

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS
JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON
AGING AND YOUTH SERVICES

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June 23, 2020
Start: 12:26 p.m.
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: Margaret Chin
Chairperson
Committee on Aging

Ben Kallos
Chairperson
Committee on Contracts

Deborah L. Rose
Chairperson
Common on Youth Services

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Committee on Contracts
Ben Kallos
Inez D. Barron
Bill Perkins
Helen K. Rosenthal
Keith Powers

Committee on Aging
Margaret S. Chin

Diana Ayala
Chaim M. Deutsch
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Mathieu Eugene
Mark Treyger
Keith Powers

Committee on Youth Services
Deborah L. Rose
Margaret S. Chin
Mathieu Eugene
Farah N. Louis
Bill Perkins

Paul Vallone

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

Jennifer Geiling
Deputy Director of Policy and
Partnerships
Mayor's Office of Contract Services

Erin Villari
Deputy Director
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Irkan Sola
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Joanne Yu

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Dana Altnu

Joseph Perry

Aya Ibrahim

Marjorie Parker

Larry Wood

Deborah Sue Lorenzen

Madaha Kinsey-Lamb

Irene Branch

Daja Achanian

Lena Billick

Nashamay Ado

Helen Kogan

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Recording to the PC
4 has begun.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible] Steve, ready to
6 go.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: OK, we are just waiting on
8 the YouTube live stream.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: OK, sorry, ah, Sergeant
10 Hannah, you can take it away with your opening.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: OK. Good afternoon
12 and welcome to today's remote New York City Council
13 hearing. At this time would all panelists please
14 turn on their videos. To minimize disruption, please
15 place electronic devices on vibrate or silence. If
16 you wish to submit testimony you may do so at
17 testimony@council.nyc.gov, again
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
19 cooperation. We're ready to begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [gavel] Good
21 afternoon. I'm Council Member Margaret Chin, chair
22 of the Committee on Aging. Thank you for joining us
23 for today's triple joint oversight hearing. I want
24 to thank, ah, Chair Kallos and Chair Rose for
25 cochairing this hearing today. And we have also

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3 been joined by Council Member Rose, Barron, Louis,
4 Perkins, Rosenthal, and Vallone. Before COVID-19
5 pandemic many New York seniors has already endured
6 many hardship, including food insecurity, social
7 isolation, and gaps in provider services. COVID only
8 further exposed and exacerbated the nightmarish
9 reality for so many of our seniors. I said further
10 intentionally because while our city is finally
11 awakened to the challenges that seniors have endured
12 for so long, many of us working in this space already
13 knew that these issues existed. Many of us have been
14 combating such issues way before COVID, especially
15 our city's nonprofit providers. During this recent
16 pandemic nonprofit providers have fiercely ramped up
17 their services. They have served more seniors than
18 ever before and have become even more innovative to
19 ensure that our seniors continue to be supported. To
20 highlight a few example, providers have been
21 designing virtual programming to keep seniors
22 connected while they're shelter at home. They have
23 been organizing virtual check-ins to help combat
24 senior social isolation and, very importantly, they
25 have been expanding food delivery service to those
seniors who are food insecure. I want to personally

3 thank the nonprofit providers for their selfless
4 service. I know while this is rewarding work, it is
5 also challenging and often thankless work. This
6 bring me to the Department of the Aging. I want to
7 speak directly to the agency today. As many of our
8 senior social service provider have highlighted that
9 working with you has been very challenging at times.
10 I cannot count how many complaint I have received
11 from providers about poor planning and poor
12 communications with DFTA. These complaint has ranged
13 from DFTA sending unclear directive at the eleventh
14 hour to DFTA providers, one set of instruction for
15 contracts expectation and then going back on their
16 words. Even more disappointing, I've learned that
17 when nonprofit provider reach out for clarity DFTA is
18 often unresponsive. How are nonprofit providers
19 supposed to support our seniors if they are operating
20 under an agency that is unclear, inconsistent, or
21 unresponsive. I want to hear from DFTA today. The
22 Aging Committee wants answers. Why has the
23 communication process been so fraught and
24 unresponsive during the first few months? How will
25 DFTA change their operation to help better coordinate
and collaborate with our nonprofit service provider?

3 What will DFTA do to change going forward? This
4 hearing will also help provide clarity and
5 understanding for the contracting process for
6 nonprofit aging service providers. We have some very
7 vital question regarding the current RFP process and
8 the future of the home delivery meal program.

9 Broadly speaking, however, our broader question for
10 all these agency testify here today include
11 understanding what happen with the contract and
12 contracting process when COVID first hit. What is
13 happening now? And what is being done to account for
14 contracting and service needs going forward? If we
15 do not understand what happened during the beginning
16 of the first wave of this pandemic we will not be
17 able to prepare for any possible future wave, and
18 that is unacceptable. Our nonprofit service provider
19 deserve better from the city than that. I'd like to
20 thank the committee staff for their help in
21 organizing this hearing, our counsel, New Sachadory,
22 policy analyst Galena Johnson, finance analyst Daniel
23 Group, finance unit head, Davina Sabora, and also my
24 legislative director, Marion Geera. With that, I'd
25 like to turn to my cochair, ah, Chair Rose, for some

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3 opening remark. Oh, Chair Kallos is here. So, ah,
4 I'm gonna pass it over to Chair Kallos. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you.

6 Hopefully that is all of the hookups. I'd like to
7 start with a thank-you to Aging Chair Chin and Youth
8 Services Chair Rose for participating in this joint
9 hearing. I'm Ben Kallos. I'm the chair of the
10 Contracts Committee. For those of you who are
11 watching remotely, please feel free to participate in
12 this hearing by tweeting me @benkallos. Ah, this is
13 an unprecedented time for New York City. What sets,
14 ah, this COVID-19 crisis apart from other recent
15 catastrophic events like September 11, Hurricane
16 Sandy, or the Great Recession is the prolonged and
17 unpredictable nature of this disaster. Back in March
18 during the early days of this pandemic I recall an
19 interview with an emergency medical tech who
20 described responding to this threat of COVID-19 like
21 watching a mass casualty event in slow motion. That
22 EMT was not wrong and this crisis is still upon three
23 months later. While things appear to be improving at
24 the moment as, as the city begins a cautious Phase
25 Two reopening as of Monday, it's important to take a
moment and reflect on what works, what didn't, and

3 what we as a city can do to respond to resurgences of
4 the virus in the weeks and months ahead. We're not
5 out of the woods yet and it would be foolish to think
6 the virus couldn't return to the city. We're
7 starting to see real spikes and infections in other
8 parts of the country and we want to make sure we
9 respond quickly and appropriately if we need to go
10 into lockdown again. The purpose of today's hearing
11 is to analyze and evaluate the city's suspension of
12 its standard procurement rules to respond to the
13 COVID-19 state of emergency, [inaudible] emergency
14 procurement measures were communicated to the city's
15 nonprofits and human service providers, and what
16 lessons were learned by the agencies and human
17 service contractors in their effort to deliver on
18 their contracts during this pandemic. On March 17
19 the mayor issued an executive order suspending the
20 city's procurement rules in response to the state of
21 emergency declared by the governor. Pursuant to the
22 City Charter and state general municipal law the
23 mayor is authorized to waive sealed competitive
24 bidding requirements for city vendors, in this case a
25 public emergency. On its face, this meant that
contracting agencies would face less red tape in

3 obtaining essential personnel protective equipment
4 from various vendors, that the city would be able to
5 streamline contract renewals or modifications for
6 critical work during the pandemic. In practice,
7 however, vendors in the human services sector
8 received inconsistent communication from their
9 contracting agencies as to what expenses would be
10 reimbursed as the state of emergency dragged on and
11 had become clear that the city would be facing a
12 budgetary shortfall. Nonprofits in particular have
13 had to invest in their own PPE and technological
14 equipment to continue operations, as well as hire a
15 new full- or part-time staff as workers got sick with
16 COVID-19 and needed to isolate themselves. In a
17 recent survey conducted by the Center For an Urban
18 Future, of the city's 24 leading nonprofits several
19 had already suffered losses of over 1 million
20 dollars, while many of the others expressed concerns
21 of their own increased expenses and associated
22 anxieties relating to looming cuts on the city's
23 budget. In this instance, communication is key and
24 the administration has gradually improved its
25 messaging to vendors in response to their concerns.
However, more remains to be done. The city's senior

3 center provider network essentially converted into a
4 meal delivery service due to limited guidance from
5 the Department for the Aging and is now fully within
6 the office of the food czar. Will that [inaudible]
7 be reestablished in DFTA once the crisis lifts? What
8 new expenses will be considered reimbursable under
9 the pre-COVID DFTA contract? Summer cancellation of,
10 ah, various summer youth employment programs has been
11 widely reported to the media and the guidance from
12 the administration remains scant. What should the
13 city be, youth be doing this summer if SYEP remains
14 unavailable? Limited programs that are being
15 reestablished, covering just a fraction of the city's
16 youth, and it remains unclear what reassurances SYEP
17 providers will have in the future contracts will not
18 be eliminated in the future. Um, I know we will be
19 looking to both our, ah, seniors Chair Chin and youth
20 services Chair Rose to follow up on those lines of
21 questioning. To be clear, we recognize this is an
22 extraordinary crisis and it has been trying for all
23 parties involved. We are not here to hang agencies
24 out dry, just to do better to understand the agency
25 communications process in light of the suspension of
procurement rules, the challenges still facing

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3 nonprofit providers, and the lessons learned so we
4 can anticipate and better address these problems if
5 the virus has a resurgence before the vaccine becomes
6 widely available. With that said, I know Chairs Chin
7 and Rose are eager to make their opening remarks, um,
8 and I will now turn it over to, ah, Chair Rose.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Um, thank
10 you, Chair Kallos and Chair Chin for convening this
11 joint hearing, and to all of those in attendance I
12 say good afternoon. My name is Council Member Debbie
13 Rose, and I am the chair of the Committee on Youth
14 Services. I first want to thank the young people of
15 New York City, because you always have inspired me to
16 be a better person every day and I rest well knowing
17 that you represent our future, and your energy has
18 just been invigorating. Um, but truthfully I am
19 resting a little less well in recent months. Indeed,
20 I, like so many New Yorkers, still have optimism, but
21 I also have more concerns than I did four months ago.
22 COVID-19 has fundamentally changed everything we do,
23 from how we learn and socialize to how we work and
24 otherwise conduct our affairs. These changes
25 underscore the ever-important objectives of saving
lives and making sure our city institutions can

3 respond to the challenges of fighting this disease.

4 Our elderly and aging populations are among those

5 most physically vulnerable to COVID-19 and the

6 nonprofits that serve them have been busier than ever

7 trying to provide safer, meaningful resources to this

8 important population. And even though our youth may

9 not have the same physical vulnerability to COVID-19

10 that our elderly do, they, too, have been impacted by

11 this crisis, some in ways that will outlive COVID-19

12 and last their entire lives. When the city's schools

13 first transitioned to remote learning this past March

14 many of us still have faith that the safety net of

15 afterschool programming would continue, even if they,

16 too, transitioned to remote platforms. Time and time

17 again research shows that afterschool programs

18 positively impact youth. Youth gain more in math and

19 reading achievement than their peers. School

20 attendance also improves, while drop-out rates

21 decrease and they have better attitudes towards

22 school with a decreased disciplinary incidence and

23 experience significant reductions in drug and other,

24 drug use and other problem behavior. Afterschool

25 programming is vital and it works. Perhaps that's

why 43% of DYCD's annual budget goes towards

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3 afterschool programming and it reaches over 110,000

4 youth per year. That's significant. Employment

5 programs are also vital for our youth. Over 150,000

6 young people vie for 75,000 slots in DYCD's Summer

7 Youth Employment Program, or SYEP. We know SYEP and

8 other employment programs uplift impoverished youth,

9 who historical struggle to access the labor market.

10 Tragically, these are the very youth who communities

11 have, whose communities have been ravaged by the, the

12 most by COVID-19 and whose futures we as a city must

13 be investing in more than ever. I can still hear the

14 collective gasp we all uttered when SYEP was simply

15 canceled. And then summer afterschool programs were

16 canceled. And then Beacon, and then Cornerstone, all

17 canceled. In total, all youth-centered programming

18 for summer 2020 was summarily cut. In the wake of

19 these cuts lay our nonprofit providers, who were

20 ready, willing, and able to work on program

21 alternatives. All they needed was a little bit of

22 contractual and agency support. They did not

23 deserve the cancellations, these abrupt

24 cancellations. Let me remind everyone present here

25 today that DYCD's strength is its network of over

1200 nonprofit community-based organizations that

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3 enable it to provide so many rich youth opportunities
4 and services in our city. They represent some 94% of
5 DYCD's annual budget. Without them DYCD is nothing.

6 So going forward I urge DYCD and MOCS to learn from
7 the past and forge ahead in support of our nonprofit
8 providers so that they can continue to serve our

9 youth. As we look forward to an uncertain future
10 beyond this summer, it is imperative that we give

11 more contractual guidance to our providers and engage

12 them in conversations about how, how we can be more

13 flexible with their contracts to meet the challenges

14 of COVID-19. We cannot simply cancel our

15 contractors. To do so would be to turn our backs on

16 our youth and to cancel their futures. So before I

17 turn the floor over to Council Member Kallos, I would

18 like to thank my staff, Lisa Cortez, Christian

19 Ravelo, Christine Johnson, and Benori Ranowara, and

20 my committee staff, Paul Sinagal, Michelle Peregrine,

21 Elizabeth Arts, and our newest addition, Ana Zamina,

22 for all the work that they have done for this

23 committee in preparation for this hearing. And I now

24 would like to turn the floor back to Chair Kallos.

25 Thank you, Chair.

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2 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you, too,
3 Chairs Chin and rose. I will now turn it over to our
4 moderator, committee counsel Alex Palma, to go over
5 some procedural items.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chairs
7 Kallos, Rose, and Chin. I'm Alex Palma, counsel to
8 the Contracts Committee of the New York City Council.
9 Before we begin testimony, I want to remind everyone
10 that you will be on mute until you are called on to
11 testify, at which point you will be unmuted by the
12 host. I will be [inaudible] your name to be called.
13 The first panelist to give testimony today will be
14 Deputy Director of Policy and Partnerships at the
15 Mayor's Office of Contract Services, Jennifer
16 Geiling, Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of
17 Contract Services, Erin Villari, will also be
18 available for questioning. From the Department of
19 the Aging, Chief Financial Officer Jose Mercado, and
20 Agency Chief Contracting Officer Irkan Sola, will be
21 available for questioning. And from the Department
22 of Youth and Community Development Chief Financial
23 Officer Jagdeen Phanor, Agency Chief Contracting
24 Officer Dana Cantelmi, Associate Commissioner of
25 Youth Services and Strategic Partnerships, Darryl

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3 Rattray, and Associate Commissioner Nevita Bailey

4 will all be available to answer questions as well. I

5 will call on you when it is your turn to speak.

6 During the hearing if a council member would like to

7 ask a question of the administration or of a specific

8 panelist, please use the Zoom raise hand function and

9 I will call on you in order. We will be limiting

10 council member questions to five minutes, which

11 includes the time it takes the panelist to answer

12 your question. Please note that for ease of this

13 virtual hearing there will not be a second round of

14 questioning outside of questions from the committee

15 chairs. All hearing participants should submit their

16 written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

17 Before we begin testimony I will administer the oath.

18 Deputy Director Geiling, Deputy Director Villarii,

19 Chief Financial Officer Mercado, Agency Chief

20 Contracting Officer Sola, Chief Financial Officer

21 Phanor, Agency Chief Contracting Officer Cantelmi,

22 Associate Commissioner Rattray, and Associate

23 Commissioner Bailey, please raise your right hands.

24 I will call on each of you individually for a

25 response. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole

truth, and nothing but the truth before this

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2 committee today and to respond honestly to council
3 member questions? Deputy Director Geiling.

4 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Director
6 Villari?

7 DEPUTY DIRECTORY VILLARI: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief Financial
9 Officer Mercado?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Agency Chief
12 Contracting Officer Sola?

13 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

14 Yes, I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief Financial

16 Office Phanor?

17 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PHANOR: I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Agency Chief

19 Contracting Officer Cantelmi?

20 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER

21 CANTELM: I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Associate

23 Commissioner Rattray?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: I do.

25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Associate
3 Commissioner Bailey?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you all.

6 Deputy Director Geiling, you may begin your
7 testimony.

8 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: Thank you.

