



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Lorraine Rolston. I am a native New Yorker who is a product of the post-WWII New York City Public School System. I grew up in Hunt's Point, the Bronx in the 1940's and 1950's when New York's school policy assigned children to their district school and the district was based on postal code. I lived in a community that was more diverse than it is today. My neighbors included African and Caribbean Blacks, ethnic whites, including Jewish, Irish and Italian immigrants, Asians, East Indians, Latinos and Native Americans who came from upstate New York to work in the construction trades. Therefore, while we were restricted to attend our local schools, there was almost no limit to the diversity of our social and cultural environment.

Today, I understand that children can be sent to schools in other boroughs but there is more racial isolation today than there was in 1954, the year of "Brown v Board of Education".

To de-fund SYEP would not only deprive young people of the exposure they need to the world of compensated work and the rewards that come from that work, but the loss of this program would remove the valuable opportunity for young people to develop the social interactive skills that environmental diversity provides.

Sincerely,
Lorraine Rolston



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

The hot summers marked the end of school and as a 8 year old I was ecstatic because that meant ice cream and the sprinklers. Yet that wouldn't be everyday. My mom had to work to make ends meet and that meant that I couldn't exactly stay home.

After the 3rd grade, after attending my schools summer enrichment- that could only allow students up to the 2nd grade, I enrolled to be a part of the summer program in another school near mine. All of the employees were paid through SYEP and all of the other kids with me had parents just like mine, unable to afford to take days off of work or afford a vacation. But playing with one another and having field trips were worth it because it was like we were having the time of our lives. It was us and the staff who made our summers the funnest.

Sincerely,

Marlen Mendieta-Camaron



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Good evening, my name is Koudjedji Coulibaly and I am a part of Teens Take charge. I have applied for SYEP twice, once last year and again this year but didn't get in. I believe that the city should continue SYEP this year is because Summer is very long and hot and Kids and young adults should have something to do. A lot of programs have been discontinued because of the Coronavirus and it isn't fair. Kids and young adults should also have the opportunity to earn more money. A lot of people have lost their jobs and may need the money.

Sincerely,
Koudjedji Coulibaly



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Although I was not planning on participating in SYEP this year, I have a lot of friends who were looking for summer jobs and relying on SYEP to help them find one. SYEP is especially helpful for low-income families and allows teens to help out and get engaged in the community. Now more than ever, programs like this are crucial because so many people have recently become unemployed. Along with supplying teens with an income, it also gives them something meaningful to do over the summer. Even if we have to stay indoors, teens will still need something to occupy their time. Shifting SYEP to an online platform is completely possible. I have watched public schools switch to remote learning in only a week and although it wasn't easy, it something that I think we are capable of doing again. It is crucial to find a way to keep SYEP going because so many NYC teens are counting on it.

Sincerely,
Zane Reedy



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

SYEP is a program that is known for how influential it can be and has been in the lives of much of the youth in New York. Personally, I have not participated in SYEP, but I know the effects of the program through friends who have participated in SYEP in the past, and through the pleas of many young people who have made it clear that canceling SYEP this summer is not beneficial for anyone. The program does not just simply give NY youth more opportunities to do activities outside, which is very much needed at a time like this, when many people are unsure of how they will be spending their summer this year. SYEP has also given so many students the opportunity to make connections that are hard to come by for young people, especially those that may come from disadvantaged families or do not have the resources to help them thrive in such a competitive world. Not only that, but SYEP has also helped many teenagers to find their first job, which is actually a hard thing to do, especially if you were a kid like me a year ago who was too young to work by most jobs' standards, but still felt that hunger to do more. SYEP has always been needed but now we need it more than ever. So please think about all of the youth of New York who are eager to make a change this summer, whether it be for the community or for themselves, and let SYEP continue this year!

Sincerely,
Emmanuela Sepetia



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I'm a New Yorker who believes opportunity for our young people is deeply important. It's crucial for young people to have every possible aid in starting out on the long road to a flourishing life in our city, and cutting youth employment at a time when so many are struggling to get by seems counterproductive and unnecessarily painful for so many who are just beginning, who have big dreams. We can find the generosity not to curtail this chance.

Sincerely,
Talia Lavin



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I have worked as an syep participant for 3 years. I like the program because it helps me out in the summer.

Sincerely,

Taniyzae Holley



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Please don't deprive the youth of someplace to put their energy during this summer in the midst of a pandemic!!!! They are suffering enough!

Sincerely,
Tayarisha Poe



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Well I'm a great leader. I think I would be able to handle SYEP and this would be my first time, so I just want the opportunity to try it out.

Sincerely,
Tykim Mansaray



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Valentina and I am a current senior in high school. I was admitted to the Ladders for Leaders (L4L) program earlier this year and was immensely excited for the program. Unfortunately L4L alongside with SYEP is cancelled this year. I am also an SYEP applicant this year and was a participant two years ago. Today, I am writing to express my gratitude for SYEP, how it has given me the opportunity to gain work experience being only a rising sophomore in high school at the time, and how integral it is to us as young people.

Every year, SYEP is a program that funds thousands of young people to gain work experience, learn new skills, and develop connections with experts and their communities. According to the 2019 Annual Summary for SYEP, 74,453 were enrolled in the program. Now, in 2020, what are all these young people going to do? It is during the summer, when youths actively engage in an internship or a job because we are busy during the school year, loaded with school work and responsibilities. It is through SYEP where we have a program that connects us with job and internship opportunities that can ultimately allow us to gain experiences that can sharpen our skills and shape our future education and career endeavors. Personally, SYEP has been an important part of my summer, allowing me to give back to my community by tutoring students at a preparatory school. It has also given me real-life experience to utilize my bilingual skills and taught me the basic skills of using a printer and scanner, both skills that I did not have or actively use before. Through SYEP, I am grateful to have had an amazing summer, where I met amazing people and was able to secure a job that I now still have.

Besides that, many of the SYEP applicants and participants come from low-income backgrounds, where SYEP becomes an important source of income to our families, mine included. This begs the question of what is going to happen this summer? Where is this extra income going to come from? With the cancellation of SYEP, the answer is nowhere. We need SYEP to contribute those extra \$1500's into our families that cover expenses that can be as immediate as food and clothing and can be as important as supplies for the upcoming school year.



#SAVESYEP

Additionally, SYEP is a representation of preparing young people now for a better future. 57% of last year's participants were females and about 85% come from minority groups. This is a program that encourages the closing of the gender inequalities gaps and segregation that our school systems have long practiced. Through these programs, youths from underrepresented groups have a chance to catch up and to become better. The cuts from SYEP are cuts from a better future, and that must be undone.

City Council Committee, please reconsider your decision. SYEP should continue every year but especially 2020 as we are all struggling amidst this crisis. SYEP matters to not only the participants but to our families and the future of our city. Bring SYEP back!

Thank you,

Valentina

City Council Budget Hearing
Thursday May 21, 2020
Testimony of Vaylateena Jones
Behalf of Lower East Side Power Partnership
LESPowerPartnership@gmail.com
212-204-0668

The Lower East Side Power Partnership (LESPP) advocates for the initiation of at least two pilot Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEP) on the Lower East Side (LES) for the summer of 2020. Potential sites include the Baruch Houses Community Center and the Rutgers Houses Community Center. Manhattan's largest development is Baruch Houses with 2,391 apartments. Our understanding is the Henry Street Settlement is the host organization at the Baruch Community Center. The Rutgers Houses Community Center is located in zip 10002. According to COVID -19 Data of May 18, 2020 zip 10002 had the highest number of deaths-138 in the area zip 10038-25 deaths, zip 10013-18 deaths, zip 10012-7 deaths.

LESPP advocates for funding to equip the pilot organizations with the hardware and software to provide safe remote experiences for some SYEP participants. In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic youth from New York City Housing authority developments can possibly help in addressing needed issues.

Teens and young adults SYEP participants can address communication approaches with vulnerable populations which includes their peers, friends, family, neighbors and community. Teens and young adults can possibly help through SYEP by having as part of their work duties include developing and submitting messages directed at their peers especially concerning physical distancing, face masks and social connections. Information can be provided to SYEP participants through the appropriate City Agencies. Teens and young adults through SYEP can interview their parents and do telephone interviews of other adult family, friends and neighbors to develop messages and approaches for submission concerning hypertension, diabetes and the other eight identified co-morbidities that includes the information obtained through City agency representatives. The submission to the appropriate City agency can possibly be a social media campaign, public service announcement and/or video, that can include dance, art, science performance and/or games as well as other type communication campaign approaches.

An article titled *Magic Johnson joins team studying coronavirus in low-income communities* by Leonard Greene states: "In New York City, about 28% of deaths have been black people, while the city population is 22% black. Hispanic have made up the highest death rates in both the state and the city, 14% and 34% respectively, despite being 11% of the state population and 29% of the city's population. "In many communities, COVID-19 has been extra-lethal because it is a pandemic piling on top of multiple, preexisting epidemics," said Carol Horowitz, dean for Gender Equity in Science and Medicine at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine. "These communities tend to have poorer access to care and information about health issues like COVID-19, less opportunity for social distancing overcrowded home situations, and the most precarious economic circumstances."

LESPP advocates that State and City agencies provide needed information and expertise. LESPP advocates that these agencies be part of orientation by providing a short virtual orientation presentation (less than 15 min) for the first day of the SYEP. Then each morning one agency could provide a virtual informational presentation on a topic with a question and answer period for no more than an hour. These agencies could also critique the planned submission prior to the SYEP participant's submission to the State and/or City agency. The possible morning presentation could include the following agencies:

New York State Department of Health-Physical Distancing, face masks and social connections

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene-Comorbidities of COVID 19

New York City Commission on Human Rights-Celebrating Cultural Diversity addressing Xenophobia and Anti-Asian racism

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services-Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention

LESPP understands that the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) mission is to invest in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish. This plan addresses the individual, community and agency need for information concerning COVID-19, physical distancing, face covering usage, social connections, co-morbidities (hypertension, diabetes, copd, etc.) and other needs associated with coronavirus.

On May 5, 2020, in Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's presentation "New York State Making Progress Happen" stated: "We all saw pictures from the weekend of people out and about in parks and in public spaces-some were not wearing masks." He goes on to state: "We're asking New Yorkers to explain why wearing a mask in public is important in a video submission contest."

The host organization could provide for virtual sign in and sign out for the morning and afternoon. The host organization would also provide virtual information and assignments concerning resume writing, job interview and career exploration during the afternoon for approximately 1 hour. The host organization would also oversee the planning, development and submission of messages by the SYEP participants.

These activities can require from approximately 2 hours of time daily and extend to whatever time the host organization plans.

The Lower East Side Power Partnership remains interested in volunteer and helping New York City and Lower East Side organizations such as the Henry Street Settlement and the Rutgers Community Center.

A Lower East Side Resident shared the following sentiments:
SYEP builds responsibility, skills, self-esteem, first work relationships and
lays the groundwork for participating in the future as adults.
Let's not take this from NYC's great young people



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I believe it's important to give young people an opportunity to work in their communities, learn life skills, and feel as if they have a voice and future. This is why I believe funding for SYEP is important, especially during these challenging times.

I work with adults as part of a workforce development program. Aside from the financial perspective, programs like this and SYEP provide hope and empowerment. It would be a shame to let that diminish.

Sincerely,
Victorio Milian



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I took SYEP participants on a Lower East Side walk. Along the way, we documented places where street trees and other living greenery could be planted - their data became part of a map we made of the past, present and future of the community (<https://www.greenmap.org/stories/hola-les-green-map/162>). I met with the group later as they worked in a community garden, on street trees etc with LUNGS. The kids were insightful, curious and focused. Their perspective was important to our project, as well as to their learning objectives.

SYEP paves the way to a better future, not just for the youth who participate, but also for the whole community as young people learn to work together for the common good. It creates stability and groundedness during what might otherwise be a lazy, uninspiring summer. Restore the funding and give youth a purpose at this uncertain time.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Every student, particularly our most dedicated and hard working students, deserves to broaden their academic experience with life experiences. SYEP provides valuable, practical real life skills and opportunities to our most impacted and hardest working students. To take SYEP away potentially compounds the pandemic circumstances many of our youth and their families are already dealing with, and definitely takes away their ability to be seen and heard and valued in spaces outside the traditional school environment.

Sincerely,
Yuli Hsu
District 14 CEC



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I believe the potential cuts to the Summer Youth Employment Program represent a potentially major misstep for the city and for helping our youth get a leg up in the face of what is sure to be a long term crippling crisis. We cannot allow ourselves to throw our hands up in the face of coronavirus and declare this a lost summer. This program exists in order to give the youth of our city relevant and critical experience in the workforce, and in some cases provide them with needed structure during the summer and opportunity to earn for their families. This is going to be even more important this year with so many people either laid off or furloughed, and with the workforce experience potentially going through a massive shift, what better time than now to continue a program such as this in a remote environment so our youth get a jump on experiencing a new way to work and collaborate with their peers. This is exactly the thing that local governments should be supporting and funding to help the up and coming generation or else we risk leaving them even further behind than the generation that started during the Great Recession was.

Sincerely,

Zachary Topkis



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Abbie Jobe and I am a sophomore at Elenor Roosevelt Highschool and I live in the Bronx. SYEP enables many high school students to receive experiences for many jobs in different fields. Without SYEP many students would not be able to have experiences to excess these types of jobs. By taking this away, students who depend on SYEP as a source of income are left stranded especially now is that so many people are financially affected by Covid-19. Even though I have not applied for SYEP this year or in the past, SYEP was always an option I could turn to if I wanted to have some job experiences. Nevertheless, I know many friends who depend on SYEP to prepare themselves for future permanent jobs, internships, and financially for the following school year.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

My name is Alex Luna and my relationship to SYEP is that I am a working member in this group and I work very hard to make sure young kids get the help they need and make sure they always have fun in a safe environment. I believe the city should continue to fund SYEP this year because there are some hardworking people who have sacrificed a few important things that were very important to them to make sure they take care of the kids in elementary school and to ensure their safety without any hesitation at all. Also without funding SYEP it wouldn't be fair to the staff who have been working years and dedicated some of their years with young students to rob them of their own money which is completely unfair and cruel, I believe funding SYEP would be the right thing to do since there are many workers ensuring the safety and careness to young kids and funding SYEP would have the staff members paid well to have a decent wealth.

