

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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October 30, 2020
Start: 10:02 AM
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: Margaret S. Chin
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Margaret S. Chin
Diana Ayala
Chaim M. Deutsch
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Mathieu Eugene
Mark Treyger
Paul Vallone

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

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez
Commissioner
Department for the Aging

Kate MacKenzie
Director
Mayor's Office of Food Policy

Katelyn Andrews

Tara Klein

Kevin Jones

Ravi Reddi

Shaaranya Pillal

Khristel Simmons

Rachel Sherrow

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Computer recording
3 underway.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Cloud started.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Backup started.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you very much.
7 Sergeant Jones, when you're ready.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS JONES: Good morning,
9 everyone, and welcome to today's remote New York City
10 Council hearing of the Committee on Aging. At this
11 time would all panelists please turn on their videos.
12 To minimize disruption, please place electronic
13 devices to vibrate or silent. And if you wish to
14 submit a testimony you may do so at
15 testimony@council.nyc.gov. And again that's
16 testimony@council.nyc.gov. And thank you for your
17 cooperation. And Chair we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you [gavel].
19 Good morning. I'm Council Member Margaret Chin,
20 chair of the Committee on Aging, and I thank you for
21 joining us today's Zoom oversight hearing on the
22 future of senior home-delivered meals. Before the
23 COVID-19 pandemic it was estimated that about 1
24 million New Yorkers were food insecure. However,
25 recent report claims that this number may have

1 doubled due to the current crisis. While food
2 insecurity affects everyone, our seniors are
3 especially vulnerable. New York City's Meals on
4 Wheels report that one in 10 older New Yorkers face
5 hunger. This statistic may be even higher due to the
6 current trend that we are seeing citywide today
7 amidst the COVID-19. To help combat senior food
8 insecurity as well as keep seniors safe from COVID-19
9 New York City's Department for the Aging, or DFTA,
10 has revamped its food-providing services in recent
11 months. In March DFTA required senior centers to
12 transition from in-person congregate meals to grab-
13 and-go meals. For safety DFTA then stopped this
14 grab-and-go program and switched to a centralized
15 home-delivered program run out of the agency called
16 DFTA Direct. Finally, in May DFTA handed over its
17 food-providing services to the GetFoodNYC program,
18 operated by the Department of Sanitation. Despite
19 all of these changes to the traditional congregate
20 meals there weren't any noticeable change or
21 adjustment made for homebound seniors participating
22 in DFTA's home-delivered meal program. In fact,
23 currently while seniors participating in the seniors'
24 get food program are able to receive three meals per
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1 week day, homebound seniors participating in DFTA's
2 home-delivered meal program continue to receive just
3 one meal per day. One meal a day. You would think
4 that the population that has already been identified
5 as having the highest level of food insecurity would
6 receive the most or, at the very least, the same
7 amount of support as their counterparts. It is
8 simply not acceptable that the city has been failing
9 our food insecurity seniors, especially during a
10 global crisis. At senior centers I've witnessed
11 seniors eating half of their meals and save the rest
12 for later. How do we know that some seniors are not
13 doing the same at home with their home-delivered
14 meal? I urge DFTA to conduct a client survey of its
15 home-delivered meal program to see if the meals that
16 they are providing are even enough. We must ask
17 ourselves are we only doing enough to keep our
18 seniors alive, or is there more we can be doing to
19 increase their food security. I also want to know
20 long-standing deficiency within the home-delivered
21 meal program, especially with the reimbursement rates
22 of meals. The council's fiscal 2021 respond to the
23 preliminary budget called on the administration to
24 adequately fund the enhanced need for senior
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1 services, such as meals. We noted that the senior,
2 the city's \$9.58 reimbursement rate for senior meals
3 is 20% below the national urban home delivered meal
4 average of \$11.78 per meal. Providers have reported
5 that this reimbursement gap in existing contract
6 forces them to run deficits ranging from \$40,000 to
7 \$100,000 per year in order to meet the full need in
8 their communities. We have to do more to support our
9 senior service providers as they do the vital work of
10 feeding our seniors. Thus, going forward DFTA has a
11 lot of work to do. DFTA will need to consider how to
12 properly fund and expand the home-delivered meal
13 program while making the program sustainable for
14 nonprofit senior service providers. DFTA will also
15 need to envision the future of the program, including
16 what kind of culturally competent food should be
17 offered, how to eradicate the waiting list, and how
18 to expand the program to include food-insecure
19 seniors who are not connected to the department.
20 DFTA needs a better plan to help feed our food-
21 insecure seniors, and I'm looking forward to hearing
22 what it will do to revitalize and improve home-
23 delivered meals for our seniors. We will
24 additionally be hearing Resolution number 112,
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1 sponsored by Council Member Ulrich regarding
2 including halal meals as part of Department for the
3 Aging, DFTA's sponsored home-delivered meal program.
4 I'd like to thank the committee staff for their help
5 in putting together this hearing. Our counsel,
6 Newsark Jadari, policy analyst Kalima Johnson,
7 finance analyst Daniel Group, and finance unit head
8 Dohena Supora. I would also like to thank my
9 legislative associate, Hamdidi Dal, and legislative
10 communications director, Khana Irvin. And I'd like
11 to thank the other member of the committee who have
12 joined us today, Council Member Diaz, Council Member
13 Ayala, and Council Member Vallone, and I also want to
14 thank all the sergeants for helping the hearing
15 today. Now I will turn it back to our policy
16 analyst, ah, Kalima Johnson, for further
17 instruction. Thank you.

19 MODERATOR: Thank you, Chair Chin. I am
20 Kalima Johnson, senior legislative policy analyst to
21 the Aging Committee of the New York City Council. I
22 will be moderating today's hearing, and calling on
23 panelists to testify. Before we begin testimony, I
24 want to remind everyone that you will be on mute
25 until you are called on to testify. After you are

1 called on you will be unmuted. I will be calling on
2 witnesses to testify in panels, so please listen for
3 your name to be called. I will be announcing in
4 advance who the next panel will be. I would like to
5 remind everyone that unlike our typical council
6 hearings, while you will be placed on a panel I will
7 be calling individuals one at a time. Council
8 members who have questions for a particular panelist
9 should use the raise hand function in Zoom. You will
10 be called on in the order with which you raised your
11 hand after the full panel has completed their
12 testimony. We will be limiting council members'
13 questions to five minutes. This includes both
14 questions and answers. Please note that for the
15 purpose of this virtual hearing we will not be
16 allowing a second round of questioning. For
17 panelists, once your name is called a member of our
18 staff will unmute and the Sergeant at Arms will give
19 you the go-ahead to begin after setting the timer.
20 Please listen for the cue. All public testimony will
21 be limited to three minutes. At the end of three
22 months please wrap up your comment so we can move to
23 the next panelist. Please listen carefully and wait
24 for the sergeant to announce that you may begin
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1 before delivering your testimony as there is a slight
2 delay. I will now call on the following members of
3 the administration to testify. Commissioner Lorraine
4 Cortes-Vazquez from the Department for the Aging,
5 Kate MacKenzie, director of the Mayor's Office of
6 Food Policy. I will first read the oath and after I
7 will call on you individually to respond.

8 Commissioner Cortes-Vazquez, do you affirm to tell
9 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
10 before this committee and to respond honestly to
11 council members' questions?

12
13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ I do.

14 MODERATOR: Kate MacKenzie, do you affirm
15 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
16 the truth in your testimony before this committee and
17 to respond honestly to council members' questions?

18 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: I do.

19 MODERATOR: Thank you. Commissioner, you
20 may begin when ready.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Ah, Commissioner,
22 before you begin, it's great to see you. I just
23 wanted to acknowledge that we have also have been
24 joined by Council Member Deutsch. Thank you.

1
2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Wonderful,
3 thank you so much. Um, good morning, Chairwoman Chin
4 and the members. For the record, I am Lorraine
5 Cortes-Vazquez, the commissioner of the Department
6 for the Aging. Last month I testified on the
7 important subject of the future of older adult
8 [inaudible], ah, particularly after COVID-19,
9 including a reopening plan. And as discussed, which
10 was discussed and remains ongoing collaborative and
11 guided by public health authorities, today I
12 appreciate the opportunity to discuss yet another
13 important topic - the future of the older adult home-
14 delivered meal. In times such as these it is
15 important to remember and reemphasize the mission of
16 the Department for the Aging, the undercurrent of
17 which always included health and safety. DFTA works
18 to eliminate agism and ensure the dignity and quality
19 of life of New Yorkers diverse older adults, and for
20 the support of their caregivers through service,
21 advocacy, and education. To that end, DFTA is deeply
22 committed to assisting older adults so they may age
23 safely in their homes and remain actively engaged in
24 their lives and their community. DFTA's priorities
25 became even more critical during this public health

1 crisis. Chief among them are combatting food
2 insecurity among older adults, and the chairwoman
3 mentioned how some of those were effectuated,
4 maintaining social engagement for tens of thousands
5 of senior center members, which I discussed at length
6 in last month's hearing, but I will again repeat some
7 of the salient points, and securing uninterrupted
8 access to critical services for older homebound
9 individuals. As previously discussed before this
10 committee, when senior centers closed, it's now over
11 seven months ago, DFTA worked to quickly transition
12 our congregate meals operations to ensure that center
13 members could continue to have access to a daily
14 meal. Emergency Executive Order 100 closed
15 congregate sites in March and public health
16 recommendations necessitated meals, ah, service
17 operations to quickly shift as the chairman announced
18 earlier to a grab-and-go model and then to a
19 centralized delivery system called DFTA Direct, which
20 eventually merged into the city's broader food
21 insecurity initiative, GetFoodNYC. Meanwhile, DFTA's
22 traditional home-delivered meal during the course of
23 this pandemic, as the chairwoman said, remained
24 unchanged and separate and apart from GetFoodNYC so
25

1 that we have no interruption of service for these
2 vulnerable older New Yorkers. And to ensure
3 continuity of service that was key. Prior to the
4 pandemic on any given weekday throughout the city
5 approximately 18,000 homebound older people received
6 a home-delivered meal through DFTA's home-delivered
7 meals programs. Unlike older adults who participated
8 in daily congregate meals, ah, services, um, any
9 older adult receiving home-delivered meals must be
10 one, must meet one of the following criteria set by
11 the New York State Office for the Aging, and they are
12 unable to meet a congregate, unable to attend a
13 congregate meal program because of an accident,
14 illness, or frailty, the lack of formal or informal
15 supports that can regularly provide a meal, they are
16 unable to provide meals due to the lack of adequate,
17 ah, cooking facilities, a lack of knowledge or skills
18 to prepare meals, or the inability to safely prepare
19 a meal [inaudible] or to cook. And, most
20 importantly, the ability to live safely at home once
21 meals are provided. A principle goal of this program
22 is to support an older adult living in their homes
23 and staying in their communities for as long as
24 possible. Through its network of dedicated home-

1 delivered meals providers, DFTA currently deliveries
2 4.5 million meals annually to homebound, frail, older
3 adults. The provision of a meal to a frail older
4 adult helps to secure their nutritional needs and are
5 met, the nutritional needs are met in order to
6 promote overall health and the ability to live
7 independently, live independently in their community.
8 Each contractor is responsible for delivering meals
9 in a predetermined geographic catchment area of the
10 City of New York. And each area comprises a group of
11 community districts, something we're all very
12 familiar with. The home-delivered meal program is
13 formally connected to DFTA's case management program.
14 Case management agencies are the entry point to all
15 in-home services. The CMA performs, I will call the
16 case management agency going forward the CMA, they
17 perform in-depth assessments of social,
18 psychological, cognitive, and the physical well-being
19 in order to assist clients to live independently
20 again in their community. If a client has a need of
21 home-delivered meals the CMA is responsible for
22 determining eligibility, initiating the service,
23 authorizing the client for a meal, and sending a
24 referral to the local home delivered meal program.
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2 The CMA is also responsible for determining if the
3 older person is capable of managing the receipt of
4 multiple meals once or twice a week in lieu of a hot
5 daily meal, and advising the client on the
6 availability of meal choice, so that the client can
7 then decide what option is best for them. The home-
8 delivered meal accepts the referral and begins
9 providing meals to that older adult older adult
10 generally between one to three business days later.
11 Again, from the onset of the pandemic DFTA worked
12 very closely with the administration and GetFood to
13 preserve the home-delivered meal program intact and
14 they were not transferred into GetFood. Ah, the one
15 and only exception is that if a current home-
16 delivered meal provider had reached its service
17 capacity, a newly under-identified homebound older
18 adult seeking, um, home-delivered meals would be
19 transferred, ah, to, temporarily and enrolled into
20 GetFoodNYC to address their immediate food
21 insecurity. The future of home-delivered meals, in
22 January following a concept paper that elicited
23 committees and responses from providers, advocates,
24 elected officials, and other key stakeholders, both
25 in writing and through various meetings, DFTA

1 released a request for proposals, an RFP, for its in-
2 home delivered meals program. The RFP was released
3 just prior to COVID-19's public health crisis.

