

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

----- X

November 19, 2024  
Start: 10:22 a.m.  
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Diana I. Ayala  
Chairperson

Alexa Avilés  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chris Banks  
Tiffany Cabán  
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Carmen N. De La Rosa  
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## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

## Council Members:

Shekar Krishnan

Mari Perez  
Fondo de Mujeres Indocumentadas

Kelly Gonzalez  
Fondo de Mujeres Indocumentadas

Rocio Gonzalez Ramirez  
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Kathryn Kliff  
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Director of Office of Asylum Seeker Operations

Iris Rodriguez  
Deputy Commissioner of DHS

Emily Ashton  
Senior Advisor at New York City Emergency  
Management

Doctor Ted Long  
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Rudy S. Giuliani  
Housing Recovery Operations

Christine Quinn  
WIN

Claire Salant  
IBO Lead Budget and Policy Analyst

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

Jacob Berman  
IBO Director of Social and Community Services

Senator Andrew Gounardes

Erika Alvarez  
Fondo de Mujeres Indocumentadas

Eylyn Velasquez  
Fondo de Mujeres Indocumentadas

Tania Paredes  
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Mamadou Diallo  
Testimony read by Djeinaba Diaby

Airenakhue B. Omoragbon  
African Communities Together

Abdou Karim Diane  
African Communities Together

Edafe Okporo  
Refuge America

Maura Heron  
Sanctuary for families

Barat Ellman  
Rabbi, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

Halema Wali  
Afghans for a Better Tomorrow

WIN Panelist 1

WIN Panelist 2

WIN Panelist 3

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

Carlos Rosales  
Citizens Committee for Children of New York

Robin Altman  
Catholic Charities

Jackeline Cruz  
Unlocal

Linda Tewksbury

Allen Keller

Jorge Paz Reyes  
Mixteca

Lauren Migliaccio  
Immigrant Justice Corps

Angela Eslava Gonzalez  
NYLAG

Karim Walker  
Safety Net Project

Stephanie Cordero  
Brooklyn Legal Services

Carolyn Gleason

Doctor Shobana Ramasamy

Karin Takahashi  
Brooklyn Legal Services

Taina Wagnac  
NYIC

Magdalena Barbosa

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

Kat

Alana Tornello  
Human Services Council

Jennie Spector



1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE WITH COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION 7

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Keep it down, please.

3 Thank you. Thank you. Good morning and welcome to  
4 the New York City Council hybrid hearing on the  
5 Committee on General Welfare and Immigration. At  
6 this time, please silence all electronic devices.  
7 Also, please do not approach the dais at no time. If  
8 you have any questions, please raise your hand and  
9 one of us at Sergeant at Arms will kindly assist you.  
10 There'll be no food or drinks allowed in the  
11 Chambers. And if you need to have a conversation,  
12 please take it out to the back of the Chambers out in  
13 the foyer. Thank you very much for your kind  
14 cooperation. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

15 [gavel]

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Hold on. Sorry,  
17 Chair. Hold on.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

19 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking French]

20 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

21 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

22 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you very much  
24 for your kind cooperation. Chairs, we are ready to  
25 begin.

2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Good morning

4 everyone. Bear with us a minute. Good morning  
5 everyone and welcome to today's hearing. My name is  
6 Diana Ayala and I am the Deputy Speaker of the New  
7 York City Council and the Chair of the General  
8 Welfare Committee, and I will be speaking this way  
9 because we have translation services that are  
10 ongoing, and so I'm trying to be mindful to speak as  
11 slowly as possible. Today, we are holding an  
12 oversight hearing on the implementation of the  
13 Administration's 30 and 60-day rules for asylum-  
14 seekers in city shelters. International and domestic  
15 law recognizes and individual's right to flee  
16 persecution in their home country and seek asylum in  
17 another. Historically, New York City has been a city  
18 that welcomes new migrants, and this council has  
19 passed laws that protect migrants from unnecessary  
20 interference with their right to reside in this city  
21 and this country, and those laws continue to hold  
22 true regardless of any changes from January. In  
23 addition to these protections, the City has also  
24 always provided our New Yorkers with an array of  
25 available resources that this city has to offer,



2 including shelter. Since 2022, the City has welcomed  
3 more than 200,000 immigrant newcomers with many  
4 coming to the City seeking asylum and other forms of  
5 immigration relief. Many of these new city residents  
6 began their journey residing in the city shelter  
7 system in DHS-run shelters and Humanitarian Emergency  
8 Response Relief Centers, or HERRCs, and respite  
9 centers run by other city agencies. As of October  
10 27<sup>th</sup> of this year, the Adams Administration reported  
11 that over 59,000 of these new immigrants were in the  
12 city's care. Immigration to a new country includes  
13 many obstacles from the often harrowing and dangerous  
14 journeys to claim asylum to the long and sometimes  
15 inefficient immigration process that indicate when  
16 new arrivals can work to care for themselves and  
17 their families. Unfortunately, policies such as the  
18 Administration's 30 and 60-day shelter stays limits  
19 add unnecessary additional challenges to this arduous  
20 process. In July 2023, the Adams Administration has  
21 imposed limits on shelter stay for asylum-seekers and  
22 immigrant new arrivals beginning with 60 day limits  
23 for single adults that eventually lessen to 30 days  
24 and then 60-day limits for families staying in  
25 HERRCs. We have heard from many New Yorkers about

2 the challenges created by these shelter stay limits  
3 including inadequate case work services provided to  
4 those subject to these shelter stay limits,  
5 difficulties in receiving their mail and important  
6 documents sent by federal agencies regarding their  
7 immigration cases, continued access to legal  
8 services, and significant concerns regarding  
9 continuity of education for children of families.

10 We're here today to hear from directly-impacted  
11 individuals, advocates and the Administration about  
12 the implementation of the shelter stay limits,  
13 challenges that they may have caused to individuals  
14 and families and what the future of these policies  
15 looks like. At this time, I'd like to acknowledge  
16 that we've been joined by Council Member Brewer and  
17 Avilés, and I'm sure that we'll be joined by others  
18 shortly. I also wanted to recognize that we have  
19 been joined by the AP Government students from High  
20 school of Health Profession and their teacher Deborah  
21 Falmino [sp?] from Carlina Rivera's district. Thank  
22 you for coming. And I believe that we're also being  
23 joined by John Bohn [sic] High School students as  
24 well. I'm not sure if they're here, but if they are,  
25 welcome as well. At this time, I'd also like to

2 thank my committee staff who worked to prepare this  
3 hearing, Sahar Moazami, Legislative Counsel, Nina  
4 Rosenberg, Policy Analyst, Julia Haramis, Unit Head,  
5 Phariha Rahman, Finance Analyst, sorry I'm like  
6 stumbling through my words today, Anne Driscoll  
7 [sp?], Data Analyst, and finally my staff Elsie  
8 Encarnacion, Chief of Staff. I would now like to  
9 turn it over to Chair Avilés for her opening remarks.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Good morning  
11 everyone. I'm Council Member Alex Avilés, Chair of  
12 the Committee on Immigration. Thank you for joining  
13 us today. Today, we will be examining updates on  
14 the implementation of the 30 and 60-day shelter  
15 limit rules. I'd like to thank Deputy Speaker  
16 Ayala, Chair of the Committee on General Welfare for  
17 co-chairing this important hearing. I'd also like to  
18 thank the representatives from the Administration,  
19 members of the public, and my committee colleagues  
20 who have joined us here today. I'd like to begin by  
21 reminding everyone that New York City has always  
22 been and will always be a city of immigrants. Now,  
23 more than ever we must come together to protect our  
24 immigrant neighbors, both new arrivals and those who  
25 have called New York City home for some time. Many  
of us

2 are still processing the events of the last couple of  
3 weeks, but now it is the time to act. The next four  
4 years, and they may-- the next four years may be  
5 difficult and in fact may be very scary. But in New  
6 York City, we will work to ensure that our neighbors  
7 are free from fear and harm and are able to  
8 experience the America they've dreamt of and  
9 struggled to reach. This city has been a beacon of  
10 hope from countries around the world looking to start  
11 of new life, looking to escape suffering, looking to  
12 find opportunities. We must continue to support our  
13 immigrant communities, and with today's oversight  
14 hearing, the Committees on General Welfare and the  
15 Immigration Committee will again examine how the  
16 30/60-day shelter limit policies are affecting our  
17 newest New Yorkers. for those individuals who are  
18 directly impacted by these policies who wish to  
19 testify today but are uncomfortable with sharing  
20 their full name in this public setting, please feel  
21 free to write your first name only on the witness  
22 slip. As my co-chair mentioned, the 30 and 60-day  
23 shelter limits were introduced in July 2023 by the  
24 Adams Administration, and since then advocates and  
25 providers across the spectrums of fields have sounded

2 the alarm on the consequences of these shelter stay  
3 limits, and the lack of case management available to  
4 shelter residents. Providers have shared how housing  
5 and stability affects the ability of new arrivals to  
6 apply for any benefits or immigration statuses. If an  
7 application for assistance or immigration relief is  
8 sent and returned-- and the return address is a  
9 shelter that an applicant does not reside in anymore  
10 or has any access to, that only further complicates  
11 access to benefits that could help these individuals  
12 and families become independent from shelters. We're  
13 deeply concerned with how these policies are  
14 impacting school-aged children. Forcing children to  
15 leave their residences during the school year to  
16 possibly be placed in another shelter miles away from  
17 their school can affect a child's mental wellbeing  
18 and their progress in school. our bus system is  
19 already deeply challenged, so adding unnecessary  
20 burdens to that system as well leaves us truly  
21 scratching our heads about the true intention of this  
22 policy which seems to result in more-- and highly-  
23 effective in creating chaos and waste rather than  
24 stabilization. Advocates, educators, residents have  
25 shared that constantly removing children from

2 classrooms affects everyone, especially the more--  
3 especially the permanently placed students who are  
4 seeing their class members disappear over and over  
5 again. There are also concerns about how this  
6 housing instability affects local providers and  
7 communities. Establishing relationships with shelter  
8 residents is a significant component of our work that  
9 community-based organizations and local providers do  
10 for their immigrant clients, especially for new  
11 arrivals who are often fearful of interactions with  
12 city agencies. Establishing that relationship is  
13 immensely complicated. However, if an individual  
14 family stops showing up because they've been moved to  
15 a different location, this constrains providers who  
16 put a lot of work already into initial contact with a  
17 client. While the number of new arrivals in shelters  
18 has decreased, the unintended consequences of not  
19 providing stable pathways for independence may put  
20 this city at greater risk of instability further down  
21 the line. We look forward to addressing these  
22 concerns today and hearing from the Administration on  
23 how we can work together to ensure that our immigrant  
24 newcomers are supported enough to being establishing  
25 their lives in New York City, we also look forward

2 to hearing testimony from the advocates and providers  
3 who support these newcomers endlessly and from  
4 newcomers themselves who like many before them,  
5 millions before them, who came from other countries  
6 very much in the same way, no allowing for  
7 revisionist history very much in the same way, to our  
8 beloved city to start anew. Lastly, the Committee on  
9 General Welfare will hear my bill Resolution 41 which  
10 calls on the New York State legislature to pass and  
11 the Governor to sign legislation to create the New  
12 York State Working Families Tax Credit and to support  
13 some of New York's most vulnerable children. I'm  
14 grateful to Chair Ayala and the Committee on General  
15 Welfare for hearing this bill and focusing  
16 relentlessly on ways to improve the lives of working  
17 families of our city. and lastly, I would like to  
18 thank the Committee staff for their work on this  
19 hearing, including Nicole Cata [sp?], Rebecca Barilla  
20 [sp?], Carolina Gil [sp?], Florentine Kabore, and  
21 finally my staff, Chief of Staff Edward Cerna  
22 [sp?], Legislative and Budget Director Christina  
23 Bottego, Legislative Fellow, Kate Burn [sp?], and  
24 Communications Director Winnie Marion [sp?], ad

2 everyone for working in the background to make this  
3 hearing run smoothly. And with that, thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. I will now  
5 turn it over to our pre-panel of impacted  
6 individuals. And a reminder that we have five minutes  
7 per panelist. I will now call up Kelly Gonzalez,  
8 Rocio Gonzalez-Ramirez, Kathryn Kliff, and Mari  
9 Perez. [speaking Spanish] One second, please. Okay,  
10 you begin on this side.

11 TRANSLATOR: Do you want me to sit down  
12 on the side? It's better? Okay.

13 KATHRYN KLIFF: Good morning. My name is  
14 Kathryn Kliff and I'm testifying on behalf of the  
15 Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless.  
16 Thank you to the Committee on General Welfare, Chair  
17 Ayala, the Committee on Immigration and Chair Avilés  
18 for the opportunity to testify today. Sure. As we  
19 sit here today, we have an incoming federal  
20 administration who has made it very clear they plan  
21 to cause harm to our newest New Yorkers. The City  
22 should be focusing its resources to help new arrivals  
23 get access to the help they need to move out of  
24 shelter, instead of imposing counter-productive  
25 requirements that force new arrivals to reapply for



2 shelter every 30 or 60 days. Case management and  
3 legal services are the answers, not forced  
4 relocations every 30 or 60 days. As you will hear  
5 today from those families and individuals directly  
6 impacted by the 30 and 60-day notices, these policies  
7 make it even harder for people to move out of  
8 shelter. Our clients often lose access to their mail  
9 once they move, including vital immigration  
10 documentation. They lose jobs when they have to miss  
11 work to reapply for shelter, or risk being placed in  
12 new locations far from their places of employment.  
13 For single adults who don't meet the requirements to  
14 remain in shelter, these time limits relegate them to  
15 the streets, further delaying their progress and  
16 exposing them to more physical harm as winter  
17 approaches. School-aged children, as was discussed  
18 in the introduction, are often placed further from  
19 their schools and miss weeks of school while they  
20 wait for new bus routes to be set up by the  
21 Department of Education. In addition to all of these  
22 harms, physically going to the offices where new  
23 arrivals must go to request another shelter placement  
24 may put them at risks. These sites are known to the  
25 public as locations where new arrivals will be,

2 putting them at risk of apprehension by the incoming  
3 federal administration. While we appreciate the  
4 City's announcement yesterday that families with  
5 children in grades K through six in non-DHS shelters  
6 will not need to change shelters after their second  
7 60-day notice, the policy should be that families  
8 should not have to change shelters at all, not even  
9 once. Each shelter change leads to significant  
10 disruption and negative consequences for families,  
11 especially for school-aged children. The Department  
12 of Homeless Services announced a few months ago that  
13 they plan to impose 60-day notices on new arrival  
14 families with children in the DHS system. Up until  
15 now, DHS families have not been subject to these  
16 notices. We told DHS we do not believe they have a  
17 legal basis to implement this policy in DHS shelters,  
18 and they have now agreed that they will not require  
19 these families to move at the end of the 60 days, as  
20 long as they request an extension prior to that date.  
21 However, we wait specifics of how this process will  
22 work in practice. We call on the City to end the use  
23 of the 30 and 60-day notices, provide quality case  
24 management at all shelters sites, invest in  
25 immigration legal services, and expand CityFHEPS in

2 accordance with the bills already passed by this  
3 council. At a time when the incoming federal  
4 government is actively working to harm our newest New  
5 Yorkers, the City should be doing everything in its  
6 power to protect them. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: [speaking Spanish]

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

10 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: I'm a little nervous so I  
12 apologize for my nervousness.

13 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: My name-- My name is Mari  
15 Cruz Perez. I'm living in one of the hotels based in  
16 Manhattan, right, and I'm going to explain some of  
17 the matters and situations I'm going through right  
18 now.

19 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: I have changed my cell to  
21 multiple shelters because of my economical situation.  
22 I have lived for a period of around 120 days in three  
23 different shelter-- I'm sorry-- in three different  
24 shelters.

25 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: In the shelter that I'm  
3 living at the moment is a shelter where I'm supposed  
4 to be there for 60 days, and unfortunately, in this  
5 shelter I have experienced a lot of racism  
6 discrimination because of national region.

7 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: There is a also a lack of  
9 information in that shelter. Something that happened  
10 to me, I was supposed to receive an immigration  
11 interview for-- you're familiar with immigration  
12 fingerprints, when you go to the immigration and you  
13 have to scan your hands. Basically, they gave me my  
14 immigration letter, but I received the letter four  
15 days after my fingerprints interview, and this letter  
16 was already too late.

17 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: And what happened because of  
19 this mistake they made, I have to wait three more  
20 months in order to get another fingerprints interview  
21 with the U.S. Department of Immigration office, and  
22 this delayed my immigration case. Also, every time I  
23 go to that shelter, I have to remind them-- I'm  
24 sorry. They have to remind me all the time in two  
25 weeks I have to leave, in two weeks I have to leave.

2 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: I'm a little afraid because  
4 of what is happening right now. To all of you, you  
5 know we have a new president that's going to start in  
6 January, President Trump. I'm very afraid, because I  
7 don't know what's going to happen with me after he  
8 takes the office in January.

9 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: When I have to go to this  
11 interview or to the shelter, sometimes my son have to  
12 lose one day of classes. He's starting high school  
13 here in New York, but he had to miss this day of  
14 classes because of this.

15 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: I just want to do the right  
17 things, that's why I'm asking for all your help,  
18 because I just don't want to live in fear all the  
19 time. I don't want to live afraid of everything. I  
20 just want to live in peace, and that's why I'm asking  
21 for your help at the moment. Okay, this is  
22 everything what I wanted to say now.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Gracias.

24 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: Thank you.

25 [applause]

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, no clapping.

3 Rocio?

4 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
5 Spanish]

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: [speaking Spanish]

8 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
9 Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: This 11 months I have been  
11 living in the United States. I was transferred to  
12 different hotels and to different shelters around six  
13 times already, and also-- and they also send me to  
14 public hotels as well.

15 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
16 Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: In these hotels we can see  
18 any kind of people, dangerous people, and people who  
19 are okay, or people who are very dangerous. So we  
20 don't have safety in the hotel. Another problem is  
21 that my children loss two weeks of classes because we  
22 were transferring so many times from one hotel to  
23 another.

24 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
25 Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: Those weeks that we're  
3 staying in that shelter, we noticed that those  
4 shelters were extremely cold. The reason why it was  
5 so cold was because the air condition were high  
6 temperature, and my children got very sick. They got  
7 sick with respiratory infection. So, similar  
8 [inaudible] like this.

9 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
10 Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: Another problem is that the  
12 bathrooms of those shelters are very dirty. They are  
13 so dirty that I got infected with a [inaudible]  
14 infection because of how dirty those bathrooms were.  
15 Also the food in those shelters is very bad. The  
16 food is so bad that my children don't want to eat  
17 that kind of food they're serving in that shelter.

18 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
19 Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: Please don't misinterpret  
21 what I'm saying. I appreciate to all of you and to  
22 the government of New York that you're giving me a  
23 plate of food and also a place for me to live, but  
24 please understand it's very hard for me because of my  
25

2 children, that my children are going to eat the bad  
3 food.

4 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
5 Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: It's not only the bad  
7 conditions at those shelters and also-- we're also  
8 spending money moving from one place to another. Let  
9 me give you an example. We moved from one shelter to  
10 another shelter located around 45 Street and  
11 Roosevelt and this caused us extra expenses for us to  
12 move.

13 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
14 Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: We also have very high  
16 stress in this type of shelters. Let me give you an  
17 example. My husband developed a bad skin disease  
18 called rosacea where the skin becomes very bad, and  
19 the reason was because of the high stress that he was  
20 facing in that shelter.

21 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
22 Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: The doctor told me that that  
24 skin disease was caused because of stress.



2 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
3 Spanish]

4 TRANSLATOR: I would like that you give  
5 me-- I'm sorry. You give me the opportunity to  
6 change all these, that I can have a better quality of  
7 life to live in a better places, because it's very  
8 hard for me to live with these-- especially I'm very  
9 concerned about my children. My children need help  
10 and they don't have to follow [sic] anything.

11 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
12 Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: I wanted to be calm. I  
14 don't want to have stresses or pressure because of  
15 this. I wanted to be in a place in peace.

16 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
17 Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: Okay. There are other things  
19 I would like to say to you, but unfortunately I know  
20 we are limited at time and my other [inaudible] here,  
21 they also need to say their own things. So this is  
22 the only things I can say for now, but there are  
23 other things I would like to tell you as well.

24 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
25 Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: We belong to a group of  
3 undocumented women who live in the United States.

4 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
5 Gonzalez [speaking Spanish].

6 TRANSLATOR: My name is Kelly Gonzalez.  
7 I'm originally from Venezuela, South America, and I  
8 belong to a group who undocumented women. It's  
9 called Las Comadres [sic] in Spanish, right? And this  
10 is the name of our group.

11 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
12 Gonzalez.

13 TRANSLATOR: Okay. Since I came to the  
14 United States-- since I came from Venezuela in  
15 January I have bene living in these immigration  
16 shelters, and I have been evicted around seven times  
17 from this shelter and this is very bad, especially  
18 because of me and because of my children.

19 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
20 Gonzalez.

21 TRANSLATOR: I'm sorry, not seven times,  
22 five times. My apologies. I was evicted five times  
23 form the shelters.

24 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
25 Gonzalez.

2 TRANSLATOR: This is a big problem for  
3 all of us, because my children are new in the United  
4 States. As you know, the education in Venezuela is  
5 different so they're getting adapted to the American  
6 school education. So what happened, we had to be  
7 processed together. So they cannot process only  
8 myself and the children individually. All of us, we  
9 had to be processed together.

10 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
11 Gonzalez.

12 TRANSLATOR: This is the main problem. I  
13 have seven children, so you know it's many children  
14 together. So the problem is very hard for me to go  
15 from one shelter to another with seven children, and  
16 some of those shelter don't want to accept me because  
17 the amount of children I have. I have seven  
18 children. When they find out I have seven children,  
19 they don't want to take us.

20 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
21 Gonzalez.

22 TRANSLATOR: So, because of this my  
23 situation has been so bad that even sleeping on a  
24 stretcher, you know, like the ones from the  
25 hospitals, right? And because I've been waiting for

2 a very long time, sometimes for one week to weeks for  
3 me-- for my case to be processed for those shelters.

4 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
5 Gonzalez.

6 TRANSLATOR: Also, another problem that  
7 we have, you know, the children have a benefit  
8 provided by the schools. This is transportation and  
9 benefits like this, you know, because they are moving  
10 us so often from one shelter to another, my children  
11 cannot take advantage of this school benefit or  
12 transportation because of this.

13 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
14 Gonzalez.

15 TRANSLATOR: The problem is that the  
16 school need two weeks in order to process a change of  
17 address, so that means two weeks to process the  
18 change of address and two weeks to transfer the  
19 children from one school to another, and this is a  
20 very long process.

21 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
22 Gonzalez.

23 TRANSLATOR: And this is the reason why  
24 my seven children cannot enjoy this benefit of school  
25 transportation because what I'm facing right now.

2 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
3 Gonzalez.

4 TRANSLATOR: Another problem is this,  
5 because they don't have steady school transportation,  
6 what is happening is this-- let's say they have a  
7 medical appointment and also they have to go to  
8 school. My poor children have to decide between  
9 missing a class or missing a medical appointment it's  
10 very bad for all of us.

11 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
12 Gonzalez.

13 TRANSLATOR: So, if I have a steady place  
14 for me to live even if a steady shelter, these things  
15 would not be happening. There were situations when I  
16 need to take the children to a medical appointment  
17 and they had to miss school days or a day of school  
18 because of this.

19 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
20 Gonzalez.

21 TRANSLATOR: This is why I'm concerned.  
22 I came from Venezuela to the United States thinking  
23 about my children. I wanted a better education for my  
24 children, the education they don't have in my home  
25 country.

2 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
3 Gonzalez.

4 TRANSLATOR: If I'm able to find a steady  
5 place to live, even as a shelter, I would life will  
6 change because I will be able to find a job. Also,  
7 my children would be able to enjoy the school  
8 transportation benefit, but in order to enjoy these  
9 things, we need a steady place for us to live.

10 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
11 Gonzalez.

12 TRANSLATOR: This is what I wanted to say  
13 to you because it's very important as mothers to  
14 invest in the education of our children, because our  
15 children will be our support when we become old and  
16 when we get into this old age. We can count on them  
17 as old people when we get this age. So thank you for  
18 listening to us.

19 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish] Kelly  
20 Gonzalez.

21 TRANSLATOR: Okay, thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish].

23 I want to thank you for coming today. [speaking  
24 Spanish] I know that it's very difficult. The  
25 process that you're going through is not, you know,

2 an easy one. I have one question. Are any of you in  
3 your respective sites receiving case assistance? Do  
4 you have a social worker that you're working with?

5 KELLY GONZALEZ: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: Okay. Honestly, I don't  
7 have my own case manager. I believe there are case  
8 managers there, but I don't have my personal case  
9 manager, no.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. [speaking  
11 Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: No, she doesn't have one  
13 [inaudible] social worker no.

