

City Council Budget and Oversight Hearing on the
FY 2020 Preliminary Budget

Testimony given by
Jacques Jiha, Ph.D., Commissioner

March 27, 2019

Good morning. Thank you, Chair Dromm and the members of the Finance Committee, for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Jacques Jiha, and I am the commissioner of the New York City Department of Finance. I am joined today by First Deputy Commissioner Michael Hyman.

I'll begin by providing you with an update on the city's financial position.

Through February, the city's revenue totaled \$46.5 billion, which represents a 1.2 percent increase over last year—well below the Office of Management and Budget's fiscal year growth forecast of 2.6%.

This under-performance has been driven by weakness in the personal income tax, especially in the area of estimated payments, and a softness in the unincorporated business tax.

In light of these weaknesses and the recent inversion of the yield curve which, if continued, could signal a recession, we should approach the FY20 executive budget and financial plan with caution. We will continue to closely monitor tax collections, and we will brief the Council as warranted.

The past four years have been a transformative period for the Department of Finance.

Increasingly, we have been relying on sophisticated data analytics and artificial intelligence, in particular cognitive and machine learning, in order to mitigate operational risks, reduce inefficiencies and costs, and make better decisions. Along the way, we have conducted our business in accordance with the agency's four key pillars: fairness, efficiency, transparency, and exceptional customer service.

Like any business, cities that do not provide good service at competitive prices will lose customers. In our case, this means residents, businesses, and visitors—and the revenue they generate.

City agencies cannot settle for providing merely adequate service. Our customers are also customers of Apple, American Express, Chase Bank, and many other private companies which are providing state-of-the-art products and services. They have grown accustomed to a certain level of service, and they will not accept anything less. Therefore, our services must be on par with the services they receive from private sector businesses.

When a customer walks into our business centers, they expect the same treatment they receive at a bank branch. They don't want to wait a long time to conduct a transaction. That's why we re-engineered our operations to reduce wait times at our business centers from 45 minutes to five minutes four years ago.

When customers must pay their parking tickets or property taxes, they expect the same level of service and convenience they receive from major retailers, banks, and other businesses. That's why we have introduced new payment methods such as mobile apps and Apple Pay and have

conveniently enabled our customers to pay their parking tickets at any CVS or 7-Eleven store around the country.

Put simply, just as private sector firms use big data and technology to provide excellent services, we must do the same.

At the Department of Finance, we are on the cutting edge. The examples of our data-driven and customer-centric approach are numerous. I'd like to share just a few with you in the time that we have today.

First, the process by which the Department of Finance values properties has become heavily driven by technology and big data. While we continue to inspect properties in person every three years as required by law, we are increasingly relying on technology to do the majority of inspections.

In the last two years, we have increased the number of properties that we have checked for anomalies, and have increased assessments by adding missed construction and fixing incorrect square footage data and incorrect building classifications.

More importantly, our assessors are now trained in applications where GIS and imagery are the underlying technologies. They appreciate the power of these new capabilities and how they have made their data-collection task more efficient. For example, our assessors were able to visit approximately 27,000 parcels in one five-month period in 2016, before the adoption of streetscape technology. For the same period in 2018, they reviewed about 80,000 parcels: about 67,000 via desktop review, and the rest through field visits.

The assessment process has also benefitted significantly from a Department of Finance initiative that we refer to as cross-agency data sharing. The purpose of this initiative is to create a collaborative culture among more than twenty participating city agencies.

The property valuations team is sharing data with nine other city agencies, including the Department of Buildings and the Department of City Planning. As a result, we can now obtain more timely Department of Buildings certificate of occupancy data to identify parcels with recently completed construction, resulting in an increase of more than \$40 million in the city's total assessed values and generating \$5 million in additional property taxes in FY20.

We are now moving into mass data collection of building characteristics using machine learning algorithms on Lidar (light detection and ranging) and imagery data, with the goal of capturing data on exterior building characteristics. Thus, assessors can focus on interior inspections of buildings (i.e. number of units, condition, alterations, etc.) and on the valuation of properties, particularly in growth areas.

Mass-data collection using Lidar and imagery will give New York City a database that all agencies can share, since many agencies use building characteristics such as footprint, square footage, number of stories and façade type. This wealth of data that is shared, accurate, and

updated on a regular basis, paired with data analytics, is the basis for building the smart cities of the future.

Clearly, good things happen when government agencies use and share data to make informed decisions. That is true not only in the area of property taxation, but also in law enforcement.

The New York City Sheriff's Office is very active in the areas of data sharing and technology. We are one of the few sheriff operations in the United States that integrates data from the courts and the police department to our service of court orders. For example, if we serve an order of protection and we know that the offender has an outstanding warrant with the court or is wanted by the NYPD, we will make the arrest on the spot. This is not a universal practice among law enforcement agencies nationwide—many will simply serve the orders and walk away.

You may also have heard about the recent tobacco bust performed by our Sheriff's Office. In January, the sheriff executed six arrest warrants and seven search warrants that resulted in the seizure of over 26,000 cartons of cigarettes in a single operation. The defendants were charged with conspiracy and the trafficking of over 400,000 cartons of untaxed cigarettes.

That operation was made possible by joint investigative work with the United States Postal Service and by the multiple data sources acquired by the Sheriff's Office concerning illegal tobacco trafficking.

In fact, we are investing in information technology to improve our law enforcement efforts across the board. The Sheriff's Office is preparing to deploy a new computer-aided dispatching system to provide deputies with more information in the field. And we are also using technology to protect New Yorkers who are vulnerable to deed fraud, a crime that has been described as an epidemic in the city.

The Department of Finance has already implemented a system to inform homeowners whenever a document is recorded against their property, so that they can report any suspicious activity. Now, we are turning our focus to prevention by acquiring optical character recognition and artificial intelligence capabilities that will make property-related records more accurate and more easily searchable.

This, in turn, will make it easier for the city register's office and the sheriff to spot suspicious activity and track the connections between perpetrators of fraud and their accomplices. Our objective is to use machine learning to detect patterns of illegal activity and stop deed fraud before it starts.

We have already seen the benefit of machine learning in other areas of the agency. As we speak, a very sharp team of highly trained economists and statisticians is working to make sure that the city's businesses pay what they owe—not one penny more, and not one penny less.

The Data Intelligence Group has developed more than 200 models to identify potential business tax audit candidates. These models include predictive econometric algorithms which identify

common characteristics of past audit subjects in order to find other candidates with similar characteristics.

The learning comes in when the results of the audits are then fed back into the models to make them smarter. Put simply, our models use auditors' insights as well as statistical algorithms across multiple sources of data to select better audit cases, which results in a significant increase in revenue for the city. Since 2014, our annual audit revenues have increased to more than \$1.3 billion.

Our collections effort has also benefited from new technology and process re-engineering. As a result of the new business tax system, business tax judgments increased to \$225 million in FY17 and close to \$200 million last year after averaging about \$70 million dollars each year from FY09 to FY15.

On the other side of the coin, we are also making sure that business owners receive the refunds that they deserve. The new system has made it easier for taxpayers to request, and DOF to process, business tax refunds. We issued \$600 million in refunds to businesses in 2018, compared to \$465 million in 2014.

So you see, we don't just come looking for customers when they owe us money; we also make sure they receive the refunds to which they are entitled.

Another example of our commitment to use technology to improve tax administration and become more customer-centric is the launch, earlier this month, of a new online property tax system which makes it much easier for customers to transact with DOF.

Property owners are now able to view important information such as their property tax bills and notice of property value and to pay their property taxes from the palm of their hand, on their mobile device.

With the new system, homeowners are now able to file online for money-saving property tax benefits such as the senior citizen and disabled homeowners' exemptions, and to view the status of their submitted applications. The streamlined electronic workflow of the new system allows us to process applications more efficiently and grant these benefits more quickly.

Our priority at the Department of Finance is to leverage technology and big data to provide a better experience for the customer and to provide more accurate tax assessments.

Before we close, there are a few other initiatives and developments of which I would like to make you aware, all of them geared toward better serving our customers.

First, working with the Council, we have just introduced a very important new program to help low-income property owners who are experiencing difficulties to pay their property tax. The Property Tax and Interest Deferral program, also known as PT AID, allows homeowners to defer a portion or, in some cases, all of their property tax payments to help them remain in their homes.

There are three payment plan options for owners with low or moderate incomes: one for seniors, one for homeowners facing extenuating circumstances such as death or loss of income due to unemployment, and one for homeowners who simply need to stretch out one year's worth of taxes over multiple years.

PT AID program participants will have their properties removed from the tax lien sale as long as they provide all required information within 45 days of the date of application.

We are excited about PT AID and expect that it will be an incredibly helpful program for the homeowners most in need of our assistance. We will work with Council members and other elected officials to get the word out in their districts.

Second, the Office of the Parking Summons Advocate was officially launched on December 21, 2018. The parking advocate's office is tasked with helping members of the public who are unable to resolve their parking and camera-violation tickets through normal DOF channels. The office also evaluates the parking system to identify and offer solutions to systemic issues.

The parking advocate and his team have been conducting a robust educational outreach effort, providing in-person assistance at our business centers and assisting customers over the phone and via email. To date, the Office of the Parking Summons Advocate has opened close to 600 cases and assisted with about 1,900 summonses. But the advocate's most important work is in educating people before they go to the judge, to help them understand their violations and prepare effective defenses.

We can be proud that New York is now one of only a few cities in the country where people who receive parking tickets have an advocate in city government.

And finally, this summer we will launch a new Department of Finance contact center which will provide customers with easy access to experts on business taxation and personal exemptions and benefits. With the contact center in place, we will be able to provide faster service for customers with sophisticated or highly specific tax questions.

This is critically important, as our system of taxation involves complicated issues that cannot be answered by 311 operators and comprises many different deadlines and documentation requirements.

Our customers require timely answers—and with the contact center, they will receive the information they need as quickly as possible.

In closing, the Department of Finance is hard at work on behalf of the city and our customers.

We are very grateful for your support, and as always, we welcome your input.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to take any questions.

Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 27,
2019

Department of Design and Construction
Lorraine Grillo, Commissioner

New York City
Council
Committee on
Finance

Good afternoon Chairman Dromm, Subcommittee Chair Gibson and members of the Committee. I am Lorraine Grillo and I am happy to appear before this Committee for the first time in my role as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction. I am joined today by members of DDC's leadership team.

DDC's Preliminary capital commitment plan continues to grow, with more than \$8 billion in new commitments over the next decade. As DDC continues to implement Mayor Bill de Blasio's equitable infrastructure investment strategy, we also have a mandate to find ways to design and deliver those projects more efficiently.

We have to change the way we do business to deliver more projects more reliably. We must manage capital projects better and more transparently, deliver them faster and keep costs down. We are changing how we do business and I'll share some of that process with you today.

Budget Overview

As the City's primary capital construction manager, DDC builds on behalf of more than 20 City agencies and receives capital funding from a number of sources.

The January Capital Commitment Plan contains nearly \$3.1 billion in new planned commitments in FY 2020 for DDC across its portfolio. This includes \$953 million for DEP projects; \$1.2 billion for DOT projects; \$81 million for library projects; and \$253 million for Sanitation projects.

The Commitment Plan also fully funds the East Side Coastal Resiliency project, adding an additional \$690 million in Fiscal Years 2020 through 2022, to allow us to complete this critical project on time.

DDC's Fiscal Year '20 operating budget is \$182 million. This includes \$136 million for Personnel Services, with a budgeted headcount of 1,489. The operating budget includes \$139.6 million in IFA funds, \$13.2 million in Federal funds, and \$29.5 million in City funds. The DDC budget also includes \$46.6 million for Other Than Personnel Services.

Capital Process Overview

DDC was created in 1996, and since then has completed almost 4,500 projects across the City worth nearly \$21 billion. In FY '18 alone – the last full year of data we have – DDC started design on 137 projects and construction on 143 more. We also completed design on 143 projects and construction on another 133. And we have hundreds of other projects cycling through DDC in every stage of execution.

DDC works in virtually every neighborhood in the City before the eyes of millions of New Yorkers. Some recent projects include:

- **The completely rebuilt Staten Island Zoo Aquarium, which we finished six months ahead of schedule, bringing new educational opportunities for students and young visitors;**
- **The new Far Rockaway Library, a game-changing public space, broke ground in November and will more than double library capacity in a neighborhood hit hard by Hurricane Sandy;**
- **In the Bronx near Pugsley Creek we are installing a massive, \$83 million sewer to divert overflow that was running into the Creek, helping restore and beautify the natural areas nearby;**
- **At the new Fowler Square in Fort Greene, DDC introduced 4,500 square feet of brand-new pedestrian space for the neighborhood; and**
- **In Washington Heights, we are upgrading century-old water mains on 50 blocks throughout the neighborhood.**

M/WBE Participation

I'm also proud to report that in October, Mayor de Blasio singled out DDC as the top performing agency in the City's M/WBE program. We've awarded more than \$1 billion to M/WBE firms since 2015. Between FY15 to FY18, our overall M/WBE utilization rate has increased from just under ten percent to 23 percent.

DDC continues working to improve our practices and develop vendor capacity so that we use and retain even more M/WBE businesses. Since Fiscal Year 2015, we have hosted 24 procurement events and attended more than 150 others, engaging more than 6,000 M/WBE firms.

But we know more needs to be done. This is why we are creating a new Business Development Unit that will reduce entry barriers for M/WBEs who want to do business with us.

Improving the Capital Construction Process

Our efforts to improve project delivery go much further. When I arrived at DDC last summer, it was clear I was working with an incredibly talented staff, but one held back by layers of policies and red-tape that we just don't have at the School Construction Authority.

So, I asked for an agency-wide review to look for ways that we can deliver projects to New Yorkers faster and more cost effectively.

This effort is more important than ever because the value of capital commitments coming to DDC has more than doubled over ten years, while our headcount has not increased to reflect this dramatic growth.

In January, with the assistance of our government and industry partners, we released DDC's "Strategic Blueprint for Construction Excellence," a far-reaching plan to transform how we deliver public works for New York.

The Blueprint offers a long list of common-sense fixes to:

- Streamline how DDC reviews and accepts projects and gets them into construction;**
- Enhance our project management to run projects more efficiently;**
- Raise performance standards for consultants and contractors using improved metrics, incentives, and enforcement tools; and**
- Modernize DDC's information technology and internal systems to standardize how we track, measure and manage projects.**

Let me offer just a few examples of this effort. A lot of work is going into all of them, and we are happy to offer more detail at the end of my testimony.

Let me start with project initiation: In the past, DDC accepted projects with questionable scopes and funding levels because there was no standard for what was an acceptable scope. That is just a formula for failure.

Today, DDC's Front End Planning unit carefully reviews sponsor proposals, all the factors that impact feasibility, and the cost and time it would actually take to execute. This back-and-forth has led to some hard conversations, but it has also produced clearer scopes and more realistic budget estimates, helping us avoid potential delays down the line. Front End Planning has proved so useful that we are working with OMB to expand it in this year's budget, so that ultimately all projects coming to DDC will be reviewed.

After a project has been through Front End Planning, we are taking a series of steps to shrink the time it takes to go from project submission to a Certificate to Proceed from 15 months to nine.

After the CP is issued and the project is underway, one of the great challenges we face is coordination with utilities whose infrastructure may interfere with our

projects. Moving it can add literally months or years to a project. With the Mayor's office, we are aggressively working with our utility partners to change this paradigm.

We have also created a Construction Allowance and Change Order Task Force. All the units involved in the change order process now sit together in one office, so that a request doesn't go from one desk to another for sign offs. The Task Force is already producing results.

This effort goes hand in hand with another major change: an Extra Work Allowance pilot program underway between the City and the Comptroller's office, to begin paying for project changes much more quickly. We're not there yet, but the pieces are in place internally, and with our oversights, to get payments out in three months – down from a YEAR – and keep work moving.

I've been talking a lot about process, but we are also developing the talent to execute it. We have started in-depth project management training to empower our managers to make quick decisions to keep projects moving forward.

We are also aggressively pushing for more project delivery options like Design-Build, that eliminate steps in the procurement process and ensure collaboration.

Albany has given us permission to use Design-Build for the Borough-Based Jails program, but imagine if we could use it for the next step street, museum, or library, like everywhere else in the country, saving money, and getting projects to New Yorkers faster and more cost effectively.

We are also dedicating significant resources to transforming our I.T. systems, helping us manage and track projects better and enabling staff and contractors to work more effectively in the field.

This is only a broad outline of a comprehensive, detailed suite of improvements underway at DDC. These efforts are already in the works and we will continue to advance them and track them aggressively.

I encourage you to read our Blueprint, which you should have received a copy of. This effort will require collaboration with the Council and other oversights, with our sponsor agencies, and the communities where we work, but it is well worth it and we are committed to seeing it through.

I am proud of the work DDC does to improve the quality of life of our City and we look forward to becoming an even better partner in this process. Thank you for the

opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you and your colleagues may have.



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Melanie Hartzog
Director

**TESTIMONY OF MELANIE HARTZOG, DIRECTOR, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK TO THE CITY
COUNCIL ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2020**

March 27, 2019

Thank you Speaker Johnson, Chair Dromm, Subcommittee Chair Gibson and council members, for the opportunity to provide an update to my testimony of March 6. I also want to thank Latonia McKinney and the Council Finance staff for their positive and collaborative approach to the budget.

I am joined at the table today by OMB First Deputy Director Kenneth Godiner. And our dedicated and hard-working OMB staff is here to assist me in answering questions.

At the release of the Preliminary Budget, the Mayor highlighted budget risks associated with the economy, the City's revenue forecast, and state budget issues. We still face these conditions - and additional risks that I will discuss shortly.

The first challenge we face is the possibility of a national economic slowdown that would pose a substantial threat to the City's financial plan. Our fiscal monitors agree.

Last week, the State Comptroller concluded that the "largest risk to the budget remains the potential for an economic setback during the financial plan period." He added that the "national economy appears more vulnerable in recent years."

The second risk we face is related to City revenue. We forecast Fiscal Year 2019 personal income tax to decline. While offset by gains in other tax revenue categories, the decline is causing our overall revenue growth to slow. An economic slowdown, or other condition, that leads to a substantial deviation in revenue expectations would threaten fiscal stability, and require us to take additional savings measures.

The third risk is related to state and federal budget actions. The State Executive Budget still contains nearly \$600 million in proposed cuts and cost shifts that impact the Budget over Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020.

This includes shifts of:

- \$300 million in education costs, and;
- \$125 million of State costs to the City for TANF financial assistance for families in need. This would shift the cost of cash assistance to the City and cut shelter rates.

The Executive Budget makes cuts of:

- \$59 million designated for healthcare services like reproductive health and child immunizations, and;
- \$13 million from programs that keep at-risk youth out of foster care and detention centers.

We are currently working with our partners in Albany to restore this funding, and the one-house budgets have been positive. But if these cuts and cost shifts are enacted, our fiscal stability will be at risk.

I would also like to highlight risks related to federal actions. The President released his proposed Federal Fiscal Year 2020 budget a week after my last appearance. It contains billions of dollars of cuts to vital City programs. While the President's budget reflects priorities that are at odds with the City's needs and is therefore a threat, we believe that it is unlikely to pass. We are working with the New York congressional delegation to advocate for budget actions in Washington that support our funding priorities.

In response to risks I outlined today, the Mayor announced a \$750 million savings plan at the Preliminary Budget presentation. We will achieve most of these savings by implementing the Administration's first PEG program and are actively working with the Agencies to help them reach mandatory PEG savings targets. The Executive Budget will reflect details, including programs affected and savings achieved.

This savings effort is on top of the \$1.6 billion in savings we achieved across Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020 in the two Financial Plan updates since Adoption and healthcare savings of \$1.6 billion in Fiscal Year 2020, and \$1.9 billion annually thereafter.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

And now, I look forward to taking your questions.



Asian American Federation

Testimony for New York City Council Budget Hearings on Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget

Committee on Finance

March 27, 2019

Thank you Chair Daniel Dromm and the Committee on Finance for the opportunity to testify. I'm Jo-Ann Yoo, executive director of the Asian American Federation (AAF).

The Asian population is the fastest-growing group in New York City, now representing at least 10% of residents in 26 out of 51 Council Districts. 1 in 4 Asians live in poverty in New York City, half have limited English ability, and more than 7 in 10 are immigrants. **Yet, despite rapid growth in the Asian community and the persistent demand for culturally competent services, only 1.4% of contract dollars from city social service agencies went to Asian-led, Asian-serving programs.**

Our goal is to see Asian New Yorkers, young and old, not only be safe and healthy in this City, but also empowered to contribute economically and politically. We respectfully request the Committee on Finance support the following efforts of the Asian American Federation:

Support immigrant-owned small businesses: Asian-owned small businesses are a major driver of economic development of the City. Yet, based on our experience working with over 100+ small business owners on the Union Street corridor in Flushing, we know that immigrant small business owners across the City face unique challenges when it comes to keeping up with government regulations, accessing capital, and taking advantage of existing programs. We recommend the following:

- **Bring small business centers, compliance officers, and targeted language assistance to the community and work with trusted community groups to deal with outstanding issues**, so that small business owners can more readily receive assistance in their neighborhoods, as well as resolve and prevent compliance issues.
- **Invest in training programs like adult ESOL classes to help both owners and workers gain language skills.**

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- **Streamline MWBE certification process and improve outreach to immigrant businesses regarding the city's small business procurement process.** Increased access can be done via targeted vendor fairs, improved language access, and extended MWBE certification assistance.
- **Tailor support programs to the specific needs of different Asian business communities and the industries they are in,** including increasing the diversity of languages in which programming is offered.