4 Several extensions were granted. Two proposals,
5 totalling a 20, ah, 22 weeks of extensions, to allow
6 for more innovation and partnerships during this
7 period of COVID, and also to, ah, in submission, um,
8 in response to the submissions to the RFP. Following
9 a six-month period from the release date DFTA
10 received more than 130 proposals for 22 home-

11 delivered meal contracts. The RFP demonstrated
12 DFTA's commitment to continuity and to continuing to
13 provide nutritious, ah, needs for the vulnerable
14 older adult while also involving the home-delivered
15 program that had been in place for over 16 years,
16 with an eye towards the future. While the means of
17 the older adult clients remain paramount enhancement
18 within the RFP endeavored to also provide greater
19 ease and flexibility to contractors who would provide
20 these meals. This was all things that emerged from
21 the concept paper and the meetings that were held
22 before the RFP. The RFP encouraged high-quality and
23 regionally sourced food, meal types choice, that was
24 a very important feature to the older adults, hot,
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1 frozen, and fresh chilled, and daily choice, and the
2 environmental sustainability. Many of these elements
3 are values set forth by the center for food, for good
4 food purchasing, which the administration has been
5 working towards implementing citywide. Ultimately,
6 DFTA sought to fund programs that were able address
7 three overarching goals of the RFP program. As I
8 said earlier, the first was choice. The RFP defined
9 choice to mean the opportunity for each meal
10 recipient to choose a meal and type of their liking.
11 DFTA will be required to our contact, ah, our
12 contractors to offer several [inaudible] in different
13 meal formats. Diversity - all meal, ah, recipients
14 must also have the option to receive meals, five
15 meals a week, from cuisines associated with the
16 prominent cultural groups of their catchment area,
17 such as halal, [inaudible], [inaudible], Polish,
18 Chinese, Caribbean, Korean, Russian, or
19 Mediterranean, depending on the catchment area. Meal
20 recipients must also be able to select a kosher meal
21 of their choice if they choose to do so. Finally, at
22 least one vegetation dish is also required in the
23 [inaudible] weekly meal offering. Quality - DFTA
24 will assess the quality of the meal experiences
25

1 through periodic taste tests conducted by a quality
2 control measure. Additionally, as part of the Good
3 Food Purchasing Program food quality will also be
4 measured through annual assessments of food
5 purchasing. And one of the other issues that we
6 talked about was to get a scale through Good Food
7 Purchasing and, and collaboration. In order to
8 propose and operate program that fully addresses
9 these three elements, DFTA strongly encouraged
10 proposals to critically evaluate their own
11 organizational capacities and strengths and to
12 consider, ah, establishing formal partnerships as a
13 of, of leveraging resources, ah, structures, food
14 purchasing, um, for meals, ah, I mean for food, as
15 well as other products, and other strengths that
16 other organizations can bring to their organization.
17 The subcontracting and the use of M/WBEs, minority-
18 and women-owned business enterprises, in
19 partnerships, were strongly encouraged. DFTA also
20 encouraged proposals and collaboration with the case
21 management agencies to provide directly or indirectly
22 targeted social interaction and support for clients
23 who request it for those deemed at higher risk of
24 becoming socially isolated and for those deemed
25

1 medically frail. Because of the time of this RFP
2 proposals were able to leverage key learnings from
3 the pandemic and apply them to many of their
4 submitted proposals. For example, based on lessons
5 learned in the past few months, vendors proposed
6 strategic delivery options and certain planning,
7 including state-of-the-art software and applications
8 to ensure efficient and flexible delivery routes,
9 something many of them did not have access to before.
10 Proposals also referenced frequently reviewing and
11 updating emergency preparedness and business
12 continuity plans, composed mandated wellness training
13 for staff, ah, and also finally in an effort to
14 respond to future crises proposals mentioned forming
15 innovative and nontraditional partnerships. Based on
16 the enthusiasm and responsiveness of our current
17 contractors, compounded by the number of submissions
18 of new proposals, we are confident that this RFP
19 process has resulted in a network of home-delivered
20 meals providers with practical and operational skills
21 to successfully serve nutritious, culturally
22 appropriate, home-delivered meals for homebound New
23 Yorkers, and bringing us into the future, who
24 requires this critical service for many years to
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1
2 come. DFTA recently announced the responsible,
3 recently announced the responsible proposals who
4 proposals had the highest technical score and was,
5 and had been determined to be the most advantageous
6 to the city taking into consideration the factors and
7 criteria set forth in the RFP. Such criteria
8 included increasing meal options for recipients, ah,
9 for recipients, increasing the availability of
10 culturally aligned meals, and promoting uniformly
11 high-quality food made from good food. In
12 conclusion, I would say we are proud of the
13 solicitation and procurement process, the long
14 solicitation and procurement process. We launched
15 earlier this year for home-delivered meal program and
16 I'm confident in the abilities of the awardees
17 selected from an increasingly competitive pool of
18 quality high-skilled and talented home-delivered
19 meals vendors. Moreover, the insights and lessons
20 learned by these awardees from the pandemic will
21 further ensure especially the technical routing and
22 delivery, ah, technology that we've been applying
23 will definitely, ah, ensure a successfully and long-
24 lasting program and can effectively serve homebound
25 older adults for the duration of this pandemic and,

1
2 of course, for the post-COVID future world that we're
3 all waiting for. With great interest and enthusiasm,
4 DFTA looks forward to seeing these proposed services
5 innovations come forth to, ah, fruition and to aid
6 and benefit some of New York's most vulnerable
7 [inaudible] New Yorkers. I thank you for your time
8 and for your consideration, and welcome questions
9 that you may have.

10 MODERATOR: Thank you, Commissioner, for
11 your testimony. We will now turn to Chair Chin for
12 questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you,
14 Commissioner. I am gonna start with a couple of, ah,
15 general question and then I'm gonna, ah, ask my
16 colleagues who have questions, ah, give them an
17 opportunity to, to ask. So, Commissioner, you know,
18 with a possible second wave of COVID-19 pandemic
19 approaching, what step is DFTA taking to ensure that
20 we are prepared to deliver meals to seniors
21 throughout this winter?

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Ah, I want
23 to just remind people that existing contracts are in
24 place till December 31. New contracts will not start
25 until January 1. So there is time to pivot and

1 transition to new contracts. We have about two, two-
2 and-a-half months to do that, right? And, ah, so
3 that if this wave comes sooner our contractors,
4 current contractors, are fully prepared to continue
5 the service that we have, and during that month of
6 December we will be working on transition.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: You know, at the, ah,
9 at the committee's, um, hearing in October, ah, which
10 is last month, ah, we talk about the future of the
11 senior center and you testified that DFTA and GetFood
12 conducted a survey of 73,000 older adults that asked
13 a variety of questions related to their interest in
14 receiving meals. Ah, can you share the result of the
15 survey, um, and also can you provide this
16 information, um, disaggregated by ZIP code and
17 Council District?

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The survey
19 was initiated by GetFood. Ah, there was a survey of,
20 ah, and, and we will work with GetFood to get you the
21 information that you may need, and I will defer to my
22 colleague, Kate MacKenzie's testimony and her
23 response to that at a later point today, this
24 morning. Um, what I also will give you is that we
25 have conducted a survey of a, ah, several, ah, older

1 adults and many of the things that we looked for was
2 the type of meal that they were interested in, ah,
3 the frequency of the meal that they were interested
4 in, and things of that nature were part of the
5 community survey. The other issue that we were, ah,
6 looking at in terms of some of the outcome of that.
7 In our community survey one of the things that we
8 were looking at was access to food, proximity in
9 terms of geographic proxy.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Also at the, ah, last
12 month's hearing I know we had a, a lot of discussions
13 about, you know, getting centers to reopen, and I
14 remember, ah, Commissioner, you mentioning, ah,
15 November 1 that you would love to start a grab-and-go
16 program, and I've talked to some providers, um, they
17 were also involved in your, ah, task force and they
18 were prepared and looking forward, ah, to do that.
19 So I just want to know that have there been any
20 progress made, ah, in terms of this topic and that
21 you can share with us?

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So I, first
23 of all, thank you. November 1, November, November 1
24 was the date that our former food czar had initially
25 cited as a possible transition date. Things have

1 changed dramatically since then, um, and I used that
2 opportunity to say the first week of November was a
3 date that we were using purely for planning purposes
4 of reopening. And I am still hopeful. Um, I don't
5 think that the first week of November is a
6 possibility, but we continue the planning process.
7 But I always have to start with the value statement
8 that the safety of older New Yorkers is our top
9 priority, and any decision to be, ah, to reopen is
10 going to be guided by public health authorities.
11 However, we remain determined to have meetings and
12 planning sessions with our providers in the event
13 that there is any change, so that we can know exactly
14 what the milestones are that we need to do to
15 implement programming. Ah, and those conversations
16 continue. No one is more, ah, looking forward to
17 this possibly than the providers than I am. We have
18 been enthusiastic about bringing the provider network
19 back into the food service. The city is looking at
20 that as well as, um, as the Department of the Aging
21 alongside this network of providers that have
22 continued to serve, ah, older adults during this
23 pandemic. So that priority continues. That process
24 continues. That date is a shifting date and that
25

1 date is shifted every day by new public health
2 information.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. I know, 'cause
5 some provider was saying well, maybe November 9, um,
6 would be the date.

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Oh, that
8 was the day. We were using that, back in the day we
9 used that as the target date, you know, like let's
10 say, let's plan because one of the things, ah,
11 Chairwoman, that the provider said to us, you cannot,
12 we cannot do this on a one-week notice. If we're
13 going to open at any point, regardless of the
14 methodology of food, ah, service, we need to have two
15 to three weeks' notice, and that is why we've been
16 planning out this process, that now every day looks
17 less and hopeful that it will be in November. Or
18 December.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, Commissioner,
20 you and I agree that the providers, um, have to get
21 back, um, in the game...

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Absolutely.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: They have to get back
24 in providing the nutritious, quality food, ah, to our
25 seniors. And I think that, yes, you know, we agree

1
2 that the safety of the senior is paramount, but I
3 think, you know, the health expert, they need to talk
4 to our providers. The providers know what to do.
5 When I saw some of their plan, I mean, they worked it
6 out. They know how to keep the senior safe, and also
7 for our senior, the seniors that go to the senior
8 center, they're active seniors, a lot of them, they
9 know how to keep this, themselves safe. They're the
10 one that's wearing the mask, they're the one that's
11 still doing social distancing. So I really urge the
12 health department to meet with the provider and talk
13 to them. Look, we started opening up restaurant with
14 sort of guideline, outdoor dining, indoor dining with
15 a lesser capacity, our schools are open. So I think
16 that we got to really look at our senior, um, that
17 there are active seniors who need the socialization,
18 who can come and do grab-and-go, and they've been
19 partnering in a lot of the virtual program and we,
20 we're gonna be talking more about that, ah, in
21 upcoming hearings. Ah but, you know, talk to the
22 provider. Health department needs to talk to the
23 provider.

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Chairwoman
25 Chin, I want to reaffirm the total alignment we have,

1
2 you and I, the network, as well as my colleagues in
3 GetFood, of the importance and the value that the
4 network brings to food, ah, provision, and food
5 security. We're working tirelessly with the network.
6 Ah, the department is working tirelessly with the
7 network, and we work with our colleagues across the
8 city to keep exploring what possibilities are there
9 to engage the network. So that, I, I don't want to
10 ever give the impression that it has to be this done
11 date. We are all constantly thinking, talking to
12 look forward to, ah, what strategies can we employ
13 that will bring the network of people who know older
14 adults, the people who have been serving older
15 adults, who the people who know their communities and
16 every need in that community to bring them back into
17 the fold. And I, I'm telling you with total
18 sincerity, and as I said in my oath to give you the
19 truth and nothing but the truth, we are working on
20 that regularly to come up with [inaudible].

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I, I thank you for
22 that. I think that, you know, the home-delivered
23 [inaudible] that cannot participate, ah, they cannot
24 go out to participate in the congregate meal program,
25 but we have so many active seniors, um, that can go

1
2 out and really participate, whether you're doing
3 grab-and-go or outdoor dining, whatever. They are
4 doing grab-and-go in, from the school for their, for
5 their grandkids, for, for their family. So I just
6 don't want to have the stereotype of people looking
7 at older adults are all the frail elderly. There's
8 so many different types of older adults and
9 [inaudible].

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:

11 [inaudible].

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And there are a lot of
13 active one that could play a good game of ping pong.
14 Ah, so, I'm just gonna stop for a minute and pass it
15 on to my colleague to see if they have some question
16 and then I'll, I'll come back.

17 MODERATOR: Thank you, Chair. I will now
18 call on council members in the order they have used
19 the raise, the Zoom raise hand function. Council
20 members, please keep your questions to five minutes.
21 The Sergeant at Arms will call, will keep a timer and
22 will let you know when your time is up. We'll be
23 starting with Council Member Vallone, followed by
24 Council Member Ayala. Council Member Vallone.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you. Good
3 morning, Commissioner, and good morning to my
4 colleagues and our amazing chair, Margaret Chin. I
5 think, as always, Margaret kind of, the most
6 important is the restart of services and, and getting
7 back to what our local providers and our seniors are
8 used to, and I think we're all still struggling with
9 this new world. So while we're in it we're doing our
10 best, 'cause it's probably the number one call in our
11 office for the amounts of seniors, those who are
12 dependent on DFTA, for, for, for decades of their
13 lives, um, trying to guide them through this new
14 world we're in. So, I mean, with that, we're, we're
15 just, and I know you had said you're looking forward,
16 as much as we are, as to getting back to that type of
17 provider service. But I guess it was around May that
18 DFTA stopped enrolling the clients in May and instead
19 referred them to GetFood. And I know you said that's
20 still active today. Um, what, what can we, what can
21 we expect? I know you mentioned with, with our chair
22 that you don't have a date yet, but is there a, are
23 we going to continue for the balance of the year with
24 that system? Do we plan on sometime soon switching

1
2 back to the providers doing the service, or what do
3 you envision [inaudible]?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So the best
5 way that I can answer that, and then I think the
6 question in more detail can be answered by my
7 colleague, Kate MacKenzie, but I can say to you, um,
8 with full clarity that the GetFood, ah, program was
9 started because of the pandemic.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Of course.

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It was an
12 emergency and is an emergency response. So as this
13 emergency continues we will have that in place,
14 'cause there's been a commit to combat food
15 insecurity, not only for older adults but for all New
16 Yorkers. And I think anything deeper as to the next
17 steps and the future of GetFood that I can tell you
18 it was started because of the pandemic and it will
19 continue, because of an emergency response, and it
20 will continue as long as the emergency, ah, exists.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: OK, so before we
22 switch to someone else, though, so if, if it's gonna
23 continue, and it looks like there are numbers that,
24 you know, are scaring all of us whether it's going up
25 or not, so it's probably going to continue for the

1 foreseeable future, what, what's the next step? So
2 if someone comes through and then gets on to the
3 GetFood services program, I mean, obviously in the
4 past if I were to call you or someone were to call
5 DFTA and their provider there are services beyond the
6 food aspect that the seniors also need. So if that
7 were to occur and now a senior uses or requests
8 additional services, whether it's at-home services or
9 mental health or medical services, or anything that
10 DFTA provides, how is that handled? Is that also
11 handled through the time the GetFood or process
12 starts or, and how is DFTA involved now when there
13 are additional services required?

15 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That's an
16 excellent, that's an excellent question and I think
17 it really requires clarification. So the beauty of
18 this design, really it, it was, thank you for the,
19 the question, because I think many of us, many
20 people, not us, ah, missed the importance that the
21 network, the aging network, the senior center
22 providers, this network of congregate providers, the
23 beauty of this process has been that they are the
24 trusted enrollers for GetFood. So the entrée to
25 GetFood is through this network. And during that

1 process they will identify other needs that this
2 person may have beyond the immediate food insecurity.
3 Because they are the senior center providers. More
4 than likely they will be put into the battery of
5 wellness calls and, ah, and contacts, and also into
6 the battery of [inaudible] and be given the
7 information on all of the other services that are
8 available for them, whether it's...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So it's at the
11 local point, so it's at the local point of contact,
12 then?