14 MARI CRUZ PEREZ: [speaking Spanish]

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Can you translate.

16 TRANSLATOR: Oh, apologize.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You can do it from  
18 there.

19 MARI CRUZ PEREZ:

20 TRANSLATOR: We only have access to the  
21 social worker when we have the interview every two  
22 weeks.

23 MARI PEREZ CRUZ: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: This-- we have this  
25 interview mostly when they have to remind us that we

2 have to leave the shelter by certain day. This is  
3 when we, you know, get the interview with the social  
4 worker.

5 MARI PEREZ CRUZ: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: No, but we don't have a  
7 personal social worker who is working our case. We  
8 don't have one, no.

9 MARI PEREZ CRUZ: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: No, we don't have a personal  
11 social worker. What we do, sometimes when we have  
12 questions, we go to the back area of the shelter and  
13 we ask people about these people who work at the  
14 shelter, but we don't have a personal social worker  
15 now.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. [speaking  
17 Spanish] Thank you.

18 TRANSLATOR: Oh, I think she have a  
19 question.

20 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
21 Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: I already have a social  
23 security number and I also have work permission in  
24 order to work in the United States. I also took a  
25 course in construction.



2 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
3 Spanish]

4 TRANSLATOR: Okay. And I took this  
5 construction course for two weeks, right, in order  
6 for me to get my certification to work as a  
7 construction worker.

8 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
9 Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: I remember one of the social  
11 workers who was not in the shelter, but in another  
12 shelter, she helped me in order for me to enroll in  
13 this courses in order to get the certification to  
14 work as a construction worker. So I'm not going to  
15 say everything is bad in the shelters. Things can be  
16 improved, but I was able to get these courses when I  
17 was in that other shelter.

18 ROCIO GONZALEZ RAMIREZ: [speaking  
19 Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: This is what I wanted to  
21 say. It's true that some social workers are paying  
22 attention to us the immigrants, but there also very  
23 bad things happening in these immigrant shelters,  
24 too.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

3 Thank you.

4 TRANSLATOR: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright, thank you

6 for your testimony. I would now like to turn it

7 over to our Committee Counsel. We'll wait for the

8 Administration to get here so that we can swear

9 members from the Administration. While we wait, I

10 would like to recognize that we've been joined by

11 Council Members Bottcher, Joseph, Banks, and Ung and

12 Cabán on Zoom. I would now like to turn it over to

13 our Committee Counsel to swear in members of the

14 Administration. Give me one second, because I also

15 just want to put in a quick reminder. I want to

16 remind members of the public that this is a

17 government proceeding, and that decorum shall be

18 observed at all times. As such, members of the

19 public shall remain silent at all times.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Will you please raise

21 your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the truth,

22 the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this

23 committee and to respond honestly to Council Member

24 questions? Thank you. You may begin when ready.

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Good morning.

3 Before I begin, I just want to thank the panel that  
4 went before us for their bravery in coming forward.

5 We take all concerns incredibly seriously. Racism  
6 and discrimination is not tolerated in our shelters,  
7 and we are happy and we have staff here to follow up  
8 with the individuals after the hearing to address

9 some of their concerns. But good morning, Chair

10 Avilés, Chair Ayala and members of the General

11 Welfare and Immigration Committees. My name is Molly

12 Schaeffer, Director of the New York City Mayor's

13 Office of Asylum Seeker Operations. I am before you

14 today to discuss--

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Quiet in the  
17 chambers.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Guards you can  
20 remove-- guards you can remove.

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] Stop  
22 evictions now. Stop the evictions now.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You can feel free to  
24 remove them. Feel free to remove them.

2 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: [inaudible] Stop the  
3 evictions now. End shelter evictions now. End  
4 shelter evictions now.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Guards, you can  
6 remove them.

7 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: End shelter evictions  
8 now. End shelter evictions now.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You can remove them.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: End shelter evictions  
11 now.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You can remove them.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: End shelter evictions  
14 now. End shelter evictions now. End shelter  
15 evictions now. End shelter evictions now. End  
16 shelter evictions now. End shelter evictions now.  
17 End shelter evictions now. End shelter evictions now.  
18 End shelter evictions now. End shelter evictions  
19 now. [inaudible] Say it loud, say it clear,  
20 immigrants are welcome here. Say it loud, say it  
21 clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say it loud, say  
22 it clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say it loud,  
23 say it clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say it  
24 loud, say it clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say  
25 it loud, say it clear, immigrants are welcome here.

2 Say it loud, say it clear, immigrants are welcome  
3 here. Say it loud, say it clear, immigrants are  
4 welcome here. Say it loud, say it clear, immigrants  
5 are welcome here. Say it loud, say it clear,  
6 immigrants are welcome here. Say it loud, say it  
7 clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say it loud, say  
8 it clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say it loud.  
9 Say it clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say it  
10 loud, say it clear, immigrants are welcome here. Say  
11 it loud, say it clear, immigrants are welcome here.  
12 Say it loud, say it clear, immigrants are welcome  
13 here. Say it loud, say it clear, immigrants are  
14 welcome here. Say it loud, say it clear, immigrants  
15 are welcome here. Say it loud, say it clear,  
16 immigrants are welcome here. [inaudible] End shelter  
17 evictions now. End shelter evictions now.  
18 [inaudible] End shelter evictions now. End shelter  
19 evictions now. End shelter evictions now. End  
20 shelter evictions now.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright. I just want  
22 to remind-- I just want to remind folks, again, that  
23 we need to be respectful. We only have until one  
24 o'clock with the Administration. We would like to  
25 get through our list of questions that I'm sure that

2 all of us in the room are interested in hearing the  
3 responses to. So if there's anyone else that plans  
4 to disrupt, if you can do it now so that we can get  
5 you out of the way, I would greatly appreciate it.  
6 Okay, go ahead, Molly.

7 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Alright. So, my  
8 name is Molly Schaeffer. I'm Director of the mayor's  
9 Office of Asylum Seeker Operations. I'm before you  
10 today to discuss the City's ongoing efforts to  
11 support migrants and asylum-seekers who have and  
12 continue to arrive in New York City. I'm also joined  
13 by key agency partners, Doctor Ted Long from New York  
14 City Health + Hospitals, Chief of Operations, Iris  
15 Rodriguez of New York City Department of Homeless  
16 Services, Executive Director Rudy S. Giuliani of New  
17 York City Housing Recovery Operations, and Senior  
18 Advisor Emily Ashton with New York City Emergency  
19 Management. In the interest of time, I would like to  
20 summarize my submitted testimony and move quickly to  
21 answering your questions. New York City is proudly a  
22 city of immigrants. Since April 2022, we have seen  
23 an unprecedented influx of over 223,000 new arrivals  
24 and we've had to use every tool in our toolbox to  
25 meet this moment. We've focused on helping each

2 person who comes through our system to achieve their  
3 goal and take their next steps for their lives in the  
4 United States. This includes exiting shelter which  
5 has been bolstered by intensive case management  
6 paired with shelter time limits. We are focused on  
7 the barriers to exit, including language access,  
8 legal assistance, housing, access to work and  
9 childcare. I'm also proud of the partnerships with  
10 the state and other local municipalizes to help  
11 identify resettlement programs around the state as  
12 well as around the country. I would also like to  
13 take a moment to share information regarding two  
14 operational changes we'll be making in the coming  
15 months that we announced yesterday. We heard from  
16 this body, advocates, and the people in our care  
17 about problems missing important mail due to  
18 movements throughout the system. We'll be opening a  
19 central mail room to serve all of our non-DHS  
20 clients. We will work with you to help spread the  
21 word to clients to ensure they pick up their mail.  
22 Additionally, in the event families with children  
23 enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade request  
24 a second 60-day notice, they can stay in the same  
25 shelter they were previously assigned to if they

2 still need more time in the system, making it easier  
3 for those children to continue attending their same  
4 schools and saving the City hundreds of thousands  
5 spent on busing those students to those schools. With  
6 that, we're happy to take any questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Good  
8 morning. We've been joined by Council Member  
9 Krishnan. He was a little late, but it's okay. It's  
10 like the principal. The principal's here guys. Be  
11 on time. So, good morning and thank you for being  
12 here. Sorry I have a little scratchy voice, so I'm  
13 chewing on something. But can you-- I guess my first  
14 question is, you know, regarding the 30-day limit.  
15 If you could tell us how many 30-day time limit  
16 notices has DHS issued in 2024 as compared to--  
17 because I know that-- so we're working with two  
18 different systems. What does that look like on the  
19 HERRC end and what does that look like on the DHS  
20 side?

21 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes, if you give me  
22 one second I can get the exact data.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Absolutely.

24 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: DHS has not started  
25 giving 60-day notices in their system at this time.



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2 Give me one minute to get the data. If we can come  
3 back to that while I try to find the data.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Do you-- maybe DHS  
5 can respond to this. Is there a pause on the 30-day  
6 limit at DHS, or is this supposed-- are you planning  
7 to implement it, at which point?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Good  
9 morning, Chair. Good morning. So, currently, we're  
10 working with our advocates, Legal Aid, on how we are  
11 planning to implement the 60-day notices for our  
12 families with children. At present time, we have not  
13 started.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, so it may not  
15 be for some time.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We are  
17 currently working with Administration and do not have  
18 a definitive date as of yet.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. I appreciate  
20 that. Thank you.

21 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: And then I got the  
22 data. So their-- DHS is still doing 30-day notices.  
23 So I want to make that clear. That has not paused.  
24 So, in FY 2024, 15,750 30-day notices were issued at  
25 non-DHS sites, and 6,015 30-day notices have been

2 issued at non-DHS sites in FY 2025. And in DHS,  
3 1,513 30-day notices were issued at DHS sites in FY  
4 2024, and 1,056 30-day notices have been issued at  
5 DHS sites in FY 2025.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright, so that's  
7 the 30-day at DHS?

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, what hasn't been  
10 implemented is the-- it's the families.

11 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, alright. So  
13 this is just singles, gotcha [sic]. Everyone's been  
14 clarified, okay. The Administration noted that  
15 clients that receive the 30- and 60-day notices would  
16 receive enhanced case work to prepare for possible  
17 departure from the city's care. Can you run through  
18 the services provided? I think as you heard in the  
19 testimony, there was some discrepancy between sites.  
20 so, some folks were only hearing from the case worker  
21 prior-- 15 days prior to the expiration of their time  
22 at that specific site, whereas some others felt like  
23 maybe they had a little bit more interaction  
24 regarding other things like, you know, workforce  
25 development and things, you know, similar to that.

2 But that was kind of what-- the sense that I got from  
3 that panel. Could you explain a little bit about the  
4 process?

5 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: yeah. I'm going to  
6 turn it over to Doctor Ted Long, but one thing I just  
7 want to say is that we've worked really hard over the  
8 last year to make our case management process better  
9 and to hear from folks and really try to enhance the  
10 services we're giving, including more legal  
11 connections, including more workforce connection.  
12 But let me pass it over to Doctor Long.

13 DOCTOR LONG: Yeah, I appreciate the  
14 question, and I also just want to say with the  
15 speakers that came ahead of us here, I really  
16 appreciate hearing their points of view as well. I  
17 think it's really important as talk about case work,  
18 and I put my primary care hat on here as I think  
19 about how we engage people and how we listen to  
20 people. To just zoom out for a second, and going  
21 beyond the numbers. We had individuals sitting in  
22 front of us a few minutes ago. I'm the primary care  
23 doctor for new arrivals, for asylum-seekers, and I  
24 run sites for our new arrivals, our humanitarian  
25 centers for new arrivals as well. I spend a lot of

2 time with them, and I really want to make the point  
3 that case work starts with hearing everybody's  
4 individual story. And to use your words, Deputy  
5 Speaker, people have not only had a harrowing journey  
6 here, but the way that we start to talk to people, I  
7 think it's important to remember people have been  
8 through literal hell to get here to New York City.  
9 I've heard stories of family members that have seen  
10 their partners next to them shot in the head and  
11 killed on the way here. I've heard from a mother  
12 that really stuck with me that would move heaven and  
13 earth, because she had undergone female genital  
14 mutilation, to protect the small daughter she was  
15 carrying with her when she came to the New York City  
16 arrival center which has been named our Little Ellis  
17 Island by our new arrivals. That's where case  
18 management starts, and that's what we've done since  
19 we started-- since we opened the arrival center. We  
20 start by asking what are some of your initial goals.  
21 Do you need immediate legal help, for example? And  
22 you've heard that reflected through the panel as  
23 well. We've made some changes immediately. Now, we  
24 offer to help you submit your work authorization form  
25 the arrival center within 24 hours of when you

2 arrive. We weren't doing that on day one of the  
3 crisis, but we're doing it now, because we've heard  
4 that's what people need and that's what people--  
5 we're meeting people where they are. The way case  
6 management's really evolved is we've heard these  
7 stories. We've seen what people's needs are, and I  
8 think that it was laid out very nicely earlier. One  
9 thing you took away is everybody wants to work. So  
10 that's been a big focus of our case management  
11 efforts. I'm proud to say that one of the numbers  
12 that shows I think we're doing a good job now is that  
13 more than 70 percent of all eligible adults in our  
14 system have either applied for work authorization  
15 with our help or actually have work authorization and  
16 are as the second speaker was saying, going through  
17 things like OSHA training that our case managers are  
18 connecting them to. So what our case managers are  
19 doing day-to-day is one, seeing what legal help you  
20 need and plugging you into exactly the right place  
21 based on where you are in your legal journey if you  
22 will. Two, talking to you about housing. And I have  
23 a picture on my phone from-- sent to me a couple days  
24 ago now, from a family that we were able to work with  
25 them to find housing. They resettled. It's a family

2 of four that sent a picture to our team with them  
3 with-- I think it was a thumbs up outside of their  
4 new home, their first home in the United States of  
5 America. That's them starting to achieve the  
6 American dream. We help them to do that. And then  
7 other things case management can include, for  
8 example-- it was mentioned earlier-- the stress that  
9 people are experiencing, especially after they've  
10 made the harrowing journey, again, your words. So we  
11 have behavioral health that we combine with case  
12 management. We also make referrals to New York City  
13 Health + Hospitals. We provide the bulk of  
14 outpatient behavioral health and inpatient behavioral  
15 health for New York City. So we have-- we create  
16 pathways for people based on what their individual  
17 needs are. We have people to have different  
18 trainings, learning to speak English, things like  
19 that. the totality of everything we do which again  
20 is really driven not by what we thought people  
21 needed, but hearing from people what they need, and  
22 hearing form everybody in this room. I especially  
23 want to thank-- I know we're joined by Coalition for  
24 Homeless, Legal Aid Society. We formed a Community  
25 Advisory Board. We meet every other week. We

2 listen. At this point, I would really consider our  
3 success a community-driven effort, and the result of  
4 that is that today through all the case management  
5 that we're doing, each week now 42 percent more  
6 families with children are taking the next step  
7 forward and leaving our shelter system than a year  
8 ago.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Just to clarify,  
10 Doctor Long, do we know how many of the 70 percent of  
11 folks that have applied for workforce authorization,  
12 do you know how many of them have received that  
13 authorization?

14 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We don't get that  
15 feedback back from the federal government. So,  
16 everything that we have is self-reported, and so  
17 people have to affirmatively tell us in that case.  
18 We don't necessarily have that information.

19 DOCTOR LONG: It's a good question  
20 actually just to further make the point that we  
21 wanted to-- we are working with the information we  
22 have, and we're doing the best job we can listening.  
23 So we actually ask in our-- every other week-- that  
24 was another good true statement what was made-- where  
25 you are again in your work authorization journey, if

2 you've received work authorization, if you have the  
3 paperwork, because then our case manager won't talk  
4 to you about applying for work authorization, but  
5 once you have it that's where we talk about the OSHA  
6 trainings that were mentioned, learn English as a  
7 second language, trying to find new jobs which we've  
8 been helping people to do, or even doing trainings  
9 with other community-based organizations for things  
10 like learning to work in kitchens, things like that.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Now, going back to  
12 the original question, because I think my-- I don't  
13 think that I heard an actual response to that, and I  
14 get it, like we're trying to do the best that we can,  
15 but you know, part of me listening and also part of  
16 being part of the impacted community, oftentimes I  
17 realize that there's a disconnect in the way that,  
18 you know, we in government perceive things of going  
19 and the way that the actual people that are receiving  
20 the services perceive that those services are  
21 actually going, and often times the truth lies  
22 somewhere in the middle. And so, I'm concerned about  
23 how you all are able to evaluate the efficacy of the  
24 case management that is being provided from site to  
25 site, acknowledging that there are many sites, right?



2 So it's difficult to be in all places at all times.

3 But how do we, you know, ensure that, you know, in  
4 the maybe five or 10 that are not functioning the way  
5 that you're intending them to function, who's gauging  
6 that? Who's evaluating that, and who's taking  
7 corrective action?

8 DOCTOR LONG: Yeah, I can start that,  
9 because we think a lot about that. And I think one  
10 of the things that we've done is we've sought to find  
11 the best case management organizations out there.  
12 So, if you rewind, you know, a year ago now, we had  
13 our existing vendors that were providing other  
14 services that began to provide case management.  
15 Today at all of my sites, except for one of the sites  
16 that's transitioning, we have Cherokee Nation  
17 providing case management. They're at 38 sites  
18 overall. They led the resettlement effort for the  
19 country for the Afghani people, 85,000 Afghani people  
20 about five years ago, and I remember one of their  
21 tribe elders that pulled me aside as we were  
22 beginning to work with them and making plans with  
23 them and said nobody cares resettlement more than the  
24 Cherokee people. And what we've done is we've taken,  
25 for example, them as an organization and we've taken

2 away the other case managers that were providing  
3 services on site and put them in place instead,  
4 because we believe that they are passionate, want to  
5 do the best job, and that's where our Community  
6 Advisory Board, for example, informs the efforts that  
7 they do day to day. But to agree with you, I'm happy  
8 to say there are 38 sites today, but that also means  
9 that they were not at 38 sites at all times. So,  
10 we've moved as fast as we can to get them into our  
11 sites. The good news is that we've overall completed  
12 700,000 case management meetings. We're starting to  
13 see things like, you know, the majority of people  
14 either having applied for work authorization or  
15 received it, but it is true that, you know,  
16 throughout this crisis now response we've been trying  
17 our best to bring the right people to do the case  
18 management work online. For example, I have the  
19 number of languages that they speak, things like  
20 that, but that wasn't all true on day one. So we're  
21 trying hard--

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] How do  
23 you make sure they're doing a good job? I mean,  
24 listen, I have-- I have wonderful staff. I love my  
25 staff. They do case management. I did case

2 management. It's not easy, but I find that  
3 sometimes, you know, that staff that I love is more  
4 knowledgeable in some things than they are in others,  
5 and you know-- and so it is my responsibility to  
6 then, you know, figure out where those, you know,  
7 those soft spots are, and how do I offer the support  
8 that they need, right, to advance in their knowledge  
9 so that they're better able to help the community.  
10 And so, I do that weekly, right? I'm like, alright,  
11 can you give me a couple of examples of, you know,  
12 clients that are coming into the office, people that  
13 are looking for help, what type of help, you know,  
14 and often times I find, well, somebody came for this  
15 and I wasn't sure. And I'm like, okay well, this is  
16 where, you know, you would get that information. But  
17 it also gives me a sense of who knows what and who  
18 doesn't and how efficient our office is, you know,  
19 able to operate. Who's doing that on your end?

20 DOCTOR LONG: Yeah, so I think when  
21 you're eval-- sorry, I didn't--

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Yeah.

23 DOCTOR LONG: I'll be more concrete with  
24 the data.

25 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah.

2 DOCTOR LONG: When you're evaluating  
3 something, one of the things you first look at are  
4 process measures. So, processes like did they  
5 actually meet with people. Today, 99 percent of the  
6 people in our non-DHS system have had at least one  
7 meeting with their case manager. And again, that's  
8 been an improvement that we've looked at over time.  
9 Then you look at outcomes. So, if a goal for people,  
10 as the Speaker said earlier, are to work, well, are  
11 they applying for work authorization? Are they  
12 getting it? So we're measuring that. Are they  
13 getting trainings that they would want? So we're  
14 looking at that. And then I think before you get  
15 downstream outcomes--

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Yeah.

17 DOCTOR LONG: like are people actually  
18 getting the apartment that they-- you know, we  
19 received the photo of, because that's ultimately the  
20 goal is to help everybody achieve the American dream.  
21 I think it's listening to people, too, and that's why  
22 we have our Community Advisory Board that has 20, 30  
23 community-based organizations on it. We meet every  
24 other week. They're the ones that have ears to the  
25 ground to hear everything from all the people at our

2 sites and they give us all that feedback, but not in  
3 a way that's, you know, critical or anything. I would  
4 say it's more of a, you know, we're on the same team.  
5 Let's put the facts on the table about what people  
6 are experiencing and their perception of the services  
7 that we're offering. Let's fix them together. then  
8 ultimately, I'm not going to say we're there yet, but  
9 I think, you know, as we see-- as we get more  
10 pictures of people in front of their new home, or as  
11 we look at the increase in the percentage of people,  
12 families with kids in particular, that are able to  
13 celebrate their birthday in their home as opposed to  
14 our shelter system. That's a really important part  
15 of success.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Absolutely,  
17 absolutely. Yes?

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Doctor Long, thank  
19 you so much. You have seen much of the trauma that  
20 people are coming with on a daily basis, and I do  
21 believe you spent an enormous amount of time with  
22 people. Do you think eviction after 30 days or  
23 eviction after 60 days is a sound policy, a trauma-  
24 informed policy, and the right thing the City should  
25 have employed?

2 DOCTOR LONG: Yeah, thank you for asking.  
3 To just acknowledge the first thing that you said, I  
4 mean I-- we really have spent a lot of time with  
5 people, and we-- by hearing them I have all these  
6 stories in my head of the-- that I've been told or  
7 that-- or of those that my team has spoken with. So,  
8 people have experienced intense trauma to get here,  
9 and trauma is not just medical.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Doctor Long, I'm  
11 sorry, I'm just going to interrupt you really  
12 quickly.

13 DOCTOR LONG: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: As a Doctor, having  
15 seen the trauma, do you think evicting someone from a  
16 shelter after 60 days is an appropriate trauma-  
17 informed policy?

18 DOCTOR LONG: Well, I'll tell you what I  
19 do think. I do think it's important, and again this  
20 is not just my perception as a doctor, but what I've  
21 been told by people that I've cared for is that  
22 people need help right away. So, there is an issue  
23 of timing. You heard this from some of the  
24 panelists, too. Everybody wants to work, and people  
25 want to work as soon as they can. So, I do think

2 it's important from a timing perspective that we  
3 offer help to people ideally as soon as they arrive,  
4 and that's why we started to submit applications for  
5 people from the arrival center. Molly has been the  
6 closest to--

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Yeah,  
8 there's no disagreement that the system that has been  
9 set up certainly to receive people and respond  
10 immediately to their arrival is an important one. I  
11 think what you're not answering, and I understand why  
12 you're not answering it is that eviction after 60  
13 days is not a trauma-informed policy. Fundamentally,  
14 it's not, and I think we just need to agree to the  
15 reality of that and acknowledge that the system is--  
16 we are trying to set up a system, but it's important  
17 for human dignity to acknowledge that this policy  
18 does not meet a trauma-informed policy, though we are  
19 trying our best. So, I think I'll leave it there,  
20 and I'll pass it back to--

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Thank  
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you, Council  
24 Member.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, in September, the  
3 Administration announced that they would expanding  
4 the 60-day rule to DHS shelters and send families  
5 pre-notices. Obviously, that sends people into a  
6 panic. Yesterday, we heard that there was a shift in  
7 policy-- well, sort of, right-- that would allow  
8 folks to stay in place after the second 60-day  
9 notice, right? I'm not sure how-- if that replaces  
10 the September announcement.

11 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: No, so the  
12 announcement yesterday was specifically for the non-  
13 DHS 60-day notices, and it was to help make sure that  
14 we're keeping families with kids who have kids in  
15 kindergarten through sixth grade and make it easier  
16 for them to keep their kid in the same school. That  
17 does not take over the September announcement--

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Okay.

19 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: for DHS, which as  
20 Iris mentioned before, hasn't--

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Not--

22 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: rolled out yet.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: They're still working  
24 on it.

25 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes.



