we believe every working New Yorker should earn a living wage.

⁸ New York City Department of Investigation Probe of Department of Homeless Services’ Shelters for Families with Children Finds Serious Deficiencies, March 2015. Available at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/12/nyregion/report-on-violations-in-homeless-shelters.html>

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2013.

CCC is very pleased that the Preliminary Budget proposes to add \$4.1 million for additional staff and administrative support to address the high demand for IDNYC. We are extremely pleased that New Yorkers are so interested in obtaining these IDs and we appreciate all of the efforts of both the Administration and the City Council for making IDNYC a reality. We urge the City Council to support this Preliminary Budget proposal.

We also support the Preliminary Budget proposal to invest \$6.9 million of city funds to modernize SNAP centers and roll-out the Benefits Re-engineering initiative. These steps to ensure struggling New Yorkers can access public benefits are critical.

While we appreciate the investments and reforms that have been made by the Administration, we urge the City to go further in the Executive Budget to better meet the needs of struggling New Yorkers.

First, we will be urging the Administration to restore and baseline the FY15 City Council initiatives and urge the City Council to do the same. These include:

- \$2.8 million for the Anti-Poverty Initiative
- \$250,000 total for the EITC Assistance Program
- \$335,000 for EBTs at Farmers' Markets
- \$60,000 to expand low income farmers' markets
- \$250,000 for Emergency Food Programs/food pantries
- \$1.32 million for food pantries
- \$148,000 for SCO Family of Services/Center for Family Life Worker Cooperatives
- \$1.2 million for Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative

While SNAP benefits are a critical component of ensuring the food security of New Yorkers, there are many hungry New Yorkers who are not eligible, eligible New Yorkers who are not enrolled, and the federal government has cut SNAP benefits. Effective November 1, 2013, SNAP recipients had their benefits decreased due to federal cuts to the SNAP program. Specifically, for example, a household of three has lost approximately \$29 per month – more than 20 meals. Thus, unfortunately, many New Yorkers need to turn to emergency food programs (EFPs), such as food pantries and soup kitchens.

Since the federal SNAP cuts went into effect last November, EFPs have experienced a marked increase in the demand for food. EFPs also saw a substantial growth in visitors preceding the SNAP cuts, as a result of both the recession and Hurricane Sandy. Given these circumstances, EFPs need more funding so that they can attempt to serve the 1.4 million New Yorkers who seek their help. We are urging the Administration to bring funding for emergency food programs to \$14.4 million and we urge the Council to do the same.

In addition, while not under the purview of today's committees, we also believe that universal school lunch for all grades (not just stand-alone middle schools) and Breakfast in the Classroom/Breakfast After the Bell would go a long way towards address hunger for New York City's children. We are grateful to the City Council for its commitment to these issues and we urge you to use your influence to push the Administration to make these programs a universal reality for NYC's public school children.

Finally, we believe that HRA should amend its work requirements to allow home-visiting participation hours to count towards the public assistance work requirement. Home visiting programs such as Nurse-Family Partnership and Healthy Families New York, have been proven to produce good outcomes for children and families. In these programs, nurses, social workers or other professionals visit the homes of mothers with young children and provide one on one supports. Evidence has shown these programs reduce child abuse and neglect, improve academic performance, reduce childhood injuries, reduce later juvenile justice involvement, etc.

New Jersey currently allows families to count the hours they participate in a home visiting program affiliated with their HRA-equivalent to count towards their work requirement. CCC urges HRA to consider creating a similar program in New York. Furthermore, we believe that a pilot program like this, focusing on families in shelter with young children, could be invaluable. We urge the City Council to support this request.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the de Blasio administration has taken some critical steps towards addressing income inequality and the needs of vulnerable children and families, there is much more work to be done. The budget is a document that reflects the priorities of an Administration. We therefore remain hopeful that the Executive Budget will include many of the restorations and priorities that are raised in this testimony. We hope that the City Council will also support these priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY 2016 Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 17, 2015

Prepared by Sarah Fajardo, Child Welfare Policy Coordinator

Good afternoon. My name is Sarah Fajardo, and I am the Child Welfare Policy Coordinator for the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families. We would like to thank General Welfare Chair Levin, Finance Committee Chair Ferreras and members of the General Welfare committee for holding this important oversight hearing on the city fiscal year (FY) 2016 Preliminary Budget.

On behalf of the 40 Asian-led and Asian-serving community and social service organizations that comprise our membership, I urge the Council to:

- 1. Increase education and outreach to the Asian Pacific American community about resources and programs available through ACS;**
- 2. Increase capacity and partnerships with Asian Pacific American community based organizations;**
- 3. Improve language access and cultural competency in the provision of child welfare services;**
- 4. Ensure that Administration for Children's Services' (ACS) cultural competency trainings address the needs of all of New York City's diverse communities, including Asian Pacific Americans;**
- 5. Support policies mandating City agencies to utilize a standard approach to data collection, disaggregation, and reporting on Asian Pacific Americans.**

For nearly 30 years, CACF has been the nation's only pan-Asian children's advocacy organization. We work to improve the health and well-being of Asian Pacific American (APA) children and families in New York City in three key policy areas: education, health and child welfare. CACF challenges the stereotype of Asian Pacific Americans as a "model minority" and advocates on behalf of underserved families in our community, especially immigrants struggling with poverty and limited English skills. We work with our membership of over 50 community based organizations to promote better policies, funding, and services for pan-Asian children, youth, and families.

Despite the success of some of our community members, Asian Pacific Americans have the highest rates of poverty and linguistic isolation of all ethnic/racial groups in New York City. APA families need access to quality child care programs, as well as neighborhood-based preventive services that provide families the resources to build family stability and secure child safety. Additionally, alternatives to foster care must be fully supported. Securing a funding source that is stable, sustainable, and sufficient to meet the needs of at-risk children and families is of particular concern for Asian Pacific American organizations because current levels of public funding remain low and are insufficient to meet our community's needs. In addition, Asian Pacific Americans' ability to access child welfare and other human services is hindered by language and cultural barriers. It is therefore vital that preventive services are provided by culturally competent agencies in the preferred languages of at-risk families. We must find ways to reach our most vulnerable community members by overcoming these barriers to accessing services.

BACKGROUND

Asian Pacific Americans are by percentage the fastest growing community in New York City, doubling every decade since 1970 and constituting close to 15% of the population. Of the over 1 million Asian Pacific Americans in New York City, 1 out of 2 Asian Pacific American children is born into poverty, 72.9% of Asian Pacific Americans are foreign-born, and 42.5% of households live in linguistic isolation



THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

(meaning that no one over the age of 14 in the household speaks English well). According to the Mayor's Center for Economic Opportunity, the poverty rate for Asian Pacific Americans is 29%—the highest rate of all racial groups. Despite this rapid population growth and these disparities, Asian Pacific Americans are often not connected to critical social services and are considered a lower priority for attention and resources. For example, less than one percent of City social service contract dollars and foundation grant dollars go to our community.

According to ACS, in November 2014, there were almost 400 Asian Pacific American children involved in open child welfare investigations, comprising 3% of all open investigations. During the same time period, nearly 1000 APA children were involved in open preventive cases, making up nearly 4.2% of all open preventive cases. The Asian languages spoken by children in open investigations were Arabic; Bengali; Chinese—Cantonese, Mandarin, and Fujianese; Hindi; Korean; Punjabi; and Urdu. These numbers reflect the diversity of the broader APA community, and likewise must be reflected in service provision and resources. Ensuring that community based organizations who serve emerging and underserved communities in their neighborhoods have adequate funding is critical for our APA community members.

Though their numbers may be relatively small, the barriers that Asian Pacific American (APA) families face in navigating the child welfare system are significant:

- **Language:** Many APA and other immigrant families who come into contact with the child welfare system struggle with limited English proficiency (LEP). In its own language access and policy implementation plan, ACS recognized nine “priority languages” based primarily on the high frequency of requests for child welfare and child care services in these languages. Five of these “priority languages” were Asian: Chinese, Arabic, Korean, Bengali, and Urdu.¹ However, families still report difficulties accessing accurate and culturally competent interpretation and translation services.
- **Culture:** Many APA families struggle with the process of acculturation and lack knowledge of U.S. laws and systems; and have a diverse array of family structures, cultural/religious practices, child rearing practices, and concepts of “family”. Engaging with these families respectfully to bridge cultural differences is critical to ensure child safety and family stability.
- **Lack of familiarity:** APA families are often unfamiliar with child welfare laws, the role of ACS, or the availability of resources for at-risk families. For undocumented families, this lack of familiarity is exacerbated by the fear that interacting with government agencies will result in punitive action or even deportation.

As a result of these barriers, Asian Pacific Americans experience great difficulty in communicating with ACS and other child welfare staff, understanding and exercising their rights, and accessing the critical support services that strengthen families and improve child safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families supports the inclusion of cultural sensitivity training in the preliminary budget, and encourages the Council to consider funding an expansion of universal pre-K for every four year old, and increasing funding to extend hours for childcare. Early childhood programs serving the Asian Pacific American community often provide additional support to immigrant families to ensure these families understand child welfare laws and have the support they need to keep their families together. Many community-based programs have the bilingual and bicultural staff able to communicate and build trust to be an invaluable resource for families. CACF has several additional child welfare recommendations:

¹“Language Access Policy and Implementation Plan,” New York City Children’s Services. Available at http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/lap_acs.pdf.



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1. **Increase education and outreach to the Asian Pacific American community about services and programs available through ACS.** ACS should develop a public education campaign utilizing multiple strategies to reach diverse communities. ACS should use Asian ethnic media, participate in community events, partner with community based organizations, and provide public information in multiple languages to help community members access child welfare and child care services. ACS must provide timely and meaningful information about its various programs to families.
2. **Increase capacity and partnerships with Asian Pacific American community based organizations.** ACS should not only build meaningful partnerships with Asian Pacific American CBOs but also commit financial resources for these CBOs to increase their staff capacity. Asian Pacific American CBOs provide much needed services that are language accessible and culturally competent. Staff are often bilingual/bicultural and are familiar with the culture shock that immigrants may experience when arriving to the U.S. These organizations guide and advocate for families through these systems. However, these organizations are often stretched because of limited financial resources and staff capacity. Additional resources are needed to expand the much needed, culturally competent and linguistically accessible services provided by community organizations.
3. **Provide linguistically accessible child welfare services for Asian Pacific American families.** All services must be language accessible at all points of contact with families. ACS and contracted agency staff must be trained on protocols to utilize translation and interpretation services. Additional funding must be made available so that staff can utilize language assistance services when needed. In addition, staff working with the Asian Pacific American community must learn how to effectively assess and respond to their diverse language needs. For example, ACS should consider alternate methods of enrolling children into child care in order to address language needs, such as community based enrollment.
4. **Ensure that cultural competency trainings include Asian Pacific American cultural information and perspectives.** CACF applauds the proposed budget allocation for cultural sensitivity training for ACS staff, and encourages ACS to ensure that these trainings are inclusive of all of New York City's diverse community members.
5. **Support policies that would mandate City agencies to utilize a standard approach to data collection, disaggregation, and reporting on Asian Pacific Americans.** City agencies need to utilize a standard approach to data collection, disaggregation, and reporting on Asian Pacific Americans. Any policy should mandate a standard approach to the collection, disaggregation, and reporting out of demographic data on New York's diverse Asian Pacific American community. This includes disaggregation of Asian Pacific American ethnic categories to at least 22 categories, information on country of origin and years in the United States, and information on top 20 most frequently spoken Asian languages. The policy must also ensure data is made publicly available at regular intervals.

We hope that the City Council will be a champion for New York City's children. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

FOR THE RECORD



FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES

TESTIMONY

**Budget Hearing:
Administration for Children's Services and Human Resource
Administration**

Presented to

New York City Council, General Welfare Committee

Tuesday March 17, 2015

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My name is Mallory Nugent and I am the Policy Analyst for Human Services and Poverty Reduction at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA). I would like to thank Chairman Levin and the members of the General Welfare Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today and for your leadership on issues that deeply affect New Yorkers.

FPWA is an anti-poverty, policy and advocacy nonprofit with a membership network of nearly 200 human service and faith-based organizations. FPWA has been a prominent force in New York City's social services system for more than 92 years, advocating for fair public policies, collaborating with partner agencies, and growing its community-based membership network to meet the needs of New Yorkers. Each year, through its network of member agencies, FPWA reaches close to 1.5 million New Yorkers of all ages, ethnicities, and denominations. FPWA strives to build a city of equal opportunity that reduces poverty, promotes upward mobility, and creates shared prosperity for all New Yorkers.

Administration of Children's Services

The administration of early childhood education has been of particular importance to FPWA due to the impact it has had on our member agencies. Of the nearly 200 agencies represented by FPWA, 70 are providers of early childhood education services. Twenty-three of these organizations are also EarlyLearn providers, accounting for 83 EarlyLearn centers across the five boroughs.

Creation of New City Agency for Early Childhood

The City's Early Childhood Education system is currently decentralized in that it falls under three City Agencies (ACS, DOE, DOHMH), one Deputy Mayor and the Chancellor. Under this disjointed system, there is no one person charged with making the youngest New Yorkers and their families first priority. Our member agencies and the parents they serve report confusing coordination, often lacking effective cross system communication. Varying sets of rules, requirements and administration result in lost efficiency and inconsistent quality of services. FPWA found through a series of focus groups that one of the biggest issues faced by UPK providers is attempting to negotiate the different agencies involved. ***FPWA strongly urges the City to create an agency specifically to ensure the effective coordination of the care and education of 0-5 year olds and engagement of families.*** This will ensure that the young New Yorkers are given a strong foundation to succeed as they transition to K-12 and beyond, while their families are given the support to remain in the workforce.

EarlyLearn

The EarlyLearn system provides a model for providing a publically funded comprehensive early child care and education system that has the potential to significantly improve the quality of childcare in New York City. Many aspects of this model have been long promoted by FPWA and other children and early education advocates and were designed to strengthen

an early care and education system plagued with varying levels of quality. These promising aspects include: improved teacher-child ratios, unified program standards and assessment system, longer daily hours and more complete coverage throughout the year, and increased opportunities for staff development.

While FPWA supports these efforts to increase the quality of early care and childhood education in New York City, we find ourselves increasingly concerned regarding aspects of this model that have inadvertently created a negative impact on many providers and the quality of services they provide. A majority of these challenges revolve around the lack of sufficient financial support for EarlyLearn providers, especially in the areas of insufficient per child reimbursement rates and increased burden of health care and liability insurance coverage.

Insufficient Financial Support – Following the implementation of EarlyLearn, the City adjusted the way in which it reimburses providers. While previous rates reflected individual providers' varied costs (rent, facilities fees, etc.), the current system utilizes a flat reimbursement rate which providers widely report to be insufficient.

In answer to the concerns of providers, including FPWA member agencies, the Campaign for Children surveyed 42 agencies representing 102 sites regarding the current rate's ability to cover high quality early childhood programs. The survey found that 83% (35 out of 42) of the agencies reported struggling with the current rate, with 17 of these programs reported that they are spending more than they are being reimbursed.

As a result of this insufficient financial support, our member agencies have reported:

1. Having to cut staff positions and cut back on extra services that in previous years provided additional support to low-income and vulnerable families. One member agency was forced to lay-off ten support and administrative staff positions. Previously this program, situated in a high need/high poverty neighborhood, was able to employ three family service workers who were responsible for providing information regarding public benefits, connecting families with additional social services, and creating a positive and emotionally supportive environment. Now this provider can only afford to employ one family service provider who must serve double duty as a substitute when teachers call in sick or are on vacation.
2. Being forced to ask employees to cover 15% of the cost of their coverage due to the insufficient level of reimbursement when childcare employees lost access to the city funded Central Insurance system. A survey of our member agencies revealed that in any given program, about 30-60% of employees opted out of health care coverage. Though this low level of insurance coverage uptake has resulted in a cost savings for many programs, especially those who estimated 100% participation from their

workforce, the rapid increase of uninsured workers is not beneficial to the providers' workforce stability or the city in the long run.

3. Struggling to pay for the cost of their liability and worker's compensation insurance. These additional insurance costs are not adequately covered by the current reimbursement rate and have resulted in programs having to cut program costs in other areas, usually through the reduction of additional administrative and support staff.
4. Struggling to recruit and retain qualified personnel. Our member agencies report the lack of competitive salaries as the number one threat to their ability to provide high quality early learning opportunities. Providers frequently report going through the process of recruiting and hiring new staff and providing training and support while new employees obtain required credentials, only to have those staff members leave to go to higher paid positions in the public schools or for profit providers.

FPWA urges the Mayor and the City Council to increase the per-child reimbursement rate to more appropriately reflect the actual costs of providing quality care. Specifically, the new rate should sufficiently ensure that providers can meet standards, provide fair compensation, address employee contribution for health insurance, and appropriately fund costs of operations, administration and materials for children. To guarantee that this rate remains appropriate in the long term, it should be indexed to inflation. **The City should also create a capital fund to expeditiously address facility repairs.**

Pay-For-Enrollment – The insufficient rate is exacerbated by the policy requiring full enrollment for full reimbursement. While providers are only reimbursed for enrolled students, their costs for rent, maintenance, and staff do not fluctuate. Cost gaps for programs not at full enrollment are therefore an even larger issue.

- According to the Administration for Children's Services, only 13% of sites are currently at 100% enrollment and system-wide enrollment is 82% (including Head Start and the non-subsidized private pre-k seats in some programs).
- While full enrollment is clearly a positive factor, it still does not ensure that the rate is sufficient. According to the Campaign for Children, almost half of the agencies reported struggling were at 95-100% enrollment. These numbers indicate that a rate that is often insufficient at 100% enrollment is overwhelmingly insufficient for the 87% of EarlyLearn programs that are not at full enrollment and therefore not receiving full reimbursement.

FPWA recommends ACS decrease their threshold for full reimbursement to a more realistic enrollment level. Given that the great majority of programs are not at full enrollment, programs are unable to plan effectively to cover the costs of fixed expenses like rent, maintenance, and staffing.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) – FPWA is extremely pleased with the investment made in universal pre-kindergarten over the last year when tens of thousands of four-year-olds gained access to UPK. Emphasis was placed on ensuring quality programs and supports were put in place to ensure programs could meet those standards. Measures to ensure quality included staff supports such as professional development and partnerships with CUNY around teacher certifications. Also, salaries for UPK teachers were increased to \$44,000-\$50,000 (dependent on level of education), allowing community-based organizations (CBOs) to hire and maintain certified teachers.

Over the summer of 2014, FPWA conducted a series of provider focus groups to assess the UPK enrollment process. The issue that arose most frequently was that of salary parity, both within CBOs and between CBO's and Department of Education (DOE) settings. Agencies reported that while they strongly support the salary increase for UPK teachers, they find it difficult to staff three-year-old and infant/toddler classrooms with qualified teachers. Certified teachers did not want to be placed in three-year-old classrooms with the same work load but significantly lower pay. Similarly, agencies saw their more experienced staff leave CBO's in favor of DOE settings. While the UPK increase set salaries at a similar level, DOE settings offered shorter hours, shorter school years and greater fringe benefits than their community-based counterparts. This was felt especially strongly in EarlyLearn/UPK settings, where programs are operated with extended hours and beyond school years to meet the needs of working families.

The issues extend beyond the teaching staff. Many providers reported that their directors, sometimes with decades of experience, were making significantly less than a first year UPK teacher. They stated that their contracted rates did not allow them to increase salaries for directors or other staff. Salary related staffing issues were reported at each of the six focus groups held by FPWA, across four boroughs. The problems were reported by a diverse range of providers, from small organizations with one site to large agencies with multiple sites. Salary increases for teachers and staff must be factored into the contracted rates for programs. ***While the salary increase for certified UPK teachers was a very positive step, FPWA urges ACS to bring the rest of their teachers and staff in line with that salary level.*** Without salary parity, providers will be unable to maintain quality teachers, directors and staff.

Child Welfare

FPWA supports increased investment in our child welfare system. We represent more than 30 child welfare agencies that operate numerous programs throughout the City. We believe that through investment in preventive services and supports for families, foster care

placements can continue their decline. This is both cost effective for the city, and the best option for keeping families together.

Preventive Services

Preventive services are a cost-effective component of the child welfare system – each slot costs about \$9,500 and serves an entire family; whereas foster care costs about \$36,000 per child. In order to provide appropriate services to families who need assistance, it is imperative to provide stability to the system and ensure sufficient capacity. Over the last decade, foster care placements in New York City have fallen by half. This is in large part due to the support of preventive services. ***FPWA strongly recommends the city to maintain its investment in order to help children and families avoid the negative outcomes associated with foster care.***

FPWA also advocates for the allocation of funding for community optional preventive services, to target support for at-risk families before there is an allegation of abuse or neglect. It is vital that families be able to access services prior to a crisis point, through community organizations who understand the needs of families in their areas.

After-care Support Services

FPWA encourages the Mayor and the City Council to continue fully supporting the wise investment of child welfare preventive services by restoring the \$4.15 million cut from previous budgets in after-care support services to help support the reunification process. Families reconnecting after a foster care placement are in need of an added layer of support as they make adjustments and continue to heal.

For youth not able to return to their families, the prospect of aging out comes with increased odds of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and incarceration. Developing aftercare with the capacity to support youth until age 25 could nurture productive independence. Currently, ACS lacks both funding allocation and clear guidelines for a support system for aged out youth. This lack of aftercare infrastructure is insufficient to meet the needs of youth aging out. ***FPWA recommends that ACS develop after care capacity to support youth already aged out of foster care until age 25 by providing housing, health and mental health, education and vocational training assistance.***

Permanency for Foster Youth

FPWA also recommends the City to restore the \$9.9 million cut from previous budgets to support permanency for foster care youth. In order for agencies to implement permanency plans they must be financially supported in this difficult and challenging work. By increasing the ability of agency to help youth develop positive adult connections and informal supports, ACS and the City will be giving youth their best chance at successful independence.

WEP Phase-out

FPWA supports HRA's intention to phase out the current Work Experience Program (WEP). We believe that increased access to evidence-based training programs is essential for the long-term success of New York City's employment plan. ***FPWA strongly supports the utilization of the Career Pathway approach as a means to allow clients to receive education and training that prepares them for careers in high-need sectors.*** We hope to see an expedited development of alternative programs that allow participants to transition to meaningful employment.