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's at the
14 local point of contract. Some people obviously come
15 in through 311, but to enroll in the program it goes
16 back to these trusted enrollers, which the lion's
17 share of them are the network itself. So that's...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [inaudible]
19 we're in, that so when this brave new world and
20 that's working how, how does DFTA then sort through
21 that new data? Is that kept, kept through, ah, for
22 the type of services and the portal that we used to
23 provide, right, and we would have a case management
24 system and we'd follow through, um, on that. You
25 know, it's tough for us to kind of delineate between

2 now where is that information, does that come some
3 through, DFTA is still managing the overall person?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So, so
5 there, there, another great question, really.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I try.

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Ah, there
8 is a central database that is kept by GetFood on all
9 recipients, right, and then there is a central, there
10 is a database that is for the 60-plus. That database
11 is also constantly, ah, reviewed and meshed and, ah,
12 aligned with DFTA's database so that we have access
13 not only to what we consider, ah, Council Member, the
14 latest client...

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: OK. Madam
17 Chair, can I just finish with that, those last couple
18 of questions on this? Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: All right,
20 so what we will do is with the legacy clients we know
21 who they're associated with. With the new clients,
22 what we're doing is looking at those clients and
23 start to determine can they be affiliated with a
24 center, and so right now we're in the process of how

1
2 to serve additional, ah, provide additional services
3 to those non-legacy clients and...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So I guess
5 that's the key, right? Yeah, that's the key right
6 there.

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Absolutely.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So do you have,
9 and I know, I like to always stay within the time, so
10 we'll kind of wrap up, and there's not a second
11 round, so maybe, Margaret, you can follow through on
12 this too, but on the legacy versus the new, do we
13 have a percentage of how many new seniors and/or
14 clients have been started from the time that the
15 transfer to GetFood started so that we have a handle
16 on, on how many versus the legacy that were already
17 existing versus the amount that are in the new?

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The number
19 to be, the number fluctuates regularly on both ends.
20 So the, the legacy client, that number has decreased.
21 We're looking at the reasons for that number
22 decreasing. Um, and we're also looking at some of
23 the factors as to why the other ones. And a lot of
24 it is choice, ah, for those who had lived
25 independently before.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So we can, we
3 can get back, we can follow up, we [inaudible].

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: There is
5 absolute data on those numbers. I don't have that
6 available right now, but I will, I commit to get that
7 number to you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And then my last
9 question on that, because it's the same type of
10 pattern, so if, if that has started do we have the
11 data on once that new I guess portal is started, do
12 we have case management files being handled as DFTA
13 did in the past for legacy and the new ones, or are
14 they being separated? Is there a separate world now
15 between...

16 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So case
17 management is an entrée point, so case management
18 deals with legacy and new. So that is...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Both.

20 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That is a,
21 right, that's a constant, that's a constant source of
22 entrée into any in-home services or other major
23 services that you may find yourself [inaudible]. So
24 that's case management. But what I can give you is
25 some data now that will give you a sense that this is

1
2 not a forgotten group of people in New York City. To
3 date we've done about 2 million wellness calls, and
4 of those wellness calls about, 1, 1.5 million have
5 been done by the network. So that means that that
6 difference is probably for people outside of, of the
7 network, and that is, you know, that is sort of like
8 a data point to see how many people are still being
9 engaged, at least in wellness calls, and they're not
10 a forgotten, ah, group of people.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: OK. Thank you,
12 Commissioner. Thank you, Madam Chair, for the extra
13 time, and I know there's a lot of good information
14 there, so we'll follow up with you on that. Thank
15 you, Commissioner.

16 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

17 MODERATOR: Thank you, Council Member
18 Vallone. Now we'll be hearing from Council Member
19 Ayala.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Good morning,
22 everybody. Good morning, Commissioner. Hope you're
23 having a good morning.

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes, I am,
25 thank you.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I lost you on the
3 monitor. Everybody keeps, this is like tic-tac-toe,
4 everybody can [inaudible].

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's our
6 new world, sometimes you [inaudible] sometimes we
7 don't.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: [laughs] Like the
9 Brady Bunch. Um, I just really have a couple of
10 question. I have some concerns about, and I know
11 this is not necessarily DFTA, but I wonder how much
12 DFTA weighs in on the GetFood program. Um, one, I
13 have concerns about the, um, obviously still the
14 quality of the, of the meals because I get a lot of
15 complaints from, ah, seniors, including my mother,
16 hates the quality of the food, so she's very
17 selective about what she eats, and, um, you know,
18 considering that the city has such a huge cash flow
19 issue, you know, it's really alarming to see how much
20 waste, right, um, is produced while we're trying to
21 make the effort to do the right thing, right? And so
22 there's a lot of really good intention in this
23 program. However, um, I'm not sure if DFTA has an
24 opportunity to weigh in considering that there are so
25 many people that may have been referred to that

1
2 program, um, and not necessarily have, have been a
3 participate of the, the, the home-delivered meal
4 program at one point. So I'm really just, you know,
5 concerned that, that those people that really need
6 it, these meals, are not necessarily getting them
7 because they're saying, you know, still, we're still
8 seeing cases where food is, you know, delivered and
9 left in the lobby of the building, um, with no names,
10 so, you know, um, does DFTA have an opportunity to
11 weigh in on that?

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: What I can
13 tell you is that we work very closely with our, ah,
14 colleagues at GetFood to work on all of the issues
15 centered around the 60-plus. But for the operations
16 and some of remedies, um, and mitigations that
17 GetFood has I think the one who can answer that best
18 is my colleague, Kate MacKenzie, when she testifies,
19 um, and, um, but I, I know for a fact that we have a
20 very close collaboration and with the goal to make
21 sure that meals meet the nutritional values of the
22 60-plus and are supportive.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Yeah. I, I mean,
24 when I used to work in the, in the senior center, it
25 was many years ago, and I mean, we had, ah, I mean,

1 the same, the same foods that I ate at home we, we
2 served at the senior center, right? Ah, those were
3 the good old days. And then the nutrition, um,
4 requirements changed drastically and with that, you
5 know, came, you know, food options that weren't
6 necessarily culturally sensitive, ah, or appealing,
7 right? Most of us didn't recognize what was in front
8 of the plate. And so, um, I think that that's kind
9 of what I'm seeing, you know, and I like to
10 interrogate my mom, just to kind of get, you know, a
11 sense of what exactly it is that she's, you know, not
12 liking and, um, you know, I've heard of cases where
13 people have like tried to give the food way and
14 nobody will take it because it's, ah, they just don't
15 like it. So, um, I think that, you know, I, I don't
16 know, I think that we missed an opportunity to maybe
17 survey the seniors or the individuals that are, you
18 know, that have access to these meals to get their
19 perspective on you know, ways that we could improve
20 the program, because, again, the goal is really to
21 ensure that people are, you know, the most vulnerable
22 people, have access to meals, ah, several times a
23 day. So I would, I would seriously, you know,
24 consider, ah, the idea of, you know, some sort of
25

1 survey to get that feedback. Um, I know, um, Chair
2 Chin mentioned, you know, maybe, um, feedback from
3 providers, right, because they have, ah, a more
4 hands-on approach and they have their own ideas. But
5 I think that we forget, ah, to ask the question of
6 the recipients, right? Like what are they receiving?
7 Because the provider, you know, they, they, they're
8 great, um, but they're also gonna comply with
9 whatever the, you know, the requirement is. Um, but
10 they're not the ones that are eating the food, right,
11 um, and we want to make sure that people are actually
12 eating it. My last question is really regarding the,
13 so, so of the individuals that were referred to
14 GetFood that should be considered for home-delivered
15 meals, is there a plan to transition them over at
16 some point once the GetFood, ah, meal program is over
17 or is this a Kate question?

19 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It is, um,
20 it is a temporary, ah, it is a temporary assignment
21 to GetFood. I'm talking about home-delivered meals,
22 I want to be very specific about that, for the
23 vulnerable elderly. It's a temporary assignment.
24 Um, it's, it's really about provider capacity, to the
25 extent that the, you know, 'cause home-delivered

1 meals is a frontline process to the extent that the
2 provider capacity increases then they can be shifted
3 back to a traditional, ah, home-delivered meals
4 provider.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And we don't know
7 yet when that would happen, right?

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We know
9 that that constant shift...

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: ...goes on,
12 on a regular basis. Oh, sorry.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You're
15 welcome.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Um, I think, um,
17 Director Mackenzie is here to answer question, ah,
18 from the GetFood program. So maybe, ah, can, can you
19 address some of the question that was raised by, ah,
20 Council Member Ayala in terms of, ah, food quality
21 and also, um, a question earlier about, ah,
22 transitioning, um, you know, seniors, um, senior
23 center provider, ah, to be able to start providing
24 the nutritious meal again?
25

1 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Yes. Thank you so
2
3 much...

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And thank you for
5 being here, yeah.

6 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Of course. Thank
7 you, Chair Chin. Of course, to my, ah, colleague,
8 Commissioner Cortes-Vazquez, for your, for your
9 leadership and support through all this, and to all
10 the, um, council members and, and their staffs on the
11 call today. Um, ah, you raise, Council Member Ayala,
12 some very important points, and I want to assure you
13 that we have been serving and receiving feedback
14 certainly from, um, from elected staff such as
15 yourselves, as well as some of the providers who I'm
16 sure you'll hear from later today, um, who are
17 enrolling seniors. Um, so something of note that I
18 wanted to, um, ensure that everyone understands is
19 that we have just transitioned, um, from the, ah, the
20 vendors that have been providing meals over the
21 course of the pandemic to 30 new vendors whose, um,
22 once all of those contracts are registered they will
23 be, ah, shared with everyone, specifically to provide
24 prepared meals. And that is in, um, after direct
25 feedback, ah, that we've been hearing from seniors

1 that that is what's desired. And so we also are
2 ensuring that the nutrition standards are even more
3 enhanced than what they had been over the course of
4 the last several months. So those two items of, um,
5 prepared meals, actually there's three items -
6 prepared meals, enhanced nutrition standards, um, and
7 also ensuring that there's more cultural and ethnic,
8 um, options available, are in direct response from
9 feedback from people such as yourselves and your
10 constituents. I will also say the fourth item is
11 that we have, um, changed the configuration of the
12 deliveries from nine meals delivered at one time to
13 six, again in response of direct feedback that we
14 were actually providing too many meals, which is, um,
15 we certainly don't want to ensure, don't want to
16 contribute to any food waste, um, at all, and want to
17 make sure that we're getting meals directly to people
18 that need them most. The other, um, ah, modification
19 that will be happening, um, is that all of the, the
20 TLC component, right, that, that we stood up
21 tremendously quickly back in March and April, um, we
22 are now doing what's called a vendor direct model
23 because we've gone from a height of serving about
24 320,000 New Yorkers a day to, I believe, last week we
25

1 served, um, 86,000. So because of the decline, which
2 is good, as the city is reopening more and more
3 people are able to get out, we're serving a vendor-
4 direct model, so the same providers who are preparing
5 those meals are also responsible for the delivery of
6 those meals. So, again, the intention here is that
7 all of those challenges, and I respect and appreciate
8 all of the work that TLC did, um, and know that this
9 model perhaps will ensure that that meal gets, um,
10 with even more accuracy to the doors of, of New
11 Yorkers in need. So I appreciate you, you raising
12 that. Um, I also, ah, Council Member Vallone you
13 mentioned, um, some questions about the numbers.
14 I'll let you know that, um, again, using last week's
15 statistics there were roughly 54,000 people in the,
16 um, GetFood program, of which about 18-1/2 thousand
17 were those legacy clients that, ah, you and
18 Commissioner Cortes-Vazquez had described. Um, and
19 so we are, again, ensuring that, um, all people are
20 served with the best service and, um, appropriate
21 meals for their needs. Um, and then finally, Chair
22 Chin, I wanted to address your questions and the
23 conversations around senior center providers. And,
24 you know, something that, um, you know, when I was in
25

1 graduate school 20 years ago I did my thesis actually
2 on meals served in senior centers. Um, and I so
3 appreciate, I have just been reminded about how
4 central senior centers are to the lives of New
5 Yorkers. And I, um, I can't wait for the day that
6 senior centers can come back to be able to serve in a
7 congregate setting, um, or even a grab-and-go
8 setting, to ensure that that, that social element is
9 there and the familiarity of meals that seniors rely,
10 have relied on, is there. Unfortunately, that time
11 is just not right, right now. We know from after
12 conversations with Dr. Varma and with the health
13 commissioner, that they all aspire to that. But the
14 time has to be right with public health guidance. So
15 I don't have a date for you, but, again, echoing my,
16 my colleague, Commissioner Cortes-Vazquez, they are
17 hounded every day with, um, with, ah, you know,
18 questions about when is that time going to be, and we
19 want to make sure that we are doing that in a time
20 that is sound and safe for, for our, our older
21 adults. Um, so I want to pause there. But, again,
22 thank you so much for your attention to these issues
23 and, um, in partnership with the Department for the
24 Aging GetFood will continue to serve all New Yorkers,
25

1
2 um, to ensure that they are not, ah, unnecessarily
3 going hungry.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, um, thank you,
5 Kate. Kate, when you talked about the, um, 18,000
6 legacy, um, clients at GetFood, does that mean these
7 are the senior center clients...

8 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...ah, that goes to
10 senior center? I thought that number, Commissioner,
11 I thought the number should be higher, because, ah,
12 senior center, right, serve what, about 30, 37,000?

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The senior
14 centers traditionally served anywhere between 21,000
15 and 25,000, and as, as Kate and I have both
16 mentioned, that number fluctuates on a regular basis.