Sincerely,
Alex Luna



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I feel like we should bring syep back so they can prepare their self with better jobs.

Sincerely,

Amede Fofana



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

SYEP is more than a summer job opportunity to pass the time or a quick payment for services, it is a bridge of opportunity for 75000 youth to a part time position, a recommendation letter, skill development and even new found friends. I not only speak from 3rd person but direct experience as well. I truly believe if it were not for the networking provided to me from my participation in SYEP 5 years ago, I would not be a SYEP director today.

Through my position and working with 600 youth from 2 High Schools, I've learned it's so much more to them than it was for me; not only was it an opportunity to network, but a means of literally putting food on the table, helping their families pay rent, phone bills, and find a means of escape from their troublesome neighborhood. From enrollment, to submitting documents, to orientation, to the 6 week work experience, the months of prep and time spent on the program for each individual youth, helps them grow and mentally prepare themselves for change, such as in our current situation.

Even in quarantine lies the potential to provide assistance to work sites and a source of income for their families through remote work. Academically inclined students can provide supervised tutoring for example, those who have to go to summer school can be paid to attend extended hours and catch up on credits, thus boosting graduation rates for the following school year and helping plenty of youth in the process. College students can provide similar support by being TAs for summer classes, having monitored tutoring or aiding tech support (CUNY quite often has its blackboard/cuny first issues or students who simply don't know how to navigate). Lastly, if direct support is absolutely needed those not in school or students who want to aid the masses can be emergency care workers at centers across the city. Moreover, this'd help thousands more than the 0 we're aiding by suspending SYEP and can benefit the city at large in the process.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I like SYEP because it helps me become a better person. My relationship to SYEP is great. I can really relate to a lot of SYEP workers.

Sincerely,
Angel Rodriguez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

My name is Aniya B and I'm a young person who has participated in SYEP before and cares about this issue because as a youth the competition for jobs is getting harder every day especially NYC. Once SYEP is canceled youths will have to battle adults to get into these fast food and retail jobs due to age and experience 95% of adults will get the job. The city should continue to fund SYEP this year because even though a little money was given to youths we have to take consideration in foster homes or many families with financial crises.

Barely are seeing their next check for a warm meal or wondering about supplies for this school year that the family can't provide for because of the COVID-19, many families are not first responders.

If we can shift a 1.1 million student school system to remote learning in a week, we can certainly find a way (IF NEEDED) to offer meaningful remote summer jobs or career training to a fraction of that number of our youths in 2 months. SYEP is an amazing program! Youths have called it "life-changing."

Losing it now, in a time of crisis, will be damaging to our youths' people's mental health.

Sincerely,
Aniya Briggs



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I'm Ashvini Naventhan. I'm just a young girl trying to fight for something that has so much benefit. Last year I got an amazing opportunity to participate in SYEP. When I heard about SYEP I just thought that I could make money out of it. During the time with syep I figure the purpose and why all the young people should participate in syep. SYEP is a great opportunity for everyone. It's the beginning of being responsible. It doesn't only pay and give us the money it always helps with Resume, Interviews and how to fight for good things, etc. In the end of the syep I did a group project which helped me to community others and helped me find friends. It doesn't only help me there are some small companies who are earning money from the syep program. We should figure some way to continue to step and follow all the rules at the same time.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Autumn Newsome, I'm 18 years old and my relationship with SYEP is pretty good. I believe the city should continue to fund syep this year because it's a great experience for young kids that really do need jobs they can do many different things of they choice and SYEP helps out a lot of people in my eyes last year was my first time working and i joined it so much and it was a great experience

Sincerely,

Autumn Newsome



Britney Espinoza
High School Student 9th Grade
Sunset Park Resident

Greetings,

I Britney E. Espinoza am a 14 year old, daughter of immigrants, sister of twins with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), and an activist in the community. My experience living in this diverse community was seeing a lot of people/families seeking help in the past and more especially during these unfortunate times. I am very worried for our future and the future for all children/youth because before the pandemic mental health has been mostly focused on teens and young adults. But now in these unforgettable moments we're all vulnerable to mental health. It's hard to imagine seeing people/families who have a small apartment, looking out of their window thinking when everything is going to be a relief. My brothers who have special needs look out and always say "let's go to summer beach" asking when are they going to the beach for their first time, imagine all of those special students who have to do weekly exercises now during this pandemic they sadly have to skip on that and work on what can affect their routine and health. Now with the decision of cutting out the funding budget, what will happen is that we will see students/families being affected mentally, economically, and academically. I want to ask all the politicians to fight so that there are no cuts in any area, especially public schools, because we need more social workers, counselors, and more afterschool programs and to reschedule Summer Youth Employment Program because today more than ever they need a job to support their families because many of them lost their jobs including mostly those who are undocumented and to continue to save money for college; it is like saying include not exclude. That politicians in general would think if all these children / youth are like their own family because all children / youth are the future of tomorrow. We need our voices to be heard, we are human, we have dreams, our future is in your hands.

Kind regards,

Britney E. Espinoza

Visión Futuro Youth Team



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

As a NYC high school senior, I am privileged enough to not have to rely on a summer job to get by this year, or in the past. However, I am one student in the nations largest public school system. A system that is so segregated and inequitable, that programs like SYEP bridge that inequality gap. Right now is not the time to be giving students in need yet another thing to worry about; NYC youth should be offered some kind of employment this summer. Even if it. has to be remote-based, students deserve to have some sort of nourishing meaningful experience this summer after dealing with the hardships of remote learning. NYC student's need the city now more than ever, especially amongst so many families experiencing financial problems. Continue to fund SYEP, for the sake. of maintaining the future of NYC.

Sincerely,

Carla Gaveglia



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I have been participating in SYEP since the year of 2017. From then, I have gained worked experience, connections, and even improved as a person. Using SYEP's income, I was able to assist in paying bills, buy school supplies, and even no longer had the need to ask parents for money- I had it myself. Through SYEP, I was able to enter the Work Learn Grown program which is Winter Youth for ages 16-21. That opportunity was amazing and beneficial to me. I was able to work in the social work force, a career path I wish to pursue in the future. This program may not mean much to others, but to us teens who need this opportunity for the present and future, it means a lot. This pandemic has had many families to lose their main source of income. With SYEP, teens are able to bring money to their households with no problem. If millions of students were able to switch to remote learning in one week, then students can be able to work remotely in a span of six weeks. They say the youth is the future, so why can't those help us to become the future?

Sincerely,

Karleny Ramos



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Paige Collins. I participated in Syep for the last 3 years. It comes in handy because it allows me to help my mom buy things that we need for the house such as toilet paper, food, water etc. It also allows me to save for the things I want that my mom isn't able to get me. I have also helped my mom to buy clothes for my little sister when my mom needed me to because she couldn't afford to. Syep not only gives money to the participants but it allows the participant to help their loved ones in need.

Sincerely,

Paige Collins



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Our youth needs SYEP to continue building skills and for their futures. Not having SYEP will have a direct negative impact on our youth and especially youth who are already marginalized and under resourced.

Sincerely,

Iris Gutierrez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Our children deserve as many opportunities as possible to glow, grow and shine in every developmental aspect - not just in academics. These summer programs nurture our students' development and are so essential to our communities as well!

Sincerely,

Andy Estevez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Besides it being a program to give our youth the experience and ability to understand the workforce in our world, it can help provide another income to help families, especially minority families, that can use the help.

Sincerely,

Miriam Lopez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I support any initiative that supports the youth in our communities.

Sincerely,

Elena Vazintaris



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a PTA co-President of PS 31 in Brooklyn, NY: a school with at least 70% of students coming from low-income households. Many of my students have older brothers and sisters who need this program to bring much-needed income into their households. This is not the time to cut something that is this crucial to the community. Please reconsider this hastily thought-out decision to cut such a vital network and program from our community. The students, their siblings, and parents need this. Don't be short-sighted.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ward



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

SYEP directly impacts students and families within my community. Discontinuing funding during COVID-19 will directly impact the wellbeing of students in terms of their ability to gain useful skills that will help their future. Gainful employment leads to a sense of purpose, job skills, social and emotional learning that are crucial for our youth, particularly those in underserved communities like mine. I implore you to reconsider this budget cut and continue the funding of this program to make a positive impact on our families for Summer 2020.

Sincerely,

Tameka Cooper



New York City Council Committee on Finance Hearing

May 21st, 2020

Testimony: Daniel Rodriguez Jr.

Contact: rodriguez13dan@gmail.com

Youth Organizer Red Hook Initiative

Hello City Council Members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Daniel Rodriguez and I am 18 years old and have lived in Red Hook for 8 years. I am writing to provide testimony for you all about the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) program and what a SYEP job means to a young person in Red Hook. Since (insert year) I have been a Youth Organizer at the Red Hook Initiative, a very family oriented non-profit where I now work.

SYEP is a great opportunity that helps build the capacity of young people who are seeking ways not only to thrive emotionally and financially but to also build connections interpersonally. SYEP allows you to become part of something that ends up being a camaraderie which then allows you to build connections with a large group of people. This experience helps young people like me find themselves and figure out what their passion is.

I was once again counting on applying to SYEP because aside from it supporting my opportunity to work at a non profit at Red Hook Initiative, it will also allow me to expand my knowledge and be part of the public service community which has been my lifelong dream. As a young person of today's society I have learned that when I work for the good of others, the more positive influence I will have to make a great impact on many generations to come.

SYEP was going to support me by helping me expand my horizons. The opportunity of SYEP would help me to further understand the importance of being a team player that is dedicated to being in service aimed to help others whenever they may need my help.

If you cut SYEP it would mean less opportunities available for far too many young people. I urge you to restore the SYEP funding immediately. Thank you for your time and for reading my testimony and best of good health to you all.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Devone and I'm currently a Junior in high school. I participated in SYEP last summer for the first time and it was beyond amazing. I was a part of younger youth and during those summer sessions I got to talk to people I didn't talk to on a regular basis. During the program we learned about our community and how to make it better without the need of gentrification. It was a great experience, I strongly recommend the program continue to run this summer so more kids can participate in the program and expand their working knowledge. Hopefully I can participate in older youth this summer!

Sincerely,

Devone Vazquez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

My name is Davonte I play basketball for my school. I have not participated in SYEP yet but I wanted to this year. Please save SYEP for kids like me.

Sincerely,
Davonte Thomas



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

SYEP is a good way for kids to get connections and have a working experience before we go off to college , I believe that everyone should get a chance to experience this like I did.

Sincerely,
Mr. Dewar



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I'm Edwarnae Smith, currently in sbc & i believe that SYEP should continue because I believe that children should be able to make there own money because some kids aren't able to do this without SYEP you never know what kids go through at home maybe they need there own money to feed themselves or provide for themselves. I also believe that it should continue so that kids could also get the work experience that they wanted like me. It would be amazing to have some kind of work experience and make our own money.

Sincerely,

Edwarnae Smith



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a teacher in district 14 for several years. My son, along with numerous young individuals have benefited in numerous ways for several years from the SYE Program. This program has been beyond a saving grace financially as well as emotionally, which they depend on every summer. They, as well as new youth should not be denied this support. Please allow our youth to continue to benefit from this amazing program! All the employees of this program are phenomenal and so supportive and depend on their employment as well.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tedeschi



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

SYEP employed 75,000 young people last summer, out of 150,000 who applied to participate. Now NYC wants to eliminate the program while increasing the policing budget. i would rather have more young people employed than more policing.

Sincerely,
Alex Ashe



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am not involved in the SYEP but I have heard about what a great program it is. It would be an incredible disservice to these young people to not allow them to have these opportunities, especially in a time of crisis the program is needed now more than ever. There is no excuse that the city can not find funding for this, considering they managed to find the money to increase spending on police.

Sincerely,
Alex Campbell



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a 17 year old boy who has a little working experience. I volunteered with my sister at her old job with her helping little kids with their homework, things like that.

I was hoping to work this summer because I heard that SYEP helps kids open a bank account. This could help pay the bills in my house. I'm in a Household of three people: me, my mother, and my older sister. My mother hasn't been working for 5 years now. All the bills were paid by my older sister and I wanna do something. I wanna help pay bills in the house. Without SYEP this summer I don't think I could help my family out.

SYEP would provide an opportunity for these institutions to build themselves back up financially by hiring SYEP participants.

Sincerely,
Alexander Charles



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a 17 year old girl who always wanted to work but never had the chance to because I had other things to do in my household. I never worked with SYEP but always wanted to ever since I heard about it.

I believe that the city should still fund SYEP this year mostly because many young people want to have the opportunity to work and earn their own money and pay for things on their own. It'll definitely be something that the young people would be proud of.

Sincerely,
Alexandra Santos



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Summer Youth has been a blessing for people in neighborhoods like mine when I was growing up. As a person who grew up in East Harlem, it has provided a means for younger people to learn responsibility especially financially. Moreover, it can create a network for those younger people so that as an adult they are ready to take on the world. As for myself, I was never employed by Summer Youth as I opted for retail jobs that had better pay. However, jobs like that in this pandemic simply don't exist. Please do not take what little they have!

Sincerely,
Alexis Iguina



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

We must protect all opportunities for young people that foster growth and development. We must invest in our youth instead of in violent law enforcement. For all the billions our municipalities spend on police and prisons, mass incarceration is not rehabilitative and makes no one safer. Divest from prisons, invest in youth programs like SYEP, especially when police are bound to prey on Black and brown youth when they are not engaged in schooling or work. Think about their futures, THEY MATTER.