2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, okay, I got  
3 that. So, I won't even ask if you're still planning  
4 to expand because I'm assuming the answer is yes  
5 until determined otherwise. If you don't have a--  
6 actually, let me just move on. How are you  
7 evaluating the efficacy of asylum-seeker shelter time  
8 limits? Like, how-- what's been the benefit of that?  
9 I mean, I agree with my colleague. I-- you know, I--  
10 and I get it. It's not-- it's a very difficult  
11 position for everyone involved. We have the highest  
12 number of individuals that are unhoused in New York  
13 City. Add to that, you know, as many migrant  
14 families that unfortunately have, you know, exhausted  
15 sometimes every other possibility and end up in  
16 shelter. That, you know-- it concerns me that we  
17 have a policy that, you know, would impose further  
18 stress. It's-- you know, I think you have to kind  
19 of-- you have to experience homelessness to  
20 understand the level of fear and just not belonging  
21 anywhere, right? Not having that level of stability,  
22 and when you're alone at least, you know, you're  
23 alone, but when you have children that you're  
24 responsible for, I mean, these are things that keep  
25 you up at night. So, I'm not going to debate whether

2 or not the policy is a good one or not. I believe it  
3 sucks. I think our colleagues all concur. I think  
4 many of you would feel the same way, but I understand  
5 that these are, you know, things that the  
6 Administration has felt would help expedite and  
7 encourage folks to start looking elsewhere. But  
8 that-- but how do you determine the efficacy of this  
9 policy?

10 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Thank you for the  
11 question. I want to just first zoom in on the numbers  
12 a little bit. I think you said a lot of this, but I  
13 just want to put those-- so, we'd almost 224,000  
14 asylum-seekers since this response started. We  
15 currently have about 57,400 asylum-seekers in our  
16 shelter system. Before we had these policies in  
17 place-- and I really want to talk about these  
18 policies paired with case management because they  
19 are-- you can't have one without the other. We  
20 announced them both at the same time. We rolled them  
21 out both at the same time. They're paired, because  
22 we really wanted to make sure that we were helping  
23 people through this process and that we were giving  
24 them support as they went through this. But before  
25 this policy was enacted, our numbers every week just

2 kept going up and up and up, and that was difficult  
3 from a space perspective. We couldn't open sites  
4 fast enough to deal with the more sometimes 4,000  
5 people that came a week. We couldn't get staffing.  
6 We couldn't get nonprofits. We couldn't even get the  
7 big conglomerates to give us staff to be able to open  
8 sites fast enough. And so this really was intended  
9 to make sure we support people in their most  
10 vulnerable time when they first come with us, give  
11 them the support through case management, and really  
12 protect our shelter system which has again grown more  
13 than three times in the last two years. When we talk  
14 about the efficacy of these programs, we really think  
15 about how many people have applied for work, how many  
16 people are in our shelter system at any one point,  
17 how many people have been connected to resettlement  
18 programs, how many people have been connected to  
19 training. It's sort of all in the same, you know--  
20 Doctor Ted Long really talked about eh different  
21 types of outcomes for looking at both process and  
22 then eventually these times of down-stream outcomes,  
23 and so that's what we're really looking at. And I  
24 think, you know, when we were at the peak of this  
25 response, we had 69,000 people every day-- every--

2 69,000 asylum-seekers or migrants that we were  
3 sheltering at any one point. We now have 57,400  
4 which has allowed us to do things like close  
5 Randall's. you know, Randall's is such a image of  
6 this response, and to be able to close it and to be  
7 able to really think about giving temporary shelter  
8 in smaller sites that are more throughout the City is  
9 a really big outcome for us.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: yeah, but one of the  
11 unintended consequences of the policy, however, was  
12 that we started to see more and more unhoused  
13 individuals out on the street, erecting tents,  
14 sleeping in our public playgrounds, our public parks,  
15 and faith-based, you know, organizations. So, are--  
16 how do you, you know,-- how can we feel like this  
17 policy has been as successful as we intended it to  
18 be? I say we, though the Administration-- when we  
19 have, you know, x number of people which I'm not sure  
20 if-- that's actually one of my questions regarding  
21 the homeless outreach unit, if they're keeping tabs  
22 on how many individuals would fall into that  
23 category, because this is kind of like a grey area,  
24 right? Because they don't fall within the HERRC. If  
25 they're-- they're technically outside, then they're

2 not part of the HERRC system anymore. Then it would  
3 become a street homeless issue which then falls under  
4 the purview of DHS. So are we keeping tabs on that,  
5 and are you guys cross-referencing so that you're--  
6 you have a better idea of how efficient this policy  
7 is, if in fact it is, you know, leading to folks now  
8 sleeping in public spaces?

9 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Can I-- just I'll  
10 hand it over to Iris, but just one thing I want to  
11 make sure is known is, you know, 70 percent of the  
12 people who have come through our system have left.  
13 Before we had this policy there was still a  
14 percentage of people that were leaving on their own,  
15 and families with children when they come back and  
16 ask for another 60-day extension, they get it. and  
17 so, you know, I'll turn it over to Iris to talk about  
18 the unsheltered homelessness, but I just kind of  
19 want to make those points a--

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] No,  
21 listen, I get it. I get it. And I, again, I've  
22 always-- you know, I've-- I try to be very fair, and  
23 I look at both sides of the issue, because I don't  
24 even want to know what it's like to be on that side  
25 of the table, and I know that it's been grueling for

2 many of you who I know and have had the pleasure of  
3 working with. So, you know, this is not a-- you  
4 know, on my part it would never be like a character  
5 assassination, but the truth is we're working with  
6 facts, is that one of the unintended consequences of  
7 the policy is that, you know, folks-- many of them  
8 singles, single adults ended up, you know, erecting  
9 tents on Randall's. Just, you know, for months I've  
10 had a group of at least 10-12 men sleeping at Thomas  
11 Jefferson Park. It wasn't until last Friday that I  
12 stopped seeing them, and all of last week the-- every  
13 time that I would drive by on my way downtown, you  
14 know, there were police officers talking to them, and  
15 I'm assuming-- I'm hoping they were encouraging them  
16 to go into a shelter, because it was cold. One day  
17 it was raining, I reported that they were because I  
18 was hoping that the street outreach unit would go  
19 there, and I also want to just, you know, say that I  
20 do understand that, you know, many of them didn't  
21 really understand what the policy was, that they  
22 could go back into the intake center and be  
23 reprocessed, but there was, in fact, an overflow,  
24 right? And so because they fell out of the HERRC  
25 system and now ended up in DHS, I just wonder what

2 the number is, if it's as significant as, you know,  
3 we may assume that it is. If it isn't and if in fact  
4 you guys are kind of touching base so that you're  
5 saying okay, look, we were able to get 10,000 -- you  
6 know, 5,000 people to leave, you know, the shelter  
7 last week, but 1,000 of them ended up on our streets.  
8 How do we fix that, right? Like, and I'm just  
9 stating numbers here. I'm just making numbers up.  
10 But how-- what does that look like?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, our  
12 street outreach, you're very familiar, they do go out  
13 through the City and do outreach and we do work with  
14 the communities when they tell us there's a group of  
15 folks. One of the things that the team has been  
16 doing is-- and we have not encountered a high volume  
17 of single adults in the street that are coming new  
18 arrivals in the City. I do want to put it out there.  
19 And we have not encountered luckily any families with  
20 children. As Molly has said, every family with  
21 children needs a second placement is granted a second  
22 placement or third, so forth. For those we are  
23 working closely and we do refer them to the re-  
24 ticketing center where they get processed, and my  
25 colleague here, Emily, could get you numbers if

2 that's what's needed. But in terms of the street  
3 outreach that DHS has, when we go out we have not  
4 encountered a significant increase of new arrivals in  
5 the City out in the street.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Any calls regarding  
7 possible sightings? Like, I mean, I know at  
8 Randall's we had, you know, over 100 folks that were  
9 living outside of the HERRC in tents.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I could  
11 get back to you in terms of the calls.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: That should fall under  
13 the category of street homelessness, right?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We'll  
15 definitely have to get back to you and let you know  
16 where we've been receiving calls and what areas we've  
17 been canvassing.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright. I mean, I  
19 don't know how significant it is or not, but I know  
20 that it is happening, and so that-- you know, we need  
21 to address-- if it's a matter of people not knowing  
22 what their rights are, right? Are we putting up a  
23 bill of rights at these sites? Are the case managers  
24 communicating efficiently with folks and letting them  
25 know that there is a re-ticketing process and if they



2 don't have anywhere else to go, that they are welcome  
3 to go in and reapply? If folks are, you know,  
4 sleeping in tents because they feel like, you know,  
5 they'd rather be in a community to speak the same  
6 language, then that's something that we should be  
7 keeping tabs on. Okay, I'll move on. For clients  
8 who receive the 30-day shelter notices and requested  
9 an extension, how many extensions did DHS issue?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, when  
11 we discharge our clients we refer them to the re-  
12 ticketing center, and our city agency colleague here  
13 from NYCEM has those numbers if--

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] So, when  
15 they come to you-- when they come to DHS, they go  
16 through-- ideally through PATH or through 30--

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ:  
18 [interposing] Singles?

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: or through Bellevue?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Our  
21 singles?

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yes, for DHS.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, when  
24 they go-- when they're with us, they're referred  
25 through us--

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Through  
3 the re-ticketing site?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: There's  
5 two ways. They come through the re-ticketing center  
6 or they come through the arrival center.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Oh, okay, alright. I  
8 wasn't-- I wasn't sure. I was just--

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ:  
10 [interposing] that's the process.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, so there is--  
12 so when they get to the re-ticketing center, they're  
13 not necessarily-- if they came out of a DHS shelter,  
14 and went to the re-ticketing, are you sending them  
15 back to a DHS site, or are you sending them to a  
16 HERRC?

17 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: That's a really  
18 good point. We actually-- at the re-ticketing  
19 center, we do not make a differentiation of where  
20 they are coming from. So we will place them in the  
21 most appropriate setting to-- that they need, and so  
22 if they came from DHS, they might be placed into a  
23 HERRC site, and if they come from a HERRC, they might  
24 be placed into a DHS site. It depends on the daily  
25 availability of cots.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. So, it's  
3 solely based on the availability of beds.

4 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: Correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. That's  
6 important. Same question for you, Molly.

7 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I mean, the-- Emily  
8 answered the question. I think we make  
9 determinations based on if someone has a reasonable  
10 accommodation that was granted. If the-- where the  
11 availability of cot is.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: No, the question is  
13 how many 30-day time limit notices were issued in  
14 fiscal year 24?

15 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, that I think I--

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] And how  
17 many so far in 25?

18 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: In 25 there as 6,015  
19 30-day notices issued at non-DHS sites in FY 2025.  
20 There was 15,750 30-day notices issued at non-DHS  
21 sites in FY 2024. There was 1,513 30-day notices  
22 issued at DHS sites in FY 2024, and there was 1,056  
23 30-day notices issued at DHS sites in FY 2025.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. Okay. It  
25 seems like it's significantly lower at the DHS end

2 than it I on the HERRC end? Is that because you have  
3 more singles than--

4 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing] Yes, so  
5 the majority of the single beds at this time are in  
6 the non-DHS system. The DHS system has the majority  
7 of the families with children, which is still the  
8 majority of the people in our care.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, and I'll just--  
10 I have two questions and then I'm going to pass it  
11 over, because I know we don't have a lot of time with  
12 you guys today. How many 60-day time limit notices  
13 were issued at HERRCs in 2024?

14 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, there was 2,000-  
15 - there was 944 60-day notices issued to young  
16 adults. So, 18 to 22-year-olds at non-DHS sites in  
17 FY 2025, 2,348 60-day notices issued to young adults  
18 at non-DHS sites in FY 2024. There was 6,295 60-day  
19 notices issued to family with children households at  
20 non-DHS sites in FY 2025, and 17,117 60-day notices  
21 issued to family with children households at non-DHS  
22 sites in FY 2024.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And I know that this  
24 is where the social services kind of get funky,  
25 because 18 to 22, right, they're legally adults, but

2 believe me, I have a few and they're nowhere near  
3 adulting. And so is there any relationship between  
4 the HERRCs and maybe DYCD, ACS, all of the other  
5 youth programs so that we're ensuring that those that  
6 are not as mature or need, you know, guidance and  
7 further assistance are receiving that?

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Absolutely. It is  
9 something we are hyper-focused on. We've spent a lot  
10 of item with DOE to make sure that kids that are  
11 eligible, the 18 to 20-year-olds that are eligible  
12 can get schooling that way and we've helped people  
13 apply. We've been working with DYCD on their  
14 programming as well. It's something that we're  
15 critically focused on is this population.

16 DOCTOR LONG: May I add just one quick  
17 comment there?

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah.

19 DOCTOR LONG: I think it is an important  
20 point. The-- so for our 18 to 22-year-olds in  
21 particular, this is an issue that was, again, flagged  
22 by our community partners as something important and  
23 something we could potentially develop an  
24 individualized strategy around. So, one of the  
25 things that we've done in lock-step and you know,

2 with our community partners is taking one of our  
3 sites and taking a couple of the floors at that site,  
4 and dedicated to just people 18 to 22. I think we  
5 may actually have a couple people 18 to 24 now. But  
6 anyways, and what we do there is we've created  
7 individualized programming that's a program we  
8 developed with DYCD with our community partners and  
9 with-- working with the people that we're caring for.  
10 That includes things like having DOE on site, things  
11 like that, but the-- we're continuing to build up  
12 that program now. But I think the most important  
13 point I want to take away, make there though is that  
14 is that this is an idea that was brought to us by our  
15 community partners, and their input has been critical  
16 and crucial in the difference we've made in people's  
17 lives.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Will you be able to  
19 send us the numbers of the extensions and stuff back  
20 so that we have it on record? Thank you. You're  
21 the best, but you have to say yes on the record,  
22 sorry.

23 DOCTOR LONG: Whatever the question is,  
24 yes on the record.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And finally,  
3 regarding the client-- so for clients that receive a  
4 60-day shelter notices and requested an extension, do  
5 we know how many extensions were issued for residents  
6 in HERRCs in fiscal year 25 and how many so far in--  
7 in 24 and how many so far in 24-- yes.

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, specifically for  
9 the 30-day notices?

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Well, I guess this is  
11 also a difference, right between how many were  
12 requested and how many were actually approved? Are  
13 they automatically approved?

14 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, for 60-day  
15 notices, they are automatically approved.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay.

17 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, for families  
18 with children.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Has that always been  
21 the case?

22 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes, for 60-day  
23 notices for families with children, yes.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Because we've heard  
3 that not to be the case. We've heard people getting  
4 rejected?

5 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I-- if there's--

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] We're  
7 going to need to follow up.

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: If there's a  
9 specific question, yeah. Families with children,  
10 it's always been that you go back to the arrival  
11 center and you get a new placement. There's never  
12 been a change in that policy.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Do we know how many  
14 extensions were requested?

15 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yeah. Well, the--  
16 for families with children, that was the numbers I  
17 read a little bit earlier. So, there was in FY 2024,  
18 there was 17,117 60-day notices issued to families  
19 with children. Actually, I'm sorry. No, I don't  
20 know how many people were extended past that first  
21 one. We'd have to get back to you, because that's  
22 just how many notices were issued.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. Alright, yeah,  
24 I would appreciate that. Alright, thank you. I'm  
25 going to pass it over to my colleague.



2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, for the record,  
3 we're going to be looking at the number of both 30-  
4 and 60-day notices, yes, where there was requests for  
5 extension and then how many of those extensions were  
6 approved or denied. And we'd like to recognize John  
7 Bohn High School. Thank you for joining us. Thank  
8 you so much for being here. So, in terms of-- I'm  
9 sorry if I missed this earlier, but I just wanted to  
10 make sure to understand this properly. So, why does  
11 the 60-day notice change announced yesterday only  
12 apply to families with school-aged children?

13 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, that's the  
14 population that most can request and get busing for  
15 the most part, and so that really does help with the  
16 busing issue. Everybody can receive a metro card,  
17 and families can say no to busing, but that's the  
18 population that really is focused on busing.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, for seven-- for  
20 those families with children in grades seven to 12,  
21 they're just exempt from--

22 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing] From  
23 this policy--

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] the  
25 policy.

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: announcement, I will  
3 say that it is always our intention to keep people in  
4 the borough of their kid's school, and so we'll  
5 continue trying to do that work, but if we have--  
6 when we have to prioritize, we prioritize K through  
7 six.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And so does this  
9 change apply to families with children in the LIFE  
10 program, Head Start, Pre-k, 3K, Promise NYC?

11 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: It does not. Only  
12 the ones that have kids that are in K through six.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And why weren't  
14 these programs included?

15 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We took a look at a  
16 lot of different factors, but this was the change  
17 that we decided to make.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Are there costs  
19 involved? Can you tell us some of the factors that  
20 were part of that decision-making process?

21 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I'd have to defer to  
22 OMB on specific cost numbers, but--

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Well, I  
24 don't know if it was one of the factors. I just kind  
25 of threw it out there.

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: It was one of the  
3 factors, but again, I'd have to defer to OMB on any  
4 cost.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Do you have any  
6 other factors that you were considering when you  
7 exempted these families?

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Again, a big part of  
9 this was busing, and currently the amount of inflow  
10 into the City is a little bit lower, as everybody  
11 knows, and so we have a lot-- a bigger percentage of  
12 people in care who are longer stayers or people we  
13 consider-- starting to consider as longer stayers, so  
14 we wanted to take some of the attention away from  
15 shelter movement and a little bit more on what things  
16 we can do to reinvest money into helping people with  
17 better, longer stayers.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: and does this change  
19 only apply to non-DHS sites?

20 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Correct, because DHS  
21 has not rolled out their 60-day policy yet.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. In terms of--  
23 let's see. I think-- I'll ask a few questions and  
24 then I'll turn it over to my colleagues who I know  
25 are eager to ask questions as well. How much-- okay,

2 I think I'll jump into costs very quickly. So how  
3 much savings has DHS generated from issuing 30-day  
4 time limit notices to asylum-seekers, single adults  
5 and adult families in shelter?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I  
7 currently do not have that number. We'll probably  
8 have to get back to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, thank you.  
10 and if you would get back to us around how much does  
11 the City expect to save from issuing 60-day time  
12 limits in DHS shelters as well, and when we might  
13 expect to see that and where, where'd we like to--  
14 well, where we can expect to see those savings. New  
15 York City's Independent Budget Office estimated  
16 negative consequences of this policy, including  
17 economic impact of missed work authorizations,  
18 healthcare impacts, street homelessness, busing  
19 costs, all of which we heard in the pre-panel,  
20 actually each and every one of those. Has the City  
21 factored in these costs, both in the short and long  
22 term when looking at this policy?

23 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: As I mentioned when  
24 I started, I mean, none of these policies were done  
25 easily. These were done to really make sure that we

2 were protecting both our shelter system and people at  
3 their most vulnerable time. We made a change  
4 yesterday as we announced to really help with some of  
5 those busing costs, and we continue-- and we also  
6 made a change around mail to make sure that was  
7 continuing to do improvements in mail so people don't  
8 lose mail. One of the key things that we changed  
9 earlier this year as well was making sure that each  
10 shelter held on to any important federal mail. So,  
11 at that point, anyone who had gone to a different  
12 shelter, could have gone back to their shelter to  
13 pick up that mail, and so we continue to make these  
14 changes as we hear-- as we get input from community  
15 members, as we get input from the people in our care,  
16 and as we continue to be in different phases of this  
17 response.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, you mentioned  
19 busing a number of times. What is the cost savings  
20 that you're calculated in making this policy change?

21 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, it's thousands  
22 of dollars. I don't have the exact figure, but we  
23 can get back to you.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: It's a little  
25 disappointing you don't have those numbers. It

2 sounds like a very big reason behind the policy  
3 shift. In terms of-- in terms of the mail, let's  
4 jump to that really quickly. How has-- I mean, this  
5 has been an ongoing issue. I feel like we've been  
6 talking about this for a year, and so I'm glad to  
7 maybe finally see some movement, but very kind of  
8 lacking on details. How has the City, DHS, H+H  
9 resolve some of these delays with access to mail for  
10 households who have previously resided at DHS  
11 sanctuary sites and HERRCs who have been transferred  
12 and/or exiting sites?

13 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, we've made  
14 numerous policy changes over the past year to really  
15 focus on mail. As I mentioned, one of the big ones  
16 was when we said all sites had to indefinitely hold  
17 important mail so that anybody who left a site could  
18 come back and pick it up. We've done a pilot now  
19 calling back people where we've had mail for a long  
20 period of time. So, we're calling certain people.  
21 you know, even, I think nine months ago I went to  
22 Randall's and specifically spent some time at the  
23 mail room and seeing-- and then I went last month,  
24 and seeing the changes in how they're prioritizing  
25 mail and how they have dedicated staff focused on it

2 is big changes on all of our sites. Every time we've  
3 heard, you know, there's been issues we've heard  
4 where a security guard wouldn't let a guest who was  
5 longer in the site come in. we fixed those issues as  
6 we've heard them. And this is sort of a culmination  
7 of that, which is now we are going to be launching in  
8 the next couple of weeks a centralized mail room  
9 where all mail will go. So, I think we've tried a  
10 numerous-- numerous amounts of improvements to make  
11 it easier for guests to get their mail, and we  
12 continue to see the success of that, even just with  
13 what Doctor Ted said where 70 percent of eligible  
14 guests have gotten their work author-- have applied  
15 or gotten their work authorizations, which many times  
16 is six months after they've applied for asylum. So  
17 they've already gotten whatever paperwork they need  
18 to be able to then apply for their EADs. So I think  
19 this is-- we're starting to see some of the fruits of  
20 all of this work.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: and how does staff  
22 know what mail is important or not? How are they  
23 making that distinction?

24 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: so, we've done a lot  
25 of trainings on this, and that was also part of our

2 improvements, is showing people what kind of mail to  
3 look out for. So, we've also included things like  
4 Medicaid cards, and important mail isn't just federal  
5 paperwork. It's all-- it's driver's licenses, it's  
6 Medicaid cards. We've done-- we have pamphlets to  
7 show staff. We've done trainings. We've really,  
8 again, tried to focus on letting shelter staff know.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Is staff disposing  
10 of any mail at all?

11 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Not at this time. I  
12 think when we have-- one of the things is when we  
13 have the centralized mail room, we will be having a--  
14 we will be having a retention policy.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Well, it is a  
16 federal crime to get rid of mail.

17 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yeah, so we're--  
18 it's with our lawyers as well. Obviously, we're in  
19 constant-- we have very good lawyers that we are in  
20 constant communication with.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Very concerned.  
22 What times will people be able to-- walk us through  
23 how you envision this centralized system actually  
24 operating.



2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: so, it'll be place  
3 where everyone can go to pick up their mail. So, you  
4 know, we have lots of different things we're working  
5 through on the policy end in terms of staffing. So,  
6 when we have exact hours we'll let you know. But  
7 it'll be a place where people can come pick up their  
8 mail and leave, and we'll be able to have the  
9 functionality to call people who have left their mail  
10 for a long time.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And will people be  
12 required to show identification to get their mail?

13 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I have to get back  
14 to you on that.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Will the center be  
16 signing for mail?

17 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I have to get back to  
18 you on signing for mail.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. Will the City  
20 be helping folks get access to the mail, like  
21 transportation to a one centralized location if folks  
22 are coming from the Bronx or Queens?

23 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, that's still  
24 under discussion, but when we have that we will let  
25 you know.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: will there-- will  
3 the center-- I'm just going to offer these questions  
4 and obviously you're thinking about it operationally.  
5 We're very keen on understanding how this is going to  
6 work. Will the mail center have a grasp on the  
7 number of folks who can-- will they be using this  
8 center as their actual mailing address?

9 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. Will there be  
11 a cap if that is in fact the case on how many people  
12 can use this one center as the address? Okay. And  
13 how many people is the Administration preparing to  
14 serve at this center?

15 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We have to get back  
16 to you on those numbers. I'll get back to you on  
17 those numbers.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And has the City  
19 coordinated with the state regarding this mail  
20 center?

21 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We've had  
22 conversations, yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, and in terms  
24 of-- will this-- will the staff at the mail center be  
25 trained in data privacy laws of the City?

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Absolutely, as all  
3 of our staff are, and I will also say that we've had  
4 a centralized mail room for a certain subset of our  
5 shelters to date. NYCEM ran a centralized mail room  
6 for specifically the folks in their care. So, this  
7 is not something that we're-- not have done before,  
8 and so we're going to continue being able to do that  
9 just at a bigger scale.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I mean, we still get  
11 text messages and emails of people trying to chase  
12 their mail. So can you walk me through-- well,  
13 actually, I'm conflating two questions. Just I'm  
14 making a statement. There's still a lot of problems  
15 with the mail. It's very well documented. It comes  
16 up on a daily basis. Can you talk to me about the  
17 training that you have engaged your staff across all  
18 systems on data privacy?

19 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Well, we have-- we--  
20 my office is the holder of the data system, and so we  
21 have-- our general counsel is obviously very focused  
22 on data privacy and ensuring that whatever we give to  
23 anybody we have appropriate protections on. We also  
24 have a data privacy officer in my office to make sure  
25 that whatever we're giving. And then given what's

2 going on, we've been doing a lot of scenario planning  
3 around data privacy and what kinds of protections we  
4 have and need, as we continue.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how are you  
6 training? How many staff do you need to train on  
7 these issues?