17 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Yeah. Um, thank
18 you, Commissioner. And, and Chair Chin I would say,
19 you know, again, after, um, you know trying to stay
20 in touch also with the tremendous network of
21 authorized enrollers, many of whom are those
22 providers, you know, the conditions, or the criteria
23 for GetFood are ensuring that, you know, you have no
24 one to get meals for you, you cannot afford a private
25 delivery service, um, ah, and, and, ah, you're not

1 receiving another meal. So our, you know, some of
2 our assumptions, and proved out in conversations, is,
3 you know, some people are finding that their friends
4 or their family can help to bring meals home and
5 that's attributing to some of that decline. Um, from
6 a height I think you're right, you know, where it was
7 upward of 30,000. So we're monitoring that very
8 closely. But as of last week we've got about 18-1/2
9 thousand of those legacy clients who are still
10 continuing to receive meals through the GetFood
11 program.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. I, I just wanted
14 to acknowledge that we've been joined by Council
15 Member Treyger. So Kate and Commissioner, um, I know
16 we, we talked about earlier, you know, want to get,
17 um, the senior center provider back in the game. So
18 what is, ah, is also GetFood working, ah, with DFTA
19 to see how we can start, ah, doing that transition?
20 I mean, if it's not grab-and-go to begin with can the
21 center, ah, provider, ah, still be able to cook the
22 meal and then work with GetFood, ah, to do the last
23 step of delivery, or provide resources, ah, to the
24 provider so that they can, ah, do the delivery
25 themselves, because some of the providers, ah, are

1
2 also part of the home-delivered meal program. So
3 they do what they call Meals on Heels, and so they
4 already are doing that, um, and I remember them
5 talking about it in the beginning, that it wasn't
6 that they couldn't, couldn't do the work, they just
7 needed more resources to help, ah, with the delivery.
8 So is that a model that at least we can back into if
9 we don't do grab-and-go? Can we get the center to
10 cook and then deliver the meal?

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You want to
12 answer that?

13 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I'll, I'll
15 support and echo.

16 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Sure. I apologize
17 for that. I think it was someone reminding me to
18 vote. But I've done that this morning. So I wanted
19 to let you, um, I really appreciate that line of
20 questions and if you could take a look at, ah, the,
21 at the, um, commissioner's, um, staff and my calendar
22 you would see just how often we are talking about
23 what you just described. Um, you know, I appreciate,
24 from the early days back in March, um, when the
25 program was transitioning, um, in the first phase,

1
2 you know, senior center providers are so
3 extraordinary at what they do and that is in that
4 meal provision, right? The challenge here is that
5 last mile delivery and so I do know that one, um, I
6 believe, Commissioner, it's Riverdale, Riverdale
7 Senior Center, um, is actually, um, on the, ah, a
8 vendor now for GetFood. They have, um, you know,
9 their, their, um, ah, bid, ah, and, and proposal was
10 accepted and they're, they're one of the providers
11 that, um, that is able to serve, um, and meet the,
12 all of the scope of work that is outlined in that
13 solicitation. Um, I know that I'm working closely
14 with Lorraine's colleague, Michael, um, on the
15 vetting and, and several other staff to just see how
16 creative we can be to resource providers in this
17 effort. But that challenge of, of delivery is, is
18 what it is, it's a challenge. And so we're trying to
19 think about how we could make that happen, um, in a
20 way that's certainly, um, leans into the
21 extraordinary, um, work that the providers can do
22 while, you know, realizing that we aren't ready for
23 grab-and-go so we've got to ensure that the food is
24 ultimately getting into the homes of, of those that
25 need it.

1
2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I, I want
3 to just echo that we [inaudible] as Kate mentioned,
4 if you look at our schedules, there's more
5 conversations about planning together and moving
6 forward and being as creative as we possibly can be
7 within the confines of this pandemic. And, um,
8 because we're all aligned with the same issue.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, we're gonna be
10 continued pushing because the, the provider, the
11 senior center provider, they, as you said earlier,
12 Kate, they know the, the seniors, the familiarity,
13 and they're ready, they're ready. So I just don't
14 want them to be left out, and they've been doing
15 great, you know, with the wellness call, with virtual
16 programming, and there's so many fantastic thing
17 that's happening, ah, with our center. And they're
18 ready to prepare the food, ah, and they know what our
19 seniors like. Ah, so I think that, I hope, you know,
20 the conversation continue and we will continue to,
21 ah, advocate. I know my colleague have some more
22 question. Council Member Vallone, if you have some
23 question we can, and Council Member Ayala, Treyger,
24 we can go a second round, ah, while we have, ah, the
25 Commissioner and Kate here. Council Member Vallone?

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, no, I, you
3 caught me off guard. I thought there wasn't gonna be
4 a second round. But I, I think just on following up
5 with, ah, the first line of question. I just think
6 if we can get the numbers, I guess, so we can help
7 follow up with, ah, the chair and the rest of the
8 committee on the amount of seniors now that are
9 utilizing services beyond GetFood that are the legacy
10 versus the new classification, ah, how that, those
11 services are being provided now that they're in this
12 new category, and one of the rallying cries that
13 Margaret has always had is the amount of case
14 management files per DFTA worker. So I think there's
15 a, a avenue that we can follow up to try to help DFTA
16 in this new world of the seniors that have enrolled
17 through GetFood versus seniors that were enrolled,
18 ah, through the providers separately. So, I guess,
19 Commissioner, you had said you can get us the data on
20 the new, on the new seniors that are part of that
21 program. Are you finding that, that flow of
22 information is coming through to DFTA now, now that
23 it is coming through these, I guess a different type
24 of portal versus the GetFood versus the previous
25 portal?

1
2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Um, once we
3 get the client data we then compared that to the
4 previous, um, portal. In, in addition to program and
5 process we do a lot of data sharing with GetFood and
6 with the GetFood team, and also systems sharing, so
7 that we can constantly have a sense of these, um, new
8 entrance into the world of senior services, right,
9 and that's what, the best way I can describe it now.
10 The other thing that I can tell you to that, ah, we
11 will get you those numbers, Council Member Vallone,
12 and we'll also give you some, um, some, ah, data on
13 the type of services that some of them may be
14 currently receiving, right, to the extent that we
15 have all of that data. What I do want to say also is
16 that the network of providers, as like, as Kate has
17 so well said, as the, the Chairwoman know and
18 everyone in this, the network of providers are the
19 key partners in all of this. And they're very much
20 interested in also getting the data of the non-
21 legacy, or the new entrants, um, older adults who had
22 not been affiliated with senior services. They, too,
23 are interested in getting that data to see which ones
24 that they can, ah, reach out to and absorb. So there
25 is a very conscious effort in this city from DFTA,

1
2 the network, as well as our partners in GetFood who
3 also have this data, um, ensuring that that
4 individual is not just then, ah, left unaffiliated
5 and untapped.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So how is, I
7 guess, who is coordinating with the nonprofit
8 providers now that there is this new system with
9 GetFood? Is there is a daily or weekly update
10 hearing from their concerns and/or...

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I meet, I
12 meet with the providers once a month by borough. Um,
13 and we discuss all of these issues, in addition to
14 the hopeful reopening. But we also talk about
15 service issues, we talk about data complexities, and
16 any of the current issues. And included in those,
17 Council Member Vallone, was this new group of
18 individuals that we've identified in New York who now
19 raise their hands and say we need services.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So what do you,
21 I guess, what would be your summary of that? What,
22 what are the nonprofits, I guess, biggest concern at
23 this point under the current model? Is there
24 anything that is the, the menu item of the day, so to
25 speak?

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think, I
3 think that under the current model, you know, the
4 issues that, that some of the council members have
5 raised are some of the concerns and issues of the
6 current medical. The, ah, the other current issues
7 that they have is capacity, you know, do they have
8 the staff capacity because it's virtual, but do they
9 have the staff capacity to sustain, you know, those
10 wellness calls and issues, ah, with this new
11 increased population? And I think another concern
12 that we all share, um, DFTA was set up to serve, ah,
13 about 300,000, ah, individuals usually in, in a year,
14 and now we're talking about upwards of about another
15 70,000, 80,000 who have raised their hands as a
16 result of COVID, and how is that we can build that
17 kind of expanded capacity. That coupled with the
18 increased population of older people. Um, so all of
19 those issues are issues that we're looking at
20 regularly with, ah, with internally, with our
21 colleagues in government, and also with, obviously,
22 with the network.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I guess the last
24 would be I guess the nonprofits have not been left...

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1 COMMITTEE ON AGING 55
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Ah, with the
3 same crisis that we are with the financial crisis, so
4 many of them across the state are on the verge of, of
5 going under. So one of the things that Madam Chair
6 has always asked for is an increase in the
7 reimbursement rate, 'cause I know that, ah, it's
8 currently, I think, at \$9.58 and we were hoping to
9 bring that up \$2, like to \$11.78. With the current
10 crisis has there been any thought of adding into this
11 year's, um, proposal or budget for the increase in
12 reimbursement rate for the nonprofits?

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So the way
14 I'm, the way I can answer that right now is that in
15 the new RFP for home, we're talking about home-
16 delivered meals, Council Member?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yes, yes.

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Um, in the
19 new RFP we issued we had a rate of 958. And of the
20 130 responders they all came in, ah, at the rate of
21 9, I mean, 958, my lips to God's ears, but, um,
22 \$9.58. Um, and we, ah, all the providers came in at
23 that level. And I understand, you know, the study
24 that talks about the \$11 per meal. Ah, but that
25 doesn't include, or factor in to the city's ability

1
2 to achieve major benefit through economics of scale.
3 So I think that that is a major factor. But the
4 current RFP came in at \$9.58 and 130 who applied did
5 come in at that price.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: OK, so I know
7 that's always something [inaudible]. Listen, we're
8 trying to advocate and help [inaudible] also. So
9 it's, it's a combination of trying to get the, the
10 administration to hear the budget needs. And I, I
11 would just follow up, I guess to the question, you
12 had said that you're meeting with them monthly?
13 Just, just know that we're hearing from the
14 nonprofits that the calls that they were usually
15 expecting and, and appreciating have stopped. So the
16 briefings, I guess, whether they were weekly or
17 monthly, um, have, in a way they used to continue in
18 the past, so they may be disconnect there somewhere,
19 but we, we should probably follow up...

20 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: There must
21 be a disconnect, but those meetings are held monthly
22 by borough and sometimes we collapse two boroughs,
23 like sometimes we'll do Brooklyn and question
24 together, or Manhattan and the Bronx together, or
25

1
2 Manhattan and Staten Island. But, ah, those meetings
3 are held religiously. Nothing has stopped...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Or maybe it's
5 the phone? Maybe it's the phone call updates? I,
6 there's something, there's just something about maybe
7 you used to have a weekly phone call or a monthly
8 phone call besides the meetings.

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I, I'm
10 not...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [inaudible]
12 helpful during the pandemic.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, no,
14 I'm not sure, I'm not sure what, what they're
15 referring to. But I can tell you the meetings that
16 do occur. We have a monthly borough meeting that I
17 chair, not staff, that I chair with providers by
18 borough. In addition to that, we have two work
19 groups, the eternally optimistic reopening work
20 group, um, and we are working on details of what
21 would be required to reopen, whether the model is
22 grab-and-go or the various models that we've all
23 discussed this morning, and then we have another work
24 group that's called the future of senior centers to
25 look at thinking, current state as well as future

1
2 state, because this city is evolving and the needs of
3 older adults are evolving. So we're always looking
4 at, ah, the future of, of senior centers. Those are
5 two very large work groups with large participation.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you,
7 Commissioner. Thank you, Madam Chair. Let's, I
8 guess we'll just find out what, what the phone call
9 that was so essential, 'cause that's always a key
10 resource for me, um, making sure we have that update.
11 Maybe it's beyond the meetings. But thank you very
12 much.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You're
14 welcome.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, thank you,
16 Council Member Vallone. Um, Commissioner, you know,
17 as you were talking about the working group, ah, due
18 to the uncertainty, ah, with the future of the senior
19 centers during the pandemic, many of the providers
20 and advocates and myself have been calling, ah, to
21 push back the RFP on senior centers. So what do you
22 think about that?

23 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I can share
24 with you that senior centers have been in place as
25 we've known them since the early 2000s and before

1 that. So we have not had any changes in the model.
2
3 And I what I can say to you is that older adults in
4 New York City have changed very much. The needs, the
5 complexity, the age range, the geographic location of
6 older adults has changed dramatically since the early
7 2000s and the, the seven years before that when was
8 the last time an RFP was done. So if we're going to
9 be looking at meeting needs, and that is what our
10 commit is for all of us, if our, we're looking to
11 look at needs we need to be forward-thinking and the
12 way we can introduce new concepts and, ah, new
13 visions of service, as well as accommodations for
14 this growth of older adults is through an RFP. We
15 are a legacy organization. We're a change
16 organization. We want to be a forward-thinking
17 organization. Um, we will work with the providers,
18 but I think that an RFP is the way that we could
19 really make sure that we're prepared and this network
20 that is so committed to this population is best
21 prepared to address the future.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. I mean, we're
23 gonna continue to push, ah, for a delay because the
24 increased population that we talked about last month,
25 ah, because I think you, ah, said earlier that, um,

2 the portfolio provides services to what, over 30,000
3 seniors, or 20, ah...

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Anywhere
5 between 21,000 to 25,000, and, ah, and then we had an
6 about 12,000 that were, we identified. This is
7 [inaudible].

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, um-hmm. And
9 then but with the GetFood program, ah, I remember
10 last month you talked about almost another additional
11 40,000 senior signed up that were not connected to
12 senior center. So there's, there's...

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I'm not
14 sure what the number is, but I will refer to, to my
15 colleague, but, um, but the number is somewhere
16 around, I believe, ah, Kate had mentioned earlier
17 53,000, ah, is that the 60-plus population, Kate, or
18 that was all?

19 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Since last week
20 there were 54,200 seniors, of which 18-1/2
21 thousand...

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right.

23 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: ... were, um, the
24 legacy clients.

25 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right.

2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK.

3 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So that's
4 an additional 30,000.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I mean, we've
6 got, I, I think the number was higher last month, um,
7 when, ah, when Commissioner, you were testify,
8 because...

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, it
10 fluctuates.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, but still that's
12 almost double the, the legacy clients...

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...ah, seniors, ah,
15 that are out there. And so I think that, and this
16 population is going to continue to grow, so I think
17 that's why, you know, the RFP, ah, need to have
18 sufficient funding and also look at how to
19 incorporate all these new seniors. I mean, I have a
20 hunch that a lot of those seniors are seniors that
21 should be connected, ah, to senior centers, but they
22 were the group, ah, that was attracted by those
23 private social adult day care. And they were not in
24 operation during the pandemic because we've gotten
25 calls from, ah, these privilege social adult day care

1
2 and their coalition complaining about not getting
3 reimbursement from the MLTC and I was like why are
4 you calling us, you're under the state. But
5 remember, ah, Commissioner, there were over 300, some
6 of them, that registered with DFTA, right? And they
7 have..