Promote healthy communities through mental health services: Asian communities have some of the highest rates of depression and suicide in the city, yet they face unique barriers to mental healthcare access due to cultural stigma and a lack of in-language and culturally competent programs and service providers. Breaking these barriers requires a comprehensive, integrated approach to creating a mental health service ecosystem that works for Asian immigrant populations, who are more likely to utilize and benefit from culturally competent services.

We ask the City Council to make an initial investment of \$100,000 in pan-Asian nonprofit organizations to develop community-wide capacity in mental health services which would include:

- The development of a training program for Asian-led social service organizations using models of non-clinical service delivery that utilize existing programs;
- A network of non-clinical mental health service providers serving Asian communities in order to share resources and knowledge about best practices and available services;
- A shared database of mental health service providers;
- Cultural competency training for mainstream mental health service providers.

Support funding to community-based organizations to encourage participation in the upcoming 2020 Census by Asian communities. The Asian community are "hard to count" because of language barriers, recent immigration history, and general wariness about engaging with the government. **Recent Census Bureau studies in preparation for the 2020 Census found that Asian Americans were the least likely group to say they intend to participate in the Census.** Trusted voices in the community can effectively encourage hard-to-count populations to participate in the Census. This is critical to the diverse Asian communities of New York City as the Census is often the only source of public data on our communities. Moreover, the upcoming 2020 Census is a key step towards creating a fair and equitable redistricting process as well as ensuring federal programs and funding for our communities.

Advocate on behalf of Asian immigrants by supporting our work on increasing immigration and integration services for Asian New Yorkers, pushing back against anti-immigrant policies such as the Muslim ban and the proposed rule on public charge, and increasing language access at city agencies. As part of the #DeliverJustice coalition, we also advocate on behalf of immigrant delivery workers facing onerous fines for using e-bikes.

We request support to provide additional investment in overburdened, under-resourced, Asian-led community organizations to develop their expertise on immigration issues and build sustainable partnerships with a variety of legal assistance organizations and programs; support community-based adult literacy programming; protect immigrant workers; and provide services with adequate language accessibility.

Strengthen Asian American nonprofits through technical assistance, including identifying emerging Asian communities in new neighborhoods, cultivating relationships with local elected officials, and finding new ways to provide in-language support. AAF will continue to offer the following technical assistance trainings for all nonprofits that serve communities of color:

- Hold quarterly networking meetings with senior staff of member organizations
- Survey member organizations about capacity building needs
- Create technical assistance program based on survey feedback
- Provide at least 10 trainings for executive directors and mid- to senior-level managers on topics such as board governance and team management
- Provide 3-4 workshops for Asian-serving CBOs to develop their internal capacity to conduct lobbying activities, fundraising strategies, and effective communications

Finally, as one of the five leadership groups of the Nonprofit Stabilization Fund, we ask for the program's continuation to further build infrastructure in nonprofits that serve communities of color.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support of our community.



SAPNANYC

**New York City Council
Committee on Finance
FY 2020 Budget Priorities
March 27, 2019**

**Testimony of Diya Basu-Sen
Executive Director, Sapna NYC**

Good afternoon. My name is Diya Basu-Sen, Executive Director of Sapna NYC. Thank you, Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Finance for holding this hearing. I would like to testify on behalf of **Sapna NYC** as well as the over 45 Asian-led and serving organizations that are members of the **Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)**.

Sapna NYC, Inc. is a not for profit organization that works with South Asian immigrant women to improve health, expand economic opportunities, create social networks, and build a collective voice for change. We recognize that women are the backbone of our families and that by empowering women, we are impacting whole families and uplifting entire communities. To date we are one of very few organizations addressing health issues in the fast-growing, high-need South Asian immigrant community in New York City, and the only community-based organization (CBO) in the Bronx providing culturally and linguistically competent social services, empowerment programming, health education, and patient navigation. At Sapna we recognize that women's empowerment cannot be achieved without addressing several of the barriers that exist for the South Asian community. As such we focus not only on economic empowerment, but also on the empowerment achieved through improved health education, removal of linguistic barriers, increased educational opportunity, and larger access to resources and networks. Over the past decade we have successfully implemented a broad range of effective, innovative, and culturally sensitive award-winning health programs. Partnerships and funders include the National Institute of Health, Montefiore, Komen, Islamic Relief USA, NYC DOHMH, and Albert Einstein, among others.

The Asian Pacific American (APA) community is by percentage the fastest growing group in New York City, nearly doubling every decade since 1970 and making up 15% of the population. Current levels of public funding for the APA community remain disproportionate to our community's needs and disproportionate to our community's size. We recognize that many of the Councilmembers here have supported APA organizations in their districts and we are thankful for their support. However, city investment in the APA community is still not where it needs to be. We are calling on the City Council to do more and to recognize that investing in CBOs that serve APA communities is the most effective way to meet a rising need that city agencies are simply not yet equipped to meet. **Only 5.06% of City Council discretionary dollars and less than 1.5% of social service contract dollars go to APA CBOs. NYC Council must increase the amount of discretionary dollars given to APA community-based organizations to better match the size of the NYC APA population.**

CBOs like Sapna are uniquely equipped to serve APA immigrant communities. They are born out of the communities they serve and therefore are some of the most effective service providers, having a deep



SAPNA NYC

connection to the needs and experiences of their clients. This bond of trust is essential when speaking about immigration, health problems, domestic violence, and all the other sensitive issues we deal with each day. These CBOs provide services that are not available and accessible elsewhere. For example, one of our Bangladeshi community members went to the doctor early last year and was told that she was borderline diabetic with an A1C of 6.4. She was told that if her A1C got any higher, she'd have to start medication and was told to go to a diabetes prevention program at one of the hospitals in the Bronx. She went to four classes and then dropped out, telling us that she had trouble understanding most of what her instructor said and that they kept talking about diet, like eating less pasta and hidden calories in different salad dressings and going to the gym regularly. As a middle-aged, conservative Muslim immigrant with very little discretionary income, the gym just wasn't a feasible solution. On top of that, she was finding it nearly impossible to compare her meals of lentils, curry, and rice to the salads and pasta on her handouts from class. To address this gap and meet the Bengali community's need, Sapna created a culturally competent CDC-accredited Diabetes Prevention and Management Program delivered completely in Bengali which has enrolled 50 women this past year and helped over 150 women get their A1C test done to know their diabetes status. As part of this program we hold a weekly fitness class, teaching women weight-bearing exercises they can do at home with nothing more than a resistance band. After completing her program, her A1C dropped from 6.4 to 5.2 and she is no longer pre-diabetic. She regularly exercises 5 days a week at a classmate's house with 14 other women. These are results that could not have been achieved through a regular diabetes prevention program.

While the heart and passion of CBOs like Sapna NYC is unmatched, there is a need for capacity building in areas like financial planning, fundraising, communications, and leadership development. Investment in these areas through the Communities of Color Non-profit Stabilization Fund (CCNSF) will not only help bring stability to these smaller non-profits, it will also help them to grow and thrive, thus allowing them to serve more people and expand their services. This past year, Sapna received a CCNSF grant for communications and with that was able to create videos, brochures, banners and other marketing material. We learned how to use Adobe Illustrator so we can make our own materials moving forward. We also created social media accounts and focused on using storytelling to highlight the strengths, journeys, and needs of our community. All of this has served to increase engagement with our donors, find new volunteers, and help raise awareness of the needs in our community. We recognize that the CCNSF has been growing these past years, but it's not enough. **We are asking that the City enhance the CCNSF to \$5 million.**

Money spent building infrastructure in smaller non-profits and increasing funding to Asian-led and serving CBOs will help educate and empower communities of color. Absolutely no one is better able to serve the APA population than these CBOs and investment in them is the best and most effective use of funds there is. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and we look forward to working with the City Council to help make health and empowerment programming accessible and available to all New Yorkers.



Arab-American Family
Support Center

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**Testimony of Arab-American Family Support Center Before the New York City Council
Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 27, 2019**

Thank you to the Committee on Finance and the entire New York City Council for inviting community-based organizations to comment on budget proposals for Fiscal Year 2020. My name is Rachel Aicher, Development Officer at the Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC). I am honored to testify today on behalf of immigrant and refugee families throughout New York City.

At the Arab-American Family Support Center, we have strengthened immigrant and refugee families since 1994. Among a range of impact measures over the past year, AAFSC's trauma-informed home-based services kept 830 children from 329 families safely in their homes and out of foster care. We assisted over 1200 survivors of gender-based violence, offering case management and crisis intervention support at Family Justice Centers across the city. We also launched a new Mental Health Initiative to address the heightened risk of depression and anxiety immigrants face in this atmosphere of uncertainty and hostility.

AAFSC serves all in need. With 25 years of experience, we have special expertise assisting New York's growing Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian populations. Our staff speak 18 languages including Arabic, Bangla, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu, Pashto, and Punjabi, enabling us to communicate with cultural sensitivity to reach underserved groups. Immigrant community members face multiple challenges, including language barriers, limited education and resources, and unfamiliarity with our complex social service and health care delivery system.

AAFSC understands the needs of immigrant community members and we recognize that City Council is committed to their health and wellbeing. Today, we call on the Committee on Finance to ensure our budget safeguards and expands programs essential for immigrant New Yorkers. For FY2020, AAFSC respectfully requests:

- Increasing the **Adult Literacy Initiative** to \$12 million for community-based organizations. The basic literacy classes we and others offer give immigrants struggling to communicate the skills they need adapt and contribute.
- Continued, full funding of City Council Initiatives that provide life-saving and transformative services for immigrant communities, including: the **Domestic Violence and Empowerment (DoVE) Initiative**; the **Initiative for Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence**; **Access Health NYC**; **Access to Healthy Food and Nutritional Education**, which includes restorations for EBTs in Farmers' Markets; the **Step in and**

Stop it Initiative to address bystander intervention; and the **Young Women's Leadership Development Initiative**.

- Expanded eligibility for the **Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund** to include all service organizations regardless of size. Groups like AAFSC are dedicating nearly all our resources to providing high-quality, intensive services, leaving limited resources to build staff capacity.
- Robust funding for **Census Outreach** to ensure participation from traditionally hard-to-reach immigrant communities. Immigrants comprise 37% of the city's population, and an undercount risks further reducing resources allocated to our neighborhoods, our city, and our state.

Thank you for your attention. We hope City Council will continue including organizations that work intimately with immigrants and refugees in conversations about community needs.

As always, the Arab-American Family Support Center stands ready to work with you in ensuring the most vulnerable among us thrive.



Commitment to Improve the Quality of Life

Wednesday March 27, 2019

To: New York City Council Committee on Finance
From: India Home, Inc.
Re: Oversight - Preliminary Budget Hearing - Finance

We thank Finance Chair Daniel Dromm and the Committee on Finance for helping India Home provide better senior center services.

India Home is a non-profit organization founded by community members to serve South Asian older adults. The mission of India Home is to improve the quality of life for older adults by providing culturally appropriate social services.

100% of the seniors India Home serves are foreign born and nearly 80% of them have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), which limits their access to mainstream services. Our clients come to us from the heavily South Asian neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Jackson Heights, Briarwood, Jamaica, Richmond Hill, and Queens Village. They also live in growing communities found in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and beyond.

India Home has grown tremendously in the last year to fulfill our mission to serve South Asian older adults with culturally appropriate social services. At our Desi Senior Center in Jamaica, we attract on average 100 seniors daily who would otherwise be socially isolated during the daytime. We have started our Community Mental Health Program by hiring a culturally competent mental health counselor. In addition to these exciting new steps, we are continuing our programs in collaboration with existing senior centers once a week in different locations such as at Sunnyside Community Services and Queens Community House. In total, we serve over 250 seniors a week.

We plan to continue to lay roots in Council Districts 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29 to provide targeted and much needed senior services to South Asian older adults. We must note that despite our continued advocacy, grassroots, community-led programs such as India Home have only minimally received the benefits of the baseline budget increase. India Home and other immigrant-led organizations that serve seniors fill a critical gap in serving a intersectionally vulnerable population – those who are immigrants, LEP, and low-income. We are laying the foundation for services that will only be more in demand in the coming years. Every week, we receive a multitude of phone calls and inquiries on behalf of seniors who are looking to attend our centers and receive our services. The city council has been an invaluable partner in our efforts to provide these critical services to immigrant older adults. However, our community resources are running thin.

India Home tries to address the growing needs of Senior center services which includes- congregate meal programs, case management, health and wellness programs, and various one-on-one services. Each day, we see our congregate meal programs filled to capacity. We try to address the growing need for all these services, however, we are in need of more expense funding to better serve the growing aging community.

In addition to expense funding, India Home requests \$1.995 million in Capital Funding for the acquisition of an 8,000 sq ft independent building in Queens Village to meet the critical need for senior services to aging South Asians. Our plan for this permanent location is to cover three primary functions: program space for senior center and social adult program, office space, and commercial kitchen for preparation of culturally appropriate congregate meals. This large, multiuse space would also include: state of the art technology center with computer classes, multi-use library, and health and wellness programs. In addition, we will

have case management and mental health services in the office so our caseworkers can reach out to homebound seniors.

Budget Request for FY2020

Item	Description	Amount
Senior Center Immigrant Population	Funds to support linguistically and culturally appropriate program expansion Reference number: #70630	\$250,000
Healthy Aging	Funds to support India Home's culturally appropriate health and wellness programs Reference number: #70630	\$58,000
Support Our Seniors	Funds to support India Home's creative aging programs such as writing, public speaking, & more Reference number: #70630	\$38,000
Speaker Initiative	Funds to support linguistically and culturally appropriate program expansion and case management Reference number: #70630	\$100,000
Local/Aging	Funds to support India Home's congregate meal program Reference number: #70630	\$140,500
Access to Critical Services for Seniors	Funds to support India Home's case management activities Reference number: #70630	\$50,000
Elder Abuse Enhancement	Funds to support case assistance for seniors facing elder abuse Reference number: #70630	\$10,000
Social Adult Day Care Enhancement	Funds to support India Home's new Social Adult Day Care program for dementia patients Reference number: #70630	\$50,000
Queens Delegation	Funds to support linguistically and culturally appropriate senior center services Reference number: #70630	\$100,000
SU-CASA	Funds to support creative aging instructor and classes Reference number: #74958	\$15,000
Cultural Immigrant	Funds to support culturally appropriate creative aging programs Reference number: #74958	\$21,500
Communitites of Color Non Profit Stabilization	Funds to support centers with vulnerable populations Reference number: #74900	\$50,000
Digital Inclusion and Literacy	Funds for technology literacy classes Reference number: #74900	\$22,000
Geriatric Mental Health	Funds for on-site mental health counsellor Reference number: #74770	\$50,000
Mental Health Services for	Funds to increase awareness amongst	\$20,000

Vulnerable Populations	vulnerable populations Reference number: #74770	
Developmental, Psychological and Behavioral Health	Funds to support seniors' mental hygiene and wellness Reference number: #74770	\$ 10,000
Immigrant Health	Funds to educate community and support for mental health needs Reference number: #74770	\$15,000
Total		\$1,000,000

Projected Budget for Capital Fund FY2020

Item	Description	Amount
Capital Funding Request: Property Acquisition	South Asian Community Home 8,000 square feet of commercial space at 220-05 97th Ave, Queens Village, NY 11429 Appication #: 208747291-E2510	\$1,995,000
Non city funds	New York State Senate	\$400,000
Total Project cost:		\$2,395,000

We request your continued and increased expense and capital support to help India Home better serve the South Asian senior community.

Sincerely,



Vasundhara D. Kalasapudi, M.D.

Executive Director

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CACF Coalition For Asian American Children+Families

New York City Council
Committee on Finance
FY 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 27, 2019

**Testimony of Tasfia Rahman,
Policy Coordinator, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)**

My name is Tasfia Rahman, and I am a Policy Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). Thank you, Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Finance for giving us the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

Since 1986, CACF is the nation's only pan-Asian children and families' advocacy organization and leads the fight for improved and equitable policies, systems, funding, and services to support those in need. The Asian Pacific American (APA) population comprises over 15% of New York City, over 1.3 million people. Yet, the needs of the APA community are consistently overlooked, misunderstood, and uncounted. We are constantly fighting the harmful impacts of the model minority myth, which prevents our needs from being recognized and understood. Our communities, as well as the organizations that serve the community, too often lack the resources to provide critical services to the most marginalized APAs. Working with almost 50 member organizations across the City to identify and speak out on the many common challenges our community faces, CACF is building a community too powerful to ignore.

CACF also leads the 15% and Growing Campaign, a group of over 45 Asian led and serving organizations that work together to ensure that New York City's budget protects the most vulnerable Asian Pacific American New Yorkers. Campaign members employ thousands of New Yorkers and serve hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Currently, the Asian Pacific American community is by percentage the fastest growing group in New York City, nearly doubling every decade since 1970 and making up 15% of the population. Unfortunately, current levels of public funding for the Asian Pacific American community remain disproportionate to our community's needs.

- Nearly a quarter of APAs live in poverty, the highest of all racial groups in NYC.¹
- Asian Americans have the highest rate of linguistic isolation of any group in the City at 42%, meaning that no one over the age of 14 in the household speaks English well.²
- 40% of NYC APA youth are not college ready upon graduation from high school

Consider that Asian led and serving organizations receive only 1.5% of the City's social service contract dollars. Yet, while many 15% and Growing Campaign members have long relied on City Council discretionary dollars to provide vital services in Asian Pacific American ethnic enclaves in Council districts throughout the City, our analysis of publicly available budget documents from the CFY2020 Adopted Budget revealed that Asian led and serving organizations received only 5.06% of City Council discretionary dollars. The City needs to invest more in key initiatives and programs that could potentially provide services and resources that our community would otherwise be unable to access.

¹ New York City Government Poverty Measure 2005-2016 (April 2018)

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

We understand that the City is facing budget cuts at the state level and financial uncertainty at the federal level. However, we also know that APA communities are facing increasing challenges to all aspects of their lives including their health and nutrition, economic and housing security, and educational opportunities. We make the following asks to better protect the survival and well-being of our communities, including the heavily immigrant APA community. For the sake of time, I will only highlight a few.

- ❖ **INCREASE FUNDING AND PROVIDE OVERSIGHT ON THE \$60 MILLION IN ANNUAL BRIDGE PROGRAM FUNDING PROMISED BY MAYOR DE BLASIO IN HIS 2014 CAREER PATHWAYS PLAN** - While current City investment in Bridge Programming focuses on skills building and career pathway development, it does not consider population-based needs. Immigrants comprise 47% of the workforce in NYC and an estimated 1.7 million New Yorkers are Limited English Proficient (LEP).³ Jobseekers with limited or no English proficiency who do not meet the requirements for intermediate or advanced proficiency in English are often excluded from current Bridge Programs. Therefore, we urge that significant portion of that funding be used to fund an innovative pilot Immigrant Workforce Development Initiative with a focus on integrating pre-literacy and basic ESOL classes with vocational ESOL, digital literacy, skills training, and student support services.
- ❖ **RESTORE \$12 MILLION IN ADULT LITERACY FUNDING:** This funding supports community based organizations that have adult literacy programs which provide basic literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages and Graduate Equivalency Degree classes for adults who cannot read, write or speak English.
- ❖ **RESTORE \$2.6 MILLION TO THE IMMIGRANT OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE (IOI):** Asian Americans are heavily immigrant with 78% foreign-born. The Immigrant Opportunities Initiative funds programs that help New York immigrant families obtain citizenship and language skills necessary for decent jobs, and to protect their legal rights. Considering the anti-immigrant climate, initiatives like IOI are crucial for immigrant communities.
- ❖ **RESTORE \$2 MILLION TO SENIOR CENTERS FOR IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS** that provides operational support to culturally competent and linguistically accessible non-DFTA senior centers and programmatic support for DFTA senior centers that predominantly serve immigrant seniors.
- ❖ **RESTORE \$6.375 MILLION TO CULTURAL IMMIGRANT INITIATIVE:** This funding supports APA-led organizations or APA-serving organizations to provide programming focused on the cultural history of the diverse APA organizations within the many immigrant communities in NYC.
- ❖ **RESTORE \$5.355 MILLION TO DISCRETIONARY CHILD CARE CENTERS:** From FY2013 - FY 2018, the City Council invested \$9.9 million a year to expand the reach of the City's subsidized child care beyond the programs supported by Early Learn contracts. FY2019 saw a baseline of \$4.5 million, but City Council should continue to support the expansion of child care centers and seats in programs with an investment of \$5.355 million.
- ❖ **CITYWIDE INVESTMENT IN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN OUR SCHOOLS:** Many of our youth face challenges in their lives and need critical social and emotional support as well as academic support in order to thrive. Growing research has shown social and emotional learning not only

³ 2016 Report, Center for an Urban Future & Center for Popular Democracy
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
March 11th, 2019

improves academic achievement but it also decreases depression and stress among students.⁴ More specifically, we need more investment in more guidance counselors and social workers who have the cultural competence to meet the needs of our students.