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, our staff is--  
9 we only have 28, but we have very few people who have  
10 access to the data system, and we keep that very  
11 tight, and that's intentional, and it's only people  
12 who truly understand the data privacy posture of the  
13 city and the data privacy specific to immigration  
14 data which obviously is a higher level of concern.  
15 There's-- we're-- obviously, we have training for  
16 contractors and shelter staff on both sanctuary city  
17 laws and data protection, and we're very  
18 conscientious about what kind of data people have  
19 access to and there's lots of protections on-- if you  
20 are shelter staff, you only get to see x amount of--  
21 x part of the data system versus others. So that's  
22 something that we take really intensely when we think  
23 about it, but happy to-- if any of my colleagues have  
24 anything particular to their shelter system.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, I'd love to  
3 hear from DHS and the other agencies around how-- who  
4 they're training, how they're training and what their  
5 training looks like.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, in  
7 terms of data, as Molly says, most of the data is  
8 managed by the City in terms of our regular posture  
9 [sic] and data. We do have also data privacy staff  
10 and our IT and legal constantly in communication.  
11 Privacy is very important for our clients as a whole,  
12 not only for new arrivals. And we work very closely  
13 with the Administration to ensure that privacy is  
14 given to our clients not only for data, but also in  
15 terms of their status and immigration as a whole.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: so, how often are  
17 you training staff around the importance of data  
18 privacy?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, we  
20 would have to get back--

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] And  
22 what the current laws look like.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: There is  
24 often training as a system, as particularly for us as  
25 city employees in terms of cyber and IT and data

2 sharing and confidentiality and privacy. So that's  
3 always ongoing for us as an agency.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Go ahead. Would you  
5 like to respond to the question?

6 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: Sure. As Iris  
7 mentioned, NYCEM trains not only NYCEM staff but also  
8 our vendors and contractors, and they've all signed  
9 confidentiality agreements. We do on an annual basis  
10 require refresher trainings, and update those in  
11 conjunction with counsel and our data privacy officer  
12 on a regular basis. But again, the systems that we  
13 use for this purpose are owned by OASO, and  
14 therefore, you know, we all follow a uniform system.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, are security  
16 contracts that are held to provide security services  
17 in the facilities, are those staff trained in  
18 privacy?

19 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I think it's  
20 part of their training.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Part of the reason  
22 why I ask to be honest and pointed is that what we  
23 have heard quite a lot is people being threatened  
24 that if they put forward grievances in facilities or  
25 are not happy, that staff are threatening them and

2 their status. And so I would really like to  
3 understand what the training is, and also separately  
4 and a part, what is the process to receive grievances  
5 of those sorts?

6 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, if you're  
7 hearing anything from clients in care, please share  
8 specifics of that so we can actually look into it,  
9 because those are obviously very, very concerning.  
10 We, you know, have protections in place, but  
11 honestly, what you're hearing from the ground would  
12 be very concerning to us, so we want to make sure  
13 that we can look into it on a site-by-site basis.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Is there a place  
15 where folks in facility would know where to put a  
16 grievance? Are there notices, you know, posted in  
17 accessible languages?

18 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, I think on the  
19 HERRC side, you can-- there's an email address that  
20 people can use. You can also go to shelter staff. I  
21 defer to DHS on their process for grievances, but  
22 that's the process.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The  
24 answer's yes. At all our DHS shelters we have  
25 process where clients can put in grievances. Also,

2 they could call 311 and those grievances get routed  
3 to our ombudsman unit that we have an agency, and  
4 then it's routed out to the program staff that  
5 oversees the particular shelter and then we work with  
6 responding and following up and investigating each  
7 case.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And I guess, Doctor  
9 Long, it looks like you want to respond. But could  
10 you just for the record for those who are listening  
11 and would like to understand what that process is, if  
12 they don't know what that email is, where can folks  
13 offer grievances about what they're experiencing in  
14 facility?

15 DOCTOR LONG: so, we instruct and offer  
16 to our guests that they can share grievances with our  
17 staff members that are on-site. we have both  
18 behavioral health staff members if that's who you  
19 feel more comfortable talking to or administrative  
20 staff members, and if that's not happening or people  
21 don't feel comfortable hearing specifics, be very  
22 helpful and we'd very much welcome that.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Where could-- where  
24 could a person, if they do not feel comfortable with  
25



2 addressing staff on site, where could a person do  
3 that in an anonymous and safe way?

4 DOCTOR LONG: So, if they don't feel  
5 comfortable talking to our administrative staff, they  
6 can talk to our behavioral health staff that they may  
7 have more of a relationship with. They can also--  
8 like we said, we set up different ways, like email  
9 addresses or-- I'll have to double-check, but I  
10 believe 311 would get back to us as well. We can  
11 confirm that.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, please get  
13 back to us on where the emails are, because it is  
14 very often that folks don't feel comfortable talking  
15 to anyone on site with fear of retribution whether  
16 it's founded or not. It's a, you know, kind of  
17 natural human concern. But for the record, we would  
18 like to have some clear process protocols for folks  
19 that we can get out there.

20 DOCTOR LONG: I was just going to add,  
21 and I'll have to confirm, but I'm almost positive  
22 that DOI has a posting at every site as well with  
23 contact information, because they flag for us if they  
24 inspect and it's missing. So, I can confirm, but I'm  
25 almost positive that that's another avenue for folks.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. And have you  
3 all received complaints through those portals, and  
4 what's kind of the scale and scope of that?

5 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, we don't talk  
6 about individual cases, but we have received--

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 100 percent [sic].

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We've received  
9 things from DOI. We've received things from our  
10 general email inbox, and we-- again, we take things  
11 very seriously, and we look into all concerns when  
12 they're brought to us.

13 DOCTOR LONG: On potentially-- changing  
14 gears a little bit, but on the-- in the same vein as  
15 offering feedback like grievances. For food in  
16 particular, we know that a lot of people have had  
17 feedback for us. so what we've done at my site is we  
18 set up QR codes that we put on the wall and are  
19 clearly labeled in different languages, that you can  
20 take your phone of which most people have-- Wi-Fi  
21 enabled at all of our sites-- and click the QR code  
22 to offer specific feedback on the food. And so we've  
23 removed certain meals and added more that people are  
24 voting on.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Council  
3 Member Brewer?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Just on an  
5 overall comment. So if you have-- what'd you say,  
6 57,000 something like that in care now? How many  
7 jobs are going begging in the City of New York or  
8 even the state of New York? Do you have any sense of  
9 that?

10 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: How many jobs are--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]  
12 Yeah.

13 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, I mean, we're  
14 working with DOL to refer people to jobs. We don't  
15 necessarily know if they take the jobs.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I'm making  
17 a point. People are moving to Minnesota, Texas--

18 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing] Yeah.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: etcetera, you  
20 know what. So, I want to keep them here. There's a  
21 lot of talent. So, I guess I'm sort of like saying  
22 how are we doing that? It is not the philosophy  
23 necessarily that all New Yorkers want to do that, but  
24 I certainly do. I know you do. So, that could be a  
25 different way of looking. Get them out, but get them

2 to New York State. I don't even want to get them  
3 out. I want to keep them in New York City. I don't  
4 hear you saying that. So, I just-- I know that may  
5 not be your philosophy, but it's mine, and I just  
6 think we should think that way a little bit  
7 differently.

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Well, and I think  
9 that we've been doing that in pockets, and we have  
10 like a real relationship with Department of Labor.  
11 So they've been doing some of the screenings as well  
12 to connect people to the industries upstate where  
13 people are hiring. I think a big impediment to all of  
14 this is housing, always in every community.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Minnesota they're  
16 giving them houses.

17 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I know. Well, and  
18 that's the thing, we see a lot of people going to  
19 Minnesota, to Texas because there is cheaper housing  
20 or there is actually housing being given by big  
21 corporations. So we've been trying to find those  
22 jewels in the rough.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

24 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Who would help us  
25 with that?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Alright, but I  
3 mean, with all due respect, you're-- I know how much  
4 work you're doing, but it should be larger staying.  
5 We are trying to find homes for people in the State  
6 of New York. That's not your-- that's not big, bold  
7 letters. I'm just saying. Okay. I would like to  
8 hear that more. Now, schools, I'm totally focused on  
9 the schools. For school year 23 and 24 and 24/25 of  
10 the students in HERRCs with children of the families  
11 who were forced to leave their shelter placement  
12 after 60 days, what percentage of students and how  
13 many were placed in the same borough? Do you have  
14 those numbers?

15 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I don't have the same  
16 borough numbers.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: What do you have?

18 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I have the-- of the--  
19 - there was 7,600 students staying in a HERRC shelter  
20 from July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 who would have been impacted by  
21 the 60-day notices.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

23 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: And this is, you  
24 know, public data. Of the 7,600 students, 41.9  
25

2 percent were still enrolled in the same school and  
3 housing location.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

5 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: 31 percent were  
6 enrolled in the same school and moved housing  
7 location, and 14.8 percent were discharged from New  
8 York City Public Schools. Seven percent had moved  
9 their shelter location and transferred schools, and  
10 4.5 percent had transferred schools, but not shelter.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Like, 42 percent  
12 would be the still in the same school, that would be  
13 your best number, right, 41 percent?

14 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Not necessarily. I  
15 would be a mix of 41 percent and 31 percent.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right, that--  
17 okay, and the same-- you said the same school  
18 district. What was the 31 percent?

19 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Was enrolled in the  
20 same school and moved housing location. So, they  
21 could have moved--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]  
23 Okay.

24 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: to a shelter down  
25 the block.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. The issue  
3 is-- if, I assume, because you have fewer numbers,  
4 you're going to be closing some H+H shelters. I  
5 don't know, but I assume. So my question would be,  
6 can you keep those students in the same school?  
7 Nothing matters more than to be in the same school,  
8 nothing. And I really would like to see the Head  
9 Start and earlier kids also kept in the same school.  
10 Then we have 50-- you know, we have all these  
11 families staying in the state of New York because  
12 they'll be integrated into our great school system.  
13 We have to be thinking that way. I don't want them to  
14 go to Minnesota and Texas. I want them to stay here,  
15 because you have-- you put money into them. In many  
16 different ways we have, and I think that they will be  
17 great New Yorkers. So, but if you keep moving them  
18 around to the schools and the shelters, I don't think  
19 that's going to help. We don't have that many people  
20 left, really. It's not a huge number. So the  
21 question is, can we elim-- are you thinking about  
22 eliminating this 30/60-day and keeping them in the  
23 state of New York. How is that thinking possible  
24 given what you're dealing with? Is it possible to  
25 think that way?

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, we continue to  
3 make changes, as this response has required us to.  
4 Just yesterday, we announced a shift in our 60-day  
5 noticing policy. So we continue to make changes and  
6 we'll continue to announce them as they happen. It  
7 is also our intention to help people integrate either  
8 in New York City, New York state or anywhere that  
9 they think is the best place for them and their  
10 family.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well, they're  
12 going to go wherever they can get a job and a house.  
13 So if they can get up state or the City of New York,  
14 I mean-- we just have to focus more. In my-- I know  
15 you're focusing, but upstate you could focus more.

16 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: And one thing I just  
17 want to say is that we've been working a lot with the  
18 state on the migrant relocation assistance program  
19 where people are getting housing upstate. I think  
20 we've had more than 500 households move into housing  
21 upstate.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Probably  
23 get more Minnesota. I'm just saying. Okay. Now,  
24 absenteeism is the other big issue, that one of the  
25 papers the other day had the huge absenteeism in



2 shelters. Obviously, including, I assume DHS, H+H,  
3 everybody else, big number. So, but if you have to  
4 go with your parents to all these different meetings,  
5 then you're going to be absent. Somebody earlier  
6 testified-- what is the story with taking your  
7 children every which way when you are moving? Can we  
8 eliminate that? Because you're going to be absent.

9 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, I mean, I think  
10 that-- we're not requiring people to bring their kids  
11 at this time.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But they're  
13 bringing them. They just-- they testified, and I  
14 hear that also. They just testified to that effect.  
15 They said they needed to bring them.

16 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I understand, but  
17 we're saying that kids don't have to attend. So  
18 we're happy to continue making that message known.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Why do you think  
20 it's not getting across?

21 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I think people--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]  
23 Because the panel earlier didn't get across.

24

25

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: I understand and I  
3 think that we'll just continue to make that message  
4 known.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Do you keep track  
6 of the absenteeism of the young people in H+H or any  
7 other shelter system who are migrants?

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, I would have to  
9 defer to DOE, but they do have students in temporary  
10 housing, officers, that do help.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know what they-

12 -

13 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing] Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I understand what  
15 they got. What they got and what is happening are  
16 two different things.

17 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Fair enough.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and the  
19 other thing is, we're one city, one administration.  
20 These kids are going-- some are going to leave,  
21 right? Devastating the schools. It is devastating  
22 the schools. We had unbelievably great families  
23 coming from the migrant community, populating where  
24 people had left during COVID. So are you-- did you--  
25 we're one administration. Are we thinking about what

2 we can do to keep those kids? Maybe it's getting rid  
3 of the shelter 60-day because then they'll stay in  
4 that school.

5 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Well, I'll--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] We  
7 got to think about the Department of Education, too,  
8 not just your silo.

9 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: No, and I appreciate  
10 that. We work really closely with the Department of  
11 Education to make sure that there's not really  
12 intense unintended consequences. I will say that,  
13 you know, at this point, the numbers I read before,  
14 72 percent were still in their same school. So, they  
15 might have moved their shelter for a variety of  
16 reasons. Some of it has to do with the 60-day  
17 notices. Some people moved out completely from the  
18 shelter system, came back, and then were put in  
19 whatever shelter we had available at the time, and  
20 still their kids stayed in the same school. and also  
21 the other point that I would make clear here is that  
22 as 70 percent of people have moved on from our  
23 shelter system, and you know, there's lots and lots  
24 of people who move on from the traditional shelter--  
25 this has been traditionally been an issue with the

2 Department of Education and we are hyper-focused on  
3 making sure we coordinate and that we make it as easy  
4 as possible for kids.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I mean,  
6 just as we speak, parents, parent coordinators,  
7 schools are all panicked, just to be honest with you,  
8 about the fewer number of students in their schools.  
9 It's bad for the American children who develop  
10 friends. It's bad for the migrants. It's bad for our  
11 City. It's just bad all around. We should be  
12 stopping any un-enrollment by these migrant families.  
13 It's just everything we can do. With all due  
14 respect, maybe it's not your job, but it is this  
15 Administration's job to do that. We're not doing it,  
16 because they're leaving. They just take off one day.  
17 We need-- because they're not feeling that there's  
18 enough support for them here. It's not just case  
19 work. It's a-- we are going to find other ways to  
20 keep you here. There has to-- it's a big  
21 administration. I'm just saying, with all due  
22 respect, it's not that kind of arc in my opinion.  
23 Finally, we've got holidays coming up. How do we-- we  
24 had them before, but how do we deal with families  
25 during the holidays and no school?

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: SO, I mean, one  
3 thing that we do is we often have a network of  
4 nonprofits that come in. I know that's not your  
5 question, but I'm just--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] No,  
7 no, it's fine. I want to know what--

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing]  
9 there's-- for thanksgiving--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I'm  
11 trying to keep these families here.

12 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: No, I know. So we  
13 try to have nonprofits that come in. we'll do  
14 thanksgiving meals. They'll do gift giveaways.  
15 We're working with New York City Service to make sure  
16 that we're getting gifts to all the kids to really  
17 make them feel welcome in this country, and so that's  
18 something we're really focused on.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I'm going  
20 to end, because I know time is up. But I'm just  
21 saying I want to hear from this administration. We  
22 want to keep these families here. We don't want it  
23 to go to Texas and Minnesota. We have jobs here.  
24 [inaudible] we take over, ain't nobody going to be  
25 working in the City of New York. So I want to hear

2 that more, and I want to hear that the schools-- they  
3 don't talk up either. Everybody's scared to talk up.  
4 They don't talk up either about the need to have  
5 these families stay here. Those schools deserve  
6 unbelievable credit. You deserve some. They deserve  
7 more. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Council  
9 Member. Council Member Joseph?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. The  
11 questioning will be along the same lines. Earlier,  
12 when a parent testified, when you move a child and  
13 their child has bus service, it takes about two weeks  
14 for that child to receive-- and this is regular. I  
15 just had a hearing on it. How long does it take when  
16 you move a child for them to get bus service to their  
17 new school or to their new-- to travel from their new  
18 location?

19 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, I have to defer  
20 to the Office of Pupil Transportation on that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: SO, you don't--  
22 you guys don't work in collaboration with them?

23 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We work--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: [interposing] You  
25 move them, but yet, you don't talk to OPT?

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, we talk every  
3 day to the Department of Education, and we are  
4 working through all those issues. But if you're  
5 asking about the specific timing, I have to defer to  
6 the Office of Pupil Transportation.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: How many students  
8 stayed in the same borough when they were moved?

9 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, I don't have  
10 that data with me today. We're happy to follow up  
11 with you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Chair? Thank  
13 you. So, that means that none of-- so you did not  
14 come with those answers as you were coming here  
15 today?

16 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: [interposing] You  
18 know these questions would be asked, because all of  
19 this is tied up. It's not in a vacuum or in a silo.  
20 This is all connected, shelter, children, schools,  
21 attendance, and as you can see, and I'm sure you  
22 heard yesterday-- you saw the report that came out,  
23 146,000 of our students living in temporary housing,  
24 and the outcomes for them are not that great. So  
25 that's why we want to make sure they have what they

2 need. So, all of these things are tied up. So when  
3 you come before us, I expect those answers when I ask  
4 those questions. Doctor Long, I know you're always  
5 eager to answer. Tell me. Talk to me. Talk to me  
6 about New York City kids in your care and what are we  
7 doing when we move them around the city? And this  
8 Council has been asking for us to keep them in place,  
9 right? GO ahead.

10 DOCTOR LONG: The first thing you could  
11 see me really wanting to say is I agree with  
12 everything you just said. I would say as a primary  
13 care doctor that the most important thing we're doing  
14 for the mental health is school, not me.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: That's right.

16 DOCTOR LONG: And so just a couple of  
17 things. At our humanitarian centers we have DOE on-  
18 site at all of my sites.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I know, I  
20 visited.

21 DOCTOR LONG: But that's been really  
22 important, though, because that's how if a family  
23 does move onto the site, we try to enroll them in  
24 school, as you know, within 24 hours. And if we  
25 don't hear from them, if their child is not enrolled,



2 we knock on their door literally with DOE to make  
3 sure that we're moving as fast as we can. Another  
4 just data point, and this isn't exactly what you were  
5 saying, but it's-- it's the way I operationally think  
6 about it, is last week-- or the week of the 5<sup>th</sup>. Last  
7 week? Yes. No, two weeks ago. This is how we  
8 looked at it. So if all the families with kids that  
9 came back to the arrival center, my site, that had  
10 one child in grades K to six, we placed 90 percent of  
11 them in the same borough. Eight percent on top of  
12 that we had a discussion with them, and they selected  
13 to-- and we documented their reason for selection--  
14 to go to a different borough, and a common reason for  
15 that is as you might guess if one of the parents got  
16 a job in a different borough, that might be a reason  
17 for them to want to have them-- their kids continue  
18 school where they're working. So, 90 percent plus  
19 eight percent. We've been trying to get those  
20 numbers as close to 100 percent each week as we can.  
21 That's not-- certainly not always been the case.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: So, what's the  
23 percentage now?

24 DOCTOR LONG: that's from last week.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: that's from last  
3 week, okay.

4 DOCTOR LONG: Or the week-- I'm sorry,  
5 the week of the fifth. I'm under oath. Which is  
6 apparently two weeks ago.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: So what's the  
8 difference, and what's the attendance like? You do  
9 knock on doors. Yes, we appreciate that. But how  
10 many of our students are really getting out the door,  
11 they're not missing school? Because the absenteeism  
12 rate if you look at it for overall New York City,  
13 it's very high, and that include our New York City  
14 students who are living in temporary housing.

15 DOCTOR LONG: So, I would have to defer  
16 to DOE about their approach to absenteeism. What I  
17 will say is that my site leads, site administrators all  
18 know who the DOE representatives, you saw yourself,  
19 are, and we work together, and they're the ones that  
20 identify students that are having absenteeism issues.  
21 We'll work together to see what's going on and how we  
22 can help.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And all of your  
24 sites have shelter-based coordinators?

2 DOCTOR LONG: I believe so, but let me  
3 double-check to make sure that I'm not-- there might  
4 be one that doesn't, but not as far I know, but I'll  
5 get back to you on that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And your older  
7 students that come in your care, what services and  
8 support do you provide for them for your high  
9 schoolers, your students who should be somehow in  
10 transfer school? Are you referring them to D79  
11 schools? Talk me through the process, please.

12 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, at this point if  
13 we have-- the 18 to 22-year-olds, we talked about it  
14 a little bit, but we have a connection with DOE to  
15 make sure that the ones that are going to DYCD and  
16 the ones that are in our care, we're connecting to  
17 schools if there's eligible placements, and we've  
18 been working on that. We're also-- and that's been a  
19 big part of just the process as people come back to  
20 our care. We've been trying to do those referrals. I  
21 think education of all kinds is top priority, so I  
22 think that that's been really good connection that  
23 we've made.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Education and  
25 immigration. And as you're moving folks along, how

2 are they getting their mail? Someone said they  
3 missed a fingerprint appointment-- fingerprinting  
4 appointment because their mail was sent to them  
5 delayed. As we delayed, those folks get put on lists  
6 to be removed.

7 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yeah, and I think  
8 what we-- I talked about a little bit is we've done  
9 a-- we've done a lot of improvements in mail over the  
10 last year. We've really focused on it. so, one of  
11 the big changes that we made a couple of months ago  
12 is that we made all sites take-- keep important mail  
13 indefinitely so that as things come, if people leave  
14 the shelter, they can come back and request that  
15 mail. We've also done a lot of work with case  
16 managers to make sure that they're helping with any  
17 mail issues. We've also made sure that all of the  
18 sites are focusing on mail and know what type of mail  
19 to look out for. And then most recently, yesterday,  
20 we announced that in a couple of weeks we're going to  
21 be doing a centralized mail room for non-DHS mail.  
22 So all of this has been a work in progress, but we  
23 continue to--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: [interposing]

25 Well, as they move around are you forwarding mail

2 since you already know in the system as to where  
3 they're being placed? Are you forwarding the mail  
4 to their next address or no?

5 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: No, because 70  
6 percent of the system has already left. So, as people  
7 move on, we are just keeping their important mail in  
8 the place that they put as their address so that it's  
9 easier for them to get to.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And do they get  
11 phone calls to know that they-- how do you notify  
12 them that the mail is there?

13 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, we started a  
14 pilot on that, and we're making tech changes to make  
15 that easier, because part of the issue was a tech  
16 issue, but at this point we'll be able to do that  
17 through our centralized mail system.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. I  
20 want to go back to childcare issues, and in  
21 particular, obviously, they-- folks who are utilizing  
22 programs like Promise NYC vouchers are exempt from  
23 this policy. Can you walk us through the impacts of  
24 exempting those families that are attempting to use  
25

2 vouchers for childcare who are getting bounced around  
3 the City and the system.

4 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, we really do try  
5 to keep people as close as possible to their current  
6 shelter when they reapply, and we're going to  
7 continue doing that regardless of this policy shift,  
8 and we continue to make changes to our policies.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Are you keeping  
10 track of those families that you're noticing to evict  
11 from facility who are using Promise NYC vouchers for  
12 childcare?

13 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We've been working  
14 with Promise NYC to get more people connected to the  
15 services, and case managers obviously are working  
16 each family that we have, but not on a central level.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, but there is--  
18 hi-- but there is awareness-- perfect timing. Babies  
19 are amazing. There is awareness that it suffers--  
20 folks will suffer the same challenges, right, of like  
21 stabilization and some kind of care, just a different  
22 age group and moving around a city. There's still  
23 that same problem. Are we just-- I just want to be  
24 sure that you are keeping track and we are helping to  
25 facilitate people to use these services and then

2 evicting them somewhere far. Like, it undermines  
3 everything we're doing. So I just want to  
4 understand, how are you making sure that you are not  
5 undermining your own work?