Sincerely,
Amber King



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Families around the city are in financial crisis. A paid summer job for a young person helps the whole family. Over a million students were shifted to online learning during the pandemic. If needed we can find a way to offer meaningful remote summer jobs or career training to a fraction of that number of young people in 2 months. Providers have remote contingency plans already in the works. Giving the youth meaningful activities this summer is good for us and for the entire city.

Sincerely,
Anjuli Rathod



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am an NYC public school graduate and parent. On March 19th I read a quote from Cathy O'Neil that, "once the health emergency is over, we will see the extent to which rich, well-connected and well-resourced communities will have been taken care of, while contingent, poor and stigmatized communities will have been thoroughly destroyed. Moreover, we will have seen how political action is possible—multitrillion dollar bailouts and projects can be mobilized quickly—but only if the cause is considered urgent."

I consider giving young people the development programs they ask for urgent. You should too.

Sincerely,
Anna Minsky



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

In my opinion I think the city should continue funding SYEP this year because a lot of people depend on summer youth. It is not so easy to get hired for a job ,it's easy to apply but actually getting hired is not always Guaranteed. For example I applied for footlocker, Footaction , target, Aldi , CVS , Walgreens and etc Multiple times but not one hired me , It kind of gets Annoying because you are looking forward for them hiring you, you want to help out your family but you can't because you can't get a job . So summer youth is what makes me look forward to summer even though there's a chance I might not get picked ,it's the thought of knowing theirs a 50/50 chance is what counts. Also the city canceling summer youth well also boost teens being the streets because in the summer its hot no one wants the be in the house but summer youth keeps most teens off the streets but if there's no summer youth teens are going to be on the street and since there's no summer youth most are not going to have money they are going to take the illegal Approach which can mess up there whole life they are Either going to go to jail and that can affect them getting a part time job our they might lose their life either way it's not good. I Understand canceling SYEP is for our safety but the same as we do remote learning we can do remote jobs we can work from home , ask me how i don't know but the city will Eventually Figure it out.

Sincerely,
Ariana Ramsey



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a social worker in a local homeless residential facility and I see the impact that the SYEP has on my clients. Many of the youth participating in this program are amongst the first in their families to hold a consistent job. This program does more than just provide summer funding. It allows youth to see a different life for themselves. The Summer Youth Employment Program is vital to our city and supporting the young people who live here.

Sincerely,
Breanna Myers



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

No relationship to SYEP. But I believe it is absolutely important to support families in need during this crisis and give teens a positive experience to look forward to this summer. It's too easy to get negative and fall into unhealthy habits, SYEP is crucial right now.

Sincerely,
Brint Hansen



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

In the midst of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, how can we justify making cuts to the largest youth employment program in the country? The NYPD is looking at a mere 1% cut to their budget, and already city council members are pushing back. What does it say about the priorities of our city when policing children is more important than employing them? We know for a fact that the cut to SYEP is not due to health concerns--program providers said long ago that they could and would continue their work with students remotely if needed. If SYEP is not fully reinstated, the financial and emotional burden of Coronavirus will weigh even heavier on the backs of young, low-income students.

History will not look kindly upon those who cut funding to one of the few reliable lifelines for families in this crisis.

Sincerely,
Cameron Leo
Public Action Team Co-Leader, Teens Take Charge



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a NYC resident. I didn't participate in SYEP but many of my friends did growing up and it was great for them to have their own income. They didn't need to rely on parents for support, many of whom were stretched thin. The city is a small place when your parents and community have limited resources. SYEP gives students a much needed boost in confidence and life experience.

Sincerely,
Caroline Abreu



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,
Community Board 16 advocate-- FOR SYEP!!



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Denise King. I believe the city should continue to fund SYEP this year because it's a very important part of New York City youth. For most applicants, summer youth is our first form of a job and the most important job we ever had. SYEP is a form of having our very first serious responsibility at a young age and teaching us how to work at certain establishments. It teaches us how to work together and sometimes care for others. We learn the responsibility of handling money and a card, we get skills to help us when we have to go into the real world and get a real job.

Sincerely,
Denise King



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a professor at CUNY who understands the importance of summer programs for teens. These programs help keep young people engaged in activities that support their civic engagement and investment with the city. These programs also demonstrate, materially, that these teens matter and that New York City is invested in them and their futures. And these programs provide income for students who need it to help support themselves and their families. My students at CUNY are precisely the population who benefit from programs like SYEP. To defund it now, when the city is in such a precarious state, when students are heading into a summer without structure, would be a failure on the part of the state.

Sincerely,
Donika Kelly



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Please restore city funding to the Summer Youth Employment Program. As the parent of a 12 year old, we have all our eyes on SYEP for the time when our child is ready to work during his summer. We are counting on it. I can't imagine finding myself looking forward to this for years only to have it snatched out from under me and my family due to the decision of a democratic mayor and city council to ask our young people in need to carry the burden of the costs of COVID. Summer for all New Yorkers is better when our teens are engaged in meaningful work that benefits all of us. Don't cut SYEP!

Sincerely,
Emily Drabinski



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

There is a lot of need in the community right now which I feel is also an opportunity for young people to find gainful employment in the communities where they live. We could have them serve as social distancing ambassadors, helping at-risk residents with their shopping, maybe doing some contact tracing support. Our youth are a valuable resource and we need to invest in them!

Sincerely,
Michelle Erfer



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

The Summer Youth Employment Program is an opportunity for students across NYC to get hands-on experience in professional development, building relationships and exploring a career of their choice. Removing SYEP widens the opportunity gap for students coming from schools that lack resources in providing career exploration during the school year. SYEP is part of a system to dismantle segregated schools because it gives students from all walks of life the opportunity to thrive while earning an income over the summer. Children who participate in SYEP know the importance of continued education beyond the classroom and taking away this opportunity of enrichment only keeps our children of color vastly behind their white counterparts. With the continuation of remote learning, there could have been the same opportunity for students across NYC to develop their digital skills and continue to learn professional development remotely. Instead of cutting SYEP, our city could have found creative and innovative ways to employ students remotely instead of completely eliminating the program. I would imagine this working in a way where companies and organizations could hire students based on the assistance they need for working remotely. Students would go through a digital training where they are learning skills they will need to be competitive in the ever thriving digital world. Rather than completely eliminating the program altogether, students hours and flexibility would look different in comparison to working on site and this is all feasible. Eliminating SYEP causes us to go backwards and we need to move forward in creative and innovative ways in order to be a better NYC for our children after this pandemic.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

As a former medical student and new resident physician in NYC, I have worked with SYEP-funded young people, relied on their help, and mentored them unofficially. The money that SYEP members earn is not an "extra buck," it means a lot more to them and their families. Especially in this time, where many of these young peoples' families are dying and without employment, this income will make a big difference to many New Yorkers. Denying funding to SYEP is cruel and does not make sense in any way. You must save these jobs for NYC youth, they have been through enough.

Sincerely,

Isuree Katugampala



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Jamayra Luna. I'm a 16 year old female who has worked with the SYEP program before. It's a helpful program, it keeps youths distracted, helps for the resumes for future reference, and it helps a lot of adults who need jobs and money to take care of themselves. I feel like the program should continue to happen because a lot of people is at they Low as of right now and it would be helpful for it to continue so a lot of people can get on they feet and get something done.

Sincerely,
Jamayra Luna



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I believe we should fund SYEP this year because it is a critical investment in our young people. Now more than ever, when the economy is awful, young people need opportunities for growth and a stepping stone to economic autonomy through meaningful employment. It is unconscionable that the DeBlasio administration is considering underinvesting in the long term health and future of our youth and communities just to funnel more money to the NYPD—a group well known for actively harming these same communities. We don't need more police, we need spaces for our young people to thrive. Police only make those spaces smaller and less safe for people of color.

Sincerely,
Jenna Jerman



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Good evening, my name is Jennifer Varghese and I used to be a participant for SYEP for the summer of 2019. I believe the city should continue to fund SYEP this year because there are many families in NYC that are suffering because of the lack of jobs. Some families depend upon everyone in the household to contribute to helping out the family with bills, groceries, and other expenses. With SYEP being cancelled, many families lose that opportunity to help out their household and will start to fall behind on things such as bills, food, and personal care. That is why I believe that the city should continue to fund for SYEP as many people come from an economic disadvantage environment.

If possible, we can set up virtual SYEP and contribute in any way. This way, everyone is safe, getting work done, and help provide for their family during this pandemic.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Varghese



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am Jordan Thompson and i think the city should continue to fund SYEP because in SYEP u actually learn new things and u get to teach kids new things.

Sincerely,
Jordan Thompson



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

The summer after my freshman year of high school, I worked for the Crime Victims Advocate Program at the Queens District Attorney's Office through the Summer Youth Employment Program. It was my initial exposure to a system that I have been learning and thinking about since. That summer taught me so much, and I would not be who I am today without it. The program catalyzed critical thinking about my work and passions, and closed gaps in work-based learning and social capital between myself and my peers at my specialized high school. The city must fund the Summer Youth Employment Program this year. Young people are creative, engaged, and resourceful—give them an opportunity to show it.

Sincerely,
Kalley Huang



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am Katie and I'm a current junior at Gramercy Arts High School. I was upset to hear that SYEP was being canceled this year. This was the first year I applied for the program and I was really looking forward to having my first job during the summer. The reason I applied this year was for I can learn more about things I had an interest in and at the same time help my family financially and learn how to provide for myself. SYEP is such a crucial program for students because we are given an opportunity to learn and at the same time earn money.

Sincerely,
Katie Davis



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

SYEP has a proven track record of providing valuable work experience and needed income to New York City youth. This is one example of several impactful programs that contribute a great deal to the wellbeing in the city and its residents at relatively low cost. Eliminating this for the summer of 2020 will make it that much harder for already hard-hit New Yorkers to mitigate the financial impact of COVID-19, to stay engaged with school, and to succeed in the future.

Sincerely,
Katie Uva



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Kevin Rosario and I am born and raised in the Bronx. That being said, I had fight for almost everything I have in my life. I only started summer youth last summer, but that summer was very eye opening. I learned the importance of showing up on time, how to dress business casual, how to work with others, especially with those from different cultures. It was such a great experience, that I want all high school students to experience.

Sincerely,

Kevin Rosario



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

This program is so essential to youth. Teaching life skills, giving them stability, exposing them to other ways of thinking/walks of life, etc. The youth are better for programs like this and honestly more programs should be made available like this as one of many needed investments toward a better future. Youth need stability and structure for proper child development and SYEP provides some of that needed during the summer to fill the gap that school usually fills. Caring for young people is a community's obligation and our tax dollars need to go into things that edify and grow a community and its members.

Sincerely,
Kieran Pierre



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am an education professional in NYC. Youth employment is extremely important for young people and our entire community. As a coordinator of a summer internship at a non-profit, I see the value of meaningful summer employment for NYC's youth. Many of the alumni of the summer internship program I run also participated in SYEP in previous summers or subsequent summers. This program is invaluable. It must be funded.

Sincerely,
Kira Simon



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I believe that young people can greatly benefit from having summer employment. Please do not cut this program!

Sincerely,
Kristin Hoesl



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am La'Neice Anderson and I believe SYEP should continue to be funded this year because there are many families that is struggling right now because of the corona virus.

If kids can work this summer to save up money to help their parents. I worked SYEP last year for the first time and it was helpful. I didn't have to ask my mother for anything, it also helped me prepare for school.

Sincerely,
La'Neice Anderson



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Research has proven a link between summer youth employment and decreased youth mortality. I start there to emphasize the fact that the SYEP is literally a life-saving program. In a time when so many other services and programs for youth have been cut this summer, and after months of income loss by the families already the most economically vulnerable prior to COVID19, this is the worst possible time to reduce or eliminate SYEP. In short, the city and providers and nonprofits will rally around the restoration of SYEP. We will get it done. Please give us that chance. Give young people the opportunities they need and deserve. Young people entering the labor market in the wake of a recession often face lifelong deficits and gaps (permanent wage loss, etc) due to lack of skills, signals, and social capital--the very thing SYEP addresses.

Sincerely,
Lindsey Dixon



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Now more than ever youth need to be employed this summer!! Defund prosecutors offices, NYPD, and corrections as these all are assailants to public health and safety. Kids need funds and kids need experience. Cops won't keep kids off the streets this summer but SYEP will. Invest in our youth, this situation is dire!!

Sincerely,
Maria Iskaros

Dear Finance Committee:

I am a writer and screenwriter based in Red Hook, Brooklyn and I am writing to testify about the DYCD budget because that funding is ESSENTIAL to NYC as a whole and to neighborhoods like mine in particular.

While I accept and understand that COVID19 impacts will take a huge bite out of the City budget, I do not accept, nor should you, that DYCD suffer a radically steeper budget cut than other City departments – NEARLY 5X THE CUTS TO OTHER AGENCIES.

The current draft budget proposes to cut the NYCD by 47.7% while the current draft budget proposes to cut NYPD by .31%, less than 1/3 of 1 percent.

Carlos Menchaca proposes a 1% cut to the NYPD budget which was [\\$6.1](#) billion last year. DYCD was [\\$7.79](#) million. The ONE PERCENT NYPD cuts are an absolutely fair and equitable way to ensure minimal disruption to the NYPD while offering MAXIMUM support to the NYCD.

DYCD funds community arts programs, youth programs, and summer jobs for youth via SYEP (Summer Youth Employment Program). Those are cultural and educational programs that benefit the entire community of the recipient organizations. As an arts professional I am very cognizant of the LIFE CHANGING impact that the arts has on individual development. Cultural and educational programs enhance knowledge, empathy, socialization, societal and civic interaction and participation and in general they help foster a more robust citizenry. If we are to move forward as a better NY as our governor has stated is his wish... THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT IS NEEDED.