- **RESTORE \$2 MILLION FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELORS**
 - **\$2.0 MILLION FOR SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS, BRIDGING THE GAP SCHOOL-BASED SOCIAL WORKERS**
 - **\$2.485 MILLION FOR THE DROPOUT PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INITIATIVE**
 - **\$4.39 MILLION FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS**
 - **\$600,000 FOR LGBTQ INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM**
- ❖ **CITYWIDE INVESTMENT IN CULTURAL COMPETENT AND LANGUAGE ACCESSIBLE YOUTH SERVICES:** Without youth services, many immigrant youths can find themselves isolated and marginalized, and without the support to navigate systems and access critical services that would put them on the path to become competent and responsible adults.
- **RESTORE \$20.35 MILLION FOR AT LEAST 34,000 MIDDLE SCHOOL AFTER-SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM SLOTS (SONYC)**
 - **RESTORE \$8 MILLION FOR COMPASS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**
- ❖ **CITYWIDE INVESTMENT IN SUPPORTING AND EQUIPPING OUR EDUCATORS TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH:**
- **ENSURE SALARY PARITY FOR ALL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.** Certified educators at early childhood programs at community based organizations must be provided equal wages as educators at Department of Education sites. Such investments ensure high quality early childhood programs throughout the City.
 - **\$20.805 MILLION FOR SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS, WHICH INCLUDES TEACHER'S CHOICE SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**
- ❖ **\$1.0 MILLION FOR A HALAL AND KOSHER SCHOOL LUNCH PILOT (DCAS)**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and we look forward to working with the City Council to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the services and support they need to lead healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives

⁴ JA Durlak, Child Dev. 2011 Jan-Feb;82(1):405-32.
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
March 11th, 2019

Testimony of Henry Garrido, Executive Director, District Council 37, AFSCME
Before the New York City Council Committee on Finance
FY2020 Preliminary Budget
March 27th, 2019

Good afternoon, Chair Dromm and members of the Finance committee. I am Henry Garrido, the Executive Director of District Council 37, AFSCME. Our union represents 125,000 municipal workers and 50,000 retirees working across every city agency within the city of New York. Our members care for the sick, the children, and the elderly. We maintain bridges, parks, roads and subways and we also staff the NYC H+H facilities, schools, libraries, social service centers and city colleges. We do the clerical work, maintenance work and the technical work that keeps the city running, and our state members uphold rent regulations and serve as interpreters and reporters in the courts.

Mr. Chairman, I am fully aware of the amount of stress President Trump's budget and policies initiatives have placed on our State and local economies, and I commend the Mayor for his leadership in putting forth efficiencies in the FY2020 Preliminary budget which totals \$92.2 Billion. However, this budget is not devoid of concerns and I would like to take the opportunity to address some of these concerns and share with you some ideas concerning the City's FY2020 Preliminary budget plan. There are three (3) areas I would like to bring to your attention that not only have an impact our city workers but the City as a whole. Firstly, I would like to discuss revenue generating initiatives propose by DC 37. Secondly, a holistic approach to renewable energy investments; and lastly, responsible investments in city services.

Revenue Generating Ideas

It is imperative that each stakeholder in the City of New York does their fair share and play a key role in ensuring that our city's economical stability. Each year we are faced with local budget cuts, state funding deficits and federal funding instability. This does not have to be and should not be the yearly reality of our City. We have a unique opportunity to change the tide and generate more revenue without the need to reduce the city's workforce. There are two feasible ways to do so:

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1. Investment in Revenue Generating Workforce: New York City's tax auditors, city assessors and tax collectors capture the appropriate tax proceeds from businesses and institutions. Over the last twenty (20) years, we've seen a significant decrease in headcount, limiting the city's ability to capture these proceeds, shifting the burden on individual property owners. Shortfall in this workforce has resulted in the underassessment of thousands of income generating properties throughout the City. Newly constructed buildings, alterations to condos and other residential properties and vacant lots need to be reassessed to ensure it is valued fairly and accurately.

Income derived from billboards and cell towers must be reported to the Department of Finance by completing a Real Property Income and Expense Statement (RPIE) form. It is District Council 37's assertion that building some owners do not report these incomes. In a 2016 report, State Comptroller DiNapoli cited the Department of Finance for their failure to obtain and review the Department of Buildings' list of properties with billboards. In that report, no income statements were filed for 82 percent of the city's billboard. A partial review by the City yielded more than \$9 million dollars in revenue for the city. We believe there is a similar practice occurring with cellular towers. We believe that the root cause of this problem issue is an undermanned workforce. A lack of workers in these titles directly results in a loss of taxable income for the City. Additional auditors and assessors will allow the city to properly review, audit and assess all of the City's taxable properties.

2. Create new ways to apply taxes: For years' fiber-optic installations on private properties have not been taxable. In December, 2018 the Court of Appeals rendered a decision reaffirming that fiber-optic telecommunication installations and cables are taxable real property in New York. This change in the law presents an incomparable opportunity for New York City to generate revenue. Making it applicable to tax fiber-optics, will help create additional revenue for the City.

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Renewable Energy Investments

In the face of Federal inaction on climate change, we are proud of the Mayor for being committed to his plan to reduce greenhouse gases 80 percent by 2050, or 80 x 50. But I think we all can agree that more needs to be done now. We need aggressive implementation of a plan for solar panels on all public buildings in New York City. On Tuesday, March 12th DCAS testified that 60% of their \$1.2 Billion budget allocation accounts for the management of the City's light bill. \$725 million of DCAS's expenses covers New York City agencies heat, light and power bill. I am advocating for the City Council to come up with an aggressive plan or mandate to achieve a reduction in the City's energy cost. I also stand in solidarity with Councilmember Costa Constantinides, and fully support his retro fit bill Intro 1253. This bill would establish the Office of Building Energy Performance as well as greenhouse gas emissions limits for existing buildings. This bill would also expand existing retro-commissioning requirements to certain buildings over 25,000 square feet. I urge the entire City Council to co-sponsor this bill, in an effort to achieve energy efficiency in New York City.

Investments in City Services

District Council 37 represents an array of workers within New York City, who provide some of the most integral services to residents and visitors alike. Our members work within NYC Health and Hospitals, NYC Public library system, NYC Parks and NYC Board of Education to name a few. Within these agencies we represent the lowest paid but most vital work force within these agencies. We are calling for an investment in city services and asking for the following:

NYC Health and Hospitals –for many years a disproportional allocation of funds to our safety net hospitals has negatively affected our hospitals, its work force and the communities they serve. Our union endorsed a proposal set forth by a working group convened by the state with representative stakeholders known as, the H&H Community ICP proposal. This proposal would draw down additional federal matching funds through the enhanced Medicaid rate, end the distribution of funds to hospitals with high profit

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margins that are not actually providing care to the uninsured and protect the state from federal cuts. The legislation will be introduced shortly and we are asking the City Council to support this legislation. Furthermore, we are urging the City to allocate sustainable funding for safety net hospitals and clinics, so that our hospitals may continue to care for more than 600,000 New Yorkers and their families who are uninsured.

NYC Libraries – we are calling for an investment of \$35 million to maintain programs, materials and, six (6) day a week operations across all three (3) systems. We were fortunate to receive \$17 million in funding from the Council in Fiscal year 2019, but \$ 8 million of which is not baselined. We are asking for the restoration and baselining of the aforementioned funds in order to maintain our City's public library system.

NYC Department of Education – We represent the remarkable support staff in our City's school system: School nurses and Epidemiologist; School lunch aides, assistants, cooks, loaders and handlers; family workers; Substance Abuse Prevention & intervention specialist (SAPIS); community associates and coordinators; clerical aides and associates, secretaries and school crossing guards. Our members work daily to ensure the safety, health and nourishment of our children. In order to maintain the safety of our most vulnerable population we are calling on the city to increase their investments in Education.

- \$2 Million allocation for Substance abuse prevention and intervention specialist (SAPIS). Students who are at risk for alcohol and substance abuse, gang involvement, suspension from school, disruptive behaviors, and violations of the discipline code are referred to our SAPIS workers for intervention services. Our workers don't only intervene in the schools with the children but they extend their reach to parents by way of workshops that address alcohol and substance abuse issues as well as bullying and violence prevention. SAPIS provide crisis-response services to schools needing support during crisis

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incidents. With the unwavering opioid epidemic in our city it is imperative that these workers are supported and the City guarantees funds to sustain them.

- \$195 Million for Cafeteria Redesign – we are in need of enhanced cafeterias in all New York City schools. To build on the foundation set by universal free school lunch, we are calling on the allocation of funds to be added to the Chancellor's 5-year capital plan. We support the plan rolled out by the NYC office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) and have been monitoring its success. The redesign of 34 middle school and high school cafeterias have led to an increase of healthy food intake and overall increase in participation in school ready meals from children. We believe that the cafeteria environment sets the tone of the school lunch experience not only for the students but for our workers as well. Donald Nesbit, Vice President of Local 372 testified before the Education Committee on Wednesday, March 20th. In his testimony he raised concerns and detailing the poor kitchen and cafeteria conditions in our NYC Schools. Air conditioning and circulation should not be an issue in our school kitchens. We are urging the City to allocate these funds for the redesign of all school cafeterias, the allocations would total approximately \$500,000 per school.

NYC Parks – NYC Parks is the steward for 14% of the New York City's land and operates the City's parks, beaches, pools, community gardens, athletic fields, and operates the City's monuments, street and park trees (over 2 million). Our members do majority of this work alongside other non-union workers. New Yorkers for Parks, Council Member Barry Grodenchik, Chair of the Parks Committee, the New York League of Conservation Voters, and DC37, the Parks workers' union, have come together to form the PLAY FAIR COALITION. Although City parks make up 14% of NYC's land, last year the agency only received a meager 0.59% of the total City budget. This disparity in the City budget for NYC Parks / Parks Department has existed for over a decade and makes it incredibly challenging for the Parks Department to staff, maintain, and secure our parks. Increasing the Parks Department's budget by \$100M or an additional 0.10% of the proposed City budget would accomplish so much and impact the lives of millions of New Yorkers. We

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are calling for an investment of \$100 million in our City Parks. This investment shall be allocated in the following ways:

- \$10 Million to baseline funds for 100 City Park Workers (CPW) and 50 Gardeners, in order to secure stable green jobs.
- \$4 Million investment in NYC's forests to protect NYC from climate change. An investment of \$3.9 Million is necessary to provide proactive care and maintenance to NYC's natural forests needs to remain healthy and resilient in our changing climate.
- \$65 Million to fund full-time staff in order to keep parks of all sizes clean and green. This investment can be distributed in two categories:
 - a. \$47.17 Million – would allow the 48 largest NYC parks to have dedicated crew that could better maintain, beautify and care for our vital neighborhood and regional parks.
 - b. \$17.96 Million to expand fixed-post crews to all eligible smaller neighborhood parks that currently lack a full-time dedicated staff.
- \$8.2 Million to fund improvements for all 550 Green thumb gardens City-wide. This investment will be used to purchase new soil, new raised beds and new features to ensure gardeners have the resources needed for their gardens to thrive.
- \$ 13 Million in Programmatic investments:
 - a. \$4M to ensure that every neighborhood in the City could have more seasonal afterschool programs and programming for children and families. An additional \$3.9M in the budget would mean that 395 playgrounds would be able to host structured sports and afterschool programs for children in every district, providing better structure, safety, and imaginative play for tens of thousands of New York's children and their families.
 - b. \$9M to preserve, protect and ensure the safety of all New Yorkers utilizing all natural areas and parks. We can achieve this by splitting this allocation into two categories: 1) \$3M to hire 50 new Urban Park Rangers to connect

Testimony of Henry Garrido, Executive Director, District Council 37, AFSCME
Before the New York City Council Committee on Finance
FY2020 Preliminary Budget
March 27th, 2019

New Yorkers with the nature that surrounds us and, 2) \$6M, to hire and retain 80 additional Parks Enforcement Patrol officers citywide to preserve and protect parks.

I am proud of the partnership that District Council 37 has with this council, and as a stakeholder in this City and the agencies that fall under the City's purview, I am committed to assist in advancing the economic stability of our City. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Finance
Preliminary Budget Hearing for FY 2020
March 27, 2019

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Finance, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Julia Duranti-Martinez, and I am the Community Land Trust (CLT) Coordinator at New Economy Project. New Economy Project is an economic justice organization that works with community groups throughout New York City to fight discriminatory economic practices and to support cooperative economics and community-led development, rooted in racial and gender justice, neighborhood equity, and ecological sustainability. New Economy Project co-founded and co-convenes the NYC Community Land Initiative, a coalition of more than two dozen housing and social justice organizations advocating for CLTs to preserve and create deeply affordable housing and stabilize neighborhoods. Since 2017, we have coordinated a citywide Learning Exchange for groups at various stages of CLT formation. As an outgrowth of this work, New Economy Project and 14 partner organizations are proposing a new citywide CLT Initiative, with FY2020 discretionary funding support, that would incubate and expand CLTs in all five boroughs of NYC.

CLTs are a proven mechanism to preserve vital affordable housing stock, prevent extraction of public subsidies, and combat displacement. A CLT is a nonprofit that owns and stewards land in the community's interest, and leases use of the land for affordable housing development and other community needs. CLTs typically issue renewable 99-year ground leases that establish resale and rental restrictions and ensure that CLT leaseholders cannot earn speculative profits if they choose to sell or rent their property. These permanent affordability restrictions protect public investments in CLTs from being lost to the market over time—a key advantage that CLTs have over conventional affordability terms of 15 or 30 years. The longstanding Cooper Square CLT, on Manhattan's Lower East Side, for example, has developed and preserved 400 units of housing for households earning 26.5% - 36% of Area Median Income (AMI), and will continue to do so in perpetuity.

CLTs also engage community members in meaningful decision-making over neighborhood and housing development. CLT boards of directors are typically composed of equal parts CLT leaseholders, community members, and public stakeholders. The CLT facilitates broad community engagement and participation in land use and planning decisions. Both Cooper Square CLT and the East Harlem/El Barrio CLT grew out of sustained community-led planning and visioning processes, and continue to have strong relationships with their community boards and other local partners. The Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition's proposed Bronx CLT will partner with nonprofit housing developers to identify development opportunities and engage residents in the planning and management of properties.

While housing remains a key focus for many CLTs, the flexibility of the CLT model can support any land use. CLTs around the country incorporate commercial uses, community and cultural spaces, community gardens, and open space into their work. The development of green space as well as public space that uplifts the resilience of local residents is particularly critical in communities that have been deeply affected by decades of environmental injustice and divestment. The Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards engaged in extensive community visioning and design processes to develop its plans for community gardens, and recently completed a feasibility study for a community health and arts center (H.E.A.R.TS). Similarly, the Mary Mitchell Center for Family and Youth plans to create a CLT that will partner with community gardens to cultivate healthy food and value-add products for income generation.

In addition to fostering permanently affordable housing, equitable community development, and community engagement in planning and land use processes, CLTs can be important partners in disaster recovery and resilience in the face of climate change. CLTs from the Bay Area to the Florida Keys incorporate ecological building techniques and green energy into their work, and partner with community members in the wake of hurricanes and other extreme weather events to rebuild. Locally, the South Bronx Land and Community Resource Trust—a partnership between We Stay/Nos Quedamos, the South Bronx River Watershed Alliance, the NYC Community Gardens Coalition, and the South Bronx Culture Collective—plans to prioritize affordable housing as well as community gardens and green infrastructure, such as community-owned utilities, micro grids, and storm water mitigation.

The CLT model has sparked a citywide movement that has achieved tremendous gains in recent years—including passage of the City’s first local law defining and entering CLTs into the administrative code; increased NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) support for the CLT model; expanded training, legal and technical support networks; and investment of NYS Attorney General settlement funds in local CLTs. More than a dozen community-based organizations from the Northwest Bronx to Brownsville are working to develop local leadership, deepen community partnerships, organize tenants and homeowners, and identify properties suitable for their CLTs.

The proposed citywide CLT initiative will allow groups to build upon this exciting progress at a critical moment of opportunity. The initiative will support essential CLT community education and organizing, board and member training, and other start-up costs; build capacity through legal, financial, and technical assistance; and promote coordination among CLTs so they reach a sustainable scale. We ask the Committee to include the CLT initiative in its budget recommendations for FY2020.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. For more information or questions, please contact Julia Duranti-Martínez at New Economy Project (212-680-5100, julia@neweconominyc.org).



Community Land Trust Initiative

New York City Council FY2020 Discretionary Funding Request

Description: The city-wide Community Land Trust (CLT) Initiative will strengthen communities and create and preserve permanently affordable housing, by incubating CLTs in all five boroughs of NYC. The CLT initiative will engage thousands of NYC tenants and homeowners in outreach, organizing, education, and CLT governance; and provide legal, technical and financial support to establish and build capacity of CLTs. The initiative will be administered by DYCD.

Request: New Economy Project (Coordinator) and partners request \$850,000 to fully fund the new citywide CLT Initiative, made up of 15 community and technical support organizations, listed below.

Need: More than 75% of low-income NYC renters are rent burdened. From 2014 to 2017, median rents increased by more than one-third. The city is rapidly losing affordable housing due to expiring subsidies and deregulation of rental properties. NYC also loses more than 1,000 small businesses each month – a particular burden for neighborhoods of color, where small businesses provide a large share of jobs.

Impact: The CLT Initiative will support development of 11 CLTs to create and preserve permanently affordable housing and combat residential and commercial displacement, in low-income NYC neighborhoods. The initiative will conduct 50 community education and organizing sessions in all five boroughs; engage 1,000 tenants and homeowners in CLT activities; and provide 25 training and technical assistance engagements to support successful incubation or expansion of CLTs. Over the long term, the initiative will create and preserve more than 5,000 units of permanently affordable housing for low-income New Yorkers. CLTs are a proven mechanism to preserve vital affordable housing stock, prevent extraction of public subsidies, and stabilize commercial and community spaces. Cooper Square CLT, for example, has developed and preserved almost 400 units of permanently affordable housing on the Lower East Side, for families earning as low as 30% AMI, while providing affordable commercial space for 20 small businesses.

Scope and Services: The CLT Initiative consists of 11 community-based organizations (CBOs) and four technical support organizations, described below. CBOs will conduct community education, outreach and organizing, and receive training and technical support to successfully incubate or expand CLTs in their neighborhoods. Technical support organizations will provide legal and other support to CBOs.

1. **CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities** will create a CLT focused on affordable housing for elderly residents, and commercial space for immigrant-owned businesses, in Manhattan's Chinatown.
2. **Chhaya CDC** will pursue a CLT that preserves community space and commercial affordability for small businesses in Jackson Heights, and work with partners to prevent foreclosures.
3. **City College of New York** will develop training curricula on CLTs.
4. **Community Development Project** will provide transactional legal support on CLT incorporation, by-laws and other matters.
5. **Community Solutions** will work with Brownsville, Brooklyn residents and nonprofit partners to establish a CLT to support low- and moderate-income households.

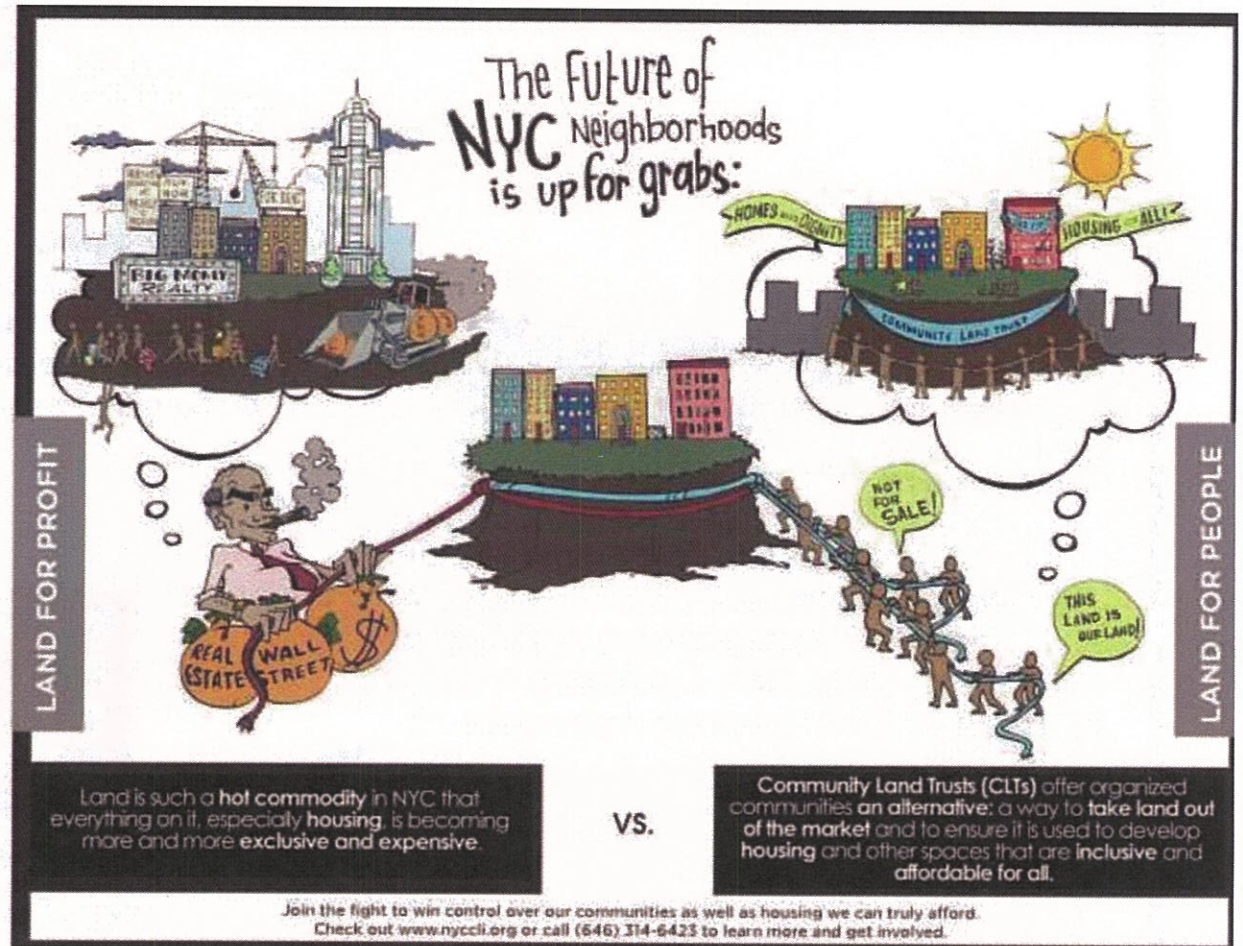
6. **Cooper Square CLT**, a decades-old CLT on the Lower East Side, will acquire and develop new properties, and recruit and train an intergeneration team of community and housing leaders.
7. **Cypress Hills LDC** will create a CLT to preserve low income homeownership and rental units in Cypress Hills and East New York, Brooklyn, focusing on homeowners at risk of foreclosure.
8. **East Harlem El Barrio CLT** will complete acquisition of its first four properties and engage tenants and community residents in stewardship, organizing, and creation of a Mutual Housing Association.
9. **Mary Mitchell Center** will pursue a CLT to steward property it currently owns and publicly-owned land and housing it seeks to acquire.
10. **Mott Haven Port Morris Community Land Stewards** will support limited-equity homeownership opportunities, as well as commercial, cultural, and educational spaces that improve quality of life.
11. **New Economy Project (Coordinator)** will provide research, training, and overall coordination for the CLT Initiative, including to track progress and ensure timely reporting and compliance.
12. **Northfield LDC** will establish a CLT to create affordable homeownership for low income families on Staten Island, and to preserve homes at risk of foreclosure.
13. **Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition** will create a CLT to protect affordable housing, community and nonprofit spaces, commercial and industrial spaces and community gardens.
14. **Picture the Homeless** will provide training and mentorship on community and CLT organizing.
15. **We Stay/Nos Quedamos** will form a CLT to steward affordable housing NQ currently manages and green infrastructure, including microgrids, community-based utilities and storm water mitigation.