Focus on Education and Training

FPWA is pleased to see HRA focus on comprehensive education, training, and employment-related services in the new employment plan. Research demonstrates the heightened earning potential of workers as they increase their educational credentials and the significant barriers to wage increases and career advancement that exist for those lacking access to educational and training opportunities. These new and enhanced programs will serve as a means to provide assistance to those at all levels of education and work experience.

Transitional Jobs

While FPWA values HRA efforts to support access to education and connections to fields like the tech sector, we see that a high needs portion of public assistance recipients will not be served by these efforts. ***FPWA encourages HRA to also implement a comprehensive transitional jobs program for clients who may require additional support services.***

Transitional jobs are a particular form of publicly subsidized employment which seeks to help those who are "hard to employ" – long-term unemployed, TANF recipients, disconnected youth and the formerly incarcerated– overcome employment barriers with paid, short-term employment that combines real work, skill development and supportive services. Participants are provided training in both necessary soft skills in the workforce and with vocational training in a specific industry/skill. Often, participants are retained for permanent employment in the jobs they had placed into for a subsidized period. Even when they are not, these participants have a much higher chance of finding permanent employment afterward, and they are provided with help in their job search process.

Transitional jobs programs have been proven by several studies to reduce dependence on public assistance for participants and have been shown to largely reduce recidivism among those formerly incarcerated. To increase the likelihood of participants maintaining employment, we hope to see the City create a strong job placement network with public and private employers.

Staffing Decreases

The Mayor's financial plan includes cuts to PA field staff by 15.5%. FPWA is opposed to these cuts. This is a significant decrease in staffing, without a significant decrease in caseloads. Job Center staff have reported "not enough staff" as a challenge in recent surveys. Per the report *Culture of Deterrence*, wait times were approximately 3.5 hours. These decreases will likely decrease the quality of customer service.

We thank the City Council for the opportunity to testify. We hope that you will consider our budget priorities and recommendations.



**BROOKLYN
DEFENDER
SERVICES**

TESTIMONY OF:

**Lauren Shapiro, Director
Jessica Marcus, Supervising Attorney
Emma Alpert, Senior Staff Attorney
Family Defense Practice
*BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES***

Presented before

The New York City Council

Committees on General Welfare, Women's Issues, and Juvenile Justice

Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 17, 2015

My name is Jessica Marcus and I am a supervising attorney at Brooklyn Defender Services' (BDS) Family Defense Practice. I thank the New York City Council, and in particular the Committees on General Welfare, Women's Issues, and Juvenile Justice, for the opportunity to testify today.

BDS is the largest Brooklyn-based legal services provider, representing **45,000** low-income Brooklyn residents each year who are arrested, charged with abuse or neglect of their children or face deportation. Our interdisciplinary staff provides supplemental legal and social services on-site in the areas of immigration, education, housing, and government benefits. Our family defense practice is assigned to represent parents and care givers in **1,000** new child welfare cases each year, the majority of the respondents in Brooklyn Family Court. Now in our 8th year, we have represented over **6,400** parents and caregivers and currently represent over **2,000** parents. Using an interdisciplinary model, BFDP has advocated for the safe return of over **6,000** children to their families. BFDP's mission is to defend the due process rights of low-income parents while helping them access the benefits and services they need to remain stable and keep their children safe.

Although there has been much discussion about the disproportionate impact of race in the family court and child welfare system, there has been little acknowledgment that most of the respondents in family court are eligible for assigned counsel due to their poverty. Over 90 percent of the child protective cases filed by the Administration for Children's Services ("ACS") are based on allegations of neglect and the vast majority of these cases are caused or exacerbated by the family's poverty. Most of these cases represent a failure of the City's safety net systems for poor children and families – public and other subsidized housing, public assistance, health care, and mental health care systems – to truly support families in need. The City can save money and reduce foster care placements by putting systems into place that address the needs of these families. The City Council, ACS, and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) should examine how these systems work, identify how to make them work more efficiently, and address the barriers that exclude families who need these services which would result in fewer families entering the child welfare system and save the City scarce dollars.

Our experience working with a large number of families involved in child welfare cases in family court provides valuable information about how limited resources are being expended by the City. ACS child protective workers continue to routinely mandate services, such as mental health evaluations, therapy, or parenting classes, which are unnecessary or not carefully tailored to meet the particular needs of the family, even though many of these interventions have not been proven effective by evidence-based research. In addition, child protective and foster care agency workers are rarely sensitive to the barriers families face in accessing these services or able to help families access them. Services are often scheduled during a parent's work hours forcing parents to choose between fulfilling a service requirement and losing a job. Oftentimes, parents are asked to attend services but no transportation or child care is provided, making it difficult to comply.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A. ACS Must Involve Stakeholders in the Development of any new Training Program

We understand that the Mayor has proposed earmarking significant new funds for the training and professional development of front line child welfare staff. We wholeheartedly agree that increased training for case handlers and supervisors is a critical piece of an overall strategy for improving case work practice. We understand the challenges that case workers face in achieving the delicate balance of ensuring child safety while providing services and assistance to keep families together. In order to create a training program that actually achieves a significant change in culture, we believe that ACS should be partnering with community based groups, parents, children and advocates for parents and children to better understand the problems faced in case work practice, which go far beyond the tragic fatalities that we hear about in the press. If the City invests substantial funding in ACS's enhanced training program, a key metric for success must be public accountability to those most impacted by the child welfare system.

In addition, we believe that training must include a cultural competence component to address the lack of sensitivity that our clients face when case workers perform home

investigation or family monitoring, including best practices training for working with families where English is not the parent's primary language.

We also firmly believe that workers and supervisors should be trained to help our clients navigate the systems they interface with on a daily basis, including the shelter system, public assistance, SSI, Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Medicaid and mental health care systems and as discussed below, should be trained on the rights of people with disabilities.

Recommendation: Any funds that are provided to NYCCS for training should require community involvement in the development and implementation of a training program, such as the creation of an advisory board that includes consumers, outside service providers, and advocates. The training curriculum should include cultural competence, training about the systems that affect poor families and training on disabilities as discussed more fully below.

B. ACS Should Revise Its One-Size-Fits-All Approach to Mental Health Issues

We are grateful that in 2013, ACS promulgated *Principles to Inform Child Welfare Decision-Making Regarding Mental Health Issues*. Yet we continue to see many problems persist, including the overuse of mental health assessments in situations where they are not warranted, including where there are no allegations of mental illness. In addition, we are concerned about ACS's improper reliance on mental health assessments which do not meet the minimum professional standards and do not provide useful information about parenting abilities. These assessments are then relied on inappropriately to mandate treatment and make decisions about visiting and reunification. We are also concerned about the widespread practice of mandating therapy and requiring disclosure of information from therapists, which little respect for the impact this has on the patient-therapist relationship.

Finally, children diagnosed with mental illnesses are often placed in foster care due to a parent's difficulty in coping with their child's mental health condition, often because of language barriers or lack of education, yet the child doesn't receive the services they need while they are in foster care. Foster care agencies, through their Therapeutic Foster

Boarding Home programs, provide specialized training and supports to foster parents caring for children with special needs, but parents are rarely offered the same type of training and support.

Recommendation: ACS and foster care agency workers need to be better trained on mental health issues, including their own guidelines, and ACS should work with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to examine closely the resources and services that are available in communities to ensure that families receive services that are carefully tailored to meet their families' needs so that children do not enter foster care because they or their parents have not received appropriate mental health services.

C. ACS Must Better Serve Clients with Intellectual Disabilities

We are concerned about the number of clients we see where the only allegation against them in their Article 10 case is their cognitive delays; these cases represent a failure of the system. ACS should not be filing neglect cases against these families but should be working with the appropriate City and State agencies to ensure that they get the ongoing support and services that they need. Very often the families have received inadequate and insufficient evaluations. Although these families can function independently with ongoing supportive services, the services that child protection currently offers these families, such as short term preventive services, are inadequate and inappropriate to meet these families' needs. In a letter dated January 29, 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) found that the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) had violated the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by denying a mother with developmental disabilities opportunities to benefit from support and services to achieve reunification. Among other things, the DOJ found that DCF failed to *provide appropriate policies and training for social workers to understand their obligation to ensure the civil rights of parents with disabilities.*

Recommendation: Where a parent presents to ACS with a possible intellectual disability, ACS should assess whether the parent is receiving any supportive services related to the perceived disability, coordinate the referral and evaluation process for the parent to receive

appropriate services, and provide transitional services to the parent until those disability-related services are put in place. The process of applying for state assistance through OPWDD can be difficult to navigate, and ACS should be familiar with this application process and assist parents with establishing their eligibility. ACS staff should be trained in reasonable accommodations that people with intellectual disabilities may need, such as more time allotted for case conferences and casework contacts, more specific assistance with traveling to appointments and time management, and in-services and classes that are available for parents in this population.

D. ACS Should Re Examine Policy Regarding Marijuana Use

The majority of substance abuse allegations in our cases are based on marijuana use. Even though marijuana possession is legal in New York, ACS prosecutes parents for marijuana use, often without obtaining a professional assessment as to whether that use constitutes a serious addiction that directly causes harm to the children. This practice is an unnecessary use of scarce resources. ACS should be focusing on cases where drug addiction is demonstrated to be harmful to children. We have many cases where children remain in foster care even though the only issue is ongoing positive tests for marijuana.

Recommendation: ACS should examine its approach to cases involving allegations of drug use and develop policies and practices to ensure that ACS intervenes and files a Family Court case only where there is actual evidence that a parent's drug use is harming or poses a risk of harm to the children and referrals for costly, time consuming treatment programs are made only when unnecessary. Children should not remain in foster care solely on the basis of positive tests for marijuana where there is no evidence that the parent was under the influence in the presence of the children.

ACS should train workers on the nature of addiction and about harm reduction programs that use a public health approach, identify drug treatment programs that provide services in the home or outside work hours and permit families to continue to reside together so that a parent does not have to choose treatment over his or her family and children are not unnecessarily placed or remain in foster care because a parent needs treatment.

E. ACS Should Further Reduce Traumatic Emergency Removals of Children

Since August 2010, BFDP has been advocating with ACS to cease their illegal practice of removing children without court order in situations where there is time to seek a court order. Oftentimes, children are removed from their homes on an emergency basis only to be returned by a family court judge who later hears the application, causing unnecessary trauma of removal to the children. In addition, there is often a delay in coming to court because child safety conferences are held first. We are grateful that ACS issued a new protocol and training program to guide case workers in February 2011, but we are concerned that the practice of removing children without court order persists.

Recommendation: ACS should continue to ensure that all of its workers are trained to follow the emergency removal protocol and consider eliminating child safety conferences in certain cases.

F. ACS Should Provide More Meaningful Preventive Services

BDS strongly supports funding preventive services to prevent the need for children to be placed in foster care and to reduce the time children spend in care. In large measure, preventive service programs helped reduce the foster care population from almost 40,000 in 1999 to under 12,000 in New York City today¹. Keeping families together with services in place, instead of placing children in foster care prevents the harm and trauma of removing children from their families while saving tax-payer money.

We also believe that preventive service programs can and should be delivered more effectively to help families provide safe and stable homes for their children and to reduce the number of children who enter foster care.

1. Monitoring requirements limit the effectiveness of programs and restrict the amount of time preventive service programs can work with families

In our experience, the role of preventive services agencies has become more to *monitor* families or act as another arm of ACS in assessing safety and risk in the family, rather than take

¹ ACS website, Statistics and Links

significant steps to meaningfully assess and address the problems families face in maintaining stability. For example, although preventive services regulations direct agencies to assist families with basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and housing, very often preventive service workers only remind parents that they must address these issues or monitor their efforts without actually helping them to eliminate obstacles to obtaining these necessities, such as providing transportation costs or childcare, or offering real assistance to help them navigate the many complex bureaucracies and agencies necessary to secure assistance. In the past, for example, agencies have funded parent advocates to help navigate these systems but such programs do not appear to exist anymore at preventive service agencies.

Preventive service workers' time with families tends to focus on completing required home and school visits and on documentation requirements rather than creating individualized service plans with families and developing meaningful, trusting relationships over time. With the advent of evidence-based preventive services programs, cases are often prematurely closed because they have reached a certain time frame – even when families continue to struggle with long-term problems such as cognitive disabilities – doing a disservice to both the family and the program.

Recommendation: Where specific needs and goals are identified, the primary role of the preventive agency should be to ensure that identified goals are reached. Casework should be measured by whether goals have been reached and cases should be closed upon successful provision of services, not when a time-frame has been met.

2. Formulaic services do not take into account the complex needs of each family

The regulations implementing the preventive services law require that social services districts provide concrete assistance, including childcare, transportation, homemaking, emergency funds, and housing assistance to families who need these services to prevent removal of their children. Yet most preventive agencies provide the same set of interventions to families regardless of their actual needs. Most often these one-size-fits-all solutions are comprised of generic “casework contacts,” where workers visit homes periodically and require families to attend appointments at the agency office.

Most parents are also required to attend standardized parenting and anger management classes and counseling sessions. But not all parents in need of preventive services need counseling or parenting skills classes—some are simply struggling financially and need concrete help to meet their children’s needs. Requiring families to attend numerous appointments and classes simply adds unnecessary stress, making it even more difficult for parents already struggling to provide for their children. Families who could benefit from more concrete services such as childcare, transportation, homemaking or housing assistance are offered classes and counseling sessions instead. As a result, children are unnecessarily removed from their families and placed in foster care.

Recommendation: Preventive workers should provide counseling to families on relevant issues which would streamline services for families who are juggling to complete various programs while also tending to their employment, school and other obligations.

3. Delays in assigning preventive services to families in need can contribute to additional problems

Delays in assigning preventive agencies and workers to families often exacerbate families’ problems. Indeed, the lag between need identification and service provision often spans months. In some cases, this gap between identification and provision results in ACS filing neglect cases. For example, in one neglect petition alleging inadequate housing conditions and leaving an 11-year old alone with younger children, ACS made a removal application where there had been a prior agreement to arrange preventive services that were not put in place in a timely manner. Because the delays in arranging preventive services are well-known in Family Court, judges are often reluctant to return children to their families, regardless of whether there is a plan that preventive services will quickly respond to the families’ service needs, leading to children staying in foster care for longer than necessary.

Recommendation: Preventive workers should be immediately assigned in all cases where families indicate they are willing to participate in preventive services. Worker performance should be assessed on the time between identification of family needs and the uptake of provided services.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

Over a third of our clients are living in unsafe housing, family shelters, doubled up, and/or are moving from place to place. Lack of adequate housing makes it difficult for clients to comply with mandated services, causing children to be placed in foster care and/or delaying family reunification when children are already in foster care. Rather than assist families in advocating for safer living conditions or addressing housing concerns directly, ACS workers frequently suggest that families leave homes deemed to be in poor condition (including NYCHA apartments) to go into the shelter system. While this suggestion meets many of ACS' short-term goals for ensuring a safe environment for children, there are long-term negative consequences for family stability: the shelter system no longer provides permanent housing options to families; living in many of the family shelters in New York is harmful to children and families²; and such a move often disrupts children's education.

ACS is required by law to provide families with preventive services to keep children safely with their families and prevent unnecessary foster care placement, which is both traumatic for children and costly for the City. Among the services that ACS is required to provide are emergency shelter and permanent housing assistance. Yet in practice, when ACS identifies inadequate housing as a risk factor for a family, case workers rarely offer any assistance beyond a direction to apply for shelter at the PATH center, the Bronx office where all families must go to apply for shelter from DHS. Once there, families who have been told by one City agency, ACS, that they must enter shelter as a condition of keeping their children in their care, are often told by a different city agency, DHS, that they are ineligible for shelter because DHS does not believe that the family is really homeless. Sometimes DHS tells a family to return to the very same housing that ACS has already determined to be inadequate or unsafe for the family. In other cases DHS rejects a family for failing to provide proof of prior residences, even in cases in which ACS has documentation of where the family previously lived. Thus, both

² See "New York City Department of Investigations: Probe of Department of Homeless Services' Shelters for Families with Children Finds Serious Deficiencies." <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/3/12/nyregion/report-on-violations-in-homeless-shelters.html>

agencies are failing in their legal responsibilities to families - ACS by failing to provide shelter in a manner that actually prevents foster care placement, and DHS by failing to provide shelter to families who demonstrably have nowhere safe to go. When one City agency - ACS - insists that a family's living conditions are so harmful to children that the family must enter the City shelter system, giving up all community ties and any sense of stability, it is simply unconscionable that another City agency - DHS, which is tasked with helping families who have nowhere safe to go - would simply turn them away on the grounds that they already have a place to live.

A. ACS Should Advocate with DHS Regarding Eligibility Issues

ACS directs often families to enter the shelter system as an alternative to having their children removed, or as a condition of children being returned to their parent. Even in these circumstances, our clients are frequently found ineligible by DHS after initial 10-day placements, which require the family to reappear at PATH in the Bronx, usually upon less than 24 hours' notice, in order to reapply. In many cases our clients have had to repeatedly reapply after being found ineligible based upon a failure to provide a two-year housing history of residences they cannot return to, even where court orders prevent the family from residing at any of their prior residences or specifically require the family to seek shelter through PATH in order to keep their children.

For example:

- 1) *Our client's daughter was released by Kings County Family Court to our client's care on December 19, 2014 on the condition that she go to PATH, which she did a few days later. She was provided with an overnight placement and went back to PATH the next day when she was placed at the 515 Blake shelter in Brooklyn. About ten days later she received a letter informing her that she was ineligible for shelter because she could not provide proof of where she had been previously living. She had been renting a room from a friend who would not confirm to DHS that our client had been living there because she feared she would jeopardize her housing as she was illegally renting the room. However, when our client was residing at this address, her foster care case planner visited her there and could have corroborated this. Our client asked the case planner for a letter but she never provided it, nor did she contact DHS on our client's behalf. When our client was found ineligible the first time, she reapplied for shelter and was once again placed at 515 Blake. Ten days after that she received another letter indicating she was ineligible for shelter for the same reason. She got frustrated and told ACS she couldn't deal with PATH anymore because she kept being*

found ineligible for shelter. She was told if she didn't enter the shelter system, ACS would have to seek a removal of her daughter. Our client decided to return to PATH on January 12, 2015 at which time she was placed in a shelter in the Bronx, but she got lost. It was late and her daughter had a cold so she dropped off her daughter at her mother's home. ACS then filed to remove her daughter. After a hearing, the Family Court placed her daughter in foster care finding that "PATH is a broken system." The child's placement in foster care could have been avoided if ACS and PATH had coordinated their services.

- 2) Our client moved from New York to Connecticut in the summer of 2014, and gave birth to a newborn son in December 2014 via extremely traumatic C-section while residing in a Catholic pregnant women's shelter in NYC. The shelter offered to allow our client to reside there with her baby after the baby's birth, but they did not allow the male ACS worker access to the shelter. ACS sought removal of the newborn based on allegations relating to our client's child welfare history in Connecticut. The Judge released the child to our client on the condition that our client enter PATH and comply with all shelter rules and regulations, as well as an order that our client not leave the jurisdiction of New York City. Our client was placed in shelter in Far Rockaway but was found ineligible twice in a row, requiring her to transport her newborn son all the way from Far Rockaway to the Bronx while still in recovery from her C-section, and in extremely cold weather, to discuss her housing history in Connecticut, a state to which she was prohibited from going by the Family Court Order. ACS failed to advocate with DHS to explain that this client could not return to Connecticut due to the Family Court order and failed to work to contact the CPS equivalents in Connecticut to assist with providing an accurate two year housing history. Further, after insisting that our client enter PATH, ACS refused to assist our client with moving any of her belongings from the pregnant women's shelter to the family shelter in Far Rockaway, and the belongings were lost.*

Recommendations: ACS and DHS should work together to ensure that ACS-involved families have streamlined and collaborative eligibility reviews, with relevant court orders and eligibility-related information possessed by ACS made available to DHS staff immediately.

B. School-Aged Children should not be required to go to PATH for application or subsequent re-application

Although there has been some discussion about changing this policy, DHS still requires all members of a household, including school-aged children, to be present at the PATH intake center on the day of the family's initial application, as well as any subsequent re-applications that are necessary because a family was found ineligible. If the policy has been changed, we

have yet to see written documentation of the policy change and the specifics of the new application procedures that we can share with our clients.

The current practice forces parents to choose between sending their child to school or seeking adequate shelter for the night. Parents who wait until after the school day to travel with their children to the PATH center in the Bronx arrive late in the day and are often provided only “overnight” placements until they can formally apply for shelter the following day. Under current policy, these overnight placements do not count as shelter applications for purposes of identifying all of the family members, and so the children must either miss school the next day or the family cannot apply for shelter.

This practice is unnecessary and harmful to children already in vulnerable circumstances. DHS can and should develop a policy to verify the existence of school-aged children in other ways, such as consulting records kept by the Department of Education, ACS, or sending a DHS worker to meet with the family in their shelter placement outside of school hours. Additionally, many family shelters are staffed by personnel who could document and report back to DHS the existence, age, and identity of school-aged children upon checking into the shelter on the very day they are placed.

Recommendations: DHS should commit to a written policy that school-age children need not be present at PATH during initial shelter applications in all cases. Further, ACS should be fully informed and trained of any policy shift.

C. Expand Functions of ACS Office at PATH

There is an ACS office within the PATH intake center, but its function at this time is limited predominantly to verifying whether ACS is investigating or involved with any particular family that is either applying to PATH for shelter or that has been identified as a potential housing resource to an applicant family. This is a huge missed opportunity for ACS to provide comprehensive support to families, particularly those already involved in the child welfare system, at the very stressful and crucial time of a PATH application. Given how time consuming it is to apply for shelter at PATH, ACS or foster care workers rarely accompany families to apply,

and when they do, rarely stay for the full application process to ensure that the family is provided a suitable shelter placement, despite the fact that families with knowledgeable advocates fare far better in the application process. A well-staffed and efficient ACS office at PATH would better serve ACS-involved families.

Recommendations: The ACS office within PATH should function as a first stop for families that are already involved with child welfare upon their arrival at PATH, where they can check in with knowledgeable ACS liaisons and receive valuable support. These liaisons should be in communication with the field workers familiar with the family, flagging issues where the family requires advocacy and assistance, and sharing documents or advocacy letters from field ACS workers to DHS staff. Where ACS, through their own investigation, has found a home or homes in the family's "prior housing history" to be unsuitable or unsafe for the children, the ACS liaison should share those findings with DHS staff and provide documentation facilitating the eligibility decision. The ACS liaisons should similarly assist in decisions regarding shelter placement to ensure that the children's educational, medical, mental health and service needs are being met. The ACS office at PATH should further assist ACS-involved families in applying for transfers within the shelter system, adding newborn or newly reunified children to the household, and in other circumstances where ACS is in a unique position to provide necessary information to DHS staff in order to streamline the provision of services to needy families. This office should serve as a much-needed support to homeless ACS-involved families and should receive training from advocates. We have heard that ACS is going to place additional workers at PATH but we have been calling for this for many years.