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well,
9 there, there, ah...

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...been there for
11 seniors.

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: There are
13 337, um, SADs and of those 370 we have, ah, 271 have
14 registered with us.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, and they...

16 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And, and
17 that's thanks to, thanks to the, ah, Local Law 9...

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I know.

19 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: ...that the
20 City Council imposed.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yep, and we're still
22 trying to crack them on them. Ah, I mean, they're
23 nine good ones that are supported by the senior
24 center, ah, City Council, and work with DFTA. But a
25 lot of them, they abandoned the seniors during this

1
2 pandemic and luckily there was this GetFood program
3 that these seniors were able to connect. So we see
4 it as an opportunity to get these seniors back, who
5 was like, you know, they were lured away by all these
6 benefits and, and when a crisis happened they were
7 abandoned. So we just want to make sure that, ah, we
8 continue, ah, to support them. I wanted to go back
9 to the home-delivered meal. Ah, I know that Council
10 Member Vallone talked about, um, the reimbursement
11 rate and I know that you're going to be negotiating,
12 ah, with the organization that was, um, that awarded
13 the contract. I hope that you will provide us with a
14 list of the people or the organization that got the,
15 ah, that got the award and their subcontractors and,
16 ah, and how many of this group are new contractors
17 and how many are the, ah, original contractor that
18 was, um, that were already, ah, providing the home-
19 delivered meal program. So we look forward, ah, to
20 seeing that list, um, 'cause I didn't see all the
21 subcontractor, 'cause when you talk about the
22 diversity and the culturally sensitive meal, ah, it
23 really didn't show, um, in the list of the people who
24 got the highest score, but I assume it will be the
25 subcontractors who are gonna be doing that. And I

1 think that Council Member Vallone and I, you know, we
2 talked about it in the past many, many times. We
3 were hoping that some of the, some of the
4 subcontractors were able to become prime contractor,
5 but I don't think it happened this time around, so,
6 um, I think we, we have to continue to look at how we
7 support, um, subcontractors who are providing the
8 culturally, um, ethnic meals, ah, in the community
9 and make sure we help them, ah, build their capacity,
10 and that's something that I'm not sure we, we saw in
11 this RFP.
12

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: In this RFP
14 one of the key points, ah, Councilwoman Chin, ah,
15 diversity and the ability to address cultural and
16 religious needs was a key factor.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: What about the, um,
18 the status of the funding? Was the 2.84 million the
19 one shot, um, was eliminated? And what was the
20 impact of that cut on the home-delivered meal?

21 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I will have
22 to get back to you on that because the RFP included
23 all of them, the budgeted, ah, amount.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Ahuh. Was there like
25 the, um, was there any kind of federal funding that

1 came in, ah, to support the home-delivered meal
2 during the pandemic?

3 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes. We
4 have federal, ah, thank you for the question, we had
5 3 million dollars that we, well, we had about 27
6 million dollars that helped us during the, ah,
7 Penrose drain, and, ah, the 3 million dollars went to
8 home-delivered meals programs to support the
9 increased demand. As you know, and I reported last
10 testimony and I continue is that there's been an
11 increased demand for, ah, in-house services,
12 including home-delivered meals. And so that month
13 has been allocated through, um, to the provider
14 through December 31.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Do you have the number
16 of the increased demand in the home-delivered meal?

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That, yes,
18 I, I can give you that number. Um, the number that
19 we're, we've seen an increased demand, and that
20 number also has fluctuated, um, and we're looking
21 into that. There was, at the highest point sometime
22 in April and May it was about 3600. In September
23 that number reduced like to a, that was a 20%
24 overage. By, ah, by September that number reduced to
25

1
2 7%, which was about 1200, and now in October that
3 number went down to 5% overage, which is about 900,
4 960.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. Um, I think with
6 the, ah, you know, Kate talked about with the GetFood
7 program, I remember early on, you know, people were
8 getting a lot of prepared meal and the shelf-stable
9 meal and people were complaining, it was about the
10 shelf-stable meal, ah, not considering a meal. And I
11 think she mentioned that from nine meal, nine
12 prepared meal now is down to six prepared meal. So,
13 Commissioner, GetFood is providing six prepared meal.
14 But the home-delivered meal program is only providing
15 five home-delivered meal.

16 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The, the...

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Ah, do we, do we know,
18 you know, like serving, um, the client that that is
19 sufficient?

20 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So I'm
21 going to answer that two ways, right? Um, one way is
22 that the case management agency looks at that issue
23 very carefully. The other thing is that we provide
24 six meals because we provide a weekend meal. Um, so
25 that there are six meals as well as emergency meals

1
2 for home-delivered meal, ah, clients. And some
3 programs do provide in addition like a light
4 breakfast or some supplemental, ah, snack. So, ah,
5 yes, ah, we are providing one meal a day, but that
6 has been part of the, ah, case management process.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I think it will
8 be good to really look at, um, surveying, um, these c
9 like I said and, and from case management to really
10 see what the real needs are, whether...

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
12 [inaudible].

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...one meal, one meal a
14 day is sufficient or like if there are like breakfast
15 or, um, I know that we fought for money, ah, for the
16 sixth meal, um, in the council. Ah, Council Member
17 Koslowitz was instrumental in, in pushing for that,
18 and I think that, you know, we really do need to find
19 out what the real read is so that we can, you know,
20 advocate for sufficient funding, so the, you know,
21 the most vulnerable senior, the one that depends on
22 home-delivered meal, ah, you know, get the food that
23 they, they really need, and not just, you know, one
24 meal a day and, and we think is sufficient and it
25 might not. There's seven days in a week. So I think

1 we really need to, um, to take that into, um,
2 consideration. Does, ah, other council members have
3 questions before I? Council Member Ayala, do you
4 have any follow-up questions?
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I did not, thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, OK. You know, in
9 July we heard that there was a wait list, ah, for
10 clients in Staten Island needing the home-delivered
11 meal. Is there still a wait list, and can you also
12 give us if there's a wait list citywide for the home-
13 delivered meal?

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I, I just
15 gave you the numbers. If there is no wait list for
16 home-delivered meals to our knowledge as we, as a
17 case management agency, ah, looks at a client and a
18 home-delivered and meal is part of the case plan
19 because they have food insecurity that client is then
20 referred to GetFood and GetFood, as I mentioned
21 earlier, will pick up that client temporarily
22 until...

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, OK.

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: ...the
25 provider has capacity.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. I'm just looking
3 to see any other questions. Um, do you have any idea
4 why the, the number, um, of seniors needing meals
5 went down?

6 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Ah, which
7 meals?

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: From 3600 to 900 in a
9 handful of months?

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It could be
11 a variety of things. It could be as, ah, one,
12 choice. It could be, for home-delivered meals it
13 could be through an assessment for a case management
14 agency. That's one of the things that we're looking
15 at right now are when people are being taken off the
16 home-delivered meals, ah, program.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: In this, ah, in this
18 RFP that, ah, that DFTA deliver home-delivered meal,
19 um, you did not take into consideration, ah, medical,
20 you know, tailored meal. I know that one of the
21 nonprofit, you know, Gods Love We Deliver, um, they
22 do a great job in terms of delivering meals to
23 seniors who just came out of hospital or certain
24 illness...

1 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Excellent
2
3 program.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...and they will
5 support. They've been supported by the council, but
6 they are not part of the, ah, DFTA's, ah, home-
7 delivered meal portfolio. Is there a way to, um,
8 include them, because it's such a great program and
9 it's a such a great need?

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Um, I
11 don't, I can look and see if they applied for the
12 home-delivered meals program, ah, and see what the
13 status of that is. I don't have that information,
14 ah, available to me right now.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. I, I don't, I
16 didn't see their name in the, in the big group. I
17 don't know if they're able to, ah, be part of a
18 subcontract group. Um, I think, you know, it would
19 be great if they can also get into, ah, DFTA's
20 portfolio because they're one of the organizations,
21 um, that have been historically supported, um, by the
22 council.

23 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And they
24 provide an excellent service. They're an excellent
25 provider, and excellent operation. They started out

1
2 as a service to AIDS and now have morphed to medical
3 needs, and they're an exceptional organization.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah. Will also like
5 costs escalate later be built into the contract, or
6 does the administration expect provider to remain
7 whole as food cost rise in the future?

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That is a
9 question that we always look to together in
10 partnership with OMB and also with our City Council
11 partners.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [laughs] I know you
13 always look towards partnering with the council.
14 Right, Council Member Vallone? Like we always help
15 you fight for more finding [laughs] and we will
16 continue, ah, continue to do that. I know that we
17 have a lot of providers and, and people, ah, waiting
18 to testify. I know there are so many questions, we
19 may not have got through all of them. Oh, wait a
20 minute. Is it true that some seniors have been told
21 that they will no longer, ah, get beyond the GetFood,
22 ah, program because the vendor isn't renewing their
23 contract?

24 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: I actually, yeah,
25 Chair, Chair Chin, I'll take that question. I

1 actually spoke with [inaudible] Nickerson this week,
2 particularly on that issue. As I mentioned, we've
3 transitioned from some previous vendors to new
4 vendors and there was an issue with a provider, I
5 think the recipient and then the, the provider was
6 misinformed. That particular vendor was saying that
7 they were no longer going to continue the vendor and
8 it was interpreted as the program is ending.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, OK.

11 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: So I, we, we
12 straightened that out.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. That, that's good
14 to know, because like, ah, we don't want the seniors
15 to be scared and all of sudden that they're gonna be
16 dropped out of the program.

17 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: [inaudible] just nip
18 that in the bud because that's absolutely not
19 correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So right now we have
21 no definite, ah, timeline in terms of when the, when
22 the GetFood program will complete its mission and
23 transfer everything back to DFTA?

24 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: You, and this, when,
25 we are committed to ensuring, um, you know, my office

1
2 will continue to ensure that the coordination of the
3 emergency food programs, um, is maintained throughout
4 the duration of the pandemic. I wish I had a
5 deadline on when this pandemic was going to end. Um,
6 but we're, we're in it, um, to continue to ensure
7 that no New Yorker need to, um, experience
8 unnecessary food insecurity.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Are there any problem
10 with, um, seniors and/or clients that are at the, on
11 the GetFood program in terms of having to re-
12 register?

13 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Yeah, sure, thank
14 you for the question. These authorized [inaudible]
15 are extraordinary, um, and, and, you know, it is, I
16 want to underscore it is an emergency program, um,
17 that we are looking for FEMA for reimbursement for,
18 so need to ensure that people are always, um, you
19 know, just checks that it is truly an emergency
20 program. So I know that some providers have, um,
21 been, ah, concerned with the two-week re-enrollment
22 window, um, but that is, you know, to, to maximize
23 our potential for FEMA reimbursements and we open it,
24 we, we're trying to make that easier and less time-
25 consuming, um, but I just appreciate, um, um, I

1 appreciate the, the challenge and the time that
2 they're spending to ensure that, you know, they're
3 helping New Yorkers to, to get those meals. But that
4 is the rationale for it.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: OK. I mean, I'm glad
7 the meal is improving and then you have more, ah,
8 diversity, more choice and, ah, so hopefully going
9 forward the seniors will be provided with more
10 nutritious meal and we're still looking forward, ah,
11 to having our nonprofit senior center providers, um,
12 back in the fold, that they are the one that's gonna
13 be cooking the meals and utilizing, you know, their,
14 their kitchen facility, and we just have to provide
15 the resources for them. They can't do the delivery
16 then provide the last step, ah, to help them, and I
17 really look forward, um, Commissioner, ah, to seeing
18 that, ah, happen. Um, so we had other questions that
19 we might not have an opportunity to ask, and we will
20 forward them, ah, to you, Commissioner, and to you,
21 Director. Ah, and then we look forward, ah, to your
22 respond. And we thank you for joining us this
23 morning and thank you for the great work that you do
24 for our older population, um, in our city and
25 hopefully we all pray that this pandemic, ah, will go

1 away as quickly as possible. And hopefully the
2 change in Washington will help us.

3 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: [laughs]

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: God help us.

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: [inaudible]

6 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Got it.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, and please go out
8 to vote and urge all your family.

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right, I
10 [inaudible] people can see it, it says vote.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Um, I
13 wanted to just make, before I leave, thank you very
14 much for this. Thank you, Kate, for being a great
15 partner with us. We just, one little correction.
16 The program that is currently part of GetFood is
17 Greenwich House, um, and I wanted to just put that
18 for the record the correct, all right? Um, so thank
19 you again all very, very much, and it's been an honor
20 to spend this morning with you.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, I didn't know that
22 Greenwich House was part of it. Were they one of the
23 new vendor that just join?

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, OK, so hopefully,
3 yeah, the centers under them, um, will be able also
4 to benefits, too.

5 DIRECTOR MACKENZIE: Thank you for that
6 correction, thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You're
8 welcome.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: All right, thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you
11 all.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I'll pass it back to
13 our policy analyst, Kalima, to call the, the next
14 panel.