Further, a truly fair COVID19 budget does not gut the programs that serve those most affected by COVID19.

The people served by DYCD are the people most affected by COVID19, black and brown communities who are dying from coronavirus at 2x the rate of whites, who have a higher level of “essential workers” risking their lives than whites, and who are overwhelming over-targeted by NYPD police enforcement of social distancing where arrests, often violent ones, of people of color equal over 80% of total arrests.

I believe there is huge merit in proposals to use SYEP funds to hire and train youth to be ambassadors about social distancing and health safety practices that prevent getting COVID19.

NYC needs #NYCBudgetJustice. We need to #SaveSYEP.

DYCD should not be the sacrificial lamb DECIMATED to support the budgets of other agencies.

Thanks for your consideration.

Maria Nieto



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

It is essential in these dire times that youth are able to thrive, help support their families who are economically hurt by the COVID-19 crisis, learn crucial skills and develop themselves after learning from home for a few months. Summer jobs help teens obtain skills, get out of the day to day funk of being stuck in the house, be entertained, for what is primed to be a difficult and idle time otherwise. The COVID-19 crisis is terrible for teenagers' mental and physical health, not to mention the economy, and jobs can help reverse the kind of difficult isolation and idleness youth will find themselves in this summer after a semester of remote learning. Investing in youth now will prevent us from fighting joblessness, downward mobility, low-skill sets, homelessness and poverty in the future--and maybe even petty crime by youth who need to find ways to sustain themselves. It is an essential facet of anti-poverty programs in the city, and a proven one. Please don't give up on it now, and make the economic situation even worse than it is.

Sincerely,
Marie Bart



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a lifelong NYC resident that knows the power of having our youth stay involved in programs like this when school is out. Not only does it help under privileged folks to earn extra income, when we all work to improve a community together the results are astronomical. There is absolutely no reason to cut the budget on these programs, we are an immensely wealthy city and it's laughable to think we can't afford this. This benefits our residents tremendously and I strongly encourage we keep the program going.

Sincerely,
Mike Najjar



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Good morning, my name is Maura Smale and I'm a Brooklyn resident and parent. In this testimony, I ask that the City fund the Summer Youth Employment Program and save 75,000 jobs for New York City's youth.

SYEP is so critical for the young people of our city. Extreme segregation in the NYC school system creates massive disparities in students' lives in and out of school. Programs like SYEP help reduce the gaps in work-based learning and social capital that segregation creates.

If we can shift a 1.1 million student school system to remote learning in a week, we can certainly find a way (IF NEEDED) to offer meaningful remote summer jobs or career training to a fraction of that number of young people in 2 months. Providers have assured us that they already have remote contingency plans already in the works. After a LONG spring of remote learning, New York City teens are more in need than ever of ways to stay meaningfully engaged and, if necessary, indoors, this summer.

I cannot understate the urgency of this ask to my family, neighborhood, and the city, and hope the Council ensures that this important priority to fund the Summer Youth Employment Program not be left behind in the budget process.

Sincerely,

Maura Smale

My UAU Virtual Town Hall Testimonial Speech

Hello everyone, it's a pleasure to see you all here at this virtual meeting. I know the COVID-19 pandemic has been rough for everyone, but I'm glad you all are here today! Before I begin my testimonial, I'd like to introduce myself a bit. I'm 19 and I'm currently a sophomore at St. John's University. My main concentration is computer science but I want to minor in education. In the Summer of 2018, I've gotten my first Summer Youth Employment Program job as a camp counselor for a 3rd grade class at PS55. While holding that position at the time, I've learned what it's truly like to be a hard worker, and made some new friends along the way! My Summer Youth Employment Program job taught me the importance and fun of helping my community out. They have also helped me realize my interest and potential for working with students. Not only that, the pay from my SYEP job has helped me fund essentials such as my college textbooks, metro cards, and hanging out with my best friends! My favorite moments from my Summer Youth Employment job was when we all had to spirit days and do something related to Harry Potter (yes even the counselors had to get involved in the activities the students were doing from time to time). My most favorite spirit day was when everyone had to come to the class dressed in all Gryffindor apparel. Another one of my favorite moments was the carnival at the end of the year. As you guys can imagine, my SYEP job played a huge role in my life. That's why it's important that the Summer Youth Employment Program remains open this Summer. The youth have so much potential and energy! They just need a place to use it! That place is the Summer Youth Employment Program! Children love and need the Summer Youth Employment Program! *Probably make a joke about that time you played tag with 7 students and quickly got tired* I understand that COVID-19 is still in issue, but the Summer Youth Employment Program needs to be reopened but in a way that can ensure everyone's safety. I hope you all have a good day.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

The jobs I held as a teenager shaped who I am today and helped me develop necessary skills to succeed in life. All people should have this learning opportunity and access to a way to independently make money and take part in the economy of their environments.

Sincerely,
Michelle Gargus



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

As a youth I had the grand opportunity to participate in the Summer Youth Employment Program SYEP working with local preschoolers at Early Childhood Development Centers. After studying Early Childhood Education in college. I then returned to Education working for prestigious Independent, private and public schools of New York City. I must credit my first experience with SYEP to my career success because the SYEP program gave me the necessary exposure and hands on experience working in Education.

As a parent of two students who also had the opportunity to be selected as SYEP participants SYEP gives my students the opportunity to learn about a career field they are interested in and earn a stipend to help purchase school supplies for the upcoming year. One of my students interned at NYC Hospital as a International Medical Resident Scheduler through the SYEP. My youngest student was selected also as a Camp Counselor where she created a special curriculum for preschoolers about nutrition and healthy eating. Please keep the Summer Youth Employment program for youth this year. The youth need support care and the ability to earn over the Summer.

Sincerely,
Michelle Hanley



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Any adult who even considers proposing or passing a budget that eliminates the SYEP and increases the budget for the NYPD ought to be ashamed of themselves. The SYEP is a critical program for developing future leaders. We need it now more than ever. Our young people were relying in the income and experience they would have obtained from the SYEP. To take that away from them while giving more resources to cops is pure, bureaucratic evil.

Sincerely,
Katie Mohrhauser



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

So many New Yorkers are experiencing economic hardship right now, in addition to the economic inequality already plaguing our city. SYEP can help provide support in the short-term to young people who need it, while putting them in a better position long-term to secure meaningful work at a living wage. We must keep this program intact.

Sincerely,
Natalie Chap



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Investing in programs like SYEP to support youth is essential to us building equity in our communities that are harmed by segregation, racism, and economic disinvestment. Stop increasing funding for the NYPD and instead focus on this life changing program. I am an adult who cares about this program and wants to see the city do the work to support our communities, not just criminalize and overpolice! During this pandemic, the city should be doing even more to support the young people who are most harmed. If school learning can be adjusted for a remote schedule, we can certainly do the same to support the young people in our communities! Financial stability is one of the most important things we can support for young people and their families

Sincerely,
Neha Patel



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I want a more equitable NYC on the other side of this pandemic. If there's money for an increased NYPD budget there's money for our youth. Take money out of the cops' pensions every time the city has to pay a huge settlement because they brutalized another New Yorker.

Sincerely,
Nicole Irizarry



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a recent college graduate who lives in Queens with my family, and I know how helpful SYEP is and can be. Programs like these need more funding, and it feels like a lie to pretend there is no money for these programs when the police budget continues to increase even during this global pandemic. Families are in crisis, and giving young people an opportunity like this to engage with others in work-based learning for pay will be beneficial to everyone. Continuing to finance this program is a way for us to invest in the future of New York that prioritizes equality.

Sincerely,
Nyelah Sawyer



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a native New Yorker who participated in SYEP as a youngster as well as managed SYEP participants in my professional life. In both instances I recognized the merit of this program to the city's youth. This program fosters responsibility and maturity while providing them with a small stipend to carry them through the summer months. I feel this funding is imperative for our city during this period of uncertainty by providing youngsters with activity and focus.

Sincerely,

Odette M. McNeil

Hi. My name is Rebecca Park and I am a proud New York City public school teacher at Leaders High School in Bensonhurst, a few blocks away from Councilman Treyger's district office.

As a Government teacher, I strive to empower my students to believe that they have a role to play – that it is *worth* participating in the government, especially the city government. If you vote yes on the Mayor's proposed budget, how am I supposed to tell them that their city government cares about them? That in a pandemic, in the midst of a crisis that has isolated and traumatized them and denied them their right to a full and normal education, the city chose to increase funding for the institutions that criminalize them while taking away resources from those that nourish and educate and value them.

In solidarity with my colleagues, students, and families across the city, I demand a restorative budget that values healing over policing. I demand that the city fund social workers and counselors and teachers and nurses and our invaluable maintenance staff. That you restore funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program, a lifeline of opportunity for students like mine. Our budget crisis is real. But the city must instead tackle it with a hiring freeze and reduced funding for the NYPD, an institution sorely ill-equipped to respond to this crisis. How many more videos of police officers brutalizing our neighbors do you need to see? Police are not the solution.

Teachers don't need empty tweets of appreciation. If you really believe we are essential workers, as this crisis has shown day in and day out, then we need resources and staff to make sure our students can be as healthy and happy and whole as possible, including *additional* resources to address the trauma of COVID and the economic fallout that's accelerating by the day. Divesting from our students now will tell them that NYC's government does not care about them. Furthermore, these cuts to education, SYEP, and our youth services infrastructure will only lead to *more* pain and *more* trauma – and thus *more* budget problems down the line.

I believe that most of you all already know the right way to vote on this is. So do the right thing.

Finally, I also want urge all City Council Members to call on our State Legislature to consider revenue-raising options when they return on Tuesday. There are multiple ways out of our budget crisis and cuts to education are not part of any of them.

Thank you.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Samantha Viscovich. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, I was working as a Program Operations Coordinator for SYEP at Commonpoint Queens. Given the quick economic downturn the country has experienced, the Summer Youth Employment Program is crucial now more than ever to enhance the financial and mental well being of participants, their families and local small business owners. New York City is one of the areas that have been hit the hardest by the virus. Our participants, a majority of whom come from low income communities and already experience economic hardship, are depending on SYEP to be reinstated so that they can help their families financially. The job loss and uncertainty of the employment sector has put a lot of unnecessary stress on our participants and families as well. Additionally this program would provide essential budget relief for our small businesses that have been closed since the pandemic began.

SYEP would provide an opportunity for these institutions to build themselves back up financially by hiring SYEP participants.

Sincerely,
Samantha Viscovich



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

SYEP provides valuable work experience and resources for low income young people, many of whom are part of communities being hit hardest by COVID-19. I facilitated an SYEP program in 2014 through the non-profits Global Kids Inc and The Point. Youth learned to work on a team to create and present a digital project they were proud of. I know firsthand how rewarding these experiences can be, and how with some creative thinking, these programs might become online internships. Save SYEP!!!

Sincerely,
Sara Vogel

March 19, 2020

RE: Proposed cuts to SYEP

Good Afternoon Chair Council Member Debi Rose and the members of the Committee on Youth Services. My name is Selina Grey. I am a Political Community Organizer and a resident in the North Shore of Staten Island.

I understand that we are in unprecedented times and New York City is facing a historic budget crisis but I am asking that you and the Mayor to restore full funding to New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program.

The North of Staten Island has the highest density of public housing and is the most diverse community in all of New York City. Youth in the North Shore of Staten Island are more likely to be disconnected than youth citywide. Meaning, they are either out-of-school and/or out-of-work. Our youth are less likely to be enrolled in college. Also, there are racial and ethnic disparities in our juvenile justice system that disproportionately affect our young people in the North Shore. We have seen over policing in our communities related to the pandemic and social distancing. If we do away with Day Camps and the Summer Youth Employment Program, what will our communities look like this summer? What activities will be afforded to our young people during the summer months?

There are many ways to keep our young people safe and employed during the summer months. Small businesses will be opening up. I'm sure many of these businesses will not be hire full time staff. The Summer Youth Employment Program can partner with businesses, as they've always done, to assist them in getting back on their feet. This will teach our young people responsibility, entrepreneurship, a new skillset, and an opportunity to earn income. This additional income can provide relief to families that have been financially devastated due to the current pandemic. It is a win for the community and their families.

Our community based organizations will suffer. They provide much needed services to the people in various North Shore Communities. I fear that they will not be able to meet the needs of the community if the funding is not there. Who will fill in the gap?

I am asking that we take a look at city agencies that have a more robust budget and find a creative way to save the Summer Youth employment program.

I thank you for your time.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Families around the city are in financial crisis. A paid summer job for a young person helps the whole family. My neighbors are currently out of work due to COVID-19, except for their 17-year-old whose fast food job is their only income.

After a LONG spring of remote learning, New York City teens are more in need than ever of ways to stay meaningfully engaged and, if necessary, indoors, this summer. Cutting this program to save money is false economy if the savings then goes to policing bored, idle teenagers.

SYEP is an amazing program! Young people have called it "life changing." Losing it now, in a time of crisis, will be detrimental to young people's mental health.

Sincerely,
Sharis Ingram



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

A mother's biggest fear is not being able to put food on her table.

Her greatest wish is that she'll never have to ask her children to contribute financially.

Her favorite words are, "It's okay, you can wait until you're older to provide for me, right now just focus on school baby."

But this is where we bump heads, because I want to provide now.

I have officially lost track of the amount of times that I've applied for Summer Youth — not the amount of times I've participated in it, just the amount of times I haven't been chosen.

I'm not called back for jobs elsewhere, and Summer Youth won't take me, so what age will I finally get my first shot at an actual work experience?

My fingers were crossed that this summer would be the first time I had my own money, for once. Not the birthday money, the Christmas money, or the lunch money, my money. Except now I'll be a freshman in college in five months who's never worked.