For more information, please contact New Economy Project at 212-680-5100 or by email:
 Deyanira Del Rio (dey@neweconomy-nyc.org) or Eve Weissman (eve@neweconomy-nyc.org)

WHY Community Land Trusts?

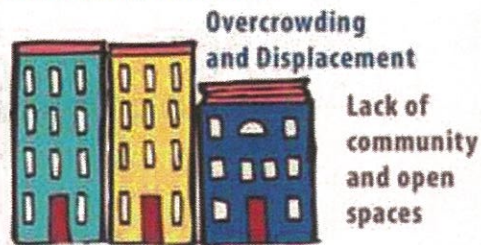
- **Permanent affordability & neighborhood stability.**
- **Community stewardship** of land, housing, and other community assets.
- **Protects public investment** in affordable housing
- **Economies of scale**
- **Social equity**



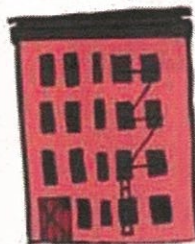
How a COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (CLT) Works

1. A community is struggling with things like:

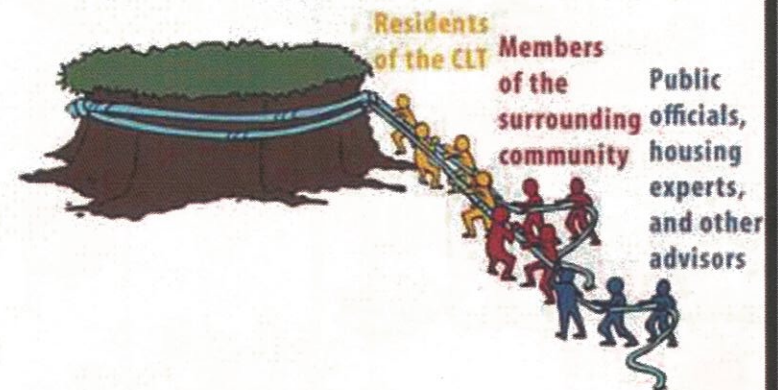
Rising housing costs
and commercial rents



Vacant buildings



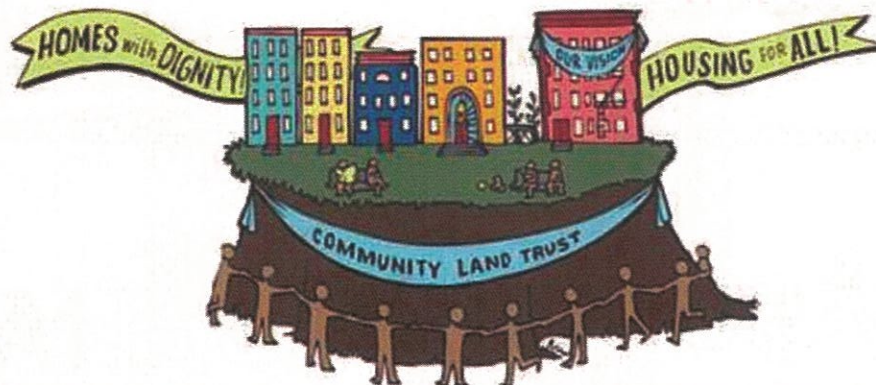
2. Community Members work together to form a Community Land Trust (CLT), a non-profit, democratically governed organization that gets and keeps land in trust on behalf of the community.



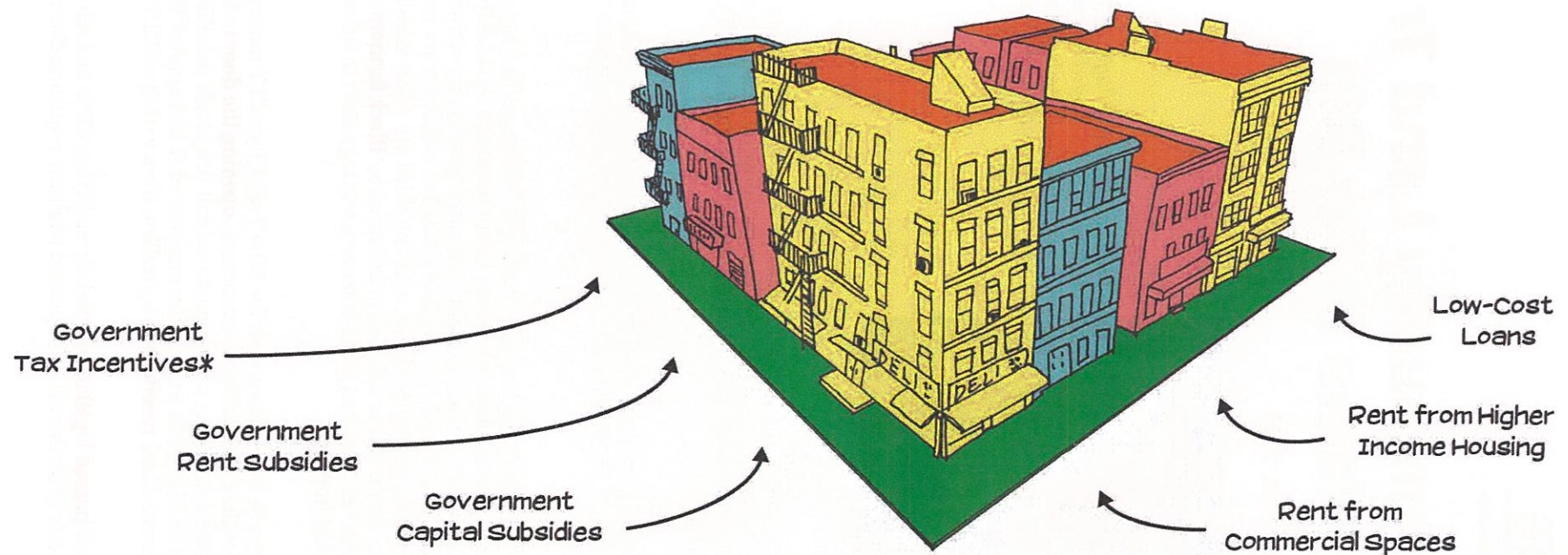
3. The CLT facilitates community-driven planning to address the community's immediate and long-term needs. It works with resident groups, non-profit housing developers and other organizations to:

Preserve and enhance low-income housing and other places of value to the community

Develop unused
spaces to meet
community needs



Permanent Stewardship Protects Public Investment in Property & Housing



The CLT enforces ground leases and resale/affordability restrictions. This ensures *permanence* of affordability on a CLT, prevents extraction of public subsidy, and creates an extra layer of community oversight.

The NYC Community Land Trust Movement Wants to Go Big

By Abigail Savitch-Lew | January 8, 2018



Adi Talwar

A CLT in the East Village: 25 East 3rd street flanked by 23 East and 27 East 3rd Street to the left and right respectively. The three building are a part of the Cooper Square Community Land Trust.

The community land trust movement is on the rise in cities across the country from Miami to Oakland, but as of late, the Big Apple arguably ranks among the cities where the movement is most energized. Across the five boroughs, where for the past 20 years there's been one community land trust (CLT), there's now over a dozen groups trying to create new CLTs.

"I don't know anywhere that has this level of growing interest, both with grassroots and more established organizations," says Melora Hiller of Grounded Solutions Network, which supports the CLT movement nationwide.

A CLT is a nonprofit entity that stewards the housing or other buildings on its property by retaining ownership of the land—a unique ownership structure that advocates say help ensure the buildings remain permanently affordable. The model is also believed to promote democratic and community-driven decision making, with CLTs usually governed by a "tripartite board," in which one third of members are residents of the property itself, one third live in the surrounding neighborhood, and one third are other stakeholders like nonprofits, elected officials, or funders. The concept was originally conceived by **Black farmers** seeking to protect Black assets in the Jim Crow South but has in recent years become a strategy used in urban settings to help communities maintain affordable housing.

From a policy standpoint, 2017 was a victorious year for New York City's CLT movement. It began with the de Blasio administration, after months of prodding by advocates, **opening the door** to the CLT vision by releasing a Request for Expressions of Interest, calling on groups to submit proposals detailing how they would develop and manage CLTs. In July, the de Blasio administration announced it had applied for grant funding from Enterprise Community Partners and had **received** \$1.65 million for a variety of CLT projects.

This December, the City Council **passed legislation** officially codifying CLTs and allowing the city to enter into regulatory agreements with them. (The Council also passed two bills requiring the city to take stock of, and

report on, vacant land as well as property owned by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)—measures that advocates believe will shed light on what properties could be potentially steered onto CLTs.)

As the momentum behind CLTs has grown, some policymakers—and some advocates, too—have cautioned that CLTs are not the answer to all the city’s housing problems, but rather just one additional “tool in the toolbox” to help address those problems. “It doesn’t create a magical subsidy or some kind of substitution for a tax exemption or below-market financing,” says Erica Buckley, a lawyer at Nixon Peabody LLP.

The de Blasio administration has expressed a particular interest in the use of CLTs to fill a gap in its existing offerings when it comes to the creation of permanently affordable single-home ownership opportunities. When it comes to rental housing, some see CLTs as not as much a necessity: There are players in the city’s established nonprofit affordable housing sector that are already dedicated to building housing for very low incomes and simply seek more resources to do so, and the city already has recently come up with other solutions to ensure permanent affordability in rental projects on public land.

On the other hand, many advocates see CLTs as providing a greater social value that exceeds these more technical aspects, and they therefore dream of the CLT movement going big and acquiring significant amounts of land—while also working hand-in-hand with existing nonprofit affordable housing developers.

Yet an effective expansion of CLTs citywide will require more resources and more city buy-in than the movement has yet seen. There will also be some tough decisions down the line as the movement tries to balance the goal of speedy expansion with that of fostering real community involvement.

The reasons to expand

For many advocates, especially organizers rooted in communities, CLTs offer the promise of community control over land-use decisions during a time when many feel they have been left subject to the whims of real-estate interests that treat land and housing solely as a commodity. The governance style of CLTs means that there’s supposed to be more say from actual low-income people who live in such communities. CLTs thus might represent another opportunity for a neighborhood’s residents to advocate, and fight to secure, housing and amenities that are truly “affordable” by their own definition.

For some, CLTs represent another step toward a “broader vision of cooperative economics for New York City,” in the words of Deyanira Del Rio from the New Economy Project—a vision that includes worker cooperatives, community development credit unions, and other entities. It’s also sometimes referred to the “solidarity economy,” and New Economy Project describes it as “a vision for an economic system that is based on values of social and racial justice, ecological, sustainability, cooperation, mutualism, and democracy” and that gives “marginalized New Yorkers” control over their lives.

And then, from an economics perspective, there’s the notion that “if you remove enough land from a neighborhood—some geographic portion of a city, or of a city as a whole...there’s going to be fewer speculative opportunities and in making fewer speculative opportunities it also means that there are whole areas that are not being speculated on,” says City College professor John Krinsky. In other words, some advocates believe that a large CLT can deter land speculation and thereby slow gentrification.

Beyond the value of bringing the benefits of deep and permanent affordability to more people, achieving local control, expanding the cooperative movement, and taking more land off the speculative market, there are also practical benefits to scaling up the city’s CLTs: large organizations are more cost-effective and can access funding more easily.

Sizing up the potential

The largest community land trust in the country is the Champlain Housing Trust, formerly the Burlington Community Land Trust and Lake Champlain Housing Development Corporation, which were both founded in 1984 while Bernie Sanders was mayor of Burlington. In December 2016, it encompassed 2,703 units of housing, and was spread throughout both urban and rural areas. The Windham and Windsor Housing Trust in Southern Vermont ranked second with 1,061 units of housing, and, in Rhode Island, Newport's Church Community Housing Corporation ranked third at 940 units, according to figures reported to the national support organization Grounded Solutions Network, which only has data on its member organizations.

In New York City, the only fully established community land trust is the Cooper Square CLT in the Lower East Side, which formed in 1994. The land is owned by the CLT while 21 buildings, comprising 328 apartments, are owned by an entity called a Mutual Housing Association, which is a multi-building self-governing cooperative that makes bulk purchases for all the buildings. Over time, most of the apartments were converted from rentals to low-income co-op units.

The organization was one of the recipients of the Enterprise Community Partners grant, which has allowed it to make some new hires and pay for some additional tenant organizing. Cooper Square now has its own visions of expansion: It's discussing the acquisition of two Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) buildings in the neighborhood, and it also has its eyes on a **desanctified church** that it believes could encompass 80 to 100 more units of housing.

"We want to expand because we want to be able to help out our neighbors in low-income housing that is threatened, but the second part of it has to do with the economies-of-scale piece, and that is, as you get more buildings and more apartments, you can purchase fuel at a deeper discount," says Dave Powell, executive director of the Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association.

There are dozens of other organizations seeking to follow Cooper Square's lead. The New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI), a CLT advocacy organization co-founded by Picture the Homeless, New Economy Project and other organizations, helped to launch the East Harlem-El Barrio Community Land Trust a few years ago. As City Limits earlier reported, the land trust sought to acquire not only vacant property but also to invite **tenants in city-owned Tenant Interim Lease** (TIL) program buildings onto the land trust.

After several years of organizing, the De Blasio administration has agreed to turn over four buildings in the neighborhood to the CLT. The CLT received \$500,000 from Enterprise, which it will use for both renovations and to hire an organizer, and \$500,000 from City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for renovations to the buildings, which will be executed by the non-profit affordable housing organizations Banana Kelly CIA Inc and CATCH. The city is exploring making additional budget commitments for rehabilitation, as well. Residents in those buildings will be renters and participants in a Mutual Housing Association.

Then there's Interboro CLT—a newly formed collaboration between four well-established housing organizations: Habitat for Humanity New York City, the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, the Mutual Housing Association of New York and Center for New York City Neighborhoods. The entity is focusing on the creation of permanently affordable homeownership opportunities throughout the city, likely with a starting focus on Southeast Queens and Central Brooklyn. Interboro received funding from Enterprise as well as \$1 million from **Citi Community Development** last year to begin its first 250 units.

The Enterprise Grant also funded NYCCLI to run a "Learning Exchange" to help nine nonprofits and community groups learn more about what it would take to build a CLT. Some of those groups, like Northfield Community Local Development Corporation in Staten Island and CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities in Chinatown, are still in the earliest stages and have not yet named specific properties they hope to acquire.

Others are already at the point of naming addresses. The Mary Mitchell Family & Youth Center hopes to launch a Crotona CLT in the Bronx and has its eyes on three properties owned, respectively, by the city, itself and an ally. The Center's vision includes a garden, community and nonprofit space and low-income housing, probably mostly rental units. The Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards in the South Bronx are trying to acquire two government-owned buildings for low-income rentals and nonprofit space, has already begun stewarding some state-owned green spaces along the Deegan Expressway, and envisions turning areas along the waterfront into community land trust greenspaces.

"We're not developers, and we're not trying to be developers. What we're trying to do is create a situation where the community can really be a steward of space and then hire professionals to manage what's on top of the ground," says Mychal Johnson, a founder of Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards. On a citywide level, Johnson would like to see more NYCHA complexes turn land over to CLTs, so that decisions about the future of any NYCHA spaces can be made in tandem with residents and the community, rather than decided by the authority. In particular, stakeholders could explore opportunities to convert apartments in some NYCHA developments into affordable cooperative homeownership units on a CLT, he says.*

Another participant in the Learning Exchange, Community Solutions, envisions the creation of a Brownsville CLT including 91 HPD-owned vacant lots in the neighborhood that they believe could hold more than 1,000 units of both rental and homeownership housing. To start, they hope the CLT can acquire several vacant lots where the city is already seeking a developer as part of its efforts to fulfill the goals of its Brownsville Plan.

Given the scarcity of public land and the skyrocketing values of private property in most parts of the city, one might wonder if New York City may be getting on the CLT bandwagon too late. Some advocates, however, still hope that in the future, CLTs—especially those that are community-driven and provide deeply affordable housing—will encompass a significant mass of the city. Johnson says ideally he'd like to see at least 25 or 50 percent of the 300,000 units in the mayor's affordable housing plan rest on a CLT. Lynn Lewis of the East Harlem-El Barrio CLT board and Del Rio similarly say their ideal vision would be hundreds of thousands of units throughout the city on a CLT.

There's a long way to go to such a vision, but there's already some ideas on the table about how to get to something the size of Burlington's CLT. City Limits spoke to the city's CLT groups about the number of units they envision could be built on specific properties they are currently seeking to acquire. Those projects add up to between 2,000 and 3,000 potential CLT units. The count does not include the potential units of groups in early stages, future units these groups may try to acquire, or units from any additional groups that did not speak with City Limits.

The ingredients for success

Asked what the Mott Haven-Port Morris CLT requires to succeed, Johnson says the biggest need is for funding to hire staff people to carry out day-to-day operations. "No one's getting paid in our organization," he says. Many other organizations trying to start CLT also spoke about the need for money to hire staff, legal counsel, and pay for community organizing and education, given that so many people still have never heard of a CLT. The funding from Enterprise has enabled some groups to hire organizers, but will only last a couple years.

New Economy Project's Del Rio would like to see the City Council establish a funding program for CLTs as they did in 2014 for worker cooperatives and make annual appropriations. NYCCLI has in the past called for a housing trust fund underwritten by higher taxes on vacant and luxury properties. Matt Dunbar of Habitat NYC says they're advocating for the state to put more money into the Affordable Home Ownership Development program, which funds the building and rehabilitation of affordable homeownership opportunities, and to mandate that all the program's projects include resale restrictions to maintain permanent affordability.

Habitat NYC is also advocating for a state property tax exemption for community land trusts. This will serve as a back-up measure to the provision in the new City Council law that allows the city's CLTs to obtain Article XI tax exemptions, and it will also help CLTs in other parts of the state.

It's not just because Bernie Sanders was hanging out in Vermont that our northern neighbor has the nation's two largest community land trusts. In 1987, the state passed the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund Act, which allocated funds from a property transfer tax to a trust fund to be used for conservation projects as well as affordable housing. The Act also mandated that any housing subsidized by Vermont be used for the creation of permanently affordable low-income housing built by nonprofit charities or CLTs. "If every city did that, it would make a huge difference," says Hiller of Grounded Solutions Network.

Indeed, beyond just funding, advocates are pushing for policies that facilitate the transfer of city-owned, or distressed, privately owned land to CLTs, such as by prioritizing CLTs when seeking partners to develop public land.

"We would like all the city-owned properties in East Harlem to be taken off the table—and I'm talking vacant lots, I'm talking city-owned buildings, and, you know, buildings are continuously going into tax liens sales and TPT," says Lewis, referring to the Third Party Transfer program, which transfers severely distressed buildings in tax foreclosure to new owners. She also mentions distressed low-income co-ops that could benefit from the cost-savings of joining a larger entity, and East Harlem's many abandoned, boarded-up privately owned buildings. Lewis would like the city to come up with policies that help move all such properties to a CLT. (Boston's famous CLT, Dudley Neighbors Incorporated, formed when the city gave a community organization the power to **take property through eminent domain**.)