15 MODERATOR: Thank you, Chair. We will
16 now turn to public testimony. Once more, I'd like to
17 remind everyone that unlike our typical council
18 hearings we will be calling individuals one by one to
19 testify. Council members who have questions for a
20 particular panelist should use the raise hand
21 function in Zoom and you will be called on after each
22 panel has completed their testimony. For panelists,
23 once your name is called a member of our staff will
24 unmute and the Sergeant at Arms will give you the go-
25 ahead to begin after setting the timer, after setting

1 the timer. All testimonies will be limited to three
2 minutes. Please wait for the Sergeant at Arms to
3 announce that you may begin before delivering your
4 testimony. The first panelist will be Katelyn
5 Andrews from Live On New York, Tara Klein from United
6 Neighborhood Houses, and Kevin Jones from AARP. We
7 will first begin with Katelyn Andrews.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 KATELYN ANDREWS: Thank you, Chair Chin,
11 Council Member Ayala, Council Member Vallone for the
12 opportunity to testify today. My name is Katelyn
13 Andrews. I'm the director of public policy at Live
14 On New York. Live On New York's members include more
15 than 100 community-based nonprofits that provide core
16 services that allow older New Yorkers to thrive in
17 communities as they age. With our members we work to
18 make New York a better place to age. First, we
19 want to thank all of the, ah, nonprofit organizations
20 that have stepped up during the pandemic to provide
21 critical services to older New Yorkers, and we would
22 like to focus our testimony on the financial needs of
23 home-delivered meals nonprofits, particularly as we
24 go into this new, um, contract period. This is
25 really important, as recently a, an analysis done by

1
2 Candid found that 1829 nonprofit organizations might
3 go out of business across New York due to financial
4 strain from the COVID crisis. We cannot have New
5 York City exacerbating this by paying nonprofits
6 rates below what they deserve. So what does that
7 mean? We need all contracts to fully fund and direct
8 cost rate initiative. This was an initiative set out
9 by the administration that has recently, um, come
10 under uncertainty and is not, there is not a commit
11 right now to fully fund this initiative moving
12 forward. We need to ensure that these future
13 contracts have the full ICR rates included. We also
14 recommend that DFTA reimbursement providers for the
15 true cost of a meal and fulfill all contractual
16 obligations associated with this program. A great
17 start to that would be following the line of
18 questioning of Council Member Vallone to increase
19 rates from \$9.58 as proposed in the RFP to \$11.78,
20 which is the national average for a home-delivered
21 meal. That means we're almost two dollars below the
22 national average for a home-delivered meal in urban
23 areas. We also need cost escalators and cost of
24 living adjustments in this contract and all nonprofit
25 contracts for the city, knowing that raw food costs

1 will go up, salary increases are necessary for this
2 predominantly female work force, um, it's really
3 important that this is included in the contracts
4 moving forward. We also know that demand has
5 increased and will continue to increase. It is our
6 understanding that nonprofit home-delivered meal
7 providers have been asked to refer clients to get
8 food rather than continuing to enroll clients into
9 this program, um, due to a lack of funding, so we
10 really would love to see this program be supported
11 and given the financial resources needed to continue
12 to enroll clients that are deemed eligible by the
13 case management agencies. Um, we also really want
14 to emphasize the need for a smooth transition from
15 old contracts to new contracts as well as any
16 transitions from GetFood clients to home-delivered
17 meals or towards the ends of GetFood whenever that
18 might be. We need a smooth transition to make sure
19 all older adults [inaudible].

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 KATELYN ANDREWS: Third and have their
23 needs met into the future. Thank you for the
24 opportunity to testify.

1
2 MODERATOR: Thank you, Katelyn. We will
3 now be hearing from Tara Klein from United
4 Neighborhood Houses.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 TARA KLEIN: Thank you so much, Chair
7 Chin, to testify today. My name is Tara Klein. I'm
8 a policy analyst with United Neighborhood Houses, a
9 policy and social change organization representing 44
10 neighbor settlement houses. Eight UNH settlements,
11 ah, currently provide home-delivered meals either as
12 lead contractors or subcontractors. During COVID-19
13 the HDM programs saw demand increase rapidly, with
14 many indicating a 20% to 30% uptick in demand as
15 urgent community needs grew. New awards were
16 recently announced for the HDM RFP. We remain very
17 concerned that this RFP proceeded in the midst of a
18 global pandemic that has significantly strained
19 programs and created major uncertainty about the
20 future programming and participation levels. The
21 COVID-19 pandemic is not the time for the city to
22 release any new procurement that envisions services
23 for years to come, and DFTA should heed this call as
24 it proceeds with several other procurements,
25 including older adult centers. But here we are. So

1 now we need to build the strongest HDM system that we
2 can. Despite its overwhelming success in maintaining
3 health and nutrition the HDM program has been
4 significantly under-funded for years with DFTA
5 contracts failing to cover the full cost of providing
6 meals. Before the pandemic some providers
7 individually reported losing hundreds of thousands of
8 dollars each year on their contracts, which has only
9 been made more acute by the increased demand during
10 COVID. This under-funding undercuts the quality and
11 availability of services for the older adults who
12 rely on these meals. The city failed to invest any
13 new funding in the program this year and, as we heard
14 earlier, even eliminated the 2.84 million dollars and
15 annually recurring one-shot funding. All this while
16 the RP included several programatic changes to
17 increase meal choice that add more costs. Um, as we
18 just heard DFTA's new per-meal reimbursement rate is
19 20% less than the national average cost of a home-
20 delivered meal of \$11.78 and an independent analysis
21 by UNH and Live On in partnership with Sea Change
22 Capital Partners has confirmed that this \$11.78 rate
23 is close to the true cost of a meal in New York City.
24 In addition to these low rates, which urgently be
25

1
2 increased, simple math shows us that DFTA's new per-
3 meal reimbursement rate and the 40 million dollars of
4 annual funding available as listed in the RFP is not
5 even enough to meet the current number of meals
6 served. Something needs to be done to correct course
7 here. Either the city needs to add 4 million dollars
8 just to meet the needs of its own, the terms of its
9 own procurement, or contractors are going to be
10 forced to reduce the number of meals they serve each
11 year by 418,000 meals, which would deny much-needed
12 food and social services to older New Yorkers in
13 need. The city must increase funding along with its
14 per-meal rate in order to make the home-delivered
15 meal program whole. It must also include annual cost
16 escalators in contracts, investment in capital fund
17 for programs, and reverse the cut to the indirect
18 cost rate initiative. We urge the city to look to
19 new federal funding sources as they become available
20 to support the program, but absent of this the city
21 must...

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

23 TARA KLEIN: ...increase the [inaudible]
24 investment into the program. Thank you so much for
25

1
2 the opportunity to testify, and I'm happy to answer
3 questions.

4 MODERATOR: Thank you, Tara. We will now
5 be hearing from Kevin Jones from AARP.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 KEVIN JONES: Good morning, Chair Chin
8 and members of the Committee on Aging. My name is
9 Kevin Jones and I'm the associate state director of
10 advocacy in AARP New York, which represents 750,000
11 members age 50 and older in New York City. I want to
12 thank you for the opportunity to testify today about
13 the future of home-delivered meals and for
14 recognizing how many older residents depend on them
15 to stay healthy and fed. Those age 50 and older
16 account for nearly a third of our population, a
17 number that is likely to increase by 30% by 2040.
18 They are among the most susceptible to COVID-19,
19 particularly older New Yorkers of color who have been
20 hit at a disproportionately high rate. They are also
21 far more likely than their white peers to suffer from
22 economic insecurity, making it harder to put food on
23 the table. AARP's Disrupting Racial and Ethnic
24 Disparities reports found that pocketbook issues are
25 the greatest source of stress facing older residents

1 and that financial hardships are felt most acutely by
2 our aging African American, Hispanic, and Asian
3 American residents. Before the pandemic nearly one
4 million New Yorkers, ah, city residents were food
5 insecure, including one in 10 older New Yorkers.
6 That number has now spiked to over 2.2 million, or
7 roughly 25% of the population. Older New Yorkers
8 must not only have an adequate amount of food that
9 provides the right nutrients. It must also be
10 cultural competent. That is why we support
11 Resolution 112-2018, which calls on the Department
12 for the Aging to, ah, ensure that halal meals are
13 available as part of the home-delivered meals
14 program. Many meals are provided by nonprofit
15 senior-serving organizations that shoulder, ah, much
16 of the cost because of the gap between what the city
17 pays for a home-delivered meal and the actual cost of
18 that meal. With nonprofits also suffering
19 financially, we worry that it is going to be even
20 harder, if not impossible, for them to continue
21 providing this essential service. That's why we must
22 have a robust and well-funded home-delivered meal
23 program, including adequate funding for senior-
24 serving organizations to help older adults through
25

1 the recovery and beyond. Senior centers which are
2 currently closed combat both food insecurity and
3 isolation by providing meals and offering
4 opportunities for socialization. Even before the
5 pandemic older adults were more likely to experience
6 loneliness and social isolation, which can be as
7 damaging to one's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a
8 day. According to a report by AARP and United Health
9 Foundation, we are now facing, ah, experiencing a
10 loneliness epidemic with two-thirds of adults age 50
11 and older reporting feeling isolated since the onset
12 of the pandemic. Senior centers also give staffers a
13 great ability to check on the welfare of those they
14 serve. There are certain things that you just can't
15 do through a phone call or video conference. For
16 example, staff have an easier time telling if someone
17 has lost a significant amount of weight, or perhaps
18 have not been eating enough, or if the state of their
19 clothing indicates that they have trouble completing
20 household chores. If someone doesn't show up who
21 usually does that's also a sign that something may be
22 wrong. That's why we encourage the city to develop a
23 set of standards available for public review with the
24 safe reopening of congregate meals in senior centers.
25

1
2 Grab-and-go meals which may allow for appropriate
3 social distancing could be a potential first step.
4 Food insecurity...

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

6 KEVIN JONES: ...in the older New Yorkers
7 has been a problem for a long time and the pandemic
8 has made it worse. Thank you for allowing me the
9 opportunity to speak about how we can address now and
10 in the future, and I am happy to answer any questions
11 you may have.

12 MODERATOR: Thank you, Kevin. Just, I
13 just want to remind council members if you have any
14 questions for this panel please use the raise hand
15 function on Zoom.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I just wanted to thank
17 this, ah, panel for your, your testimony and for
18 your, your advocacy. Um, it just shows that we need
19 to advocate for more funding, especially, um, in the
20 next budget and, and that process starts, you know,
21 in a, in a couple months. And so we, we need to
22 prepare, ah, to continue to push on the indirect cost
23 and increasing the meal program. Because I remember
24 the commissioner, ah, talking about early on that,
25 um, you know, they want the home-delivered meal

1
2 program to be intact and that's why it was separated,
3 ah, from the GetFood program. But that program needs
4 the resources and when we talk about, you know, five
5 meals a day versus six meals a day, a week, um, or
6 seven meals a week, I mean, that's something that we
7 have to continue to look for, ah, to make sure that
8 the seniors' needs are met, and we know that the
9 funding has always been the problem, and that is
10 something we just have to, to continue to fight, ah,
11 to include in the budget. But I just wanted to thank
12 this panel, ah, for your great work.

13 MODERATOR: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.
14 I see Council Member Vallone has questions for this
15 panel. Council Member Vallone.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [inaudible] echo
18 the chair's comments with Katelyn and Tara and Kevin.
19 Thank you so much. We always do listen to your words
20 and your concerns, and it's a big part of how we
21 shape our questions and conferences, over seven years
22 now. Ah, Mighty Margaret, as we call her, and myself
23 have been, ah, ah, the Batman and Robin team, and we,
24 we really do, ah, appreciate, especially now with the
25 virtual setup. You know, it's a little bit more, ah,

1
2 challenging to have those personal follow-ups. So
3 your words today, we will follow up, and you hear our
4 questions, so if there's ever something you want us
5 to follow up on. Um, maybe you can help me. There
6 was, ah, there was some type of call that I think had
7 stopped. Was it the, is it the Get Food call that,
8 that, I think that's the one, so maybe we can help
9 with the commissioner and get back to her, because it
10 seems like our local providers are telling me that
11 that phone call, that DFTA update, has stopped. Have
12 you heard anything on that also?

13 KATELYN ANDREWS: Um, yes. I believe
14 that the, um, GetFood call might have paused for a
15 period of time and we had a recent conversation with
16 the, um, with Kate MacKenzie and are really helpful
17 that we'll be able to get something back on the
18 calendar specifically, 'cause the get, the GetFood
19 monthly calls, um, they were on all GetFood, ah,
20 services, not specific to older adults, though it
21 certainly covered that to a large extent. Um, but we
22 are in conversation with Kate MacKenzie's team to see
23 if we can, um, discuss having a meeting specific for
24 the needs of older adults, um, who are receiving

1
2 GetFood and have providers continue to hear, because
3 they certainly do appreciate those meetings.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And do you see
5 any, um, challenge, I guess, with the transition from
6 GetFood, I guess, between the legacy and the new and
7 the, the request maybe for seniors beyond food for
8 additional services, are those being met or are we
9 finding a new challenge with seniors looking for
10 those needs beyond just the meal program? And that
11 would be my last.

12 KATELYN ANDREWS: Sure. I think the good
13 news is that we now are aware of a whole new cohort
14 of older adults that the system might not have
15 previously been interacting with and, um, maybe the
16 pandemic allowed more older adults to be comfortable
17 to share their needs that might have existed prior,
18 um, to all of this. And so that's really positive
19 and I certainly hope that we can continue to engage
20 the older adults to make sure that they're receiving
21 SCRIE and all of the benefits that they might be
22 entitled to, as well as determining if there are
23 additional supports that might be necessary. Um, I'm
24 sure there could be an opportunity for conversations
25 with providers, the Department for the Aging, um, the

1
2 food team, and figure out how we can best assess
3 those needs and prepare the supports, um, to make
4 sure they're in place, and I think certainly making
5 the connections for the non-legacy clients to their
6 local senior center if they might not have been aware
7 previously that that center is around. Um, that
8 would be great to do a warm hand-off introduction to
9 the services, tell them about the virtual
10 programming, and really show them what New York has
11 to offer.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, I think
13 that's an opportunity we can use then to reintroduce
14 them to maybe for the first time, like you said, it's
15 a new, it's a new wave of folks that are coming
16 fiscal the first time. So they may not even be aware
17 [inaudible]. So thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

18 TARA KLEIN: I would also just add and
19 underscore that, um, around May DFTA did tell
20 providers, home-delivered meal providers, to stop
21 signing up new clients [inaudible] for the clients to
22 GetFood and because of that there were social service
23 needs that were unaddressed, ah, because they were
24 not able to receive the case management services and
25 the daily wellness checks that come with the, the HDM

1
2 program, and so while there were still wellness calls
3 happening, you know, the depth of service that
4 happens from the home-delivered meals program, that
5 was really lost for those people who might have
6 needed it. Um, and so that does remain a concern as
7 well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Has that
9 continued at any point or is it still not happening?

10 TARA KLEIN: I believe it's still, it's
11 still sort of frozen, that's my understanding.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's, that's
13 not good. All right, we'll have to follow up on
14 that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I mean, like the
16 commissioner was saying that, um, you know, the
17 provider don't have the capacity and, ah, but you
18 have to help them build the capacity, because that
19 was the first question back then, it's like we have a
20 home-delivered meal program. Why don't we just sign
21 the, the seniors up and connect them and, ah, the
22 whole conversation was, oh, we just want to make sure
23 that the home deliverable meal program, you know,
24 stay as it, like don't get interrupted or whatever,
25 and then everybody got, ah, channeled into the, the

1
2 GetFood program. But the other thing that I raised
3 earlier, a lot of that population could have been the
4 population that went to the social adult day care.
5 Ah, so we don't know going forward if SADC is going
6 to open back up. Um, it doesn't seem like any time
7 soon. So these seniors still need the service and
8 we, and it would be a good opportunity for them to
9 get connected back to the regular seniors who are
10 providing, ah senior centers, who are providing lots
11 of programming even during the pandemic, ah, virtual
12 programs and, and other important, you know, wellness
13 check. So we'll definitely continue to, to advocate
14 for that. And thank you again to this panel.