I want to surprise my hard working mom with a gift or two, you know? My mom shouldn't have to do all of the surprises. I want to buy groceries and necessities for the house when they run out too, you know? My mom shouldn't have to do all of the buying.

I'm a freshman in college with a mom paying Room and Board for the campus that I'll be staying on, I didn't want my first job to be the one that I work on campus. Even if I wasn't chosen last summer, or the summer before, or the summer before, I had



#SAVESYEP

hoped in the program that this would be my lucky year, but it's cancellation has made it impossible for me to ever find out.

Not only did it provide for over 75,000, but it rejected a quantity that we'll never know.

"Some service options have additional eligibility requirements" -- Clearly in which I don't ever have.

I live within the five boroughs, and am legally allowed to work.
That's what the website said I needed, so what am I missing now?

The program's binoculars don't see everyone, and there are a portion of teenagers that want the opportunity so bad but can't get it.

Cutting this program will completely deplete the probability of us getting a job, so save SYEP.

Sincerely,
Sierra Fraser
Teens Take Charge Public Action Team



The relationship I have with SYEP is I was going to apply this year. When I got the news it was cancelled I was devastated. I really hope the city can change their minds and fund SYEP this year because there are students who have nothing to do during summer. I won't be doing anything this year but if we can work virtually it will really help out. I will be able to help out my family with the money I make. SYEP can also teach me skills that I can use in the future. I think this is a great opportunity to work and learn from others.

TO VIEW THE SYEP 2020 PLAN VISIT: <https://www.teenstakecharge.com/syep2020>



I was relying on SYEP to cover my tuition for college. I am in a financial crisis and the money is a necessity as I need to pay 13k every year.

TO VIEW THE SYEP 2020 PLAN VISIT: <https://www.teenstakecharge.com/syep2020>



A lot of people like myself from all ages benefit from SYEP. I know that it won't be the same because of the corona virus but there is always a way to work around it

TO VIEW THE SYEP 2020 PLAN VISIT: <https://www.teenstakecharge.com/syep2020>



I want SYEP to start up again. People are struggling especially with this pandemic going on, and seniors like me , are going to college we need the money to fully be able to move onto campus

TO VIEW THE SYEP 2020 PLAN VISIT: <https://www.teenstakecharge.com/syep2020>



As a young Bronx teenager, the removal of a program like SYEP which gives back to its community, is something that heavily impacts the way my life will move forward. Many teens such as myself depend on the money we earn during the summer to buy things like school supplies and clothes for the school year which our parents cannot afford due to their extremely low incomes. In New York City, the majority of teenagers in SYEP come from the Bronx and from families of low socioeconomic status. In this time of crisis, many parents are not working and cannot do outside jobs to make ends meet. For many of us, our parents are on welfare and receive money from the government that doesn't even cover the rent. In this lockdown, a heavy strain has been placed on the finances of many families which will inhibit mothers and fathers from buying necessities for their kids due to the demand on them to keep up with rent and find new jobs. As a teenager who's about to enter their first year in college, the money I would've earned this summer would've gone towards dorm and utilities. My mother, like many single parents, has to pay money for me to pursue my degree and SYEP would've helped with that. When the people making legislation aren't the ones experiencing the effects of it, it's very easy to make senseless cuts and policies. For those of us on the receiving end of these decisions, our lives are often negatively impacted and we're left to fend for ourselves. Covid-19 is without doubt an issue that needs to be focused on because it's destroying the lives of the nation. However, the future and morale of the young population and the seniors who have already lost so many high school experiences is just as important. The city cannot praise the voices of their youth in instances like gun violence rallies and gay fights rallies and take that same voice away from them when it comes to SYEP. We must do better.

TO VIEW THE SYEP 2020 PLAN VISIT: <https://www.teenstakecharge.com/syep2020>



My name is Tajh Sutton and I am an arts educator and community organizer. I also happen to be President of the Community Education Council in District 14 where I grew up. Before I became all these things, I worked at Restoration plaza and in schools across Brooklyn as an SYEP participant. My god mother opened her own summer program and utilized SYEP participants to staff it. We built community with the youth and families in our neighborhoods, helped the older young people gain skills they could use throughout their lives and supplied parents with an affordable and culturally responsive option for childcare. It was my years in SYEP that led to being site director at that same camp my godmother started and eventually to be beginning my own arts education organization. SYEP is more than a random program for kids to make a couple dollars. It is an institution families, communities and youth depend on to build community, provide opportunities and develop the socio emotional skills we all need to be happy and healthy. I would not be the educator and organizer I am today without my time at SYEP. That opportunity should not be stripped away from our youth during one of the most traumatic times they've ever experienced. Many providers have already begun creating remote opportunities for youth to participate in the program. We urge our elected officials to #SaveSYEP

TO VIEW THE SYEP 2020 PLAN VISIT: <https://www.teenstakecharge.com/syep2020>



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Tyler, and I'm a concerned citizen from Chicago. Chicago has a similar program to SYEP in NYC, and there is a deep causal relationship between summer activities and crime rates for young Black and Brown people. Especially after this period of remote learning and trauma from COVID-19, they need vital opportunities like SYEP to remain engaged indoors. How is it that NYC can increase the budget for NYPD during a literal pandemic while cutting vital programs like SYEP? Let's fund our young people and the future of the city rather than further stripping opportunities away from them and their livelihood.

Sincerely,
Tyler He

My name is Carmen Lopez Villamil and I'm a high school junior from Brooklyn. I participated in SYEP during the summer after my freshman year, and planned to do so again. The Summer Youth Employment Program provided me with financial independence, work experience, and a community that has given me indelible support and incredible opportunities since. As it turns out, these benefits – income, security, and support – are exactly what I, and countless other NYC students, need right now.

The coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc on my family's income; my mom has taken a pay cut and my dad lost his job, but we are still expected to pay our debts and mortgage. A summer stipend is essential for my family. Though my schoolwork keeps me busy – I'd even venture to say that some days are stressful – it is not because I am learning. I am stressed because this pandemic is confusing and terrifying, and the Department of Education hasn't given us the academic or emotional support to deal with it. An engaging, empowering, supportive summer opportunity is essential for my mental health. The Summer Youth Employment Program, when shifted online, can start to make up for the systemic inequities of our city's social and educational systems, especially in their cruel pandemic iterations. It can, and must, serve the city's most vulnerable youth as a source of education, mental well-being, and financial stability.

In all earnestness, how does the Mayor suggest I spend my summer without SYEP?



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Especially in this time of crisis, young New Yorkers deserve access to programs like SYEP that will set them up for success and contribute to our community. To cut funding for this program while increasing the NYPD budget, which terrorizes many of the same black & brown youth who could participate in SYEP, would show that New York only cares about locking up New Yorkers instead of keeping our city vibrant and thriving.

Sincerely,
Zoe Leverant



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

I have participated in SYEP in a school base. I am currently a senior and this summer job is extremely important to me, it's a great way to save for my college expenses such as books, metro cards, etc. Also, if my mom is not able to work this summer this would help so much. This gives me the opportunity to gain more experience in a work-based environment and try a new style of working while learning in a virtual way.

Sincerely,
Francis Catalino



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I participated in SYEP. It is an essential program for young New Yorkers financially, socially, and mentally. It is more important than ever that the program be offered to as many youth as possible this summer.

Sincerely,

Jabbie Halimatou



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

As a student of color who is a female and attends a segregated high school it stands out to me to see how these low income students who have participated in SYEP are suffering in this time of crisis because the city doesn't want to fund the program. I've never participated in SYEP but I know students who have and they depend on that money for their family and health, But something that is eye-catching is the idea that many females don't have the option to get into their dream job but this program allows them to apply and make a difference.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

It's that time of year again — New York City's budget process is underway. Unfortunately, the proposed budget is \$3.4 billion less than last year due to the lost tax revenue from COVID-19, as well as cuts in New York's state budget, leaving a bigger hole for the city to backfill. What will New York City do to balance its expenses?

I am submitting this testimony to join the collective voices demanding that the city stop robbing Peter to pay Paul. The current proposed budget will underfund and cut education and youth programs to pay the New York City Police Department (NYPD) billions of dollars. This has to stop.

As a member of Manhattan Community Board 11, which covers East Harlem, I participate in crafting recommendations of our district needs for the city budget. I see how our city sets our collective priorities through the allocation of funding — a budget that props up policing to battle all the symptoms to our city's problems, but not the root causes.

This year's budget will be extremely constrained. The COVID-19 pandemic is projected to result in \$7.4 billion in lost tax revenue for the city. Mayor de Blasio's executive budget cuts \$641.8 million from education but only cuts \$23.8 million from the police department. In other words, the cut from education is about 27 times greater than the proposed cut from the police department.

To get more specific as to who is impacted, New York City's school population is 40.6 percent Latinx, 25.5 percent Black and 16.2 percent Asian. The mayor also announced cuts to the Summer Youth Employment Program, which provides jobs to 75,000 youth in the city each summer. In 2019, the program employed 44 percent Black, 25 percent Latinx and 12 percent Asian youths.

These numbers are particularly alarming when we see these are the same racial demographics targeted by the police and criminal legal system. The city's Department of Correction reports their average daily population is 53.3 percent Black and 33.9 percent Latinx.

There never seems to be enough money to invest in our youth and their futures when it comes to education and job opportunities — except the money is there. The issue is our priorities. In the mayor's executive budget, he allocates \$5.9 billion for the NYPD and \$1.2 billion for the Department of Correction. Moreover, the city approved an \$8 billion borough-based jail expansion plan.

We are told tradeoffs must be made in the name of public safety. But racist policing does not make any of us safer. The truth is there is no such thing as public safety when Black and Latinx New Yorkers are dying at twice the rates of their white counterparts from COVID-19. The infection and death rates can literally be mapped onto the most segregated neighborhoods in the city by race and class. The reality is poverty and



#SAVESYEP

systemic racism are comorbidities, and no amount of policing and mass incarceration will fix the root causes of these problems.

We say that as a city we care about youth and the well-being of our future generations. If that is true, then it's not too late. As the New York Budget Justice movement has called for, we can increase city, state and federal taxes on the rich and wealthy to fund a budget that invests in our communities and fights inequality. Even during this pandemic, billionaires continue to see their net worth soar by many more billions, and they can afford to pay their fair share instead of continuing to balance the budget on the backs of poor, Black and Brown New Yorkers.

In addition to increasing our government's tax revenue, we can also choose to redirect much-needed resources from the NYPD budget to the needs of our communities. Save SYEP. SYEP is an amazing program and it is truly life changing—I was an SYEP youth and it gave me an opportunity to work in a professional setting and exposure to new career possibilities that no one in my family had. It also gave me income that I shared with my family to pay bills. Families around the city are in financial crisis. A paid summer job for a young person helps the whole family.

I respectfully submit this testimony to the New York City Council and ask that you put our communities first, now more than ever: Choose to invest in future generations by saving SYEP and through investment in housing, health care and education, and reject disinvestment, criminalization and mass incarceration.



New York City Council Committee on Finance Hearing

May 21st, 2020

Testimony: Jaylie Efferson

Contact: jaylieefferson@gmail.com

Youth Organizer Red Hook Initiative

To City Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in writing today. I'm Jaylie Efferson, I'm 15 years old and I am born and raised in Red Hook, Brooklyn. I'm very passionate about my education and being independent. I've been going to the Red Hook Initiative since last year starting with the Career Starters program.

Last year I worked as an Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) staff member at Sunset Park High School. I feel that SYEP is a great opportunity for young people because it gives them something positive to do and a clear focused activity during the summer.

SYEP cuts would just give another reason for kids to be outside on the streets doing things other than working, and it probably would cause some problems in our community. When kids have something positive to do and focus on they normally stay out of trouble. Young people also need that income to help themselves and their families, especially through this tough time of the Coronavirus.

For the elected officials, I feel that you made a huge decision that you felt was right but didn't really think deeply into what impact this would have on young people. SYEP takes a lot of kids off the streets and keeps them busy.

I feel that you shouldn't cut SYEP, and you should do the program virtually via Google Hangouts, just so that kids can get extra money in their pockets. Young people at Red Hook Initiative including myself are willing to work with you to design a virtual SYEP program for our neighborhood. We need something positive for young people to look forward to.

Please reconsider your decision to cut this program and understand that this will hurt our community.

Jayson Acosta
Class Of 2023
KIPP College Prep High School

My name is Jayson Acosta. I'm 15 years old. I currently live in Washington Heights Manhattan, and attend school at South Bronx, KIPP NYC College Prep. My first time applying for the SYEP was in 2019 in hopes of being selected, which later I was told that I wasn't selected. This year was supposed to be the year that I got chosen until I received a phone call from my provider stating that the program was canceled due to COVID 19. I was super excited that this year I was confident I was going to be selected because I'm 15 years old going on 16.

This year it was my first year of high school. My friends and I had a plan to gain more experience for our resume and, more importantly, make money to help with my expenses. Being in high school and playing sports, I acknowledge how expensive it was to purchase my equipment and to keep up with fashion. Therefore I have planned to work for SYEP and save every paycheck so that I could contribute to my cost. I believe that the city should continue to fund SYEP, especially this year since our city has been on lockdown for several months, and now our summers have been taken away from us too.

There are not going to be any pools open, no beaches and no amusement park, so what is there left for us now? I feel that having the option to do something engaging would give lots of young teens a chance to have a healthier mental state. This program can continue to help thousands of families who have lost their jobs like mine with any expensive costs around the house. I understand this decision was made for safety reasons. However, I believe they should have taken more time to consider the longer impact of this drastic decision. Maybe they could incorporate more options that could have let us work remotely on projects. These would have included keeping us safe at home, still earning money to support our families and developing skills that will help me in my future career.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a youth worker and educator who has seen the disproportionate negative impact of this pandemic on young people. The young people I work with (high school aged) are scared, stressed, and concerned about the health and financial wellbeing of their families.