9 Good afternoon, Chairs Kallos, Chin, and Rose, and
10 members of the Committees on Contracts, Aging, and
11 Youth Services. My name is Jennifer Geiling and I
12 serve as deputy director for policy and partnerships
13 at the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, MOCS.
14 Thank you for providing MOCS with this opportunity to
15 share the role our agency played in supporting human
16 services providers during the COVID-19 pandemic
17 response. I'd like to begin by noting that COVID-19
18 amplified the significance and relevance of the work
19 that MOCS has pursued over the years. Digital
20 procurement, centralized guidance, standard
21 practices, and collaboration were key to nonprofit
22 business continuity during COVID-19. Nonprofit
23 organizations that had teams dispersed across the
24 five boroughs, working from home on laptops and cell
25 phones, were able to maintain operations with the

3 city because of online systems like PASSPort and HHS
4 Accelerator, digital practices like electronic
5 signatures and electronic invoicing and citywide
6 coordination and guidance that was informed by
7 provider input. The pandemic made it clear than ever
8 that we need to permanently institutionalize digital
9 procurement through PASSPort and continue our efforts
10 to create accessible and standard practices for all
11 of our vendors. Turning our attention to the city's
12 COVID-19 human services response, we all remember the
13 tremendous disruption and uncertainty that ensued at
14 the outside of the pandemic in mid-March. As the
15 chairs noted, and I want to underscore, nonprofits
16 are our central partners. And the city responded
17 rapidly to support these critical human services
18 providers, stabilize the sector, and leverage
19 communication channels. A centralized team, the C19
20 response team, focusing exclusively on business
21 continuity for human services providers was formed
22 with MOCS, the Mayor's Office of Management and
23 Budget, the offices of the deputy mayors of Health
24 and Human Services, and Strategic Policy Initiatives.
25 Within a matter of days we were able to reassure
providers that their payments would continue

3 uninterrupted as they worked with their contracting
4 agencies on plans to deliver services in that
5 frontline and uncertain environment. We met daily
6 with city procurement and finance leadership to
7 realize this goal. Over the course of the emergency
8 response from March 13 to May 31 the city dispersed
9 more than 755 million dollars to the sector to
10 support cash flow and allow for financial
11 flexibility, paying more than 9100 invoices and
12 initiating nearly 1360 budget advances. As of today,
13 nearly 900 million dollars has been dispersed to
14 human services nonprofits through nearly 14,000
15 invoice and advance transactions since March 13. The
16 C19 response team also immediately issued guidance to
17 ease administrative practices, allowing contracts to
18 flow through the system and business to continue.
19 Over the course of 11 weeks of emergency response we
20 issued seven guidance documents to the sector,
21 targeted at ongoing business practices and
22 maintaining the health and stability of our provider
23 partner organizations. It was critical that our
24 hundreds of providers received information and
25 updates quickly and clearly given the shifting nature
of the pandemic and have an established pathway to

3 communicate with the city. We created a staffed
4 centralized service staff to respond to business
5 questions and triage concerns. Agency COVID-19
6 liaisons were identified in each Health and Human
7 Services, HHS, city agency with whom we could
8 coordinate rapid responses and bring open questions
9 to resolution. COVID-19 liaisons met at least
10 biweekly as a full work group to address sector-wide
11 provider concerns and establish responses. We
12 quickly created a web page to offer up-to-date
13 information from our team and across the city that
14 pertained directly to human services business
15 continuity, health and safety practices, and city
16 resources. We also enabled partnership and
17 information sharing through weekly conversations with
18 more than 25 nonprofit membership associations,
19 representing hundreds of nonprofit organizations, and
20 in addition to those weekly conversations we reached
21 out almost daily to share critical updates in between
22 scheduled video calls. It was through these channels
23 that we heard about many of the challenges the
24 sector's essential work force was experiencing, which
25 enabled us to take fast action. We secured emergency
child care through regional enrichment centers and

3 access to isolation hotels and testing for HHS
4 provider staff. And just this week we are
5 coordinating with more than 800 providers to
6 distribute seven million face coverings for nonprofit
7 staff and clients. Recognizing the critical role of
8 disinfecting supplies and safety equipment in this
9 period the C19 response team immediately advised that
10 the city would reimbursement providers for these
11 expenses. We developed a standard approach
12 applicable across the city's HHS agencies to maintain
13 documentation and submit invoices, all in an effort
14 to ensure prompt payment of expenses and save time
15 down the line in reporting to FEMA or other oversight
16 and response agencies. The COVID-19 response
17 underscored the significance of many long-standing
18 MOCS initiatives and our work to implement a digital
19 procurement process with centralized practices,
20 standard policies, and vendor partnership. That is
21 why as the city continues to move to reopen and then
22 into recovery MOCS will continue to pursue its
23 mission and support human services providers through
24 signature efforts, the continuing roll-out of new
25 digital procurement system across the City of New

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3 York, streamlining and standardizing audit practices

4 and invoice review, partnering in the city

5 implementation team for the indirect cost rate

6 funding initiative, managing HHS Accelerator, and

7 centralizing support for agency CFOs to enable

8 providers to maximize cash flow through budget

9 management and invoice practices. Beginning next

10 month HHS Accelerator will facilitate the

11 disbursement of automatic advances at the start of

12 fiscal year 2021 for registered contracts and

13 approved budgets, a new initiative that the city

14 instituted to support nonprofit cash flow during

15 COVID-19 reopening and recovery. Said another way,

16 the City of New York will be issuing 25% budget

17 advances automatically and without any request by

18 providers for all fiscal 2021 registered HHS

19 contracts and approved budgets. This is money up

20 front and early that will allow for business

21 flexibility and liquidity. Later this summer MOCS

22 will issue guidance on streamlining invoice review to

23 continue expediting payments through FY21. We are

24 proud to be working on this policy with our city

25 agency partners, who were instrumental in our

coordinated efforts during COVID-19. The upcoming

3 guidance is informed by provider experience during
4 COVID-19 and we want to acknowledge their partnership
5 and open conversation which enables this work. In
6 summary, the city's COVID-19 human services response
7 highlighted the necessity and relevance of many long-
8 standing initiatives and values, digital procurement,
9 centralized coordination, standard policies,
10 communication, and partnership. As we move forward
11 we will continue to hold these values while we also
12 provide the kinds of outreach, technical support, and
13 personalized guidance that help so many providers
14 sustain operations during the emergency while
15 developing new and enhanced tools to make it easier
16 for the nonprofit human services sector to do
17 business with the City of New York. Thank you for
18 the opportunity to share the important work we
19 pursued in collaboration with our city agency and
20 nonprofit partners. I am joined today by Erin
21 Villari, deputy director of financial services at
22 MOCS, and colleagues from the Department for the
23 Aging, DFTA, and Department of Youth and Community
24 Development, DYCD. We look forward to answering any
25 questions you may have about our human services
response during COVID-19.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Deputy
3 Director Geiling. Next we will hear questions from
4 Chair Kallos. Panelists, please stay unmuted if
5 possible during this question and answer period.
6 Chair Kallos, please begin.

7 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you very much.
8 I'd actually like to turn it over to, ah, Chairs Chin
9 and Rose, and I would like to acknowledge, ah, Chair,
10 ah, Powers, Council Members Powers and Rosenthal.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Um, OK, I am just
12 gonna start off with some questions for DFTA, even
13 though, um, you did not provide testimony today. Um,
14 I guess the, the CFO Mercado and Agency CCO Sola is
15 here to answer question, correct?

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Correct.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. Ah, right now,
19 um, DFTA previously outlined concept paper and RFP
20 timeline for [inaudible], senior centers, and case
21 management services. So has the department publicly
22 updated these timeline so that providers can be able
23 to plan. Given all that is going on, is DFTA willing
24 to commit to not issuing new RFP over the next year
25

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3 given that COVID will continue, ah, to destabilize
4 the sector, the service sector?

5 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

6 Good afternoon, ah, Council Member, Members, and, ah,
7 everybody else. Um, the current plans for the next
8 senior center, ah, and NORCs RFPs are for new
9 contracts to [inaudible]. At this time there are no
10 plans for a case management RFP as the current
11 contracts began in fiscal year 18 and they are good
12 to go until, ah, the fiscal year 2024.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So that the current
14 NORCs and the senior center, their contracts are
15 being extended?

16 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

17 Ah, yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Is that what you're
19 saying.

20 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

21 The contracts, the senior center contracts and, and
22 NORC contracts, they are, um, being extended and they
23 will be good until, ah, fiscal year 2021. Um, yes,
24 that's correct.
25

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3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK, so that's only
4 one, one more year. And that's enough time for you
5 to do your RFP [inaudible]?

6 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

7 The agency is trying, they're working on, ah, concept
8 papers, but we have not received, ah, we have not,
9 ah, you know, shared the concept papers with
10 oversight agencies yet. Um, we can provide more
11 information on those concept papers later on, um, but
12 we don't have any specific dates yet for the release
13 of the concept papers as they need to be reviewed and
14 approved by the oversight agencies before they can be
15 published.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK, and what about the
17 home delivered meal? I know that, you know, working
18 with provider we've been trying to get DFTA to really
19 push back, ah, to the end of the year but DFTA settle
20 on, um, I think Wednesday is the deadline. How many,
21 ah, application have DFTA received so far for the new
22 home delivered meal RFP?

23 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

24 Um, so, ah, following an extraordinary 16 additional
25 weeks of extensions from the original submission
26 deadline proposals for the HDM RFP are due on

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2 Wednesday, tomorrow, at 2:00 p.m. Ah, we look
3 forward to sharing more details as appropriate at a
4 later date, but as of, ah, yesterday we had about 60
5 proposals submitted for the 22 awards.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Ah, 60, six-oh?

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, that's correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. And would you
9 [inaudible], ah, looked at those, ah, people who
10 submitted are the majority of them providers who have
11 been doing this service for decades?

12 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

13 Ah, I don't have the list in front of me, ah, but we
14 have a mix of vendors, the current and the new
15 vendors.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK, I, yeah, if you
17 can share, um, the list with us going forward that
18 would be great. Um, you know, in my opening I was a
19 little bit critical of DFTA because a lot of the
20 complaint that we heard back from provider,
21 especially, ah, in the early part of the pandemic
22 when a lot of the communications was, was very
23 confusing and, ah, I know that when I asked for
24 information I got sent frequently asked question. Ah,
25 so a lot of the senior center and meal providers have

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3 been going through a very rough time. And now the
4 city is beginning, ah, to open. Have DFTA started to
5 prepare with our senior center how they would, ah,
6 provide service going, um, going forward? Like, for
7 example, cooling centers, ah, providing any
8 information, are there going to be the cooling center
9 over the summer? I mean, the weather is getting so
10 hot. Um, are there like procedures guidance as to
11 giving, ah, to the centers who are cooling centers so
12 that they can take care of our seniors?

13 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

14 My colleague, Jose, will provide the response for
15 this.

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: I have

17 it, sir. Ah, good afternoon, Councilman Chin. Ah,
18 this is Jose Mercado, DFTA CFO. Ah, the 19 Summer
19 Heat Plan that the mayor shared on June 12 is
20 essential to helping New York City's most vulnerable
21 stay safe in their homes and cool during the summer.
22 Under the direction and leadership of NYCEM, DFTA,
23 along with a number of other city agencies have been
24 part of the planning and implementation [inaudible]
25 consider COVID-19 and its ongoing evolution. The
city is identifying existing facilities that can used

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3 as key cooling centers, planning appropriately in
4 social distancing and providing face covering.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So what happened to
6 our senior center? I mean, they are the logical
7 place. They've been doing this for years and years.
8 So are you working with the providers...

9 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yes,
10 we've...

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...ah, to help them
12 prepare, ah, to be able to provide the service?

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yes,
14 yes, Council Member. We've reached out to providers
15 asking them whether they are basically ready to open
16 up. We've provided surveys, we've provided some
17 guidance, and we're still ready, we're waiting for
18 them to come back to us to tell us exactly are they
19 going to opt in to open or not.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So you don't have a
21 timeline for them, ah, providing the information back
22 to you?

23 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yeah,
24 right now, for example, they're supposed to be
25 sending us information tomorrow, um, Wednesday. Some
of them have already asked for extensions, since

3 we're asking them to determine how much it's going to
4 cost them to open up and, and project that.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK, what about going
6 forward, I mean, into the fall, into the winter? Is
7 DFTA planning with the provider how the senior center
8 is gonna be able to operate, um, providing social
9 distancing and, and programming and a home-delivered
10 meal? Because one of the most important part that I
11 wanted, um, to talk to you about is that we do not
12 want our senior center to disappear or to be
13 decimated. Ah, throughout this pandemic they stepped
14 up, they did the job, they provided for our senior
15 and we gotta make sure they are kept whole, and I was
16 very, very, um, dissatisfied with the food program,
17 ah, what happened during the pandemic, that, ah, the
18 support was not given, ah, to the senior centers, ah,
19 the home delivery meal provider that's been doing
20 this service for years. Ah, instead the city
21 contract with some of these private, um, OK, some of
22 them might be nonprofit, some of them are for profit,
23 catering food company that has not been providing
24 good-quality, nutritious food to our senior. And
25 going forward that cannot happen. It has to go back
to our senior centers and home-delivered meal

3 provider. I want to make that clear. So the
4 transition needs to start. DFTA got a lot of money,
5 ah, from the federal government under the CARE
6 package, and there was 173 million for meal. We
7 gotta make sure that our seniors are taken care of.
8 So, you know, you have the Get Food NYC and all that
9 Grab and Go stuff. I just want to make sure that
10 DFTA is working with our senior center to make sure
11 and our home-delivered meal program to make sure
12 they're getting the support that they need so that
13 they can provide the nutritious meal that they have
14 been providing for our seniors all these years. And
15 I still haven't heard a plan, you know, from DFTA.
16 Like how are you working with the provider, um, to
17 give them [inaudible] so they can continue to hire
18 locally? People who know the neighborhood, who can
19 knock on doors and has been doing this, visiting the
20 seniors, being able to check on them, versus food
21 being left outside of building, in the lobby. I
22 mean, like, you heard stories all over the city, and
23 the kind of meal that the seniors got was horrible,
24 some of them. Moldy bread and, and boxes of snack
25 that are not meal. This gotta, this gotta stop. So
we gotta make sure that our senior center that we

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3 fought so hard for will continue to expand. So is
4 DFTA working on a plan with the provider so that we
5 can start this transition as soon as possible? I'm
6 not talking about wait till the end of the year. I'm
7 talking about beginning of July.

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Ah, the
9 safety of, of older New Yorkers is our top priority
10 and any decision to reopen is going to be guided by
11 public health [inaudible]. It remains to be
12 determined exactly when the [inaudible] sites will be
13 reopened. In the interim, senior center providers
14 continue to serve their members accordingly to social
15 distancing guidelines virtually and remotely. Over
16 the course of the pandemic, senior centers, like you
17 mentioned, served grab and go meals. Some delivered
18 breakfast at home to their members. Presently all
19 get from New York City our [inaudible] and several
20 NYCHA senior centers are also serve as food
21 distribution hubs. Our [inaudible] hope is to return
22 to some sense of normalcy as soon as it is safe to do
23 so for the sake of all adults [inaudible]. Also
24 regarding the 170, Councilman, the 170 was not part
25 of the federal stimulus. We've, ah, we received in
DFTA right now stimulus one and two is 26 million

3 dollars, which most of that went to, to provide for
4 the meals that we provided as a part of the emergency
5 procurements.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, but that money,
7 ah, that part of that 170 million needs to go to
8 DFTA. We need to fight for a share of that money.
9 Because otherwise it's being wasted right now, the
10 way that it's being used. And we have provider who
11 knows the neighborhood, who we have worked so hard to
12 bring them in, and we have young people who could
13 help do the food delivery. You know, we have local
14 people that knows where, where the building is
15 located, versus we got taxi and TLC clogging up our
16 street, creating chaos in my neighborhood and other
17 neighborhood. That's gotta stop, and I think DFTA
18 really needs to work and fight for a transitional
19 plan, to start now. It cannot be taken over by the
20 food czar. Look, if the city want to take care of
21 the general population, go ahead. But the senior is
22 the priority of the Department for the Aging. So I
23 hope to see a plan as soon as possible from DFTA how
24 you are working with the senior center to help them
25 expand their capacity, help them prepare so they can
continue to take care of the most vulnerable

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3 population in the city, our older adult population,
4 and to make sure that they're taken care. I want to
5 make sure that the service provider get the support
6 they need and they do not, you know, disappear, have
7 to lay off people, and that's what's happening now,
8 and that cannot be, OK? So I hope to see a plan from
9 DFTA as soon as possible.

10 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

11 Yes, Councilman. I will relate that request to our
12 commissioner.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you.

14 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I'm gonna send it back
17 to, ah, Chair Kallos. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, thank you to,
19 ah, Aging Chair Chin. I'll just ask a couple of
20 questions before I turn it over to, ah, Chair Rose.
21 Ah, when the pandemic started the governor and mayor
22 began closing down businesses large and small. When
23 nonprofits providing services to seniors, youth, and
24 family who were living in poverty reached out for
25 guidance we in the council shared our concerns and
received assurances from the mayor's office that

3 these providers were deemed essential and would
4 continue to be reimbursed. Ah, and as you testified,
5 you apparently provided similar guidance about seven
6 different times. Ah, I wanted to follow up in terms
7 of what happened there, because that guidance
8 happened and then several weeks later, um, I believe
9 on less than 72 hours' notice I think some folks have
10 had said 24 hours' notice. The SYEP contract was,
11 was canceled. So I guess overall are we still
12 considering our human services providers, our senior
13 service providers, our youth service providers, our
14 providers who are addressing poverty, ah, and food
15 deserts, and low-income communities, are they still
16 going to be considered essential and are, are we
17 going to see any further cuts or cancellations? Can,
18 can we have a commitment that the, ah, city will give
19 providers more than 24 hours' notice?

19 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: Ah, I'm happy,
20 um, Chair Kallos, to, ah, just respond to the
21 guidance piece and then I'll defer to my colleagues
22 at DYCD on the SYEP. Um, but with respect to the
23 guidance, ah, we did come out right out of the gate,
24 ah, with, ah, information to help stabilize our
25 provider partners and let them know that during a

3 period of time that was so unclear and uncertain, um,
4 and while they were working with their agencies to
5 determine how to deliver services, um, during this
6 completely unique, ah, situation, ah, we would be
7 there to continue to pay them and then we would
8 continue to update them, ah, as the pandemic, um,
9 evolved and, ah, I know we were all glued to our TVs
10 during those first, you know, month, 11 weeks or so,
11 where it was daily, hourly press conferences about
12 changes in the environment and so, um, the multiple
13 guidance documents were issued, ah, with, um, the
14 intention of keeping up to date and, um, ah,
15 maintaining relevant information along with the
16 daily, um, conversations with, ah, individual
17 providers, ah, with umbrella organizations, and then
18 the weekly, um, video calls, um, all in an effort to
19 try to, um, maintain communication during a period
20 that was just so, um, frontline, um, and, and
21 shifting. Um, and with respect to questions around
22 SYEP I'll defer to, um, my colleagues at DYCD.

23 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: It's, it's, it's
24 more generally beyond us why also DFTA they
25 transitioned from having these senior congregate
meals to moving everything out into, ah, the, the

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3 city's meals program under somehow the Department of

4 Sanitation, which is, is somewhat bizarre. So I

5 guess overall, ah, in society we ask people to give

6 two weeks' notice, ah, before they quit a job. Um,

7 most contracts I've ever drafted have notice

8 requirements about if people want to, ah, cancel

9 their lease. Ah, Housing has lease, ah, notice

10 requirements. So I, think we can all agree that 24

11 hours or 72, if you're cancelling something where

12 human lives are on the line and, and people's jobs

13 are on the line, several hours isn't good enough.

14 Um, is there a rubric for what the best practice is

15 for if you're not going to renew a contract or one we

16 should suspend, or, or suspend a contract. But I'm

17 happy to also hear from DYCD and DFTA. But I do want

18 some sort of commitment in terms of weeks or months

19 versus hours.

20 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PHANOR: Hello,

21 I'm Jagdeen Phanor, um, Council Member Kallos. Um, I

22 think I want to speak specifically to the SYEP

23 cancellation. Um, DYCD's first priority is the

24 safety of our youth and I think at that given moment,

25 um, in the pandemic that was the earliest or that was

the most, um, up-to-date information that we had and

3 safety was priority. And, um, you know, we care
4 about, um, providing safety for our youth and there
5 were serious concerns at, um, at that point in time
6 and so, um, you know, it's unfortunate for the
7 cancellation. Um, we are hoping through, um, budget,
8 um, negotiations that we can secure an alternative,
9 um, SYEP. In regards to giving a commitment, um, I'm
10 unable to do that because we are guided by what the
11 budget, um, outlook looks like.

12 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And DFTA, in terms
13 of your own suspensions and cancellations?

14 UNIDENTIFIED: We didn't have any
15 suspensions or cancellations in [inaudible].

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, my, my
17 understanding is that you, you moved the senior
18 congregate meals over, ah, from senior centers and I
19 believe the Aging chair went into this and, ah, it
20 got moved over to DSNY and being handled by, ah,
21 caterers who had never done this kind of work. And I
22 just want to echo, ah, the chair's sentiments and I
23 think I'm working on introducing legislation with
24 [inaudible] Adams on legislating food quality issues
25 with what some of the vendors you contracted with,
ah, were distributing.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: No, I understand, but at
4 the same time.