D. The City Must Advocate for Increased Preventive Housing Subsidy:

Although there is a state mandated preventive housing subsidy, the \$300 per month subsidy rarely, if ever, succeeds in preventing the need for foster care or in reunifying families when housing is a barrier to family stability.³ The housing subsidy has become a meaningless

³ Social Services Law section 409-a (5)(c) provides for the provision of a housing subsidy in the amount of \$300 per month for up to three years when "a lack of adequate housing is the primary factor preventing the discharge of children from foster care." Section 409-a(7) further provides for the same subsidy in cases in which "a lack of

entitlement due primarily to the exceedingly low monthly \$300 monthly rate. The housing subsidy amount has not been increased since the subsidy was first enacted into law in 1988 ---- almost 30 years ago. Today, rental amounts in New York City are an average of over \$1,200 per month⁴ yet most of our clients' household income is well below this amount. In addition, during the period 2000 – 2012, median apartment rent amounts in New York City rose by 75 percent⁵ while the subsidy amount stayed the same.

In our experience, preventive services workers and even ACS workers are generally unaware that the subsidy even exists, and those who are aware of it explain that it is not a useful tool for keeping children out of foster care. Not only is the \$300 rate inadequate, but the procedure for obtaining the subsidy is so lengthy and cumbersome that even if a family is lucky enough to find an apartment that can be rented with the subsidy, a landlord is unlikely to be willing to wait the time it takes to receive payment. Even workers who are aware of the existence of the housing subsidy are often unaware that it can be used to provide families with lump sum payments for rental arrears, repairs, and other one-time expenses to help a family obtain or preserve stable housing. As a result, preventive workers often advise families to enter the shelter system — an intervention that is far more costly and harmful to family stability — instead of assisting them in preserving stable permanent housing.

A substantially higher and more easily accessible preventive housing subsidy would make an enormous difference in preventing children from entering foster care and reducing children's length of stay in foster care.

Recommendations: ACS and DHS should be working closely with other government agencies, including HRA, NYCHA, and HPD to develop real solutions to the lack of permanent housing options for poor families - one of the most prevalent and pervasive issues in child welfare cases.

adequate housing is a factor that may cause the entry of a child or children into foster care and the family has at least one service need other than lack of adequate housing.”

⁴ NYU Furman Center, State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2013, pg. 32.

⁵ Office of the NYC Comptroller, Scott M. Stringer, The Growing Gap: New York City's Housing Affordability Challenge (April 2014).

The City should be advocating with the State to increase the housing subsidy substantially if it is to actually reduce the amount of time children spend in foster care as a result of the lack of adequate housing and the amount should be commensurate with the increase in rental prices.

ACS should renew a housing collaboration with advocates, community partners and other government agencies to ensure that children are not placed in foster care, and do not needlessly remain in foster care, as a result of the lack of housing resources.

Conclusion:

BFDP's proposals would not only strengthen the system in these key areas, ensuring that children are able to remain with their families in safe, secure and stable environments, but would also help enable the child welfare system to leverage available resources in the most cost-effective and impactful ways possible. We believe that following these suggestions will result in more stable families with access to the resources they need.



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**Testimony of Christy Parque, Executive Director, Homeless Services United, Inc.
Before the NYC Council Committee on General Welfare
March 17, 2015**

My name is Christy Parque, and I am the Executive Director of Homeless Services United (HSU). HSU is a coalition of over 50 non-profit agencies serving homeless and at-risk adults and families in New York City. HSU provides advocacy, information, and training to member agencies to expand their capacity to deliver high-quality services. HSU advocates for expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers.

Homeless Service United's member agencies operate hundreds of programs including shelters, drop-in centers, food pantries, HomeBase, and outreach and prevention services. Each day, HSU member programs work with thousands of homeless families and individuals, preventing shelter entry whenever possible and working to end homelessness through counseling, social services, health care, legal services, and public benefits assistance, among many other supports.

The de Blasio administration has made notable improvements in expanding safe haven beds for street homeless individuals, expanding homelessness prevention, creating the LINC permanent housing subsidies, and I commend these important steps. However, I will focus most of my testimony today on the financial starvation of our non-profit agencies and the programs they operate, which poses a serious threat to the City's most vulnerable citizens.

The lack of economic opportunity for those at the bottom of the income scale combined with out-of-control rents has resulted in dramatic increases in homelessness. Spending has climbed as the City struggles to meet its commitment to provide shelter to anyone who needs it. The bulk of the City's homelessness spending is devoted to emergency shelter in the middle of the system, between prevention and outreach efforts at the front end and the housing needed at the back end to exit homelessness.

Chronic Underfunding Has Created a Starvation Cycle for Homeless Services Providers

Nearly all of the funding growth in homeless services has gone towards opening new shelters, while funding for existing shelters, has remained flat. Since the older shelters were opened, many of them 15-30 years ago, the costs of staffing, health insurance, heating, maintenance, transportation, and nearly every other category of expense has increased.

Persistent underfunding combined with increased demand has created a vicious cycle. As costs and client needs have increased, DHS and other funders have exerted increasing pressure on providers to do more and more with less and less. Unwilling to abandon their mission of helping the neediest New Yorkers, non-profit providers have for decades accepted these unfavorable contracts with unattainable outcomes while resorting to raising private funds, borrowing, or cutting other costs in order to remain solvent.

These measures have given funders the unrealistic expectation that they can continue year-in and year-out to provide flat funding or funding cuts while costs increase. This failure to invest in our facilities, our staff and our administrative infrastructure exacerbates the problem of ever-increasing demand for shelter.

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In previous testimony, I have repeatedly warned that chronic underfunding would threaten the health of non-profits and the well-being of the clients they serve. We have now reached the breaking point. Today I am here to say that it is beyond dispute that the chronic starvation of non-profit homeless service providers has significantly impacted our ability to serve tens of thousands of homeless men women and children while providing critical services to transform their lives.

Our homeless service providers face profound challenges every day. These challenges require a safe and supportive environment, a workforce with sophisticated knowledge and skills, and a supportive administrative infrastructure.

Homelessness, one of the most complex and tragic manifestations of poverty, is solvable. The solution requires facilities that can provide a stabilizing environment. The solution also requires staff that can provide the support and caring that helps clients tap into their own unique strengths and identify a path to permanent housing. The solution also requires a staff that can understand and adapt to the complex and rapidly changing systems and rules involving health, housing and other public benefits. And the solution requires an administrative infrastructure that provides the support that any program needs to succeed. By failing to invest or even maintain its initially low levels of support, the City is working against itself in resolving the crisis of homelessness.

Deteriorating Facility Conditions

Last week the City Department of Investigation issued a report detailing decrepit and unsafe conditions in 25 of the City's family shelters. The report pointed out that the Tier II shelters, which are typically run by non-profit operators, while not immune from serious problems, were the "best maintained and provide the most social services" compared to the "cluster site" and hotel shelters, which are typically run by for profit operators.

To respond to this problem, the Mayor's FY 16 budget calls for \$1.2 million to hire 19 staff to inspect shelters. While more inspectors may draw attention to problems, inspectors will not fix the conditions they discover. As I mentioned, many of the shelters were opened decades ago. As any engineer will tell you, building systems and components naturally degrade, increasing the maintenance and repair requirements over time. A point is reached where it is not cost effective or possible to continue repairs on aging system and it becomes necessary to make capital improvements.

The DOI report itself pointed out that many of the conditions it highlighted were already known by the City. Our members report that they have repeatedly begged the City to fix serious facility problems with no results. In one large shelter run by a non-profit in a City-owned building, there have been two instances of pieces of the ceiling falling, literally, in dorm rooms. Thankfully no client has been hurt, and beds in these damaged areas have been taken off-line. The Department of Homeless Services has been aware of this problem for well over a year, but have issued no formal response to the non-profit contractor's request for funding to fix the problem.

In another facility for homeless families, an operator with decades of experience, repeatedly asked the City for money to replace all the bathroom floors after a child fell through a rotted floor several years ago. These entreaties have also been ignored. Other providers have given up submitting new need requests because they know they will not be funded. Actually maintaining, repairing and making capital investment in the City's shelters will require funding that has not been identified.

Workforce Challenges

People experiencing homelessness have higher rates of life-threatening medical conditions such as tuberculosis and HIV as well as increased occurrence of debilitating mental health and substance use problems, as well as

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trauma. The daily experience of working with clients in desperate circumstances can be overwhelming, and our staff requires extra training and support to avoid fatigue and burnout.

Stagnant funding has placed providers in the predicament of having to eliminate services in order to pay for unfunded increases in utilities, property taxes, health insurance or other expenses. While struggling to maintain facilities and fund cost increases, shelters have had to reduce security, child care, or medical staff. Many shelter providers are now routinely cited by State inspectors for failing to meet social services requirements or the staffing outlined in their operational plan.

Non-profit workers have not had a City cost-of-living adjustment since Mayor Bloomberg authorized a 3 percent increase seven years ago. Sadly, we are losing many of our best workers to other employers, often in public jobs that have higher salaries and benefits. Many of our shelters have turnover rates of 25% or higher in entry level positions. The result is a staff that is increasingly ill-prepared to go beyond meeting more than the clients' basic needs. A better educated, motivated, and trained staff could increase move outs and reduce recidivism by addressing the complex needs of the most chronically homeless clients who account for a disproportionate share of shelter resources.

Administrative Costs

Non-profit and government leaders were stunned by the announcement in December that FECS, one of the City's oldest and largest non-profits was closing its doors. The closure of FECS has had reverberations for non-profits, as banks become less willing to provide working capital, and vendors tighten their payment terms. One of the lessons we can learn from the FECS closure is that scale, diversification, ability to raise private funds, and reputation offer no immunity from financial failure.

Running a sustainable non-profit organization requires stable funding, executive leadership, financial management, well-trained staff, information technology, training and other supports to ensure its success. These supports are particularly critical in a field like homeless services, where the multiple needs of clients require expertise in a range of disciplines, and across a variety of systems.

Yet the City Department of Homeless Services pays only 8.5% overhead on its contracts, a percentage that is well below that of other City and State funders and is universally acknowledged by homeless services non-profits to be well below the true cost of doing business. HSU member organizations annually see increasing costs for insurance from 10-20% and utilities from 4-6% while their DHS budget reimbursement rates remain flat. A 2008 study by the Bridgespan group found that actual non-profit overhead rates for non-profits ranged from 17 to 35 percent.¹ With such an unrealistically low overhead rate, the Department of Homeless Services is not paying for its share of overhead costs, compared with other government funders. For example the State of New York, pursuant to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 38 of 2013, capped administrative expenses at 25% in 2013, decreasing by 5% each year until this July, when the cap will be 15%.

Client Centered Services: Jobs, education and physical and mental health services

If we are to truly help the New Yorkers who come to us for assistance to resolve their housing crisis, we must be prepared and equipped to help meet their needs. This means a shift from a "one size fits all" mentality of re-housing of the past years. **Now is the time to return to a client centered model of service delivery.** Shelters must be equipped with the funding and resources to deliver a diversity of services to match diversity of causes that lead the client's homelessness. This includes:

¹ W. Bedsworth, A. G. Gregory, and D. Howard, Nonprofits Overhead Costs: Breaking the Vicious Cycle of Misleading Reporting, Unrealistic Expectations, and Pressure to Conform (The Bridgespan Group, April 2008)

Physical and Mental Health Services

We are grateful for the commitment of the City Council in the past for restoring Medical Services PEG cuts for the Adult Shelters and to the wisdom of the Mayor de Blasio for including this funding in his preliminary FY15 budget. If we recognize the need for these services for adults then we must recognize the critical need on the family and adult family side and consider expanding mental and physical health services on-site either through partnerships with local hospitals, clinics or our partners in Health Care for the Homeless.

Employment & Education

Employment specialists and education and GED specialists provide a unique connection for our clients to see a permanent way out of homelessness. In FY11, as part of a PEG exercise, DHS removed employment specialist from shelter budgets. It was counterproductive and counter intuitive to cut the staff services that directly impact that likelihood that a client, who is able to work, will obtain a job that enables them to move from shelter.

Recreation Services

Due to a FY10 PEG, we saw the final chipping away of critical recreation services for adults and families. Prior to entry into adult or family shelters, many clients have had few positive experiences with socializing and participating in a healthy community. Shelter recreation programs are a relatively low cost investment in homeless people that provide healthy socialization and communication skills that benefit clients in shelter and when they exit. Recreation programs address cycles of violence and create safe forums for disclosure and exploration of alternatives to lives consumed by abuse, violence and shame.

A Call For Action: The Mayor and the City Council must act to save the City's investment in non-profits that help our neighbors who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness.

We are calling for the following measures to be enacted in the FY 15-16 budget.

- Immediate budget increases in the maintenance and repair, capital or rent budget lines of the City shelters, including non-profit operated, as necessary to immediately repair all of the dangerous or substandard conditions.
- Conduct a thorough assessment by DHS, and other relevant City and State agencies of the maintenance and capital needs of all shelters, along the line with recommendations of the recent Department of Investigations report. Included must be a public plan for resolving the maintenance and capital needs.
- DHS Budgets should automatically include cost escalations related to rent, real estate taxes, transportation, utilities, water/sewer and insurance in all existing and future contracts.
- Protect shelter budgets fixed costs such as rent and debt service, from future cuts related to PEGS or performance incentive programs, and ensure that baseline funding is sufficient to meet operations and staffing needs.
- Increase salary and benefits for all staff in non-profit human service agencies by 10% across the board.
- Provide financial support for a living wage and more systematic career ladder opportunities for the lowest-paid non-profit human services workers.
 - While we support the call for a living wage, the City must simultaneously identify and fund the necessary changes in its contracts which will result from raising the minimum wage.
- Immediately increase the DHS administrative overhead rate to achieve parity with other City agencies.
- Increase the overhead rates paid by City agencies to one rate that is consistent across agencies and reflects the *real* cost of administrative overhead.

Thank you for your time and commitment to addressing the needs and concerns of homeless and at-risk New Yorkers and those who serve them.



Community Board 12M

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TESTIMONY OF COMMUNITY BOARD 12, MANHATTAN

Housing and Human Services Chair – Richard Lewis
Presented at the Request of George Fernandez – Board Chair

VENUE: NYC City Council Committee on General Welfare

RE: Preliminary Budget Oversight Hearing - General Welfare

LOCATION: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, New York, NY

Permit me to extend greetings to the City Council Committee Chair and Committee members, members of the city administrations and all those present. I am here today to present the testimony of Community Board 12, Manhattan on the potential effects of the FY 2016 the Mayors Preliminary Budget Recommendations for the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA) as it relates to our community district that extends northward from West 155th Street in Manhattan to areas of Marble Hill in the Bronx, otherwise referred to as Washington Heights-Inwood. I am here at the request of Mr. George Fernandez, our Board's Chair and where I serve as Chair of the Housing and Human Services Committee. We were happy to receive your invitation to testify on these preliminary budgets.

Before I begin let me state that our board has no specific or detailed information on the Fiscal Year 2016 Executive Budgets and the operational services or plans for either of these agencies and the same issue is true regarding their recommendations to our preliminary budget requests.

Let me state that our community board has not passed a resolution yet on the Mayor's New York City's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 —totaling \$77.7 billion, but during the nearly four decade history of our board we have taken various consistent positions in our resolutions, some specific and some general as well as budget ranking of DHS and HRA services in our district. This testimony then will briefly summarize that position in one critical area of human need: **Expansion legal services and the right to legal counsel in housing court.**

LEGAL SERVICES

Both agencies in several fiscal years have had similar programs to fund and prevent some form of homelessness: the Rental Assistance Program for Vulnerable Homeless Populations, Home Base Prevention Program, HASA, Agency Legal Services Consolidation and a variety of outsourcing with legal services contracts for anti-eviction efforts.

- Yet, in 2013 some 30,000 families have been evicted from their homes and two-thirds of those families earned less than \$25,000 a year

It costs the city **\$36,000** a year for a shelter bed, and about **\$250,000** to build an affordable unit. There are many costs we can't calculate, like days lost from school, days lost from work, stress, and instability for families. Full representation in housing court costs about **\$2,000- \$3,200 per case**. We have received reports that there are long lines in Housing Courts throughout city waiting to receive agency attorney help and many are also turned away by contracted legal services organizations and community based organization. Clearly, these HRA and DHS

programs although well intended and provide some relief have not been either efficient or effective in reducing eviction rates. Our community board has been exploring a better approach: the right to housing court appointed legal counsel. We believe this new initiative will further prevent homelessness and also stem the loss of needed affordable housing for families, particularly in our district.

EXPANSION OF THE RIGHT TO LEGAL COUNSEL AT HOUSING COURT.

In two successive budget cycles including this one Community Board 12, Manhattan has recommended and ranked as the number one expense priority: **"Legal Assistance and Heavy Legal Counsel"**.

HRA and DHS can only currently handle about ten percent (10%) of the cases brought to housing court. Attorneys, bar associations, judges, CBO's, electeds, and tenant advocates contend that nearly half of these cases with direct legal counsel could be averted, thus cutting the eviction rate since many of these tenants lost their housing mainly because they could not navigate the maze of housing laws and regulations, or court proceedings or afford legal counsel. There is every need to level the playing field in housing court, as landlords are almost always represented by counsel. The right to a court appointed attorney has become a necessity in housing and Community Board 12, Manhattan will be discussing this matter in April with the possibility of passing a resolution in support of City Council bill Intro 214.

Our concern here and why we are testifying is the following:

If Intro 214 is passed by City Council and signed into law by the Mayor will there be sufficient funding in FY2016 to allow for this large increase for direct funding of attorneys, best practices and will this funding adequately provide for multi-language services. That is Community Board 12, Manhattan's testimony are there any questions?

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Testimony of Marianne C. Yang
Before
New York City Council's Committee on General Welfare
Regarding
the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project

March 17, 2015

Introduction

Good afternoon and thank you—Chairman Levin and fellow Councilmembers—for this opportunity to testify before you today. I am Marianne Yang, Immigration Practice Director of Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). I speak today in support of the City's continued funding for the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP), the nation's first public defender system for immigrants facing deportation. I speak on behalf of BDS, The Legal Aid Society (LAS), and The Bronx Defenders (BXD), who together have been serving as NYIFUP's three legal service providers this fiscal year.

In Fiscal Year 2014 the Council launched NYIFUP with pilot funding of \$500,000. Based on the strengths of the pilot's results, in Fiscal Year 2015 the Council committed \$4.9 million to fund NYIFUP's service of *all* New Yorkers facing detained deportation proceedings, as well as all New York City residents facing those proceedings while detained in nearby New Jersey. As a result of the Council's visionary leadership, today the City can say that no New York family will have a loved one locked up and deported simply because they cannot afford an attorney. As part of NYIFUP, LAS, BXD, and BDS have been serving as the City's providers of high-quality deportation defense services to our immigrant New Yorkers. New York's leadership in funding this groundbreaking program has prompted cities such as Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to mount replication efforts and a dozen or more additional cities to make inquiries regarding replicating the NYIFUP model.

NYIFUP's providers—BDS, LAS, and BXD—have been working with the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights, The Center for Popular Democracy, Make the Road New York, the Vera Institute of Justice, the Immigration Justice Clinic at Cardozo Law School, and scores of other immigrant, legal services, and progressive organizations to make NYIFUP a continuing reality in Fiscal Year 2016 for New Yorkers in deportation proceedings.

We cannot express enough how thankful we are to this City Council and this City, for having funded the nation's first public defender system for indigent immigrants facing deportation and thereby promoting a more fair and just process for our immigrant communities. Through NYIFUP, we have been able to say to our immigrant New Yorkers that yes, we can represent you if you don't have the means to pay a lawyer. Yes, we can defend you no matter how difficult your case may be, or how long it may take. We will not be able to prevent deportation

in all cases, because the laws are very harsh. But we will be able to ensure that all our clients are aware of their rights and have a knowledgeable, experienced attorney by their side to defend them every step of the way. **With a renewed commitment of \$4.9 million in Fiscal Year 2016, New York would remain the national leader in ensuring that every detained immigrant facing deportation will have a lawyer if she cannot afford one.**

Keeping Families Together, goals and preliminary results

NYIFUP's goals have been to:

- Obtain successful case outcomes for detained New Yorkers who have a right to remain in the United States.
- Ensure that all detained New Yorkers facing deportation are empowered to make informed decisions about their cases and receive due process of law.
- Keep New York families intact and our immigrant communities strong and contributing segments of the City.
- Create efficiencies in the process by reducing the number of clients who have to fight their cases while detained and by speeding the resolution of cases for those who cannot be released from custody.

NYIFUP's primary goal is to preserve the unity of families, but it also aims to keep New York City's vibrant immigrant communities strong. As documented by The Center for Popular Democracy,¹ keeping families together saves New York government and employers significant sums, offsetting much of the cost of representing each NYIFUP client.

This fiscal year NYIFUP has been able to provide representation for *all* New Yorkers facing deportation at Varick Street Immigration Court, as well as all New York City residents facing deportation while detained in New Jersey, who otherwise would have been left to fend for themselves in a system that the New York Immigrant Representation Study² showed would result in 97 percent of them being deported. We are expected to provide more than one thousand indigent immigrants with high-quality deportation defense services over the course of the full fiscal year. Thus far the NYIFUP providers have undertaken representation of 496 cases between July 14, 2014 and February 28, 2015. **Our clients truly come from all across our great big city: they have come from 48 of the 51 Council districts.** See the annexed Appendix for a breakdown of clients' Council district of residence.

Not only has NYIFUP concretely demonstrated that the City of New York is the nation's leader in protecting the rights of immigrants, it has kept New York families intact, made case processing at the Varick Street Immigration Court more efficient, and enhanced due process. While it is too early to assess the results of representation since the program came to scale in July (as many cases, particularly those of immigrants who are released pending the outcome of their proceedings and the overlapping group of cases that must be resolved by a trial take months, and frequently years, to resolve), below are results as of December 30, 2014 that go toward demonstrating NYIFUP's FY 2015 successes thus far:

¹ http://populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/immigrant_family_unity_project_print_layout.pdf

² http://www.cardozolawreview.com/content/denovo/NYIRS_Report.pdf.