6 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: No, and I appreciate  
7 the question. As I mentioned, it's still our  
8 intention to try to get everyone as close as possible  
9 to their original shelter, but I think the bigger  
10 point here is that we're trying to help everyone move  
11 on from temporary shelter. No one wants to raise  
12 their kid in a temporary shelter, and so it is the  
13 work case management to get people as many resources  
14 as possible so that they can move on, and part of  
15 that is our legal services. Part of that is  
16 connecting people to childcare, and part of that is  
17 making sure that they're-- that people are saving  
18 money and people are kind of making a plan for them  
19 and their families to move on.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, I guess in terms  
21 of the case management which we've talked a lot  
22 about, the-- you mentioned saving money. Is that  
23 part of case management? Are they financial-- can  
24 you tell me, like, what actually case management  
25 looks like? Because I will say, we hear the

2 administration say intensive case management all the  
3 time, and there was an example in the pre-panel of  
4 someone whose case management actually resulted in  
5 work. So, not all bad. Nevertheless, we do hear a  
6 lot of stories that that intensive case management is  
7 an exit interview. That's not intensive case  
8 management. That's pushing people-- like, you remind  
9 you go to go in two weeks. What is your plan? So,  
10 walk us through what this intensive case management  
11 is supposed to be.

12 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, I mean, I'll  
13 turn it over to Doctor Ted in a second, but I think  
14 the overall the importance and the point of the case  
15 management in our system is to help every single  
16 person make a plan for what are they going to do in  
17 the next 30 and 60 days that's going to help them  
18 resettle out of shelter. So that means how are they  
19 going to get farther along in their work permit-- in  
20 their legal process? How can we get them  
21 appointments to do that? How can we make sure that  
22 they're looking at ways to get work? Most people  
23 are working, but how are we helping to facilitate  
24 that. If we have referrals to OSHA trainings, if we



2 have referrals in ESOL classes, how are we connecting  
3 people to that?

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, are you keeping  
5 any particular data on-- I know Doctor Long, you  
6 mentioned 700,000 case management hours. I don't  
7 know what that means, but like, are you-- because the  
8 quantity is less important than the quality, right?  
9 If we have an immigration system that takes four  
10 years to actually get through step one, I don't care  
11 that we did 70,000 applications, if we only had one  
12 person that actually can get through that system. So,  
13 really what I'm hoping to understand is how is the  
14 quality and real outcomes that we are pursuing  
15 actually reflected in the context of a city where we  
16 haven't been able to get folks to move on from our  
17 shelter system generally. We have the highest number  
18 of children, which Council Member mentioned, which  
19 has been persistent for the past nine years. So I  
20 guess, if I could just understand more--  
21 quantitatively, not quantitatively, qualitatively--  
22 what that truly does look like that would be helpful.

23 DOCTOR LONG: Yeah, happy to. And I  
24 known Council Member Joseph just stepped away, but I-

2 - my excellent team has given me precise answers to  
3 her questions. Maybe I'll just put it on the record.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Sure.

5 DOCTOR LONG: Yes, to coordinators at all  
6 of our sites from DOE. And we also get emails from  
7 attendance teachers daily so that we can stay  
8 coordinated closely with our DOE colleagues that are  
9 on-site at my sites. So, going to case management--

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Can I  
11 pause you for a quick second?

12 DOCTOR LONG: Of course.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Is that the case for  
14 DHS sites? Are there coordinators at every site?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes. WE  
16 work closely with DOE and they are, and our  
17 percentage for last month was 82.6 where we make sure  
18 our families are placed and in the child-- the  
19 youngest child in the borough of where they go to  
20 school. That's always been a policy for us. So, we  
21 just continued.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Back to  
23 you.

24 DOCTOR LONG: thank you. So, you-- if I  
25 may, just to make sure I'm being precise.

2 Qualitatively more about what case management is and  
3 then what do we have in our data, what have we  
4 learned through these meetings as also a way to  
5 inform qualitatively how it works. Sound good?  
6 Yeah. So, I would say we take the same initial  
7 question that I ask all of my patients that I've ever  
8 seen in my Bronx primary care practice for the last  
9 seven years. I start with, "How can I help you  
10 today." So, whatever people's individual barriers  
11 are-- and I'll give several examples here-- the case  
12 manager's goal is to identify what those barriers are  
13 and figure out what help you need. You know, the  
14 number one thing that people want which is something  
15 we've talked a lot about during this hearing is to  
16 get a job. Everybody wants to get a job as a way to  
17 have them and their families be able to pursue the  
18 American dream, but everybody needs something  
19 different to get that job that they want. So, if--  
20 sticking on legal services. If you tell us that you  
21 need work authorization, but you applied for asylum,  
22 you don't know how the process works, we can educate  
23 you and make the right referrals. If you're eligible  
24 for applying for work authorization, we can make you  
25 an appointment at the AHHC, and again, now we're

2 actually even helping you to apply for work  
3 authorization from the arrival center the minute you  
4 arrive with our case management team. So our case  
5 management team does a lot of different things. If  
6 you've applied for work authorization and you have  
7 it, and we have, again, data on that because we ask  
8 for updates related to that, then we look at what  
9 kind of job you might want to have and what your  
10 experience has been. So, I could tell you for  
11 example, sort of interesting, how many former doctors  
12 we have in our asylum-seeking system and how many  
13 we've ever had enter into our city asylum-seeker  
14 response. I can tell you how many nurses, how many  
15 pharmacists, how many lawyers. That's important,  
16 though, because those are the types of jobs people  
17 would want to continue to pursue. So another example  
18 is we had an event where we helped people at one of  
19 our sites to apply to work with a community-based  
20 organization that I mentioned earlier that teaches  
21 how to work in a kitchen, cooking skills, things like  
22 that. So, we reached out to people based on their  
23 prior experience, based on their work authorization,  
24 and then they dressed up for the interviews, came in.  
25 it was a really nice day of people applying for

2 their-- really, applying for their first job in the  
3 U.S. We actually got to see it because we did on-  
4 site. So, case management lets us sort of have that  
5 individualized approach. Legal services is one  
6 important thing. The last thing I'll say about the  
7 legal side of things is with our Community Advisory  
8 Board which has been, again, instrumental in terms of  
9 how to get case management right, we have a specific  
10 work group on legal services. So how we're asking the  
11 questions, the types of things we're covering, the  
12 types of services we're offering to people. It's not  
13 only informed by the experience we have on the ground  
14 working with people, but it's informed by our  
15 community leaders that also have their ear to the  
16 ground, and to your earlier point, maybe hearing  
17 something slightly different than we hear. So we  
18 want to hear from every source and we want to be able  
19 to collaboratively come up with solutions together.  
20 Jobs is another thing. Housing is another thing. You  
21 mentioned saving money. That's actually something  
22 that's come up that we're now helping people with.  
23 Was that something on day one that we knew we needed  
24 to help people with? No, but it's something we've  
25 heard from people especially our guests, for example,

2 upstate that are looking for apartments. They may  
3 have been working for a while in the communities that  
4 they're in. they're tell-- a lot of them are telling  
5 us their barrier to being able to get that apartment  
6 they want and to be able to exit the system, is they  
7 want-- they need to know how they can save money in  
8 the U.S. to be able to afford that apartment. So we  
9 work with them on how that works, and we make a plan  
10 with them. other types of things that case  
11 management can cover is we can help you with how to  
12 navigate getting the apartment, both either in New  
13 York City, in New York State or in other places. So  
14 we do have connections to jobs and to housing  
15 resources in other places, too, and we really base  
16 that-- we base it on the job. so, if somebody  
17 experience working in a job in a certain sector-- as  
18 Council Member Brewer said, we'd love to keep you in  
19 New York City, but if you'd prefer to go to a  
20 different place based on the job that's available, we  
21 can educate you about that. We can make a plan with  
22 you. So it's really all about you and whatever your  
23 barriers are. Our job is to move heaven and earth to  
24 get you where you want to go.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, are you keeping  
3 track of like outcomes around that, how many people  
4 have actually gotten a job or how many people have  
5 actually gotten permanent housing, how many people--  
6 you know, all those dimensions.

7 DOCTOR LONG: Yeah. So, one way to look  
8 at the dimension related specifically to jobs again  
9 is we do know if you've not applied for work  
10 authorization, you are eligible and have or have not  
11 applied or we ask you which is again what you tell  
12 us, if you've received approval for work  
13 authorization. We then work with you to get a job,  
14 and we document in the records that we have, you  
15 know, this is your prior job experience, here's the  
16 types of things we talk to you about. Maybe if you  
17 were a cook, we're going to put you in that program I  
18 mentioned, or have you apply to that program I  
19 mentioned. Maybe if you're a nurse, we can arrange--  
20 which we're working on now-- how to go through the  
21 appropriate process to become a nurse here in the  
22 U.S. or if you do something else in the medical  
23 field. We desperately need more clinicians and  
24 people in the medical field to care for New Yorkers,  
25 and frankly, everywhere across the U.S. So, we're

2 trying to, again, meet people where they are based on  
3 their former experience which we note in the records  
4 we have.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, are you keeping  
6 any data--

7 DOCTOR LONG: [interposing] Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: on the outcomes?

9 DOCTOR LONG: So, if the--

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Can  
11 you report to the Council what some of these outcomes  
12 are, because it's still very descriptive, and I know  
13 lacking in outcome data?

14 DOCTOR LONG: Yes, I think it would be  
15 great if we could circle back with the exact data  
16 that we have, and if we don't have the data that you  
17 think would be important for us to collect, we're  
18 totally open to add any question onto the surveys we  
19 use for people every other week.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. In  
21 terms of extenuating circumstance, what training is  
22 staff being given around extenuating circumstances  
23 review?

24 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: That's a really  
25 excellent question. Extenuating circumstances was the



2 result policy set by the City as part of the terms of  
3 the Callahan stipulation, and therefore, the policy  
4 itself and the questions that are asked when we  
5 interview guests around the extenuating circumstances  
6 are very proscribed. So, we have a slide deck and we  
7 sit down and we train staff to go through the very--  
8 the questions. They also go through the questions  
9 using our system host [sic] and they are programmed  
10 into that along with the script and the interpreter  
11 sitting with the guest.

12 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: But in our noticing,  
13 we start the process of letting people know what the  
14 process is to get another extenuating circumstance.  
15 So case managers are aware of the process, and any  
16 questions that come up, they know how to answer them.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How much of-- I  
18 mean, I think where we all find enormous challenges  
19 is in the level of discretion and interpretation,  
20 right, around guidance. Are you finding staff  
21 needing substantial guidance on how they're making  
22 determinations?

23 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: No, the staff who  
24 do the interviews shadow existing staff. We've now  
25 been doing this for a number of months. We have

2 grown some in-house expertise around this, and they  
3 are supervised by a group of staff. So the people  
4 making the ultimate decision are not the people doing  
5 the actual interview, and therefore, there is an  
6 added layer of review on-site before a decision is  
7 rendered.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And is there a  
9 vulnerability to appeal--

10 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: [interposing] Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: this decision? Can  
12 you walk us through what that is?

13 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: There are three  
14 ways to appeal. There's an email address that is  
15 both on the determination letter at the end of an  
16 extenuating circumstance review. Also, advocates and  
17 others can contact us on behalf of clients, which  
18 they do frequently. Also, clients may individually  
19 speak to staff on-site to express concern and to have  
20 the determination explained to them.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What was the second-  
22 - the second option?

23 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: Advocates.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Advocates.  
25

2 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: Can contact us  
3 directly on behalf of their client.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And are you keeping  
5 any data around appeals, how many appeals are coming  
6 from advocates, how many are coming from clients?

7 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: Yes, we have that  
8 data. I can follow up.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What the results  
10 are?

11 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can you report  
13 around what the status of appeals are and what are  
14 provided and denied?

15 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: We can provide  
16 that information to you. I don't have it with me,  
17 but what I can tell you is that in terms of formal  
18 appeals, as outlined in the stipulation, I do not  
19 believe we have received any. Most of them have been  
20 inquiries about status that we have answered with  
21 information and updates, and all guests are  
22 encouraged to consider if-- with additional  
23 documentation. One thing that happens, is the guest  
24 may affirm that they have taken steps towards  
25 independence without any documentation to indicate

2 that is the case. And so often, guest will come back  
3 to the site and have a second easy interview with  
4 that documentation. They are informed they can do  
5 that at the site.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And in terms of--  
7 are those-- are those documents provided in preferred  
8 language?

9 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: The documents  
10 that the guest provide to us can be provided in  
11 multiple languages, and the documents that we provide  
12 to the guest which I assume you are asking--

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Yes.

14 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: they are provided  
15 in the guest's preferred language. They are also  
16 interpreted for them on-site by an in-person  
17 interpreter in their preferred language.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, every document,  
19 or is that upon request? Because we know there's--  
20 in some instances literacy issues.

21 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: So, again, at the  
22 extenuating circumstance interview, we provide a  
23 determination letter, and that determination letter  
24 is read to the guest in their preferred language by  
25 an interpreter.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Got it.

3 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: As well as being  
4 provided in writing.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Could  
6 you share a list of all the languages of which the  
7 shelter limit notices are being published?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The  
9 notices that are given out to the families and  
10 individuals while they're in shelter is what you're  
11 asking?

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I think  
14 we have-- I don't know if you have all the languages,  
15 but--

16 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing] No, I  
17 have the languages folks speak, but it's all of the  
18 languages that people have asked. I don't have the  
19 exact list with me. Give me a minute and I'll get  
20 it.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I'm sorry, Molly,  
22 could you say that one more time?

23 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes. So I don't have  
24 the exact list of languages right here with me, but I  
25 can follow up with it.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: You'll provide it to  
3 Council.

4 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yeah, that's pretty-  
5 - we have that.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can the admin supply  
7 the Council with a slide deck that is being offered  
8 to staff around the extenuating circumstances that  
9 you referenced?

10 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: the training  
11 material?

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Correct.

13 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: The training  
14 materials [inaudible] yes [inaudible].

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. The  
16 Coalition has informed us that no one responds to the  
17 email unless an advocate sends an email, and I assume  
18 it's the email address on the extenuating  
19 circumstance notice. Who's manning the email address  
20 on those notices?

21 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: so, it's New York  
22 City Emergency Management and our staff from the re-  
23 ticketing center, and I respectfully would disagree  
24 with that-- with that statement and would ask that if  
25 the Coalition has concerns about our lack of response

2 to please let us know indications and evidence of  
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Are you keeping data  
5 on your responses?

6 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: We are.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And can you provide  
8 to the Council what that looks like, how--

9 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: [interposing] I  
10 don't have it with me--

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: the frequency of  
12 response in cases?

13 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. And in terms  
15 of-- are people given reasons for their denials if  
16 they are denied extenuating circumstance?

17 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: There is a  
18 determination letter that is given to the guests that  
19 outlines the decision that was made.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And what are some of  
21 the decisions or decision trends that you see, or  
22 maybe some of the most common around denials?

23 SENIOR ADVISOR ASHTON: The request for  
24 an extension of stay in shelter is tied to steps  
25 taken by the applicant towards independence from the

2 shelter system. None of our goals is-- and I don't  
3 think it's the goal of our guests either, to remain  
4 in shelter indefinitely. So, one of the things we  
5 are evaluating are steps the individual has taken  
6 toward independence. So, for example, applying for  
7 an IDNYC, enrolling in English classes, looking for a  
8 job, enrolling in a course like the Workforce  
9 Development course, the person who testified earlier  
10 mentioned. Those are all steps towards independence  
11 that are granted consideration in an extenuating  
12 circumstance evaluation.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: and so how is that--  
14 how is that assessed or is there like a point system  
15 with those steps? How is that assessed on what's  
16 more valuable than others?

17 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yeah, so each of  
18 the-- you know, we've spent a lot of time litigating  
19 this with Legal Aid and with advocates, so we've  
20 gotten approval on this process. The point of this  
21 is an individual determination of someone's steps  
22 taken to independence, and we continue running that  
23 process as such.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I'm sorry. So,  
25 individual determination-- I don't know what to make



2 of that. Does that mean it's up to the individuals  
3 who is reviewing--

4 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing] there's  
5 a rubric.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: that person?

7 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Yes, that's exactly  
8 right, and that was a key part of the settlement and  
9 a key part of our negotiations with Legal Aid.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, if I'm having a  
11 really grumpy day and I want to not be the most  
12 generous interpreter of people's steps, I could deny  
13 them and that would be fine--

14 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: [interposing] No, so-

15 -

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: based on a rubric.  
17 So, I guess what maybe I'm not understanding is-- it  
18 sounds like there's a lot of discretion on  
19 interpretation on whether ESL versus being able to  
20 access an IDNYC.

21 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, we monitor both,  
22 but the point of this is to have an individualized  
23 review of each individual that comes in front of us,  
24 but we do that in as fair of way as we possibly can  
25 with staff which gets down to training, which gets

2 down to talking through what kinds of things would  
3 showcase that somebody did something, and ensures  
4 that they have brought proof to showcase that. So it  
5 is not about the grump interpreter, but-- or sorry,  
6 the grumpy case reviewer, but it really is about the  
7 individual in front of them and what they're saying.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, there's 100  
9 percent each case is very unique, but I think absent  
10 a clerk rubric, a standard, you can have an infinite  
11 number of interpretations around what is more  
12 valuable than the next, and that feels utterly  
13 problematic.

14 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: so, we have a  
15 standard and a rubric which we have negotiated  
16 heavily with Legal Aid, and so that's what I'm going  
17 to keep saying here, that we--

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Yeah.  
19 Okay.

20 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: that we have a  
21 process.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay.

23 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: It is also really  
24 focused on the individualized review of the case in  
25 front of us.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, thank you for  
3 that.

4 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: And I have the list  
5 of languages that we have--

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Okay.

7 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: We have these  
8 notices: Arabic, Bangla, Chinese traditional, Chinese  
9 simplified, Dari, English, French, Fula, Fulani,  
10 Pular, Georgian, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Moninca  
11 [sic], Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish,  
12 Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, and Wolof.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. We're coming  
14 up on time, but I just realized, in terms of  
15 healthcare, does the City make any exceptions to the  
16 30/60 limit for individuals that have upcoming  
17 medical procedures?

18 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, that is part of  
19 the process of requesting an extenuating  
20 circumstance. We also have a reasonable  
21 accommodation process where if somebody has some  
22 reason where they would need to stay in place, they  
23 can come and request that.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how long does  
25 that take to determine?

2 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: It depends based on  
3 if they-- if somebody brings proof and you review  
4 each case individually.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how many of  
6 these have you-- do you keep track of how many have  
7 been requested of reasonable accommodations?

8 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: so we'd have to get  
9 back to you on that point. I don't have the exact  
10 reasonable accommodation numbers in front of me.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Are there any  
12 medical procedures that wouldn't be included in  
13 exemptions or accommodations?

14 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: So, it's a case by  
15 case determination based on the totality of  
16 circumstances.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And I guess this is  
18 another-- a lot of gray areas, and I appreciate the  
19 complexity of it. But is that just dependent on the  
20 person who's reviewing it, whether they think this is  
21 an important procedure or not?

22 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: There's lots of  
23 lawyers involved. There's medical clinicians  
24 involved. There's a process to get a reasonable  
25 accommodation reviewed, and so there is layers to it,

2 but it does take into account the totality of  
3 circumstances. One person's disease may not be the  
4 same as another person's disease and how it effects  
5 them from moving place to place. I don't know if  
6 Doctor Ted--

7 DOCTOR LONG: Yeah, I wanted to-- I can  
8 add a couple of notes about the reasonable  
9 accommodation process from the point of view of  
10 Health + Hospitals humanitarian center sites, and  
11 then if Emily wants to add anything from the point of  
12 view of the re-ticketing center, that would be great.  
13 I first just wanted to say-- I know this has nothing  
14 to do with your question, but healthcare is a human  
15 right regardless of who is president, and we will  
16 always in New York City see everybody that comes to  
17 us for help. We've had a lot of asylum-seekers come  
18 to us for help over the last two years. We make them  
19 our primary care patients at Health + Hospitals. I'm  
20 proud to see many of them in my personal clinic in  
21 the Bronx every Friday. Reasonable accommodation, to  
22 your question, is we have a clinician that's a part  
23 of Health + Hospitals review every reasonable  
24 accommodation request that's requested of-- requested  
25 by anybody staying at any of our sites. I can tell

2 you, for example-- I have the data here-- 88 percent  
3 have been approved. Some are still waiting on  
4 paperwork from the medical team taking care of the  
5 person, but we have-- our Health + Hospitals team is  
6 the one that's reviewing the request and making sure  
7 that everybody's appropriately cared for.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And do you-- Doctor  
9 Long, do you have a sense of how long an approval  
10 process takes?

11 DOCTOR LONG: Yes. So, we--  
12 documentation turnaround review we commit to and  
13 deliver on less than one week, and during that time  
14 somebody stays on-site. So if you, for example  
15 Chair, request reasonable accommodation and let's say  
16 two days before your notice might be up, we will have  
17 you stay on site while your case is being reviewed.  
18 Then when the outcome of the review is complete,  
19 we'll come and talk to you about the outcome. Most  
20 of the time we do get back to people much quicker  
21 than that, but that's the standard we set for  
22 ourselves.

23 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: And I'm sorry, but I  
24 have to leave. It is one o'clock.

25 UNIDENTIFIED: We had a hard stop, sorry.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Duly noted. We were  
3 informed of your hard stop. So, don't leave without  
4 me saying thank you for being here, for responding to  
5 the questions. There are a slew of questions we are  
6 expecting follow-ups. So, we have a diligent list of  
7 things that we are anticipating some questions for.  
8 So, thank you for your testimony.

9 DIRECTOR SCHAEFFER: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright, we will now  
11 be opening the hearing for public testimony. I once  
12 again remind members of the public that this is a  
13 government proceeding and that decorum shall be  
14 observed at all times. As such, members of the  
15 public shall remain silent at all times. The witness  
16 table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No  
17 video recording or photography is allowed from the  
18 witness table. Further, members of the public may  
19 not present audio or video recording as testimony,  
20 but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the  
21 Sergeant of Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.  
22 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill  
23 out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and  
24 wait to be recognized. When recognized you will have  
25 two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic,

2 Implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules. You do  
3 not need to share personal information such as where  
4 you're staying if you do not wish to. If you have a  
5 written statement or additional written testimony  
6 that you wish to submit for the record, please  
7 provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at  
8 Arms. You are also-- you may also email written  
9 testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) within 72  
10 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings  
11 will not be accepted. I'd also like to announce that  
12 we simultaneous interpretation available to the  
13 public to listen to today's hearing in the following  
14 languages: Arabic, Spanish, French, Wolof, Fulani,  
15 and Pular. I will now call on the first panel.  
16 Christine Quinn, Claire Salant, Jacob Berman, and  
17 Senator Gounardes. Alright, good afternoon. We'll  
18 hear first from Christine Quinn and the Senator and  
19 then we will transition over to IBO. My apologies.  
20 You may begin.

21 CHRISTINE QUINN: Thank you. My name's  
22 Christine Quinn. I'm President and CEO of WIN, Women  
23 in Need. We are the largest provider of shelter to  
24 homeless families with children and the largest  
25 provider of supportive housing to homeless families



2 with children. We through the course of the influx  
3 of migrants to New York City we have housed over  
4 1,200 individuals. We presently house them

5 throughout our network of 15 tier two shelters, and  
6 we run one hotel in the Bronx that's 35 units, and  
7 that is all-- excuse me, 55 units. That is all  
8 migrant family at the hotel in the Bronx. I

9 submitted my written testimony, but I just kind of  
10 want to instead of reading it, to respond to some of  
11 what the Administration said in their testimony.

12 One, it is not trauma-informed to move people every  
13 60 days. Now, the Administration, I think, would like  
14 people to think the 60-day rule is gone. It's not.

15 People are going to go through one eviction after  
16 they've already had to go through a grueling intake  
17 process. They're just not going to have to do it a  
18 second time, which is a good step, but is not

19 repealing it. Two, the City didn't seem to have a  
20 ton of answers, and even seemed to indicate that they  
21 didn't have the data. There is a tremendous amount

22 of information accessible. In fact, one of our staff  
23 people went on to look for someone he knew who's a  
24 migrant, and all he knew was his name and he was able  
25 to find him. So, the city has access. In fact, I

2 worry that the city has too much information, and  
3 that the overlap with groups that have federal  
4 contracts like the Red Cross-- nothing against Red  
5 Cross, but they have a federal contract. There's all  
6 this info. Is that going to mean the info's going to  
7 go to the feds? What we should be doing-- the city  
8 should be doing is making the info available to  
9 something like the City Council who would hold it in  
10 confidence and then working with advocates and  
11 elected officials to put up guard rails around the  
12 data so it can't be accessed by the federal  
13 government. We have had about 34 families been given  
14 a 60-day notice. Now, you can often beat those back  
15 if somebody has working papers or if they have a  
16 mental health diagnosis, but you have to have real  
17 case managers who can do that kind of work. But even  
18 if the 60-day rule doesn't get implemented, the days  
19 those families exist with it hanging over their head  
20 is more trauma. These are individuals, many whom  
21 have come from, you know, war-torn places, places  
22 where basically the society is being run by gangs.  
23 So this idea of government evicting them hanging over  
24 their head is even more traumatic than it would be  
25 for someone who has lived in New York for a very long

2 time, and we need to understand that that is just  
3 harassment, nothing else, in the hopes that people  
4 will leave the shelter system and go God knows where.