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: So I guess from
6 anyone, is there anyone willing to make a commitment
7 saying that if we sign a contract with a nonprofit
8 that we won't just cancel it on a couple of hours' or
9 days' notice? OK. Um, I guess just a quick question
10 to MOCS. Is there, is there any reason why we can't
11 cancel our 75 million dollar contract with IBM and
12 use that money to fund all the senior and youth
13 services, because literally we're talking about
14 hundreds of thousands of dollar contracts and million
15 dollar contracts, and like there's this 75 million
16 dollar contract with IBM. There's a 25 million
17 dollar contract with, with other, ah, similarly
18 situated vendors, KPMG, Northrop Grumman. Can we
19 just cancel four or five really big contracts to save
20 300 million dollars and just fund everything else?
21 I'd rather cancel on blue-chip companies, ah, then on
22 the providers providing essential services.

23 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: So, ah, Chair
24 Kallos [inaudible] contract services. We actually
25 don't manage contracts. They're between agencies
and, ah, their vendors and their providers and so,

3 and the question at a contract document in and of
4 itself is not, um, what MOCS oversees. Um, we
5 oversee, um, the procurement process, um, and again
6 we're, you know, looking forward to moving forward
7 with digital practice that creates transparency and
8 visibility into the procurement practice. Um, but I
9 can't answer questions around, ah, contracts between
10 agencies and vendors.

11 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Sure. Ah, are you
12 in receipt of my request for all of those 376 million
13 dollars in contracts?

14 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: I'm not sure
15 about the specific request you're asking right now.
16 I, ah, have seen, um, letters and, um, requests, but
17 happy to circle back with you, Chair Kallos, after
18 the, the calling on MOCS's, um, actively working
19 [inaudible] and your office [inaudible].

20 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: No worries, just for
21 those, just for those watching, I have requested all
22 of those contracts that I referred to and I will be
23 going through them personally and hopefully if we can
24 get it before, ah, July 1 we can go in and start
25 cancelling and trimming some of the fat on these very
large contracts that I still don't know what they do

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3 and I'm not sure anyone else do. Ah, you mentioned

4 it in your hearing, in, in your testimony, so, ah,

5 last year was the first year as I was chair of the

6 Contracts Committee, where MOCS started doing the

7 25%, ah, payment. Ah, how many of the vendors were

8 you able, specifically human service vendors, were

9 you able to actually get paid 25% up front, and as we

10 head to July 1, which is about, ah, seven or eight

11 days away, um, are you on track to getting everyone

12 paid out their 25% on July 1, while we still haven't

13 even necessarily passed the budget?

14 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: Yeah, um, so

15 great questions, thank you for asking. Um, yeah, so

16 again the policy, um, as it, as it currently stands,

17 ah, is that registered contracts and approved

18 budgets, um, are entitled to at least a 25% advance

19 and the way it currently stands is providers request,

20 um, an advance. To be clear, during the pandemic,

21 ah, the city, ah, came out in March and just

22 initiated a second set of advances to help with cash

23 flow. That was a unique response to the pandemic,

24 um, and it was, feedback from providers was that it

25 was extremely helpful, um, as they were trying to

pivot and make sense of the situation. Um, learning

3 from that experience, we have instituted a new
4 approach for next week, July 1, ah, instead of
5 requesting an advance the city is automatically, ah,
6 providing those advances of 25% for the registered
7 contracts and approved budgets. Um, so, to the
8 question of where we are with that initiative, so,
9 um, MOCS is extremely focused on that, as are city
10 agency partners we work in collaboration, as are
11 providers. Um, ah, part of the registration process
12 is signing, ah, contracts and getting documents, um,
13 into agencies. So we've been working really closely
14 with providers and agencies. We've instituted new
15 rules to help providers get the documents back during
16 COVID, so electronic signatures, waiving notary
17 requirements, um, things of that nature, to allow for
18 providers to, ah, submit what they need to submit
19 and, um, allow the process to go forward. Um, we are
20 moving very quickly. I was emailing the providers
21 this morning, ah, the agencies here on the phone
22 today are working with us, um, and we're hopeful as
23 we move towards July 1, um, that we will get as many
24 as possible ready for registration on time.
25

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Do you know what
4 percentage are still unregistered and what percentage
5 are already registered?

6 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: I don't have
7 that information right now, ah, but we will, I mean,
8 we'll have it, ah, in just a few short days for sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: We, we have a number
10 of people watching on the internet. We have a number
11 of people who are participating in the Zoom, ah, what
12 day should people expect the payment? What day
13 should they reach out to, if you are a provider, we
14 just got this great news that checks are coming in,
15 that the checks will automatically be issued, I'm
16 assuming through ACH or some other wire transaction,
17 not just checks in the mail, I hope. Ah, what day
18 should they expect it? What day should they reach
19 out and who should they reach out to if they need to
20 get paid?

21 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: Yes, so I'm
22 gonna defer that to my colleague, Erin, but, ah, I
23 just want to take up, um, on, I'm interpreting it as
24 invitation, ah, to share information to the providers
25 who are listening and watching. Um, if you do have
contracts, ah, in your inbox that need to be signed

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3 please, please, ah, return them as soon as possible.

4 Um, it's, again, electronic signatures, email

5 signatures are acceptable during COVID. Um, if

6 there's documents that need to be submitted, and

7 especially if there's budgets that need to be, ah,

8 submitted please do so as soon as possible. If you

9 need assistance, if you think there's something in

10 your inbox, you're just not sure, you can reach out

11 at help@mocs.nyc.gov. We are happy to help you. Um,

12 it's a team effort and we want to get us to the

13 finish line. And then with respect to the timing for

14 the advances I'll defer to Erin.

15 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Before we go to Erin

16 I just, I have a competing email address and I think

17 I insist that the help@mocs.nyc.gov was, was created

18 in response to our email, which is

19 contracts@benkallos.com. So if you need help, email

20 help@mocs.nyc.gov and copy council@benkallos.com and,

21 ah, both of us will work together to make sure you

22 get the assistance. Erin.

23 DEPUTY DIRECTORY VILLARI: Thank you,

24 Council Member Kallos. Um, so I think the first

25 thing that a provider should do is log onto HHS

Accelerator and check the status of their budget and

3 contract for FY21. They can get up-to-date
4 information 24 hours a day. Um, I'm happy to report
5 that we are partnering with the city agencies to
6 create a process for, ah, dispositioning all the
7 advances on registered active contracts for FY21 and
8 agency, the HHS agencies have already actually, ah,
9 prepared hundreds of the advances to date, and so
10 once the budget is adopted and the fiscal year begins
11 on 7/1, those, ah, payments will be executed through
12 an EFT, ah, no checks in the mail, through an EFT,
13 ah, and so providers should expect to start seeing
14 that, ah, the first week of July.

14 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I want to just dig
15 in on the mayor's executive order, ah, which
16 suspended the city's procurement rules on March 17.
17 That was supposed to, ah, standard competitive bidding
18 rules were no longer in place and that agencies were
19 able to select vendors for essential services or
20 equipment without standard contractor evaluation
21 processes. I'm curious what has been the biggest
22 impediment to properly vetting contractors during
23 this emergency. Were there any instances where
24 vendors were approved for PPE contracts that could not
25 deliver, and how can vendor evaluation be improved

3 even in a state of emergency so we don't lose
4 valuable time awarding contracts to inexperienced or
5 incapable vendors? As folks may have read in *Crain's*
6 there was a 70 million dollar contract for, ah,
7 different PPE supplies that, um, I believe they still
8 haven't been delivered, and I'm even curious if we've
9 been, ah, how much we've paid out on that and how
10 much we will be getting in return?

11 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: Um, so happy
12 to, to, ah, respond to that. Um, so the executive
13 order did allow us to suspend, um, and streamline
14 some of the usual requirements to allow for contracts
15 to begin more quickly. Um, with respect to specific
16 contracts, happy to circle back offline with the
17 appropriate folks from MOCS to answer those
18 questions, um, and to continue that conversation.

19 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And I'll just wrap
20 up with a last question before I turn it over to
21 Chair Rose. Ah, our understanding is that the RFP
22 for home-delivered meals is due tomorrow, just by
23 request for delaying inaccurate unit targets
24 following the increase of meal serving during
25 coronavirus. Ah, when, why hasn't DFTA issued an
addendum indicating the new levels of meals that will

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3 be expected to be served and correspondingly delay
4 the due date?

5 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

6 Can you repeat the question, ah, sir?

7 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: The request for
8 proposal for home-delivered meals, ah, is, is it due
9 tomorrow?

10 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

11 That's correct, yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And so the question
13 is have you received requests to delay because
14 providers are concerned that the, that inaccurate
15 unit targets, which means that there are, the
16 contract doesn't provide for enough meals because
17 we're now serving more meals during coronavirus and,
18 ah, we're asking why Department for the Aging hasn't
19 issued an addendum to, ah, recalibrate for the new
20 meal need during coronavirus and whether or not you
21 are planning to do so and whether or not you will
22 extend the deadline and so do it.

23 AGENCY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER SOLA:

24 So, ah, this RFP has been issued in January and with
25 a due date of, ah, March 3, and then since then we
have, ah, ah, extended the RFP for 16 additional

3 weeks. And, and the current contracts for these, ah,
4 services are, are going to expire at the end of
5 December 2020. So, um, we, we believe that we have
6 given enough time for the vendors to prepare their
7 proposals and the, ah, submit their proposals. And
8 we are not sure how long this, ah, pandemic is going
9 to, you know, ah, last. So, ah, which is difficult
10 to plan when you, when you don't know, ah, what to
11 expect. So it wouldn't be, ah, it would, you know,
12 seem to include, ah, pandemic-related, ah,
13 assumptions into an RFP that will have, you know,
14 longer contract terms.

15 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I, I would just
16 argue that as we prepare for a second wave and we
17 have to deal with the now, ah, if this is something,
18 I, I think we'll have an idea of whether or not we're
19 seeing a second wave and how long that second wave is
20 going to be, probably in the fall. So I would just
21 say that we should either recalibrate for what we're
22 seeing right now today, ah, and perhaps end up in a
23 situation where we might have more food. But I just,
24 I don't see hunger going away. I'd like to turn it
25 over, so I just urge you to please push the due date
out, perhaps even into the fall if, if you feel like

3 you need more certainty. But, um, I, I haven't heard
4 any doctors or Anthony Fauci saying we're done, go
5 back to normal life with what I'm hearing and what
6 I'm seeing throughout this country is spikes and
7 people preparing for a second wave. I'd like to,
8 I've taken too much time, so I want to turn it over
9 to our, ah, Youth Services Chair Debbie Rose to
10 follow up on summer youth employment and everything
11 that our, our youth providers have had to deal with.
12 She mentioned in her statement and she is our
13 champion on this, and I'm just here to help.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, Chair
15 Kallos, and, um, my colleagues have all been stalwart
16 in this battle, you know, to get youth funding, um,
17 reinstated in the budget. So I want to thank you
18 all. And, ah, MOCS, and the MOCS guidance from, ah,
19 3/18/2020 for human service programs was, they issued
20 this guidance, um, on 3/18/202 for human service
21 programs but it only covered the period up until
22 6/30/2020. If programs can't meet their contractual
23 demands due to the COVID-19, ah, pandemic will they
24 be penalized in the next fiscal year?

25 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: Ah, so thank
you, Chair, ah, Rose for your question. The, um,

3 what I can say is that we, ah, appreciate the fact
4 that COVID is continuing, um, and, ah, the city will
5 be supporting providers as we move into the next
6 fiscal year and as we've been working with each
7 provider, um, each agency, I should be clear, it's
8 each agency working with their contracted provider
9 and understanding how to deliver in a COVID
10 environment. They'll continue to do that as we move
11 into the fiscal year.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Um, with that, would,
13 um, providers, ah, could the providers roll over any
14 unspent funds from their fiscal 2019-2020 contracts,
15 um, to cover some expenses, ah, especially if there's
16 no funding in the adopted budget?

17 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GEILING: So questions
18 about budgets, um, should really be directed to
19 contracting agencies. Um, this group, um, one, it's
20 between the agency and the provider. Um, two, um,
21 it's hard to answer the individual questions in this
22 type of a forum, um, and from, um, a policy
23 perspective it's, um, that's MOCS oversees the
24 procurement process, not the budgeting, ah, process.
25 So, um, it's not really [inaudible] on that, um-hmm.

3 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'll [inaudible].

4 Thank you. I'll speak with DYCD about that. Um,
5 with the abrupt canceling of, of the summer programs,
6 ah, staff, um, many of our contracting agencies, ah,
7 were, were forced to lay off staff. So staffing up
8 for summer programs and, ah, school year programming
9 traditionally occurs months ahead of time. In order
10 to complete the necessary background checks and
11 trainings the staffing challenge has now been
12 exacerbated by, um, you know, providers' inability to
13 financially retain their staff. Will DYCD advance
14 funds to support providers and staffing up for summer
15 and, um, especially if we're, ah, successful in
16 providing, ah, summer programming funds? And what
17 will the advance policy for a fall programming be?
18 And will DYCD work with DOHMH and OCFS to deal with
19 the rush of applications for background checks in
20 order to avoid the nightmare that, um, we experienced
21 last fall?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, Chair Rose. Um,
23 and we look forward to whatever funding, um, is
24 afforded. As always, you know that DYCD, um, in the
25 past has been able to ramp up, um, very quickly. In
regards to advances, unfortunately, you know,

3 without, um, summer programming it's gonna be hard
4 for us to do advances, but what, um, Nevada and I
5 have done with our team is we are working together,
6 um, with, um, our ACO and our fiscal team to figure
7 out if we had to roll out a program what we would do
8 to facilitate cash flow to providers.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Will we be able to do
10 that in a timely manner so that they could be up and
11 running?

12 UNIDENTIFIED: So I, you know, I put my
13 right hand up and I'm, I'm going to be honest here.
14 Without, um, ah, ah, a mechanism to, um, especially
15 since it was canceled and contracts may not be
16 registered for a portion of our SYEP contracts, um,
17 getting an advance is going to be tough. I know
18 that, um, Dana and I, who is our ACO, spoke about the
19 possibility of trying to get them, um, funding from
20 the loan fund, and so, as I indicated before, we, we
21 understand, um, the strain that our providers, um,
22 are, are experiencing and, um, it's always our effort
23 to work collaboratively to try to get them cash flow.
24 That's my, my staff's primary goal and we'll do
25 everything in our power to make sure that we could

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3 get them funding, um, to operate these last-minute
4 programming if in the event we are getting funding.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Um, you know, because
6 of the cancellation the executive budget, um, cuts
7 caused many of the providers and the CBOs to furlough
8 their staff or lay off staff. Um, do you have a
9 number, can you give me the numbers of the COMPASS,
10 Sonic, Beacon, Cornerstone, SYEP staff who have been
11 furloughed or laid off as a result of these cuts?
12 We've been trying...

13 UNIDENTIFIED: Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...to get that number.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: So at this time we don't
16 have the number. Um, what I can say to you is that
17 in each of the prospective areas program folks, um,
18 have gotten emails from staff who have indicated it
19 and, um, if possible we are going to try to see if we
20 can pull something together, but at this present time
21 I don't have those numbers for you.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Um, when do you think
23 that you can get them, ah, because we're trying to,
24 um, formulate a budget that will, you know, take into
25 consideration and, and compensation for, for those
staff members that were laid off.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Um, other than doing a
4 survey, like I said, sporadically we would have
5 providers, um, you know, voice their concerns about,
6 you know, is there going to be funding, we have to
7 furlough staff. At this present time it's only those
8 one-off emails or providers that have reached out to
9 us. We haven't collectively, um, figured out how we
10 can survey a larger, um, a larger group of our
11 providers to do so. Um, I will definitely, um, take
12 this back to the executive team to figure out how we
13 can try to pinpoint, um, numbers. But at this
14 present time I don't have it have it, and I
15 understand the urgency and the need to, and we will
16 put our heads together to try to make sure that we
17 could get something together if possible.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Um, I'd like you to
19 just talk to me about, um, the communication between
20 DYCD and the providers. Um, I understand that
21 there's been, um, you know, a contract [inaudible]
22 weekly calls to the providers, but they've only been
23 listen-only. How is DYCD engaging providers and
24 creating a space for them to offer questions and
25 feedback, and, um, how are the questions responded
to? And are there questions and recommendations

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3 incorporated into any living, you know, FFQA, FAQ,
4 um, document, you know, for dissemination.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: So I'm gonna, I'm gonna
6 pass this, um, to Darryl Rattray. But I can say to
7 you that, um, with the guidance and the collective,
8 um, collaboration between MOCS and OMB we have worked
9 to kind of distribute some of our FAQs and, um, you
10 know, frequently asked questions. So I'm going to
11 pivot to Darryl and he could speak more, um, in
12 detail about what's happening in a program level.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Hi, Darryl.

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Good
15 afternoon, Chair Rose, how are you?

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'm good, how are you?