- NYIFUP has obtained relief, termination, or administrative closure for 17 clients, who may now remain in the United States.
- Including the 17 successful outcomes listed above, NYIFUP has obtained release for 72 clients. Thus, 19% of NYIFUP's clients have been released from detention thus far and are reunited with their families.
- NYIFUP has initiated 17 ancillary proceedings—proceedings in other courts or USCIS that are critical to obtaining a successful outcome or release from detention in the deportation proceedings.
- NYIFUP has obtained 22 voluntary departures.

We also have significant results from the NYIFUP pilot that provided representation for 190 cases³ at Varick Street from November 2013 through April 2014. As of February 28, the pilot, which received \$500,000 in funding for FY 14 funding from the Council, has **resulted in 42 percent of its clients being reunified with their families.**

- NYIFUP has obtained relief, termination, administrative closure or deferred action for 22 clients, who may now remain in the United States.
- Including the 22 successful outcomes listed above, NYIFUP has obtained release for 79 clients. Thus, 42% of NYIFUP's clients have been released from detention and are reunited with their families.
- NYIFUP has won 69% (20 of 29) of its merits hearings (trials).
- NYIFUP has initiated 28 ancillary proceedings—proceedings in other courts or USCIS that are critical to obtaining a successful outcome or release from detention in the deportation proceedings.
- NYIFUP has obtained 22 voluntary departures.

All but a small number of clients in still-pending cases from the NYIFUP pilot have now been released. Notwithstanding the fact that some of those cases will not be resolved for two or more years, **we project that NYIFUP will increase the percentage of immigrants who will win the right to remain in the United States 1000 percent** as compared to the three-percent success rate for detained unrepresented immigrants documented by the New York Immigrant Representation Study (NYIRS). Our projection is based not only on the success rate for represented non-detained immigrants in the NYIRS study, but also the fact that NYIFUP has thus far won an impressive 69 percent (20 of 29) of its pilot phase merits hearings (trials).

How NYIFUP Makes a Difference

The following two cases from FY 2015 demonstrate how NYIFUP makes a difference in comparison to the NYIRS results that show that 95 percent of detained unrepresented immigrants do not make a claim that would entitle them to stay in the country and 97 percent of detained unrepresented immigrants lose their cases. Without representation, these two immigrants would virtually certainly have been deported.

³ City Council funding of the pilot in FY 2014 covered the costs for 166 cases; funding from the Cardozo School of Law covered the remaining 24 cases.

Michael is a 51-year-old Lawful Permanent Resident from Jamaica who came to the US in 1983, when he was 20 years old. He enlisted in the Coast Guard, but was discharged shortly thereafter for an injury, and then continued his college studies in engineering. For the past 20 years, Michael has been actively displaying signs of untreated schizophrenia. He was homeless on and off for 15 years. His siblings have shown consistent concern about his mental health but he has refused to acknowledge his symptoms or need for help. Recognizing at their first meeting that Michael was likely struggling with undiagnosed severe mental health problems, his attorney from The Bronx Defenders (BXD) brought in a BXD social worker to work with him and they then scheduled a psychiatric evaluation. The psychiatrist diagnosed him as schizophrenic and concluded that he was incompetent and unable to assist counsel in his own defense. The NYIFUP attorney submitted a motion to terminate proceedings due to his lack of competence. Despite finding Michael incompetent after a hearing, the Immigration Judge denied the motion to terminate. The following month, however, Michael's lawyer convinced the judge to reconsider his decision because Michael refused to assist in applying for cancellation of removal, for which he was eligible. Finally, in October 2014, the judge administratively closed Michael's removal proceedings on competency grounds. Although the government initially reserved appeal, the Deportation Officer granted a Humanitarian Parole request that day. After ten months of detention, Michael was released and reunited with his sister, with whom he is now living while he is readjusting to life outside of detention. Ultimately, the government agreed not to appeal and Michael now has the ability to move on with his life with the help of his concerned family.

Jenny is a young woman in her twenties who has been living in New York since she was six years old, when she came to this country from Trinidad and Tobago. She had been detained by ICE and placed in removal proceedings because she lacked lawful status here, but also because of an arrest history that included mostly petty crimes. When NYIFUP attorneys from Brooklyn Defender Services met Jenny, she expressed her fear of return to Trinidad. She self-identifies as lesbian, and was terrified of the prospect of being returned to a country where she would face stigma and persecution, possibly even death, as a result. NYIFUP attorneys—with co-counsel at Immigration Equality—represented Jenny in a complex case seeking asylum, withholding, and Convention Against Torture relief, which included technical legal briefing and psychiatric evidence. On the strength of the evidence and her attorneys' advocacy, the government's attorney agreed to stipulate to almost all of the issues in the case. In May 2014 the Immigration Judge granted Jenny all three forms of relief: asylum, withholding and CAT. He said in his 25 years as a sitting judge, he has only ever granted asylum without trial in one other case. Jenny's lawyers secured her release from detention on that same day, bought her lunch, and took her to be reunited with her mother. NYIFUP staff have also been working with Jenny post-relief; they helped her place in a GED program and access other services, and earlier this year Jenny was accepted into college.

The judges at Varick Street acknowledge that NYIFUP has raised the level of practice across the board in that court. Project data show that NYIFUP lawyers are identifying approximately ten times the number of claims as NYIRS showed were made by unrepresented individuals. Thus, without NYIFUP, nine out of ten of the project's clients would have been deported without raising a claim—though many had valid ones—and only three percent of the project's clients would in fact achieve a successful outcome.

These are examples of how NYIFUP attorneys identify claims of relief for clients and prepare

the most robust of applications that our detained clients would have had no ability to mount by themselves.

NYIFUP makes a critical difference in other ways as well. Our attorneys have discovered and corrected government errors—such as incorrect criminal court records—that would not have been caught otherwise and would have had devastating effects on clients and their families. They have made successful legal arguments that clients are not deportable at all in the first instance. And they have gone into other courts—such as federal district court and family court—to press for claims that are essential to get clients out of detention or successfully defend against deportation.

Creating Efficiencies and Providing Due Process

While NYIFUP maximizes the number of families that can be kept together, some immigrants facing deportation have no viable claim under existing law. NYIFUP ensures that all immigrants it serves are fully advised so that they can make decisions in their own best interests. When there is no possibility of release or staying in the country, it often is in the best interests of individuals facing deportation not to unnecessarily extend their time in detention. Thirty-four percent of NYIFUP's clients chose to resolve their cases by accepting an order of removal or voluntary departure at their first appearance in immigration court. Another nine percent did so at the second hearing. Quick resolution of cases, when appropriate, as well as more frequent and quicker releases of individuals with viable claims lessens the considerable expense to the federal government of detention, and demonstrates why it would be in the best interest of the federal government to fund representation for detained immigrants.

Creating Positive Systemic Changes

We have now been at the Varick Street facilities and courtrooms day in and day out for eight months of this fiscal year now, interacting with court officers, government trial attorneys, and court clerks. We have been appearing before each of the three Varick Street judges on a regular and frequent basis, pressing the arguments and cases for our clients before each of them. I can attest to the significant and positive changes that this assigned counsel model—through our constant presence and advocacy, has brought to the overall culture and practice of detained removal proceedings at Varick Street. For example, Varick Street Immigration Judges have acknowledged—both in stakeholder meetings and in off-record courtroom asides—that the NYIFUP providers have been “raising the bar” on the standards of legal practice in the courts. We believe we have been raising this bar in a range of ways, including by holding the government to its burden of proof, questioning its positions where they are unfounded, challenging removability, or establishing eligibility for relief with sophisticated legal arguments. We have been mounting bond and merits hearings with well-documented evidence packages, and thoroughly preparing testimony from clients, families, and experts.

As other examples, through our advocacy, our clients are now routinely given copies of important documents in their case, and there has been more simultaneous interpretation in the courtrooms for our non-English speakers. Our constant presence also yields efficiencies and helps us build better working relationships with ICE Chief Counsel, deportation officers, and court clerks. We routinely ask ICE attorneys for additional information or documents in our clients' immigration files, and they have been responsive. Where we prodded, they even

canceled a charging document after conducting their own investigation in one case, and promptly released another client after we raised a question as to the whether the client may have derived citizenship.

We believe these and other positive changes to be the natural result—over time—of having competent assigned counsel constantly present and advocating in the courts. BDS, LAS and BXD—because we are already public defenders in criminal cases—know from deep experience that these cultural shifts are bound to occur when counsel are in the courts day in and day out. Judges become accustomed to lawyers mounting layers of defenses. Opposing counsel become accustomed to freer flows of communication between the parties, and work with us more frequently to achieve negotiated outcomes for the sake of fairness or efficiency. Court clerks more readily facilitate our requests to ensure better case flow. And court officers are more open to granting us greater access to detained clients for private attorney-client meetings. We believe these positive shifts in culture and practice—absorbed over the long-term—are an important part of the bigger picture of the difference that a universal representation model can make in deportation proceedings as well.

Evaluating NYIFUP

Using foundation funding, the Vera Institute of Justice, in conjunction with the Immigration Justice Clinic of Cardozo Law School, will be conducting a comprehensive social science evaluation of the impact of NYIFUP following the conclusion of FY 16.⁴ Using matched comparison groups of both unrepresented and represented immigrants facing deportation, the evaluation will determine whether NYIFUP representation results in more successful outcomes and more efficient case processing. The evaluation will have three hoped-for outcomes:

- Demonstrating the value of the program to the City, supporting the case for long-term funding of the project.
- Proving to other jurisdictions around the country that funding of deportation defense benefits local and state jurisdictions and their immigrant communities.
- Quantifying the offsetting savings—principally in lower detention costs—to the federal government that result from public defender representation in deportation cases (as part of seeking to convince the federal government that it is in its interest to fund such representation).

The Fluctuations of Immigration Enforcement

Over both the last several years and the last several decades, immigration enforcement has varied greatly in its policies, tactics and intensity. Notwithstanding the various changes, never in U.S. history has there been as much immigration enforcement as has occurred between 2009 and 2014. Still, this year in New York City has witnessed lower-than-average numbers of detained immigrants facing deportation proceedings. First, there was the unprecedented influx of

⁴ Because a large percentage of the immigrants who are likely to receive successful outcomes also get released while their cases are pending, and because the nondetained docket typically involves a wait of years for case resolution, it is not possible to have sufficient completed cases of those whose release NYIFUP has secured any earlier than the end of FY 16 and thus not possible to do an evaluation that will appropriately show the value of NYIFUP any earlier.

undocumented immigrants fleeing violence from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. The national spotlight cast on the “crisis” at the border prompted the Department of Homeland Security to redirect interior enforcement capacity to the border. The administration also mandated that the Executive Office for Immigration Review place existing removal dockets on hold and implement a “surge docket” - to fast track removal proceedings to return newly arrived unaccompanied minor children and adults with children to their countries of origin. As a result, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) devoted significant resources, including sending over 10 percent of Enforcement and Removal Operations’ (ERO’s) entire workforce, to support the southwest border operations.⁵ Nationally, in 2014, the Department of Homeland Security assigned ICE agents in cities nationwide to the border, and assigned agents on Fugitive Operations Teams, the Criminal Alien Program, and Secure Communities to work on juvenile and recent arrival processing, transportation, and other tasks.⁶ New York agents were part of this re-deployment, which was temporary and seems to be ending.

Second, the City Council—again demonstrating its visionary leadership in protecting its immigrant families—passed a detainer bill that greatly reduced the number of detainers honored by the New York City Department of Corrections. For many years, the single most significant source of detained New York City immigrants in removal proceedings at the Varick Street immigration courts had been immigrants transferred directly from New York City jails pursuant to immigration detainers.⁷ After the passage of the detainer law, this was no longer the case. These two events - the reprioritization of interior enforcement resources to the border and enactment of the detainer bill - have resulted in lower-than-anticipated numbers of immigrants in detained removal proceedings.

Factors that tend to diminish ICE enforcement often lead to shifting enforcement tactics. For instance, as fewer people are turned over to ICE on detainers, anecdotally there has been an increase in ICE “fugitive operations teams” in New York seeking out lawful permanent residents with convictions, often quite minor, and often 20 and 30 years old, at their homes and places of work. Frequently, any out-of-status immigrant who by bad luck is present at the home or place of work of the immigrant being sought when ICE arrives is also arrested. Similarly, experience in some other jurisdictions, like New Orleans,⁸ demonstrates that following the passage of aggressive detainer discretion laws, such as went into effect this month in New York, ICE sometime retaliates against communities by increasing resources for home and community raids. Indeed just earlier this month local ICE arrested and detained more than a hundred New Yorkers, largely through home and community raids, as part of a nation-wide multi-day enforcement operation that led to more than 2,000 immigrants’ separation from their communities.

Experience over many years shows that the level and specifics of immigration enforcement frequently change—in both directions—making it impossible to precisely predict the number of cases needing representation months or more in advance. To build an effective and stable

⁵ See ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report, Fiscal Year 2014, December 19, 2014, page 3 available at <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2014-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>

⁶ See Testimony of Chris Crane, President, ICE Council of AFGE, House Committee on the Judiciary (June 25, 2014) at 7, available at <http://judiciary.house.gov/cache/files/35dc3291-1b22-4a60-be1e-789c263ada58/crane-testimony.pdf>

⁷ In fact, since January 2014, state and local law enforcement authorities declined to honor 10,182 detainers. See ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report, Fiscal Year 2014, December 19, 2014, page 5.

⁸ See, e.g., <http://www.mintpressnews.com/178507/178507/>.

deportation defense system for detained immigrants requires taking this volatility into account by creating a program that is flexible enough to respond to the rapid increases and decreases in those subjected to ICE enforcement. The City Council and HRA, our contracting agency, have approved just such a flexible system that ensures that the City gets full value for its investment in the program, while also ensuring that the providers are funded and staffed to a level to meet the increases in enforcement that experience shows inevitably occur. The tiered intake system approved the City for this year has been as follows:

- All eligible detained immigrants at Varick Street;
- All eligible detained New York City residents at Newark and Elizabeth;
- Immigrants in or facing immigration detention who need legal representation to avoid deportation; and
- Immigrants facing deportation at 26 Federal Plaza.

Serving all these groups meets the City's interests in keeping families together and in keeping immigrant communities vibrant and out of the shadows. While detained immigrants are least likely to be able to obtain private counsel—and thus constitute the higher priority for NYIFUP services—several thousand nondetained New Yorkers a year are also unable to obtain counsel and, despite having long and strong ties to New York, face a strong likelihood of being deported if they do not obtain representation.

Funding for Fiscal Year 2016

Based upon the success of the program to date, most particularly the 42 percent of NYIFUP clients who have been reunited with their families, \$4.9 million for NYIFUP should be committed anew for Fiscal Year 2016. By maintaining funding at its current level, NYIFUP will be able to guarantee that all detained New Yorkers at Varick Street and in New Jersey receive a lawyer, as ICE enforcement activity fluctuates. To the extent that the funding at times could be greater than is needed solely for detained immigrants, equally deserving nondetained New Yorkers will be protected from being deported without a lawyer to aid in their defense. Regardless of volatile and unpredictable changes in ICE enforcement patterns, the City will be guaranteed that its investment will reach an agreed-upon number of indigent New Yorkers facing permanent exile without legal representation.

The NYIFUP providers request renewal funding for Fiscal Year 2016 at the same level as in FY 2015. It is our belief that we provide a service and function that no other organizations provide, even when the number of detained immigrants is low in any given year. Funding stability for the legal service providers is critical to NYIFUP's function as a universal assigned counsel program. In order to have a viable program that can handle fluctuations in enforcement, changes in the law and access to affirmative opportunities to immigrants in NYC when they become available, our organizations must remain stable at current staffing levels.

While enforcement has been relatively lower during this fiscal year, there are many reasons to believe that it will rise again:

- **The Surge has subsided.** One primary factor in the low numbers this year was the surge at the southern border crossings and Department of Homeland Security's decision to send more enforcement and deportation resources to the border to curb the tide of border crossers and to prioritize rapid processing of those recent arrivals. That surge has waned over the past few months. As the surge has subsided, enforcement personnel have returned from temporary reassignment at the border and resumed enforcement activities closer to home, driving numbers up.
- **Undocketed backup of cases.** Due to the surge, the New York immigration court has been unable to schedule approximately 12,000 new cases. These undocketed cases include (1) long term lawful permanent residents with convictions who traveled abroad and were issued charging documents upon return, and (2) lawful permanent residents with criminal convictions who applied for immigration benefits before the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the service has determined that they fall within the DHS's enforcement priorities. Traditionally, many of these immigrants are subject to mandatory detention and are often arrested and detained by immigration officials when they appear on the non-detained docket at 26 Federal Plaza. Their cases are then transferred to the Varick immigration court.
- **Enforcement.** The current low detention level is a low tide mark in enforcement. Historically, detention numbers have been higher and, because of the factors listed here as well as increased enforcement operations, we believe the numbers will increase in the coming year. ICE is currently refining its focus on identifying, locating, and apprehending immigrants with criminal convictions who are not in criminal or in a custodial setting.⁹
- **Detention quotas.** Even during this low mark in enforcement, detention quotas remain in effect and local ICE contracts with county jails require a certain number of detainees detained nationally and locally.¹⁰ These contracts with local county jails, together with the "detention bed quota,"¹¹ requiring ICE to maintain 34,000 beds nationally, give them a strong incentive to continue to fill ICE beds they are already contracted to pay for. This shows no sign of abating.
- **New enforcement activities.** We have already witnessed a dramatic increase in ICE's use of other enforcement activities, particularly home raids, where long-time New Yorkers who have completed criminal sentences and probation and are rehabilitated, are detained based on old criminal convictions. Additionally, since the detainer law went into effect, ICE officers have begun to show up in criminal courtrooms with photographs of defendants, ready to detain defendants when they are released in court and initiate removal proceedings. The providers anticipate more

⁹ See ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report, Fiscal Year 2014, December 19, 2014, page 5 available at <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2014-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>

¹⁰ For example, in 2008, they contracted for 112 beds at Orange County Jail, for "8620 bed days". A March 2013 ICE document indicates that ICE's bed capacity at the local county jails under the jurisdiction of the Varick Street immigration court are: Bergen County Jail, 128; Orange County Jail, 112; and Hudson County Jail, 352. See Orange County Jail contract at http://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/isa/r_droigsa080026orangecountyny.pdf ICE has posted several Intergovernmental Service Agreements (IGSAs) at <http://www.ice.gov/foia/library>, including for Hudson and Essex, but they are all from previous years.

¹¹ See, e.g., efforts by House members to eliminate the quota, at <http://foster.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/foster-deutch-continue-effort-to-eliminate-immigrant-detention-bed-quota>

and more of these enforcement actions, and a subsequent rise in detained deportation numbers.

Funding stability ensures that NYIFUP's flexible and adaptable model can continue to meet emerging immigrant legal service needs in New York City that are otherwise unfunded.

- Funding stability ensures that NYIFUP can always play a critical part in any larger, coherent City plan to maximize quality legal representation for immigrant New Yorkers.
- NYIFUP providers can nimbly respond to the City's call for the provider resources to go toward emergent City needs in other areas of immigrant legal services as necessary. For example, NYIFUP providers may serve as part of any City comprehensive plan to respond to the President's executive actions on immigration policy, which included the expansion of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the establishment of Deferred Action for Parental of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA). (In addition to Executive Action opportunities, there are natural disasters that give rise to Temporary Protected Status, political situations that give rise to asylum claims and other unpredictable immigration legal service needs that come up on a regular basis for which NYC residents have often had a hard time accessing good quality legal representation).
- Funding stability ensures stability in staffing, helps facilitate hiring and maintaining the most qualified staff attorneys, and ensures sufficient time and capacity to provide training to have the most highly skilled, effective attorneys at all times. It also protects the desirability of NYIFUP job positions and staff morale.

With renewed funding at a level consistent with last year, NYIFUP will achieve the stability and flexibility required to respond to fluctuations in enforcement trends while consistently providing high quality legal services to those who most need it. The NYIFUP providers will prioritize representation of detained immigrants facing deportation at Varick Street and New Jersey immigration courts. Additionally, where necessary, the providers will work in collaboration with City, non-profit and private partners, to step in whenever a new immigrant legal service need—such as for Executive Action—may be identified, providing the City of New York with the most robust immigration resource in the United States.

Conclusion

Thank you again for this opportunity to share with you today how impactful the NYIFUP project has been, from the perspective of its legal service providers. I trust that the testimony you hear from others today, and me, underscores for you the tremendous importance NYIFUP plays in protecting our immigrant New Yorkers, keeping their families united, and keeping our communities stronger. I hope the City will now continue its investment in a continued NYIFUP, one that ensures the continued representation of unrepresented New Yorkers facing deportation proceedings.

NUMBER OF NYIFUP CASES, BY COUNCIL DISTRICT
NOVEMBER, 2013 TO DECEMBER, 2014

District	Council Member	No. of Cases
1	Margaret Chin	2
2	Rosie Mendez	2
3	Corey Johnson	2
4	Daniel R. Garodnick	1
6	Helen Rosenthal	1
7	Mark Levine	5
8	Melissa Mark-Viverito	22
9	Inez E. Dickens	9
10	Ydanis Rodriguez	18
11	Andrew Cohen	1
12	Andy King	12
13	James Vacca	2
14	Fernando Cabrera	11
15	Ritchie Torres	20
16	Vanessa L. Gibson	12
17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo	5
18	Annabel Palma	8
19	Paul Vallone	2
20	Peter Koo	8
21	Julissa Ferreras	31
22	Costa Constantinides	4
23	Mark Weprin	3
24	Rory Lancman	8
25	Daniel Dromm	13
26	Jimmy Van Bramer	10
27	I. Daneek Miller	7
28	Ruben Wills	4
29	Karen Koslowitz	2
30	Elizabeth Crowley	2
31	Donovan Richards	8
32	Eric Ulrich	2
33	Stephen Levin	2
34	Antonio Reynoso	8
36	Robert Cornegy	10
37	Rafael Espinal	8
38	Carlos Menchaca	14
39	Brad Lander	12
40	Mathieu Eugene	12

41	Darlene Mealy	6
42	Inez Barron	6
43	Vincent Gentile	1
44	David G. Greenfield	6
45	Jumaane D. Williams	6
46	Alan Maisel	1
47	Mark Treyger	7
48	Chaim M. Deutsch	5
49	Deborah Rose	2
50	Steven Matteo	4

**HUMAN SERVICES COUNCIL
TESTIMONY TO CITY COUNCIL
HEARING OF THE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE
Tuesday, March 17, 2015**

Good afternoon Chair Levin and members of the Committee on General Welfare. I am David Ng, Government and External Relations Manager at the Human Services Council, and I am glad for the opportunity to testify before you today.