5 Now I want to raise another thing that is going on.

6 So there's the 30-day rule for singles, 60-day for  
7 families. There's also a procedure the City has,  
8 which they should have, administrative transfers.

9 So, let's say when a family where there are two  
10 adults and there's a domestic violence incident, we  
11 might have to administratively transfer the domestic  
12 violence survivor because the perpetrator knows where  
13 they live. We need that, right? Or some thing-- or  
14 a child gets sick and specialist is uptown Manhattan,  
15 but the family is in Queens. We might move them so  
16 they can be near their child in the hospital. You  
17 know, that's-- we need that provision. But right  
18 now, they're using that provision to move migrant  
19 families. You get 24 to 48 hours to get your stuff  
20 together if you're being administratively challenged,  
21 as opposed to the longer time of the 60-day rule, and  
22 I'm to saying do the 60-day rule instead of  
23 administrative transfers, I'm saying stop abusing the  
24 administrative transfers as a loophole and a back  
25 door to moving migrants around and out of shelter.

2 So that's it. I'm happy to answer any questions on  
3 that or on the testimony. Oh, let me say one other  
4 thing. This isn't going to save any money, right? I  
5 mean, and whether it is, we're never going to know,  
6 but the truth is if they were working to move  
7 migrants out of shelter into permanent housing by  
8 extending vouchers to the undocumented, not just the  
9 migrants, but any undocumented, they would be saving  
10 money. Because the amount of money you pay, \$72 for  
11 a voucher, is significantly less than what you pay  
12 for when you're housing someone in a tier two shelter  
13 or in a commercial hotel. If the primary impetus  
14 here is saving money, I wish it was morality, but if  
15 it's saving money, that's the way to do it. We did a  
16 study with the Immigration Coalition and showed that  
17 you could save \$3 billion by moving forward with  
18 vouchers.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. I love it  
20 when you're here, because you-- you bring a lot of  
21 information. But I think one of the things that we  
22 heard was the-- not pausing, but the fact that the  
23 new policy that was announced in September has not  
24 yet been implemented. Has the Administration given  
25

2 any indication on when they'd plan to do that so that  
3 at least there's heads up?

4 CHRISTINE QUINN: Not yet.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Not yet. Okay.  
6 Alright. Have you had any difficulty with the  
7 application for reasonable accommodations or folks  
8 that are requesting and extension?

9 CHRISTINE QUINN: I mean, the entire  
10 paperwork process for all unhoused folks, but  
11 specifically for migrants is laborious, and you know,  
12 if I had to go through that process right now,  
13 somebody's who's housed and has a filing cabinet in  
14 their house, I couldn't do it, right? It's so  
15 laborious. So, we've had lots of clients who've had  
16 those kinds of problems, but they have case workers  
17 who work with them and staff who would work with them  
18 to help them overcome those problems, but that is a  
19 persistent issue.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: As a provider, are  
21 you required to hire a specific type of case manager  
22 to assist?

23 CHRISTINE QUINN: Yeah, we-- we negotiate  
24 for each shelter with the city about how many case  
25 managers, how many housing specialists, how many

2 this, how many that, a goal of how many should be  
3 bilingual or more than, so yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Do they stipulate how  
5 often those case managers should be meeting with  
6 families?

7 CHRISTINE QUINN: Well, they don't-- they  
8 don't stipulate that, but they-- we set a goal for  
9 how many housing placements we get, right? So that's  
10 what the goal is that we get-- the main goal we get  
11 judged on, and depending on what your situation is  
12 depends on how much case management. It's minimally,  
13 you know, once a week, but sometimes it's more than  
14 that.

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah. I'm trying--

16 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] And there  
17 is-- there are rules around things like newborn  
18 children. So we do unit visits every other week,  
19 unless there's a newborn, we do it every week.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, I'm just trying  
21 to determine why there's such a huge discrepancy  
22 between sites in terms of the level of case  
23 management or case assistance that folks are  
24 receiving. it seems like in some-- you know, in some  
25 cases people are receiving, you know, fairly adequate

2 amount of face to face time, and in some place-- in  
3 some instances it's only, you know, every 15 days,  
4 right-- 15 days prior to the expiration of their time  
5 at that specific site.

6 CHRISTINE QUINN: I mean, it's off--  
7 well, there's two things. One, it's often a budget  
8 question, right? And different organization will  
9 negotiate their budget in different way depending on  
10 their model. Two, you know, what they really judge  
11 us on, as I said, are housing placements, but there  
12 really isn't an expectation of housing placement for  
13 the migrants, because they have no access presently  
14 to housing subsidies. So that may be part of it.

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Which is interesting,  
16 because the idea behind the 30- and 60-day rule--

17 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] Correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: is to help people  
19 transition to housing.

20 CHRISTINE QUINN: Right.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And self-sufficiency.  
22 Okay, I appreciate that.

23 CHRISTINE QUINN: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Did you want to add  
25 something else?

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, in your  
3 experience, have you seen folks been able to  
4 stabilize in 60 days [inaudible] New York City?

5 CHRISTINE QUINN: I mean, I think it  
6 would be hard for any client we got to stabilize in  
7 60 days, because you end up in a WIN shelter if  
8 you've been evicted, if you're a survivor of domestic  
9 violence, if you're a survivor of sexual abuse. So,  
10 dealing with that,-- well, one, getting your child  
11 situated in school if it's a new school. Two,  
12 beginning your own healing process through whatever  
13 you've been through, and make no mistake, being  
14 evicted is a trauma. Three, then getting your work  
15 life in order if that means just stabilizing where  
16 you are or going through training to get another job,  
17 and then beginning the housing process. Now, it's  
18 good we don't have the 90-day rule that prevents you  
19 looking for housing right away, but 60 days is an  
20 incredibly short period of time, particularly since  
21 the case manager or housing specialist isn't just  
22 dealing with one person, they're dealing with a lot  
23 of people. So, so that's just what you might say the  
24 traditional client. But then you add onto that  
25 somebody who has literally walked to the United



2 States, and then unceremoniously been put on a bus  
3 without their permission to New York with nothing  
4 but, you know, their t-shirt and their flip-flops--  
5 we had one client who had the same clothes on for 15  
6 days. They didn't tell us they needed clothes. We  
7 then gave them clothes, because they had-- they took  
8 nothing. So, you add that trauma in, you add the  
9 language issues in, you add a whole new public school  
10 educational system you have to come to understand,  
11 and 60 days is a drop in the bucket. And they know  
12 that. they didn't pick 365 days, you know, they  
13 picked a very short period of time, and I would argue  
14 30 days for a singles is even worse given how hard it  
15 is-- there's no more SROs in the city, right, so--

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Yeah,  
17 just to get an appointment takes 30 days.

18 CHRISTINE QUINN: Exactly.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, and I think--  
20 you know, even some of the outcomes, right, or lack  
21 thereof that clearly the Administration could not  
22 respond to it speaks volumes that it's really not  
23 about establishing a particular outcome in such a  
24 rapid time.

2 CHRISTINE QUINN: And throughout this  
3 entire time, we've seen the Administration take a  
4 very anti- or negative posture towards the migrants,  
5 right, and really stand in a place-- not so much in  
6 the functioning of the agencies, but in the Mayor's  
7 statements about the migrants. So when you take--  
8 when you have a new challenge and you take a posture  
9 that the challenge or the people involved in it are  
10 kind of bad and we have to get rid of them, then you  
11 don't engage in planning and organizing to try to  
12 address the problem and help the people. So you lose  
13 critical time and critical attention. So, that is  
14 what we've seen here, not embracing a reality, one we  
15 don't want, one we don't like, but nonetheless  
16 embracing a reality. I also just on the data wanted  
17 to add a point I forgot. You know, the National  
18 Guard is going to shelters asking people questions.  
19 And so at Sonia Sotomayor, for example, they come.  
20 They see however many people they see. They come  
21 back. They come back. They come back until they're  
22 done. And then when they finish at Sonia Soto--  
23 that's what we named the shelter, Sonia Sotomayor  
24 Shelter, sorry. That when they leave that shelter  
25 that's just migrants, they go to another shelter

2 that's just migrants, and then eventually they'll  
3 come to the other shelters we have that have a mix of  
4 clients and we'll have to make the migrant clients  
5 available. That is incredibly a, harassing; b,  
6 terrifying, and three, where's all that data. Do the  
7 feds get it? How does it get protected?

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What legally  
9 requires you to identify--

10 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] They'll  
11 come with names--

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: migrant families?

13 CHRISTINE QUINN: of people. We don't  
14 identify, like Mary Smith on the fourth floor. They  
15 come with names of people they want to see, and the  
16 City knows that in that one shelter, Sonia Sotomayor,  
17 they're all migrants. Now, people cannot go, but  
18 event-- they just keep coming. And people risk their  
19 contract if they don't, you know, let them have a  
20 room to set up and etcetera.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can you say that one  
22 more time? You risk your contract that--

23 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] Well, I  
24 mean, if you-- if these-- if the National Guard  
25 comes, the worry groups are going-- providers are

2 going to have. The worry is that you might risk your  
3 contract.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Got it. Got it.

5 And currently there are National Guard--

6 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: coming to shelters.

8 CHRISTINE QUINN: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how often have  
10 you been--

11 CHRISTINE QUINN: 'Til they finish.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: With a predetermined  
13 list of individuals. You're required by contract.

14 CHRISTINE QUINN: Well, I mean, you're  
15 required kind of to participate. There's nothing in  
16 the contracts that says if the National Guard comes  
17 because nobody anticipated that.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Got it.

19 CHRISTINE QUINN: You know, the thing-- I  
20 hope the City is doing now is prepare-- if-- we don't  
21 know. It's hard to say if President-elect Trump is  
22 going to do the mass deportations with military. We  
23 don't know if that's going to happen, but we need to  
24 prepare in case it does happen, and I know that work  
25 has begun, but they need to prioritize that work.

2 Because when the raids happened under Trump one, the  
3 de Blasio Administration did a good job and we-- with  
4 the support of the Administration trained all of our  
5 security guards and ICE came one night to one of our  
6 shelters without the proper judicial documentation  
7 and we were able to send them away, and they left.  
8 So, I know I spoke to the Commissioner at DHS. She  
9 is working on that, but I hope that they finish that  
10 work, a, and b, find ways to be even more protective  
11 than we were the first time.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I always worry about  
13 this when I hear mass deportations, because I wonder,  
14 you know, how are they going to identify who's who?  
15 We don't walk around with signs on our heads saying I  
16 come from x, y and z, and it brings me back to a  
17 movie I saw many years ago where they actually in  
18 California recruited a whole bunch of migrants and  
19 threw them in a van and then sent them to-- deep into  
20 Mexico and, you know, some of those people were  
21 citizens.

22 CHRISTINE QUINN: Right, right.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You know, because  
24 there was no way of identifying. So, I'll--

25 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] It makes--

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I'll be extra careful  
3 when I'm walking the street, you know.

4 CHRISTINE QUINN: Absolutely.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: That I don't get  
6 snatched up as well, because under this new  
7 Administration one never knows. But--

8 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] It makes  
9 anyone who isn't white and might have an accent  
10 vulnerable.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: That's all-- yeah.  
12 Yeah, one other-- just something out of curiosity  
13 just because on the provider end, is there-- you  
14 know, because the Trump Administration has been so  
15 vocal about, you know, what their intentions are, I'm  
16 assuming this is creating another layer of anxiety.  
17 Is there information that is required to be posted  
18 that informs residents, you know, specifically like  
19 migrant residents of what their rights are?

20 CHRISTINE QUINN: We've given all of that  
21 out.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I'm sure that you  
23 have, because I know you're great, but--

24 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] Yeah, I  
25 don't know.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: are you required to,  
3 because I--

4 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] I don't  
5 know.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I worry. Okay, so  
7 we'll look into that. Because I think-- you know,  
8 the best way to arm people is with information.

9 CHRISTINE QUINN: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And once people at  
11 least understand that these are their rights, then  
12 that, you know, helps alleviate some of the--

13 CHRISTINE QUINN: [interposing] Yeah.  
14 I'll check. I don't know. One other thing I just  
15 wanted to mention about data. We, in conjunction  
16 with the New York Legal Assistance Group, have put  
17 together a legal clinic, LE [sic] we call it, for our  
18 migrant clients. Now, we could tell you of the 160  
19 that we worked with so far who's done work training,  
20 who's gotten a job, who's done English language. We  
21 have two staff people, right? So, I don't understand  
22 why the city can't tell you that data when we could.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, yeah. Alright,  
24 well, thank you so much.

2 CHRISTINE QUINN: You're welcome. Thank  
3 you. And thank you-- I know some of our clients are  
4 going, you know, Zoom in or virtually come in--

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah.

6 CHRISTINE QUINN: for giving them the  
7 opportunity and for making accommodations for  
8 anonymity.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We'll now hear from  
10 Senator Gounardes.

11 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Great. Thank you.  
12 Can y'all hear me?

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yes, we can.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes.

15 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Alright, great.

16 Well, thank you very much. Good afternoon everyone.

17 I'm State Senator Andrew Goundardes, and I'm here to

18 testify in support of Resolution 41 which calls on

19 the State to adopt or enact the New York State

20 Working Families Tax Credit which I am the Senate

21 sponsor of. You know, just as a baseline, I think we

22 all know working families are struggling to get by in

23 New York and the problem is only getting worse.

24 Poverty in our city is soaring. One in four children

25 in our city now live in poverty. We saw the news



2 yesterday that one in eight children in New York are  
3 homeless, and according to the State Comptroller, New  
4 York State has one of the highest child poverty rates  
5 of any state in the country. We rank 41<sup>st</sup> out of 50,  
6 and 23 percent of city residents say that they're  
7 struggling to pay for their basic necessities like  
8 food and housing and clothes, etcetera. And that's  
9 really the basis for why I proposed and wrote the  
10 Working Families Tax Credit which is designed to give  
11 New Yorkers the support that they need to afford the  
12 essentials for their kids, whether that be diapers,  
13 clothes, rent, just a roof over their head, pay  
14 utility bill-- God forbid they want to go to the zoo  
15 or the museum as a family, all the essentials. And  
16 it's based and it's modeled on the incredible success  
17 we saw with the expanded federal child tax credit  
18 through the American Rescue Plan which was President  
19 Biden's COVID relief bill. When we bumped up the  
20 child tax credit at the federal level, for six months  
21 we cut the poverty rate in this country for kids in  
22 half by 50 percent. So, the Working Families Tax  
23 Credit seeks to operate in a similar way, and it does  
24 so in a couple of important thing-- it does a couple  
25 of important things. Number one, it streamlines and

2 expands several existing state tax credits, including  
3 the New York State Earned Income Tax Credit, the New  
4 York State Empire Child Credit, and the New York  
5 State Dependent Exemption. The reason for that is  
6 that many of the people who claim one or more, all  
7 three of those benefits, they are largely the same.  
8 So we want to simplify the process by which they can  
9 access those benefits. The plan provides crucial  
10 support for families by increasing the maximum credit  
11 \$1,600 per child and provides a minimum \$100 floor  
12 for every child regardless of income. It eliminates  
13 the cap--

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
15 you. Your time has expired.

16 SENATOR GOUNARDES: [inaudible] the number  
17 of kids that are eligible, and it pins the credit to  
18 inflation, and it closes important loopholes like  
19 cover 17-year-olds, includes 510 [sic] filers, and  
20 eliminates a regressive income phase in, and  
21 crucially will be paid out four times a year so that  
22 families would not have to wait until tax time in  
23 order to see these benefits. Instead, they can get a  
24 check four times a year to help them pay for their  
25 essentials. I really encourage the Council to take

2 this resolution up. I'll be incredibly helpful to  
3 our momentum in Albany to have the support of the  
4 City Council to push for enactment of this bill while  
5 we are trying to meet our New York State child  
6 poverty reduction goal by 2030, and I thank the  
7 Committee for giving me a few moment to chat about  
8 this.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much,  
10 Senator Gounardes for this work and this bill, and  
11 thank you for your testimony.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. We will  
13 now call up Claire Salant-- sorry, couldn't read  
14 that-- and Jacob Berman.

15 CLAIRE SALANT: Good morning, Deputy  
16 Speaker Ayala, Chair-- sorry. Am I close enough to  
17 the mic? Great. Good morning, Deputy Speaker Ayala,  
18 Chair Avilés, and the Committees of Immigration and  
19 General Welfare. I am Claire Salant, the Lead Budget  
20 and Policy analyst for IBO, the New York City  
21 Independent Budget Office which is an independent  
22 city agency. I am joined today by my colleague Jacob  
23 Berman who's the Director of the Social and Community  
24 Services team at IBO. Thank you for the opportunity  
25 to testify today. I'm only going to read the

2 highlights of our testimony, so please refer to our  
3 written testimony which you should have for more  
4 detail. I am here to discuss the city's  
5 implementation of the 30- and 60-day exit policies for  
6 asylum-seekers, referred to in this testimony as new  
7 arrivals. The city justified the need for exit  
8 policies and historic changes to the city's  
9 longstanding right to shelter policy on the  
10 assumption that they would reduce the population and  
11 high costs related to new arrivals. IBO's May 2024  
12 report noted that these management strategies are not  
13 purely money-savers, but generate new costs and have  
14 potentially negative consequence on a particularly  
15 vulnerable population. Just yesterday, the Mayor  
16 announced new policies to address some of these  
17 consequences, implicitly acknowledging the problems  
18 with the strategy that began over a year ago. Since  
19 2022, More than 220,000 new arrivals have entered the  
20 City. Providing services for these arrivals have  
21 cost about \$5.2 billion over the last two years,  
22 about a third of which has come from the state. For  
23 context, the total cost in 2024 was \$3.75 billion  
24 which represents less than three percent of the city's  
25 total budget including all funding sources. This

2 actual spending has been much lower than the City's  
3 forecasts, and the number of new arrivals entering  
4 the city has been rapidly declining in recent months.  
5 Nevertheless, the city continues to budget very high  
6 cost for this population moving forward. For  
7 example, the adopted budget assumes costs will be  
8 higher this year, fiscal year 2025, and next year,  
9 fiscal year 2026, than it was last year, even though  
10 the population is declining. According to data IBO  
11 obtained from the Administration, as of November 1<sup>st</sup>,  
12 approximately 20,600 adults and families with minor  
13 children had a first exit notice expire. Of this  
14 group, about 58 percent have left the system, and the  
15 remaining 42 percent are still in the city's care.  
16 For those who returned to the arrival center for new  
17 placement, 89 percent are in a different facility  
18 than their original shelter location. For  
19 individual adults, including families of related  
20 adults without children, approximately 51,000 people  
21 have had an exit notice expire for the first time.  
22 for those who apply for an extension to remain in a  
23 shelter system the city has approved 85 percent for  
24 extensions for those who applied based on their state  
25 benefit status, and only 33 percent of extensions for

2 those who apply based on extenuating circumstances  
3 criteria. Many of the impacts of exit policies are  
4 social and emotional, and not easily quantifiable.  
5 For what is quantifiable, IBO estimated some  
6 potential negative consequences in April, including  
7 the challenges of getting mail, a potential risk of  
8 increased street homelessness, and costs for the new  
9 busing requests for children. Since the city's new  
10 exit policies began in May, there have been  
11 considerable reporting on the challenges of missed  
12 mail with incident missing work authorizations as  
13 well as court notices and there crucial information.  
14 There's also been a visible rise in encampments  
15 around shelters, as individuals are either not given  
16 an extension or placed too far from their original  
17 shelter location. Lastly, IBO has not yet analyzed  
18 the specific impacts of the exit policies on  
19 students, there's already a robust body of research  
20 that documents the negative impacts of both mid-year  
21 school changes, and long commutes on student  
22 outcomes. Yesterday morning, Mayor Adams announced  
23 that the city will create a centralized mail location  
24 to guarantee that new arrivals can continue to get  
25 important legal documents even when they have to move

2 facilities or leave the shelter system. While this  
3 will make a significant difference going forward, it  
4 will not address the potentially thousands of new  
5 rivals who may have already lost essential documents.

6 The mayor also announced that families with minor  
7 children from kindergarten through sixth grade will  
8 be able to stay in the same facilities. This will  
9 reduce educational and social disruption as well as  
10 associated transportation costs for these families,  
11 but will not do so for families with older students.

12 Lastly, in terms of spending, one year ago in the  
13 November 2023 financial plan, the city estimated that  
14 costs related to new arrivals would total \$4.7  
15 billion in 2024 and \$6.1 billion in 2025. A year  
16 later actual costs were almost a billion dollars  
17 lower for 2024, and the city has already reduced the  
18 2025 budget by over a billion dollars compared to  
19 last year. This reduction comes even as the city has  
20 continued to use for-profit vendors and emergency  
21 contracts for much longer than is typical. IBO  
22 expects the 2025 budget estimate to shrink even  
23 further in the coming November plan, given that the  
24 population entering the City has been falling since  
25 January, and exits have outpaced entries for most of

2 the last year. Furthermore, IBO expects the budgeted  
3 amounts in the out-years which are currently over \$7  
4 billion to be similarly reduced. As the new budget  
5 comes out, IBO will be looking at the revised budget  
6 for 2025 through 2028, as well as updating our  
7 estimates based on recent population data which will  
8 reflect the impact of exit policies. We will also be  
9 factoring in the considerable uncertainty arising  
10 from the outcome of the federal election earlier this  
11 month. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and  
12 I will be happy to answer your questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you so much for  
14 that. I think that my-- and I'm actually now-- I'm  
15 hearing you. I'm trying to multitask because trying  
16 to get on top of all of the unanswered questions and  
17 I'm trying to be very sensitive and careful, you  
18 know, in what we say and do here today. But what do  
19 you attribute to be the highest drivers in cost at  
20 this moment? And like, because when-- you know,  
21 we're looking at this year's, you know, upcoming  
22 budget, the Administration is expecting to have more  
23 revenue as a result of the closure of some of these  
24 facilities. What you're saying does not necessarily  
25 align with what the Administration is expecting to



2 happen. And so I'm wondering where are you seeing  
3 the higher shifts? Where are we seeing a reduction  
4 in cost?

5 JACOB BERMAN: So, we don't know exactly  
6 what's going to be in the budget and we won't until  
7 tomorrow probably, so I can't comment on what exactly  
8 the Administration is going to budget, but you know,  
9 we're happy to talk about that when we come back to--

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Yes.

11 JACOB BERMAN: testify in a few weeks. I  
12 will say that the way that we are thinking about this  
13 is that you can't-- when you say that you're going to  
14 get savings for something that was never going to be  
15 spent anyway, is that really savings? I would argue  
16 that I think because these costs were unlikely to  
17 ever be as high as they've been budgeted to be which  
18 is something that we at IBO have been pointing out  
19 for the last two years.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Absolutely.

21 JACOB BERMAN: You know, saying that oh,  
22 well, we found these savings might not be the most  
23 accurate way of portraying this situation.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Interesting, because  
25 it-- yeah, I mean, it lends the-- it gives the

2 impression that because we're shutting down, you  
3 know, migrant shelters that we are in essence saving-  
4 - it's a good point. Thank you guys so much.

5 JACOB BERMAN: Appreciate it.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I just want to warn  
7 that we have I think about 13 panels, about 13  
8 panels, and so we're going to be strictly sticking to  
9 the two-minute rule. So if your testimony is more  
10 than two minutes, we ask that you please highlight  
11 those areas of importance, and you can always submit  
12 the full testimony for the record. We're going to be  
13 calling up Erika Alvarez, Evelyn Velasquez, Tania  
14 Paredes, Djeinaba Diaby. So, let's start with the  
15 [inaudible] while we wait for the interpreter on this  
16 side. What is the baby's name? That is baby Adama,  
17 I knew it. I knew that was-- yes. Yes, baby Adama is  
18 famous just like her auntie Adama. You may begin.

19 MAMADOU DIALLO: Okay, hello everyone.

20 My name is Mamadou Diallo. I'm the Director of  
21 Operations at Afrikana, but also I'll be serving  
22 today as Djeinaba's advocate. So, she charged me with  
23 reading her written statement which is what I'm going  
24 to do because I heard about the two-minute rule. So  
25 I'm going to go ahead. "Hello, everyone. Thank you

2 for allowing me to speak. My name is Jabi [sic].

3 When I came to New York City I had no family and no

4 place to go. Someone told me about Adama and

5 Afrikana saying they could help me. I was heavily

6 pregnant and in a lot of pain after my journey from

7 Guinea Conakry, my home country, to the United

8 States. Adama and I connected when she referred me

9 to the Roosevelt Hotel where I was placed at the

10 hotel. No one spoke Pular. If you needed help, you

11 had to wait days for someone who could interpret.