But Lewis also recognizes that getting the city's trust requires time and effort, and there's some justification for that. "We don't want a situation where anybody who walks up to HPD says I want this vacant plot, and they say 'ok, here,'" she says, adding that she's encouraged by signs of HPD's growing interest in CLTs.

CLTs are currently welcomed to respond to RFPs but are not given special preference or priority. The city says it does, however, give preference for projects that offer extended affordability beyond the minimum regulatory period.

"We recognize that community-driven solutions are key to the progress of housing development and preservation. We believe [in] harnessing and nurturing these groups that are uniquely positioned to fill gaps in our robust programming," wrote Juliet Morris, a spokesperson for HPD, in an e-mail.

The challenges of growth

Some tenant advocates emphasize that expanding CLTs shouldn't be the only goal of the housing movement at the expense of all others. There are nonprofit affordable housing developers who hope that the excitement over CLTs doesn't distract from **their battle** to ensure the nonprofit sector as a whole receives a larger share of the development pie—rather than create a situation where, as one developer puts, "non-profits and CLTs end up fighting for scraps while HPD continues to steer land, buildings, and funding to their for-profit partners."

Others caution that CLTs by themselves may not be enough to bring displacement to a halt. Cooper Square may have protected low-income residents on a couple blocks in the Lower East Side, but that has not, of course, prevented the rest of that neighborhood from gentrifying.

"It's a great moment. We're very excited for the potential for this movement to grow and expand, but the other side of this is that the CLT piece is not a panacea, it's one part of a larger movement that we're part of," says Powell. "If we don't simultaneously insist that NYCHA housing is defended, and NYCHA residents are defended—if we don't simultaneously insist that vacancy decontrol in rent-stabilized housing is abolished, then we win the battle but lose the war."

There have been cases where the administration has touted investment in CLTs as part of a larger land use project that CLT advocates may or may not agree with. When the East Harlem rezoning was approved by the Council in November, the de Blasio administration and Mark-Viverito listed "fund and support the East

Harlem-El Barrio Community Land Trust” as one of the investments the city would make in the neighborhood. Lewis says the CLT board actually took a stance against the rezoning, which, in her view, makes East Harlem “opened up like a piñata for developers to come in and snatch properties.” She’s now waiting to see to what degree the city actually supports the CLT going forward. “How can the CLT really be a ‘community benefit’? What does that really mean?” she says.

These concerns aside, there’s also the question of how to balance the CLT movement’s desire for scale with the goal of thorough community engagement. Given the rapid creep of gentrification into outer borough neighborhoods—and the urgency of the affordability crisis—it’s logical that some CLT advocates would want CLTs to establish themselves efficiently and acquire land as fast as possible.

“From the perspective of addressing a housing challenge...I would rather see 100 units be permanently affordable from a Habitat [for Humanity], versus five over 15 years from a community-based organization,” says Hiller.

But if CLTs are going to be truly community-based and community governed—not just another tool pushed forward by large, if benevolent nonprofits—they’ll require a level of careful community engagement that could take much longer.

Hiller adds that she deeply values community engagement and that ideally New York City’s CLT movement will create a structure that allows for both efficient expansion and grassroots connections. This might look like a “hub and spoke” system where there’s a central organization with development capacity that is connected to many neighborhood groups that are facilitating on-the-ground conversations, she says. Indeed, NYCCLI is actually in the early stages of exploring a citywide community land trust that would be able to provide administrative support, and acquire properties, on behalf of smaller groups that are rooted in neighborhoods.

If CLTs want to go big, they will ultimately grapple not only with the issue of securing resources and land, but also with how to establish their legitimacy while at the same time staying loyal to, as Del Rio says, the “C” in CLT.

“One thing that people really want to make sure is that scale doesn’t lead to a dilution of mission or connection to the community,” says Del Rio. “What are the mechanisms to ensure that CLTs really respond to and are led by community members?”

**Amended to clarify Johnson’s vision.*

CityViews: NYC Needs Equitable Economic Development, Not the Amazon Deal

By Deyanira Del Rio and Andy Morrison | November 28, 2018



The governor, the mayor and representatives of Amazon and public agencies announce the LIC deal.

Unless you've been stuck under a rock – or perhaps on the 7 train – you've heard the news: the winner of the Amazon HQ2 sweepstakes is...Amazon. Two hundred and thirty-eight cities competed. Twenty finalists raced to the finish line. Two – New York City and Washington, D.C. – were selected to split Amazon's new so-called second headquarters. But in the end, Amazon took home the big prize: **\$4.6 billion of public money**.

New York assembled an **unprecedented package** of subsidies to lure one of the world's biggest corporations, headed by the world's wealthiest human, Jeff Bezos, to Queens. The negotiations took place behind closed doors, without a single public hearing and little, if any, community engagement. To prevent possible delays or second-guessing of the deal, the Mayor agreed to **bypass** the **City Council** and the city's **public land use process**. And it just so happens that Amazon's Long Island City location will be sited in one of Trump's new "**opportunity zones**," offering up lucrative tax breaks to **wealthy investors** and further enticing development that will likely exacerbate gentrification.

Did we mention the **helipad**?

In a rare **kumbaya moment**, Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio came together earlier this month to celebrate Amazon's planned Queens campus. Local residents, electeds, and community and labor groups, meanwhile, have voiced **vehement opposition to the plan**, and **a coalition** has quickly come together to try to block its implementation. Opponents foresee further strain on the city's already beleaguered transit system and infrastructure; accelerated gentrification and displacement in Long Island City and northwest Queens; and yet another corporate welfare deal – reportedly the largest in New York's history – benefiting a company with an abysmal record on labor and the environment, no less.

So, what would an equitable economic development agenda for New York look like?

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For starters, we need to dramatically change the frame on development. Instead of handing billions in public subsidies to Amazon and other mega-corporations, New York should invest in cooperative, bottom-up economic development led by and directly benefiting people and communities of color, immigrants, and women – who are disproportionately harmed by our current unfair, extractive economy.

New York is perfectly positioned to grow its cooperative economy, and in fact has taken initial steps to do so. The number of **worker-owned businesses** in the city has tripled since 2014, thanks in part to **critical, multi-year funding** from the City Council. Worker co-ops like Sunset Park's **Sí Se Puede** and the Bronx's **Cooperative Home Care Associates** provide thousands of jobs with dignity to immigrants and women of color who make up the majority of worker-owners here. And in Albany, Sen. Jamaal T. Bailey, who represents parts of the Northeast and Northwest Bronx and the City of Mount Vernon, has introduced **legislation** to create a state-run employee ownership center, providing technical assistance and other support to businesses that are converting to worker ownership.

Community land trusts – like New York City's **Cooper Square** and **East Harlem/El Barrio** CLTs and Buffalo's **Fruit Belt** CLT – are likewise **gaining traction** as a proven strategy to curb speculation and ensure permanently affordable housing and serve other community needs. New York City passed enabling CLT legislation last year, and the NYS Attorney General's office recently **helped direct bank settlement funds** to CLT efforts around the state. A crucial next step should be for city and state agencies to prioritize CLTs and permanently affordable housing, when awarding public land and other subsidies.

Community development financial institutions (CDFIs) represent another opportunity for New York to jumpstart economic growth at the grassroots. In historically-redlined neighborhoods throughout the state, loan funds and financial co-ops – like **The Working World** and **Lower East Side People's Federal Credit Union** – are meeting critical needs, channeling **more than \$2 billion** in low-cost financing annually to support New York's small and worker-owned businesses, limited-equity housing co-ops, community centers, and more. That's why more than **60 organizations statewide** last year called for a modest \$25 million budget allocation to support CDFIs – tantamount to a rounding error in the

state budget and .01 percent of what New York has offered Amazon. The governor and state legislature should deliver on funding for CDFIs this legislative session.

And that's just scratching the surface.

A comprehensive equity agenda starts with a bold vision. It calls for policies and actions that transform, rather than perpetuate, our fundamentally unjust social, political and economic systems. It means putting racial and economic justice front and center. It requires decision-making led by people and communities typically left out of, and harmed by, status quo economic development. And it demands that our elected officials do much more to tackle our most existential crises – from climate devastation to persistent wealth inequality. In the face of federal attacks on immigrants, women and people of color, the need for bold, local action has never been greater.

Unlike Amazon, grassroots and nonprofit initiatives advancing equitable development *actually need* public support. Imagine what a even slice of the billions promised to Amazon would do to expand worker, food, and financial coops; channel land to CLTs; expand **community-controlled renewable energy**; create an office to support cooperative economics in every city; or even capitalize municipal **public banks** to bolster equitable economic development initiatives and free municipalities from Wall Street predation.

Wouldn't it be nice if the governor and mayor teamed up for that?

Deyanira Del Rio is co-director and Andy Morrison is campaigns director of New Economy Project, which works with community groups and low-income New Yorkers to build an economy that works for all.

Could a Community Land Trust Keep Brownsville Affordable? Local Nonprofit Says Yes.

Community land trusts transfer the control of city-owned land to local residents and stakeholders to maintain affordability and economic diversity of their neighborhood.



by [Andrea Leonhardt](#) — January 29, 2019



Vacant lot at 457 Powell Street. Source: Google Map

The [Brownsville Partnership](#), a collaborative of more than 30 organizations working to improve the health, safety and prosperity of Brownsville, is forming a community land

trust for Brownsville and Ocean Hill and is looking for local residents to join the advisory committee.

"Brownsville is a good location for a community land trust because of the significant opportunities for development here," said John Napolitano, senior project manager of Inspiring Places for the Brownsville Partnership. "As vacant land owned by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development is redeveloped, a CLT will help ensure that the new building supports the goal that every Brownsville resident has a safe, healthy and affordable place to live."

Community land trusts are nonprofit corporations that develop and steward affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces and other community assets on behalf of the community. In neighborhoods like Brownsville, where an influx of development on long-vacant land is underway, CLTs are particularly important, said Napolitano.

"Creating a CLT can help ensure that as development happens in Brownsville, it's done in a way that keeps the interests of the community front and center," said Napolitano. "By empowering the community to participate in the development process, the CLT can ensure that new construction addresses what matters to Brownsville residents, like creating more housing that's truly affordable. Most importantly, a CLT gives the community a strong say in future planning and development. It's crucial that a CLT is established before development comes in, so that affordability can be preserved for current residents."

Once formed as an independent nonprofit, the mission of this membership-based organization will be to transfer control of select real estate assets to local residents and community stakeholders to maintain affordability, economic diversity and local access to essential services within the neighborhood. A board drawn from residents, other members of the community, advisors and public officials will oversee the operations of the CLT, Napolitano explained.

The Brownsville CLT will place particular emphasis on providing new homeownership and rental opportunities, as well as sponsoring community improvement and placemaking projects on vacant properties.

The Brownsville Partnership is now looking for local residents to join the CLT advisory committee that will shape how city-owned vacant land in Brownsville will be developed and provide a check to ensure that the new housing being built is affordable and serves the community's needs.



"Our goal is to form a panel of at least 12 members, with residents and local stakeholders making up two-thirds of the group," said Napolitano.

A first introductory meeting was held on January 16, and a second introductory meeting will take place in mid-February. The CLT will be formed in the next few months, with the election of board members taking place later this year, said Napolitano.

The Brownsville Partnership is still accepting applications from interested residents. For more information, sign up [here](#).

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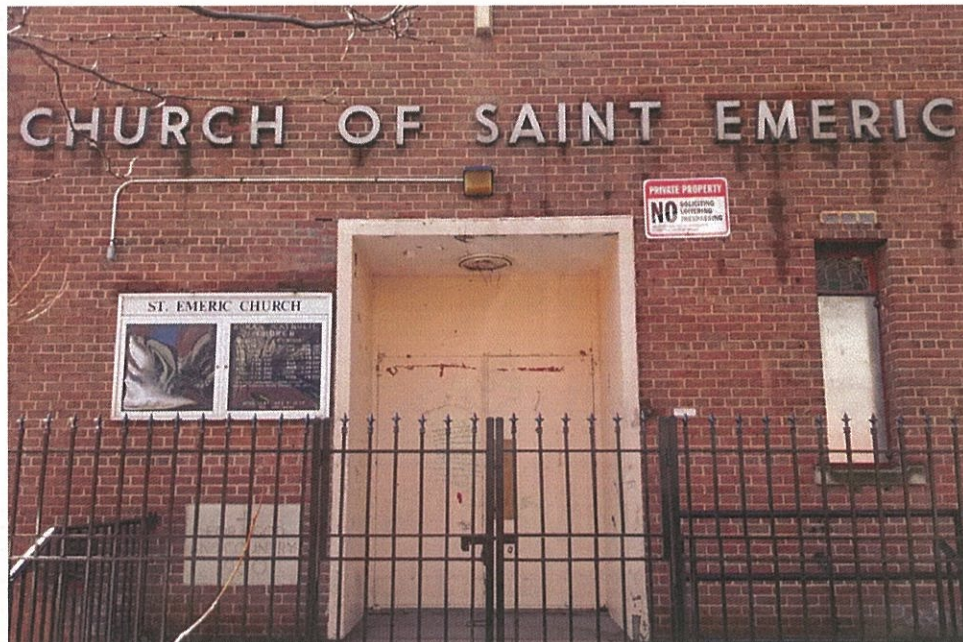
EAST VILLAGE | NYC AFFORDABLE HOUSING

3

Shuttered East Village churches must be converted into low-income housing, advocates say

"The Archdiocese of New York has an opportunity to take a bold step for the community," said one advocate

By **Caroline Spivack** | Feb 21, 2019, 9:31am EST



Advocates aim to develop 400 units of below-market-rate housing at the former Church of Saint Emeric on East 13th Street. | Caroline Spivack/Curbed NY

The Archdiocese of New York is considering a proposal to turn over a shuttered East Village church to a land trust that would transform the property into 400 units of below-market-rate housing.

The [Cooper Square Community Land Trust](#) has offered to partner with developer [Jonathan Rose Companies](#) to create a mixed-income community on the roughly 300,000-square-foot parcel at 740 East 13th Street between Avenues C and D. The plan is the latest in a years-long effort urging the archdiocese to convert unused church space

into affordable homes for a Manhattan neighborhood where nearly half of the tenants are rent burdened.

The archdiocese has already committed to devoting 100,000 square feet of the property toward affordable housing—though they have yet to define tenant income requirements—on land that houses the former Church of St. Emeric. But housing advocates say the church should further its charitable mission by devoting the entire lot to low- to middle-income housing.

“We believe it would be unjust to develop part of St. Emeric’s for market rate housing,” wrote Valerio Orselli, project director with the Cooper Square Community Land Trust, and Steve Herrick, the executive director of the Cooper Square Committee, in a recent letter to David Brown, the archdiocese’s director of real estate. “The Lower East Side/East Village community between East 14th St. and Houston St. has lost a great deal of affordable housing in the past decade, and we cannot help but view the Archdiocese’ disposition of its properties in this context.”

The archdiocese, which says it is the largest private developer of low-income housing in the city, invited Cooper Square to submit a revised proposal for the site after rejecting the land trust’s July bid to partner with the Catholic Church on low-income senior housing at another shuttered house of worship: the Church of the Nativity at 42-46 Second Avenue between East Second and Third streets, according to Orselli.



The Church of the Nativity closed its doors in August 2015 and faces an uncertain fate. | Caroline Spivack/Curbed NY

Joseph Zwilling, a spokesperson for the Archdiocese of New York, said that the Church of the Nativity belongs to Most Holy Redeemer Parish because the Nativity's congregation merged with the East Third Street church and is not owned by the archdiocese. In instances of unused church space, the archdiocese works with a given parish to determine the best course of action.

The Cooper Square Community Land Trust, a Lower East Side organization that ensures community stewardship of land, offered to buy Church of the Nativity for \$18.5 million (with \$5 million in closing costs) over a 30-year period, but the Archdiocese has instead expressed interest in seeking market value for the land and using the funds to address needs at the Most Holy Redeemer and parishes across the city, according to Cooper Square's letter. As an alternative, the Archdiocese suggested St. Emeric's—which is directly across from a Con Edison power plant and requires environmental remediation from contaminated soil—as a potential site for affordable housing.

Rather than an either/or approach, advocates contend that both parcels should be developed into below-market-rate housing and argue that the Catholic Church's resistance to do so flies in the face of its doctrine.

“It’s in direct contradiction in the teachings of the Church,” said Orselli. “We understand that the Church has obligations, but there clearly is a disconnect from the social justice thesis of the Church and the practices of the real estate offices of the Archdiocese.”

The Church of Nativity closed its doors in August 2015 as part of a downsizing effort within the archdiocese that shrunk its number of parishes from 368 to 296. Parishioners from the Church of St. Emeric landed at a merged Church of St. Brigid-St. Emeric, which was also set to close and its buildings demolished until an anonymous donor stepped in with some \$20 million to endow and restore the Avenue B church.

In canonical terms, the Catholic Church has since relegated the former Church of Nativity to profane use. This means it can be sold and used for anything that is not antithetical to Catholic teaching (what is known as a sordid use)—but neighborhood advocates say that ignoring the neighborhood’s dire need for below-market-rate housing and selling the land to the highest bidder is tantamount to a sordid use.

“It’s kind of mind boggling,” said Rebecca Amato, the associate director of the Office of Civic Engagement and Urban Democracy Lab at NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study, who got involved with the Church of Nativity efforts while studying the Cooper Square Community Land Trust. “It shows a complete lack of knowledge or respect or ignorance of the history of the Lower East Side and of the faith of the people who have lived there for centuries.”

Amato even raised her concerns at a November conference in Rome hosted by the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Culture discussing the use of decommissioned Catholic churches across the globe.

Today, the Cooper Square Community Land Trust fears it is unlikely that the group will reach an agreement with the archdiocese to develop the Church of the Nativity site. Instead, if the property is sold with the purpose of developing housing, the trust urges the archdiocese to mandate a buyer develop a minimum of 25 percent affordable housing.

“We have concluded that we cannot make a viable offer to develop even mixed-income rental housing at the Nativity site that would satisfy the Archdiocese’ purchase price requirement,” reads Cooper Square’s letter to the archdiocese, which notes that

developers the group has consulted with estimate a high-end price of \$40 million for the land.

Meanwhile, if the trust's proposal to develop St. Emeric's is accepted, the project would also include community space, as well as services for mental and physical health, senior services, and educational programming. The group would fine tune the plan based off of community feedback.

The Cooper Square Community Land Trust is in the midst of organizing a May town hall—with the support of Community Board 3—on the fate of the Church of Nativity, the St. Emeric's site, and on the issue of how decommissioned churches can be best utilized by the archdiocese and the communities they once served. A venue and exact date have not yet been set.



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**TESTIMONY
of
FPWA**

**Presented to:
New York City Council Finance Committee
Budget Hearing on the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2020
Hon. Chair Daniel Dromm
Wednesday, March 27th, 2019**

**Prepared By:
Winn Periyasamy
Policy Analyst**

**Jennifer Jones Austin
Executive Director/CEO**

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My name is Winn Periyasamy and I am a Policy Analyst at the FPWA (formerly the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies). I would like to thank Chairperson Dromm and the members of the Finance Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today and for your leadership on issues that deeply effect New Yorkers.

FPWA is an anti-poverty, policy and advocacy nonprofit with a membership network of 170 human service and faith-based organizations. FPWA has been a prominent force in New York City's social services system for more than 95 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. To fulfill these goals, FPWA encourages the City Council to fund several initiatives that support upward mobility for New Yorkers by building and developing the workforce, ensuring safety and dignity for workers in New York, increasing access to health care, and developing community leadership. We urge the City Council to:

- **Support the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative (DLWI), which provides New York's most vulnerable workers with safer employment options and workforce development services, by enhancing DLWI to \$3.6 million in FY20.**
- **Restore funding for Access Health NYC to \$2.5 million, which will help hard-to-reach and underserved populations access information and health care coverage.**

FPWA supports these initiatives as keys to upward mobility and poverty reduction in the future, and at the same time, we also recognize that critical services must be delivered to New Yorkers facing poverty now. **To this end, FPWA encourages the City Council to invest over \$330 million across the human services sector to fully fund contracts and fill service gaps in early childhood education, afterschool programs, and programs for older adults.**

Day Laborer Workforce Initiative

FPWA urges the City Council to enhance Day Laborer Workforce Initiative to \$3.6 million. The Day Laborer Workforce Initiative supports the expansion and development of Day Laborer Centers across the five boroughs. Over three years the Initiative has dispatched over 4,000 jobs and trained thousands of day laborers on their legal rights, job safety, and work-related skills. The fifth year of the initiative will focus on the creation of new day labor centers in the Bronx while increasing services at existing centers in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island. These centers provide dignified, physical space for day laborers, offer support through job referrals, wage theft legal clinics, referral to critical services, and workforce development. Through the efforts of the initiative, there will be six day laborer centers at the end of fiscal year 2020 serving all five boroughs.

As members of the city's underground workforce, day laborers experience rampant wage theft, pervasive construction accidents, workforce hazards, lack of access to workforce development training, and lack of infrastructure. We ask that New York City commit to supporting the expansion and development of Day Laborer Centers across the five boroughs. Consequently, these centers will provide job placement and workforce development services to the most vulnerable of workers. The Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, through the existing day laborer centers in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island and the development of new centers, supports five key services: 1) Job Referral, 2) Wage Theft supports 3) Know Your Rights Trainings 4) Referral Services to Critical Services 5) Workforce Development Trainings. Lastly, with the necessary funding, the Initiative also plans on training day

laborers to respond to city-wide emergencies and disasters, acting as “secondary responders” to assist with clean, demolition, and construction in the aftermath of natural disasters.