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: I'm
18 good. Great seeing you. So, yes, we do have, of
19 course, daily communication with our providers. Um,
20 we do have the weekly calls amongst the different
21 program areas. So the, during the RHY call, um,
22 that's an open call where providers can ask questions
23 during that time period. Um, our calls with the
24 COMPASS and Beacon and Cornerstone programs because
25 on each call we have over 150 people on those calls,
um, it's a little problematic to have people chiming

3 in all at once during the call. So for those we have
4 collected questions beforehand and read the responses
5 out during the call. Um, and that's been an ongoing
6 process. But, um, since the last hearing that we
7 had, ah, we have had, ah, CBO supervisory calls as
8 well. So we've had supervisors of providers on calls
9 where they are, that's an open dialogue. They are
10 able to ask questions during those calls, um, and
11 have conversations. And actually for the past two
12 weeks we've had calls with executive directors as
13 well that, again, are open video conference calls
14 where they can chime in, um, get answers directly,
15 and if we don't have the answer we definitely get
16 back to everyone.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And, um, when you have
18 the big call with all of the Beacons and
19 Cornerstones, um, and the questions are submitted
20 ahead of time, how do you address the questions that
21 don't get, um, answered during these video
22 conferences? Is there any mechanism in place to get
23 back to, um, the questioner with the answer?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Yes, we,
25 so after each video call we do a follow-up email to
everyone that was on the call, and actually even if

3 you weren't on the call but you're part of the
4 portfolio you also receive that follow-up email. Um,
5 during calls, absolutely right, we've had questions
6 that up until the point of the call hadn't been
7 answered, but, and we addressed that part of it, hey,
8 we know all of you are reaching out about this, we
9 don't have an answer yet, we're working on it, we're
10 gonna get it out to you. Um, so that's also
11 something that we include in that dialogue.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You mentioned RHY,
13 and, um, we received, um, some correspondence that
14 they submitted invoices for, um, for additional
15 salary and OTPS costs due to COVID-19, ah, for
16 reimbursement, but they still haven't been
17 reimbursed, nor has DYCD communicated with them when,
18 when they should expect the funds. Um, what's,
19 what's going on with the communication with the
20 providers, and when can they expect to be, um, fully
21 reimbursed?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: So I, I'm going to start
23 and then I'm going to, um, transition or pivot to
24 Nevita Bailey. Um, in general, um, the process, as
25 you know, with this pandemic, um, moving swiftly, um,
we know it's instrumental to cash flow to our

3 providers. I think with the guidance along with MOCS
4 and OMB we were able to send out a template for
5 providers to kind of distinguish between what are
6 [inaudible] COVID expenditures and non-COVID
7 expenditures. Um, providers, um, as you can imagine,
8 um, you know, providers took a while to get us back
9 the information. After we got the information my
10 staff had to vet the information because there were
11 certain line items that they were putting in that,
12 um, perhaps, um, you know, um, OMB, um, and others
13 didn't feel were, um, things that we could put in,
14 um, based, um, reimbursement and, um, we shared it,
15 um, with OMB and since then, you know, we are
16 communicating back and forth, working
17 collaboratively. So I will say that, you know, we
18 could, um, streamline that process a little bit
19 better. We have every intention of making providers
20 whole. We're just trying to get the details done.
21 As you know, the city is in, um, a budget crisis and,
22 um, we're looking for, um, you know, other funding
23 streams from the state and other places to be able to
24 help, um, um, you know, not supplant but to, um, to
25 fill some of those gaps, um, that we have in the
city. So we want to make sure that we get it right.

3 Um, as soon as we can we will send notification out.

4 I can assure providers that while they're doing the

5 work, um, we will not leave them on the hook. We

6 have reached out. We have said this is something

7 that we're going to do and we just need to finalize

8 them. I think, I speak a lot. Nevada, I don't know

9 if there's much that you need to add to that, but,

10 um, Chair Rose, it's definitely our intention, um, to

11 get those numbers out. You know DYCD does not work

12 independently. There are other, um, approvals that

13 we need, um, um, to move forward and, um, again, cash

14 flow, getting information to our providers is key to

15 us and, um, if it's not, you know, received on a

16 timely basis, trust me, it's not done out of militia

17 or anything of that sort.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Um, I, I think the

19 problem is, is the lack of communication. That, you

20 know, um, granted, we know that there is an issue

21 with cash flow, but, um, a, a couple of phone calls,

22 you know, actually articulating what is happening and

23 what efforts are being made to get them reimbursed I

24 think would, you know, go a long way. So, um, I, I

25 would like to see that there's some more

communication with, with, ah, um, RHY providers and,

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3 and as soon as you have some sort of timeline in
4 which you think that, you know, these reimbursements
5 will be made or will be forthcoming that you express
6 that to them.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Definitely.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Um, and so, ah, I just
9 want to say that, um, part of the problem has been,
10 um, that people just are, they feel like they're
11 functioning in a vacuum, that, you know, the guidance
12 has been limited from, from MOCS in terms of, you
13 know, next steps, where they're going to go after
14 6:30 and the fact that, um, they have had enough
15 contact with you to know, um, we're continuing to
16 fight. I am, I am so sure that we're going to be
17 able to fund summer youth programming, and I want
18 everybody to be able to get up to speed and, and
19 running so that our most vulnerable youth can
20 actually have, um, valuable programming this summer.
21 So, um, ah, I do, there's a lot of other people who
22 have questions so I'm gonna, um, give them, cede my
23 time back to the chair. Um, thank you, Chair Kallos.

24 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I want to again
25 thank the committee, this hearing's Cochairs, ah,
Rose and Chin. I'd like to now turn it to Council

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3 Member Inez Barron, who has been waiting very
4 patiently. But first our, ah, moderator and
5 committee counsel, Alex Palinov, will read some, some
6 questions and, ah, I urge any other council members
7 to raise their hand at this time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
9 Kallos. Thank you, Chair Chin. Thank you, Chair
10 Rose. I will now call on council members in the
11 order that they have used the Zoom raise hand
12 function. Council members who would like to ask a
13 question and you have not yet raised your hand please
14 do so now. You will have a total of five minutes to
15 ask your question and receive an answer from the
16 panelists. The Sergeant at Arms will keep a timer
17 and I will let you know when your time is up. Once I
18 have called on you please wait until the Sergeant has
19 announced that you may begin before asking the
20 question. First we will hear from Council Member
21 Barron.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so
23 much.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Council Member Barron,
25 your time will begin now.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so
4 much. I want to thank Chairs Chin, Rose, and Kallos
5 for having this opportunity for [inaudible] this
6 hearing [inaudible] the department [inaudible] we're
7 having [inaudible] problem in getting acknowledgement
8 for questions that we raise. Our questions, our
9 emails, our calls are not responded to and that's
10 unacceptable for an agency. We are now at the point
11 where there are organizations that have been told
12 that they cannot [inaudible] funds [inaudible] by
13 other organizations. For example, we have an
14 organization, Wayside, that was allocated \$75,000.
15 They have spent \$30,000 and have been told that they
16 cannot continue to spend funds because they are no
17 longer providing essential work. They have a \$31,000
18 contract from Aging, and the contract was, which they
19 normally would, ah, continue to submit in the normal
20 process, has not been [inaudible] question becomes
21 they want to purchase tablets for the seniors. Must
22 they now amend the original contract to indicate
23 that? Is that something that will be approved so
24 that they can be reimbursed? Or will the funds be
25 able to be rolled over to the next year? My time is
ticking. Did you hear my question?

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3 UNIDENTIFIED: My colleague is going to
4 respond, but he is muted.

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Thank
6 you. Sorry, sorry, Commissioner Barron, sorry,
7 Council Member.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

9 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Um, I'm
10 assuming that this contract is actually a
11 discretionary contract.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Correct.

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: All
14 right. I mean, that's actually a discretionary,
15 that's a decision done by the City Council, not by
16 [inaudible].

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: OK. That is
18 something that we brought to your attention and we
19 still have not heard, and we said that, ah, the city
20 contract is willing, the City Council is willing to
21 do that, but that the provider must have a contract
22 with DFTA in order to claim its reimbursement. So
23 that comes back to you.

24 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So, so
25 this is a discretionary contract.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: The council has
4 no objection. You haven't registered the contract
5 that they want to submit. So it's back to you.

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So I
7 will look into that and get back to you, Council
8 Member.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right. When will
10 you do that, because today's the 22nd or whatever.
11 Time is ticking. People have to be able to know that
12 they're registered and they've got like seven days to
13 spend the money and get the items. This has been
14 totally unacceptable. It's not something new and we
15 are very disappointed that we have not gotten
16 responses to these questions, which have been
17 submitted in writing, and have not gotten a response
18 while the time is ticking. So when will you get
19 back? Will you get back to us before the close of
20 business today or by the end of business today? When
21 specifically will we hear from you?

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: I will
23 look at it today and do my best to see if I can
24 respond back today. If not, definitely by tomorrow.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: OK. And who am I
speaking with, who am I hearing from?

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3 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Jose
4 Mercado.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I don't see your
6 name, it's not on my screen.

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Jose
8 Mercado, chief financial officer.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.
10 [inaudible] Betty Simmons. She's my contact person
11 and her email is jsimmons@council.nyc.gov. Thank you
12 very much.

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Thank
14 you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
16 Member Barron. I'll now turn the floor back over to
17 Chair Chin with additional questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Ah, thank you. Um, I
19 just wanted to follow up on the home-delivered meal
20 RFP. Now we've heard that the demand has gone up
21 20%, 30%. So, I mean, is DFTA looking at really
22 pushing back their RFP and see how we will be able to
23 meet, um, this growing demand, ah, for home-delivered
24 meal, 'cause we don't know when this pandemic is
25 gonna end. Ah, so you do a RFP that do not provide,
ah, sufficient funding, ah, for the number of meals

3 or the reimbursement rate, um, that would not be
4 accountable. So how is DFTA doing with that?

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Ah, open communication with
6 providers and regular review of our data systems are
7 key to successfully tracking increased demand. In
8 FY2019 the average home-delivered meals was
9 approximately 17,300. As of April 2020 we have seen
10 an increase about 20%. While there are clients
11 waiting for a full in-home assessment, the increase
12 of which is consistent with home delivery increase,
13 there are zero clients waiting for meals. Any
14 traditional CMA clients waiting to be added to home-
15 delivered program, which is approximately 209
16 individuals, to enroll in Get Food New York City
17 immediately [inaudible].

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But there were, there
19 were other seniors that got signed up for the, ah,
20 Get Food NYC. And what I've heard, even from the
21 commissioner, I mean, that number has like increased
22 to almost like 100,000. I mean, a lot of seniors who
23 are not, who are not connected, ah, to senior centers
24 before now they've heard about, you know, food
25 programs or they sign up with the senior center and
they're, they're getting other services, which is

3 great. Um, but at the same time we gotta make sure
4 that sufficient funding to be able to take care of
5 the increased demand, ah, that we are seeing. As I
6 said, you know, the pandemic is, we don't know when
7 it's gonna end. And, and people are aging every day,
8 the senior population is growing every day, so
9 there's going to be more and more demand. Um, how is
10 DFTA going to be able to meet that? The other
11 question, ah, that I didn't get to, um, ask earlier
12 was, you know, I was talking about the cooling
13 centers. I just want to make sure that is DFTA also
14 requesting extra funding, ah, for these centers, who
15 are gonna be cooling center to provide overtime and,
16 and services so that the senior center that are going
17 to be cooling center are not going to get short-
18 changed.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm gonna answer the first
19 question. Ah, DFTA will continue to work with OMB
20 regarding the council's request for increased funding
21 for home-delivered meals. The second question, we're
22 basically [inaudible] we sent out a survey to
23 determine what is the cost to reopen cooling centers.
24 Again, mentioned earlier, we're supposed to be
25

3 getting them by tomorrow. We will know exactly how
4 much it's gonna cost to do so.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, in your
6 conversation with OMB we, we've put it out there from
7 the council. We're asking for 26 extra million
8 dollar for the home-delivered meal program and I want
9 to see that 10 million that was promised in the model
10 budget that was supposed to be in this year's, um,
11 preliminary budget, wasn't there. Executive budget,
12 wasn't there. It better be there before we adopt the
13 budget, because that money is desperately needed, ah,
14 by our senior center. My one last question is for
15 MOC. Ah, I don't know if you have the information,
16 ah, in terms of the, the private, um, food service
17 company, um, that got into the Get Food NYC contract.
18 Do we know like how much are they getting paid, ah,
19 of the salary or, ah, hourly pay rate that they are
20 providing to the food preparer and the people who
21 deliver the meal, and what's the rate that they're
22 getting, ah, per meal, these private contractors?

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, I don't, we don't
24 have that information, but I'm happy to go offline
25 and, ah, you know, get the appropriate colleagues,

3 ah, to help answer your questions about that
4 contract.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That would be helpful,
6 because I've been asking it. I haven't, ah, gotten
7 any information back. I want to see like who are
8 these private, um, catering companies? You know, how
9 are they paying people the amount of money that
10 they're getting, ah, for the kind of food that
11 they're providing, and I want to make sure that we're
12 not wasting money. So if you can get that
13 information to us as quickly as possible it will be
14 appreciated. Thank you. I pass it back on to Chair
15 Kallos.

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you to, ah,
17 Aging Chair Chin and, ah, just checking to see if we
18 have any additional questions. Ah, seeing none, we
19 will begin our first panels, ah, from the public.
20 Ah, I'd like to turn it over to our, ah, moderator,
21 Alex Palinov.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
23 Kallos. Thank you, Chair Chin. Thank you, Chair
24 Rose. We will now turn to public testimony. I'd
25 like to remind everyone that unlike our typical
council hearings we will be calling individuals one

3 by one to testify. Each panelist will be given two
4 minutes to speak. Please begin once the Sergeant has
5 started timing. Council members who have questions
6 for a particular panelist should use the Zoom raise
7 hand function and I will call on you after the
8 panelist has completed their testimony. For
9 panelists, once your name is called a member of our
10 staff will unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will
11 set the timer and give you the go-ahead to begin.
12 Please wait for the Sergeant to announce that you may
13 begin before delivering your testimony. I would now
14 like to welcome MJ Okma to testify. After MJ Okma I
15 will be calling on Tara Fein and then Gregory
16 Brender. MJ Okma, you may begin.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Alex? I'm sorry to
18 interrupt. Council Member Rose, ah, raised her hand,
19 I believe, ah, at the end of the admin testimony. I
20 believe she may have a final question for the admin
21 before they leave.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, David.
23 Council Member Rose?

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you.
25 I, I just wanted to ask, um, ah, two, ah, COVID-
related, um, questions. Um, due to the, ah, the

3 elimination of summer programs providers have been
4 told that, ah, there's no storage or rent that will
5 be available to programs over the summer. So what
6 does DYCD, um, want the providers to do with supplies
7 and equipment, and in the Cornerstones the CBOs are
8 usually the ones tasked with securing the facility
9 and supplies. They are also the ones reporting to
10 NYCHA for the necessary repairs. Without Cornerstone
11 programming over the summer, who will be responsible
12 for the security of these facilities and the supplies
13 for the summer? No? Did the admin leave? Are they
14 gone?

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Is DYCD still here?

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: OK, I'll, I'll just
16 follow up with the questions that I have. I'll, I'll
17 send them, I'll send them to the, to them directly.
18 Thank you. Thank you, Chair, sorry.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
20 Rose. Um, once again, we're going to turn to public
21 testimony now. We are welcoming MJ Okma, Tara Klein,
22 followed by Gregory Brender. MJ Okma, you may begin.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

24 MJ OKMA: Ah, good afternoon, Chair
25 Kallos, Chin, and Rose. My name is MJ Okma, with the

3 Human Services Council, a membership organization
4 representing over 170 human services providers in New
5 York City. The cost of COVID-19 that has been passed
6 along to human, the human services sector has been
7 immense. In a time when these programs need more
8 support to meet growing demands vital services have
9 been cut and flattened. This choice
10 disproportionately impacts communities that have been
11 hardest hit by this pandemic due to structural
12 racism, ablism, and income inequality. Last year's
13 indirect investment was an important step forward
14 that many providers have deeply relied on during this
15 time. And while it's vital that this commitment has
16 held steady, this investment alone does not address
17 the full scope of under, of the underfunding crisis
18 facing this sector long before this pandemic. It is
19 impossible to separate the issues discussed today
20 from the looming fiscal year 21 budget. The city
21 government has already eliminated necessary services
22 with little notice and we've been given no sense of
23 what the final budget could look like. On June 10
24 HSC sent the City Council a letter, joining the call
25 for reduction of the NYPD's operating budget by at
least one billion in fiscal year 21 and out, which

3 also outlined some recommendations to help redirect
4 those savings into vital social services. Under the
5 purview of DYCD and DFTA those recommendations
6 include fully restoring all summer youth programs,
7 including COMPASS, Sonic, Beacon, and NYCHA-based
8 Cornerstone programs, which are facing 79 million in
9 cuts, saving the Summer Youth Employment Program at a
10 cost of 124 million, funding the current home-
11 delivered meals program with an immediate 26 million
12 in emergency funding to help cover the real cost of
13 the program, while allowing time to pull the
14 drastically underfunded current RFP and rework the
15 program with direct inputs from providers, and
16 releasing funding for the Unity Works Program, a work
17 force development program specifically aimed at
18 creating work and education opportunities for
19 homeless and runaway LGBTQI youth at a cost of 2.7
20 million over four years. The contract of this RFP
21 has already been awarded but the funding has been put
22 on...

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 MJ OKWA: Additionally the city must
24 start paying human services workers fairly. Um,
25 these city-contracted workers, the majority of which

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3 are women of color, are some of the lowest paid in
4 our city's economy. The small increase they do
5 receive in the form of COLA is set to expire unless
6 it's included in the fiscal year 21 budget. A 3%
7 COLA for these workers would cost 48 million. Um,
8 for decades despite small incremental changes the
9 city has asked human service providers to do more
10 with less. The system is now on the brink of failure
11 and the time is now for bold action. Thank you so
12 much for providing me this opportunity to testify and
13 for your partnership on these deeply pressing issues.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, MJ Okma.
15 Unless there are questions from the members we will
16 move to the next panelist. Seeing there are no
17 questions from the members, we will now move to Tara
18 Fein. Ms. Klein, you may begin.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

20 TARA KLEIN: Can you hear me?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can hear you.
22 Now we can't hear you. You may have to push the
23 unmute button. There you go.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Ms. Klein, you muted again.
25 Hold on. You're unmuted now.

TARA KLEIN: OK, this is good?

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

4 TARA KLEIN: Great, so sorry about that.

5 Um, thank you so much to Chairs Kallos, Chin, and
6 Rose for hosting today's hearing. My name is Tara
7 Klein with United Neighborhood Houses. UNH is a
8 policy and social change organization representing 43
9 neighborhood settlement houses. Settlement houses
10 have been on the front lines of the COVID-19
11 emergency response by continuing to deliver essential
12 services to New Yorkers, including providing
13 emergency food, counseling, shelter, youth and family
14 supports, and more. Um, my written testimony
15 highlights more details around aging and youth
16 services contracts. Ah, I'd like to briefly
17 highlight some of the aging concerns and align
18 ourselves to the testimony you'll hear next from
19 Gregory Brender and Campaign for Children on his
20 services concerns. Um, so I'd like to discuss the
21 home-delivered meals RFP and program. This is a
22 DFTA-contracted program that includes meal delivery,
23 case management, and in-person wellness checks to
24 support the most vulnerable homebound older adults.
25 During COVID-19 home-delivered meals providers were
instructed to continue business as usual. At the

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3 same time the program saw demand increase rapidly
4 with many indicating a 20% to 30% uptick in clients
5 as urgent community needs grew. This underscores our
6 major funding need we've been requesting for 26.2
7 million dollars for the program. So DFTA currently
8 has a new RFP out for home-delivered meals program.
9 This was released before COVID-19 hit and since then
10 has been postponed several times. It's currently do
11 tomorrow, the 24th, with contracts scheduled to begin
12 January 1, 2021. So the RFP lists the number of
13 meals to be served in each catchment area of the
14 city, but these numbers are no longer accurate given
15 the increased demand we've seen and uncertainty about
16 how these numbers will change in the future.

17 Further, providers are still responding to the COVID-
18 19 crisis and are focused on rug their programs and
19 applying for emergency funding sources. The pandemic
20 is not the time for the city to release a new
21 procurement and this RFP must be postponed until
22 after COVID-19 has been subsided. The hopes, too,
23 for any other procurement [inaudible] including
24 senior centers, NORCs, and case management, these
25 procurements must remain on hold until after the

3 pandemic subsidies. My written testimony also
4 highlights...