It is important for the city to support youth by providing them with meaningful experiences and financial support this summer. The Summer Youth Employment Program is essential for the well-being of young people in the city. The city must take its responsibility to care for teens seriously by expanding rather than closing SYEP. With the closure of public pools, ban on team sports, and limited social opportunities, it will be a bleak summer for young people without opportunities to learn and engage with others remotely. I hope this city will do the right thing by supporting and expanding paid summer opportunities for NYC youth.

Sincerely,
Jomaira Salas Pujols



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

My name is Joss Greene and I am a PhD candidate in Sociology at Columbia University. I am deeply concerned that the 2021 budget, as currently proposed, will increase suffering for New Yorkers already struggling during the pandemic. The proposed budget includes over \$3 billion in cuts to social services, with hundreds of millions of dollars in NYC education cuts alone (including cuts to pre-K and the Summer Youth Employment Program). Despite these draconian cuts, the proposed budget barely cuts or even increases funding for the NYPD, District Attorneys, and the Department of Corrections. Black and Latinx currently comprise 84% of people in NYC jails, more than 75% of incarcerated people who've contracted covid-19, and 98% of people arrested under social distancing policing. Pouring money into NYC's criminal justice system while stripping money from social services will have racist and deadly consequences.

As a sociologist who studies social inequality, I call on you to divest from police, the Department of Corrections, and prosecution and invest in the things we need for a just recovery and beyond: health care services, affordable housing, free public transportation, education.

Thank you so much for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,
Joss Greene



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a 16 years old with that participated in summer youth since the age of 14. through summer youth I learned skill that help in my day to day. Summer youth help me buy my clothing ,school items because i a have 4 brothers and my mom income is just rent an bills.

My mom is a hardworking lady but supporting for of us is a lot. SYEP help me and my brothers help with clothing and our cellphone bills or sometimes food and snacks.

This summer we need summer jobs because, first our families are with limited income . second as young people we are running out of creative things to do at home .remote school is cool but we need outdoors, we need to be with our friends.

SYEP is part of our summer but is also the way we assist our families, but is our beginning to learn how to work and gaining new skills.

Sincerely,
Kareem Garcia

Katie Dean

148 Evergreen Avenue Apt 3R

Brooklyn, NY 11206

5/22/2020

Hello and thank you for hearing me. My name is Katie Dean and I am a constituent in district 34. I spoke yesterday at the hearing and wanted also to send along my written testimony. I would like to voice my concerns and opposition to the proposed 49% budget cut to the Department of Youth and Community Development.

A city with diminished, or extinguished, social services, after school programs, and community support, with increased police presence, does not support or represent the ideals of New York City. We rely on these programs for community, and to offer young people an outlet and a channel for creativity, to explore avenues that interest them, to secure work. The initiatives the DYCD targets are the exact things I hope we'd support right now, they are the exact things that I would want a budget to include. Their services include initiatives for Runaway & Homeless Youth, Family Support, Literacy, Senior and Housing programs; the Summer Youth Employment Program, afterschool, and year round youth enrichment programs. This department is looking at a 49% cut next year. They are the only department looking at a cut in the double digits and they are looking at a 49% cut. How devastating. These are NOT the things I want to be diminished or extinguished.

The organizations who currently receive funding from the DYCD did not stop when COVID-19 hit. They did not stop when they couldn't physically meet with their students or communities. They became community hubs, or rather, they were always community hubs and they continued to be that, coordinating food drives, organizing pet supplies, shifting to online classes and meetings to continue programs, sending people on food runs to supply deliveries for families and individuals who could not leave their homes. When an unforeseen need popped up in a community, they are the leaders on the ground who filled that void. One of many such organizations, Cora Dance in Red Hook, Brooklyn, has contributed in many such

ways and depends on resources from the DYCD to continue their programs, which serves over 500 young artists yearly with pay what you can classes and performances, afterschool, internships for young artists and social service programs. Stripping community hubs from their ability to do vital, important work means depriving communities of so much. If you strip these community hubs from being able to continue to do this, you deprive communities of so much.

I would like to call for a 1% cut from the NYPD budget to reinstate the DYCD. A “suppression plan” with increased policing indicates inherent distrust of the citizens of New York City, when we have historically shown to rise in moments of crisis. I believe a budget that cuts the DYCD, green initiatives, social services, and freezes education budgets while increasing policing does a disservice to the city of New York. **In crisis it is more important than ever to make a budget toward the future we want, not a budget created out of fear.**

Thank you for your time.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My Name is kazishakawat Hussain .I'm 16 years old and a PBIS ambassador . This city should continue to fund SYEP because it provides an opportunity to have a hands on experience of working . Starting now allows students so not only earn money for them solves but also gain satisfaction from doing somethings . as your work and earn , the motivational is there to never stop and continue on . Further ,setting them up for the real and more complicated world . Not only that they explore beyond their imaginations and later on purse somethings they enjoy . Personally ,I know that getting my first job can be never-racking . My confidence wasn't at its peak and thoughts of messing up echoed my mind . Somethings feelings are overlooked .And I believe many students out there feel the same way .They may not express it but one must understand we are still teenagers . we take everything to heart most of the time .This program teachers us it's okey to mess up and make mistake . we aren't perfect . We will only learns and grow from it . This world has its ups and downs with jobs . We win and we lose . Some of us Can't handle that because we depend on it if we come from a low income family . What the SYEP gives , we take it into something new and roll with it . Whether it works out or not , at least it's an experience that's memorable .



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I would like to have the experience working and learning how to budget my own income, over the summer I would be able to keep myself occupied and focused on my future.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Hi my name is Kelicia Richards I'm 16 the school I currently attend is Urban Dove team charter school . I don't really have a relationship with SYEP , I tried signing up last year with my twin sister but I was too young and we wasn't able to work with summer youth and I only have one working parent at that time . So I was really hoping on this year . It was the only thing I was looking forward to towards the ending of the school year . It's kind of hard when you dont really have any experience in working looking for jobs it's very overwhelming . I do Have experience with kids my moms a babysitter plus in my school there's this thing called high risers were we are basically staff members to the kids in school like a couple blocks from us and it's really fun . It's about to be my senior year in September , I really wanted to make my own money and stop asking my parents stuff and I'm trying to be more independent it's like if not now then when ? Like I'm not really the type to have a lot of fun in the summer for plenty of reason so the least I can do is work right ? Get ready for the next school year . There's this quote that I really admire it's from this app called motivation I downloaded it ever since I Hurd summer youth was no more this year and for other reasons I lost all hope tbh even if the year just started . The quotes goes " work while they sleep learn while they party save while they spend live like they dream " and that's exactly what I wanted to do what I wanted to achieve what I was hoping for it would really mean a lot to me if they did open back SYEP because next year I'm going to be in college 🤔😊 . I'm going have a lot to do during the summer . Thank you for your time and for me having this opportunity to even have SYEP available for us it's really helpful in so many ways .

Sincerely,

Kelicia Richards



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

As a former summer youth worker, who DEPENDED on this opportunity to help my single mother with school supplies and bills. I find it disgusting that of all things to cut budgets from, why choose something that molds, builds and helps disadvantaged youth! Bring back SYEP! I live in a NYCHA complex and I know of Many young people who were depending on this opportunity! Stop being selfish! Think about our future leaders!!!

Sincerely,

Kenyatta Reid

Leahna Marlen Linares
Class of 2021
KIPP NYC College Prep High School

Good day to all! My name is Leahna Linares and I am a junior at KIPP NYC College Prep. I live in West Harlem. I participated in SYEP for the summer of 2019 and applied to work again for this summer. Working for SYEP for the summer of 2019 allowed me to get my first real job experience and I was able to use the money for school supplies and school clothes. It gave me my first real sense of independence. Now that I am becoming a senior, the costs of the college process is making itself known. I was planning on working SYEP to help my parents save money for senior dues as well as college finances. Then I got an email from SYEP saying that I wouldn't be able to work this summer since SYEP was cancelled.

Due to Covid-19 many of my summer opportunities were cancelled and my choices are severely limited. Many teens in the city have been stuck at home experiencing a low mental state and would benefit from a healthy outlet that SYEP could provide. Also, many kids in the city would benefit from having a way to make money since the coronavirus has caused a big financial setback to many families.

SYEP provides hundreds of jobs for countless teens in the city. The city has made accommodations to keep new yorkers safe during this pandemic. Maybe there is a way for SYEP to continue providing jobs for the teens of new york city, and yes, it is a big risk. But this is New York City. We make the impossible, possible and make dreams come true. I hope that our city representatives can rethink the proposed decision in cutting funding to SYEP this year, and can hopefully provide an opportunity for teens to continue participating this summer.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I'm a high school senior who knows students from my school that attended SYEP before. After I heard the news of the mayor cutting funding from SYEP, I immediately thought about them. Even though I don't have a close connection with these students, I have the opportunity to advocate and fight to save the program with Teens Take Charge. Even if I didn't know any person who applied and attended SYEP, it is an essential program that teenagers need for economic support and resume-building experience. It would be selfish of me to not support the program because I invest my time in programs similar to SYEP and every teenager should have access to programs to SYEP.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Mirella Prado, a 16-year-old Latina student and like many of us, SYEP has helped many teenagers during the summer by having great opportunities in programs where we get to learn new things and earning money while doing so. The money has helped my mom pay the bills and if there's some money left I would save it for college.

The first time I joined SYEP I did Youth Conservation corps at Fannie Lou High School Freedom High school. I got to learn a lot about the environment and how we get to take care of our planet without harming any animals. Last year I was able to have the opportunity to join the NYU excel program and it provided helpful information I needed for college, how to apply for scholarships, FAFSA, looking into colleges in the city.

This year now I'm an apprentice at Amazon as a project coordinator for the Advertisement team through Careerwise and organization that helps young people to enroll in jobs based on learning programs. I help organize meetings, reaching out to more of my Co-workers which helps connect more with other people. I go to meetings that talk about how they can promote their new products and how they can use customer feedback to make improvements and to collaborate with other brands.

A connection between my apprenticeship and school is writing and presentations because at my apprenticeship every time there's a meeting there's a presentation about a topic and they use a lot of useful information and data. When it comes to writing it's important in schools because students write what they think and for their ideas to be heard, it helps build good writing skills that are useful for a job. At work, there's a lot of writing involved, and making sure the writing makes sense for others to read, being organized and asking for feedback helps a lot.

The money I received from Careerwise has helped my family to pay the bills and provide food as my mom is a single parent who only works in a part-time job and doesn't pay that much to help provide for me and siblings but since COVID-19 my mom lost her job as well as millions of people in the city.



#SAVESYEP

Working for Amazon and SYEP will help me in the future because of the money I'm earning and saving for college. Also, it taught me useful skills that could help me prepare for my career, such as my communication skills because it helps build a relationship with a person and work more easily since I am a shy person it's hard for me to talk to others but I'm working towards improving. It also helps expand your network because you can connect with other people that could help you along with your career. The City Council should restore the program for its full funding because it will help me and many teenagers in the city through this hard time.

Sincerely,

Mirella Prado



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

I am a 16 year old girl named Nyequa, I have participated in SYEP since I was 14 years old and when I found out that it would be canceled due to corona it made me upset . SYEP was not just a job for me, it was also helping me to add things to my resume and to gain more work experience. This year I am 16 so I would've had a better opportunity at gaining work experience because I would've gotten to go out and speak to different people and get more of a sense of reality. SYEP also helped me to be more independent, I don't want to have to ask my mom for money every time I want to go out and eat and hang out with friends. With the money I earned from SYEP I would've been able to be less dependent on my mom this summer. Another reason SYEP should be funded this year is because it would help keep teenagers off the streets and actually doing something productive.

Sincerely,
Nyequa Ndiaye

Statement to Restore the New York City SYEP in Summer 2020
For Immediate Release - April 10, 2020 9am

Press contacts: Kevin Wei (hi@kevinwei.com) and Jared Trujillo (jared.m.trujillo@gmail.com)

New York, NY - This week's decision to suspend the Summer Youth Employment Program comes as a disappointment to 75,000 youths and their families. Canceling SYEP would disproportionately harm marginalized youth, including youth of color, youth with disabilities, and justice-involved youth. As community leaders, service providers, and public officials, we are calling on Mayor Bill de Blasio and the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development to immediately restore SYEP this year. New York City must fully fund SYEP for summer 2020, allow SYEP workers to work remotely, and provide internet access and equipment to allow youth workers to successfully complete remote work.

Over the past 56 years, New York City's SYEP has provided millions of youth workers with their first formal jobs, allowing them to gain on-the-job experience and professional development. The experience that participants glean from this program--the largest of its kind in the United States--prepares them to enter college or other trades while providing them with reliable and steady income. The cancellation of SYEP would be highly destabilizing for our youths' career development.

Mac-Olivier Lalanne, a 19-year old rising junior at SUNY Plattsburgh who had interned previously in his state senator's office, had been selected for SYEP three years ago and was looking forward to participating in the program this year. "SYEP would have meant a lot to me to prepare for the life experiences I have to face after college," he said, "but when I heard that SYEP was cancelled, I don't know what to do next." To suspend SYEP this summer would be to fail youth like Mac-Olivier and thousands of others. It would disproportionately affect youth from marginalized and underrepresented communities. These are the same communities being hit hardest by COVID-19 and its economic impacts, and these families rely on the income that the young people earn during SYEP. Now it is more critical than ever.

SYEP has also been crucial in expanding opportunities for underrepresented youth. Not only are a vast majority of SYEP participants persons of color but SYEP also employs NYCHA residents and justice-involved youth. SYEP has elevated significance for justice-involved youth. Children in foster care look forward to the program all year, as participation gives them pride and independence. Similarly, SYEP motivates young people involved in the justice system and challenges them while giving them focus. With unemployment rising, the benefits of SYEP are even more critical for the success of young people in New York City.