Access Health NYC

Access Health NYC is a citywide initiative to fund community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide education, outreach, and assistance to all New Yorkers about how to access health care and coverage. Access Health NYC builds capacity, amplifies existing efforts and supports community-based organizations by targeting individuals and families who face barriers to accessing health care or seeking information about health coverage options, such as New Yorkers who are uninsured, limited in English proficiency, disabled, LGBTQ, formerly incarcerated, low-income, and/or homeless.

Health care is complicated in New York. Currently, New York State Department of Health does not fund contracted Navigator organizations to conduct community education, outreach, and post-enrollment assistance. Underserved communities look to CBOs for culturally competent and accurate information about free or low-cost programs and services. CBOs need funding, support and training to help them ensure that every New Yorker understands how to access health care coverage and services. Better access to insurance coverage and primary and preventive care will reduce health care costs for families and safety net providers like the Health and Hospitals Corporation (H+H) and will improve health outcomes for all New Yorkers.

FPWA urges the City Council to restore the Access Health NYC Initiative to \$2.5 million.

Without this funding, the 31 designated CBOs, and the five lead agencies who support their work, would not have the capacity to conduct the outreach their communities need to know their rights to health coverage and care. This initiative’s unique ability to serve hard-to-reach New Yorkers is critical in today’s political climate. Even as anti-immigrant rhetoric has frightened communities, these organizations have also described success in finding new ways to draw their clients back into using services by providing community safe spaces for discussion of federal threats or even accessing credible messengers (such as friends and family) to pass along accurate information. Moreover, while New York City has shown leadership in increasing access to healthcare for low-income and vulnerable New Yorkers by announcing the new NYC Care program, it has created another important role for Access Health NYC partners. During the two-year transition period for this groundbreaking program, Access Health NYC CBOs will be needed to provide linguistically appropriate, culturally responsive, community-centered outreach. Restoring funding towards designated CBOs will continue their outreach to key underserved populations and will allow Access Health NYC to assist even more target communities and improve health care access and outcomes for New Yorkers.

Human Service Budget

FPWA is very concerned about some pressing needs that were not addressed in the Mayor’s Executive budget. These issues affect some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Human Service Contracts

The human services sector of our city is in crisis. Providers have long been sounding the alarm about the impact of the chronic underfunding of government contracts and now we have reached a breaking point. Without a crucial investment in our current contracts, my organization will have to reevaluate how we can engage with the city to provide crucial services to our communities. As things currently stand, we can no longer carry the deficit of our city contracts.

The gap between what the City funds on human services contracts and what providers can supplement with private and philanthropic dollars has grown too wide. It is vital that no cuts are made to human

service programs as part of the mandated budget reductions and the chronic underfunding of the sector is rectified.

The sector is united in asking the City Council to include in their budget response a request for the Mayor to invest \$250 million to fill the gap between provider's indirect costs and the contract reimbursement rates from the City. The new Health and Human Services Cost Policies and Procedures Manual, which was developed alongside Deputy Mayor Palacio, lays out standardized indirect costs for our sector. However, without increased funding to address the gaps this manual displays in our contracts, the fiscal crisis we are facing remains unaddressed. Based on numbers provided by the Office of Management and Budget, \$250 million should cover the costs to fully implement this manual.

While we understand the driving narrative around this budget is mandated budget cuts, there is money to go around. The City has made massive investments in areas including city staff and infrastructure while the needs of the human services sector have gone largely ignored. It is time to take the state of emergency facing this sector seriously and prioritize the needs of organizations that provide an estimated 2.5 million New Yorkers annually with critical services including after-school programs, supportive housing, homeless services, job training, and mental health services.

Early Childhood Education

Mayor de Blasio's Preliminary Budget maintains his commitment to pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds and includes a new investment in mental health services for young children in early childhood education programs. Unfortunately, however, the Preliminary Budget failed to include any of the investments needed to strengthen or expand the early childhood system, such as salary parity for teachers in community-based child care programs.

To ensure child care programs can operate without significant deficits and that programs can provide safe, high-quality care, the following must be funded in Fiscal Year 2020:

- **Ensure quality and equity by creating salary parity** for teachers, staff, and directors between DOE schools and CBOs.
- **Ensure 3 and 4-year olds have access to wrap around care**, including before and after the school day and during the summer months.
- **Increase** the capacity of the subsidized early childhood system to serve more infants and toddlers.
- **Make all homeless children in shelter eligible for subsidized child care.**
- **Ensure the transition of EarlyLearn contracted child care to DOE strengthens** the early childhood system and **creates** a strong high-quality birth to five system. This must include expanding the system to reach all children under 5, increasing capacity for infants and toddlers, ensuring that the needs of children with disabilities and dual language learners are met, combating segregation, and addressing trauma to prepare young children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

After-school and Summer Programs

After-school and summer programs provide quality youth development opportunities to school-age children and youth. These programs offer a broad range of educational, recreational, and culturally age-appropriate activities that integrate school day experiences. In addition, they allow working parents to go to work each day, year-round, certain that their child is safe and learning.

To maintain the strength of the after-school and summer program system, the following must be funded in Fiscal Year 2020:

- **Ensure all middle school students** in after-school programs **have access** to summer programs. (This includes **restoring and baselining \$20.35 million for 34,000 middle school students.**)
- **Implement universal access to full-year after-school/summer** programs for elementary school children. (This includes restoring and baselining **\$8 million** to maintain current levels of elementary after-school capacity.)
- **Address enrollment priorities** for students in shelters and prioritize their enrollment in after-school and summer programs.
- **Expand** after-school and summer programs for high school students.
- **Provide stable, reliable multi-year funding** to create sustainable programs. **Provide a sufficient per-child rate** to ensure quality standards are met.

Older Adults

Community-based aging services funded through the Department for the Aging have been on the front lines of serving immigrant older adults and the diverse population of older New Yorkers for many years. Current resources are not an adequate investment in programs and services for older adults. To adequately meet the needs of New York City's older adults, FPWA supports the following recommendations.

- **\$20 million to increase** the reimbursement rate for congregate meals, which is currently 20% under the national average, fairly fund staffing, and address unfunded costs of running senior center kitchens.
- **\$15 million to increase** rates for home-delivered meals which are currently 20% below the national average rate, ensure cultural competency, flexibility, and address growing demand.
- **Invest \$10 million** to provide funding for DFTA infrastructure needs, and for accessible funding for emergency repairs, particularly in the 100 DFTA NYCHA Senior Centers and Clubs.
- **\$1 million restoration** for FY19 one-year funding for Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) added to DFTA's budget.

Conclusion

We thank the City Council for the opportunity to testify. We hope that you will consider our budget priorities and recommendations during this year's budget negotiation process and look forward to working closely with you to ensure hard-working individuals and families receive sufficient services needed for them to live and thrive in their communities.



FOR THE RECORD

**TESTIMONY
of
Workers' Justice Project (WJP)**

Presented to:

The New York City Council Committee on Finance

Daniel Dromm, Chair

Wednesday, March 27th, 2019

Prepared By:

Reyna Tellez

WJP member leader

**Workers' Justice Project (WJP)
365 Broadway Brooklyn, NY 11211**

Good morning, honorable Daniel Dromm and distinguished members of the Finance Committee of the City of New York. My name is Reyna Tellez , I'm from Mexico. I'm a worker, mother of two beautiful boys, member of the community and member of Workers Justice Project.

My experience as a domestic worker unfortunately had been bad. My experiences have been humiliating where I had to clean on my knees , I have worked for long hours without a right to have a break nor time to eat. For necessity I agreed to these situations.

For these reasons I became a member of Workers Justice Project to help me and inform me about my rights as a worker. And together achieve a fair job change, worthy and respect. For that reason, in the organization we created a committee for domestic workers where the organization support us and represent us. That way we organize employers so they can value our work as domestic workers and treat us with dignity so that our rights as domestic workers are respected and valued. Through this committee we are formalizing the domestic work by having employers sign a contract that agrees to pay a minimum of \$15 per hour, where we are treated with respect, give us time for lunch and work with dignity and security, by not working on our knees, we deserve to get paid on time, because "hours worked, hours paid," and a better treatment, fair and worthy where we are not treated as criminals. No to the unfairness for domestic workers.

Today more than ever we depend on our center so we can continue fighting, learning and contributing to the economy of this city. I am here to request funding in the amount of 3.6 million for the day laborers like my center so we can continue to exist and support my community.

We hope you will consider the Day Laborers and Cooperatives as part of your priorities during this year's budget negotiation process and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you.

Thank you for giving me the time to express myself and I join us in our fight. We look forward to counting with your support so we can continue changing people's lives as mine has changed. Thank you.

New York City Council FY 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing
City Council Committee on Finance
Testimony of Maria Policarpo, President of Local 1757, DC37
March 27, 2019

Good Afternoon members of the City Council. My name is Maria Policarpo; I am President of DC37, Local 1757, which represents Assessors and I work as an Assessor with the NYC Tax Commission. I am going to speak in regard to the critical need for the hiring of more Assessors as a crucial part of the Department of Finance's budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The gross insufficiency of these professionals in the Department of Finance, Property Field Division is a leading cause of uncollected revenue. Assessors are responsible for overseeing the valuation of approximately 1,100,000 parcels within the five boroughs of NYC.

There should be a minimum of 150 districts to properly maintain and value them; instead there are only 87 districts with 23 of them vacant. There are supposed to be 17 supervisors for the 87 districts, yet 6 supervisor positions are vacant. Staffing is at crisis level. The hiring of 80 additional Assessors will help to back fill the current vacancies and create smaller more manageable districts. The City continues to lose hundreds of millions of tax dollars due to the limited time an Assessor is able to spend in the field for inspections of new construction or major alteration projects who file with the Building Department; and virtually no time to pick up those who do work without permits.

BORO	TOTAL # OF DISTRICTS	TOTAL # OF VACANT DISTRICTS	TOTAL # OF SUPERVISORS	TOTAL # OF VACANT SUPERVISORS
1	21	5	4	2
2	11	1	2	1
3	27	6	5	0
4	21	10	5	2
5	7	1	1	1
TOTALS	87	23	17	6

Director positions which should be held by Administrative Assessor titles remain vacant for over a year. The Assessment Division is being run by Staff Analysts who have never held the title of Assessor and have no assessment or appraisal background. Somehow, these same Staff Analysts are also in charge of training newly hired Assistant Assessors and Assessors. We cannot stress enough the importance of creating a dedicated training unit run by qualified and experienced Assessors. Time for this is running out as senior staff is rapidly retiring and taking their knowledge with them.

Over a million dollars has been wasted on field computers that never worked. Additional funds are now being allocated for a third useless tablet, however, simple cameras and measuring wheels are not available.

The modeling system was meant to be a tool, yet management continues in its attempt to have it take the place of the Assessor. In turn, the quality of the tax roll is very poor. This is evidenced in the 56,000 and counting property tax appeals filed yearly with the Tax Commission. The additional liability facing NYC must be considered in the upcoming budget due to the irresponsible passing of Intro 1038-A by the NYC Council, even though the Mayor was compelled by our argument of its detrimental nature to return the bill unsigned.

Assessors at the Tax Commission are tasked with determining an average of 2,000 parcels each per season and are required to complete ten hours per week for twelve weeks of mandatory overtime. This year we face the additional burden of rendering sound decisions without the benefit of certification by a CPA of income and expense statement figures on the majority of parcels heard. The additional workload this creates and the number of individuals eligible to retire in the near future calls for a line of succession to be addressed with the hiring of 20 additional Assessors in the Tax Commission.

The impact of the shortage of assessment staff will be a loss of billions of dollars in tax revenue in the coming years along with tremendous liability incurred if property tax appeals are not settled. Local 1757 thanks you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Testimony
New York City Council Finance Committee 2019 Budget Hearing
March 27, 2019

By Ralph Palladino 2nd Vice President
DC 37 Local 1549 Clerical-Administrative Employees

Local 1549 represents 14,000 employees of the City of New York, who are also taxpayers, working in virtually all city agencies, the NYPD, NYC Health and Hospitals and the Metro Plus HMO. Our members are the 911 operators who answer emergency calls, the 311 Call Center Representatives providing vital information, and the HRA Eligibility Specialists in Medicaid and Food Stamps, who provide assistance to families in need. In NYC H+H, we also perform information providing, billing and financial counseling duties.

This testimony is a summary of all those given during the budget hearing process this past month. The documentation supporting our requests were previously distributed and attached to all of those testimonies that you already have.

The budget asks are broken down to Staffing Needs and Revenue Generating. The following are those asks:

Local 1549's Ask for Budget

Staffing Needs

- 1- Hire Eligibility Specialists in the city's Human Resources Administration (HRA). It is the ONLY way that HRA can reduce wait times for service in person and on phones. 400 ES positions were allowed to be lost to attrition by the city and HRA administration the past four years. 400 ES's (18%) must be hired if wait times and conflicts in HRA between staff and clients are to be reduced. It is outrageous that at a time when New Yorkers paid a fee to be on civil service lists that they are not called, especially when there is a need. Is a shame that poorer, most people of color, children and elderly must be treated like third class citizens and be forced to wait for servicing do to staffing shortages.
- 2- Support the NYC Care funding for NYC H+H in order to make sure those that those, mostly immigrants in need of healthcare receive it. The NYC H+H cannot possibly absorb the total cost of visits from patients who cannot obtain health insurance.
- 3- Begin to use the Interpreter title city-wide and Client Navigator in NYC H+H instead of the private, contracted out phone lines. Face to face interpretation is a far better service eliminating mistakes in misinterpretations. These employees can also translate documents.

Revenue Generating

- 1- Reach out to the Mayor's office, NYPD Commissioner O'Neill and Governor Cuomo and request that the 911 Surcharge on telephone and cell phone bills be used for the purpose it was intended, to enhance the 911 emergency system. The FCC report issued in December says that 42% of the \$189 million of the funds collected were diverted from 911 use to the state General Fund. Use the surcharge to upgrade the 911 system

and hire 500 additional PCT/SPCTs for the NYPD 911 System call centers. That the funding be sent on a recurring basis.

- 2- The City Council should pressure the NYPD to complete the Civilianization of the Police Administrative Aide work currently being performed by 500 able bodied uniformed officers. **A saving of almost \$30 million a year.** There are New Yorkers who paid to take a test and be placed on the PAA Civil Service list who deserve jobs!
- 3- The City Council should request that the city, DCAS and NYC H+H strictly adhere to the placement of employees in positions according to their job description and proper titles. These are higher paid titles performing clerical-administrative duties. Most are non-competitive titles taking civil service positions. But a significant amount are also higher titles including managerial and semi-managerial. There has been an attrition of 400 Clerical Associate (33%) positions in HRA over four years. The agency replaces the CA title with non-Civil Service, Non-competitive titles at a higher cost to the agency and city while subverting the Civil Service system. That all litigation of cases involving collective bargaining disputes on this issue be expedited to conclusion as soon as possible. That DCAS be asked to send a memo to all city agencies to cease this practice. That this practice begun by the Bloomberg Administration which is a waste of city tax dollars must be ended. At least \$3 million can be saved by city agencies by doing so.
- 4- Reach out to Albany TODAY to make sure the NYC H+H receive its' fair share of funding from the state regarding Disproportionate Share (DSH) funds and also increase Medicaid Reimbursement Rates. The NYC H+H has an overhead of 3% but loses \$150 for every visit from someone on Medicaid. Every dollar spend on Medicaid adds \$2 to the local economy.
- 5- Reach out to Albany TODAY to support the Gottfried/Rivera legislation in Albany for funding of patients in need for the Essential Healthcare Plan. Some of this funding will be used by NYC H+H
- 6- Reach out to Albany TODAY to make sure that TANF funding is not cut.

The people of who need the services the most, and would benefit from civil service job creation come mostly from communities of color including the poorest parts of the city. They deserve better! We ask the NY City Council to support our Asks and that the city implement them.

Thank you

TESTIMONY

New York City Council
Committee on Finance jointly with the Subcommittee on Capital
Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Wednesday, March 27, 2019

Submitted by:
Michelle Jackson
Deputy Executive Director
Human Services Council of New York

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairperson Dromm, members of the New York City Council Finance Committee, and to the membership of the Subcommittee on Capital. My name is Michelle Jackson and I am the Deputy Executive Director of the Human Services Council, a membership organization representing over 170 human services providers in New York City.

HSC serves our membership as a coordinating body, advocate, and an intermediary between the human services sector and government. We take on this work so our members can focus on running their organizations and providing direct support to New Yorkers. These are the nonprofits that support our City's children, seniors, those experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, individuals who are incarcerated or otherwise involved in the justice system, immigrants, and individuals coping with substance abuse and other mental health and behavioral challenges. We strive to help our members' better serve their clients by addressing matters such as government procurement practices, disaster preparedness and recovery, government funding, and public policies that impact the sector.

It is in this capacity that I come before you to say that the human services sector of our City is in crisis. I do not say this lightly. Each year you hear from providers who are struggling, but because significant changes have not been made, the compounding crisis of underfunding this sector has caught up to the City. Across New York, providers are reporting large deficits stemming from inadequate government reimbursement levels and an inability to fundraise their way out of the gap. Some are considering downsizing or closing if no significant changes are made.

What makes this crisis even more urgent is the current economic unpredictability that could impact human services budgets as well as increases the need for services. Mayor de Blasio said there's a "high likelihood" we will face a recession this year or next when he released his FY20 budget, the State has warned of low revenue, and the federal budget climate is uncertain. If this is the case, you are going to need us now more than ever. An economic crisis would lead to rising demand to the programs the City relies on our sector to provide including food assistance, child care subsidies, and job development. However, human services nonprofits are already underfunded to the point that scaling back existing services could be required to make ends meet. This would lead to delays in the ability for New Yorkers to receive the help and the economic stability they need not only for themselves but for the economic recovery of New York City as a whole.

The gap between what the City funds on human services contracts and what providers can supplement with private and philanthropic dollars has grown too wide. It is vital that no cuts are made to human service programs as part of the mandated budget reductions and the chronic underfunding of the sector is rectified.

The sector is united in asking the City Council to include in their budget response a request for the Mayor to invest \$250 million dollars to fill the gap between provider's indirect costs and the contract reimbursement rates from the City. The new *Health and Human Services Cost Policies and Procedures Manual*, which was developed as part of the Nonprofit Resiliency Committee, lays out standardized indirect costs for our sector. However, without increased funding to address the gaps this manual displays in our contracts, the fiscal crisis we are facing remains unaddressed. Based on numbers provided by the Office of Management and Budget, \$250 million should cover the costs to fully implement this manual.

While we understand the driving narrative around this budget is mandated budget cuts, there is money to go around. The City has made massive investments in areas including City staff and infrastructure while the needs of the human services sector have gone largely ignored. It is time to take the state of emergency facing this sector seriously and prioritize the needs of organizations that provide an estimated 2.5 million New Yorkers annually with critical services including after-school programs, supportive housing, homeless services, job training, and mental health services.

We need this core investment this year and to work with the Council to create a better partnership for the procurement of human services, where providers are trusted as experts who have worked for decades in their communities and are brought into the room from the start on contracts to ensure they create the most cost-effective and impactful programs.

Indirect Manual

Through the Nonprofit Resiliency Committee, the new *Health and Human Services Cost Policies and Procedures Manual* is set to be released soon. This manual standardizes indirect rate definitions across human services contracts and creates a standard approach for providers to calculate an individualized rate. This is a step forward in allowing providers to understand and apply real indirect costs to City contracts and create a streamlined approach across agencies. The manual does not include funding for providers who have rates higher than the rates currently allowed on contracts, nor does it allow for a reduction in services.

The City does not adapt to the real costs of doing business, and asks providers to move money around when there are cost increases outside of the control of providers. Contracts are already underfunded and providers cannot keep moving a finite amount of money around; at some point these rising costs will negatively impact programs. The implementation of this manual needs to come with additional dollars so that providers can apply their real indirect rates, and to the extent that resources are limited, providers should be able to decrease service levels.

The City needs to pay the full costs of the services they contract with, just like in other industries. This manual outlines a clear policy on indirect, but without funding providers will continue to have unfunded portions of their contracts and struggle to fill those gaps.

State of the Sector

Nonprofits provide a myriad of services on behalf of the government - many of them mandated - and the sector is able to leverage private and philanthropic dollars and funding from the City, State, and federal government, to create dynamic programs at a bargain. Providers are experts who are uniquely qualified to create cost-effective and impactful programs directly catered to their communities. But elected officials must not take that knowledge for granted or keep trying to cut back costs by refusing to listen to providers and undervaluing the services they provide.