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 TARA FEIN: ...[inaudible] around the
7 city's emergency meal provision for older adults
8 through Get Food and, ah, some questions around how
9 that program and its funding will wind down. So
10 thank you for your time and I'm happy to take any
11 questions.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms. Fein.
13 Unless there are questions from the members we will
14 move to the next panelist. Seeing no additional
15 questions from the members we will move to Gregory
16 Brender, followed by Caitlyn Andrews and Carlyn
17 Cowen. Mr. Brender, you may begin.

18 GREGORY BRENDER: Thank you so much for
19 the opportunity to testify and thank you, Chair
20 Kallos, Chair Rose, and Chair Chin for convening this
21 important hearing. Um, as you know, the most drastic
22 cuts made in the mayor's, um, executive budget were
23 to DYCD, and this is gonna, the impact of these cuts
24 will impact the providers and the contractors who
25 make DYCD programs work well beyond the summer when
the cuts are happening. As we speak, youth services

3 workers are receiving layoff and furlough notices

4 because we have not had these programs restored yet.

5 The council has been such a strong ally in pushing to

6 restore these programs and we ask not only that you

7 push to restore them again but that you push the

8 mayor to restore them now so that before people leave

9 their jobs, before layoffs go into effect, we can

10 start planning programs to go into place in the

11 summer. As you know, and as Chair Rose mentioned,

12 um, providers, um, immediately adapted when COVID-19

13 struck towards, um, remote models, towards socially

14 distant in-person models, um, in the [inaudible] and

15 want to continue to provide those services in the

16 summer. Um, in order to ensure, um, the successful

17 transition of programs we urge DYCD, ah, to make

18 adjustments to the work scopes and budgets for DYCD

19 programs, including enrollment and rate of

20 participation expectations, um, amending budgets to

21 reflect additional expenses from COVID-19, and

22 amending per child costs to reflect fewer children in

23 single classroom studies. Thank you, ah, for

24 testifying and for all your leadership to support

25 these programs. We need the city to act now to

fulfill the commitment that the mayor made to

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3 transfer funds from NYPD to youth services and act
4 now in fulfilling that promise and restore Compass,
5 Sonic, Beacon, Cornerstone, and SYEP. I'm happy to
6 take any questions, and thanks so much.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Mr.
8 Brender. I'll now turn it to Chair Kallos, who has
9 questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, thank you, ah,
11 Greg. So I, I saw on TV, I saw Mayor de Blasio on TV
12 talking about millions of dollars available for Cure
13 Violence and other youth programs, and so that was at
14 this point at least more than a week ago. Um, so are
15 you, are you saying that the mayor hasn't made that
16 money available yet?

17 GREGORY BENDER: Um, there is money
18 available for Cure Violence, as far as I understand.
19 But there's still huge amounts in the system,
20 including most of the programs, which are run through
21 COMPASS, Sonic, Beacon, and Cornerstone for
22 afterschool and SYEP for youth employment that are
23 entirely eliminated for this summer. So we're still
24 looking at a summer where tens of thousands of young
25 people will be deprived of the opportunities to work

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3 and more than 14,000 youth workers are being laid
4 off.

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: There's a pandemic
6 out there, right?

7 GREGORY BRENDER: There is.

8 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: What are kids gonna
9 do this summer if they don't have summer camp and
10 summer jobs?

11 GREGORY BRENDER: I think it's gonna be a
12 huge challenge for keeping kids to social distancing.
13 They've already lost, um, engagement over the past,
14 ah, several months, having not been in school. They
15 need this connection to both caring adults and to
16 their peers that youth services programs can provide.
17 Um, so it's, it's a big unknown and I think it's a
18 really important question, um, that honestly our
19 mayor needs to answer because right now the services
20 that are keeping kids engaged, that are helping them
21 have positive experiences are slated to close.

22 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: How many kids are
23 you talking about for your, for the, the, ah, summer
24 programs that are part of the, ah, settlement, ah,
25 housing settlement network?

3 GREGORY BRENDER: Um, I can get you that
4 number. I don't have it at the top my head, sorry.
5 But it's, it's, um, within our network it's, um, it's
6 [inaudible].

7 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Or, or generally.
8 I, I know that, if I remember that number is in the
9 tens of thousands.

10 GREGORY BRENDER: Yeah. Um, it's over
11 175,000 children affected by this cut.

12 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, I see, ah, the
13 Youth Services chair, Debbie Rose, vigorously, ah,
14 nodding along and I'll, ah, see if she wants to, to
15 jump in and, and interrogate you as well.

16 GREGORY BRENDER: Ah, thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I, ah, I don't want to
18 interrogate, um, Greg. Ah, he's a wonderful advocate
19 for our young people. But, um, I liked the
20 questioning, um, Chair Kallos, um, and you're, you're
21 calling to, to question how, how youth programming
22 could be zeroed out in the midst of a pandemic when
23 our young people need these services more than ever.
24 And so, um, yes, it's over 175,000 young people who
25 will be impacted by, ah, by this, by the budget as it
stands. The mayor did restore some money to youth

3 but not to the summer youth programs that we, we have
4 been targeting. It was for NeON, it was for a NeON
5 program and it was for, um, a paltry number of 3300
6 slots, as opposed to the over 175,000, um, slots, ah,
7 for various summer programs, Sonic, COMPASS,
8 Cornerstone, Beacon, SYEP, Work, Learn, Grow, um, all
9 of them was zeroed out. So, um, ah, you know that
10 the council is fighting to restore funding to all of
11 those programs and, um, and it has had an impact on
12 our providers. Um, and so I'm really thankful to you
13 for having this contracts meeting because, ah, with
14 the, the sudden just cancellation of funding to their
15 programs it has impacted their ability to be able to,
16 um, have a full-fledged, um, summer youth
17 programming, ah, as we knew it in the past. So, um,
18 I'm thankful for getting all of these, this
19 information on the record so that we have more
20 ammunition to fight in our budget negotiation talks
21 that are ongoing. Thank you.

22 GREGORY BRENDER: I'm with, um, Campaign
23 for Children and Campaign for Summer Jobs that
24 actually submitted a summer recovery plan with both
25 in-person and remote options. I know that, ah, Chair
Rose has seen it, but I'll also submit it in the

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3 testimony, ah, and to Chair Kallos, um, and anyone
4 else who wants to see it so that, um, and it's on the
5 website of campaignforchildren@nyc.com, um, so there
6 are plans out there that providers have worked on,
7 ah, who have experience with both remote and social
8 distancing in-person programming.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I'd like to
11 [inaudible] ah, Chair Chin.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, Chair. Hi,
13 Greg. Thank you for the testimony, and Tara. I, I
14 agree with you. The providers have plan. You're
15 experienced. You know what to do. I just can't
16 understand the administration and the mayor. Like,
17 hey, during the summer kids can still learn with, you
18 know, virtual programming that they have been getting
19 right now from a lot of the youth service provider
20 that is creative. Why not allow them to continue
21 instead of terminating their contract? It make no
22 sense. OK, and don't give us the excuse that it is a
23 safety issue. OK? The providers can help deal with
24 that. And same thing with the senior provider. They
25 can deal with the safety issue. I mean, there could
be social distancing. Not every senior has to

3 congregate together. But there are ways that you can
4 have a smaller group or whatever and you can still do
5 the virtual that's been going on. Come on. Just
6 fund the programs. And provide the support, simple
7 as that, instead of gutting everything, and I think
8 that's why in this budget we cannot allow the
9 administration to get away with it and just use the
10 thing about, oh, the pandemic is still going on, we
11 have to worry about safety. No. Talk to the people
12 who's been doing this. Talk to the providers,
13 support them, support our youth, support our seniors.
14 Thank you, Chair.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair Chin.
16 Chair Kallos has additional questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And just to be
18 clear, how much was in the budget for you before the
19 cut and what is the rest, how much money does it cost
20 to get these 130,000 kids, ah, engaged positively
21 this summer, socially distanced, and keeping them
22 healthy and engaged?

23 GREGORY BRENDER: Ah, this was a cut of,
24 ah, 215 million. Um, we do project that there are
25 additional expenses, ah, particularly for in-person

3 programs related to, ah, PPE, um, and other costs,
4 ah, for socially distancing.

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: So you're saying
6 that it would cost a fraction of our city's heat,
7 light, and power bill? Ah, the, my projected savings
8 for what the city saves on heat, light, and power, on
9 its 713 million dollar budget is about 176 million
10 dollars. Ah, I believe the number you're talking
11 about is less than the police overtime budget, ah,
12 and the cost of having the city invest in, sorry,
13 spend money on policing our children instead of
14 investing in them. So, um, would you, would you
15 support cutting overtime for the NYPD to, ah, instead
16 take that money from paying police officers to, ah,
17 police our children, to have your organizations work
18 with them?

19 GREGORY BRENDER: I think there's a lot
20 of people who would, who would be, and I think there
21 already are people in the streets saying we need to
22 get behind moving money out of NYPD, um, and into
23 youth programs and other social services as well.

24 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, those are, those
25 are my questions for this witness.

GREGORY BRENDER: Thank you so much.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair

4 Kallos. Thank you, Mr. Brender. Unless there are
5 any additional questions from members we will move to
6 the next panelist. Seeing no additional questions,
7 I'd like to call Caitlyn Andrews to testify, followed
8 by Carlyn Cowen and Joanne Yu. Ms. Andrews, you may
9 begin.

10 CAITLYN ANDREWS: Thank you. My name is
11 Caitlyn Andrews. I'm with Live On New York. Thank
12 you, Chairs Chin, Kallos, and Rose, and the full
13 committees for the opportunity to testify. With a
14 base of more than 100 community-based organizations,
15 Live On New York's members provide core services that
16 allow older adult to thrive in their communities. So
17 before highlighting the areas which we need
18 improvement, I would like to first express the good
19 news. Over the past few months the resiliency,
20 adaptability, and strengths of senior service
21 providers has been on display like never before.
22 With that said, the challenges have been significant.
23 Amidst death, grief, and fear within the senior
24 community the demand for services has spiked
25 significantly. Home-delivered meal providers have
reported a 20% to 30% increase in demand in March

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3 alone and now are disallowed from accepting new
4 clients and [inaudible]. Case management [inaudible]
5 of grab and go meals. These challenges were all
6 incurred against a backdrop of a chronically
7 underfunded system with home-delivered meal providers
8 reimbursed 20% below the national average, case
9 management systems receiving no new funding to
10 address rising demand and senior centers even seeing
11 the 10 million dollars that was promised to them for
12 FY21, being neglected from the expense budget. As it
13 is June 23 and the budget has not yet been adopted, I
14 would be remiss not implore the City Council and the
15 administration to fully fund senior services,
16 including the 10 million promised for senior centers
17 and the 26.2 million dollars that's needed for home-
18 delivered meals in the FY21 budget. Now, some
19 examples of the contractual challenges that have
20 emerged, without clear communication, that is the
21 headline. Ah, on May, on March 15 the mayor
22 announced via press conferences that senior centers
23 would be closed the following day.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 CAITLYN ANDREWS: That means that senior
25 centers got no time to create new programming or

3 prepare for that change. They learned of this
4 through that press conference. Moving forward, we
5 need to have better communication, specifically on
6 plans for reopening, and more specifically, I know
7 I'm a little over, we need to be sure that seniors...

8 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Take your time to
9 finish your testimony.

10 CAITLYN ANDREWS: Sure. We need to make
11 sure that seniors are aware of the cooling centers
12 that will be open in their area. The purpose of
13 emergency preparedness is to make a plan. Seniors
14 need to know now what will be open, especially with a
15 heat wave coming next week. There's a lot more in my
16 testimony, but I appreciate the opportunity to share
17 just some of the things that we can learn from from
18 the past few months and improve on moving forward.
19 Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms.
21 Andrews. Do any of the chairs or council members
22 have questions? Seeing none, we move on to our next
23 panelist, Carlyn Cowen, followed by Joanne Yu, and
24 Beatriz Diaz Taveras.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ms. Cowan, you may
4 begin.

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I just want to jump
6 in, I'm sure the Aging Chair will, will have
7 questions. Ah, so we heard the administration raise
8 issues of, of safety, um, and, ah, I guess the
9 question is, is there a way for this, ah, so we, so
10 one challenge is that it's gonna get hot out. It's
11 already hot. It's, it's pretty muggy out. I was out
12 this morning at 6:00 a.m. and it was already hot at
13 6:00 a.m. Ah, what kind of, ah, dangers would, are,
14 are seniors going to face at home this summer, ah,
15 versus if they're able to actually go to cooling
16 centers, how are we able to do things safely, and
17 what kinds of, ah, safety measures are available so
18 that we an, ah, make senior services available again
19 in person?

20 CAITLYN ANDREWS: So what I think is most
21 important is to lay out the options that seniors will
22 have early so that they can discuss with their
23 senior, um, providers, the senior center case
24 managers, etcetera, what makes sense for them. So
25 some seniors may be able to participate in the AC
distribution project that's going on, and that will

3 be sufficient. Others may not be able to do that for
4 a variety of reasons, potentially cost of the
5 utilities being one. Um, so they need to be able to
6 talk with providers and say where is a cooling
7 center, what makes sense for me, and those
8 discussions can only happen if we have a clear plan
9 laid out now. I think that there are many senior
10 centers that want to operate. They know that they
11 can enforce social distancing within their center and
12 would love to be a part of the solution. And there
13 are some that say I'm located in senior housing and
14 this just doesn't make sense. It's too much of a
15 risk. But I think having those conversations and
16 then laying out exactly what's going to be available
17 in every single community is the first step to making
18 sure everybody can have a plan and execute it to make
19 sure that they're safe and healthy during the heat.

20 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: During this pandemic
21 have your members seen the cost of food go up, like
22 we've seen all over the country? Have they seen
23 their SNAP stretched thin? Has their SNAP and food
24 pantry been insufficient and have they had to rely on
25 senior centers to provide additional access to food?

3 CAITLYN ANDREWS: Absolutely. Food is
4 the number one concern that we've heard during this
5 time, and more specifically we are really concerned
6 about the fact that drivers have had no access to
7 incentive pay. It's been the position of the city
8 not to provide incentive pay for the drivers of home-
9 delivered meals who have remained on the front line,
10 interacting with seniors every single day. Um, the
11 food is the biggest challenges. We know that moving
12 forward senior centers could be a solution and create
13 culturally competent meals as they have done for
14 decades and continue to provide these safely. But
15 without adequate funding to cover the full costs, um,
16 that's a solution that's untenable in the current
17 state.

18 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms.
20 Andrews. Are there any additional questions for
21 members? Seeing none, we will move on to the next
22 panelist. Next, I will call upon Carlyn Cowen,
23 followed by Joanne Yu, followed by Beatriz Diaz
24 Taveras. Ms. Cowan, you may begin.

25 CARLYN COWEN: Good afternoon, and thank
you to the chairs for holding this hearing today and

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3 for your attention to this really urgent issue. My
4 name is Carlyn Cowen, pronouns they/them. I'm the
5 chief policy and public affairs at CPC. CPC has been
6 serving immigrant and Asian American communities
7 since 1965, and we have supported our communities
8 through all sorts of crises. And so when the COVID-
9 19 crisis hit we knew we had to respond to support
10 our community members quickly. The City of New York
11 could have made this easy, but it didn't. The City
12 of New York could have made it possible for us to
13 rapidly transfer our services, adapt to new and
14 emerging needs, and make sure that our community
15 members were able to safely receive services given
16 the current conditions, but that's not what happened.
17 When the news of the shutdown happened what we
18 immediately did was reach out to the city to get
19 assurances that our contracts would be kept whole so
20 that we could adapt our services and meet the needs
21 of our community members, which they did provide us.
22 But what we didn't know is that that assurance was
23 only if the contracts were actually going to be kept.
24 So we told our staff that they were guaranteed to
25 stay on with us until June 30. And then after that,
a week later, we heard that our senior services were

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3 being cut, and we learned that through a press
4 conference on a Friday afternoon when we had seniors
5 already planning to show up on Monday for food. We
6 then worked with our seniors to begin home delivering
7 meals and learned that the city was going to be doing
8 that as well. And we had seniors that were not
9 receiving food, seniors that were going hungry,
10 seniors that were receiving inadequate meals, um, and
11 seniors that were frankly afraid of opening their
12 doors to a city worker rather than a trusted
13 community member, because they have fears of ICE.
14 Then a few weeks later our youth services contract
15 cut just overnight, with barely enough time to...

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

17 CARLYN COWEN: ...even to have our
18 programs close, pull information from the database,
19 or close our doors. We had to scramble to figure out
20 how we would keep this program together. And
21 ultimately we are being forced to let off a number of
22 our staff for that program. In the meanwhile, our
23 young people have been texting staff with suicidal
24 thoughts because they don't know how their families
25 are going to make ends meet or how they're going to
afford to bury our parents, and that will be the loss

3 of our connection to those young people if we are not
4 able to serve them. Simply put, CPC will try our
5 best to meet all of our community needs, but when our
6 budget is being slashed by a million dollars, when we
7 are being forced to lay off 100 staff, it is simply
8 not possible and when that happens at a moment's
9 notice with no time to prepare it means we cannot
10 prepare our community members either. At the same
11 time, the city is continuing to fund the NYPD at the
12 exact same essentially rate that it has and the city
13 is too concerned about laying off officers and
14 actually reducing the head count and reducing
15 policing in our communities. Yet the city is
16 essentially letting go hundreds, if not thousands, of
17 human services workers who are going to be critical
18 to our recovery without blinking an eye. So I
19 implore you, and thank you for working on this
20 matter. Please, defund the NYPD. Reallocate that
21 funding to our communities, to human services that
22 will be here for our communities through the
23 recovery. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms. Cowen.

25 I will now turn to Chair Kallos for questions.

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3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, thank you for
4 your courageous, honest, and very straightforward
5 testimony. Ah, and, ah, thank you for being the
6 first panelist to say defund NYPD. I agree. We must
7 defund NYPD. Did I ask you to say that? Just wanted
8 to make sure of that.

9 CARLYN COWEN: No, you did not. And I
10 will happily say it again. We need to defund the
11 NYPD, invest in communities, and invest in human
12 services.

13 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, would, would you
14 support, ah, cutting the next graduating class, ah,
15 sorry, cutting the next, ah, ah, cadet class to save
16 4 million dollars and that, that would actually help
17 restore funding to your organization and several
18 others? That would be [inaudible].