The impact that the cancellation of SYEP would have on communities of color in particular is unacceptable--81% of SYEP participants in 2019 were black, hispanic, or asian, and 84% were enrolled in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. Instead of eliminating the largest youth jobs program in the nation, New York City must instead support and expand economic opportunities

for our youth. Ensuring that 75,000 young workers will have the opportunity to advance their careers and develop professionally should be a priority for New York, especially at a time when our communities are at risk of economic collapse.

In order to empower our youth and ensure our communities' economic success, we ask that Mayor de Blasio, City Council, and DYCD take action to restore SYEP for summer 2020. As a part of this process and to accommodate for current events, DYCD should:

- Fully fund SYEP for summer 2020
- Conduct SYEP orientation and other programming remotely, in conformity with public health measures
- Work with SYEP program partners to allow SYEP employment to occur remotely, in conformity with public health measures
- Provide internet access and remote work equipment to any SYEP participant who requests it, such that all SYEP participants can successfully complete remote work
- Provide individual grants to SYEP participants who would be unable to work remotely
- Engage SYEP workers in COVID-19 response and recovery initiatives such as community outreach, mutual aid, wellness checks, and calls to seniors or individuals with pre-existing conditions

Note: we are still accepting signatures from organizations, elected officials, and community leaders. Sign [here](#); the list below is being updated live. Members of the public see [here](#).

Signed,

Organizations:

All Star Code
America on Tech
American Red Cross of Greater New York
Artistic Noise
Association of Legal Aid Attorneys
Black Lives Matter Brooklyn
Bronx Community Board 6
Brooklyn Community Board 16
Brooklyn Young Democrats
Children's Aid
Chinese-American Planning Council
Commonpoint Queens
Community Justice Action Fund
CUNY University Student Senate
DecrimNY
Double Discovery Center
El Centro del Inmigrante
El Puente
Equality NY

Gangstas Making Astronomical Community Changes, Inc.
GAPIMNY—Empowering Queer & Trans Asian Pacific Islanders
Global Kids
Green Map System
HANAC Inc.
HERE to HERE
Indivisible Harlem
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
Lambda Independent Democrats of Brooklyn
LIFE Camp, Inc
Man Up Inc
Manhattan Community Board 9
Manhattan Community Board 11
Manhattan Young Democrats
Morningside Area Alliance
MetaBronx
Mixteca Organization Inc.
New York State Gender Diversity Coalition
New Yorkers Against Gun Violence
Organizing for Equity, NY
Pakistani American Youth Organization
Phipps Neighborhoods
Queens Chamber of Commerce
Red Hook Initiative
Rockaway Youth Task Force
Rooted Theater Company
Solar One
Teens Take Charge
The Bushwick Starr, Inc.
The Central Family Life Center
The Gathering for Justice
United Activities Unlimited
Urban Dove
UYAI / Bronx Connect
Youth Over Guns

Elected Officials:

Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
State Senator Brian Benjamin
State Senator Julia Salazar
State Senator Jose Serrano

State Senator Robert Jackson
State Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Assemblymember Al Taylor
Assemblymember Catalina Cruz
Assemblymember Dan Quart
Assemblymember Harvey Epstein
Assemblymember Inez Dickens
Assemblymember Karines Reyes
Assemblymember Michael Blake
Assemblymember Nathalia Fernandez
Assemblymember Robert J. Rodriguez
Assemblymember Tremaine Wright
Councilmember Ben Kallos
Councilmember Carlina Rivera
Councilmember Farah Louis
Amanda Farias, Democratic State Committeemember
Christopher Marte, Democratic State Committeemember
Dan Cohen, Democratic State Committeemember
Emilia Decaudin, Democratic State Committeemember
Josue Pierre, Democratic State Committeemember
Avery Pereira, Brooklyn GOP District Leader
Corey Ortega, Manhattan Democratic District Leader
Kim Moscaritolo, Manhattan Democratic District Leader
Norma Campusano, Manhattan Democratic District Leader
Richard David, Queens Democratic District Leader

Community Leaders:

Alan Aja, Chair of the Department of Puerto Rican & Latino Studies at Brooklyn College
Alexa Aviles, Community Leader
Alexandra Taber, Community Leader
Althea Stevens, Community Affairs Department Director at East Side House
Aminta Kilawan-Narine, Community Leader
Amit Bahl, School Leader at Urban Dove Team Charter School
Amoy Barnes, NYC DOE Transition and College Access Center
Andrea Gavora, Program Director High School & College Success at Commonpoint Queens
Andrea Guaman Lopez, Community Leader
Andrea Lopez, Community Leader
Andrew Albright, Community Leader
Andrew Padilla, Manhattan CB11 Member
Anthony Beckford, Community Leader
Barry Weinberg, Manhattan CB9 Chair
Brian Romero, Community Leader
Carla Thomas, Community Leader

Christina Das, President of Brooklyn Young Democrats
Christopher Fuentes-Padilla, Community Leader
Christopher Volpe, Community Leader
Curtis Young, Executive Director of Artistic Noise
Cynthia Felix, Vice President of the Brooklyn Sunset Park Lions Club
Cynthia Gonzalez, Brooklyn CB7 Health Chair & Carroll Gardens Association Chair
Daniela Finlay, City Elected Official Coordinator for Zoomers Caucus
Dario Cerrud, Associate Executive Director of Urban Dove
Deirdre McIntosh-Brown, Manhattan CB9 Youth, Education and Libraries Co-Chair
Destiny Delacruz, Community Leader
Dianne Morales, Community Leader
Dion Quamina, Secretary of Brooklyn CB17 & Member of Brooklyn NAB 16
Elizabeth Adams, Community Leader
Eliza Pacheco, Community Leader
Elizabeth Bishop, Community Leader
Elvis Santana, Community Leader
Emerita Torres, Community Leader
Emily Task, Community Leader
Enrique Peña-Oropeza, Academic Senator at CUNY Queens College Student Association
Ericka Medina, Red Hook Initiative
Evie Hantzopoulos, Executive Director of Global Kids
Felicia Singh, Educator and Community Leader
France Francois, Founder of In Cultured Co
Frantzy Luzincourt, President of the Undergraduate Student Government at City College
Gloria Rodriguez-Novoa, Sunset Park Lions Club
Heather Squatriglia, Association of Legal Aid Attorneys
Ismabel Cueto, Community Leader
Ischia Bravo, Community Leader
Jabari Brisport, Public School Teacher
Jared Trujillo, President of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys
Jason Salmon, Community Leader
Jason Wu, Manhattan CB11 Member
Jennifer Johnson Avril, Community Leader
Jessie Ngok, Community Leader
Joan Alexander-Bakiriddin, Brooklyn CB17 Youth Committee Chair
Jon Gabay, Urban Dove
Joseph Coborne, President of CUNY Queens College Student Government Association
Julia Elmaleh-Sachs, Executive Vice President of Brooklyn Young Democrats
Julia Forman, Community Leader
Julio Pena III, Brooklyn CB7 Youth & Education Committee Chair
Justin Collins, Brooklyn CB7 Member
Justin Westbrook-Lowry, Chairperson of the NYC DYCD NAB Bronx District 9
Katia Portela, Community Leader

Katherine Walsh, Brooklyn CB7 Member
Keith Garcia, Assistant Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life at Northwestern University
Kenneth Lee, Community Leader
Kevin Wei, Community Leader
Kimberly Watkins, President of CEC District 3
Kristen Gonzalez, Queens CB4 Member
Lee Sunday Evans, Artistic Director at Waterwell
Lismari Antigua, Community Leader
Mac-Olivier Lalanne, Zoomers Caucus Member
Marti Cummings, Manhattan CB9 Member
Martha Bayona, Community Leader
Matthew Levy, Manhattan CB12 Member
Natalie Martinez, Director of Youth Employment Programs at HANAC Inc.
Nick Roloson, Community Leader
Nidia Perez, Community Leader
Nilsa Orama, Manhattan CB11 Chair
Pablo Zevallos, Community Leader
Patrick Johnson, Community Leader
Rakim Brooks, Community Leader
Rebecca Lamorte, Manhattan CB8 Member
Rick Echeverria, Community Leader
Robin Karasyk, Vice President of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys
Rod Townsend, Community Leader
Rodrigo Camarena, Community Leader
Ramdat Singh, Educator & Community Leader
Samy Nemir Olivares, Community Leader
Sanduke Mcphatter, Executive Director of G-MACC INC.
Seth Rosen, Community Leader
Shahana Hanif, Community Leader
Shaun Abreu, Double Discovery Center Board Member
Shoshana Brown, Community Leader
Shrowna Thomas, Community Leader
Sofia Shapiro Cruz, Community Leader
Stephanie Pope, Association of Legal Aid Attorneys
Tanvir Hayat, Case Manager at ACE Programs for the Homeless
Tricia Shimamura, Manhattan CB8 Member
TS Candii, Decim NY Steering Committeemember
Victor Adesoba, Community Leader
Whitney Hu, Community Leader
Wilfredo Florentino, Community Leader
Zohran Mamdani, Community Leader



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Ryan Quish. I grew up in New York and just moved away last year. While I didn't use SYEP when I was younger, my summer jobs were important formative experiences that helped me develop better on-the-job communications skills and understand how to be an accountable, reliable member of a team. On top of these skills, it was also a great way for me to stay busy and productive during the summer. During this COVID crisis, when so many normal activities for young people are being cancelled or are unaccessible, SYEP can help keep them meaningfully engaged. SYEP also provides the opportunity to begin to address the massive disparities in students' lives caused by extreme segregation in the NYC school system. At a time when these disparities will only increase, SYEP can help reduce the gap in work-based learning and social capital. A paid job will also help alleviate the financial burden so many NYC families are struggling through right now. This program can be life-changing for its participants and in times of crisis, young people need more support, not less. A government shows who it cares about through its funding. I hope you will choose to care about NYC's youth and support the program they need.

Sincerely,

Ryan Quish



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I have known about SYEP and how it helps young people get jobs for years. It allows young lower income kids with hands on experiences, income, and a productive summer. This is an important program that not only invests in our young people but also their futures.

Sincerely,
Samiha Akther



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I have been a New York City resident for eight years and have a niece growing up in the city. I am supportive of any programs that can help provide assistance to those in need and give them engaging opportunities. I believe that SYEP will do this.

Sincerely,
Sean Nolan



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Bailey's Café, a Bed-Stuy based nonprofit, has employed at least 12 young people through SYEP for the past four summers. They are hired as Creative/Mentors and have the opportunity to work with professional teaching artists, their peers and younger children to co-create a culminating performance that expresses all we learned during our 6-week program. Last year we looked at the themes of authenticity in the age of social media, mental health and kindness. These themes continue to resonate and we are planning to delve in deeper this year. We have already been approached by ten young people, who have been part of Bailey's for multiple years, looking for work and we are trying to raise the funds to cover stipends of \$500 apiece but this is far from what they would have earned through SYEP. We urge you to reinstate this invaluable program.



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Trying to spend my summers productively. After all, colleges are so competitive. So I had figured to work this year through SYEP. After all, money is tight and what better way to get experience and money? However, I was disillusioned once I heard that it'd be canceled this year. Which I find to be ridiculous. In a time of economic hardship, having SYEP should have been a no brainer. Once again, the gap between the poor and rich is widening, all due to the refusal to allocate some money towards SYEP. A program which would've served as an invaluable experience, in addition to being an essential one. Jobs nowadays are hard to come by, and SYEP was almost my guarantee at being able to help out financially. So, to find out that SYEP is being cancelled is something I find absurd, especially now when thousands have now filed for unemployment. Politicians preach the idea of ending the gap between the rich and the poor, in order to adequately do so cutting SYEP is a clear step in the wrong direction. In a time of need cutting back programs that help lessen this curve is absurd. Teens still need a sense of normalcy despite what is happening in the world, so why destroy one of the few opportunities that thousands of students are dependent and reliant on? Exactly, the choice is clear. A program as important as SYEP shouldn't have been cut in the first place, after all, it is counterproductive and unjust to those who were relying on having SYEP as a source of income this summer. With that being said, SYEP is a program that should without a doubt be running this summer, so young people like me can get the experience and financial boost they need and deserve.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Garcia



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I have participated in SYEP before. I was hoping to participate in SYEP this year, too. To many kids and me SYEP isn't just a program. It's helps us and our families. For example, I come from a single parent household and sometimes as a single parent you don't always have enough to support a whole household by yourself. With SYEP I was able to help my mother at least a little with things around the house. I was also able to use the SYEP money for the things that I needed for back to school. I could take a weight of my mother's shoulders. SYEP is a program that can keep me inside or if this crisis wasn't happening it could've kept me busy by engaging in something useful. Many kids don't usually have summer plans and SYEP gave them one. It's like an incentive to learn how to work hard for things that you need. SYEP also helps you learn and meet new people. Last year in the SYEP program I participated in I learned the importance of job interview and how to behave and act in a work environment. In conclusion SYEP is important in many ways for many kids and during a crisis like this it can help even more.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Paredes



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

It's very important to me that my neighbors continue to participate in healthful and positive activities. SYEP is what i want my tax dollars to support.

Sincerely,
Hikma Abdulghani



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a youth worker and educator who believes that young people deserve to have fair-paying work. Extreme segregation in the NYC school system creates massive disparities in students' lives in and out of school. Programs like SYEP help reduce the gaps in work-based learning and social capital that segregation creates. It is imperative that SYEP is active this summer, especially amidst a global pandemic and economic recession.

Sincerely,
Julia Chang



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Young people are worth investing in.

Sincerely,
Sophie Ellman-Golan



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

As a New Yorker, born and raised, I am deeply concerned that Mayor de Blasio has proposed to cut summer jobs this year. Young people in NYC need summer enrichment and income now more than ever. They have experienced a life-altering pandemic, been sheltering in place, been isolated from their friends, and have lost loved ones. I have first hand knowledge of how emotionally difficult this has been for the teens in my own life.