HSC is a membership association comprising almost 200 of New York City's leading human services organizations – direct service providers as well as umbrella and advocacy groups. Our members are involved in such realms as early childhood education, youth development, health, mental health, employment and services to seniors and immigrants. To operate these programs, our members partner extensively with government and, very often, with City government.

HSC serves our membership as a convener, a coordinating body and an intermediary to government, and we focus on such matters as procurement practices, disaster preparedness and recovery, public policies that over-arch the sector and, pertinent to this hearing, budgetary issues.

The Human Services Council of New York (HSC) supports alleviating poverty and inequality and we hope that the City will provide adequate funding for the workforce of the nonprofit human services sector in order for us to achieve that. Stretched thin after years of funding cuts, denied cost-of-living adjustments, counterproductive regulatory requirements, and increasing costs and demand, the industry is long overdue for a substantial investment.

The nonprofit human services sector plays an important role in improving community health and safety, combatting poverty, and fostering equity. The services we provide include job training and placement, early childhood education and afterschool enrichment, violence intervention, legal assistance, homeless shelters, community health services, assistance to immigrants, and senior services. These services provide bridges to opportunity for New Yorkers struggling to overcome a vast array of systemic biases impeding their ability to succeed. In addition to improving the lives of the disadvantaged, this industry is a major economic engine; according to the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, nonprofit organizations deliver nearly \$5.5 billion in human services each year through City-funded contracts in New York City alone.

Unfortunately, over the last five years, the nonprofit human services industry has been financially eviscerated. According to a survey published by the Nonprofit Finance Fund, 42 percent of respondents do not have the right mix of financial resources to thrive and be effective in the next three years with 28% of respondents ended their 2013 fiscal year with a

deficit. The study also found that only 14 percent of nonprofits receiving state and local funding are paid for the full cost of service. Demand for human services has increased while funding for programs and service rates have remained stagnant. This combination has led to a persistent instability in the sector, which can lead to an interruption in service and damage the quality of service provided.

A skyrocketing cost of living, combined with stagnant or falling wages for many who are lucky enough to find work, has left many New Yorkers in need of help. Facing soaring demand and shrinking resources, providers have been forced to make difficult decisions, such as laying off staff, freezing or reducing salaries, reducing contributions to health insurance plans and other benefits, drawing on reserves, and forgoing much-needed investments in training and infrastructure. With low wages and diminishing benefits, frontline workers are increasingly seeking services themselves. Nonprofits are struggling to do much more with much, much less. We are seeing the effects of this financial starvation in the form of program and organization closures, diminished quality and reach of services, greater signs of ongoing financial instability among too many organizations, and a very low-wage workforce with fewer benefits. For us and the communities we serve, the recession is not over.

Despite an exorbitant and steadily rising cost of living in New York, the City's nonprofit human services providers have not received a City cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) since July 2008, when then Mayor Bloomberg authorized a 3 percent increase. To deny these providers an increase for a sixth consecutive year is unacceptable. Women and people of color comprise the majority of the human services workforce, holding notoriously low-wage positions.

Meanwhile, in 2014, the City reached an agreement with the public workers' union to implement automatic increases—retroactively—through 2016. This agreement, which covered more than 100,000 City employees who had been working without a contract since 2010, included increases based on the final seven years of the United Federation of Teachers contract: 1 percent each year for 2011, 2012, and 2013, followed by 1.5 percent in 2014, 2.5 percent in 2015, and 3 percent in 2016, amounting to a total increase of 10 percent. It is only fair that this increase, which is a modest acknowledgement of the ever rising cost of living in an already expensive City, be applied to the human services sector. We urge a total increase of 10 percent for the nonprofit human services sector by 2016, with a 5 percent increase this fiscal year and another 5 percent increase next fiscal year.

It is important to note that nonprofit human services providers deliver essential services on behalf of the City government, so while provider employees are not City employees, they are providing City services. Furthermore inflation does not discriminate. Prices rise for public workers, private workers, and nonprofit human services workers alike. The lack of salary increases to offset growing costs (such as rent, utilities, medical care, and transportation) has

created a recruitment and retention crisis for nonprofits, which must compete with public employers that afford salary increases and comprehensive benefits. A total increase of 10 percent by 2016 will put nonprofit employees on better financial footing and enable nonprofit providers to attract and retain qualified, dedicated workers. This, in turn, would stabilize the sector and enhance the quality of services delivered.

HSC supports Mayor Bill de Blasio's push for a living wage for New Yorkers. This proposal is a much-needed effort to make our City livable for many who are barely scraping by, and the nonprofit human services sector in particular presents a meaningful opportunity to raise the wage of a large, low-income workforce. According to the American Community Survey, median annual earnings are only \$25,255 in social services. According to another Census Bureau survey, 24 percent of social service workers are paid less than \$10 an hour, 40 percent make less than \$12 an hour, and 52 percent make less than \$14 an hour. A two-tier structure has been identified, with higher-paying occupations tending to have higher proportions of white, non-Hispanic workers, and lower-paying occupations having higher proportions of people of color. The challenge is to build a ladder between the two tiers.

We urge the City to provide financial support for a living wage and more systematic career ladder opportunities for the lowest-paid nonprofit human services workers. While we support a living wage, we must acknowledge that without adequate funding to cover the cost and flexibility for nonprofits to implement the new wage, instability within the sector will be exacerbated. We also note the need for State investment if nonprofits funded largely through state contracts will be expected to pay a living wage. Because of the long-term lack of investment in our sector, many organizations are already struggling to pay even the current minimum wage.

We hope that the City legislators and our Mayor will recognize the integral role that nonprofit human services providers play in preventing, alleviating, and reducing poverty as they develop the City's financial plan. We look forward to working with the City Council during this budget session to ensure smart, equitable investment in this important sector for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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**Testimony of Joel Berg, Executive Director
New York City Coalition Against Hunger**

Before The New York City Council General Welfare Committee

Preliminary Budget Hearing- General Welfare

March 17, 2015

I am Joel Berg, Executive Director, at the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. I am testifying on behalf of the city's more than 1,100 soup kitchens and food pantries – and the approximately 1.4 million New Yorkers who live in households that can't afford enough food. I want to first thank Chairman Levin for his work on behalf of people in need as well as to the Committee for allowing me to testify here today.

Hunger in New York City

Food insecurity and hunger remain high throughout New York City, with one in six city residents and nearly one in four children living in homes that couldn't afford enough food in the 2011-2013 time period. These levels are essentially unchanged, staying at the same high level since the start of the recession in 2008.

Statewide in New York, one in ten residents suffered food insecurity in 2011-2013, representing a 33 percent jump from the 2000-2002 time period.

New York City's food pantries and soup kitchens faced an increased demand of 7 percent in 2014, on top of increases of 10 percent in 2013, 5 percent in 2012, 12 percent in 2011, 7 percent in 2010, and 29 percent in 2009. Yet 58 percent of these agencies suffered from cuts in combined government and private resources.

Over 2010 and 2011, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average surged by more than 1,000 points, the number of people in poverty in New York City increased by more than 100,000 people. The recent success of big business is simply not translating into the creation of living-wage jobs. In 2011 alone, there was a more than 70,000-person increase in poverty at a time when the poverty rate nationwide was essentially flat. In 2011, there were more than 1.7 million New Yorkers living below the federal poverty line, making less than \$17,916 annually for a family of three. The number of poor people in New York City is now greater than the entire population of Philadelphia and could fill Madison Square Garden, or the new Barclay's Arena, more than 85 times.

As *The New York Times* reported in 2011, "The rich got richer and the poor got poorer in New York City last year as the poverty rate reached its highest point in more than a decade, and the income gap in Manhattan, already wider than almost anywhere else in the country, rivaled disparities in sub-Saharan Africa...Median household income in the city last year was \$49,461, just below the national median and

down \$821 from the year before (compared with a national decline of \$642). Median earnings for workers fell sharply to \$32,210 from \$33,287 — much more than the national decline.”

Just how vast is this gap? There are now 55 billionaires in New York City alone. Their collective private net worth rose from \$200 billion in 2010 to \$211 billion in 2011 to \$231.5 billion in 2012 to \$319 billion in 2013, according to *Forbes*. That’s a 62.7 percent jump in wealth over just four years, at a time when the income for average New York City families remains low and poverty soared.

Most people cannot fully grasp what a figure such as \$319 billion actually means. That’s almost five times the size of the entire budget of the City of New York, which pays for the police and fire departments, public schools, water system, social services, parks, public health measures, etc. for a city of more than eight million people. The \$319 billion combined private net worth of these New York City billionaires now equals the annual household income of 4.6 million average New York City families. Even more outrageous, the wealth held by these 55 people is 18 million times the annual salary of someone working full-time at minimum wage for a year, meaning that the average billionaire in New York City has as much money as 318,681 minimum wage workers. The New York City Coalition Against Hunger supports capitalism. But we have replaced the well-regulated opportunity capitalism of the past that caused broad-based growth and rewarded those who worked hard and played by the rules with crony capitalism in which some at the top make themselves even wealthier by rigging the game. To end hunger, we must once again have a fair economy with ample jobs, high wages, and an adequate safety net.

Given that poverty, unemployment and under-employment are the main causes of domestic food insecurity and hunger, it is no surprise that hunger and food insecurity soared citywide even before Superstorm Sandy, and have likely surged since then, according to data collected and compiled by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. Before the storm, more than 1.4 million New Yorkers — one in six — lived in households without enough food, determined by the federal government to be food insecure, a new record high since the federal government started formally measuring the problem in 1997. Nearly one in four of the city’s children — nearly half a million — lived in households that lacked sufficient food. One in 10 seniors struggled against hunger.

Nearly One in Four New York City Children – Nearly Half a Million – Are Food Insecure

In 2011-2013, an estimated 435,899 children in New York City lived in food insecure households that did not have an adequate food supply throughout the year. This number represents 23.60 percent, or nearly one in four of the city’s child population. It also represents an 18.2 percent increase from 2006-2008, when 369,415 of New York City children lived in food insecure homes.

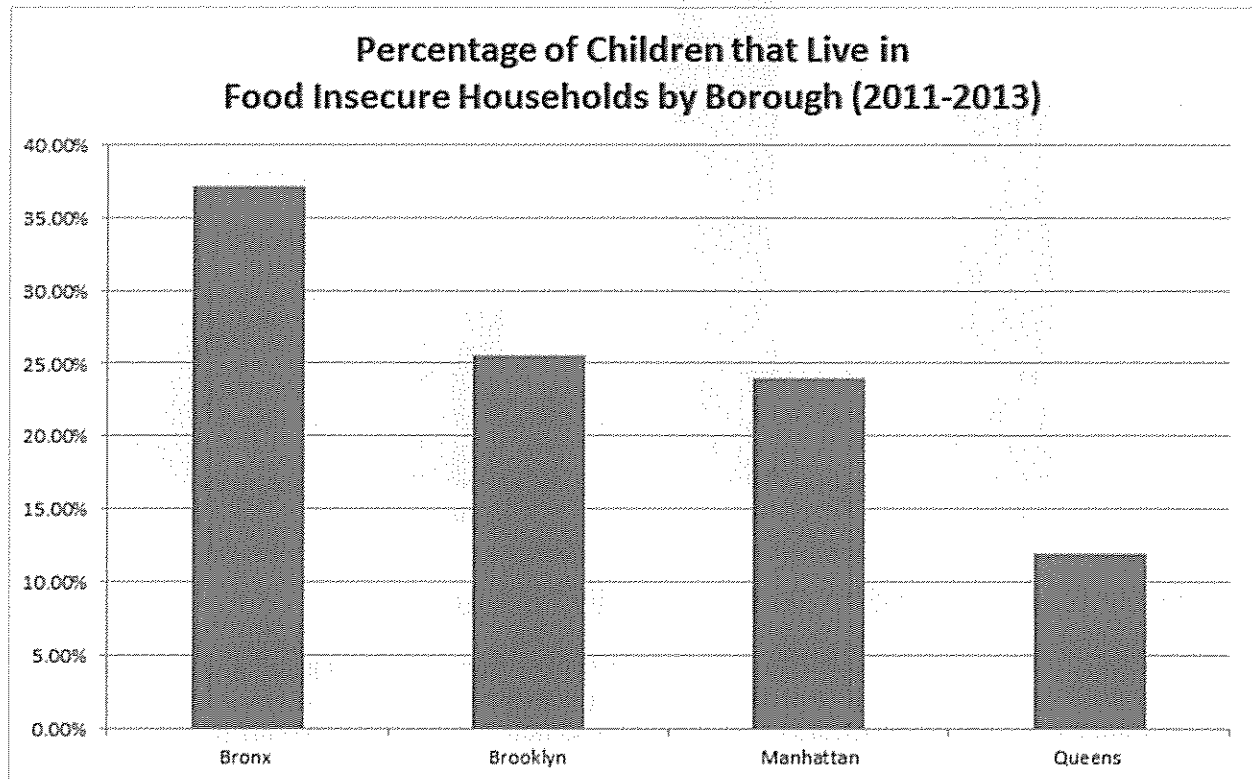
Brooklyn had the highest number of children in food insecure households, but the Bronx had the highest percentage.

Borough*	Number of Food Insecure Children (2011-2013)
Bronx	120,251
Brooklyn	196,033
Manhattan	57,263
Queens	55,368

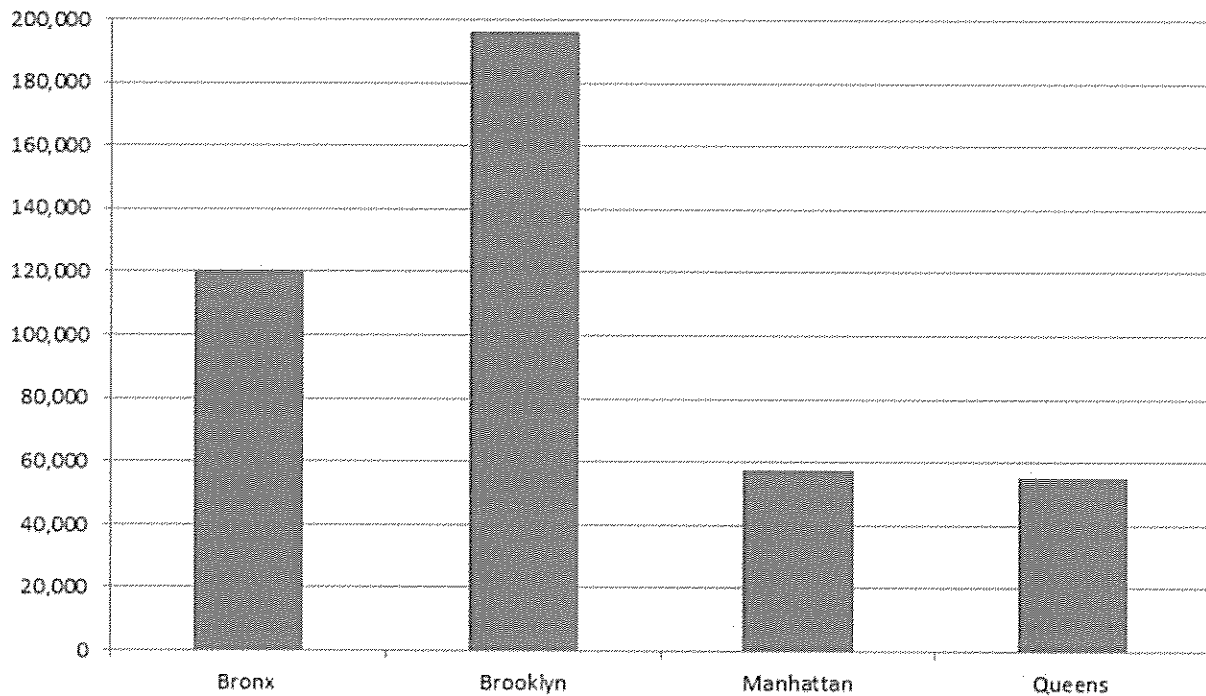
Borough*	Percent of Children in Food Insecure Homes (2011-2013)
Bronx	37.17%
Brooklyn	25.54%
Manhattan	24.02%

Queens	11.98%
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*In general, due to sampling issues, the data for percent of people is more accurate than the data for the total number of people food insecure. Note that, given smaller sub-samples for these boroughs and sub-populations, margins of error are higher. Citywide numbers and percentages for child food insecurity include Staten Island, but there is not enough federal food insecurity data for that borough to adequately calculate a borough- specific child food insecurity rate for Staten Island. In 2013, according to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 18.7 percent of Staten Island children lived in poverty; the food insecurity rate is likely similar.



Total Number of Children that Live in Food Insecure Households by Borough (2011-2013)



Over One in 10 New York Seniors (Over the age of 60) Are Food Insecure

In 2011-2013, there were an estimated 167,329 food insecure seniors over the age of 60. This number represents 13.07 percent, or one in 10 of the city's senior population. It also represents a 22 percent increase from 2006-2008, when 132,133 New York City seniors lived in food insecure homes.

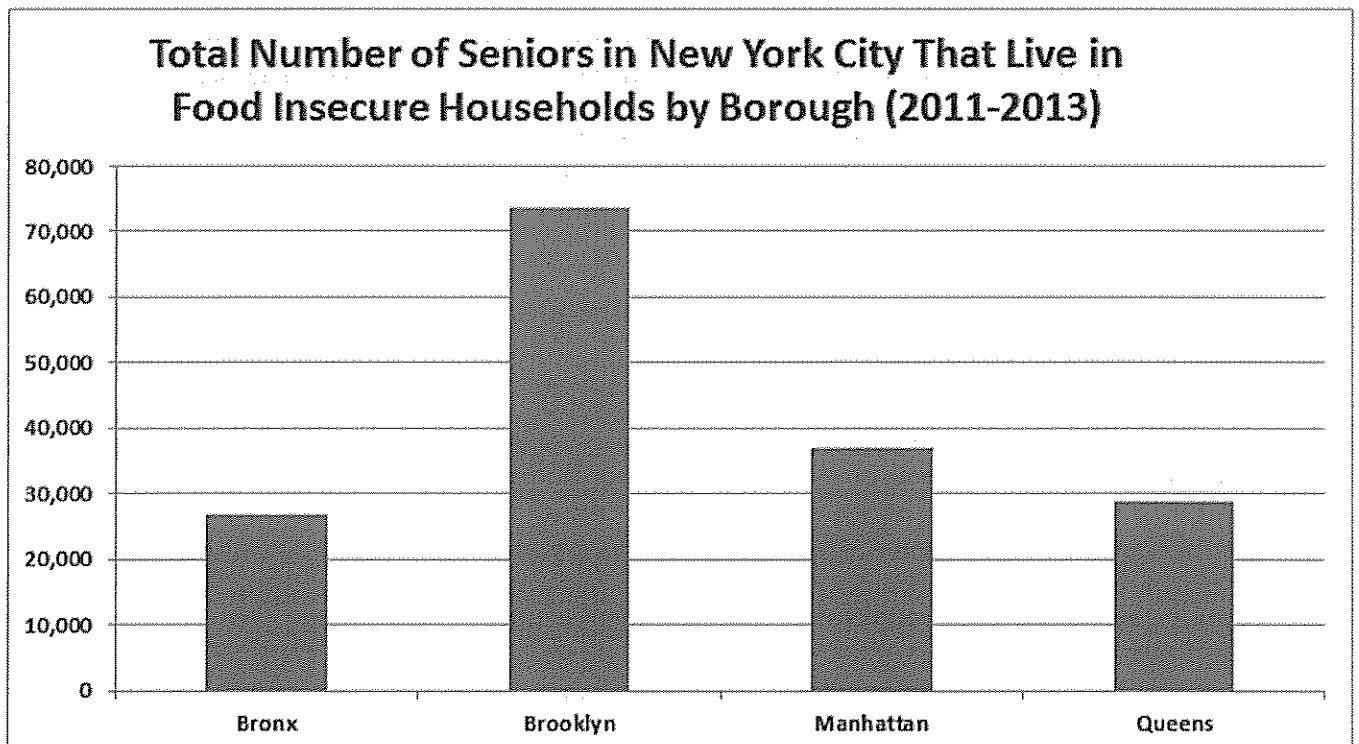
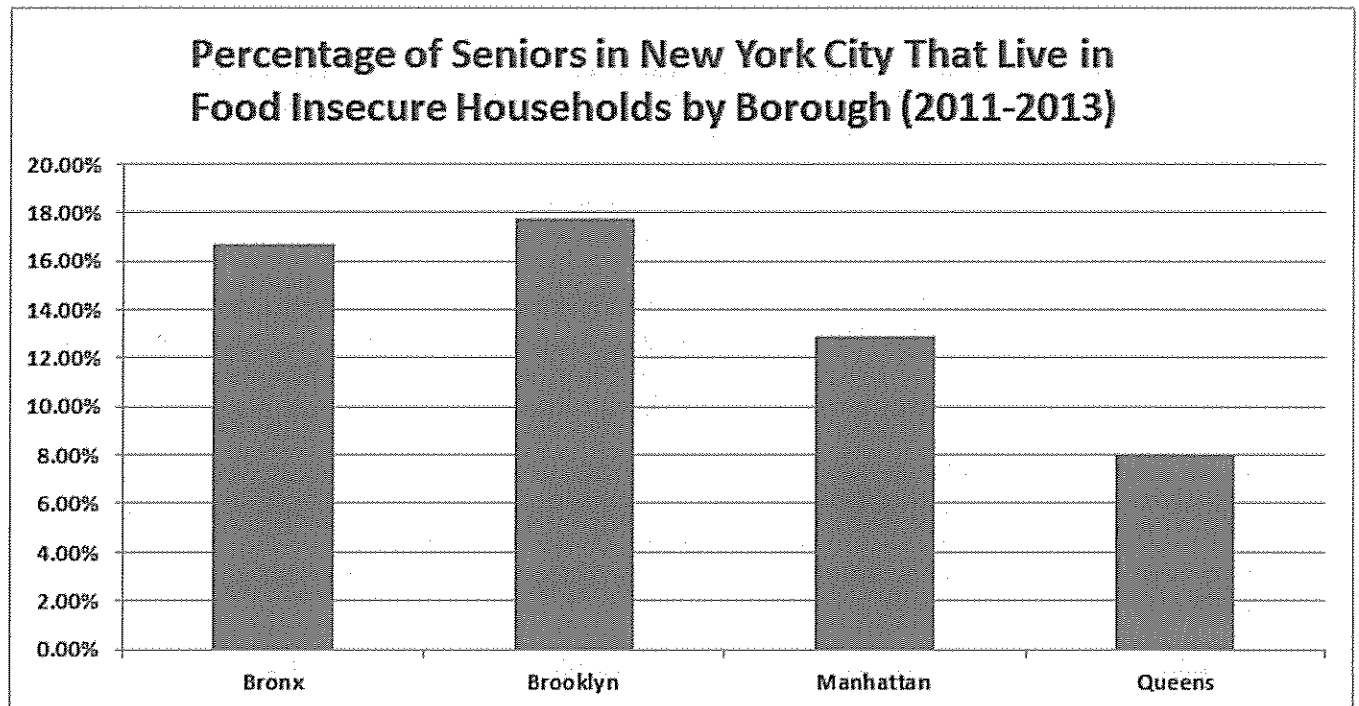
Brooklyn had both the highest number and the greatest percentage of food insecure seniors.