19 CARLYN COWEN: I would, I would
20 absolutely support [inaudible] that class, and
21 furthermore I would support going further to reducing
22 the head count of the NYPD in a meaningful way that
23 actually reduces the policing of our community
24 members, of young people of color, of low-income
25 folks, of black and brown communities. All the
police are doing is criminalizing their poverty,

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3 criminalizing their lived experiences, and what we
4 know is that it is community-based social services
5 that actually supports and uplifts these communities,
6 and during this economic and public health crisis we
7 are needed more than ever. That 4 million dollars
8 that you say alone, that could fund hundreds of young
9 people to be engaged in summer programming and
10 supporting their community members through COVID-19.
11 That 4 million dollars could pay for thousands upon
12 thousands of meals for people who are homebound, as
13 our waiting list for food pantries and for food
14 services is growing exponentially. 50% of our
15 community members have lost their jobs or income. We
16 need to invest urgent funding into services for New
17 Yorkers, not policing them.

18 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: 50% of your
19 community members?

20 CARLYN COWEN: 50% of our community
21 members in wellness checks have lost jobs and income.

22 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, and, and how
23 many of those community members were able to access
24 unemployment benefits through the state or federal,
25 ah, benefits?

3 CARLYN COWEN: Unfortunately, not a lot
4 of them. Just as an example, for one of our
5 preschool families in Queens of 24 families, 20 of
6 those families lost jobs in the first two weeks of
7 shutdown and less than half of those families were
8 able to access any sort of federal or state benefits.
9 And they are left with the, they're forcing
10 themselves to choose between paying for food, they're
11 waiting to get evicted when the eviction moratorium
12 expires, which is today. These are the investments
13 we need to be making in supporting these New Yorkers.

14 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: These are some very
15 stark realities, um, and just horrifying, especially
16 the message you're receiving, the fact that people in
17 the community feel that they can text you and share
18 their thoughts and get the support they need, but,
19 ah, with, with laying off 100 staff, I imagine that
20 is more challenging than ever, and yet it seems like,
21 I imagine, you're still rolling up your sleeves to do
22 more with less. Ah, I, I want ask to ask this very
23 specific question, just to get the facts out there,
24 because I think the public needs to know and, um,
25 I'm, I'm hoping folks are paying attention here. So,
um, the city sent out letters saying that services

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3 were going to be continued. You were under the
4 rightful belief that you were safe until June 30.
5 Ah, how many hours' notice did you get on the cut to
6 SYEP?

7 CARLYN COWEN: Less than 24 hours. We
8 were told one afternoon that our programs were ended
9 the next day. That would not have been enough time,
10 even if we were, um, fully in the office for us to
11 update all of our program participants, close out the
12 program in terms of its actual planning, as well as
13 financials, to have our staff clean out their desks.
14 And, again, you are talking a work force of low-
15 income, people of color, paid minimum wage through
16 city contracts, often immigrants, that the city was
17 essentially willing to let go on less than a day's
18 notice. At CPC we have been able to scramble to
19 promise to guarantee those staff through June 30 and
20 that means that myself and other leadership team
21 members are taking a pay cut, that we are
22 reallocating from other programs. Other agencies
23 that are smaller do not have the ability to do that
24 the way that we have been able to, and therefore they
25 had to lay off staff very quickly following that
notice. And the thing here is that we are at June 23

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3 and so if the city decides to bring those programs
4 back it's gonna be really hard because a lot of those
5 staff are already gone. And if and hopefully when
6 the city realizes that human services are going to be
7 central to any kind of economic and public health
8 recovery that we have, if these community-based
9 organizations have laid off significant amounts of
10 staff or if, God forbid, some of them had even gone
11 under, those organizations are not going to be there
12 to serve our community members, and we are so vital
13 to this recovery. We need the city to recognize
14 that.

14 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, you mentioned
15 the senior service cuts to your senior centers. Ah,
16 how many hours' or days' notice did you get on that
17 cut?

18 CARLYN COWEN: We were told first of all
19 on Friday afternoon that we were no longer able to do
20 our [inaudible] meals, even though we had been
21 working very hard with social distancing and sanitary
22 and PPE practices, um, and that that was effective,
23 um, as of that Monday. But we knew that seniors were
24 already counting us for a meal. Our meals are 70% of
25 their daily nutritional value and we know that a lot

3 of our seniors do not get anything else to eat
4 besides what we feed them. And most of our seniors
5 face digital access and literacy issues and so
6 there's no way to notify them. And then, again, when
7 we moved from grab and go meals to the DFTA home
8 delivery we were given barely a day's notice on that,
9 and so we knew that again our list of seniors was not
10 going to be the same as the list that DFTA had. We
11 were immediately hearing reports as soon as, as soon
12 as we started, of seniors that were not getting meals
13 that we then had to scramble and pull together
14 donations to make sure that they didn't go hungry.
15 We heard of seniors receiving meals that were
16 basically made up of crackers, applesauce, juice, um,
17 and other things that were just really not
18 nutritionally appropriate. Um, and we heard of
19 seniors that were just confused by the new system,
20 particularly our limited Engage proficiency seniors,
21 and scared to open the door because we have been
22 since, ah, 2016 teaching our community members that
23 you do not open the door, and so our seniors were
24 literally forced to choose between the fear of
25 deportation and not going hungry.

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: That, that's a lot
4 of last-minute cancellations. Ah, so one place is we
5 can defund NYPD. Ah, another question is, um, we, we
6 are currently spending 84 million dollars with IBM,
7 ah, for something called Citywide SI Class 2
8 Projects. Um, do you have any idea what that is,
9 'cause I, I don't, and does it seem like it might be
10 better to cut one multimillion-dollar contract with
11 IBM, Deloitte, Accenture, or Northrop Grumman? Ah,
12 together they would be worth about 375 million
13 dollars. Or should we keep cutting, ah, services to,
14 to youth, seniors, and those living in poverty?

15 CARLYN COWEN: I don't know what those
16 contracts are and so, you know, I can't say with
17 certainty that we should cut something that I haven't
18 heard of, but my general instinct is that for the
19 city to continue paying out our corporate contractors
20 for whatever those services are while, um, not paying
21 and cutting contracts for our vital youth services,
22 our senior services, our community services, is
23 mixed-up priorities. The city should be first
24 preserving the needs of New Yorkers, which is funding
25 human services, funding education, funding our youth
programming, meeting our needs during this crisis,

3 and then thinking about paying out our corporate
4 contracts, and frankly maybe think about if they're
5 even really necessary.

6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, thank you, and I
7 did not pay you to say any of this, right? Ah, thank
8 you, and I guess just as I go, if something's in the
9 budget and it is so opaque that we don't know what it
10 is, the Mayor's Office of Contract Services doesn't
11 know what it is, and it is hundreds of millions of
12 dollars, that's when I say that's, that's time to
13 cut. I don't know anyone in their right mind who
14 would keep paying even a dollar if they didn't know
15 what it was for. So thank you, and we will continue.

16 CARLYN COWEN: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms. Cowen.
18 Thank you, Chair Kallos. We'll now call the next
19 panelist, Joanne Yu, followed by Beatriz Diaz
20 Taveras, followed by Dana Altnu. Joanne Yu, you may
21 begin.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 JOANNE YU: Good afternoon, everyone.
24 Um, thank you so much for, ah, allowing me to submit
25 this testimony. My name is Joanne Yu. I'm the
executive director of the Asian American Federation

3 and we represent a network of 70 member and partner
4 agencies that support the Pan-Asian community. Um,
5 at this point, um, we, I probably would have been
6 parked in your office to do some, ah, budget advocacy
7 and we're grateful that you guys are all fearlessly
8 leading our city at this point. Um, Council Member
9 Rose, ah, your office was the last meeting that I had
10 with before the, the shutdown. So I feel particular,
11 um, affection, um, in seeing you here and just wanted
12 to let you know that through our census work we were
13 able to reach 100,000, ah, Staten Islanders, um, on
14 the, um, with the census, ah, and, and getting, and
15 over-delivering on our numbers. I am, um, extremely
16 grateful for this opportunity. I want to talk about,
17 um, asking, my testimony is to really ask for support
18 for the hardest-hit communities, um, those who have
19 suffered socioeconomic neglect and lack of funding
20 for years, and that is the communities of color, who
21 have been tragically under-resourced. So none of
22 this, ah, the death rate and, and the challenges in
23 our communities should come as a shock to anybody
24 who, who understands how the city dollars are divvied
25 up. Um, as Council Member Chin can, ah, tell you,
ah, Asian American seniors, we're the fastest-growing

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3 senior population and one in four seniors live in
4 poverty, with poverty rates reaching as high as 35%
5 for Bangladeshi seniors and 30% for, ah, Chinese
6 seniors, Asian, Asian American seniors living in
7 poverty of, of that, the population. Ah, [inaudible]
8 rate is 83%. And, um, obviously, we have the highest
9 rate of senior mental health, um, services needs. We
10 have, ah, 40% of the seniors experience, ah, we have
11 the highest rate of suicide of all the senior
12 populations. And so what I want to ask, obviously
13 what COVID has exposed...

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

15 JOANNE YU: So my recommendation,
16 quickly, um, address the growing needs of [inaudible]
17 language and culturally competent...

18 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Take all the time
19 you need.

20 JOANNE YU: ...health care and mental
21 health services.

22 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Take all the time
23 you need.

24 JOANNE YU: Thank you. Raise
25 reimbursement rates for ethnic home-delivered meals
and allow congregate meals, ah, to happen. Ah,

3 continue funding senior centers for immigrant
4 population initiatives. Um, I can tell you that of
5 the 70 nonprofit organizations, and there are many
6 allies here who talk about, um, the New York
7 programs, but the reality is that all of the money
8 that has, is being, um, divvied up between, um,
9 senior services, Asian American and communities of
10 color, we are the last to know. And there have been
11 some money that has been, um, allocated during this
12 pandemic and, um, you know, I keep a running email
13 with my colleagues who serve other communities of
14 color and we didn't even know about that. And so
15 right now no, not one Asian American nonprofit has
16 its own Meals on Wheels contract. So we are, um,
17 obviously, um, just so short-changed and so under-
18 funded, um, as Carlyn mentioned, you know, obviously,
19 um, there's tremendous need. But we also need to
20 acknowledge that there's a reality, an economic
21 reality that communities of color have always been
22 underfunded and under-resourced. So we need to amend
23 contracting process to allow Asians and nonprofits to
24 more accurately reflect cultural and language
25 expertise they bring to the senior population. We
understand the importance of SYEP because of the fact

3 that they serve low-income communities of color and
4 it's an opportunity for them to be able to raise
5 their families out of poverty. So we know that there
6 are lots of, ah, budget requests, um, in front of
7 you. We ask you to recognize the fact that this
8 pandemic, what this pandemic has done is to shed, ah,
9 shine a light on the communities that have never
10 gotten the resources and that will, and will continue
11 to not get the resources, even to, you know, to be
12 honest, you know, everybody's, everybody's saying all
13 the right things, but when it comes to money we know
14 that, um, we know how this is gonna go. And so I
15 guess I'm gonna just say, um, you know people talk
16 about culturally competent meals, they talk about
17 language access, they talk about funding nonprofits,
18 but those, none of those, um, those elements, those,
19 those critical needs [inaudible] reach my community
20 and so I'm asking all of you for our support to
21 ensure that not just Asian Americans, but communities
22 of color get their resources that we need to serve
23 our community. Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms. Yu.

24 Unless there are any additional questions from the
25 members we will move on to the next panelist. Seeing

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3 no additional questions from the members I'll now
4 call Beatriz Diaz Taveras, followed by Dana Altnu and
5 Joseph Perry. Ms. Diaz Taveras, you may begin.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 BEATRIZ DIAZ TAVERAS: Good afternoon,
8 Chairs Kallos, Chin, and Rose, and committee members.
9 My name is [inaudible]. I'm director of the
10 contracts management at Catholic Charities Community
11 Services, which provides basic human services in
12 Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island. Thank you
13 for the opportunity to provide testimony today. The
14 suspension of both SYEP and summer camp programs
15 promises to leave thousands of children without
16 constructive activities and guidance this summer. As
17 you know, immigrant children and families, many of
18 whom are excluded from the federal stimulus packages,
19 will especially be worse off. Commitments by members
20 of this council and the mayor to redirect funding to
21 youth and social services would pave the way for
22 empowering development through investment in
23 communities of color, disproportionately affected by
24 COVID-19, and the murders of George Floyd and so many
25 others. Should SYEP funding be restored we have the
staff and equipment ready to act immediately from

3 Zoom operations and allow children to gain the
4 valuable career experience and life skills that SYEP
5 provides. For the more than 500,000 undocumented
6 immigrants in New York City who are left out of the
7 federal stimulus programs, funding may provide not
8 only legal assistance, but case management, mental
9 health care, ESOL and job training assistance. We
10 support increased investments in these services
11 because we see the benefit they have on the city's
12 most under-resourced communities and we know that
13 they will be critical supports for these communities
14 as we collectively recover. The city's record of
15 handling youth and human services contracts is one of
16 limited successes and significant shortcomings. The
17 suspension of SYEP contracts with only 24 hours'
18 notice caused widespread turmoil among youth services
19 providers, and casts doubt on the city's willingness
20 to deliver to on its contract and budgetary promises.
21 The council's discretionary guidance came a month
22 after the PAUSE order and caused enough confusion to
23 merit subsequent guidance and an FAQ. Despite these
24 additional communications, city agencies continue to
25 reject contract invoices for clearly established
essential services. While council staff has been,

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3 have been helpful in our attempts to rectify these
4 issues, these are symptoms of a more systematic,
5 bureaucratic opacity. In addition, contract
6 registration delays continue to be commonplace.
7 Providers wonder if they're FY20 contracts will be
8 cut before they're ever registered.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

9 BEATRIZ DIAZ TAVERAS: This is not to say
10 that among the city's failures are not areas of
11 improvement. Changes to contract advances and
12 invoice review, as well as the launch of PASSPort
13 could usher in a period of greater transparency and
14 accountability. The city's commitments, the indirect
15 cost rate initiative if adhered to universally
16 without exceptions for emergency contracts, is a
17 promising step to ensure that nonprofits can provide
18 needed services without taking on losses. Thank you.
19 And I'm happy to take questions.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Unless
21 there are any questions from the members, I will move
22 on to the next panelist. I see Chair Kallos has a
23 question. Turning the floor over to Chair Kallos.

24 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: You're, you're with
25 the archdiocese. Can you give us just a scope of

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3 just how big the archdiocese is and, and how many
4 folks you, you work with and, ah, serve?

5 BEATRIZ DIAZ TAVERAS: Yes, um, so
6 Catholic Charities Community Services is within one
7 of the 90 agencies within the Archdiocese of New
8 York. Um, Catholic Charities, CCCS, um, covers
9 Manhattan, the Bronx, and, um, some of Staten Island
10 and some of the, ah, Hudson Valley counties. Our
11 agency alone serves about 140,000 individuals with
12 various basic, ah, needs. Um, the Archdiocese of New
13 York covers, um, 10 counties, including New York City
14 and Hudson Valley. Um, hundreds of thousands of
15 households, ah, youth, and families are, are served
16 by our, our services.

17 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: What, what does it
18 look like if things continue the way they are versus
19 how things have been going?

20 BEATRICE DIAZ TAVERAS: In terms of SYEP,
21 Beacons, COMPASS, our afterschool programs, um, that
22 have been suspended this coming summer. We, we have
23 not, we have been playing a waiting game, um,
24 basically, ah, just waiting to hear from the city
25 agencies on what our next steps are going to be. Um,
thousands of children are going to be basically, um,

3 not able to participate in any kinds of activities
4 over the summer, where they could be provided
5 meaningful, um, meaningful activities through our
6 counselors, through, through people who, who would be
7 able to, to provide those activities, um.

8 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK. Um, and I guess
9 one of the things you, you were talking about some of
10 the contracting. It just seems like your
11 organization is very large, um, so any pointers you
12 have for the city in, in dealing with, with so many
13 large numbers of people and large numbers of
14 subsidiaries and, and sub-providers and subcontracts,
15 I'm incredibly open to and also happy to just turn it
16 over to Chair Rose.

17 BEATRICE DIAZ TAVERAS: Um, one of the,
18 one of the things that I had talked about was the
19 indirect cost rate initiative. And I know that that
20 was an initiative that was, um, started, ah, more
21 than a year ago. Um, I think that if, if we could,
22 um, push that forward and ensure that, um, our
23 contracts can be made whole in order to provide these
24 services, um, that would be one large step in, in
25 ensuring, um, continued, ah, services. Um, that's,
that's an essential area.

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3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'll now
4 turn the floor over to Chair Rose for her two
5 questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, before that,
7 just quick response. In terms if you're having any
8 trouble with the indirect rate please reach out to
9 the agency you're having issues with, ah, who
10 hopefully should have stayed on this, ah, this, but
11 we will be making sure that they come back and watch
12 this and get back to you. Ah, but email
13 help@mocs.nyc.gov and email contracts@benkallo and
14 the relevant chair, whether it's, ah, Rose, or Chin,
15 or both of them, and we will be there for you to make
16 sure we support you on the indirect. Turn it over to
17 Chair Rose.

18 BEATRICE DIAZ TAVERAS: Thank you. I'm
19 sorry, I think it's muted?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Rose needs to
21 unmute.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Um, the
23 archdiocese has, ah, both senior and youth programs.
24 Um, do you, can you give us a number of how many, um,
25 what staff layoffs, how many staff layoffs there
might have been as a result to, ah, the zeroing out

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3 of the youth contracts and, um, and cuts to senior
4 services? And how many seniors and youth were
5 impacted by, um, these cuts?

6 BEATRICE DIAZ TAVERAS: I don't have that
7 information right away and our sister agency in
8 Staten Island [inaudible] Staten Island operates the
9 senior centers on the North Shore as well as, um,
10 afterschool programs. So I, I can certainly get that
11 information to you. Um, I'm sorry, I think it's on
12 mute.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Um,
14 because we've been trying to get some type of head
15 count of how many staff members have been impacted by
16 these sudden cuts, as well as we know, we have a
17 number for the youth, so, um, it would be really
18 helpful if you could get back to my office so that,
19 um, and, and let us know so, um, again, we can use
20 that as some type of barometer in terms of our
21 negotiations and how much monies, um, we should be
22 actually asking for, um, in, in this, in the next
23 budget. Thank you.