The City is not getting a deal by chronically underfunding homeless shelters, foster care agencies, food pantries, and senior centers; it is directly harming those who rely on government for help. The nonprofit human services financial crisis must be addressed:

1. Contracts are generally underfunded for the program, asking for an outright match from providers, or with a low rate per service unit, where providers must make up the difference.
2. Contracts do not provide an appropriate indirect cost reimbursement rate. The Stanford Innovation Fund estimates that the average nonprofit indirect cost rate is between 15-25 percent – still substantially lower than the private sector, where the lowest rates start at 30 percent – but the City pays around ten percent, and that new rate and investment to ten percent has only recently been put in to place.
3. Contracts neither provide for cost escalations on the OTPS (other-than-personal services) side, nor cost-of-living increases on the PS (personnel services) side. Contracts with government are often for five to seven year terms, and even longer when RFPs are delayed, but providers are unable to account for unforeseen rising costs, such as a spike in electricity and water prices or an exceptionally cold winter, nor is there a mechanism to accommodate rising rent, health insurance, or other costs when contracts need to be extended.

These are not new issues, nor is government unaware that these are real concerns with which nonprofits grapple each month. A string of recent reports outlines this underfunding clearly, with survey data, anecdotal information from the sector, and by looking at the numbers in actual contracts and financial reports.

One of the most alarming pieces of information comes from the *SeaChange Capital Partners/Oliver Wyman* report, which found that **18 percent of New York City human services providers are insolvent**, based solely on IRS 990 data.¹ This means that their liabilities exceed their assets, and many have less than a month of cash on hand. **Fifty percent of New York City human services nonprofits have less than two months of cash on hand and operating reserves**, meaning that one late payment can impact payroll, and one unforeseen event can put the provider out of business. Government relies on these providers to ensure that our communities have programs that promote wellbeing.

The *SeaChange* report also points out that the financial health of the sector is government's problem. **Eighty percent of the largest human services organizations have budgets that are 90 percent or more dependent on government funding.** The largest five percent of nonprofits provide almost 50 percent of services in New York City, and are also mostly dependent on government funding. If these organizations fail, it will be difficult for the network of providers to pick up these contracts; government is uniquely responsible for the fiscal viability of these organizations.

The sector's health is in severe crisis, and providers report that underfunded contracts are the main driver of their financial struggles. Fifty-two percent of New York nonprofits report that local contracts do not cover the full cost of the services they are required to provide, and **56 percent report receiving indirect rates at 9 percent or less, with 91 percent reporting receiving 15 percent or less.**ⁱⁱ

In the child welfare sector, a study of over 80 child welfare providers in New York offers a stark picture that resonates across the full human services sector.

"Ninety-five percent of respondent organizations reported receiving a government contract that fails to pay the full cost of providing the contracted services. Eighty-six percent of respondents stated that they use their private fundraising to offset the deficits their government contracts create. In addition, 83% report that they cut program costs to make up the deficits of government contracts. Even while taking these measures, **69% of the organizations in our sample stated that they simply run these programs at a deficit;** presumably, they are hoping they will be able to raise necessary private funds eventually and are loathe to cut off their needy clients. Finally, the organizational impact of running chronic program deficits is both widespread and widely acknowledged among New York's child welfare nonprofits: **67% report they anticipate a year-end organizational deficit** that can only be made up with private fundraising."ⁱⁱⁱ

With a number of high profile nonprofits merging or closing in recent years, the sector itself came together in the *Call to Action* report, citing government underfunding as the main obstacle in planning for risk, and finding that government contracts were themselves a great risk to human services providers. The report drew upon the experience of sector leaders, and concluded that the underfunding of government contracts, including inadequate overhead, lack of cost-escalators, and low rates per unit, were main drivers to unstable organizations.^{iv}

Conclusion

There is a nonprofit human services crisis of epic proportion that must be addressed now. The broken and underfunded system currently in place cannot weather an economic downturn. The gaps created by inadequate government reimbursement rates are real and growing. We must act now to ensure NYC maintains its ability to provide services to New Yorkers from all walks of life.

Currently, organizations are forced to cope with government deficits by cutting staff benefits, not being able to give appropriate wages or give cost-of-living adjustments, or scaling back on programs. The sector is not able to make the necessary repairs and maintenance to buildings that the people coming through our doors deserve for quality programs. Providers are closing programs or not competing for programs, which does a disservice to communities. And finally, nonprofits are cutting administrative processes and staff, leaving them unable to adequately measure outcomes to understand if they are having an impact, undermining their ability to plan for the long-term, and preventing them from investing in career ladders for emerging talent.

The City leans on our sector's programs and expertise both in times of economic crisis and in times of growth, but the fiscal health of these important institutions has been overlooked. We cannot wait another year for investments, and also for fundamental changes to fix decades of underfunding. This year we are asking for an investment in indirect funding to coincide with the new Health and Human Services Cost Policies and Procedures Manual. This is a crucial investment in the sector millions of New Yorkers rely on every day, and also essential for this manual to appropriately address the indirect issues the sector has raised.

We look forward to continuing our work with the City Council to address the decades old systems and practices that result in underfunded programs and slow processes that do a disservice to our communities and limited resources.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to testify about the state of the human services sector. We greatly value our partnership with the City Council and know you stand with us in our call to address this crisis.

Michelle Jackson

(212) 836-1588 / jacksonm@humanservicescouncil.org

ⁱ <http://seachangeap.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SeaChange-Oliver-Wyman-Risk-Report.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://survey.nonprofitfinancefund.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269103151_A_Deficit_Model_of_Collaborative_Governance_Government-Nonprofit_Fiscal_Relations_in_the_Provision_of_Child_Welfare_Services?enrichId=rgreq-e79c7ca8a17894b9c2034939bf6a8ed0-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI2OTEwMzE1MTtBUzoxNzU3NTI5NzY4MDU4OTBAMTQxODkxNDE4MzE0NQ%3D%3D&el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf

^{iv} <http://www.humanservicescouncil.org/Commission/HSCCommissionReport.pdf>



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Greg Berman. Director

Attachments Summary

Public Hearing Testimony

Letters of Support

Bronx District Attorney's Office

Kings County District Attorney's Office

Council Member Letters

Mental Health Application Informational Graphic

Fiscal Year 2019 City Council Impact Map Excerpt

Fiscal Year 2020 Application Summaries

Operating Programs Bronx Child Trauma Support, Bronx Community Solutions, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, Brooklyn Mental Health Court, Brooklyn Treatment Court, Brooklyn Young Adult Court, Brownsville Community Justice Center, Civil Alternatives, Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, Domestic Violence Court, Harlem Community Justice Center, Harlem Reentry Court, Legal Hand, Midtown Community Court, Newark Community Solutions, Parent Support Program, Peacemaking Program, Poverty Justice Solutions, Project Reset, Queens Youth Justice Center, Red Hook Community Justice Center, Save Our Streets, Staten Island Justice Center, Strong Starts Court Initiative, Supervised Release Program, UPNEXT, Westchester Court Education Initiative, Youth Court, Youth Justice Board



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Greg Berman. Director

Center for Court Innovation Testimony
New York City Council
Committee on Finance Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 27, 2018

Good afternoon Chair Dromm and esteemed members of the City Council. My name is Shane Correia, who is the Associate Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Center for Court Innovation. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I am here to request the Council to support the Center for Court Innovation as it seeks to renew and strengthen the work we do with over 75,000 New Yorkers annually in early diversion, youth and adult alternatives-to-incarceration, and mental health support for children. This includes those children who are victims of crime or involved in neglect cases where they are, or are at-risk of, being placed in child protective custody.

Our programs have been shown to be effective. Researchers have documented that our operating programs throughout the city have decreased violence, aided victims, reduced the use of jail, and transformed neighborhoods providing meaningful off-ramps from a cycle of poverty and recidivism to real integration back into their communities. To continue to accomplish this work, we seek continuation funding for our core Citywide Speaker request, our youth-focused supervised release programming operating out of Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, and our Bronx pre-arraignment diversion (Project Reset) programing.

Operating Programs Bronx Child Trauma Support, Bronx Community Solutions, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, Brooklyn Mental Health Court, Brooklyn Treatment Court, Brooklyn Young Adult Court, Brownsville Community Justice Center, Civil Alternatives, Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, Domestic Violence Court, Harlem Community Justice Center, Harlem Reentry Court, Legal Hand, Midtown Community Court, Newark Community Solutions, Parent Support Program, Peacemaking Program, Poverty Justice Solutions, Project Reset, Queens Youth Justice Center, Red Hook Community Justice Center, Save Our Streets, Staten Island Justice Center, Strong Starts Court Initiative, Supervised Release Program, UPNEXT, Westchester Court Education Initiative, Youth Court, Youth Justice Board

Reset specifically permits New Yorkers to resolve low-level misdemeanors without ever setting foot in a court, and the case disappears from the criminal justice system as a declined-to-prosecute, avoiding many of the collateral consequences associated with a prosecuted case. Reset cases have been evaluated to be resolved significantly more quickly than traditional criminal court cases, and participants have a lower likelihood and frequency for new arrests. Council provided mid-year FY19 support to begin borough-wide implementation of Project Reset in Brooklyn. We seek Council's support of our application to continue this implementation in FY20.

We also seek Council's support to bring innovative public safety models to more New Yorkers. In targeting opportunities for low-level diversion and decreasing recidivism, we ask for Council support for the creation of a Far Rockaway Justice Center, which would bring the Center's wholistic approach to justice to the neighborhood, and to expand our Driver Accountability Program pilot to all boroughs. Since 2015, this group-based intervention for traffic related offenses has been found to reduce the likelihood of rearrests by 40% for those who complete the program. Council's support for citywide expansion of the Center's Driver Accountability Program would complement pending legislation to hold reckless drivers accountable through alternative sanctions, reduce dangerous driving, and save lives for New Yorkers.

Finally, we request Council to expand funding available under the Mental Health Initiatives for Vulnerable Populations, and for Court-Involved Youth. We have submitted several applications to permit us to increase mental health access in the outer boroughs where demand outstrips our current capacity. In Queens, this funding would allow Queens Youth Justice Center to address the needs of a population with critical programs that will soon lose state funding. Through Council support we could provide enhanced mental health services and community supervision to diverted youth and their families. In the Bronx, we are seeking to expand the number of child crime-victim survivors we can serve. These children receive ongoing therapy following their victimization from violent crimes such as sexual and physical abuse. A summary of our applications has been submitted with our testimony.

The City Council's support has been invaluable to our work in improving public safety. We respectfully urge you to continue to support our work and thank you again for the opportunity to speak.



DARCEL D. CLARK

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BRONX COUNTY

March 18, 2019

Speaker Corey Johnson
New York City Council
250 Broadway
Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson and Members of City Council,

I am writing this letter in support of key Center for Court Innovation FY20 City Council applications that will continue funding for Project Reset: Bronx Community Justice and expand alternatives to incarceration and mental health programming for Bronx residents. The Center's proposals complement my Office's vision for the Bronx – to focus on reform that promotes fairness through diversion, reduces the use of incarceration, and provides aid to victims of crimes.

Researchers have documented that the Center's operating programs throughout the City have reduced reoffending, decreased violence, aided victims, reduced the use of jail, and transformed neighborhoods. The Center's work is culturally competent and shaped by the particular needs of each community it serves. To that end, the Center's Bronx-focused proposals respond to two major needs of this borough: increased diversion and enhanced mental health support for both defendants and victims.

With respect to diversion, I encourage the Council to continue funding for the Center's effective Project Reset program, which provides defendants with an option to resolve low-level cases without setting foot in the courtroom.

Unfortunately, many people enter the Bronx criminal justice system in crisis and without access to off-ramps. The Center's Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations and Court-Involved Youth initiative applications directly respond to this need. The Bronx Child Trauma Support program offers services through trauma informed intervention models to child victims and witnesses of horrendous crimes, such as rape, attempted homicide, and shootings. Funding would increase the program's capacity to reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms and suicidality for these young victims.

I also urge the Council to fund the Strong Starts Court Initiative, which provides clinical and mental health support to children and their families after a neglect petition is filed. Funding would increase capacity for therapeutic interventions to these individuals. And, with forty

percent of Strong Starts cases including a domestic violence component, this program aligns with the mission of my Office, which places great value in those programs that provide support and safety planning to victims of domestic violence in a non-criminal setting.

Lastly, I urge the Council to explore opportunities that increase driver safety in the Bronx and equip our community with effective options to reduce dangerous driving. Research has found that programs that improve driver accountability in New York City reduce traffic-related recidivism by 40%.

To ensure that the Bronx realizes its vision of equity and fairness within the system, we must ensure that all involved – residents, court players, and service providers – have the necessary tools to succeed. I support the Center's applications to the City Council in bringing these tools to the people of Bronx.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Darcel D. Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Darcel D. Clark



ERIC GONZALEZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KINGS COUNTY
350 JAY STREET
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(718) 250-2202
WWW.BROOKLYNDA.ORG

March 18, 2019

Speaker Corey Johnson
New York City Council
250 Broadway
Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson and Members of City Council,

On behalf of the office of the Kings County District Attorney, I write in support of key Center for Court Innovation (the "Center") FY20 City Council applications that will expand early diversion, alternatives to incarceration for dangerous driving and for people charged with felonies, and mental health programming for Brooklyn residents. The proposed programs complement my office's vision for Brooklyn, as announced in Justice 2020— to focus on those people who do the most harm, to reduce the use of incarceration, and to use new approaches to accountability in the community that don't rely on confinement and conviction.

Researchers have documented that the Center's operating programs throughout the city have reduced reoffending, decreased violence, aided victims, reduced the use of jail, and transformed neighborhoods. The Center's work is culturally competent and shaped by the particular needs of each community it serves.

The Center has submitted proposals centered in Brooklyn that involve diversion and alternatives to incarceration. First, the Center seeks to expand its proven and effective Project Reset early diversion program throughout the borough, permitting defendants to participate in a brief intervention that will resolve their low-level case without requiring them to set foot in the court room. Next, to keep our streets safe, the Center has applied to expand its successful Driver's Accountability Program, which has shown participants are 40% less likely to be rearrested for traffic-related crimes than those who do not go through the program. Finally, working with Kings County Supreme Court, our office and defense advocates, the Center seeks to create a Brooklyn Felony ATI Court program to increase the use of closely-supervised community-based services for defendants charged with felonies. I wholeheartedly support the funding of all three programs.

Many people unfortunately reach the criminal justice system in crisis and without off-ramps. The Center's applications within the Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations and Court Involved Youth initiatives respond to this need. Funding would provide non-native English clients with quality interventions, allowing them to overcome significant barriers in

receiving mental health treatment. Funding would also provide programming tailored to court-involved youth, engaging a critical population before they become caught in a cycle of justice involvement. To that end, I support the expansion of access to mental health services for those in the justice system through new and expanded funding to the Center for this work.

To realize a new vision of ensuring a safe Brooklyn that builds public trust in a fair and equal justice system requires investment in tools that meet Brooklynites in their communities with innovative models to resolve their cases. The Center for Court Innovation does just that, and I request City Council's support of the Center's applications to bring these tools to the people of Brooklyn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Gonzalez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "E".

Eric Gonzalez

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DEPUTY LEADER OF
THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

March 21, 2019

Speaker Corey Johnson
New York City Council
250 Broadway
Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson,

On behalf of my constituents in my district, I write in support of City Council funding for the Center for Court Innovation's FY20 programs and new initiatives. This includes support for alternative-to-incarceration, youth and youth-led peer diversion, and young adult and child-victim mental health access programs. This support will aid in interrupting the cycle of poverty many New Yorkers are faced with due to justice involvement.

Researchers have documented that the Center's operating programs throughout the city have decreased violence, aided victims, reduced the use of jail, and transformed neighborhoods. To continue to accomplish this work, I urge the Council to continue funding for the Center's core Citywide Speaker request that supports needed programs in my district, youth-focused supervised release programming in Brooklyn, and the Center's Bronx pre-court diversion (Project Reset) programing. Also, with continuation and expansion of implementation funding of Project Reset in FY20 to Brooklyn, thousands more New Yorkers would be diverted, significantly reducing the number of people going to court and improving the fairness of the system.

I also support the expansion of funding for access to mental health services for those in the justice system through two initiatives: Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations and Court Involved Youth. For the court involved, this funding would bring expanded services to those with often unmanaged mental health needs. For the youngest New Yorkers, it would provide age appropriate and trauma-informed mental health services to children who are victims or witnesses to serious crimes.

On behalf of my constituents, I affirm my support for these requests. This work will help promote equal access, increase safety, and improve fairness in my district and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ritchie Torres". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Ritchie Torres
New York City Council Member
District 15, Bronx

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RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

SMALL BUSINESS

STANDARDS & ETHICS

TRANSPORTATION

March 18, 2019

Speaker Corey Johnson
New York City Council
250 Broadway
Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson,

On behalf of my constituents, I write in support of City Council funding for the Center for Court Innovation's FY20 programs and new initiatives. This includes support for alternative-to-incarceration, youth and youth-led peer diversion, and young adult and child-victim mental health access programs. This support will aid in interrupting the cycle of poverty many New Yorkers are faced with due to justice involvement.

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On behalf of my constituents, I affirm my support for these requests. This work will help promote equal access, increase safety, and improve fairness in my district and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlos Menchaca". The signature is stylized with a large, cursive "C" and a distinct "M" at the end.

Carlos Menchaca
NYC Council Member
District 38

Serving the Mental Health Needs of New Yorkers



These programs have been proven to break the cycle of justice-involvement. Help us expand their reach.

Expand Mental Health Initiatives

Vulnerable Populations

APPLICATION #75702

Bronx Child Trauma Support — Increase therapy hours to serve more children who are victims and witnesses to violent crimes.

« *The children served are victims or witnesses to crimes such as domestic violence homicide, rape, shootings and other violent crimes.*

— Kristen Slesar LCSW, MS

APPLICATION #76621

Brooklyn Justice Initiatives — Provide part-time psychiatric support for prescription oversight of Behavioral Health Unit defendants.

147 clients were served in the Behavioral Health Unit in 2018

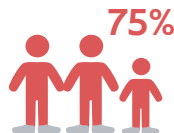
over 50% clients in the Behavioral Health Unit are mandated to at least 6 sessions that include mental health treatment sessions



APPLICATION #75742

Strong Starts Court Initiative — Increase staff to serve more infants and toddlers' families in neglect cases.

40% cases with a domestic violence component



75% families have continued to reach out for services after case resolution

APPLICATION #73866

Brooklyn Mental Health Court — Hire bilingual mental health staff to serve more defendants receiving diversion from jail.

1 in 10 clients do not speak English as their primary language



Court-Involved Youth

APPLICATION #76382

Queens Youth Justice Center — Support the Enhanced Supervision mental health group for youth and families who are involved in the juvenile justice system. Within this group:

21% diagnosed with ADHD

19% diagnosed with depression

16% diagnosed with bipolar disorder

APPLICATION #73876

Brooklyn Mental Health Court — Create therapeutic and workforce development groups for court-involved youth with mental health needs.

1 in 5 clients between 16 and 24 years old—a critical window for intervention



For more information, contact Shane Correia at correias@courtinnovation.org.

Approximately 2,500 New Yorkers served through City Council's Investment in the Center for Court Innovation

Selected Results of Citywide Speaker Initiative Funding in FY18*

Harlem Community Justice Center

129 reentry court hearings held

Midtown Community Court

195 hours of group and individual therapy and support

Citywide

Training Institute

20 trainings provided

Youth Justice Board

22 youth met weekly for a year to learn about and advocate for policy reform

Access to Justice**

50 community members equipped with information about their rights

Staten Island

Staten Island Justice Center

14 youth trained to facilitate youth court hearings

Bronx

Center for Court Innovation

Bronx Child Trauma Support

71 families with children therapeutically assisted following violent crimes

Bronx Community Solutions

208 Driving While Intoxicated screenings and assessments completed

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) South Bronx

15 youth engaged in S.O.S. Basketball Clinic

Queens

Queens Youth Justice Center

19 youth engaged in justice trainings and as youth court members

Brownsville Community Justice Center

25 events and rehabilitations made public spaces safer

Neighbors in Action

100 community residents received walk-in services

Red Hook Community Justice Center

270 youth court service learning hours

Brooklyn

*Outcomes in FY19 and FY20 may differ based on funding allocations.

**This reflects FY19 projections.

The Center seeks a continuation of its \$500,000 Citywide Speaker Initiative funding for FY20. For more information, contact Shane Correia at correias@courtinnovation.org.



520 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York 10018
p. 646 386 3100
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courtinnoation.org

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Greg Berman. Director

Center for Court Innovation Initiative Applications

- **Center Core-Ask Application #73443 \$500,000 (continuation funding)** This is an application to support the continuation of our alternative-to-incarceration, youth-diversion, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. The Council's support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, immigration and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all.
- **Project Reset (Bronx) Application #74655 - \$710,000 (continuation funding)** Bronx Community Justice is a diversion program offering a new response to low-level offending that is proportionate, effective, and restorative. The program offers people who are arrested for low-level, non-violent crimes and receive a Desk Appearance Ticket the opportunity to avoid court and the possibility of a criminal record by completing community-based programming. Participants engage in a one-time restorative circle discussion with community volunteers, during which they discuss their strengths and needs, the impact of their offense, and what they can do to improve their community. The program holds people accountable for their actions, involves community members in the administration of justice, and strengthens public trust in the justice system.
- **Project Reset (Brooklyn) Application #75477- \$977,182** Starting in March 2019 the Center for Court Innovation will expand Project Reset to Brooklyn. The expansion will unfold in two stage, first to Brooklyn North precincts, and then to Brooklyn South precincts later in the year. The program will serve people of all ages who are arrested for low-level, nonviolent charges a receive a Desk Appearance Ticket. Programming will occur at a new community office in downtown Brooklyn and/or arts spaces across the borough - including a collaboration with the Brooklyn Museum - and will cover themes of accountability, community harm and repair, and the role of law enforcement in Brooklyn.
- **Far Rockaway Community Justice Center (Queens) Application #76774 - \$1,635,315** Far Rockaway is geographically isolated, with 19% of residents living below the poverty



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line – a higher percentage than the rest of Queens. The Far Rockaway Community Justice Center will improve public safety, reduce the use of incarceration, and enhance public trust in justice by involving communities in the work of “doing justice.” The Justice Center will provide a local hub for crime prevention, youth development, and alternative-to-incarceration services, enabling residents of the Rockaways to engage in programming and resolve their court cases without numerous lengthy trips across the borough. The Justice Center will invest in local residents -- particularly young people -- providing services that build on their strengths, address trauma, and prepare them to become community leaders. Its placemaking initiatives will seek to revitalize distressed vacant lots and underutilized public spaces, activating the neighborhood’s physical infrastructure to strengthen its social infrastructure.