12 One day, Adama visited the hotel. She asked if I was

13 okay, and I was shocked to meet someone who spoke my

14 language. Seeing I was heavily pregnant, she helped

15 me get medical care and connected me with lawyers

16 from Project Rousseau. Afrikana also helped me get

17 clothing, and when I had no phone they provided one

18 with free service for a year. When I was feeling

19 depressed, Adama told me to come to the office and

20 just hang out. She said many woman come to walk

21 around and talk, and she wasn't lying. I went and met

22 other woman who spoke Pular and I received so much

23 help. Project Rousseau also helped me enroll my

24 daughter in school. One day, while leaving the

25 Roosevelt Hotel to do laundry, the staff yelled at me

2 to go back to my room and pack my belongings. They  
3 told me I had to leave immediately. I begged them to  
4 let me get my baby from daycare first, but they  
5 refused. They said I had to leave because my 60 days  
6 were up. I was so confused and didn't know what to  
7 do. So I called Adama crying. She told me to wait.  
8 She made some phone calls. The hotel staff told me  
9 Adama couldn't help me, and they kept pressuring me  
10 to pack my things. I asked the neighbor to help me  
11 pack while Adama arranged for someone to pick up my  
12 daughter. The staff wouldn't let me leave the room  
13 until everything was packed. As I was packing,  
14 someone came to speak with me. I called Adama and  
15 put her on speaker phone, but they kept telling me to  
16 hang up. Adama advised me to send my medical  
17 documents on Whatsup before doing anything else.  
18 Despite the pressure, I listened to her. After some  
19 time, the hotel staff told me I could stay. They  
20 claimed I had not given them my daughter's medical  
21 paperwork, but I had provided it earlier. They  
22 simply hadn't listened to me. It's very hard living  
23 at the hotel. The staff yell at us in English, and  
24 they won't let us call Afrikana for interpretations.  
25 Instead, we're forced to use the Language Line which

2 often gets the Pular translation wrong. Since that  
3 incident, the staff have been nice to me-- have been  
4 nicer to me, but the process still exhausting. Adama  
5 later told me she had to make many phone calls to  
6 advocate for me. She also reminded me to keep all my  
7 medical paper organized and to advocate for myself.  
8 Now, I tell everyone at the hotel to contact Afrikana  
9 because they truly helped. There are so many pregnant  
10 woman and people with medical issues who are kicked  
11 out of these hotels every 60 days. It's  
12 heartbreaking. Before New York I did not feel safe.  
13 I thought coming here would allow me to finally  
14 settle down, but it is still so unstable. I can't  
15 find a job or attend training programs because I  
16 don't speak Spanish or English. I'm grateful for the  
17 help I've received, but the City can't treat us like  
18 cattle, moving us around constantly. We need real  
19 help, and we can contribute to society if given the  
20 chance. My children go to school near the Roosevelt  
21 Hotel, but their schools are in different locations.  
22 I don't know how I will manage with two small  
23 children if I moved again. I recently received  
24 another 60-days' notice. My doctor has written  
25 another language, but I'm not sure if they will

2 accept it. I know I'll need Afrikana's help again,  
3 and I'm so thankful for their support. If you have  
4 any questions, I'm willing to answer. Thank you for  
5 listening."

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I appreciate that,  
7 and believe it or not, baby Adama finally fell  
8 asleep. This is the part of the hearing that bored  
9 her to sleep.

10 MAMADOU DIALLO: Well, Adama [speaking  
11 other language]

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you so much for  
13 your testimony.

14 MAMADOU DIALLO: [speaking other  
15 language]

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: Hello, good morning.

18 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: Good afternoon.

20 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: My name is Tania and I'm  
22 from Ecuador.

23 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: I'm part of the group of  
25 undocumented women.

2 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: This subject of eviction of  
4 the moving, I have experienced.

5 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: I have experienced  
7 situations in which I wasn't able to sleep and also  
8 using the bathrooms.

9 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: Because there is private  
11 bathrooms and there's also private bathrooms that you  
12 have to share.

13 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: So, in one of the shelters,  
15 I had an experience, a bad experience with a man who  
16 was knocking the door very aggressively wanting me to  
17 come out when there was other-- four other bathrooms  
18 that could be used. There were five bathrooms in  
19 total.

20 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: Because of this incident I  
22 had to go to the hospital with my blood pressure of  
23 200.

24 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: I have two children. One is  
3 11 and the other-- another is four, and the one who  
4 is 11 became sick with gastritis because of the  
5 situation.

6 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: Because of the issue of the  
8 evictions we live in constant stress and worry.

9 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: The children are always late  
11 to school every day because we're moving around.

12 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: We all sleep in the same bed  
14 with the children.

15 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: It's very complicated to  
17 move around with those suitcases and all the baggage,  
18 and we have to go to 45<sup>th</sup> Street.

19 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: If we had a permanent place  
21 until we get the documents, we would have a better  
22 quality of life for the children--

23 TANIA PAREDES: [speaking Spanish]

24

25



2 TRANSLATOR: for them to have much  
3 stability as well as us. And that's all. That's  
4 everything.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Gracias.

6 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: Good morning my name is--

8 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: Velasquez.

10 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: My family group is my  
12 daughter who is six years old and I.

13 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: I'm not under the rule of  
15 60-day rule.

16 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: Even though in September  
18 they sent us a notice that we were going to go into  
19 that group.

20 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: 18 months that I've been in  
22 the system they have moved me twice--

23 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: from a family shelter to a  
25 shelter only for single parents.

2 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: which became with time a  
4 family shelter.

5 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: But they didn't renew the  
7 contract with the hotel and we all had to leave.

8 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: That was going to be in  
10 April thanks to the Brooklyn community and the  
11 school.

12 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: We were able to wait the  
14 time and we were able to wait to June 'til the  
15 children left school.

16 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: In my experience with the  
18 moving around, the process become tolled [sic]--

19 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: due to the social workers,  
21 they don't work as well.

22 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: Today, my daughter is the  
24 same school because she traveled two stations to get  
25 there.

2 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: And transportation service  
4 is provided by the school, not the shelter.

5 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: At the moment-- when we  
7 arrived, we had a social worker. At the moment, we  
8 don't have a case worker. We don't have anything.

9 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: But she or he didn't do his  
11 job well. He didn't do anything well.

12 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: A lot of people now have the  
14 HDA service, because I took upon myself to tell them  
15 and help them out with it.

16 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: In October, I got my social  
18 security and my work permit.

19 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: And the next step was going  
21 to apply for the voucher of 30 days that I could  
22 leave the system, the shelter.

23 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

24

25

2 TRANSLATOR: But I was sent to different  
3 offices, but I've been told that the shelter is the  
4 one that's got to do it.

5 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: Now, we are four families in  
7 my shelter that have everything ready and we're just  
8 waiting for the 30 percent voucher, but we don't get  
9 it. We haven't gotten it.

10 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: To have a living place will  
12 benefit myself and my daughter emotionally and also  
13 for food and also to be able to get a job.

14 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: So that I could have help  
16 from somebody else whenever I have to work and my  
17 daughter has to take the day off.

18 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: Because in the shelter  
20 system I'm not allowed to have a friend or a  
21 babysitter to come and babysit my daughter when I  
22 have to work.

23 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: and I also wanted to make  
25 another comment--

2 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: for you to know that I have  
4 been through three shelters--

5 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: and which there is always  
7 empty rooms--

8 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: for months--

10 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: where families in the  
12 process of 60 days could be placed.

13 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: For example, in my shelter  
15 which is called Metropolis--

16 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: room 406 has more than one  
18 month empty--

19 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: which-- and the city is  
21 paying for it.

22 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: And there is another issue  
24 that the city is.

25 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: They're giving us a voucher  
3 for \$5,000 or \$4,000 to be able to get an apartment.

4 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: So that's one month-- a  
6 deposit and one month of rent.

7 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: But I have not until this  
9 day met someone who's gotten it.

10 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: But I have met families that  
12 had to leave New York because of the lies. For  
13 example, room 405, that guy--

14 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: they told him that the check  
16 has arrived, but he's in Dallas now with a daughter  
17 of six months.

18 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: Because they evict them from  
20 the shelter, because supposedly the check had already  
21 arrived.

22 EYLYN VELASQUEZ: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Just a reminder that  
3 you do not have to disclose your address if you don't  
4 want to. [speaking Spanish].

5 TRANSLATOR: Good afternoon.

6 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: Good afternoon. My name's  
8 Erika and I'm from Ecuador.

9 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: One month ago I started  
11 using the shelters--

12 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: because of an issue with my  
14 daughter of sexual abuse in my prior housing.

15 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: The group of undocumented  
17 women told me about this and started using it.

18 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: But first they didn't want  
20 to help me because my partner is not an asylum-  
21 seeker. He has already been here for two years.

22 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: I want to get help to get a  
24 job and to give my children dignified life so that  
25 this doesn't happen again.

2 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: I have the knowledge, but  
4 there is no case or caseworker that can help me to  
5 get an apartment at a low price, affordable housing.

6 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: I have to share with my  
8 partner and my kids the same area.

9 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: They're teenagers and they  
11 sleep in the same bed, and because of what happened,  
12 it worries me a lot.

13 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: A dignified housing will be  
15 able to give my children a dignified life, and also,  
16 I'm pregnant at the moment.

17 ERIKA ALVAREZ: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: That will be all.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish] I  
20 want to say thank you to everyone, to this panel for  
21 coming to testify. I know that it's difficult but  
22 it's also very important. You are a representative  
23 voice for a community that's back home or, you know,  
24 in your shelter setting who could not be here today,  
25 so you speak for them all and I'm sure that they



2 really appreciate that. Thank you. The next panel  
3 will be online, the WIN families panel.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Give us one second.

8 WIN families, you are unmuted. You can begin. If

9 not, we will come back to you and we'll call on the

10 next panel. Okay, we're moving on. Airenakhue,

11 Madelina [sp?] [inaudible], Abdou Karim Diane, Miguel

12 Decosta [sp?], Lamime Kante. Okay, this is

13 Airenakhue. You, that's you? Okay. Okay, Lamime.

14 Miguel Decosta? Madelina Lutaleticia [sp?]? Abdou

15 Karim Diane? Abdou? Okay, you may begin.

16 AIRENAKHUE OMORAGBON: Alright, are you

17 able to hear me okay? Alright, so good afternoon

18 everyone and thank you to the Chairs of the

19 Committees on Immigration and General Welfare for

20 holding today's hearing. My name is Airenakhue

21 Bernadette Omoragbon and I'm the New York Policy

22 Manager at African Communities Together. I know many

23 of you are familiar with ACT, but for the folks in

24 the back of the room, ACT is a national membership

25 organizations by and for African immigrants dedicated

2 to fighting for civil rights, opportunity and better  
3 life for Africans living in the United States. The  
4 members of our New York chapter hail from countries  
5 like Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, etcetera,  
6 just to name a few. Today I'm here to speak in  
7 opposition to Mayor Eric Adams 30/60-day rule. For  
8 the last few years ACT has been working tirelessly  
9 with members of the New York Shelter for All in Need  
10 Equally or NYSANE Coalition to protect New Yorker's  
11 right to shelter in a safe place. I think a lot of my  
12 colleagues would agree with me in saying that the  
13 30/60-day rule has not, does not, and will not work.  
14 There has been little to no movement from the city  
15 and the state to create a sustainable solution to the  
16 outcry of our members, and to be honest, a lot of  
17 this is disheartening. Studies show that over 65,000  
18 migrants and asylum-seekers residing in the city  
19 shelter system are yet to be stabilized and are yet  
20 to be integrated into the community. This 30/60-day  
21 rule has blocked asylum-seekers efforts to get the  
22 work permits they need to obtain stable housing, and  
23 they've created a lot of hurdles for them to join  
24 housing programs like CityPHEPS. Last night, it was  
25 approximately 47 degrees outside, and there has been

2 an alarming increase in the number of people sleeping  
3 on the streets, in public parks, on trains and other  
4 make-shift shelters. A lot of folks in New York  
5 you've seen it, so I don't have to explain that  
6 situation. And this short-sided policy has not only  
7 exacerbated New York's housing crisis, but it poses a  
8 detrimental threat to the human health and their  
9 life. Instead of supporting them and manifesting  
10 their American dreams, this policy has further  
11 traumatized new arrivals and made it impossible for  
12 them to access the care they need to fight the  
13 elements associated with immigration. Like many  
14 advocates-- I'll keep it very short-- the results of  
15 this year's presidential election has stirred up a  
16 series of emotions. We have some fear and some  
17 uncertainty around how the first 100 days of the  
18 upcoming presidential administration will shape  
19 immigration policy and things of that nature. But in  
20 spite of these, you know, feelings, we will continue  
21 to protect and stand for our members and other  
22 disenfranchised groups. So, here in New York this  
23 starts with protecting the right to shelter,  
24 abolishing Mayor Adams' 30/60-day rule and passing  
25 bills like Council Member Hanif's Intro 210 which is

2 being considered on the city and state level to  
3 protect these shelter limits and protect our new  
4 community members. So, to keep it very short, I  
5 think it's time for us to put a stop to this and we  
6 must act now. So thank you. And I'm going to pass it  
7 to some of the members of African Communities  
8 Together so you can hear their experiences in the  
9 shelters. Thank you.

10 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
11 language]

12 TRANSLATOR: Hello, my name is Abdou  
13 Karim Diane. I live in New York with my wife and my  
14 two children who are aged two years and three months  
15 old.

16 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
17 language]

18 TRANSLATOR: We are living in a temporary  
19 shelter.

20 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
21 language]

22 TRANSLATOR: And the living conditions  
23 are extremely difficult.

24 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
25 language]

2 TRANSLATOR: Imagine being a family with  
3 two small children and having to-- under the age of  
4 three-- and having to change a shelter every two  
5 months.

6 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
7 language]

8 TRANSLATOR: We've had to move with our  
9 children four times in the past year.

10 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
11 language]

12 TRANSLATOR: And for much of this time my  
13 wife was in the late stages of pregnancy.

14 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
15 language]

16 TRANSLATOR: And her health was very--  
17 she was at risk.

18 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
19 language]

20 TRANSLATOR: Our daughter who is two and  
21 a half years old has to sleep in the same bed with  
22 us.

23 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
24 language]

2 TRANSLATOR: So, my wife would really  
3 like to take English classes but she can't do that,  
4 because there's no childcare, and also we're told  
5 that she doesn't-- that because nobody has  
6 citizenship that our daughter doesn't qualify for  
7 childcare.

8 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
9 language]

10 TRANSLATOR: So, we're asking for  
11 official help to improve our living conditions.

12 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
13 language]

14 TRANSLATOR: And to please give us enough  
15 time for me to find a job that can sustain our family  
16 in a permanent living conditions.

17 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
18 language]

19 TRANSLATOR: It's-- we don't know how  
20 we're going to be able to survive in this city in  
21 these very difficult hostile conditions.

22 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
23 language]

24 TRANSLATOR: We're trying desperately to  
25 find work.

2 ABDOU KARIM DIANE: [speaking other  
3 language]

4 TRANSLATOR: Thank you very much for this  
5 opportunity to bring our case to your attention.

6 TRANSLATOR: Good afternoon everyone.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

8 TRANSLATOR: I come from Guinea. I came  
9 here last February.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

11 TRANSLATOR: And I'm also in a temporary  
12 shelter.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

14 TRANSLATOR: My first four months were  
15 incredibly difficult here in New York.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

17 TRANSLATOR: So, I was-- after the first  
18 four months I was put out on the street and I had no  
19 one to go to and no place to sleep, so I spent three  
20 nights sleeping out on the street.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

22 TRANSLATOR: And someone referred me to  
23 Africa communications.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

2 TRANSLATOR: And they found me more  
3 temporary shelter in Manhattan.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

5 TRANSLATOR: And it's very difficult for  
6 me without having any way of learning English to find  
7 my way around. I can't even navigate the city, and  
8 it's also important-- I'm unaware of what the law is.  
9 I'm trying to comply with the law, but first I have  
10 to know what the law is in order to be compliant.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

12 TRANSLATOR: So, finally I was sent to  
13 Brooklyn and that's where I am currently.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

15 TRANSLATOR: But we want to be able to  
16 take English lessons and training, and we can't do it  
17 because every time we want to enroll somewhere, we're  
18 sent someplace else and it's no longer in traveling  
19 distance.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

21 TRANSLATOR: And then--

22 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

23 TRANSLATOR: Also, at the temporary  
24 shelters, they kick you out at 6:00 a.m., and where  
25 are you going to go at 6:00 a.m., and they don't let



2 you back in again until it's time to go to sleep. So  
3 where are we supposed to be during that time,  
4 especially in bad weather?

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

6 TRANSLATOR: So, we spend our days from  
7 6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. in the park.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

9 TRANSLATOR: And the food is so spoiled  
10 that we don't dare eat it.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

12 TRANSLATOR: So, we're going through  
13 trash cans looking for our next meal.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

15 TRANSLATOR: And there is-- we can go  
16 days without having access to a working shower. It's  
17 not sanitary.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

19 TRANSLATOR: And now we're being told  
20 that after 70 days we're going to be put out  
21 permanently on the street, and that's going to be the  
22 heart of winter. Where are we supposed to go?

23 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

24

25

2 TRANSLATOR: So, that's why I'm here is  
3 to let you know the real conditions that we're  
4 experiencing in the shelters.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

6 TRANSLATOR: So, we're asking for mercy  
7 from you and from the governor.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

9 TRANSLATOR: To show us some mercy in  
10 extending our temporary shelter.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

12 TRANSLATOR: Because if you put us out,  
13 we're going to be sleeping on the street for sure.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

15 TRANSLATOR: So, we're living in fear.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

17 TRANSLATOR: All we ask is the  
18 opportunity to learn English so that we can get work.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

20 TRANSLATOR: So, we're asking for an  
21 extension of the permission to remain in the shelter,  
22 and also, please take a hard look at improving the  
23 conditions there so that they're sanitary and safe.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

25 TRANSLATOR: Especially the food.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

3 TRANSLATOR: Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Before you leave,  
5 before you walk away. Could you ask him who told him  
6 that after 70 days he'd have to leave permanently?

7 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

8 TRANSLATOR: At the shelters.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

10 TRANSLATOR: The shelter employees told  
11 us that.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. Is he aware  
13 that he can go to the re-ticketing center to reapply?

14 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking other language]

15 TRANSLATOR: So, in order to that-- I  
16 found that out yesterday, was the first I heard of  
17 it, but I was also told I have to go out to JFK, so  
18 I'm going to miss school again, and I'm not quite  
19 sure if JFK is the only place I'm going to be allowed  
20 to stay or not.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. I just want to  
22 make sure that he understands that. They cannot-- we  
23 don't deny housing. So, they will make it difficult  
24 by having you leave every so often and start all over  
25 again, but he--

2 TRANSLATOR: He says that he started  
3 English lessons in one place and he's going to lose  
4 them if he moves, you know, two boroughs away.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. We can-- we  
6 can help. Yeah, we can follow up with him about that  
7 and try to see, yeah.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay.

9 TRANSLATOR: Who should he see about  
10 this?

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, he should-- if  
12 you could get his information and give it to one of  
13 the guards, they'll give it to us.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay.

15 TRANSLATOR: Thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, thank you.  
17 Okay, we're going back to the WIN family panel  
18 online. Can you hear us?

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: WIN families? Okay,  
21 we'll be back. Edafe Okporo? Maura Heron, Barat  
22 Ellman and Halema Wali? You may begin.

23 EDAFE OKPORO: Thank you to the Committee  
24 of General Welfare. Thank you, Council Member Ayala  
25 and Council Member Avilés. My name is Edafe Okporo.

2 I'm the Executive Director of Refuge America. We're  
3 a nonprofit serving LGBTQIA asylum-seekers. My  
4 testimony today is a protest and standing gap for  
5 people who are traditionally marginalized by society.  
6 I strongly oppose the 30-day and 60-day shelter limit  
7 policies, because this limit is an attempt to  
8 undermine the city 40-year-old right to shelter laws  
9 which have prevented thousands of New Yorkers from  
10 sleeping on the street. In 2018, I was the Executive  
11 Director of New York City first shelter for asylum-  
12 seekers. I know LGBTQIA asylum-seekers who go to  
13 city shelter and feel unsafe [inaudible] by policies  
14 that do not give them an opportunity to rebuild their  
15 life. In the years I ran the shelter and provided  
16 shelter for more than 1,000 families to begin their  
17 life. One example comes to mind. Desta [sic], a guy  
18 man from Guyana who sought asylum in New York City.  
19 We brought him from New York City rescue shelter into  
20 our shelter system, and in two years during the  
21 pandemic, he was working as an EMT for New York City.  
22 New migrants who come into New York City in search of  
23 a new life are just looking for an opportunity to  
24 rebuild their life. That is why I ask the Mayor and  
25 the Administration at what length are we going to go

2 to orchestrate a migrant crisis just to prove a  
3 point? Or are we going to work to be efficient to  
4 create a safety-net for New Yorkers. We saw an  
5 influx of migrants in 2023. It's more than 18  
6 months. The rates have gone down drastically. At  
7 what length are we going to go to continue vilifying  
8 these migrants? So, I ask the Administration to  
9 govern with compassion and effectiveness while we  
10 seek long-term solution. I ask the Administration to  
11 stop stripping New York of legislation that has  
12 helped people like me to have a different life.  
13 Thank you.

14 HALEMA WALI: Good afternoon and thank  
15 you for the opportunity to testify on Mayor Adams'  
16 30- and 60-day shelter stay limits. My name is  
17 Halema Wali and I'm the founding Co-Director of  
18 Afghans for a Better Tomorrow, an Afghan-led advocacy  
19 organization dedicated to systemic change for Afghans  
20 in the U.S. and beyond. I'm here to strongly oppose  
21 these inhumane policies. Since the end of 2022, our  
22 organization has supported nearly 1,200 asylum-  
23 seekers in New York City, many of whom are Afghans  
24 that fled famine, brutal persecution, and climate  
25 devastation, conditions by created or worsened by

2 U.S. policies. They arrived here seeking stability  
3 and safety but now face evictions from shelters, a  
4 policy that is harsh, unjust and re-traumatizing.

5 One Afghan father of six, part of a persecuted  
6 religious and ethnic minority seeking asylum asked  
7 us, "Why would they displace us all over again, force  
8 my girls to switch schools when we fled the only  
9 country in the world where my daughters are denied an  
10 education?" This policy is not just cruel, it's  
11 dangerous. Evicting families from shelters after  
12 such brief stays forces them into homelessness and  
13 jeopardizes their health, safety and future. For  
14 children, the stakes are even higher, disrupted  
15 schooling and deeper instability. These families  
16 don't want to remain in shelters where their children  
17 go malnourished due to inadequate food. They want a  
18 fair chance to rebuild their lives. But without  
19 time, resources, and pathways to permanent housing  
20 and employment, they're being set up to fail. New  
21 York City has long been a beacon of compassion and  
22 opportunity, upholding our right to shelter law and  
23 investing in affordable permanent housing. Language  
24 access, legal services, and workforce access will not  
25 only protect these families but also empower them to

2 enrich our communities. These new arrivals are  
3 motivated and ready to contribute to our city's  
4 vibrant, diverse future. I urge the Mayor and the  
5 City Council to reject these harmful limits and  
6 commit to humane sustainable solutions. Together, we  
7 can ensure New York remains a city of hope and  
8 opportunity for all. Thank you.

9 BARAT ELLMAN: Can you hear me? Yes.

10 So, good afternoon and thank you for letting me speak  
11 here today. My name is Rabbi Doctor Barat Ellman and  
12 I am one of 6,000 members of Jews for Racial and  
13 Economic Justice, and I'm here to speak against the  
14 30/60-day rule that is currently causing shelter  
15 evictions for new New Yorkers. This Administration's  
16 shelter eviction policy must end immediately, despite  
17 even some tweaks that were made just yesterday. My  
18 Jewish tradition has much to say on hospitality and  
19 care for the stranger or foreigners and on human  
20 dignity. In Genesis we see Abraham rush to welcome  
21 and host three strangers who come to his tent  
22 insisting they stay for a bath, food and drink.  
23 We're commanded 36 times in our Torah, the five book  
24 of Moses, to love and care for the stranger,  
25 including providing the stranger with the opportunity



2 to rest on the Sabbath. In Deuteronomy, we're told  
3 that when an indentured servant has fulfilled his  
4 time of service, the master must set that person up  
5 with housing, supplies, and the wherewithal to  
6 establish themselves economically. That is because  
7 the Torah recognizes that most of us, if given proper  
8 care, are capable of becoming contributing members to  
9 society. The migrants who come to our great city are  
10 no different. If given proper support, they are able  
11 to establish themselves, and I know this because  
12 about two years ago my husband and I hosted a young  
13 Columbian man for several nights. His time with us  
14 gave him a measure of stability which proved critical  
15 to him. We connected him to services and stayed in  
16 touch with him, and now he is working as a barber in  
17 Queens and living in his own apartment. Mine is not  
18 the only such story. Friends of mine have also  
19 opened their homes to individuals and families  
20 because they know the importance of giving someone a  
21 leg up. And we also heard about Afrikana, Adama Bah,  
22 credible model for this kind of aid. But surely the  
23 city of New York, its municipality can do the same.  
24 And yet, Mayor Adams advocates for this 30/60-day  
25 policy that destabilized migrants, that takes housing

2 away from them right after they have found shelter.