Borough*	Number of Food Insecure Seniors (2011-2013)
Bronx	80,028
Brooklyn	220,571
Manhattan	111,053
Queens	86,788

Borough*	Percent of Food Insecure Seniors (2011-2013)
Bronx	16.72%
Brooklyn	17.78%
Manhattan	12.89%
Queens	8.02%

*In general, due to sampling issues, the data for percent of people is more accurate than the data for the total number of people food insecure. Note that, given smaller sub-samples for these boroughs and sub-populations, margins of error are higher. Citywide numbers and percentages for food insecurity include Staten Island, but there is not enough

federal food insecurity data for that borough to adequately calculate food security rates. According to U.S. Census data, Staten Island had a senior poverty rate of 9.1 percent for the years of 2011-2013; the food insecurity rate is likely similar.



Adding Insult to Injury- Cuts to the Safety Net

Making matters even worse, federal nutrition assistance programs are suffering from the worst attacks in decades.

The city's food pantries and soup kitchens faced particularly severe cuts in funding through the federal FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), which suffered through both long-term, multi-year budget cuts as well as through more recent budget cuts as a result of sequestration.

The sequestration also slashed funding for the nutrition assistance that pregnant women and infants get from the WIC program and that seniors receive through meals-on-wheels.

In 2010, a Democrat-controlled Congress passed, and President Obama signed into law, the so-called Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HFKA) which slightly improved school meals, but cut \$5 billion from SNAP, by rolling back cost-of-living increases in the SNAP program that were included in the 2009 recovery bill, thereby reducing benefits for every single person that depends on the program.

In 2013 and 2014 the SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) program was deeply cut by nearly \$14 billion, forcing the 47 million Americans – and 1.8 million New Yorkers – who depend on SNAP to rely more heavily on charities and emergency feeding programs to feed their families. The average family of three lost \$29 per month, more than 20 meals monthly. The city's economy is losing more than \$200 million in federal aid each year.

On top of all that, Congress passed a Farm Bills further slashing SNAP by *another* \$8.6 billion. Insane. Immoral.

Even before the most recent SNAP cuts kicked in, our annual hunger survey provided hard data to prove what we see every day – still soaring hunger. 92.7 percent of New York City's food pantries and soup kitchens reported that they were being impacted by the SNAP cuts. 43.8 percent of agencies reported that the SNAP cuts *significantly* increased the number of clients and/or significantly increased the food needs of existing clients, and 48.9 percent reported that the SNAP cuts have *somewhat* increased the number of clients and/or significantly increased the food needs of existing clients. Overall, 82 percent of agencies reported an increased demand in people needing food, with 43 percent reporting that demand has greatly increased.

Taken together, the HFKA and Farm Bill cuts reduced SNAP by nearly \$14 billion dollars, with many reductions going into effect as of November 1, 2013.

Low-income New Yorkers faced one of the toughest winters ever this year, and it's just not because of the weather. Far too many New Yorkers will have to make the difficult decision between buying groceries or covering basic living expenses.

The data proved that the number of poor and hungry New Yorkers has not decreased since the start of the recession. One in six city residents – and nearly one in four children – still struggle against hunger. But there are actions that New York City can do to help those in need.

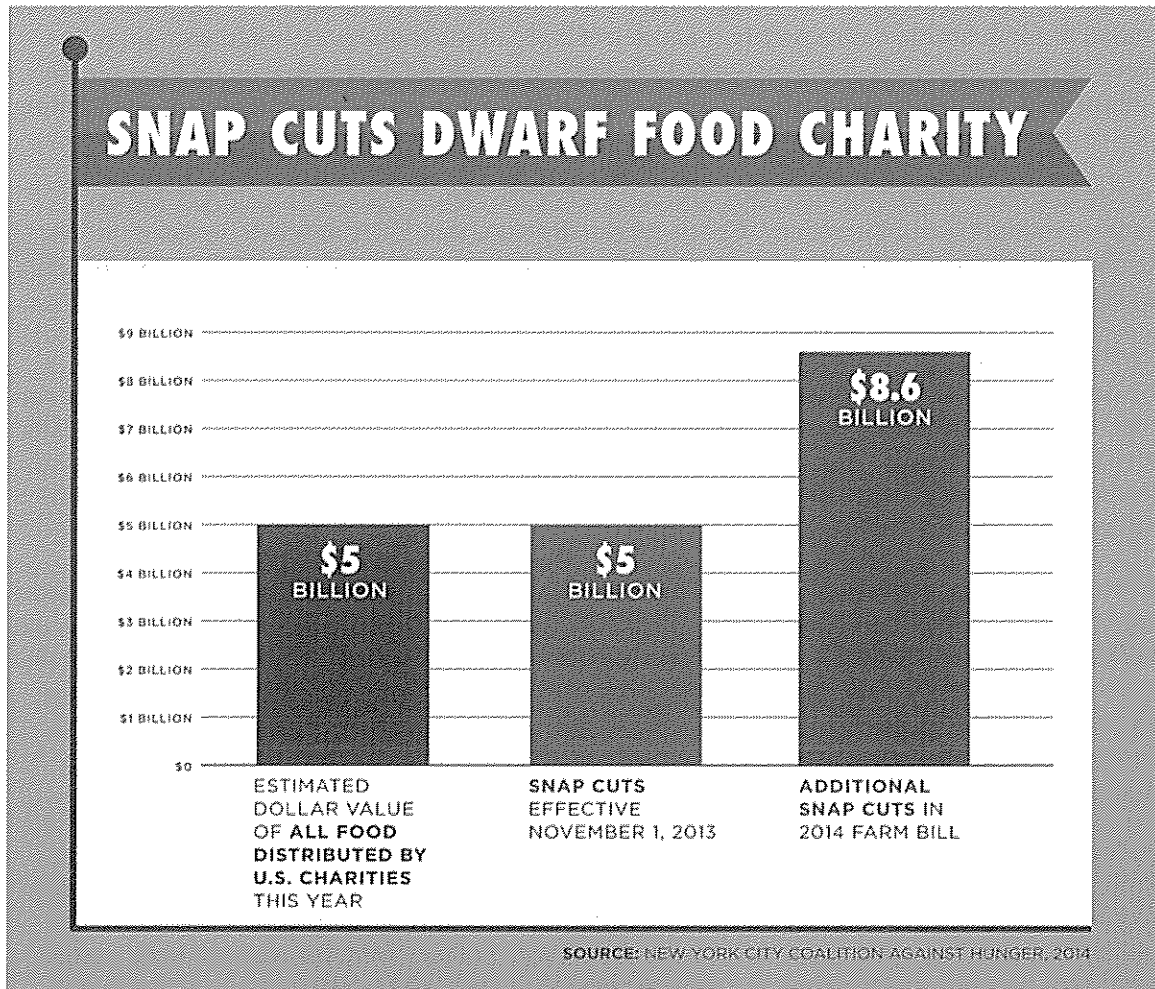
New York Governor Andrew Cuomo was able to take administrative action to prevent the heat or eat cuts from being implemented in New York, thereby saving \$457 million for the first year in SNAP benefits that would otherwise be cut. He has indicated that funding would be provided to prevent those cuts from

harming New Yorkers in 2015. The action prevented cuts averaging \$127 per month for 300,000 affected households statewide.

However, states were powerless to prevent the HFKA cuts from being implemented, and all 3.1 million SNAP recipients in the state suffered a cut. In New York City, the average household SNAP benefit was cut by \$19 per month, equaling a \$228 reduction in groceries per year.

The amount of SNAP benefits per meal in New York City was reduced from the paltry level of \$1.70 per meal in August, 2013 to an even smaller \$1.60 per meal in August, 2014. Partially because the benefits were less adequate, few New Yorkers applied or re-applied for SNAP; the rolls declined by 125,487 people in the city during that year. As a result of both the reduction in average benefits amount and the drop in the overall caseload, low-income New York City residents will receive an estimated \$426 million less in federal SNAP funding in 2014 than in 2013.

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger estimates that all the food pantries, soup kitchens, food banks, and food rescue groups in the U.S. provide, at most, \$5 billion worth of food each year. Thus, as the chart below demonstrates, the SNAP cuts dwarf all the nation's charitable donations.



As of January of 2015, there were 1,722,856 people receiving SNAP benefits in New York City, a massive -- 185,754-person -- decline since the peak participation level of 1,908,610 in December, 2012. Just since the start of the de Blasio Administration, there has been a 112,481-person drop in SNAP participation in the City. It is imperative to determine how much of that drop is due to positive reasons -- more jobs and higher wages in the city's economy -- versus negative reasons, such as City-imposed barriers.

Big Progress in SNAP Access through City's Human Resources Administration

The good news is that, for anti-poverty advocates -- and for the millions of struggling New Yorkers we represent -- there has been a 180 degree change at the city's leading social service agency, the Human Resources Administration (HRA). And all that change is for the better.

When much of the mainstream media covers city government, they tend to fixate on minute political squabbles, personality clashes, and procedural tiffs, rather than the far more important issue of whether city government is working better or worse for average New Yorkers. Most media is even *less* likely to cover issues impacting poverty. That's why hearings like this are so vital.

For the previous two decades, under both Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg, HRA was a right-wing bastion that was frequently incompetent and intransigent, and often even lawless. The agency, responsible for the administration of food, health, cash assistance, and select types of job training and child care aid to low-income New Yorkers, frequently lost paperwork from applicants, forced people to wait on lines for days, failed to return calls, treated its clients rudely, refused to admit any errors, and stubbornly clung to failing policies.

Public interest lawyers -- including then Attorney-in-Chief of the New York City Legal Aid Society Steven Banks -- routinely sued the agency. Courts repeatedly ruled that HRA seriously violated the law by abrogating the rights of its clients, often by illegally denying struggling New Yorkers life-saving benefits. Even after tragedies like Hurricane Sandy, HRA *still* went out of its way to deny help to families in need.

Mired in a "blame the victim" mentality, the old HRA designed most of its policies and procedures around the demonstrably false assumption that the main reason that so many New Yorkers were poor was that they were lazy or crooked. While the agency still had some talented managers -- and many dedicated front-line workers -- those remaining stalwarts had their hands tied by top agency management that was openly hostile to the agency's clientele. Thus, the very agency tasked with lifting New Yorkers out of poverty all-too-often pushed them deeper into destitution.

During these two decades, poverty, hunger, and homelessness in New York City all soared. By the time Bloomberg left office, 1.8 million New Yorkers were poor, more than 1.3 million were food insecure, and more than 50,000 per night were forced to use homeless shelters, an all-time high. Yet the key metric that HRA used to determine its success was how many people it *removed* from its programs. That makes as little sense as a hospital determining its success solely by how many people leave the hospital, without differentiating how many people leave it cured, equally ill, or dead. Veterans were kicked off of aid programs just as arbitrarily as everyone else.

Ironically, the city's policies of removing families from federally-funded programs often increased the burden on the city taxpayers, by forcing families into extraordinarily expensive yet shoddy shelters and job training programs that were of more benefit to the politically-connected contractors who ran them than to the families that they were supposed to help. The City's policies were the worst of both worlds: they violated both the conservative ideal that government should use money efficiently and the liberal ideal that government should help lift up those most in need.

Enter Mayor de Blasio, who, in his previous roles as Chair of the City Council General Welfare Committee and Public Advocate, was a consistent, thoughtful, and progressive critic of HRA leadership and policies. Since his election, de Blasio has reinforced his commitment to fighting hunger and inequality.

Mayor de Blasio's bold social service appointments backed up his rhetoric. He appointed a long-term champion of low-income New Yorkers, Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, as his Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services. And, in a move that demonstrated both daring courage and perfect common sense, de Blasio named Steven Banks – the long-time HRA watchdog – to head that agency. That's the equivalent of a President naming Ralph Nader to oversee a federal consumer protection agency.

Literally, minutes into his new role, Banks started making massive reforms, providing exactly the kind of competent progressivism that de Blasio promised.

For starters, the agency is now treating low-income New Yorkers, and the advocates who represent them, as trusted partners, not as feared adversaries. Unfortunately, while there were 1.87 million recipients of SNAP in New York City last year, according to the New York City Coalition Against Hunger estimations, there were approximately 600,000 eligible New Yorkers not receiving SNAP. While we recognize that this prediction is difficult to be precise, we are also aware that there is a gap in the number of Public Assistance recipients and those who receive SNAP even according to HRA's own fact sheets, which means that HRA must do a more effective job at outreach.¹

It is vital for HRA to investigate, and publicly report on, why the SNAP caseload has dropped so thoroughly. Poverty has not decreased and the shelter population is still sky-high. Unemployment benefits have run out. With a bureaucracy of HRA's size, change can be slow to come.

Here are some of the other problems that remain:

- 1) HRA has begun a re-engineering update that they presented to partners in October, 2014, that we encourage them to continue with.
- 2) We specifically recommend that HRA continue to improve their **On-Demand Interviews** for recertifications. Many clients fail to get a scheduled interview call and it is almost impossible for clients to get through to the rescheduling line. The establishment of a call center that clients can contact for interviews will save time for HRA staff, clients, and CBO reps and cut down on the number of cases closed due to missed interviews. There is currently a single phone number given to clients and CBOs for recertifications and it is extremely difficult to get through to an HRA representative who can reschedule an interview. Messages left at this number are rarely, if ever, returned.
- 3) Documents are still routinely lost, with HRA forcing applicants to re-submit **documents** and applications, delaying access to needed benefits.
- 4) The **EASY ACCESS** program should be expanded so that there are a variety of community-based locations where clients can submit required documents, periodic reports, etc.
- 5) Complete the **rollout of the improved ACCESS NYC website and Mobile Document Upload** so clients can submit documents from personal mobile devices.

¹ HRA/ DSS Fact Sheet: NYC Human Resources Administration, Department of Social Services
http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/downloads/pdf/facts/hra_facts/hrafacts_2014/hra_facts_2014_01.pdf

6) Many clients receive their first month's SNAP but fail to have the case approved for ongoing benefits despite having submitted all documents and completed the required interview.

7) Documents placed by clients in the "drop boxes" at HRA offices are often not retrieved and entered into HRA's computer system on a timely basis.

8) Clients receive notices requesting submission of documents that have already been submitted.

Low-income New Yorkers represented by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger are already starting to notice these positive changes, but they understand that systematic change will take time.

As a result of these and other Kafka-esque access barriers, many of which are decades-old, SNAP participation in the city actually declined by 42,453 people in the last six months of the Bloomberg Administration, and by another 65,729 people in the first six months of the de Blasio Administration, despite the still-soaring local rates of poverty, hunger, unemployment, and homelessness.

The good news is that Commissioner Banks and his team is fully aware of these remaining problems, and they have already taken concrete steps to address them.

Challenges that built up over 20 years won't be fixed in a few days. But the city's new human services leadership is already making huge progress.

Taxpayers are getting a better bang for the buck, and struggling families are getting the basic housing, food, job training, and income support –and, with that, the hope – they desperately need. Thanks to the mayor and his appointees, these improvements are a win-win for all New Yorkers. We hope the Council can support and accelerate these changes.

Helping New Yorkers by Changing the Human Resources Administration (HRA)

We must ensure an adequate nutrition assistance safety net and boost upward mobility through expanded access to SNAP, school breakfast, school lunch, WIC, and summer meals benefits that makes robust benefits available, free of stigma and hassle, for those in need.

Currently, to obtain the multiple benefits for which they are eligible, low-income individuals must often submit multiple applications, submit multiple sets of supporting documents, and visit multiple City offices, losing significant time and money. We should enable all eligible people to obtain all benefits for which they are eligible through one single, easy-to-complete application, available online, in paper form, and by phone.

City-imposed barriers to access deprive more than half a million eligible, low-income New Yorkers – many of whom are working people – from receiving SNAP (formerly food stamp) benefits, thereby increasing hunger and depriving the city's economy of over one billion federal dollars. Mayor de Blasio should launch a comprehensive effort to increase the number of eligible families – and particularly working families – who receive SNAP benefits. Through this effort, participation rates could be increased to 90 percent by the end of the next Mayoral term.

Emergency Food Assistance Program

In order to support the organizations that the New York City Coalition Against Hunger works with, the food pantries and soup kitchens that fill the gap when SNAP runs out for so many, we request that the City Council baseline \$14.5 million in funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Conclusion

Over the last year New York City has made progress in the fight against hunger because we have made a concerted effort to do so. The New York City Coalition Against Hunger acknowledges that effort, as it is society's duty to care for its most vulnerable. Through continued effort New York City will continue to be more effective at assisting those in need.

Testimony of Michael Jackson on Behalf of The Bronx Defenders**New York City Council Committee General Welfare****FY 2016 Preliminary Budget Hearing****March 17, 2015**

Hi my name is Michael Jackson. I was born in Jamaica and I came to the United States with my green card when I was 9 years old. I've lived in Jamaica, Queens ever since then. I went to P.S. 134 all the way to Jamaica High School.

I got arrested for the first time when I was 22. My mom's house had been foreclosed on so I became homeless. After that, I had some run-ins with the law and I got convicted of a couple of misdemeanors. I didn't know those meant I could be deported, until immigration picked me up from Rikers Island last September.

I was in detention for about four months while I was fighting my case. When I was in detention, it was miserable. I missed my daughter's second birthday, and the holidays with my family. I had no idea what I would do if I got deported. I don't have anyone in Jamaica—I haven't been there since I was a kid. My whole family lives in New York: my mom, my brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, aunts, cousins, and my daughter Crystal. I didn't want to be separated from them.

In detention, I thought mostly about my daughter. She's only two years old. I grew up without a father and I didn't want that for her. I wanted to be here with her.

I got my lawyer, Paige, from The Bronx Defenders and a social worker, Cheyne. They helped me fight my case. They interviewed many of my family members and people I couldn't reach on my own from jail. They also got a lot of records and they spent a lot of time visiting and talking with me. They helped show that I'm not just that person who's had these cases, but that I didn't have enough support or sources of help throughout my life, and that forced me to make the wrong decisions.

At my hearing with the Judge, my lawyer and my social worker helped me explain everything to the Judge and show the Judge my true side, and he let me stay here. Then I was released from detention and I felt relieved and great. When I was released from detention, my family members were there: my daughter, my moms and my sister.

I came out of detention about a month and a half ago. Since then my social worker Cheyne at the Bronx Defenders is still helping me. Cheyne is helping me get connected to Fortune Society, which is a program for ex-cons with job training, housing, GED, and alcohol and drug treatment.

If I hadn't had Cheyne and Paige helping me, I think I would probably still be in detention or maybe deported. I didn't have the money to afford a lawyer, but Cheyne and Paige were very resourceful and helpful.



MORE THAN FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE

MET COUNCIL

ACTS OF CHARITY • DEEDS OF KINDNESS • צדקה וגמילות חסדים

**New York City Council FY2016 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee on General Welfare
March 17, 2015 at 10:00am
Council Chambers - City Hall**

Thank you, Chairs Levin and Crowley and the Committees on General Welfare and Women's Issues, for inviting us to speak today. My name is Eric Munson, and I am the Chief of Staff at Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty.

For more than four decades, Met Council has supported and championed families, seniors and adults living in poverty and near-poverty. Met Council provides immediate assistance to New Yorkers in crisis and creates pathways to self sufficiency both directly and through our grassroots Jewish Community Council network in clients' neighborhoods—right where they live. In the fight against poverty, we serve immigrants, seniors living on fixed incomes, the un- and underemployed, and all others in need. As an organization founded on Jewish values, we serve everyone with dignity and empathy, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.

Support from New York City Council enables our case workers to assist the City's poor and near-poor. In addition to individual member items for our Food, Social Services, and Metropair programs, Met Council is supported through the following City Council initiatives:

- **ACES, or Access to Crisis and Emergency Services (\$600,000), which supports our Social Services Program**
- **Handyman Services (\$400,000), which supports Project Metropair, and**
- **DoVE (\$268,000), which supports our Family Violence program**

We respectfully request that the Council sustains these funding streams for Met Council into FY16. As part of a coalition of Holocaust Survivor service providers, we have also requested \$1.5 million to start a new Survivor Initiative in the Council.

I want to take the remainder of my time to discuss some program expansions at Met Council over the past year. We are grateful that in FY14, with your support, every one of our anti-poverty programs expanded or fundamentally changed for the better.

- Social Services: We created our first geriatric services manager position to streamline all our services offered to seniors. Susan Moritz makes the rounds to the JCCs and to our housing sites to ensure that case workers are providing the highest level of senior care.
- Holocaust Services: We hired an additional dedicated Holocaust survivor social worker to support and advise a network of case workers across the City, so that they too can best serve the most vulnerable among us.
- Kosher Food Network: Thanks to a generous donor, our kosher food pantry system- the largest in America- now provides much needed kosher meat ahead of major Jewish holidays to increase nutrition and ensure a festive and dignified celebration.
- Benefits Access: We held four SCRIE (Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption) Enroll-a-Thons, where 75 seniors enrolled- and dozens more were educated about this essential City-sponsored program, which freezes eligible seniors' rent and in many cases helps them avoid eviction.
- Project Metropair: We hired additional handymen to repair seniors' homes, enabling vulnerable New Yorkers to age safely in the homes that they love.
- Family Violence: Thanks to additional DoVE initiative funding from the New York City Council we hired a Russian-speaking Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Spanish-speaking case worker for our Family Violence program, and increased staff time at the Manhattan and Queens Family Justice Centers.
- Housing: We completed construction of Council Towers VII in the Bronx, which will provide 78 units of affordable housing for very low-income seniors.