- **Driver Accountability Program (Citywide) Application #77926 - \$885,082** The following application is for support of the expansion of the Driver Accountability Program that was developed and piloted at the Red Hook Community Justice Center, is also run on a limited basis in Staten Island and Brooklyn Criminal Courts. City Council support would allow the Driver Accountability Group to be facilitated in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island, and the Bronx, as sentences for misdemeanor driving offenses and as a requirement for drivers receiving multiple speed camera violations, both in connection with Councilmember Lander’s Reckless Driver Accountability Act. Research appears to show that the Driver Accountability Group may change participant behavior and encourage safer driving.
- **Schedule C Alternative to Incarceration Initiative: Brooklyn Supervised Release #76595 - \$375,000 (continuation funding)** This application is to support the Center’s high-risk youth work at Brooklyn Justice Initiatives. The program addresses an important need by diverting youth at-risk of having bail set towards pre-trial services. Pre-trial supervision allows participants to receive services, address needs, and remain in their communities during the pendency of the case. We received \$375,000 in support from the City Council for FY 19, and we are requesting \$375,000 in support for FY 20. We hope to continue this ongoing partnership with the City Council on this work.

Mental Health Services Initiative Applications

- **Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (Bronx – Bronx Child Trauma Support) Application #75702 - \$33,000** This application will support the provision of assessment and treatment of child victims and witnesses to crimes in the Bronx, in partnership with the Bronx District Attorney’s Office. Direct services are conducted through evidenced-based, trauma-informed intervention models designed to prevent or reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms, suicidality, re-traumatization, and future victimization.
- **Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (Bronx – Strong Starts) Application #75742 - \$100,000** This application is to support the Strong Starts Court Initiative for infants and toddlers involved in neglect petitions. Funding will support outreach to local community partners to forge strong partnerships with high-quality service providers so that participant families can access a range of family focused interventions required to prevent maltreatment recurrence, prevent developmental delays, and promote the safety, stability and self-sufficiency of their parents.
- **Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (Brooklyn – Brooklyn Justice Initiatives) Application #76621 - \$50,000** This application request would provide Brooklyn Justice Initiatives with the capacity to contract with a part-time psychiatrist. The psychiatrist would assist project staff in determining program eligibility for high-risk and/or high-need client cases by creating treatment plans alongside BJI staff and providing case consultations. The support would allow for high-need clients to receive a psychiatric evaluation for the purposes of determining eligibility and appropriateness for community-based treatment and medication management.
- **Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (Brooklyn – Brooklyn Mental Health Court): Application #73866 - \$100,000** This is an application for funding to provide non-English speakers the support necessary to have a positive and procedurally just experience in the Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC). BMHC has experienced an influx of non-native speakers and funding for various translation services will ensure quality participation in BMHC programming. These services are essential to conduct successful clinical evaluations and secure treatment for those who cannot afford to pay and are not eligible for insurance. By contracting with locally culturally competent community-based organizations, BMHC can call upon its partners to confidently convey important information to non-native English speakers. Funding will also cover costs

associated with translating important program documents including consent forms and participation guidelines into the top five most commonly used languages by BMHC participants and community members with open cases in the Kings County Supreme Court. Additionally, a portion of funding will be used to link participants to programming specifically tailored for immigrants and uninsured community members.

- **Court Involved Youth Mental Health (Brooklyn – Brooklyn Mental Health Court) Application #73876 - \$150,000** This is an application that would allow support to Brooklyn Mental Health Court staff to take advantage of professional development training opportunities and contract with local community-based organizations for technical assistance. Training and technical assistance would be aimed at learning cognitive behavior therapy curriculums and best practices. Additionally, funds would be used to contract with the same organizations to run groups for youth and young adults, potentially on a weekly basis. Groups will include cognitive behavior therapy groups and professional development workshops, among other groups with an emphasis on reengaging the community and [re]entering the workforce. Council support would also allow BMHC to provide supplies for workshops and other activities for participants, outreach to parents, and materials for monthly parent support workshops. Lastly, a portion of the funding will be used to provide participants with healthy meals and snacks upon their return from court or holding.
- **Court Involved Youth Mental Health (Queens – Queens Youth Justice Center) Application #76382 - \$150,000** This is an application to assist in the revitalization of QYJC's Futures Mental Health Programming. Currently operating as Enhanced Alternative to Detention, our mental health services provide linkage and referrals to participants who may have or need to be evaluated for mental health concerns. Case managers provide screening and assessment, treatment referrals, ongoing coordination, and linkages to family therapy and psycho-educational groups for both young people and family members.



New York City Council
Committee on Finance, Chair, Council Member Daniel Dromm
March 29, 2019
Preliminary Budget and Oversight Hearing

Thank you Chair Dromm and the Finance Committee for the opportunity to testify on how we can work together to make New York a fair city for all ages. LiveOn NY also thanks Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, DFTA Acting Commissioner Caryn Resnick, Aging Committee Chair Margaret Chin and the entire City Council for their consideration of needs of older adults in the FY20 budget.

The following is repeat testimony originally submitted on March 6, 2019, however, LiveOn NY would not want to miss an opportunity to testify on the record to the significant budgetary investments needed to best serve New York's older adult population. While repetitive to our earlier testimony, the needs have not changed, only intensified, and we appreciate your consideration of the below:

With a base of more than 100 community-based organizations, LiveOn NY's members provide core services that allow older adults to thrive in their communities, including senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, affordable senior housing, elder abuse prevention services, caregiver supports, transportation, NORCs and case management. DFTA's network provides services to over 50,000 older adults daily. *Let's be clear, these services aren't just nice to have: studies have shown that services such as senior centers, home delivered meals and others are key to positively affecting health impacts and preventing isolation.*

LiveOn NY recognizes and is encouraged by initial investments in senior services by the de Blasio Administration and ongoing investments by City Council. That said, the DFTA budget still accounts for less than 1% of the total city budget, a point that is only exacerbated by the fact aging New Yorkers are the now fastest growing demographic. Further, New York City spends 20% below the national average on senior meals – that means they are only paying for 4 out of every 5 needed meals. This does not reflect fairness for older New Yorkers, senior service staff and nonprofits that serve older New Yorkers. ***In order for New York to truly be the fairest big city, it must be a #FairCity4AllAges.*** Fairness does not have an age cutoff.

LiveOn NY's priorities are attached to our testimony, and are briefly highlighted them below.

Invest \$20 million in Senior Center Meals and Kitchen Staff

WHY:

- Senior centers provided 7.6 million senior center meals in FY17¹
- 30,000 seniors visit seniors centers daily
- 56% of seniors report that meals eaten at the center makeup ½ or more of their daily food intake
- NYC currently funds senior meals on the average at 20% below the national average funding 4 out of every 5 meals, with nonprofits picking up the rest of the costs. ²

¹ New York State Office of the State Comptroller congregate Meal Services for the Elderly study, 2018

²In FY17, NYC reimbursed nonprofits an average of \$9.06 compared to the 2015 national average rate of \$10.69 for

- In 2008-2013 alone, the cost of food increased by 11% according to the Consumer Price Index while nonprofits struggle to keep pace.
- Food costs, raises for kitchen staff and kitchen equipment and maintenance costs were specifically **excluded** from the model senior center budget funding last year, leaving a void in budgets despite the fact that kitchens are core to a senior center.
- Over 50% of older New Yorkers are foreign born according to a recent Center for an Urban Future study, reflecting a significant need for meals that are culturally appropriate to an array of backgrounds, which brings an underfunded fiscal impact. In 2015, DFTA stated that, “in DFTA’s HDML network, each catered Kosher [meal] is on average \$1.38 more than non-Kosher catered meals.” Similar to Kosher meals, Halaal, gluten free, vegetarian, vegan, or other cultural or nutritional needs have an associated cost-increase.
- A citywide RFP for senior centers is expected in the near future.

\$20 MILLION WILL FUND:

- Increase for **raw food costs**, including funding for culturally competent meals
- Increase in costs for **disposables** to serve food
- Increase in funds to support **fair salaries for kitchen staff** and to fully staff kitchens to address numerous responsibilities including food preparation, cooking, serving meals, menu planning and submissions, inventory, ordering, accounting, managing volunteers and numerous other responsibilities required to operate a kitchen.
- **Repairs and maintenance** for critical kitchen equipment including ovens, refrigerators and HVAC systems. These costs and needs are heightened in NYCHA senior centers and programs, which have critical additional infrastructure and repair needs.
- Funding for critical **inspections and services** that are required annually or several times a year, including extermination, grease trap cleaning and grease removal, hood cleaning, fire suppression systems, maintenance of HVAC systems and refrigerators and freezers as well as treating sewage back up problems and security alarm service and maintenance.
- All DFTA senior centers, including the 38 additional programs were not evaluated in the “model senior center” budget process last year³, should receive funding for meals.

**Expedite the Additional \$10 million “Promised”
for Senior Center Staff and Programs**

DFTA allocated the first \$10 million in model senior center budget funding late in FY19 and the second \$10 million is “promised by FY21.” As noted, this funding specifically excluded meals and meal staff. We see no reason for the city to hold this funding. It should be expedited as soon as possible.

congregate meals. For home delivered meals, DFTA reimbursed providers on the average \$8.24 compared to the national average rate of about \$11.06.

³ 38 centers were not evaluated in the model senior center budget process. In that group are former discretionary funded sites that are now under DFTA (11 centers), former NYCHA (4 centers), “social clubs” (17) and other social service programs (6). Many, if not all, of the sites not evaluated in the “model senior center” budget process are held to the same standards as the sites that were evaluated, yet were not given funding as the others were. The appropriateness of this decision must be evaluated and reconciled moving forward.

Invest \$15 Million in Home Delivered Meals

WHY:

- This year, providers will distribute over 4.6 million home delivered meals
- The majority of seniors utilizing the program are women, living alone, receiving meals that on average account for ½ or more of their total food for the day
- Nationally, 59% of meal recipients live alone – and the person delivering the meal is often the only person they will see that day⁴
- Seniors are underenrolled in SNAP - among those living with hunger, the under-enrollment rate of SNAP benefits is around 40%
- NYC reimbursed providers 20% below the national average for home delivered meals⁵
- A citywide RFP is expected for home delivered meals in the near future

\$15 MILLION WILL FUND:

- Increase for **raw food costs**, including culturally competent meals
- Increase in costs for **disposables** to serve food
- Critical increase in funds to support **fair salaries** for home delivered meals staff, who are critical to the human interaction for home delivery
- Funds for **equipment, kitchen needs and food preparation**

Invest \$10 Million for Repairs, including funding for NYCHA Senior Programs

Senior Centers have infrastructure and repair needs, often that arise in an emergency, however there is not set funding or process to request these funds and centers are often confused and unaware of how to address such needs. These issues are exacerbated in the nearly 100 DFTA programs that operate in NYCHA community spaces which offer critical programs for older adults. The city should invest \$10 million to provide funding for DFTA senior center and program infrastructure needs, and for accessible funding for emergency repairs and conditions, particularly in the 100 DFTA NYCHA Senior Centers and Clubs.

Invest \$5 Million for Service Coordinators in Senior Housing

87% of senior of seniors would prefer to age in their homes. Research has shown a service coordinator located in a senior building is a proven cost-effective way to support seniors in their community, reducing hospital & nursing home costs. *Seniors at Selfhelp Community Services were found to have significant healthcare savings: Selfhelp residents were 68% less likely to be hospitalized compared to seniors in the same zip codes, representing an average savings of \$3,937 per person, per hospitalization.*

Investing \$5 million in a citywide Service Coordinators Program would provide one full time and one part time service coordinator at nearly 40 new or existing affordable senior housing buildings to provide culturally competent information and support. Promotion of overall health and wellness the interconnection of services through the co-location of services can mean the difference

⁴ Meals on Wheels of America, Delivering So Much More than Just a Meal Fact Sheet, United States, 2018

⁵ For home delivered meals, in FY17 DFTA reimbursed providers on the average \$8.24 compared to the national average rate of \$11.06.



between successfully aging in place versus experiencing costly hospitalizations or a move to a nursing home. Service coordinators provide culturally and linguistically competent opportunities for seniors in affordable housing buildings. Qualified social workers in these buildings can help older adults to access benefits, provide referrals to other services as needed, including home care, and combat isolation by connecting residents to socialization opportunities and other local resources, all of which promote healthy aging in the community.

Invest \$1 Million for Case Management

There are over 1,000 seniors on case management waitlists citywide. LiveOn NY greatly appreciates the investments in FY18 which are beginning to address waitlists, as well as funding added by Council in FY19, but the need continues to grow. We must continually build this system to serve today's need and the needs of the future. Additional funding is needed to reduce caseloads, which are already very high at an average of 65. Funding is also needed to serve frail, homebound seniors on waiting lists so that a social worker is available to visit them at home, assess their needs and provide ongoing services. MSW compensation, as well as multilingual staff needs to be funded to ensure there is a professionally trained social worker who can work with immigrant and diverse populations and complex situations. Funding growing need and agency infrastructure are cornerstones to strengthening the case management system citywide. Case Management is a key program that services seniors that are not Medicaid eligible but still need these services, and it is vital to sustain this program.

No PEGs for DFTA

Across the board reductions through the recently announced Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) disproportionately and unfairly affect small agencies, such as DFTA, which receives such a small portion of the city budget to begin with. To avoid cutting direct services to older New Yorkers and the staff that serve them, DFTA should not be subject to PEGs.

Council Restorations and Investments in Senior Services Through Schedule C

City Council has long been a staunch supporter of city and district wide senior services programs through allocations in Schedule C. We thank you for your investments and advocate for full restoration for all Senior Service Programs funded in Schedule C. These include NORCs, Support our Seniors, SuCasa, Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations, Health Aging Initiative, Social Adult Day, and others.

Age Friendly Commission

LiveOn NY sits on the Age Friendly Commission and knows the importance of the Commission and its work groups. It is critical to convene thought leaders from across disciplines working on these critical issues. LiveOn NY supports continued funding for \$100,000 for the Age-Friendly Commission to support its critical work, as well as an additional \$250,000 to support the ongoing and new work groups for the commission for a total of \$350,000.

Continued Investments in Human Services Sector

LiveOn NY is a member of the Human Services Advancement Strategy Group (HSASG).

The human services sector of our City is in crisis. Providers have long been sounding the alarm about the impact of the chronic underfunding of government contracts, and now we have reached a breaking



point. Without a crucial investment on our current contracts, my organization will have to reevaluate how we can engage with the City to provide crucial services to our communities. As things currently stand, we can no longer carry the deficit of our City contracts.

The gap between what the City funds on human services contracts and what providers can supplement with private and philanthropic dollars has grown too wide. It is vital that no cuts are made to human service programs as part of the mandated budget reductions and the chronic underfunding of the sector is rectified.

The sector is united in asking the City Council to include in their budget response a request for the Mayor to invest \$250 million dollars to fill the gap between provider's indirect costs and the contract reimbursement rates from the City. The new *Health and Human Services Cost Policies and Procedures Manual*, which was developed alongside Deputy Mayor Palacio, lays out standardized indirect costs for our sector. However, without increased funding to address the gaps this manual displays in our contracts, the fiscal crisis we are facing remains unaddressed. Based on numbers provided by the Office of Management and Budget, \$250 million should cover the costs to fully implement this manual.

While we understand the driving narrative around this budget is mandated budget cuts, there is money to go around. The City has made massive investments in areas including city staff and infrastructure while the needs of the human services sector have gone largely ignored. It is time to take the state of emergency facing this sector seriously and prioritize the needs of organizations that provide an estimated 2.5 million New Yorkers annually with critical services including after-school programs, supportive housing, homeless services, job training, and mental health services.

LiveOn NY looks forward to working with Mayor de Blasio, City Council, DFTA, all city agencies to make New York City a fair city for all ages and better place to age through a strong network of community based services.

LiveOn NY's members provide the core, community-based services that allow older adults to thrive in their communities. With a base of more than 100 community-based organizations serving at least 300,000 older New Yorkers annually. Our members provide services ranging from senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, affordable senior housing with services, elder abuse prevention services, caregiver supports, case management, transportation, and NORCs. LiveOn NY advocates for increased funding for these vital services to improve both the solvency of the system and the overall capacity of community-based service providers.

LiveOn NY also administers a citywide outreach program and staffs a hotline that educates, screens and helps with benefit enrollment including SNAP, SCRIE and others, and also administers the Rights and Information for Senior Empowerment (RISE) program to bring critical information directly to seniors on important topics to help them age well in their communities.

Our NYC Finance needs public oversight.

We propose a Community Budget Council to be part of each community and a citywide Community Budget Council. This would be supported by the government and give real civic participation and oversight and feedback to the commissioners. As it stands today, the commissioners can testify anything and the council persons just nod in agreement.

The website for property tax is still not functional.

We need a way for taxpayers to compare the inequity in our property tax system.

See <https://tax.tidalforce.org/> as one such tool to easily allow taxpayers to compare their tax payments to others and share.

Also the cost affidavit and tax assessments should be in open data.

The commissioner talks about big data. but the very core of the system is the cost affidavits and the assessment increases BOTH are not in the open data website. It is easy to show the inequity and the mistakes. WE DESERVE MUCH BETTER THAN THE CURRENT INCOMPETENT COMMISSIONER and the department of finance.

One Case in point, just look at the way the clerical error process works.

There are properties that are increased in size with a cost affidavit spending of \$500,000 and only a \$9,778 assessment increase

While a similarly situated property with a inflated \$250,000 improvement has a +\$15,900 assessment increase.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

Jiha says assessors visited 27000 parcels in the past and now 80000 parcels

What parcels? That should be public information.

Sincerely,
Ralph Yozzo

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pByCAprEhKI&feature=youtu.be&t=856>

**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: Tiffany Cheng

Address: _____

I represent: Asian American Federation

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: 03-27th-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ayuda Tsaki

Address: _____

I represent: Woman kind - 15% 8 Growing

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: 03-27th-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tasfia Rahman

Address: _____

I represent: coalition for Asian American Children & Families

Address: 15% 8 Growing

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: 3/27/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maria Policarpo

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 1757, DC37

Address: (Assessors - Dept of Finance)

**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: 3/27/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Henry Garrido

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Executive Director, DC37

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: 3/27/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ralph Palladino

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: 2nd Vice-President, Local 1549, DC37

Address: _____

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

Asian American
Panel

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: Man Yuk Yu

Address: _____

I represent: American Academy of Medical & Public Health

Address: _____ Services (AMPLIS)

Asian American
Panel

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: Jo-Ann Yu

Address: Man Yuk Yu

I represent: Asian American Federation

Address: American Academy of Medical & Public Health

Asian American
Panel

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: India Shaaranya Pillai

Address: _____

I represent: India Home

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: Beyna Tellez / Ligia Guallpa

Address: _____

I represent: Workers Justice Project

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: 3/27/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julia Duran Martinez

Address: 121 W 27th St #804

I represent: New Economy Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shane Correira

Address: 520 8th Ave

I represent: Center for Court Innovation

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: A. DUMIN PERLATA DUMIN GEFILIA

Address: E 40 BROAD ST, 5TH FLOOR

I represent: EPWAKERS Justice Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Greg Waltman

Address: _____

I represent: G2 Quantum

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: 03-27th-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dnya BASV-Sen

Address: _____

I represent: Sapna NYC - 15% 86rowing

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: 03-27th-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Aicher

Address: _____

I represent: Arab-American Family Support Center

Address: 15% 8 Growing

**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: 03-27th-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ying Yu Situ

Address: _____

I represent: Min Kwon - 15% 8 Growing

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: 03-27th-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexander Kim - Youth Leader

Address: _____

I represent: MinKwon - 15% 8 Growing

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: 3.27.19

Name: Melanie Hartzog (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 255 Greenwich

I represent: OMB

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: 3.27.19

Name: Melanie Hartzog (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 255 Greenwich

I represent: OMB

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 Jacques L. He, Ph.D (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC DOR

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: Michael Itzman, First Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: NYC DCF

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: 3/27/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lorraine Grillo

Address: 30-30 Thomson Ave, LIC

I represent: DDC

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: 3/27/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jamie Torres Springer

Address: 30-30 Thomson Ave, LIC

I represent: DDC

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: 3/27/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Justin Walter

Address: 30-30 Thomson Ave, LLC

I represent: DDC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Vancil

Address: 30-30 Thomson Ave, LLC

I represent: DDC

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: 3/27/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margie Austin

Address: 30-30 Thomson Ave, LLC

I represent: DDC

Address: _____

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