15 MODERATOR: Thank you to this panel. We
16 will now be calling on the next panel. Ravi Reddi
17 from the Aging American Federation, Shavania Pally,
18 Pilly, sorry, from the India House, Cristal Simon,
19 Simmons from the Isaac Center, and Rachel Sharel from
20 City Meals on Wheels. We will be starting with Ravi
21 from the Asian American Federation.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 RAVI REDDI: I want to thank committee
24 Chair Chin and Council Members Ayala, Diaz, Vallone,
25 Eugene, Treyger, and Deutsch for holding this

1 hearing. I'm Ravi Reddi, the associate director of
2 advocacy and policy at the Asian American Federation.
3 We represent the collective voice of more than 70
4 nonprofits, serving 1.3 million New York, Asian New
5 Yorkers. The challenges our service providers are
6 facing in providing for our seniors are significant,
7 including high rates of poverty and limited English
8 proficiency, lack of immigration status, the digital
9 divide, and anti-Asian xenophobia, as was tragically
10 demonstrated in the case of an 89-year-old Asian
11 elder who was set on fire in Brooklyn in late July.
12 We're appreciative of the continued efforts being
13 made by DFTA and this committee, but we're here on
14 behalf of community-based organizations that are
15 doing on-the-ground work in order to make real the
16 urgency. First, [inaudible] define the challenge
17 facing our senior meal service providers in the near
18 future. One, rising demand as more seniors remain
19 homebound and vigilant against the danger posed to
20 them, and two, in expanding increasingly diverse and
21 dispersed Asian senior population across our city.
22 From 2000 to 2018 the aging senior population in our
23 city more than doubled. There are now over 150,000
24 Asian seniors living here, making up 16% of our over-

1 fifty population. Among Asian seniors, one in four
2 in our city live in poverty, 83% of whom were
3 [inaudible], almost twice the rate for non-Asians.
4 And our seniors are helping create new Asian
5 communities in places such as Parkchester and East
6 Harlem. In this context many CBOs who are the sole
7 service providers for certain ethnic communities are
8 struggling to cover the expanding [inaudible] demand
9 without the necessary funding. But our seniors are
10 going to our CBOs before they go to mainstream
11 providers or city agencies in large part due to
12 culturally competent services and innovations. For
13 example, while many senior centers and service
14 providers are not able to meet the volume of need,
15 they're coordinating with local restaurants to
16 deliver culturally competent meals, stock food in
17 pantries, and build relationships with produce
18 suppliers familiar with Asian diets. Our CBOs are
19 also incorporating mental health checks and embedding
20 wellness interventions into these basic needs
21 services because one thing is clear - individual
22 services are better received and utilized when
23 delivered together. But these innovations by our
24 service providers are born out of necessity. From
25

1
2 2002 to 2014 our analysis showed that the Asian
3 American's share of DFTA funding was 2.7% of total
4 contract dollars and 3.7% of the total number of
5 contracts. These numbers were from over a decade of
6 data and they reflect a long-term trend that has
7 resulted in our CBOs becoming increasingly dependent
8 on private funds. The cumulative effect of this
9 funding can't be ignored during a pandemic, and
10 whether we can keep our seniors fed through the
11 winter is an urgent, uncomfortable open question.
12 But as Council Member Chin said earlier, we have to
13 continue the fight. Our service providers in our
14 community are working together to build internal
15 structures that include umbrella organizations that
16 have the expertise in coordinating with member
17 nonprofits to be innovative in sourcing culturally
18 appropriate meals and have the community buy into hit
19 the ground running with the existing relationships.
20 Still city contracting processes have left these
21 critical actors out. Our service providers are
22 leading by example...

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 RAVI REDDI: ...[inaudible] what they need
25 from our city instead of [inaudible] recommendations.

1 We need to continue funding for the senior centers
2 for immigrant population initiatives at 1.5 million
3 dollars to support Asian senior centers in both
4 existing and emerging neighborhoods. We need to
5 raise reimbursement rates, as was previously
6 referred, for ethnic home-delivered meals and
7 temporarily allow [inaudible] meal contractors to run
8 home-delivered meal services as long as it's needed,
9 especially as it will allow groups to continue to
10 reach seniors who were homebound prior to COVID and
11 will remain so due to physical limitations. We need
12 to address the growing need for in-language and
13 culturally competent health care and mental health
14 services for Asian seniors. We need to amend the
15 contracting processes to allow Asian-led nonprofits
16 to more accurately reflect the cultural and language
17 expertise they bring when serving Asian seniors. We
18 need to establish protections for subcontractors or
19 restructure contracts to enable Asian senior centers
20 to contract directly with the city for homebound
21 meals. And finally we need to ensure that DFTA
22 receives the funding they need to fully implement the
23 new citywide languages covered in Local Law 30. I
24
25

1 want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to
2 provide testimony and I await any questions.

3
4 MODERATOR: Thank you, Ravi. We will now
5 be hearing from Sharian from the India House.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 SHAARYANA PILLAL: Thank you, Chair
8 Margaret Chin and the Committee on Aging for the
9 opportunity to testify today. My name is Shaaryana
10 Pillal and I'm testifying from India Home, a
11 community organization that is dedicated our heart
12 and soul towards serving the South Asian senior
13 community in Queens and throughout New York City with
14 culturally competent senior center programming.
15 During this pandemic I'm proud to say we did not stop
16 any of our programs. We pivoted and we continued to
17 serve in as many ways as possible creatively and
18 we're having more of [inaudible] we ever had before.
19 Since the start of the pandemic we have delivered
20 more than 11,000 meals, delivered groceries to more
21 than 900 seniors, and provided more than 18,000
22 telephone reassurance check-ins, and more than 17,000
23 service units through educational talks, nutritional
24 talks, yoga, meditation, exercise, ESL, citizenship
25 classes, among many other classes. To take a step

1 back, in 2017 we conducted a needs assessment, which
2 focused on the needs of the South Asian senior
3 community throughout New York City. When assessing
4 economic priorities for this population, food and
5 groceries were of top importance. We acknowledged
6 this and tailored our program accordingly, even
7 before the pandemic started. When the pandemic came
8 upon us and took over Queens in mid March we
9 continued to be in tune with the needs of the seniors
10 during this time, of which food insecurity was still
11 the biggest concern. We knew that the senior
12 population was especially vulnerable to contracting
13 COVID-19 and that we cannot take the risk of making
14 them go outside to get food, even though the, even
15 through the grab-and-go method, which was proposed
16 and which we tried for a day and it did not go well.
17 Many of the seniors were depend on our senior centers
18 for the only nutritious meals that they had. Many of
19 our seniors cannot afford to go out and get meals,
20 both financially and in terms of their health.
21 Despite this program not being funded by DFTA, we
22 continued to fight for nutritious, culturally
23 competent meals for these seniors as a basic right.
24 We started our own culturally competent home-

1 delivered meal program and grocery program, which
2 again has delivered more than 11,000 meals and
3 grocery store to more than 900 seniors. We're
4 working directly with a local caterer who serves
5 halal meals [inaudible] style of cooking and delivers
6 the meals to the safety of the seniors' homes. While
7 this has been incredibly fulfilling to provide this
8 program during this incredibly difficult time, it has
9 not come without its own challenges. We have been
10 scrambling for funding and are fully dependent on the
11 funding from foundations and the generosity of
12 individual donors during this time for this program.
13 We were directed to GetFoodNYC as a solution and told
14 to direct all of our seniors to this program. But
15 this program has lacked cultural competence, as it
16 has lacked quality. Our seniors have told us about
17 the state of the meals delivered through this program
18 and it is truly unacceptable. I think we can all
19 agree that our seniors deserve better. They don't
20 deserve the same treatment that our organization's
21 founder was told by [inaudible] senior programs
22 before 10 years ago, we don't have curry for your
23 father. When our seniors are not prioritized or
24 heard it is our job to speak up for them and advocate
25

1
2 for them. And so we have to speak up on the
3 continued importance of local organizations with
4 cultural competence and knowledge of these
5 populations to be the ones delivering the meals...

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 SHAARYANA PILLAL: ...to these seniors.

8 We have shown that nothing will stop our dedication
9 to the provision of meals to vulnerable seniors and
10 we ask that the city do the same. While we are
11 temporarily able to run with the help of private
12 donations, we need the city's help to be able to
13 sustain this program and to continue to provide and
14 prioritize culturally competent services. As such,
15 we ask that the city provide support to grassroot
16 organizations such as India Home with resources and
17 funding to better serve and stabilize the immigrant
18 Asian community. We ask that you prioritize food
19 security and the COVID-19 response for seniors in a
20 demonstrable way. We ask that you work directly with
21 local nonprofits to handle the provision and delivery
22 of meals so that cultural competence is ensured. And
23 we ask that you provide funding for these local
24 organizations to be able to continue to meet food
25 security needs of this population. We urge your

1 support and look forward to working together to
2 stabilize this community. Thank you.

3
4 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now hear
5 from Khristel from Isaac Center.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: Thank you, Chair Chin,
8 for this time to testify. My name is Khristel
9 Simmons. I'm the director of food and nutrition
10 services at Stanley Isaac's Neighborhood Center,
11 overseeing the home-delivered meals program,
12 congregate lunch program for older adults. I have
13 had the pleasure of being an HDM director for 11
14 years now. I observe, keep policy, and budgetary
15 decisions impacting both older adults and human
16 service professionals being made by our city and
17 state government entities with little to no discourse
18 or opportunities for meaningful partnerships with
19 those utilizing the services, as well as those
20 employed within the sector. In March of 2020 without
21 a clear blueprint of how to procedure, the human
22 services sector worked tirelessly to ensure both
23 service continuity and expansion to accommodate
24 rapidly growing needs across the city. The HDM
25 program is not only a meal delivery program, it is a

1 lifeline to the seniors of New York City, to those
2 who work to build its very foundation. In March of
3 2020 without a clear blueprint of how to proceed the
4 human services worked tirelessly to ensure, as I said
5 before. We know that seniors are amongst the most
6 vulnerable and disproportionately impacted throughout
7 this public health crisis. Since the onset of the
8 pandemic the Isaac Center Meals on Wheels program has
9 been at the forefront of feeding New York City's most
10 under-represented and oppressed population. The
11 Isaac Center created, funded, and adopted a community
12 kitchen model to deliver additional meals to our
13 seniors who needed them. This included Meals on
14 Wheels to recipients, senior center members, and
15 congregate, and our elderly neighbors in need. The
16 GetFood program has been made more difficult and
17 time-consuming for seniors to re-register and stay on
18 the program. The burden for keeping seniors on the
19 program has largely fallen on the senior centers
20 already stretched to meet the growing needs of our
21 members stuck at home. But the reality is that until
22 senior centers resourced to begin cooking and
23 distributing meals there is not going to be a
24 significant reduction in the need for GetFood. We
25

1 ask for the Aging Committee's help and advocacy to
2 release funding for senior centers, such as ours, to
3 cook grab-and-go meals. Further, it was extremely
4 disheartening to learn of no restoration or
5 baselining of one-time project funding from both the
6 council and DFTA for the current fiscal years. We
7 ask for the Aging Committee's help and advocacy to
8 restore and baseline this one-time funding from DFTA,
9 particularly as need continues to grow until the
10 COVID crisis is behind us. Thank you to the
11 Committee on Aging for holding this important hearing
12 and the opportunities to submit testimony. Thank
13 you.

14
15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
16 now hear from Rachel from City Meals on Wheels.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 RACHEL SHERROW: Thank you. Ah, my name
19 is Rachel Sherrow. I'm the associate executive
20 director at City Meals on Wheels and I would really
21 like to begin by thanking the council and especially
22 Chair Chin for her dedication to advocating for more
23 supportive senior services, and for City Meals as
24 well. Just to clarify, um, City Meals on Wheels
25 funds weekend, holiday, and emergency meals, um, to

1 the providers and that's why older adults in their
2 homes get food seven days a week. Um, I'd like to
3 also say, ah, reiterate the fact that City Meals
4 along with our partners and advocates who you've
5 heard from have been consistently lobbying for the
6 support of aging services, which are continually
7 underfunded, despite the growing population of older
8 adults and especially while we're in the midst of a
9 pandemic. While money has been found for other
10 services, aging funding has been held stagnant or
11 worse. The daily home-delivered meal program
12 throughout the city, along with support from City
13 Meals remain seamless, even when the city shut down
14 services throughout because of COVID. As a sector,
15 aging providers have always known how critical our
16 services are, but not more so than in the current
17 environment when Meals on Wheels staff are literally
18 essential workers, ensuring their recipients are not
19 without food and a friendly face, risking their own
20 lives to maintain a lifeline for our elderly
21 neighbors. The check-in can be almost as important
22 as the nutritious meals. The social isolation, which
23 was an issue before the pandemic, has devastated this
24 population acutely without a known end date in sight,
25

1
2 unable to socialize or even see family, afraid of
3 infecting those in the most vulnerable group. Ah,
4 although the, ah, HDML awardees have not been
5 confirmed by DFTA, we do know that a big part of the
6 RFP was to ensure quality of meals, menu choice, and
7 cultural competency. Home-delivered meal program are
8 integral to the survival and part of the larger
9 safety net that has been underfunded and under-
10 invested in over the years. And now when the Meals
11 on Wheels rolls have increased, even if they are
12 coming down, as the commissioner stated, they are,
13 um, they will continue to grow. It's imperative for
14 those in need to receive extra supplemental food in
15 addition to their daily meals because accessing other
16 means of nutrition is less possible now for most of
17 them. In addition to being a moral obligation, Meals
18 on Wheels is a cheaper alternative to
19 institutionalization, more dignified, and what the
20 majority of older adults prefer, especially in light
21 of the current devastation of life with the nursing
22 homes by the coronavirus. I thank you for the
23 opportunity and I, I really hope that we'll be able
24 to right this, ah, aging ship in the next couple of
25 years. Thank you.