In conclusion, Met Council could not continue providing critical social services to thousands of needy New Yorkers each year without the vital partnership of New York City Council. We deeply value your leadership and partnership and look forward to working together to help the needy throughout the New York area.

Thank you. I would be happy to take any questions you have at this time.



METROPOLITAN COUNCIL ON JEWISH POVERTY

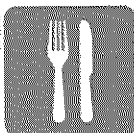
provides comprehensive social services to *aid, sustain and empower* poor and near-poor New Yorkers throughout our city.

In FY14, Met Council provided:

FOOD

2.46 MILLION meals distributed by our kosher food pantries

\$514,650 in emergency food cards



SOCIAL SERVICES

\$1.5 MILLION in direct financial assistance

3,452 case management services

BENEFITS ACCESS

11,195 families enrolled into SNAP leveraging more than

\$3 MILLION in government funds



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1,777 units in operation and development

HOME CARE

1,318 clients



HOME REPAIRS

2,658 free repairs to seniors' homes

VOLUNTEERS

16,975 volunteer hours



FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

526 clients

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN NEED, PLEASE CONTACT US AT: 212.453.9539

Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty is the voice of the Jewish poor and the first line of defense for our community's needs. We fight poverty through comprehensive social services and treat every individual with dignity and respect. Our network of grassroots Jewish Community Councils strengthens families and neighborhoods throughout New York City.

HELP MET COUNCIL SERVE NEEDY NEW YORKERS

Met Council leverages government contracts with privately raised funds to multiply the impact of our services and empower our clients to move from crisis to stability. Our government partnerships sustain the following Met Council initiatives:

Kosher Food Pantry Network

Provides a dignified solution to hunger, including: the country's largest kosher food pantry system, emergency food cards, home delivered meals and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment assistance. These programs enable clients to eat more healthfully and ensure they can use their limited income to meet other daily needs, such as rent, clothing and medication.

Social Services

Empowers clients to confront their crisis and reach stability. By using a strengths-based approach, our caseworkers conduct a thorough assessment with the client to create and execute an effective intervention plan. Through this process, Met Council enrolls clients into benefits, connects them to a food pantry and provides privately raised financial assistance to keep clients in their home, keep their utilities running and address their medical needs.

Family Violence Services

Addresses the immediate safety concerns of survivors of intimate partner violence and family abuse, and works towards self-sufficiency and healing by providing: safety planning, case management, supportive counseling, emergency financial assistance, legal advocacy, benefits screening and facilitated enrollment and access to food pantries. Though we receive referrals involving clients of every background, Met Council is proud to be the agency the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence turns to for assistance with domestic violence involving members of the Jewish community.

Project Metropair

Helps frail seniors age in place and live safely and independently in their own homes by providing free handyman services, including installing grab bars, removing trip hazards and lowering peepholes.

Affordable Housing

Assists poor and near-poor seniors, mentally ill and formerly homeless in becoming self-sufficient because a safe and affordable home is one of the key elements in helping someone out of poverty.





Communities for Healthy Food NYC

CYPRESS HILLS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

625 Jamaica Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11208

Phone: **917-893-8801 X 217** Email: shail@cypresshills.org www.cypresshills.org

Cypress Hills Submitted Testimony on General Welfare Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 Hearing of the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare

Submitted March 17, 2015

Thank you Chair Levin, and General Welfare Committee Members, for considering this testimony supporting Communities for Healthy Food's request for City Council Citywide Discretionary Funding in the amount of \$760,000. My name is **Yakima Pena, Senior Project Manager** of Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation known as Cypress Hills. I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of Communities for Healthy Food and Cypress Hills.

Communities for Healthy Food (CfHF) NYC is a new, innovative approach to expand access to affordable, healthy food in four of New York City's economically challenged communities. This place-based initiative integrates access to healthy and affordable food into every aspect of our comprehensive community development work – through resident outreach, nutrition education and cooking classes, creating new or improved healthy food outlets and generating food-sector jobs. A comprehensive evaluation of CfHF is underway with the NYC Food Policy Center at Hunter College.

This new initiative, seeded by \$1.6 million from the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, addresses the interrelated issues of diet-related diseases, poverty, and unemployment to help residents live longer and healthier. CfHF taps LISC's value as an effective community development intermediary with strong neighborhood organization relationships, the ability to leverage capital and programmatic funds, and its track record as a facilitator, convener and technical assistance provider. CfHF builds on the existing work of LISC and its partners revitalizing struggling communities and improving overall quality of life.

Program Partners

- Cypress Hills LDC in Cypress Hills/East New York, Brooklyn.
- New Settlement Apartments in Mount Eden, Bronx.
- Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.
- West Harlem Group Assistance in West Harlem.

These programs also reach some Queens neighborhoods.

These program partners are embedding healthy food strategies into community development work to:

- 1) Increase the availability of high quality, affordable, and nutritious foods;
- 2) Create new or improved healthy food outlets and venues;
- 3) Educate residents, housing staff, and community service providers about nutrition, healthy food preparation, and gardening;
- 4) Enable economic development opportunities through creating or expanding food-related jobs, improving existing or creating new healthy food venues and fostering urban markets and food related enterprises; and
- 5) Implement a comprehensive neighborhood outreach and awareness campaign.

[Cypress Hills – Please add two or three bullets here about food insecurity in your neighborhood and specific work you are doing to address it through your client choice food pantry and also through any SNAP or public benefits counseling you do through CfHF.]

2014 Accomplishments

- Provided more than 250,000 pounds of emergency food for close to 17,000 pantry clients.
- Started two new neighborhood farmers' markets and two farm share programs and created four new community produce gardens.
- Trained and employed 44 residents to become farm stand operators, farmers, and community chefs.
- Held CfHF program activities for close to 3,000 neighborhood residents. This includes: farm shares, youth programming, farmers market, gardening workshops and grocery store tours and cooking demonstrations.
- Hosted a variety of nutrition education and cooking classes for close to 500 neighborhood residents to increase: cooking skills to make healthy food on a limited budget; knowledge about what foods are healthier alternatives; and literacy skills to read nutrition labels.
- Equipped 500 neighborhood residents, CDC staff, and partner organizations with information about neighborhood healthy food resources and services and the importance of healthy eating, nutrition and gardening skills.
- Enrolled 600 families in public nutrition assistance programs, like the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formally known as food stamps.
- Connected directly with close to 6,500 residents through neighborhood outreach campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating, the availability of local healthy food resources, and help strengthen community networks.
- Converted four corner stores to healthy corner stores.

Impact of new City Council Funding

We respectfully request \$760,000 in City Council funding which would allow CfHF to expand and reach more low-income families and give individuals the tools they need to create healthier lives and build demand for healthy food, so that nonprofits, community-based organizations, city departments, and funders can partner with NYC businesses and investors to provide a better infrastructure for healthy food in underserved neighborhoods.

Impacts across the Four Boroughs

- Provide 275,000 pounds of emergency food for 19,600 pantry clients.

- Sell over 40,000 pounds of local produce to in need residents at farmer's markets and farm shares that CfHF started in collaboration with local nonprofits. Residents can use food stamps and NYC Health Bucks for purchases.
- Enable economic development opportunities by:
 - Employing 34 local, neighborhood residents as farm stand operators, urban farmers, community gardeners, and community chefs; and
 - Equipping 15 residents to incubate food businesses.
- Host a variety of nutrition education, cooking classes, and cooking demonstrations for 750 neighborhood residents to increase: cooking skills to make healthy food on a limited budget; knowledge about what foods are healthier alternatives; and literacy skills to read nutrition labels.
- Equip over 300 neighborhood residents, CDC or partner organization staff with information about neighborhood healthy food resources and services, knowledge on the importance of healthy eating and nutrition, and gardening skills.
- Reach 2,500 community residents through a neighborhood outreach campaign designed to raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating, the availability of local healthy food resources, and help strengthen community networks.
- Support the conversion of 5 healthy food corner stores and their owners.
- Improve the nutrition and wellness environment at early childcare and school facilities for 625 children.
- Enroll at least 450 families in public nutrition assistance programs, like the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program like (SNAP), formally known as food stamps.

About the Partners:

Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation (NEBHDCo) - Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

A leading affordable housing developer since 1985, NEBHDCo has developed and self-manages 929 residential units and 17 commercial units in 92 buildings in Central Brooklyn, and also provides tenant and community services. As one for four CDCs in LISC NYC's Communities for Healthy Food initiative, NEBHDCo owns and manages affordable housing and other commercial and community spaces; delivers an array of social and economic development programs and services; and has close ties to the neighborhood residents served, including seniors, youth, families, and adults. NEBHDCo also works with many local partners on a multi-faceted community healthy food access program, allowing them to effectively implement healthy food interventions into locally-owned assets through their comprehensive community development work.

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) - Cypress Hills, Brooklyn

With community residents leading the way, the mission of Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation is to build a strong, sustainable Cypress Hills and East New York, where residents achieve educational and economic success, secure healthy and affordable housing and develop leadership skills to transform their lives and community. We serve over 9,000 local residents each year, many of whom are immigrants, through affordable housing development, sustainability planning, housing counseling, community organizing, college access and persistence programs, career and education programs, and youth and family services. CHLDC is working with LISC NYC to increase access to healthy food for seniors, youth, families, and adults through comprehensive community development work. CHLDC owns and manages affordable housing and other commercial and community spaces; delivers an array of social and economic development programs and services; and has close ties to the neighborhood residents. CHLDC's strategic interventions, integrated into existing programming and locally-owned assets, are designed to strengthen the local food system and reconnect community members with all aspects of it – from garden to table, including hands-on workshops about growing food at community gardens; nutrition, health, and effective food budgeting educational sessions; expansion of Cypress Hills' youth market with onsite cooking workshops; and health screenings at a senior center, affordable housing buildings, and local schools. CHLDC is working with the Cypress Hills Child Care Corporation, serving approximately 500 children and their families, to increase healthy food options served at their early childhood facilities and engage parents in meal improvements. Lastly, Cypress Hills is working with local bodegas and restaurants to increase healthy offerings, and help increase community demand.

New Settlement Apartments (NSA) - Mount Eden, the Bronx

New Settlement Apartments is a community development organization based in the Mt. Eden community of the Southwest Bronx, with a 25-year demonstrated commitment to increasing preparedness and access to high-quality public and post-secondary education, safe and affordable housing, fair and sustainable employment, and expanding opportunities for healthy and active living for youth, seniors, adults, and families. New Settlement has provided 1,022 affordable homes in 17 multi-family buildings and collaborates with community residents and develops partnerships to create services and opportunities that celebrate the inherent dignity and potential of individuals and families. NSA owns and manages affordable housing and other commercial and community spaces; delivers an array of social and economic development programs and services; and has close ties to the neighborhood residents allowing them to effectively implement healthy food access programs and activities into their comprehensive community development work. New Settlement Apartments and LISC NYC are partnering to reshape the neighborhood food landscape, with a focus on youth and families, by

concurrently improving access to affordable healthy food and embedding interactive food education and nutrition promotion within New Settlement's programming and assets.

West Harlem Group Assistance (WHGA) - West Harlem

West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc. (WHGA), a community-based development corporation was established in 1971 to revitalize the under-invested West and Central Harlem communities riddled with dilapidated and abandoned buildings. Since 1971, WHGA has developed 1,037 units of affordable housing and owns 43,676 square feet of commercial space in West Harlem. WHGA owns and manages affordable housing and other commercial and community spaces; delivers an array of social and economic development programs and services; and has close ties to the neighborhood residents, allowing the organization to effectively infuse healthy food access programs and activities into their comprehensive community development work. In 2014, with the support of LISC NYC, WHGA redeveloped one of their vacant storefronts on Lenox Avenue now called the West Harlem Community Healthy Food Hub, serving as a portal to improve access to healthy food and advance educational prospects related to health and nutrition for seniors, youth, families, and adults.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) – New York City

LISC NYC's mission is to help resident-focused, community-based development organizations transform distressed communities and neighborhoods into healthy places to live, do business, work, and raise families. Over the last 34 years, LISC New York has invested approximately \$2.3 billion in more than 75 New York City community development corporations and other local, nonprofit organizations. With our support, these organizations have developed over 34,600 affordable homes and more than 2.3 million sq. ft. of community and commercial space. For CfHF, LISC NYC is providing technical assistance and program management support; leveraging government and private funding; organizing trainings; creating cross-sector partnerships; completing a comprehensive program evaluation with the NYC Food Policy Center; and documenting the program model through neighborhood stories and media outlets.





MAIN OFFICE: 39 Broadway, 10th fl, New York, NY 10006, T: 212.566.7855 F: 212.566.1463
WAREHOUSE: Hunts Point Co-op Market, 355 Food Ctr Dr, Bronx, NY 10474, T: 718.991.4300, F: 718.893.3442

Testimony prepared by

Rachel Sabella

for the

Committee on General Welfare

on

Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget

March 17, 2015

on behalf of

Food Bank For New York City

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon Chairman Levin and member of the City Council's General Welfare Committee. My name is Rachel Sabella and I am the Director of Government Relations at Food Bank For New York City. Food Bank appreciates the opportunity to present testimony today to the City Council about the Preliminary Budget for the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) for Fiscal Year 2016.

First, Food Bank For New York City thanks the City Council for your continued commitment to addressing the issue of hunger and ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to affordable, nutritious food. The City Council has long played a leadership role in this arena, and we are pleased to see continued strong leadership on anti-hunger initiatives this past year. The Council's instrumental role in implementing universal free school meals in middle schools, increasing enrollment of eligible households in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), expanding the in-classroom School Breakfast Program, as well as increasing funding

for emergency food are especially appreciated. The Council's two citywide food drives this year have helped raise awareness and support about need among our neighbors.

For more than 30 years, Food Bank For New York City has been the city's major hunger-relief organization, working to end food poverty throughout the five boroughs. Nearly one in five New York City residents relies on our programs and services. Through our network of more than 1,000 charities and schools citywide, Food Bank provides food for more than 63 million free meals for New Yorkers in need. Food Bank For New York City's income support services, including SNAP enrollment and free tax assistance for the working poor, put more than \$100 million each year into the pockets of New Yorkers, helping them to afford food and achieve greater dignity and independence. In addition, Food Bank's nutrition education programs and services empower more than 275,000 children, teens and adults to sustain a healthy diet on a low budget. Working toward long-term solutions to food poverty, Food Bank develops policy and conducts research to inform community and government efforts.

My testimony today will focus on hunger in New York City and the importance of increased funding in the FY 2016 New York City budget and policy to work towards ending hunger.

NEW YORK CITY'S MEAL GAP: 250 MILLION

SNAP is our nation's first line of defense against hunger. A federal entitlement program, SNAP now provides food assistance to 46.5 million Americans.¹ Available to any household that meets the eligibility criteria (most importantly, income and immigration status), SNAP is *countercyclical*, meaning when the economy shrinks, SNAP has the flexibility to grow to meet rising need.

More than 1.7 million New York City residents (almost one in five) currently rely on SNAP to keep food on the table, with a monthly household benefit that has been averaging approximately \$260 since November of 2013's SNAP cut – a reduction of approximately \$18 per month.²

Despite SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs (like school meals, and the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC), **nearly 1.4 million New Yorkers rely on emergency food³ – evidence that a meal gap remains.**

The meal gap represents the translation into meals of the financial resources needed by food-insecure households to secure an adequate diet year-round. Commissioned by Feeding America and based on the federal government's annual food insecurity measure, the meal gap is the most sophisticated food insecurity metric available, enabling sub-county analysis and accounting for variations in local grocery costs. We were pleased to see the meal gap adopted by the Administration as the measure of food insecurity included in the City's annual food metrics report, in compliance with Local Law 133 of 2013. **New York City's meal gap (as of 2012, the most recent year for which data is available) is 250 million meals.**⁴ In terms of a borough breakdown, the meal gap for:

¹ United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). July 2014.

² Food Bank For New York City analysis of SNAP participation and benefit data reported by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) as of September 2014.

³ *Hunger's New Normal: Redefining Emergency in Post-Recession New York City*. Food Bank For New York City. October 2013.

⁴ Gunderson, C., E. Engelhard, A. Satoh, & E. Waxman. *Map the Meal Gap 2014: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity at the County Level*. Feeding America, 2014.

- the Bronx is 53 million
- Brooklyn is 88 million
- Manhattan is 45 million
- Queens is 55 million
- Staten Island is 8.6 million

As an attachment to my testimony, you will find a visual representation of the meal gap by City Council district. I look forward to meeting with individual Council Members to discuss the meal gap in your district and ways we can work together to ultimately eliminate it.

Emergency food, our last line of defense against hunger, is not sufficient to meet this need. When cash, benefits and the generosity of family and friends have been exhausted, the emergency food network is the resource of last resort for those struggling to keep food on the table. Yet even before SNAP benefits were cut, this network, which relies heavily on unpaid volunteers to do its work, was having a hard time meeting heightened levels of need that persisted past the end of the recession.⁵ Between 2007 and 2012, 250 food pantries and soup kitchens across the five boroughs have closed their doors, leaving those remaining to confront elevated need.⁶

FACTS ABOUT EMERGENCY FOOD

As referenced earlier, in November of 2013, sweeping cuts were made to the federal SNAP program. Food Bank For New York City surveyed its member food pantries and soup kitchens, and found that in the month benefits were reduced, more than three quarters of emergency food programs reported increases in need, and nearly half reported running out of food.⁷

Nearly a year later, a follow-up survey found that four out of five food pantries and soup kitchens continue to see increased visitor traffic, but that food shortages are even more widespread. In September 2014:

- **60 percent of food pantries and soup kitchens reported running out of food**, or particular types of food needed for complete pantry bags or meals – an increase of 12 percentage points from November 2013;
- **37 percent of food pantries and soup kitchens reported having to turn people away** due to food shortages – an increase of 11 percentage points from November 2013; and
- **61 percent of food pantries reported reducing the number of meals provided in their pantry bags** – an increase of 38 percentage points from November 2013.⁸

These statistics speak to a profound insufficiency of food in the emergency food supply, and the acute operational stress under which food pantries and soup kitchens have been functioning since the cuts. It is likely that the results we found about need at emergency food providers in

⁵ By economists' definitions, the recession, which began in December 2007, ended in June 2009.

⁶ *Serving under Stress Post-Recession: The State of Food Pantries & Soup Kitchens Today*. (2012). Food Bank For New York City.

⁷ "Visitor Traffic Increases at Emergency Food Providers Post-SNAP Cuts." Food Bank For New York City. January 2014.

⁸ "The Hunger Cliff, One Year Later: 56 Million Meals Lost; Need for Emergency Food Remains High." Food Bank For New York City. Nov. 2014.

November 2013 underestimated the true severity of the impact of the SNAP cuts due to two factors: first, November is a month when food donations peak, meaning more food was available at food pantries and soup kitchens than in an average month; and second, a class action settlement that provided retroactive benefits to wrongfully sanctioned households resulted in tens of millions of dollars in additional SNAP benefits issued to New York City residents that month. The survey findings from September 2014, by contrast, reflect neither holiday giving nor other special circumstances.

It is critical to know who relies on emergency food programs –

- An estimated 1.4 million New York City residents rely on emergency food programs, including soup kitchens and food pantries, each year.
- Approximately 339,000 New York City children or approximately one out of every five, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 604,770 New York City adult women, or approximately one out of every six, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 204,000 New York City seniors, or approximately one out of every five, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 70,000 New York City veterans, or approximately three out of every ten, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries⁹.

BUDGET PRIORITIES TO ENSURE NO NEW YORKER GOES HUNGRY

No New Yorker should go hungry: access to adequate, nutritious food is a fundamental human right. If New York City is serious about lifting the floor for all New Yorkers, let us at least set the threshold there. Thankfully, the policies and programs to realize this core principle are already in existence, and with the collective commitment of leaders across sectors, we can make this happen. While cuts to SNAP have intensified the challenge, policy and budget options well within the authority and discretion of City government can considerably improve the lives of New Yorkers who struggle to afford food.

New York City's anti-hunger resources – primarily those that bolster SNAP enrollment and fortify our emergency food system – are more vital than ever. Food Bank For New York City offers these recommendations on behalf of the emergency food network in a spirit of partnership. It is our hope this spirit will be met by constructive engagement by the City Council and the Administration. We are strongest and most effective when we take on hunger together. Closing our City's 250 million meal gap will require a thoughtful and aggressive strategy that uses every resource available. With millions of meals already lost, New York City's anti-hunger resources – primarily those that bolster SNAP enrollment and fortify our emergency food system – will be more vital than ever.

EMERGENCY FOOD

New York City's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) is a major source of food for our city's emergency food network. EFAP plays an especially important role because it provides a steady year-round supply of nutritious food for the approximately 500 food pantries and soup kitchens that participate. EFAP provides food from all five food groups, and all EFAP food meets the City's rigorous nutrition standards. In addition, EFAP is an important source of kosher food.

⁹ *Hunger's New Normal: Redefining Emergency in Post-Recession New York City*. Food Bank For New York City. October 2013.

The now-baselined funding of the City Council initiative that supplemented EFAP by \$1.3 million for food represents the first increase to baseline food funding for EFAP since 2009. This baseline increase effectively lifts the value of the program's funding to pre-recession levels, as it is comparable to increases in food costs since 2007.¹⁰ Poverty and food insecurity, however, remain entrenched at high levels, and food pantries continue to fall short of providing the standard nine meals per person in a pantry bag. It is vital to the ability of the emergency food network to address New Yorkers' immediate food needs to ensure that EFAP's food dollars are spent in a way that maximizes their purchasing power.

The baselined funding also reverses a major improvement to the program. Prior to the baselining of EFAP funds, the program operated in two distinct ways – the baseline funding for food was ordered by HRA (through DCAS) to cover a six-month period for EFAP providers. This food is shelf-stable and agencies were not given a choice as to what food they received. During the second half of the year, the City Council Initiative funding enabled EFAP agencies to choose which food options they could order through Food Bank's wholesale purchasing program. This allowed for agencies to choose which options would best serve their clients' needs. It is our understanding that since funding for the entire program has been baselined, the program will no longer operate with any choices for EFAP providers.