24 BEATRICE DIAZ TAVERAS: Thank you.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chairs.

I'll now turn to Dana Altnu to testify, followed by

3 Joseph Perry and Aya Ibrahim. Ms. Altnu, you may
4 begin.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 DANA ALTNU: Thank you. Thank you for
7 hosting today's important hearing on nonprofit
8 contracting during COVID-19, with a particular focus
9 on youth and senior services. My name is Dana Altnu.
10 I am the assistant director of government contracts
11 at Good Shepherd Services. Guided by social and
12 racial justice, Good Shepherd both partners and grows
13 with communities so that all New York children,
14 youth, and families succeed and thrive. We have seen
15 numerous rapid changes to contracted programs with
16 youth services being forced to significantly shift
17 their operations overnight in order to comply with
18 health and safety guidelines. The support that GSS
19 provides both pre-COVID and during COVID are even
20 more crucial to assist our communities now. We
21 understand that difficult choices have to be made,
22 but urge the city to preserve key programs and
23 investments in the human services sector, including
24 last year's investments in the higher indirect rates
25 and salary parity for early childhood educators, so
that the sector remains stable over the coming months

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3 and can continue to work with helping New Yorkers
4 recover. Additionally, the mayor's three-year COLA
5 investment comes to an end this year and it is vital
6 to continue COLAs in the years out. An investment in
7 COLA is an investment in essential nonprofit workers.
8 The most dramatic cuts made in the mayor's, um,
9 budget are to DYCD, which we have all discussed. Um,
10 these summer programs include COMPASS, Sonic, Beacon,
11 Cornerstones, and SYEPs. And for Good Shepherd this
12 will directly impact roughly 300, 3000 participants.
13 The cuts also threaten the infrastructure of
14 community-based organizations who serve youth. Um, I
15 can tell you for Good Shepherd Services we have laid
16 off over 300 staff. It is the single biggest layoff
17 of staff at one time since our inception in 1947. It
18 is vital that contracts reflect the changes that have
19 happened or the changes that may need to happen for
20 programs to reopen with programatic or fiscal
21 modifications in order to conduct safe...

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 DANA ALTNU: ...[inaudible] in-person
23 programs. Additionally, budgets need to be modified
24 and allow for new costs, such as food for families
25 and other items that are necessary. Um, many of our

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3 DYCD contracts, um, have been busy distributing food
4 and have been working at the RECs, which, um, in
5 collaboration with the Department of Education, and
6 in order to create equity across all GSS programs
7 staff that are reporting to program sites and working
8 in person are being paid one-and-a-half times pay.
9 Unlike some other contracts, these programs are not
10 allowing us to charge even when there are funds
11 available and the contracts are not allowing for us
12 to charge this one-and-a-half times pay, and
13 therefore Good Shepherd is needing to take on this
14 financial burden. Furthermore, we urge DYCD to work
15 collaboratively with providers on work scopes and
16 budgets to reflect the new realities that we are
17 facing during this crisis. Thank you, and I'm
18 available for any questions.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Unless
20 there are any questions from the members, we will
21 move on to the next panelist. Seeing no additional
22 questions from the members, we will move on to Joseph
23 Perry and Aya Ibrahim. And note to the muter, please
24 unmute them both together because they'll be
25 testifying together. After Joseph Perry and Aya

3 Ibrahim we will move on to Rachel Gazda and Riyad
4 Yuel. Mr. Perry and Mr. Ibrahim, you may begin.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 JOSEPH PERRY: Thank you to, ah, Chairs
7 Kallos, Chin, and Rose, ah, for the opportunity to
8 speak today. Um, my name is Joe Perry. Ah, I'm with
9 the Junior Achievement of New York. Ah, for those
10 who don't know us, we're the largest nonprofit
11 organization in the Greater New York area, dedicated
12 to creating pathways to economic empowerment in young
13 people, kindergarten through twelfth grade. Our
14 mission is to teach and inspire young people to
15 understand the economic world around them, plan for
16 their financial futures, and to make the most of
17 their potential, with the premise that knowledge and
18 access leads to empowerment. Ah, Junior Achievement
19 of New York provides free programming to students who
20 reside in 49 of the 51, ah, City Council districts in
21 all five boroughs. Ah, as you may know, financial
22 literacy, entrepreneurship, and work force readiness
23 are not part of the regular required curriculum in
24 New York State, and that means that most students
25 graduate without any meaningful exposure to basic
pocketbook economics or to the larger topic of how

3 our economy works. Without this kind of literacy our
4 students are at great risk of becoming adults without
5 learning how to make smart financial decisions and
6 plan for their futures. We create partnerships
7 between hundreds of businesses in over 300 local
8 schools, summer programs, and afterschool providers
9 in the city that help, ah, shape the next generation
10 of community leaders, workers, consumers, and
11 innovators. And as we continue to grapple with the
12 effects of the COVID-19 pandemic we have
13 transitioned, ah, to remote learning opportunities,
14 ah, digital transition that was really already
15 underway prior to the pandemic, but that we have been
16 able to, um, accelerate during this past months. Ah,
17 JA students are reflective of New York City's
18 communities. One-fifth of our students are black, a
19 quarter are Asian, and nearly 50% are Latino. Nearly
20 80% of the students we serve..

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

22 JOSEPH PERRY: ...qualify for free
23 financial, ah, free federal, ah, student, student
24 reduced lunch programs. Many come from immigrant,
25 immigrant communities. We serve over 100,000
students each year, and I would like to turn, ah,

3 turn to, ah, Aya Ibrahim, ah, one of those 100,000,
4 ah, to, to speak with you just for a few minutes.

5 Aya?

6 AYA IBRAHIM: Thank you for giving me the
7 opportunity to speak today. And as a youth member
8 striving to do my best and reach my dreams, I'm a
9 first-generation immigrant and a first generation to
10 go to college. I was clueless on how to navigate and
11 tackle this process. But JA came at a time when I
12 needed support, when I needed guidance, when I needed
13 someone to show me how to unlock my potential. All
14 of my JA experiences, from learning on, ah, learning
15 soft and hard skills and financial literacy and just
16 having that entrepreneurial mindset to start our own
17 company, all of these experiences have had a great
18 impact in me and helped me look 10 years ahead,
19 getting me both college and career ready. Um, every
20 experience brings me closer, brings me a step closer
21 to achieving my dreams. So it will be a great
22 opportunity if every student in New York City gets
23 this chance to help them strive in their careers.
24 Ah, thank you for giving me the time to share my
25 story and I would be very happy to take any
questions.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Ah,
4 turning to the council members for questions. Seeing
5 no questions from the members, ah, we will now turn
6 to our next panelist. Um, some of the original
7 panelists I called are no longer here, so we skip
8 ahead. The next panelist will be Marjorie Parker,
9 followed by Martha Camber, and Larry Wood. Ms.
10 Parker, you may begin.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ms. Parker, are you
13 here? Ms. Parker is muted. To the muter, please
14 unmute her.

15 MARJORIE PARKER: Ah, got it. Thank you
16 so much. I'm trying to navigate multiple meetings
17 here. Um, so good afternoon, Chairpersons Rose,
18 Chin, Kallos, and distinguished members of the Youth
19 Services, Aging, and Contract Committees. My name is
20 Marjorie Parker and I am the president and CEO at Job
21 Search NYC. We're a nonprofit intermediary that
22 creates and advances solutions to break down barriers
23 and transform the systems supporting young adults and
24 their communities in the pursuit of economic
25 opportunity. [inaudible] 2020 among young people
ages 16 to 24 has skyrocketed due to COVID, rising to

3 35% of its pre-pandemic rate of 6.6%. The young
4 adults [inaudible] can have much longer-lasting
5 consequences and young adults today may even a harder
6 time because they have more student loan debt. To
7 understand the breadth of the pandemic, um, economic
8 impact on young adults their communities and the
9 organizations that support them [inaudible] conducted
10 interviews with 68 of our 155 [inaudible] across New
11 York City. Um, the resulting report is called The
12 Early Impact of COVID-19 on Young Adult Work Force
13 Development Inside [inaudible]. I want to give you
14 some quick highlights about that. It's all detailed
15 in the, in the report. But first I want to say that,
16 um, you know, the New York City passed a resolution
17 that was enacted on April 25, 2017, which charged
18 Mayor de Blasio to launch a New York City [inaudible]
19 task force that would work to develop a single
20 systems strategy to, for real investment in the out
21 of school, out of work population. Um, that report,
22 that first report, was given to the City Council on
23 March 1. Um, I know that you do not have that report
24 and so we're, um, really asking you to, um, reach out
25 to the team at the mayor's office that's working on
this, um, to share this report. We're really

3 disappointed in the lack of [inaudible] that Mayor de
4 Blasio is showing on this group. So to the report,
5 right, um, these are 68 organizations that...

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

7 MARJORIE PARKER: ...[inaudible]. Um,
8 very quickly, um, household finances are declining
9 rapidly. Having a job has become a matter of
10 [inaudible] young people. Ah, young adults and
11 nonprofit staff are facing rising mental and physical
12 health needs. Someone asked a question earlier
13 about, you know, are the agencies talking to their
14 contract, um, their nonprofits on what are they
15 hearing. Well, you can, you can find this in this
16 report 'cause we talked about it. Finding
17 [inaudible] right now, nonprofits are bracing for
18 drastic cuts. Um, the one thing that we're asking
19 for from the City Council are three things. Hold the
20 line in cutting funding for critical programs,
21 convert the current funding to general operations
22 support. I don't know how the government can do
23 that, but they should. Um, nonprofits need time to
24 right size. Think about if we're operating in a
25 time, having the type of experience we've never had,
um, we're spending money on resources that we really

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3 don't have money to spend on. Um, we need to invest
4 mental health counseling and support services. Um,
5 and we need more institutional partnerships across
6 the work force of the education system. The full
7 testimony, is, um, we've emailed this to you. But I
8 will thank you for your time and consideration.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Unless
10 there are any questions from the chairs I will move
11 on to the next panel. Seeing no questions from the
12 chairs, I will move on to our next panelist, Larry
13 Wood, followed by Deborah Sue Lorenzen, followed by
14 Madaha Kinsey-Lamb. Mr. Wood, you may begin your
15 testimony.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 LARRY WOOD. Thank you. I want to, um,
18 thank my council member, Helen Rosenthal, as well as
19 the committee chairs, ah, Chin, ah, Rose, and Kallos
20 for this opportunity. Um, I work at Goddard
21 Riverside. We're a settlement house based on the
22 Upper West Side of Manhattan, serving the West Side,
23 Harlem, and large parts of Manhattan. We're also a
24 proud member of UNH and Live On New York. So we, ah,
25 echo their testimony given earlier. And I, I just
want to do a shout out and thank Carlyn for her

3 powerful testimony from the CPC, um, and also for her
4 leadership, ah, in circulating sign-on letters and
5 calls to action in the human service, ah, community.
6 It's very important, that type of leadership, and I
7 want to thank her, her testimony. Ah, Goddard
8 Riverside is not as big as some of the other
9 agencies, but we run two senior centers, two NORC
10 programs, um, multiple daycare, Head Start sites,
11 afterschool programs. We also have the contract to
12 do outreach to the chronically street homeless
13 throughout Manhattan. We're supposed to expand it
14 into Queens with a new safe haven, ah, in the coming
15 year, which will be new for us to operate outside of
16 Manhattan. Um, and we also run supported housing,
17 um, for the formerly homeless. Um, this has been a
18 very difficult time and, you know, honestly I gotta
19 say we're just basically frightened to death about
20 the budget cuts and the layoffs and the impact it's
21 gonna have on the communities we serve. Um,
22 particularly youth services and the SYEP cuts. Um,
23 we've already laid off a number of staff. Um, the
24 rest of the staff, their last day is next week on
25 June 30. Um, and it's heartbreaking to, to see
people I've worked with for years and some cases

3 decades of being let go at this time, when their
4 services are needed more than ever. Um, we just
5 cannot accept the notion that hundreds of thousands
6 of young people are not gonna have a productive, safe
7 place to go and to be engaged for their own personal
8 growth and professional development. It just seems
9 so short-sighted...

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

11 LARRY WOOD: It's so short-sighted and I
12 guess just in summarizing, ah, I want to urge you to
13 keep funding for human services as whole as possible.
14 We do have to defund the police and I'm proud to say
15 that Goddard Riverside has signed on to every letter
16 that's come our way to that effect. We need to do it
17 smartly. We don't need the police doing homeless
18 outreach. We don't need the police in our school
19 system. Ah, we need to downsize the police and put
20 that where the, ah, it will do the most good in human
21 services, and also look at some of the revenue
22 enhances that the Independent Budget Office has put
23 out there because cutting the police is not enough.
24 We gotta cut the police. We gotta raise revenue, and
25 we have to push forth in keeping our city as healthy
as possible. Thank you again for this opportunity.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Mr. Wood.

4 I'll now turn to Chair Kallos for questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, thank you, thank
6 you for, ah, your testimony. Once you went over the
7 time you, you actually ended up answering my line of
8 questioning, which I, I was going to ask just along
9 the lines of defund NYPD about whether or not, ah, we
10 should be using police to do homeless outreach and
11 using police to force homeless off of subway cars and
12 out of public spaces, ah, or if we should be working
13 with organizations like Goddard Riverside, which I
14 believe covers most of uptown Manhattan, and what the
15 difference is between the training that NYPD gets and
16 what your staff and employees and outreach workers
17 get, and whether or not it is necessary to have
18 somebody with a gun, ah, while interacting with
19 somebody who is homeless, chronically homeless, has,
20 may have a mental health challenge or a substance
21 abuse challenge?

22 LARRY WOOD: Ah, I'll try to answer that
23 question. Ah, I mean, there are times where we do
24 work in conjunction with the police, but that's
25 pretty rare. Ah, it really undermines the, the very
intense, long-term work, ah, to engage a homeless man

3 or woman out on the streets in New York. It takes a
4 lot of visits. Um, I, we're dealing with emails from
5 both Gail Brewer and Helen Rosenthal today about
6 particular homeless people that, what's happening,
7 what can be done, um, and, you know, there's privacy
8 issues and we can't be that, ah, we can't be that
9 specific about folks. Um, but it takes a lot of
10 outreach to win trust. Um, there's a pair of twin,
11 not twins, but they're sisters, here up on the Upper
12 West Side, residing around 86th Street, between
13 Broadway and Amsterdam and back and forth. Um, it
14 was only recently they've started engaging our staff.
15 So we really hope that they're gonna, ah, if we have
16 a place to refer them, permanent housing or a safe
17 haven, and those are in short supply. We need to
18 have real places to refer people as well. Um, but
19 when you engage them over a long period of time, win
20 some trust, they're willing to take some assistance,
21 then you can get them the assistance they need.
22 That's often undermined when you do have a, a police
23 officer with you. Um, it's , it's just a whole
24 different kind of experience. We don't do outreach
25 in the subways and haven't been involved with that
aspect because of our residence committee.

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Correct.

4 LARRY WOOD: um, it's, it's very
5 difficult, though, ah, to find that right balance.
6 But for the most part the police themselves do not
7 have the appropriate training, ah, and the same could
8 be said for crisis intervention teams. I didn't say
9 it in my testimony, but the crisis intervention teams
10 needed, ah, to intervene and to, um, from emotionally
11 disturbed men and women. Ah, again, just sending the
12 police out there, ah, does not end well in a lot of
13 cases. We need trained professionals to do that type
14 of outreach to the homeless and to people in
15 emotional crisis.

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Larry, you
17 mentioned, ah, that you get, ah, emails about
18 specific folks, just something I'll put on the table
19 here. On the East Side when the crisis really
20 started to peak and the mayor really hadn't taken a
21 position on it I found that the East Side Task Force
22 for Homeless Outreach and Services, we bring my
23 office, ah, other elected officials, Gail Brewer is
24 one of them, ah, Senator Krueger is another, and
25 faith-based organizations, nonprofits, ah, and, and
Steve Banks when necessary, and we, we sit a table,

3 we talk about individuals in the community who need
4 help, different people at the table who have
5 relationships with those individuals...

6 LARRY WOOD: Right.

7 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: ...through soup
8 kitchens or other, ah, loose contact points, and
9 we've been very successful in, in getting people the
10 support, so to the extent we can, ah, offer that
11 assistance, ah, north or, or westbound or what have
12 you. We are, we are open to, to working and
13 expanding the model. We do know what works and we've
14 been able to get some pretty amazing results for
15 people.

16 LARRY WOOD: Thank you, yeah, a team
17 effort makes a difference. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, the only cost is
19 in order to sit at the table you have to be willing
20 to build supportive housing or a shelter on your
21 block, across the street from your house. You have
22 to be willing to do it. Or even put housing in your
23 building. And I will say I actually have, ah,
24 supportive housing in my building. I have it across
25 the street. I have folks going to the same school my
daughter will go to. So that is the price. So, so

3 if you're willing to stand that price we'd love to
4 work with you.

5 LARRY WOOD: I've, I've actually, I've
6 been at Goddard Riverside for 33 years and, ah, a
7 good part of that was with the SRO Law Project. So
8 I've worked with many SROs before they became
9 supported housing and a firm supporter. Around the
10 corner from me is Euclid Hall, run by Wish Fish. Ah,
11 a lot of my friends live in there, so it's not just
12 buildings in the neighborhood. They're my, ah,
13 friends and community members and, ah, I'm so glad
14 they're still here and I've been pushed out of the
15 neighborhood.

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Mr. Wood.
18 Seeing no additional questions from the members,
19 we'll now turn to the next panelist. The next
20 panelist will be Deborah Sue Lorezen, followed by
21 Madaha Kinsey-Lamb, followed by Irene Branch. Ms.
22 Lorezen, you may begin your testimony.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 DEBORAH SUE LORENZEN: Thank you for the
25 opportunity to speak about DYCD contracts during this
difficult time. My name is Deborah Sue Lorezen and

3 I'm the director of youth and education for St.
4 Nick's Alliance. As the largest youth services
5 provider in north Brooklyn and one of the largest
6 SYEP providers in New York City, St. Nick's Alliance
7 has 21 DYCD contracts valued at 6.27 million dollars,
8 including nine SYEP contracts totalling over 1
9 million dollars. MOCS Deputy Director Geiling
10 indicated in her testimony that a goal of MOCS was to
11 stabilize the nonprofit sector. Certainly the
12 initial flexibility on their COMPASS, Sonic, Beacon,
13 and Cornerstone contracts was a reassuring and
14 stabilizing force for our organization and for
15 thousands of children, families, and seniors who
16 desperately needed our services. However, voluminous
17 contract compliance requirements has several strained
18 our program and fiscal staff. It often feels like
19 every day brings new urgent demands, often with
20 conflicting information, even within DYCD itself.
21 Most destabilizing however, was the unconscionable
22 decision of New York City to eliminate reimbursements
23 on their SYEP contracts with one day's notice. Still
24 reeling from this financial blow, summer camp was
25 eliminated about a week later. To St. Nick's
Alliance these dramatic changes to our contracts are

3 valued at some 2 million dollars. These cuts
4 destabilize the lives of children, families, staff,
5 or organization, and the field at large. Moving
6 forward, we urge MOCS and DYCD to prevent this short-
7 term damage from long-term negative effects. Of
8 course, we are advocating for the full refund of DYCD
9 and all of its contracts. But beyond that, we need
10 to ensure that contracts for SYEP providers,
11 particularly those at the scale we have executing
12 contracts at the scale that St. Nick's is has
13 sufficient investments to allow for the fall
14 [inaudible]...