1
2 MODERATOR: Thank you, Rachel. That
3 concludes this panel. But if any council members
4 have any questions for this panel please use the Zoom
5 raise your hand function.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I wanted to, you know,
7 thank this, ah, panel, ah, for your advocacy and, and
8 especially the one who's, you know, on the ground
9 providing, um, the services. I know that at the
10 council we continue to advocate for the funding, ah,
11 for center that serves senior, ah, I mean, immigrant
12 senior population. And there's 10 of them. And this
13 year we fought against any cut. So they're still
14 getting, um, the same amount of funding that they
15 have gotten before, which is \$150,000, um, and
16 hopefully, you know, we can continue, um, to help
17 increase that funding. And one of the purpose of
18 that funding is to really help these center build
19 their capacity so that they will be prepared, um, to
20 apply for the senior center RFP when it's gonna be
21 available. Ah, so I just want, like India Home, I
22 wanted to ask like were you contacted by DFTA with
23 any kind of support and did you have an opportunity
24 to look at, um, the senior center concept paper and
25 see if that, if India Home will have the resources

1 and capacity, ah, to apply when the RFP is available?
2
3 I mean, we're trying to push it back because there's
4 all these uncertainties. But were you able to look
5 at, ah, and review the concept paper?

6 SHAARYANA PILLAL: Yes, definitely. Um,
7 we did take a look at the concept paper and we will
8 be applying for, for this program. I mean, we, um,
9 we do believe like it's, it's very needed for and
10 this amount of support from DFTA would be, um, you
11 know, really helpful with the amount of reach that
12 we've been able to achieve at this time. Um, your
13 earlier question, could you just repeat your earlier
14 question, I think I, um, lost tracking.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, I mean, like the,
16 we're still continuing to provide funding, ah, for
17 the senior center that serves immigrant population.
18 I think India Home is one of the, ah, the center that
19 we support. There's 10 of them, ah, that the council
20 support. So I hope that you know about the funding
21 and you're able to access the, the resources. Um,
22 have you been having, I guess, any problem in terms
23 of getting, um, the contract signed or, or, you know,
24 accessing the funding, ah, from DFTA?

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SHAARYANA PILLAL: For sure. Um, it was during the, the transition I think that, you know, we were, we were directed to having our seniors, um, that, that our own meals would not be the ones [inaudible] local caterer would not be funded by discretionary dollars. Um, I know that for this program, this has been our most robust program and, um, as such, you know, we [inaudible], ah, be able to get more support, specifically for this program providing the services. So, um, we just, we, we need that support to be able to, you know, be funded for this program, which is needed by our seniors.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: You've been going in and out. I guess, was India Home a subcontractor to any home-delivered meal contractor in Queens, or, or in any other part of the city?

SHAARYANA PILLAL: We, we were not. Um, we were contracted with, um, so basically DFTA contracted directly with our caterer when the home-delivered meals happened. First they were contracted with us, then it was the [inaudible] caterer and then after the GetFoodNYC was [inaudible]. So that was kind of the process, um, that happened. But, yeah.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I, I guess we'll find
3 out more detail from DFTA in terms of how these 10
4 centers, ah, were taken care of. I just to make sure
5 that they know that the funding, ah, was allocated.
6 I mean, we fought for it, ah, and that's supposed to
7 have started July 1. So I want to make sure that,
8 ah, you get, you know, the, the money, ah, to support
9 your staff and the services that, that you provide.
10 Um, Rachel, I, I wanted you to, ah, talk a little bit
11 more about, um, City Meals on Wheels, ah, 'cause
12 you're the one that provides the emergency meal, the
13 weekend meal, um, so you have a contract with DFTA to
14 do that?

15 RACHEL SHERROW: Yes, we have a contract
16 with DFTA, um, to provide, ah, to leverage our fund
17 raising in order to provide weekend, holiday, and
18 emergency meals. So we have a small administrative
19 grant, that we've had the same amount since 1991.
20 Um, but we do have other monies that go through DFTA
21 because of your incredible generosity, um, for
22 emergency meals. And since the beginning of the
23 pandemic we have delivered over 750,000 emergency
24 meals, and a lot of that came, ah, was in reaction to
25 the need to fill the gap that GetFood wasn't and

1
2 because the system had shut down. Legacy clients
3 were allowed to continue their services, but there
4 was no, as Tara mentioned before, um, they weren't
5 allowed to take on additional clients.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I mean, shouldn't the
7 DFTA expand, ah, funding support for City Meals on
8 Wheels? I mean, like you're providing the sixth and
9 seventh meal. I mean, it's like DFTA is only
10 providing five meals a week and early on we were
11 talking about, you know, one meal a day for the
12 senior, is that sufficient? Um, there's seven days
13 in a week, ah, so if your funding hasn't increased
14 since 1991? And that's like.

15 RACHEL SHERROW: Our administrative
16 grant, right, right. No, it's, yeah, we, ah, that
17 would be terrific to, ah, to increase it, and I know,
18 you know, things are, are pretty rough. But we also
19 know that it's so much cheaper to keep someone in
20 their homes than into, than institutionalize them,
21 whether you like Meals on Wheels or not. Um, and
22 it's a wonderful program, it's a safety net, and it
23 has been underfunded for years and because of City
24 Meals on Wheels, 18,000 to about 19,000 homebound
25 elderly are able to receive food on weekends,

1
2 holidays, and emergencies. So they have enough food
3 365 days a year plus some. Ah, some of our clients,
4 about 14%, we know need an additional meal, the one
5 meal a day is not enough. So we have a small program
6 where we bring, um, more food to their homes, about a
7 thousand clients are getting that, but that's not
8 enough. And especially now when folks maybe could
9 have gone out to their local deli or store, they're
10 just not doing that now.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, I know. We thank
12 you for the, the great work you've been doing, and I
13 know that we see...

14 RACHEL SHERROW: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...the City Meal boxes,
16 um, through our districts and through other council
17 members', ah, district. Um, I think Ms. Simmons
18 from, ah, Isaac Center, I mean, you guys are on the
19 ground. Um, you know, earlier when we talked with
20 the, the commissioner, are, are you guys ready to go
21 to start preparing the food again for the seniors
22 that you've been serving all along? Get them back
23 into your program?

24 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: Yes, but, um, just for
25 the record, we have been cooking for our home-

1 delivered meals program since March. We started with
2 our frozen meals. And in August of this year we
3 started preparing our hot meals. So we're cooking
4 and distributing about 3500 meals a week, ah, from
5 our kitchen. Safely, of course.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But that's from the,
8 the home-delivered meal?

9 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: That's for the home-
10 delivered meals program.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So that's not...

12 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: So yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...your congregate
14 meal, ah seniors.

15 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: No, but that's why we
16 believe, right, that's why we believe that we are
17 more than prepared and ready, but we are asking for,
18 you know, the funding to do so.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah. Yeah, because
20 there are a lot of other, ah, center, ah, like
21 yourself. Are you a subcontractor?

22 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: So we're the, we're
23 the lead contract...

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh.

2 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: ...and our
3 subcontractor is Union Settlement and Carter Bergen.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, OK. Yeah, because
5 there are a lot of senior center that are
6 subcontractor.

7 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: Right.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Because they do home-
9 delivered meal and so they're already still, they're
10 already cooking. So it doesn't, you know, it makes
11 sense for them to, to start cooking for the, the
12 client who used to come to the center and if not, if
13 the city won't allow the center to grab and go then
14 [inaudible] to include back all the senior center
15 providers, um, in the meal program. But thank you
16 again for your, your testimony.

17 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [inaudible] you want
19 to call the next panel?

20 MODERATOR: Yes. First I'll call on
21 Council Member Vallone, I see he has hand raised.
22 Thank you, Chair.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Just quickly I
25 wanted to thank this panel as I called the panel. So

1
2 you know, as our chair said, how, how much we depend
3 on you, your services, your advice. Um, you heard
4 our testimony throughout, especially the commissioner
5 and the previous panel. I just, the last thought
6 from me was anything else you wanted to add on that
7 transition? It seems to me there's, there's a little
8 maybe of a disconnect between DFTA and the GetFood
9 and the legacy versus the new. Um, I guess the
10 upkeep of the new seniors that are now partaking of
11 the services and considered new versus legacy, are
12 you having any additional difficulty or concern there
13 as we are continuing through this GetFood program and
14 maybe hopefully transition off?

15 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: So of course with,
16 with all programs there are always going to be, um, a
17 lot of issues. I would say that the, one of the main
18 issues that stand out between the GetFood program and
19 the home-delivered meals program is for our Meals on
20 Wheels program we can start sending a meal within 24
21 hours, versus the GetFood from the time a person is
22 referred it takes about three to four days before
23 they even start receiving a box.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's a big
25 difference.

1
2 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: That's a, it's a very,
3 very big difference. And of course the, you know,
4 the accommodation, so we have clients that don't eat
5 pork or beef and we, we have the luxury of, um,
6 changing out a meal, or we have vegetarian meals as
7 well. We have kosher meals. We're hoping to have,
8 start having halal meals soon. So that's the
9 difference, like I said, between home-delivered meals
10 and GetFood.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Has there been
12 any conversation of bringing down from three to four
13 days back to a day? I mean, how are we [inaudible]?

14 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: There's been a lot of,
15 there's been a lot of conversations, but because
16 there's, you know, you always have that, I guess the
17 third party, so the senior center social workers and
18 my colleague, who's the clinical directory, Aaron
19 Rooney, I mean, he can, he will refer a client, but
20 like I said it takes, the turnaround time is too
21 long. And there are some people, some seniors that
22 call and say well I don't have anything right now.
23 What are we supposed to do? So that's why...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Exactly.

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KHRISTEL SIMMONS: So that's how we ended up in the summertime, um, with our community kitchen model because of that very issue with GetFood. And the community, um, kitchen model was something, a model that we created, we funded and we also delivered the meals to the clients in the community. And these were mostly congregate clients and very few home-delivered meals clients that asked for an extra meal, because, as you know, home-delivered meals, it's only one meal a day and I know you and I eat more than once a day.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [inaudible]

KHRISTEL SIMMONS: Right, so luckily, you know, we had that option, but we weren't, we haven't be able to, um, continue with our community kitchen model because we don't have the funding for it.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So there may be an opportunity there, that community kitchen model, and I, I don't see any changes in the crisis coming and they're probably going to increase in demand. So maybe we can put our heads together after today's hearing on this privilege partnership with the nonprofits and the ability, whether it's through fundraising or the immediate ability of providing

1
2 food, ah, the restaurant industry is itself has
3 already, um, collapsing, but if we can bridge this
4 gap between providing of the food, getting it to you
5 to get to the seniors before that three-four day and
6 immediate turnaround there may be something we can do
7 on our, within this network of people we're talking
8 to step up. And I see Rachel, you're shaking your
9 head.

10 RACHEL SHERROW: Yes, and I, I just want
11 to add, and I said this in my last, ah, the last
12 hearing, my last testimony, it would be so great to
13 get the experts who are actually in the field, like
14 Khristel, who are doing this every day, who know
15 their communities and have been doing this for so
16 long, to give their, um, their advice and for there
17 to be a little more transparency around what is the
18 plan, if there is a plan, because, as Khristel said,
19 it, it takes a while to set things up. They could
20 pivot and, and deliver, I know they can, I know them
21 very well, to their congregate members, but they have
22 to have funding and they have to have the support and
23 the plan, and I think that's what's really been
24 missing. So that would be great to continue that.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, I think
3 we're on to something. That's why I always like to
4 talk to the panels because Margaret and I always, you
5 know, as we always say it, my, my goosebumps are up
6 and my, my brain is already twirling on trying to
7 combine those, the angels that are out there do have
8 the funding and do want to make [inaudible] and don't
9 know how to get them to exactly to, to, to you and to
10 Khristel because you already, [inaudible] reinvent
11 the wheel doesn't need to be done, it's just need to,
12 to fund the wheel. It's already in place. It's the
13 funding that we need. So maybe then, Khristel, we
14 can follow up with this group through Margaret's
15 leadership on how to do that within the counties,
16 too, right, so each county has their ability to know
17 their resource needs and their groups, ah, and then
18 break it down through the council [inaudible]
19 districts we all have. I have a huge senior
20 population out here in northeast Queens and we're so
21 diverse and so geographically located to our homes
22 that we're so dependent on that meal delivery, that,
23 um, I go from City Field to Nassau County, it's
24 insane.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: What's that? So
3 excited to follow up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 KHRISTEL SIMMONS: Thank you, thank you.
5 I look forward to hearing from you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. I think,
8 yeah, I think we will have committee staff follow up,
9 ah, with some of the panelists, you know, [inaudible]

10 MODERATOR: Chair Chin, you're breaking
11 up a little.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [inaudible] oh, yeah,
13 I mean...

14 UNIDENTIFIED: If you could repeat, you're
15 [inaudible].

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, OK. Yeah, I want
17 the committee staff, ah, to follow up with some of
18 the panelists and please reach out and give us your
19 suggestions and, you know, what you've been doing and
20 what would be helpful, and we will look for
21 additional, ah, resources, that there might be
22 fundings available, like certain program that are not
23 running, funding is not being used, and then maybe we
24 can, ah, reallocate. But definitely in the next
25 budget fight, um, we will, you know, make sure, um,

1
2 that, that home-delivered meal and senior center
3 providers get the resources that they need. Thank
4 you.

5 MODERATOR: Thank you, Chair. Thank you
6 to this panel. This concludes the panelists for
7 today. But, however, if we inadvertently missed
8 anyone that would like to testify please use the Zoom
9 raise hand function and we will call you in the order
10 your hand is raised. Seeing none, we have concluded
11 public testimony for this hearing. I will now turn
12 it back to Chair Chin for some closing remarks.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Ah, once again, I
14 wanted to thank you, ah, [inaudible] everyone for
15 joining us today, everyone, ah, [inaudible] and my
16 colleague, especially, ah, Council Member Vallone, my
17 partner in this, and, ah, and all the staff that
18 worked on preparing for this hearing and all the
19 Sergeant at Arms that are helping support this
20 hearing, and, ah, we will continue, ah, to fight for
21 more resources for our older adult population in New
22 York City, and we look forward to continuing to work
23 with all the advocates and all the providers and we
24 want everyone to, ah, stay well, um, and please get
25 the message out that we all got to vote on November 3

and that we will fight for more adequate funding.

It's gonna be fun next year, OK, and we thank you

again for all your great work. [gavel] This conclude

our hearing for today. Thank you.

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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 December 7, 2020