Many community organizations that hire young people through SYEP are willing and able to develop remote/virtual work activities to accommodate public health mandates through the summer. These organization NEED resources to provide such opportunities to young people.

As a researcher and educator, I know that providing young people with employment has a salutary effect on our communities. Young people who are engaged and who have an income are significantly less likely to become delinquent and much more likely to adopt pro-social behaviors.

The city NEEDS to fund summer jobs to keep young people and our communities safe. If the city cut policing GROWTH for the upcoming fiscal year by eliminating the new youth policing coordination program and not hiring a NEW class of school cops, the City would save approximately \$155 million. This is more than enough to fund summer employment this year.

I call on the City Council and the Mayor to reinstate funding for SYEP immediately.

Sincerely,
Mariame Kaba



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Hello my name is Escalin Santos a student from Urban Dove. My relationship to SYEP is that I like being with the kids teaching them new thing, make sure the do what they have to do, and if any trouble in there to have their back

Sincerely,
Escalin Santos



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I participated in a summer jobs program with the YES program in the City Of Commerce (Los Angeles county). It gave me a leg up for future summer work and even internships in college. I still keep in touch with my former supervisor over 17 years later. As a social scientist researcher, summer jobs programs are one of the few programs/interventions that have proven to be cost-effective using rigorous causal research.

Sincerely,
Wendy Castillo



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I'm a high school teacher at Sunset Park High School in Brooklyn. Every year I help dozens of my students to fill out SYEP applications because this program is transformational. It helps students develop real-world skills and explore career pathways in public service. It also enables them to earn real money that helps their families pay their bills. Families need this money right now, especially mixed status families who are ineligible to receive any help under the CARES act.

Sincerely,
Sarah Crichton



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Working through the summers from the age of 14-18 changed my life. I did people's laundry, cleaned a massive cafeteria at a summer camp, car-hopped at Sonic, waited tables at a local restaurant, and eventually did microbiology research at the University of Texas in my final summer in TX. My service was valuable, and it helped me and my family tremendously.

I was able to buy my own books, tech, and clothes for the next school year, so that my parents didn't have to. I kid you not, the ability to buy your own clothes is a VERY BIG DEAL in a low-income household. It also taught me how to communicate better, work in teams, and how to manage my own money. I also made life long friendships, and learned what being part of larger ecosystem feels and looks like.

"At a time when low-income families across New York City are in crisis, the government needs to use every opportunity it has to put cash directly into the hands of young people and families." I couldn't agree more with you, Teens Take Charge NYC!

Sincerely,
Lynn Shon



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Working through the summers from the age of 14-18 changed my life. I did people's laundry, cleaned a I am a licensed mental health professional, doctor of organizational development, former SYEP site supervisor, parent, and community member. Simply put: There is no NYC without SYEP. It is an engine for our city. Our young people will pay back the investment with their future contributions. Don't perpetuate the inequities that Covid has laid bare by freezing out the very young people and their families who depend on SYEP.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Speck



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I will like to work for syep to get experience and make some money on my own. Working for syep will left a burden of me and my dad chest because i will no longer need to ask my dad for money and i will be able to buy new supply and clothes for the new school year.

Sincerely,
Mahmoud Turay



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Pass it now! Student need summer opportunities now more than ever with pandemic

Sincerely,
Stuart Chen-Hayes



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I worked with the MTA East New York Depot in the bus safety unit. I further learned how to use Microsoft Suite and Tableau, and the experience greatly enhanced my interpersonal skills and confidence before going to college (interned the summer before freshman year).

Sincerely,
Tonie Chase



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Summer youth is essential for young people to gain experience as well as making money for themselves and their families who may depend on that money for necessities in the house hold and the upcoming school year. It also takes the youth off the street, being involved in something positive and gaining knowledge on a new skill.

Sincerely,
Monique Harouna



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I grew up in NYC and my family still lives there. Employment and job opportunities are vital to keep our black and brown youth engaged and off the streets. The need to know there's another option and another way to follow. Job experience now prepares them for working tomorrow. It gives the opportunities to leave the neighborhood and meet different people from other parts of the city. They learn how to help others. They learn money management and the pride of earning a paycheck. It's said that it is easier to get a job when you have a job, well it's easier to get a job when you have work experience first.

Sincerely,
Stefanie Johnson



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a licensed mental health professional, doctor of organizational development, former SYEP site supervisor, parent, and community member. Simply put: There is no NYC without SYEP. It is an engine for our city. Our young people will pay back the investment with their future contributions. Don't perpetuate the inequities that Covid has laid bare by freezing out the very young people and their families who depend on SYEP.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Speck



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Parent of student participated NYC since 2015. My daughter worked in SYEP public school summer camp program and her experience lead her to study psychology in college to become a teacher or police officer. She realized she's an example for the youth she served in SYEP program in our community. The Mayor should continue SYEP program to provide our youth engaging employment opportunity for the summer and year around.

This is time for innovation of online platforms with companies for our youth to learn other ways to participate to gain experience, exposure and access to learn online marketable skills to earn future incomes. Thanks for reconsideration to restore funding for SYEP 2020!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Speck



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I grew upon New York City and saw the benefit directly. Living in Bedstuy, there was a clear need for sport facilities during the summer. My choice, frankly, was to join a gang and find people, houses to rob. Playing basketball gave me an alternative that was the better alternative. I now find that computers and remote learning are most helpful.

Sincerely,
Hughlyn F Fierce



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am an adult that cares about this issue and my son wanted to work this summer. Not only will he be effected, my daughters' summer programming has been canceled and they will not have a program this year. Undoubtedly, they must be safe measures taken to ensure the safety of all. The Coronavirus has changed life as we know it and precautions must be taken. However, the Summer Employment program still has its place. There are many jobs that will be operational and businesses that will need to hire our city's youth

Sincerely,
Michelle Caines



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Akelia Douglas and I am 19 years old and I attend the Medgar Evers College. SYEP is very important to me because it helps me save money to put towards my school and it also helps me to help my mother. Also I enjoy working for SYEP because I use to work with children and I find it very fun and interesting. I believe the city should continue to fund this year because there are lots of kids out there who struggle and don't have any money and would love the help. It also gives kids the opportunity to have work experience.

Sincerely,
Akelia Douglas



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Lindiana , i live in the bronx area . i feel like the SYEP should continue this year because a lot of people depended on summer youth for income . Not only that , people also depended on it for job experience . So , i feel like it should be continued because think of it this way , imagine your parents being your only source of income or something you **DEPEND** on then , someone come and then from you someway , somehow . Is life going to be as easy as it was before ? No . Which is why the SYEP should be restored especially since there's plenty of people be usually depends on it for income this summer .

Sincerely,
Lindiana Lopez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I was trying to be a part of the SYEP summer program this year in hopes to save money and gain experience. Being in foster care I'm not as available to resources that I need and this money would've helped me gain stability and would've helped many kids who are also in the foster care system. Not only would the money be beneficial but the experience I'd gain that would help me with other job opportunities. When applying for a job right now you need experience and reference and this would've been an opportunity to gain that experience. Especially since college is on the way this would've also helped my application. I think SYEP is extremely important for NYC students especially low income students and kids in foster care. These opportunities are important and crucial because it gives experience, a way to make money, gaining responsibilities and even friends.

Sincerely,
Sue Najm



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Tiffani Torres, and though I haven't participated in SYEP, many of my friends have relied on the program. As we are approaching a severe economic crisis as a result of this pandemic, now is not the time to be eliminating much needed funding from our youth and low-income families.

Sincerely,
Tiffani Torres



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I was trying to be a part of the SYEP summer program this year in hopes to save money and gain experience. Being in foster care I'm not as available to resources that I need and this money would've helped me gain stability and would've helped many kids who are also in the foster care system. Not only would the money be beneficial but the experience I'd gain that would help me with other job opportunities. When applying for a job right now you need experience and reference and this would've been an opportunity to gain that experience. Especially since college is on the way this would've also helped my application. I think SYEP is extremely important for NYC students especially low income students and kids in foster care. These opportunities are important and crucial because it gives experience, a way to make money, gaining responsibilities and even friends.

Sincerely,
Sue Najm



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a 17 year old student who's currently a sophomore, I don't have a relationship with SYEP but I was hoping to this year so I can get a handle of it when applying, I believe that the city should continue to fund SYEP this year because many young students would want to have the ability to earn money on their own and will have to know what to expect in a real job.

Sincerely,
Alexandra Santos



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Gilana Steckel and I am a 10th grade student in NYC and a member of Teens Take Charge. I have never participated in SYEP, but I care deeply about it and understand the importance of it to thousands of students across the city. In Teens Take Charge I get to hear the stories of students from all over the city and how much of a difference SYEP can make. The NYC school system is extremely segregated and SYEP helps to reduce the gap in work-based learning programs available to students. SYEP provides a source of income and support to families who may need it, which is especially important after quarantine. Students need SYEP to stay engaged and healthy in this time of crisis.

Sincerely,
Gilana Steckel



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

This program is paramount to engaging young people during the summer particularly since this pandemic may limit the choice people have due to adverse impacts on summer jobs

Sincerely,
Gregory Fierce



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

It is irresponsible and inhumane to our young people to deliberately widen the opportunity gap. We were already deeply unequal before the Covid crisis. How can any leader choose to deepen and broaden the inequities and disparities when they have professed to reduce them?

Sincerely,
Atina Bazin



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I'm qwayshone i like syep because it take time out or day for use to be to know each other and see so we can play as a team.

Sincerely,
Qwayshone Pigatt



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Lindiana, I live in the Bronx area. I feel like the SYEP should continue this year because a lot of people depended on summer youth for income. Not only that, people also depended on it for job experience. So, I feel like it should be continued because think of it this way, imagine your parents being your only source of income or something you **DEPEND** on then, someone come and then from you somehow, somehow. Is life going to be as easy as it was before? No. Which is why the SYEP should be restored especially since there's plenty of people who usually depend on it for income this summer.

Sincerely,
Lindiana Lopez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Victor Edwards and I'm a Vice Chair of Community Board 9 in Manhattan. Growing up in the Bronx and was a part of SYEP for several years.

SYEP formulated a great work ethic for me as a young adult. The importance of being prepared, responsibility, and showing up on time are all qualities I carried into my adult life.

It would be a travesty if our young people were not afforded the opportunity of SYEP this year. I cringe to imagine the results for some of our young people being idle for the summer.

I urge the committee to utilize all means necessary to restore this vital program for the sake of our young people.

Sincerely,
Victor Edwards



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

My name is Sandra Sanchez I was hoping to be able to participate in SYEP this year and I believe the city should continue to fund SYEP because why cancel it if we are able to do it from home. Also everyone is financially unstable, if we continue SYEP kids and adults can help there parents especially undocumented.

Sincerely,
Sandra Sanchez



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I have worked as an educator at the Museum of the City of New York for the past 5 years, overseeing youth programs for teens from across the city. New York City students have to be smart, tough and creative from the get go because of the historical racism built into the school system they are a part of. The youth that I have worked with understand that the cards are stacked against them and take advantage of every opportunity, including SYEP, to create a better future for themselves and their families. Taking away one of the few city funded ways for them to provide stability for their families and career training for themselves in this horrible moment is an injustice. The Department of Education launched their Civics for All curriculum last year, hoping to empower youth to engage in the process of shaping their city for the future. If you cut programs like SYEP you are not only sending a mixed message, but actively disinvesting in the youth you are trying to train to be active citizens. They are fighting for their future, and will take every advantage given them. Please reinstate SYEP.

Sincerely,
Pilar Jefferson



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am a teacher at Brooklyn International High School, a small public school for recently arrived immigrant youth. Many of my current and former students have participated in SYEP and spoken of the program's impact on their lives. My students' communities and families are among the hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic: low-income immigrants who work in groceries stores and restaurants and as taxi drivers, home health aides, and nurses. I have students who are out of work or whose families are out of work, students who are sick and whose family members are sick or have died. In this moment when our entire city is facing a financial crisis, a paid summer job for a young person helps the whole family and, by extension, the larger community. If we can shift 1.1 million students to remote learning in a week, we can certainly find a way (IF NEEDED) to offer meaningful remote summer jobs or career training to a fraction of that number of young people in two months. Providers have said that they already have remote contingency plans in the works.

New York City's students have already lost a lot in the last two months; let's not take anything more away from them. SYEP is a crucial program that must be saved if we are serious about our care and concern for young New Yorkers' well-being and future success.

Sincerely,
Malcolm Sacks



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I'm a junior in Bard High Early College Queens and I have participated in SYEP during the freshman year of high school. I didn't get the chance to participate in SYEP during the sophomore year so i was really hoping to participate during my junior year as i'm preparing for college. Preparing for college has a lot of pressure and comes with a lot of financial issues that would have been solved if i had gotten a chance to participate in SYEP this summer. I believe that the city should continue SYEP this year because many young people rely on this for a lot of things and specially during a time like this many families are financially struggling.

Sincerely,
Anika Akond



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

I am Jamel Seymore and I feel like the fund should fund SYEP because it keeps kids out the streets and keeps them busy and active while getting paid and also grasping the whole working experience.

Sincerely,
Jamel Seymore



#SAVESYEP

May 20, 2020

Dear City Council Committee of Finance,

Hello I am Quandaisha a high school student at Urban Dove Charter School. I don't have any relationship to syep, I would like to have one as far as being a worker. Also I believe that the city should continue to fund SYEP because in this generation a lot of kids have that to look forward to not many kids get to go on trips or see different things, Also parents now and days don't really be taking the best care of their children so this be the money or escape some kids look forward to all year. For kids like me to stay out of trouble and gain learning experience while still being able to enjoy the summer and get paid for it. Also it teaches early adulthood skills such as saving money, bills (phone bill,Netflix,etc...) how to be responsible and put priorities first. To always do what's best for you.

Sincerely,
Quandaisha White