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 DEBORAH SUE LORENZEN: ...in preparation
16 for summer 2021. We will never get where we need to
17 be for next summer if we're not providing service,
18 building towards those service requirements this
19 year. We need to replace SYEP's three-month and
20 nine-month contract model to a 12-month contract to
21 reduce the gross administrative burden and allow for
22 increased flexibility. We need to allow flexibility
23 in our DYCD contracts so that we can continue to meet
24 the blended learning models and shifting needs of our
25 children during the school year. We need to provide

3 reimbursements on contracts this summer. So the
4 field at large is not forced to furlough some 14,000
5 staff, including 250 staff at St. Nick's Alliance and
6 we will not be providing jobs for some 2500 young
7 people through SYEP and another 50-plus staff that we
8 hired just for SYEP over the summer. And lastly, we
9 need to resolve the extreme backlog for New York City
10 Department of Health clearances, without which youth
11 services providers cannot be in full compliance with
12 the SAC regulations and our DYCD contracts that are
13 coming down the pike in September. So thank you for
14 your kind consideration of this testimony.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'll now
16 turn it over to Chair Chin for some additional
17 remarks.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK, yeah, thank you.
19 Ah, thank you to Chair Kallos and Chair Rose for
20 cochairing this important hearing today. And I
21 really want to thank all the service provider, ah,
22 youth program, senior program, social service program
23 for coming to testify today. We have to fight for a
24 fair and equitable budget that will protect our
25 youth, our senior, immigrants, vulnerable population,
and human services, and we are gonna, and we have to

3 work very hard in the next couple of days. I have to
4 sign off because I'm on the budget negotiation team,
5 ah, together with Council Member Rose, so I just
6 wanted to, ah, show my appreciation to all of you for
7 being here. And let's continue, ah, to raise our
8 voices so that we can have a truly equitable budget
9 this year. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I want to thank, ah,
11 Aging chair, ah, Margaret Chin for, for staying
12 throughout most of the hearing. I think we only have
13 like a couple of folks left. Just had one quick, ah,
14 question for our last panelist. Ah, you mentioned
15 having issues with compliance with regulations and I
16 was just curious if I could get another 30 seconds on
17 those regulations, or if you could send your concerns
18 related to the regulatory matter to
19 contracts@benkallos.com.

20 DEBORAH SUE LORENZEN: Are you speaking
21 about the school age child care license, um,
22 regulations? So as you probably know, last year
23 there was a dramatic change in the DOH regulations
24 that were set down by the OCSF. And, um, the
25 Department of Health just has been terribly
backlogged all year, even prior to, um, the COVID-19,

3 ah, pandemic. And they have only fallen further
4 behind. So organizations like mine have hundreds of
5 staff who were not properly cleared at the time
6 because their clearances have been expiring. It's
7 really quite a, um, it's quite a difficult hurdle for
8 the field at large to, um, jump over without changes.

9 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, I'm not sure if
10 you heard at the beginning of the, ah, ah, hearing,
11 but I was home with my 2-year-old and child care is
12 kind of an issue I cared about before I was a parent
13 and even more so now that I am in it. Ah, and so if
14 you are still experiencing these backlogs, which were
15 supposed to be cleared up last year this time, ah,
16 please let us know. Let any other organizations
17 know. If anyone is watching just email
18 contracts@benkallos.com. We will work with you to
19 get these contracts addressed.

20 DEBORAH SUE LORENZEN: Thank you so much,
21 I appreciate that.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
23 now call upon Madaha Kinsey-Lamb, followed by Irene
24 Branch, followed by Lina Delacruz. Madaha Kinsey-
25 Lamb, you may begin your testimony.

26 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

3 MADAHA KINSEY LAMB: OK. Good afternoon

4 dedicated officials and electeds. Thank you for your
5 concern, as well as for your commitment to arrive at
6 just and thoughtful future policies, and for the
7 distribution of public funds in these extraordinary
8 times. [inaudible] Creative Arts Center creates,
9 conducts classes and community productions with more
10 than 750 youth and families each year. My name is
11 Madaha Kinsey-Lamb and I'm the executive director and
12 founder. Current statistics for our neighborhood
13 show that this ZIP code, 10467, has the highest
14 numbers of COVID-19 infection in all of New York
15 City. Within two weeks of the New York City shutdown
16 order we had transitioned all of our classes to
17 online, so that close to 75% of our students
18 continued to participate in over 225 weekly online
19 classes that we provided at no charge. As soon as we
20 opened registration for the first of our online
21 summer offerings we quickly received 140 applications
22 for the limited 20 slots we had available for one of
23 the special online summer programs for teens. Youth
24 services are indeed essential and must be kept whole.
25 Since we began with arts education more than 40 years
ago we have known that we serve a vulnerable

3 population. It's why we have always been about
4 providing more than quality music, dance, and theater
5 classes or UBK, community folk culture research, and
6 visual arts classes. At Mind Builders we work
7 alongside students, parents, grandparents with more
8 than 34 dedicated teaching artists who are employed
9 to empower our children and our community, to build
10 self-esteem, help students prepare for college
11 scholarship auditions, or gain access to specialized
12 high schools, free tutoring that we provide, and
13 individual or group counseling when needed, to
14 ultimately have young people realize an unlimited and
15 fulfilling [inaudible] of themselves that they may
16 never have thought possible as global citizens in
17 whatever profession they ultimately choose. Without
18 critical New York City support, through speaker,
19 member, delegation items, DCLA, Coalition of Theaters
20 of Color, Cultural Immigrant Initiative, and DOE we
21 would not be here today and could not have become the
22 force that we are for hope and leadership in this
23 community. We are grateful for all that has helped
24 to make our services possible in our underserved
25 community, an area that is also referred to as a
cultural desert. Now the need for what we CBOs do

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3 has never been greater. The inequities endured by 12
4 generations continue to be evidenced in our
5 communities every single day and must finally begin
6 to be rectified. We cannot leave our children and
7 teens unoccupied all day for months without
8 constructive activities for the use of their minds
9 and talents. We thank you for your support and for
10 the courage and wisdom you will continue to
11 demonstrate towards this goal.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Unless
13 there are any questions from the members we will move
14 on to the next panel. Seeing no additional questions
15 from the members we will move on to Irene Branch,
16 followed by Lena Billick, followed by Nashamay Ado.
17 Ms. Branch, you may begin your testimony.

18 IRENE BRANCH: Thank you.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 IRENE BRANCH: Good afternoon. Thank you
21 so much for the opportunity to participate in the
22 conversation today. I'm with the Hope Program, ah,
23 an organization based in downtown Brooklyn and the
24 South Bronx that empowers New Yorkers, including
25 young adults and, um, our senior citizens to build
sustainable careers through comprehensive training,

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3 jobs, career advancement, and lifelong support. Um,

4 I actually would rather that my colleague, who is

5 sitting in the attendee room under the same name, I

6 would rather her, um, have the opportunity to

7 testify, so I wondering if the host could pull her

8 in. Um, her name is Daja Achanian and she, she's

9 going to be much more interesting to listen to than I

10 am.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is she under the name
12 Irene Branch as well?

13 IRENE BRANCH: Yeah, yeah, we're, we're
14 sharing a login. [laughs]

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Will the muter please
16 unmute her?

17 IRENE BRANCH: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just unmute her. You
19 may need to click unmute on your...

20 IRENE BRANCH: [inaudible] can you click
21 unmute on your screen? So sorry.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It's all right.

23 IRENE BRANCH: Apologies. If you don't
24 mind, ah, Daja and I have a really brief statement.

25 If you don't mind I'm gonna, um, call her and have

3 her read her statement over the phone for, for the
4 panel to hear?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we just try one
6 more time because I think we've managed to unmute
7 her, yep.

8 IRENE BRANCH: Thank you.

9 DAJA ACHANIAN: Thank you, thank you for
10 that. [laughs] OK, wait a second, OK, thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [inaudible]

12 DAJA ACHANIAN: Yes, yes. Hello
13 everyone, my name is Daja Achanian. I am a 23-year-
14 old single mom, Bronx resident, as well as a born and
15 bred New Yorker. I have just moved out of the
16 shelter system to my own apartment. I recently
17 graduated from the Hope Program's remote training,
18 where I was able to gain a paid internship with Hope.
19 My duties consist of calling members of my community
20 to educate them about the importance of the census.
21 The census is a fundamental property that provides
22 accurate funding for the people in the Bronx who need
23 it most. Thanks to Hope I am building my resume and
24 earning a paycheck at the same time. At first I was
25 very intimidated. This is the first job where I've
ever had to call people. But then I realized talking

3 to people is what I love to do. I have very big
4 dreams for me and my daughter. I know I have a very
5 bright future as well, because I fight for myself and
6 in part because of the Hope Program. I hope the City
7 Council will increase funding for the programs like
8 these, because when you invest in your community the
9 entire community grows for all of us. We all
benefit. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'll now
11 turn to the members for questions. Seeing no
12 questions, we'll move on to the next panelist. We'll
13 now call Lena Billick, to be followed by Helen Kogan.
14 Ms. Billick, you may begin your testimony.

15 LENA BILLICK: Good afternoon. Um, my
16 name Lena Billick.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 LENA BILLICK: Policy analyst at
19 Children's Aid. I'd like to thank Chairs Rose,
20 Kallos, and Chin for this opportunity to testify.
21 For over 167 years Children's Aid has been committed
22 to ensuring there are no boundaries to the
23 aspirations of young people. Today we empower nearly
24 50,000 children, youth, and their families, and have
25 continued our services during the pandemic.

3 Children's Aid is a member of Campaign for Children
4 and stands with nonprofit youth services providers
5 deeply concerned with the well-being of New York
6 City's young people this summer and beyond. The
7 mayor's budget cuts to summer funding for Beacons,
8 COMPASS, Sonic, Cornerstones, and SYEP leave 175,000
9 youth without support this summer. Three weeks ago
10 the mayor made a commitment to shift funds to NYPD,
11 from NYPD to youth services. But today youth
12 programs are closing because the mayor has not
13 fulfilled that promise. We must fully fund youth
14 services this summer and beyond. During the COVID
15 crisis, nonprofits have shifted programming to adapt
16 to our community's needs and safety. And we have
17 experienced unforeseen costs. We need and deserve
18 the city's support. We have serious concerns about
19 the sustainability of the nonprofit sector and we ask
20 that the council push the administration to support
21 nonprofits by providing robust cash advances for FY21
22 contracts, recouping advances at the end of
23 contracts, not at the end of years, paying invoices
24 immediately, investing in our sector's remote work
25 needs as we continue to provide critical services
remotely, supporting providers now with continuing

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3 emergency funds, and pushing contracting agencies
4 like DYCD to provide much more consistent,
5 responsive, and transparent communication with
6 providers during these uncertain times. We believe
7 that if we work together we can make sure the budget
8 represents our city's values by strengthening the
9 crucial human services programs that keep our
10 community safe and invest in our city's future.
11 Thank you so much.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
13 testimony. We will now turn to Nashamay Ado,
14 followed by Helen Kogan. Nashamay Ado, you may begin
15 your testimony.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 NASHAMAY ADO: Good afternoon. Good
18 afternoon, everyone. Thank you to the council for
19 holding this hearing today and for creating space for
20 us service providers to state our concerns. I'm
21 Nashamay Ado. I'm the policy director at Expanded
22 Schools, which is an intermediary that provides
23 coaching, technical assistance, and funding for
24 afterschool programs. Over the past five years
25 Expanded Schools has received discretionary funding
from the council that supports, um, the After Three

3 Enrichment, the After Three Initiative, which
4 supports afterschool enrichment, as well as the
5 Middle School, um, Expanded Learning Program, which
6 is also known as MS Extra, which focuses in on, um,
7 literacy report for young people with also for After
8 Three a component that supports, um, SYEP for 24
9 schools, school and community partnerships. And as
10 we all know COVID-19 has shed light on the many
11 inequities that our communities and our youth face on
12 a daily basis, inequities that service providers, um,
13 [inaudible] on this call who have spoken today, are
14 devoted to responding to and restoring our climate of
15 heightened awareness around anti-black racism. It
16 also revealed how deeply rooted these inequities are
17 and as community voices have demanded restorative
18 justice we want to ensure that we are able to provide
19 these services that deepened community development
20 during this critical time. Our families need
21 services for their children that provide them with
22 safe and productive outlets, supplement learning loss
23 that has accrued over the past three months as adults
24 return to work and see that employment opportunity.
25 As an intermediary we support community-based
organizations that have been providing these

3 essential services. Throughout our history of this
4 partnership we support the integration of human
5 services and advise on best practices of the funds
6 being dispersed. Thanks to the contractual
7 flexibility many programs have been able to continue
8 providing services that have made all the difference
9 in how our city has responded to this current crisis.
10 We ask for these flexibilities to be maintained as we
11 enter a still very...

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 NASHAMAY ADO: ...concerning FY21, um,
14 fiscal year, and as we continue to rise to this
15 challenge as a city we hope that we can work together
16 to provide a just and equitable recovery,
17 specifically by funding youth services, um, this
18 summer as well as into the fall, for all the reasons
19 that have been stated during this hearing for young
20 people to have the opportunity to really be fully
21 developed in ways that they were not able to this
22 school year, um, and really embracing the summer and
23 knowing that there are certain concerns about them
24 not having anything to do with their time and needing
25 support, um, both academically and socially
emotionally, also allowing for flexibility that, um,

3 provide a hybrid between virtual and in-person
4 enrichment as we look to certain public health
5 guidance and community concerns about safety, um, and
6 really needing to be flexible in how we move forward
7 and supporting the community throughout this fiscal
8 year, allocating proper funds for PPE, which is
9 something that was very much lacking over this past
10 year. I would also mention here continuing the COLA
11 adjustments to further support, um, community-based
12 organizations and providing the services that they
13 need. And continuing and really pushing for open and
14 consistent communication between DYCD and service
15 providers. Thank you so much for your time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
17 now call upon Helen Kogan for testimony. As a
18 reminder, if your name has not been called and you
19 wish to testify, please raise your hand in the Zoom
20 raise hand function. Ms. Kogan, you may begin.

21 HELEN KOGAN: Hello, can you hear me?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Fabulous.

23 HELEN KOGAN: Thank you. Thank you so
24 much for this opportunity to present testimony to the
25 committees, and thank you to the City Council for
your guidance during the crisis, um, many of whom we

3 Empower have worked with. I am Helen Kogan. I am
4 the executive director for Empower New York. We are
5 a free technology training and work force development
6 program, specifically for underserved young adults in
7 New York City. Prior to the pandemic in New York
8 City there were almost 300,000 disconnected youth who
9 were neither working nor in school. And we have seen
10 during the pandemic that there was an unprecedented
11 impact on the way we live and we work. We need to
12 frame this emerging new norm within the context of a
13 technology-driven era. The future of work is in tech
14 and tech will drive the new economy that will emerge
15 after the crisis. In addition to the disproportional
16 health and economic impact of the pandemic on low-
17 income communities, it has further illuminated the
18 breadth of the digital divide. And small businesses
19 and nonprofits that service our community have been
20 negatively affected because of technology needs and
21 the demand for tech talent. Therefore, [inaudible]
22 young adults will serve as a critical need to combat
23 generational poverty experienced by our community.
24 Programs like Empower have made a clear difference in
25 the lives of thousands of underserved young New
Yorkers. Our organization is the link between

3 nontraditional job seekers and the employers hiring
4 IT and digital talent, creating an alternative fast
5 track to jobs for young adults from low-income
6 communities on a citywide scale. Our rigorous
7 training program and job placement program turns job
8 seekers into employed professionals for
9 certifications by providing students with intensive
10 technical training, professional development,
11 internship experience, and social services. And we
12 pivoted seamlessly to an entire virtual content and
13 delivery format and we continue to offer virtual
14 training throughout the end of the year. Programs
15 like ours are greatly positioned to help our city
16 during the recovery by recruiting...

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 HELEN KOGAN: ... disconnected and
18 underserved and under-resourced young adults. Train
19 them with up-to-date skills and finding them well-
20 paying jobs and middle school jobs, ah, middle skills
21 jobs in the ever-growing tech industry in New York.
22 These jobs will not only impact the lives of our
23 students but that of their families and their
24 communities. It is critical that life-altering
25

3 programs like Empower and other nonprofits in the
4 city continue to be funded. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
6 testimony. As a reminder, if your name has not been
7 called and you still wish to testify please raise
8 your hand in Zoom [inaudible]. Seeing no hands
9 raised, this concludes our testimony [inaudible]
10 panelists. I'll now turn the floor over to Chair
11 Kallos for closing remarks. Chair Kallos, you may
12 begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I want to start with
14 a huge thank you to the Aging Committee chair,
15 Margaret Chin, and the Youth Services chair, Debbie
16 Rose for their, ah, leadership on these issues. We
17 felt it was important to hear from the nonprofit
18 service providers, particularly in light of some of
19 the testimony that we did hear on the record for the
20 world to hear about how we have an administration
21 that has been saying one thing, putting out guidance
22 that said those same similar things, and is talking
23 about how there's all this funding available at the
24 same time as our nonprofit providers on the front
25 lines are, are feeling the pain. Ah, we've heard
really what's at stake. We've heard about matters of

3 life and death. Um, we've gotten to hear compelling
4 stories from, ah, young people with their children
5 and how they've been able to have access to paid
6 internships. Ah, we've gotten to hear about job
7 training opportunities and, ah, we've also heard a
8 lot about defunding the NYPD and using those monies
9 to invest in our communities instead of policing
10 those communities. And I'm hoping that as we have
11 this hearing and we hear these conversations that we
12 can see the funding secured by the City Council, ah,
13 led by Speaker Johnson, that we can pass a council
14 budget if the mayor won't come to the table, that we
15 can fully fund our nonprofit providers, and even go
16 further than just restoring existing funding but
17 actually get universally with jobs, universal summer
18 camp, universal afterschool, and create a
19 comprehensive, ah, support system with a lot of the
20 funds that we might be able to pull from NYPD, ah,
21 but also just the hundreds of millions, if not
22 billions, of ways that we have already identified in
23 the city's budget and that we discussed throughout
24 this hearing. Ah, there's a lot at stake. There's
25 seven days left. Ah, we need to get this done. Ah,
we're here to, ah, support you. If you did not get a

3 chance to provide testimony, ah, you can still submit
4 it for another 40 hours, ah, and that can be mailed
5 to, I believe, correspondence@council.nyc.gov and, ah,
6 if any of the nonprofits or anyone on this call, ah,
7 needs assistance or wants to blow the whistle you can
8 always email me at contracts@benkallos.com and, ah,
9 we will work with you and support you and try to make
10 sure we get our city back on track and make sure we
11 know how every penny is being spent in our city and
12 that every penny is going to direct services to our
13 residents as much as possible. Ah, with all that
14 being said and thank-yous to all, I hereby adjourn
15 this meeting. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 29, 2020