- We ask that EFAP baseline food funding increase to \$14.4 million in order to account for rising poverty and food costs, as well as adjust for the current inadequacy of the food supply, which only allows food pantries to provide 5.8 meals in a typical pantry bag – far short of New York State's nine-meal standard.
- We ask that HRA change the structure of the EFAP program so that agencies can have choice for all 12 months of the year. Choice allows them to better serve clients' needs.

SNAP

While SNAP cuts have reduced the benefit amounts of those already participating, it remains of utmost importance to ensure that eligible New Yorkers who are not enrolled in the program avail themselves of the benefit – particularly emergency food participants. Even at the currently reduced benefit amounts, SNAP benefits provide our city more meals in two months than the entire emergency food system distributes in a year.

- We encourage HRA to take advantage of all available federal waivers and options that increase benefit amounts and reduce the burden on applicants and HRA staff. We applaud HRA for having taken an important step last year in requesting (and receiving) the federal waiver that removes time limits on Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs); we look forward to working with HRA on continuing to improve SNAP access for seniors, students, working parents and others.
- We encourage HRA to ensure SNAP outreach materials are incorporated into outreach for other programs and services targeted to likely eligible populations – like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

¹⁰ Food Bank For New York City analysis of Consumer Price Index data for the NY metropolitan area from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Dec. 2007-Oct. 2014.

COUNCIL INITIATIVES

In the FY2015 New York City budget, the Council included funding for key initiatives and programs that are designed to help New Yorkers struggling to make ends meet. We urge you to continue to prioritize funding for the following initiatives during the FY2016 budget negotiations:

- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Assistance Program.** Since 2010, the New York City Council has partnered with Food Bank For New York City on our Tax Assistance Program, which provides free income tax assistance services for low-income working individuals and families, ensuring they receive the full refunds and credits to which they are entitled. In addition, we are also able to connect tax filers with SNAP benefits and financial coaching.
- **Food Pantries and Technical Assistance (HRA).** This critical, existing Council initiative supports funding to food pantries city-wide through direct purchase of food and for capacity expansion efforts at EFAP pantries through Food Bank For NYC. Capacity expansion efforts would be through the Tiered Engagement Network (TEN), an approach developed by Food Bank that utilizes neighborhood-level partnerships among the network of Emergency Food Programs to increase access to food, public benefits and other vital social services and information to reduce hunger and poverty.

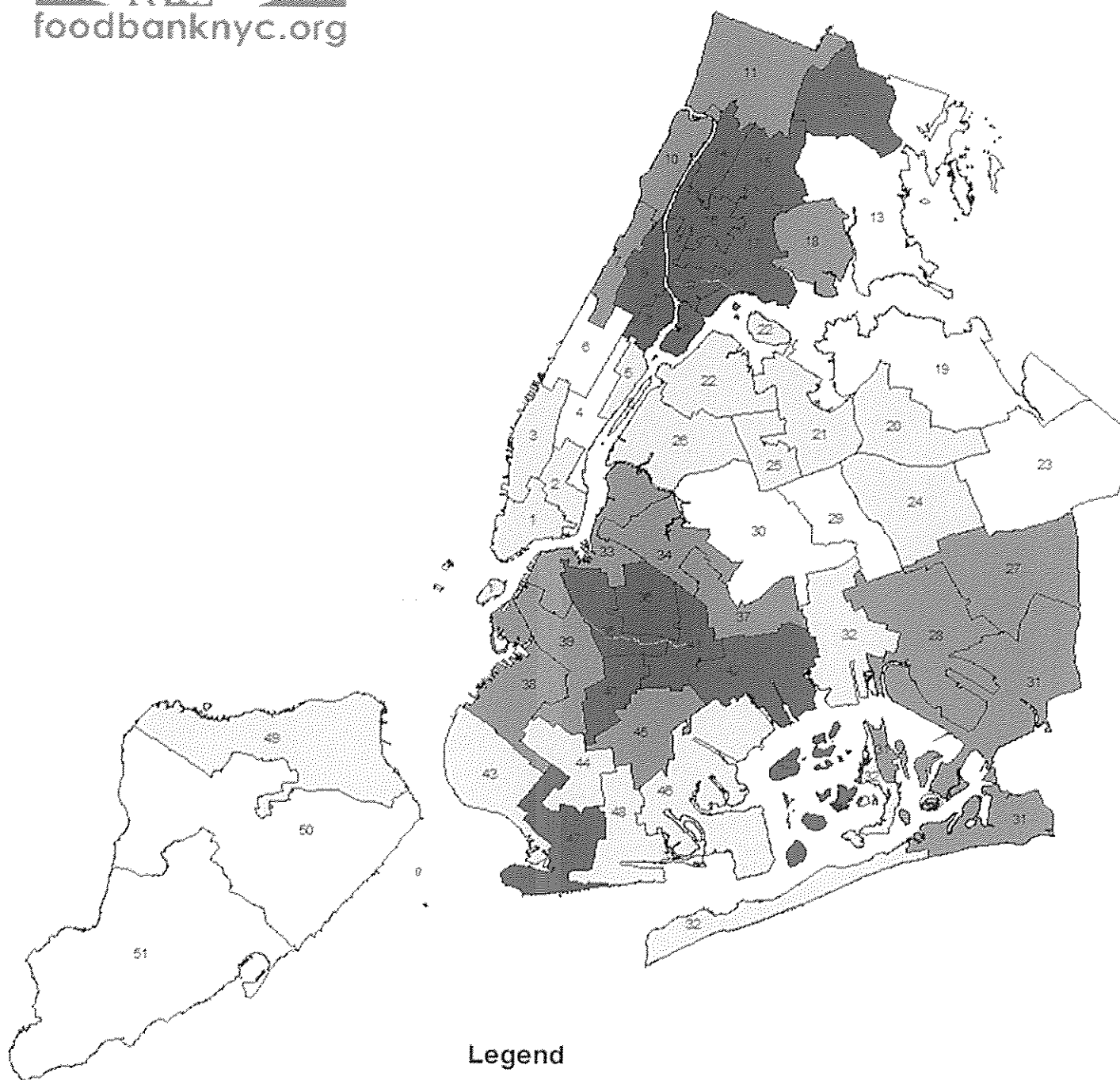
CONCLUSIONS

Over the last year, the Administration and the City Council have expressed a deep commitment to helping New Yorkers in need. In the wake of the worst economic downturn in generations and an unprecedented cut to our country's deepest investment in preventing hunger, local leadership has never been more important. This is our City's moment to come together as a united front to show its commitment to the principle that no New Yorker should lack access to an affordable, nutritious diet. Let us set a goal of closing New York City's widening meal gap and becoming the first city in the country to end food poverty. Food Bank looks forward to working with together with the City Council and the Administration to develop the plan and ensure no New Yorker goes to bed hungry. Together we can do this.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.



Meal Gap by City Council District





www.CVHaction.org

Testimony for Human Resource Administration Preliminary Budget Hearing March 17, 2015

Good afternoon, I am a member leader of Community Voices Heard. We thank the Mayor, Commissioner and City Council for the announcement of the phase out of the Work Experience Program.

Students at CUNY have mostly been offered work study positions at \$10 an hour instead of WEP and they are thrilled. Some are finding places that they can work that will also supplement their educational goals.

We are glad the Department of Education, Fire and Aging have stopped taking in WEP workers, but we would like to see a pathway to those jobs for the lowest income New Yorkers.

Parks Department has also stopped accepting WEP. Parks has the Parks Opportunity Program and we are glad they are working to improve the training provided in the Program. One career pathway from Parks could be to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection positions which will be hiring thousands of people to maintain new greenways and stormwater management systems.

While this progress is good, according to HRA own website, every week, 11,854 people are being mandated to a WEP assignment.

We know that Commissioner Banks has a plan to create a clerical training program at HRA, but there are still close to 500 WEP workers there.

There has been an increase in people assigned to the Department of Sanitation. While some people who were doing WEP assignments were told about a test to apply for a permanent position, many were not aware of this or do not want to work in Sanitation. The Department of Sanitation needs a plan for how to shift from relying on over 1,000 unpaid workers.

New York City (main office) 115 East 106th St., 3rd Floor New York, NY 10029 Tel: 212-860-6001 Fax: 212-996-9481	Westchester County 28 N Broadway, 2nd Floor Yonkers, NY 10701 Tel: 914-751-2641 Fax: 914-751-2642	Orange County 98 Grand Street Basement Level Newburgh, NY 12550 Tel: 845-562-2020 Fax: 845-562-2030	Dutchess County 29 North Hamilton St., Suite L03 Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 Tel: 845-790-5945 Fax: 845-790-5946
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The MTA and DCAS are the other two agencies with the largest number of WEP workers. DCAS Commissioner said at a hearing a couple of weeks ago that she is waiting for HRA before making a plan. There are almost 1,000 WEP workers at her agency. There needs to be a plan of how to replace those workers with paid positions and the people who have been doing the work deserve a chance at those jobs.

MTA in the past has hired a small number of the WEP workers but many people have worked cleaning trains and platforms without pay believing that after sometimes years they will be hired. Some discovered that missing one day for being sick or a mistake by HRA can cost that chance when the reality is they were not going to be hired.

This exploitation must stop. HRA could and should stop sending people to WEP assignments tomorrow. Yes, they must create new systems but there will be more pressure on these agencies relying on the workers if they were not there. And people needing help could be reassessed to determine what would actually help them obtain permanent employment instead of being in the exploitative, waste of time program of WEP. Change is coming but how long must we wait? Thank you.

Work Experience Program (WEP) Participants Assigned Mayor's Management Report -

HRA Weekly Cash Assistance Caseload Engagement Status
HRA Weekly Family Assistance Caseload Engagement Status

9,494
2,360

WEP Worker Total

11,854

	Actual					FY14	FY15
	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13		
New York City Police Department	167	247	231	168	254	232	238
Fire Department	49	16	23	3	1	11	0
Department of Sanitation	1,171	1,852	1,727	830	1,346	870	1,206
Department of Parks & Recreation	542	59	87	787	688	115	25
Department of Health & Mental Hygiene	188	293	38	113	94	114	89
Human Resources Administration	627	663	1,213	901	547	563	484
Administration for Children's Services	64	76	143	96	73	110	68
Department for the Aging	799	566	795	704	63	23	0
Department of Education	139	238	296	210	115	126	29
Department of Transportation	85	199	78	67	27	36	37
Department of Housing Preservation & Development	211	382	260	234	162	134	142
Department of Citywide Administrative Services	838	1,246	1,278	960	930	771	881
City University of New York	338	417	640	719	624	678	558
Board of Elections	167	247	231	168	254		
TOTAL	5,385	6,501	7,040	5,960	5,178	3783	3,757

* Information regarding the additional 5,000 NYC WEP workers' placements is
They are housed in the MTA and non-profit organizations.

NOTE! According to the OTDA 2013 Legislative Report, from July 2012 to June 2013 there were
23,856 WEP workers (12,756 in NYC and 10,608 across the rest of the state).
As of June 2014 22,986 WEP Workers Total across the State and 12,693 in NYC



www.CVHaction.org

Testimony for Human Resource Administration Preliminary Budget Hearing March 17, 2015

Good Afternoon Chairman Levin and members of the Committee on General Welfare. My name is Joseph Mpa of Community Voices Heard. Thank you for caring and speaking on behalf of so many who never seem to be heard, but sometimes feel the greatest amount of pain, discomfort and sense of hopelessness. On September 10th, 2014 at 2:28 PM the City Council voted in favor of Resolution 257-A which supported legislation to prohibit Work Experience Programs in New York City. Subsequently the Commissioner of HRA Mr. Steven Banks announced on October 1, 2014 in his employment plan, his intent to phase out WEP. Certainly these dates can be considered historical by those who have been personally humiliated, exploited, disillusioned and further trapped in an endless cycle of poverty.

However at this moment and at this critical time we are confronted with the opportunity to influence, to change and to bring about something that can immediately affect the lives of thousands and ultimately lay the groundwork for creating the steps necessary to alter communities and a consciousness of the sense of loss, of dignity and of hope.

To provide for one's family, one's self and to be a contributing member in good standing to society reflects the inner most desire of so many, immigrants, the poor and the middle class who long for the freedom and the opportunity to stand where others have stood and to become self-sufficient, educated, healthy and prosperous. A chance to provide for their loved ones, and to be part of something greater than themselves. Every man, woman and child who seeks not to harm but to help, not to injure but to heal and not to steal but to give deserves this opportunity. It speaks to the fabric of this society which must be woven by the creative will, desire, energy and commitment of the people who live work and play here.

Every city agency must be part of this solution which addresses the problems of poverty, homelessness, disease, hunger, unemployment, mass incarceration, injustice, prejudice and discrimination. We need a holistic approach to the curse of Income Inequality.

New York City (main office)	Westchester County	Orange County	Dutchess County
115 East 106th St., 3rd Floor New York, NY 10029 Tel: 212-860-6001 Fax: 212-996-9481	28 N Broadway, 2nd Floor Yonkers, NY 10701 Tel: 914-751-2641 Fax: 914-751-2642	98 Grand Street Basement Level Newburgh, NY 12550 Tel: 845-562-2020 Fax: 845-562-2030	29 North Hamilton St., Suite L03 Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 Tel: 845-790-5945 Fax: 845-790-5946

We need good paying jobs, real and relevant training programs as well as an education that not only teaches us how to read, write and count, but to think, create, invent and explore. We must begin to look out for each other, to have each other's back.

We should create pathways in city agencies for people who are willing and capable of doing the work needed and have already proven it with years of nonpaying WEP assignments. People who were good enough to labor for free at DCAS, Sanitation, MTA and multiple other City Agencies should have access to those positions.

We need the City to support Worker Cooperatives, Small Businesses, Entrepreneurial Activities, and Job Training Programs that lead to meaningful employment. The City can use its' billions of dollars of purchasing power to help provide incentives and leverage of corporations and unions to help with apprenticeships and entry level employment openings or job creation. The needs of the city are great, infrastructure, security, health and recreation and educational support, are all legitimate services which can be filled by a willing, trained and dedicated work force.

A true pathway to employment is an investment in people, an investment in the future and one of the best revenue generating policies we can have. What we put out will be returned tenfold in finances and in the attitude and spirit of those who have been wronged. We believe change is possible, thank you.

Children & Families in NYC Homeless System

In the past several months, the number of homeless families in the New York City shelter system has hit record highs, with nearly 12,000 families currently spending a night in a homeless shelter. While the family shelter census is beginning to show a slight decline, large numbers of homeless families continue to spend an average of more than 12 months in shelter.

Each night, more than 24,000 children and youth will call a shelter home during critical stages of their development and growth. To meet the complex needs of these homeless children and their families and to ensure positive outcomes, providers must offer interventions that are grounded in evidence, are tailored to the individual needs of families, and can be evaluated for their effectiveness.

A Coalition to Better Serve Children & Families in Shelter

Four leading New York City non-profit social service providers – BronxWorks, CAMBA, Henry Street Settlement, Win and Homeless Services United, the coalition of the non-profit providers – have formed a coalition to advocate for the funding necessary to provide specialized services that produce proven results for homeless families and children.

Combined, the four providers serve more than 2,000 families and over 4,000 children and youth across New York City.

Coalition Capacity by Borough	
<i>Borough</i>	<i>Total Capacity to Serve Families by Coalition Members</i>
Brooklyn	1,220
Bronx	411
Manhattan	566
Queens	117
Total	2,314 families

Together, the providers are committed to improving outcomes for the City's most vulnerable children and families, by providing specialized services and supports – both during families' stay in shelter and beyond.

We urge the Council to support a \$2.5 million New Citywide Initiative to Better Serve Children and Families in Shelter by:

- ✓ Incorporating trauma-informed care into shelter services to build resiliency among children and youth
- ✓ Increasing staff capacity on proven, evidenced-based practices to better meet the needs of clients
- ✓ Creating an aftercare program to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency by providing comprehensive case management, employment, financial counseling, crisis intervention, and other family supports to reduce recidivism after shelter exit
- ✓ Using evidence-based strategies that prevent maltreatment in high-risk cases to protect child well-being and development



Who We Are:

BronxWorks helps individuals and families improve their economic and social well-being. From toddlers to seniors, Bronxworks feeds, shelters, teaches, and supports its neighbors to build a stronger community.

CAMBA is a non-profit agency that connects people with opportunities to enhance their quality of life.

Henry Street Settlement opens doors of opportunity to enrich lives and enhance human progress for Lower East Side residents and other New Yorkers through social services, arts and healthcare programs.

Win transforms lives of New York City homeless women and their children by providing a holistic solution of safe housing, critical services and ground-breaking programs they need to succeed on their own – so the women can regain their independence and their children can look forward to a brighter future.

Homeless Services United is a coalition of non-profit agencies serving homeless and at-risk adults and families in New York City. HSU provides advocacy, information, and training to member agencies to expand their capacity to deliver high-quality services. HSU advocates for expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers. Homeless Services United promotes effective solutions to end the crisis of homelessness in New York City.



DHS

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

Name: (PLEASE PRINT) FAYSA S. RODRIGUEZ + JEREMY KELS

Address: _____

I represent: coalition: Bxworks, CAMBA, Henry St. Self

Address: WIN + HSY

HRA

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: (PLEASE PRINT) MICHAEL HENSE

Address: 30 THIRD AV BKLYN NY 11217

I represent: 33 DIST CONSTITUENT

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/2015

Name: (PLEASE PRINT) Shari Grigg

Address: 534 TH. CH. AVE

I represent: Foster Care Alliance

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK *Public*

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christy PARQUE

Address: _____

I represent: Homeless Services United

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Public

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anthony Turner

Address: 563 East 91st Street

I represent: You Gotta Believe!

Address: 3114 Mermaid Avenue

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Public

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: MARCH 17th 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: YAKIMA E. PENA

Address: 2966 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208

I represent: COMMUNITY FOR HEALTHY FOOD - CHLDC

Address: 625 Jamaica Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11208

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Steven Banks

Address: 4 WTC 42nd Fl.

I represent: Human Resources Administration

Address: 4 WTC, 42nd Fl.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeff Foreman

Address: _____

I represent: Care for the Homeless

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Anti-Hunger/
EFAP

Public

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Sabella

Address: Food Bank for NYC

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Jackson

Address: _____

I represent: Bronx Defenders, client

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mary Anne Yang

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Defenders

Address: _____

*Funding for
foster care
adoption*

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Public

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 03/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gretchen Beidl

Address: 160 W. 86th St, Apt 1, NYC

I represent: You Gotta Believe - adoption

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gilbert TAYLOR

Address: 33 BEACON STREET

I represent: DHS

Address: 33 BEACON STREET

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

PUBLIC

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RICHARD LEWIS - CHAIR Housing +

Address: HUMAN SERVICES COMMUNITY

I represent: COMMUNITY BOARDED 12, MANHATTAN

Address: 530 W. 166th ST NYC 10032

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1116 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 03/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: M. Linda Simmons

Address: 127 19 Boddell Street

I represent: CVII

Address: 115 E. 106th ST NY

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

Public

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 3/17/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kesha Sha Kimono Veras

Address: 963 Prospect Ave Bronx, NY

I represent: The Electric Camp & All Homeless People

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Public

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Waldorf

Address: 768 Forest

I represent: ASEP

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Public

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Levy or Joel Berg

Address: 150 74th St Brooklyn NY or 1 Plaza West Brooklyn NY

I represent: NYC Coalition Against Hunger

Address: 50 Broad St New York NY

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

PUBLIC

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

to testify on
panel w/Christy
Parque

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeff Foreman

Address: 30 E. 33rd Street NY NY 10016

I represent: Care for the Homeless

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: March 17, 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joseph M. Mpa

Address: 260 Audubon Ave.

I represent: Community Voices Heard

Address: 115 East 106th St.

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susan Nuccio

Address: 115 East 106th St.

I represent: ACACS

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Susan Nuccio (PLEASE PRINT)
Jill Krauss

Address: ACS

I represent: ACS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Commissioner Gladys Carron (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: ACS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/2015

Name: Ann Valdez (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 3178 Bayview Ave

I represent: Community Voices Heard

Address: 115 East 106th St

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

Public

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Keyel

Address: Education & Welfare

I represent: Local 372

Address: 125 Barclay Street

Public

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Trina Prior

Address: Education & Welfare

I represent: Local 372

Address: 125 Barclay Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Re: ACS ☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Budget

Date: 3.15.17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ~~Anna~~ Anna Lynch

Address: 207 Kings Borough 3rd Walk Brooklyn N.Y

I represent: myself & other foster you

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Public

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarah Fajardo

Address: §

I represent: Coalition for Asian American Children

Address: re: cultural sensitivity + Families
ACS

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Public

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Ellenbogen (Discuss City Council budget)

Address: _____

I represent: The Center for Court Innovation

Address: 520 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Public

Social services
COLA

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 03/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Ny

Address: 1739 79 St Brooklyn NY 11214

I represent: Human Services Council of New York

Address: _____

PUBLIC

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gregory Brender

Address: _____

I represent: United Neighborhood Houses

Address: ACS/early childhood education

THE COUNCIL PUBLIC THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eric Munson

Address: _____

I represent: Met Council

Address: to speak regarding Budget Request
and Services impacted

PUBLIC

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeremy Hoffman Budget RE ACS

Address: 52 Bluff N+1 Ch. 11/12/13

I represent: UFT

Address: _____

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

PUBLIC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Sandra Killeff (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 80 E. 110th St Ste 1E

I represent: Child Welfare Organization

Address: _____

Public

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mallory Nugent

Address: 281 Park Ave South

I represent: Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Address: 281 Park Ave South

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JESSICA MARCUS

Address: 177 LIVINGSTON ST.

I represent: BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Address: _____

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

Sexual
Assault
Initiative

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lynn Frederick Hawley

Address: Executive Director

I represent: Mt Sinai Sexual Assault & Violence

Address: 1 Gustave Levy Plaz Intervention
Box 1670, NY, NY 10029

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gladys Carrion, Esq., Commissioner

Address: 150 William Street

I represent: NYC Administration for Children's Svcs.

Address: 150 William St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susan Nuccio, DC

Address: 150 W. William St

I represent: NYC ACS

Address: 150 William Street

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Public
child care
child welfare

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephanie Gendell

Address: _____

I represent: Citizens' Committee for Children

Address: _____

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

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lula Urgohart

Address: 410 W. 147 St, NYC 10031

I represent: Dept of Homeless Services

Address: 33 Beaver St, NYC 1003

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donald Broosen

Address: 33 Beaver Street

I represent: NYC DHS

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/17/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Diana Rodde

Address: 1 River Place 1901 NY NY 10036

I represent: DHS

Address: 33 Beaver

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