3 His policies mean that children have to change

4 schools every couple of months, parents have to

5 scramble to settle them again and again, and single

6 adults have only 30 days to live in shelters before

7 being kicked out for good. New York has the capacity

8 to house everyone in this city who needs it, both

9 unhoused citizens and newly arrived immigrants and

10 refugees. Mayor Adams has spent the last three years

11 pitting New Yorkers against each other, claiming

12 immigrants are the reason our city is struggling, all

13 while he's been stealing millions of taxpayer dollars

14 and granting non-competitive government contracts to

15 his friends, flouting daily the message emblazoned at

16 the entrance of our city, "Give me your tired, your

17 poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free, the

18 wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these,

19 the homeless, tempest toss to me. I lift my lamp

20 besides the golden door." I along with JFREJ and

21 many other migrant rights groups and housing justice

22 groups declare that these words on the Statue of

23 Liberty are not mere jargon. They have meaning.

24 They declare that immigrants are welcomed here in New

25

2 York City. It is Eric Adams' Trumpian [sic] policies  
3 of shelter evictions that are not. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

5 MAURA HERON: Good afternoon. My name is  
6 Maura Heron and I'm a supervising attorney in  
7 Sanctuary for Families Immigration Intervention  
8 Project, the nation's largest immigration legal  
9 service program exclusively for survivors of domestic  
10 violence, trafficking and other forms of gender-based  
11 violence. Sanctuary is New York State's largest  
12 provider of comprehensive services, exclusively for  
13 abuse survivors and their children with a broad,  
14 holistic program of shelter, counseling, legal and  
15 economic empowerment services reaching 8-9,000 adults  
16 and children every year. The Immigration  
17 Intervention Project represents clients in all types  
18 of humanitarian immigration relief for which they may  
19 be eligible, providing representation, pro se  
20 assistance and advice and referrals to over 2,500  
21 clients annually. In response to the influx of  
22 migrants to the city in recent years, we have  
23 expanded our practice to include more asylum and  
24 removal work. Last year, IIP handled nearly 400  
25 asylum and 200 removal defense cases. we're grateful

2 for the opportunity to testify on the critical topic  
3 of the shelter time limitations for recent migrants  
4 to New York and the impact these limitations have on  
5 our client's lives and our ability to represent them  
6 in their asylum cases. Our special thanks to Council  
7 Members Alexa Avilés and Diana Ayala, Chairs of the  
8 Committees on Immigration and General Welfare, for  
9 calling this hearing and for their advocacy on behalf  
10 of immigrant survivors. Representing recent migrants  
11 in their asylum cases before the Immigration Court is  
12 demanding of both attorneys and clients. All of  
13 Sanctuary's clients are survivors of gender-based  
14 violence. They're often fleeing domestic violence,  
15 sexual violence, and homophobic violence in their  
16 home countries. Preparing an asylum case requires  
17 that survivors relive these experiences over and over  
18 as they explain their stories to use. This is not  
19 only time-intensive, but often is emotionally  
20 exhausting. We have intensified our efforts to  
21 ensure that our services are trauma-informed as our  
22 clients repeat these devastating stories to us. It  
23 is very difficult to prepare clients for their cases  
24 in court without stable housing. Clients who have to  
25 move shelters every few weeks simply do not have the

2 emotional bandwidths to talk about past traumatic  
3 experiences. They are in constant crisis, and  
4 they're transience makes it very challenging to stay  
5 in touch with them and provide legal representation.  
6 Clients who have to constantly move miss their  
7 appointments, they lose documents that are critical  
8 to their claims. They do not receive extremely  
9 important notices in the mail and they cannot  
10 concentrate on preparing their cases when they do not  
11 know where they and their children will be sleeping  
12 from one day to the next. We have heard stories  
13 already this morning, so I will skip my client's  
14 story, although they'll be in our written testimony.  
15 I want to emphasize that we are screening people very  
16 week who are clearly eligible for asylum. These  
17 clients come to New York because of our reputation as  
18 a city that welcomes immigrants, but stable shelter  
19 is key to ensuring that these clients have the  
20 opportunity to adequately prepare their court cases.  
21 in view of the planned policy changes articulated by  
22 the incoming federal administration, immigration  
23 cases will become far more challenging, making it all  
24 the more critical that the city minimize the range of  
25 other obstacles faced by these vulnerable individuals

2 and families. We thank the committees for shining a  
3 light on this important topic and we are very  
4 grateful for the Council's efforts to tackle these  
5 challenging issues in our city. Thank you for the  
6 opportunity to testify today and for your deep  
7 commitment to immigrant abuse survivors and New  
8 Yorkers in need, and I'm happy to answer any  
9 questions from the perspective of the legal service  
10 providers in the city.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Thank you  
12 so much. We're going to try one more time with WIN  
13 families. Are you there? Can you hear us?

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, can you hear us?

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yay. Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: So, we have two families  
18 that are here that are just going to need translation  
19 assistance.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, we're ready.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: Good afternoon. I am from  
23 Ecuador.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: In order to arrive to come  
3 into the United States, I had to go through many  
4 different countries.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: In one of those places, in  
7 one of those countries, I was offered shelter and a  
8 place to be with my family.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: I had to sleep at bus  
11 terminals, in the street.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: In order to arrive here.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: When we got to Mexico, my  
16 son had a stomach infection because of the water.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: And I wasn't given the help.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: And I decided to come  
21 without waiting for the appointment because my son  
22 didn't help, so I went through the El Paso  
23 [inaudible] for medical attention.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: When I was there they  
3 offered medical help to my child, the best medical  
4 help.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: And I was very grateful  
7 because they helped my son.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: At the moment I'm at a  
10 shelter.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: Because I need it now  
13 because I don't have a worker permit.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: Anyway, I go and I look for  
16 work anyway, like one day for two days.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: I'm trying to save some  
19 money because I heard we were going to be evicted in  
20 60 days, so I'm a little afraid.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: Because I recently-- one of  
23 my sons who was born about 15 days ago.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]



2 TRANSLATOR: We're in winter season, so  
3 I'm afraid we'll have to stay outside during the  
4 cold, because of the children.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: And just like myself, there  
7 is other families that we don't want to be here, but  
8 because they treat us as bums and that we come to  
9 live off the government, but in reality it's not like  
10 that.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: We just need more time to be  
13 economically stable and get our work permit.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time  
16 expired.

17 TRANSLATOR: And that's what makes me the  
18 most afraid.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm going to hand it over  
20 to the panelist [inaudible].

21 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: Good afternoon.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: I'm from Venezuela.

25 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: To arrive to this country, I  
3 had to go through the Jungle of Darien [sic] and  
4 eight other countries--

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: with my husband and my child  
7 of four years old and myself.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: It wasn't easy to get here.  
10 We lasted a month to get here.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: And we decided to-- we  
13 decided to come forward instead of waiting for the  
14 city, for the appointment because we thought we would  
15 not get anything in Mexico.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: We got from Matamoros we  
18 came forward and they treated us very well.

19 [speaking Spanish]

20 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: And they gave us a check-up.  
22 They gave us a check-up.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: And so we are here. We're  
25 applying for asylum.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: We don't have a worker's  
4 permit and I would like to have one.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: We are afraid because of the  
7 60-day limit that we have at the shelters.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: And I have my child going to  
10 school nearby, and the winter, the cold is coming,  
11 so.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: And they're making me  
14 anxious and we would love to get our worker permits  
15 so that we can move somewhere else.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: so, we would love to be  
18 helped with that because that we can work and pay  
19 taxes.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: Okay, thank you.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Panelist number three is  
23 English speaker.

24 TRANSLATOR: Okay.  
25

2 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible] I come from  
3 Africa. I have two [sic] children. I leave my  
4 husband with my two children, and I have a school  
5 [inaudible]. The 60 days is giving me a lot of  
6 [inaudible] because I don't know when I going to move  
7 [inaudible] or I going to get again the room or not  
8 yet. That's why I said let me ask about to what is  
9 going to be our future [sic]. I'm sorry. [inaudible]  
10 be our future to be six days [inaudible]. I'm  
11 needing help from the government, and they  
12 [inaudible]. I'm sorry. I'm so stressed [sic]  
13 because I have two children and they're too little  
14 and they don't need ever anybody help you or  
15 something [inaudible] that's why. I don't know what  
16 [inaudible] say, but I meant to say the 60 day  
17 [inaudible] I want to be [inaudible] for that. Thank  
18 you.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Thank you  
21 so much. We will now call our next in-person panel.  
22 Carlos? Robin? Robin? Okay. I'm trying to use  
23 first names. Paula? Is there a Paula? Jackie? You  
24 may begin.

2 CARLOS ROSALES: Thank you, Chair Ayala  
3 and Chair Avilés, members of the Committees on  
4 General Welfare and Immigration for the opportunity  
5 to submit testimony at this hearing regarding the  
6 updates on the implementation of the 30- and 60-day  
7 rules for asylum-seekers. My name is Carlos Fernando  
8 Rosales and I'm the Director of Community Engagement  
9 at Citizen's Committee for Children of New York, a  
10 multi-issue children's advocacy organizations. CCC  
11 is a co-convener of the Families Homelessness  
12 Coalition, FHC, whose other members you've heard from  
13 and will be submitting testimony as well. CCC and  
14 advocates citywide are extremely concerned over the  
15 implementation of shelter limits from migrant  
16 families at New York City shelters. The harmful  
17 effects that children will face will endure and  
18 severely impact their education and overall  
19 wellbeing, as you heard from other speakers here  
20 today. These families have already endured difficult  
21 barriers in their effort to become self-sufficient  
22 and be an asset to the City's economy. Furthermore,  
23 these immigrant families live in constant fear from  
24 city enforcement and now even more concerning,  
25 federal enforcement. Now more than ever, New York

2 City should support immigrant families with children  
3 by focusing on solutions to the current shelter and  
4 housing crisis. CCC therefore urges the City Council  
5 to support the following reforms to improve housing  
6 stability of all New York City families with  
7 children. First, eliminate the 60-day rule for  
8 migrant families with children. In general, 60 days  
9 is not enough time for shelter staff to work with  
10 families to secure public benefits assistance and  
11 find permanent housing. This actively reverses work  
12 done by case managers and makes it increasingly  
13 difficult for parents to maintain a job.

14 Additionally, families are also unable to access  
15 their mail, as you heard earlier today, creating a  
16 significant barrier to apply for asylum and work  
17 permits, and even possibly risking deportation for  
18 missing a notice to appear in Immigration Court.

19 Migrant students must miss school due to mid-year  
20 transfers, and often weeks as such. The 60-day rule  
21 should eliminate to provide sufficient time for  
22 migrant families with children to gain self-  
23 sufficiency and thrive. Second, invest in legal  
24 services for migrant families. Immigrant families in  
25 New York City face unprecedented legal challenges.

2 We urge the City Council to advocate for more legal  
3 resources to prevent family separation and more  
4 suffering for migrant children. And last, fully  
5 implement the CityFHEPS reform package. As the legal  
6 process impedes the expansion of CityPHEPS, CCC and  
7 FAC partners continue to advocate for the full suite  
8 of its reforms and expansions. The critical  
9 resources should be funded and be able to serve those  
10 who need it most. CCC will provide more  
11 recommendations in the written testimony. Thank you  
12 for your time and consideration.

13 ROBIN ALTMAN: Good afternoon Chairperson  
14 Ayala, Chairperson Avilés and committee members. I  
15 am Robin Altman, supervisor for Asylum-seeker  
16 Services in the Refugee Resettlement Department at  
17 Catholic Charities Community Services of the  
18 Archdiocese of New York. I appreciate this  
19 opportunity to testify. As has been noted by  
20 compelling testimony today, these policies have had a  
21 profoundly negative impact on asylum-seekers lives  
22 and run counter to city goals of immigrant  
23 integration and self-sufficiency. Asylum seeking  
24 families in shelters experience significant  
25 instability and some move up to six times a year. The

2 children in these families have already experienced  
3 the trauma of fleeing their home countries. They  
4 made the treacherous journey to New York City often  
5 on foot in search of safety and stability, but have  
6 instead faced continued transient in our shelter  
7 system. Clinical interventions for children stress  
8 the importance of physical and emotional stability.  
9 However, the threat of eviction every 60 days, even  
10 the threat of eviction makes children unable to feel  
11 safe in their own beds. They may experience physical  
12 pain, anxiety, night terrors, and bed wetting. This  
13 applies to children of all ages. They could be  
14 forced to switch schools multiple times a year,  
15 decimating fragile community and social support  
16 networks. They may face significant obstacles in  
17 school that follow them their entire careers. Parents  
18 face an impossible choice to spend inordinate hours  
19 escorting their children to and from a familiar  
20 school or spend their days learning English, looking  
21 for jobs and searching for housing. This impossible  
22 choice between their children's long-term academic  
23 success and their family's long-term stability is  
24 devastating and counterproductive. Asylum-seeking  
25 adults are eager to work and access a stable housing



2 for themselves and their families. They are  
3 desperate to find stability and respite from the  
4 monthly or bi-monthly cycles of moving. If they  
5 leave shelter under these circumstances, they often  
6 wind up in basements without heat or windows or  
7 apartments with rat or insect infestations. These  
8 families often end up re-entering the shelter system  
9 worse off and with less money. It would be far  
10 better for the families and more efficient for the  
11 city if they could stay in one shelter under  
12 appropriate housing could be found, rather than  
13 existing in conditions so inhospitable that waking up  
14 to rats feels preferable to living in city-run  
15 shelters. Our clients report significant problems in  
16 the communication they receive in shelters. Shelter  
17 limit rules are inconsistently communicated in  
18 someone's preferred language. One client was told by  
19 shelter staff that he had to leave, but understood  
20 that he could reapply for a new shelter the same day  
21 at a re-ticketing center. However, at the re-  
22 ticketing center, he was told that all shelters were  
23 at capacity and they had nowhere to put him. He went  
24 back to his previous shelter, but was not allowed to  
25 return as his bed had already been reallocated. He

2 spent the next three nights sleeping on a church pew  
3 until a placement could be found. Poor communication  
4 has also put pressure on shelter residents to apply  
5 for asylum. Residents report being told by shelter  
6 staff, not by legal counsel, that they are required  
7 to apply for asylum to remain in their shelter.

8 Legal providers have encouraged many people who feel  
9 pressured by-- I'm sorry. Legal providers have  
10 encountered many people who feel pressured by shelter  
11 workers to apply for asylum to remain housed, despite  
12 not having strong claims. The influx of people  
13 seeking asylum has put a high strain on New York  
14 City's already overloaded immigration legal providers  
15 and on the asylum courts. One glaring discrepancy  
16 that has been mentioned earlier today, in the push  
17 for asylum applications as a result of these rules is  
18 that asylum-seekers who are evicted from their  
19 shelters are unable to access their mail, missing  
20 critical communication about their asylum cases.

21 They have no way to track mail that has been sent to  
22 a previous shelter address, and miss critical hearing  
23 notices and documents needed for work authorization.

24 We urge New York City to eliminate the 30 and 60  
25 shelter rules. Further we urge the City to increase

2 the list of exceptions to 60-day shelter rules beyond  
3 the K through six provision that we heard earlier  
4 today from the Administration. We recommend  
5 increasing funding for legal services in shelters,  
6 implementing supportive case management distinct from  
7 exit planning, ensure that communications with  
8 residents is provided in linguistically and  
9 culturally appropriate manner, provide training and  
10 increase training of shelter staff to ensure that  
11 they explicitly offer information regarding  
12 expectations, conditions, and extension policies in  
13 resident's preferred languages. We also urge the  
14 city to expand the housing voucher program to include  
15 provision specifically for asylum-seekers who are  
16 typically ineligible due to the program's  
17 prerequisite of receiving cash assistance for which  
18 they are not eligible. Please refer to our submitted  
19 written testimony for further recommendations and  
20 please know that we are available to answer any  
21 further questions. Thank you very much for your  
22 commitment to providing safe and sustainable housing  
23 to asylum-seekers in New York City.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

2 JACKELINE CRUZ: Good afternoon. My name  
3 is Jackeline Cruz and I'm the Social Work Supervisor  
4 at Unlocal, an organization dedicated to immigration  
5 legal representation and community education, and I'm  
6 here to speak on the different but related pre-60-day  
7 notices that community members have received. This  
8 past August, I worked with two recently arrived  
9 families who received pre-60-day notices instructing  
10 them to prepare to leave their shelters despite not  
11 yet having received official eviction notices. One  
12 family led by a single mother with three children  
13 under 13 years old became overwhelmed knowing that  
14 homelessness would threaten her ability to maintain  
15 employment and access mental health services. The  
16 second family, also led by a single mother supporting  
17 two sons and her sister, learned that displacement  
18 can negatively impact her son's ongoing Family Court  
19 proceedings relating to pursuit of Special Immigrant  
20 Juvenile Designation. The pre-60-day notice contains  
21 misleading, contradictory, and fear-inducing  
22 language. It suggests prioritizing an exit plan  
23 while school is out, but was issued two weeks before  
24 school opening, leaving people with only 14 days to  
25 uproot their families, identify safe and immediate

2 housing, and transfer children to new schools. The  
3 notice also fails to provide housing alternatives or  
4 resources and was accompanied by inadequate case  
5 management from shelter staff requiring supplementary  
6 advocacy from an organization like ours. Without  
7 this kind of community advocacy, displacement may  
8 become inevitable with profound repercussions for  
9 already housing insecure populations such as those  
10 newly arrived. Frequent relocations disrupt  
11 communication with attorneys, hinder the receipt of  
12 legal mail, and sever meaningful connections to  
13 critical services and community organizations  
14 intended to stabilize, empower, and transition  
15 individuals to independent living. The impact is  
16 even greater on children who face academic  
17 disruptions and increase anxiety due to constant  
18 school transfers and residential mobility, both of  
19 which are known risk factors for the development of  
20 adjustment disorders. New York City has long  
21 committed to welcoming and sheltering all people,  
22 including immigrants and we urge the Adams  
23 administration to honor that commitment by addressing  
24 the housing crisis for newly arrived immigrants with  
25 humane, sustainable and ethical solutions. If self-

2 sufficiency is the goal guiding the 30/60-day rule,  
3 displacement and destabilization is not the answer.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Agreed. Thank you.

6 Thank you so much. We will now call the next panel.

7 Chandler? Last name Miranda. Chandler Miranda?

8 Mauriel Lacosta [sp?]? Mauriel? Linda Takowsky

9 [sp?]. Allen Keller? Allen? Alright, hold on.

10 We're going to just add a couple more. Jorge, Jorge?

11 Teresa? Aramando? Aramando? Please make sure your

12 mic is on.

13 DOCTOR LINDA TEWKSBURY: Good afternoon.

14 Thank you for the privilege of speaking at today's

15 hearing. My name is Doctor Linda Tewksbury. I am a

16 pediatrician who has proudly cared for underserved

17 children and families in New York City for over 30

18 years. I testify today to voice strong concerns

19 about the negative impacts of the 30- and 60-day

20 rules, specifically on the health and wellbeing of

21 the asylum-seekers housed in New York City shelters.

22 And to answer an earlier question, as a primary care

23 pediatrician in my medical opinion, it is not trauma-

24 informed care. I speak on behalf of myself and a

25 group of colleague including pediatricians and

2 internists who have been meeting on a regular basis  
3 for almost two years to try to better understand the  
4 health concerns facing our migrant patients and how  
5 best to address their health needs. The opinions  
6 expressed today are our own and not that of any  
7 institution or organization. In caring for the  
8 recently arriving asylum-seekers, we have learned of  
9 their incredible resilience, as you've heard, as they  
10 forge-- seek to forge a better life for themselves  
11 and their children. They have endured unspeakable  
12 horrors, forcing them to flee their home country and  
13 heart-breaking trauma on their dangerous journey  
14 here. Yet, they persevere on. They are immensely  
15 grateful for the shelter, for the medical care, for  
16 the schooling. They are also highly-motivated to  
17 leave the shelter system as quickly as they can and  
18 become independent, productive, and contributing  
19 members of our society. However, it can take many  
20 months, certainly more than two before they're able  
21 to address pressing healthcare needs and get the  
22 basic resources they need to be able to do so. The  
23 30- and 60-day rules contribute little or nothing to  
24 moving these temporarily-housed asylum-seekers into  
25 more stable long-term housing, as you've heard. To

2 the contrary, these rules can undermine and delay  
3 long-term stabilization through disruptions in their  
4 access to critical services including medical  
5 services and cause exacerbations of their mental  
6 health and medical conditions. Many of our asylum-  
7 seeking patients arrive with a myriad of complex  
8 medical, psychological and social health concerns,  
9 forcing vulnerable individuals with no alternative  
10 housing options to leave their shelters. It is  
11 stressful, disruptive and potentially harmful to  
12 their health important medical appointments are  
13 missed as the families have to instead pack up their  
14 things and move from one shelter to another. Our  
15 doctors and social workers spend countless and often  
16 fruitless hours trying to track down patients to  
17 reschedule missed appointments, follow up on abnormal  
18 laboratory values, ensure proper delivery of needed  
19 medical supplies. Some of these patients bounce  
20 around to different healthcare facilities resulting  
21 in duplication of services. Some don't follow at  
22 all. Those are the ones we're worried about. One  
23 can easily imagine how having to move just as an  
24 individual or family settling into a new living  
25 situation after a traumatic journey can take a



2 significant toll on one's physical and mental health.

3 Actually, you don't have imagine. You heard it in

4 the brave voices of the immigrants who testified here

5 today. One young woman suffering from a chronic

6 medical condition required multiple hospitalizations

7 and year of visits for exacerbation of her pain and

8 trauma-related symptoms. She identified her unstable

9 housing situation to be a key contributing factor to

10 her emotional stress and physical pain, necessitating

11 these hospital visits, and there's very good evidence

12 that stress exacerbates a number of both psychiatric

13 and medical conditions. Just receiving a notice that

14 family will be forced to move out of their shelter is

15 enough to significantly exacerbate symptoms of

16 anxiety and PTSD which is common in these patients.

17 As one example, a woman subjected to female genital

18 mutilation as a small child, then forced out of her

19 home under the threat of death after having a

20 daughter with special needs, fled her country with

21 her daughter and made the treacherous journey to the

22 United States. Since arriving in New York City,

23 they've been staying in temporary housing and are no

24 receiving intensive holistic health services. The

25 mothers--

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] Can you-  
3 - I'm sorry. I don't want to interrupt you, but you  
4 ran out of time, and I'm trying-- I want to make sure  
5 that everybody gets adequate time.

6 DOCTOR LINDA TEWKSBURY: Can I just--

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah. Can you just  
8 wrap? Thank you.

9 DOCTOR LINDA TEWKSBURY: As I hope this  
10 testimony examples demonstrate the 30- and 60-day  
11 rules for asylum-seekers have been unnecessarily  
12 disruptive, stressful, and harmful to health and  
13 wellbeing of the recent immigrants who have been  
14 subject to them. We hope the city in hearing this  
15 and other testimony will immediately eliminate these  
16 rules in entirety and focus on other efforts to  
17 safely and humanely assist asylum-seekers who have  
18 landed in New York City to get on their feet and  
19 become independent, healthy and productive members of  
20 our society which they so desperately want. Thank  
21 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Allen?

23 ALLEN KELLER: If I skipped the line, I  
24 was out-- my son is-- so I'm Allen Keller. I'm a  
25 physician who's been caring for asylum-seekers and

2 refugees for over 30 years. I work at a public  
3 hospital. I speak as an individual citizen. Thank  
4 you so much. I'll skip to-- cut to the chase. First  
5 of all, the look of compassion in all of your eyes  
6 reassures me. I would recommend effective immediately  
7 that the 60-day rule be put on hold. It's a  
8 different world since November 5<sup>th</sup>, and we just have  
9 to realize that. I would hope and think the Mayor  
10 who actually has done so much in creating systems,  
11 even though I think he's shooting himself in the foot  
12 right now, but I think he'll understand that, and we  
13 need to not be pennywise, dollar foolish. We are  
14 about to learn exactly what it means to be a  
15 sanctuary city. the reason the number of people  
16 arriving is down is not because the things that drive  
17 people to flee-- which is really the question I ask  
18 and we all need to ask-- have gotten better. It's  
19 just it's gotten more dangerous and actually now more  
20 difficult to get into this country and it's about to  
21 get a lot more. And so given it's going to be fewer  
22 people, all the less reason we're going to need to  
23 have this rule. The other thing is I guess I would  
24 rename or brand it, rather than a 30-day or 60-day  
25 rule for departure. We've heard what I believe is

2 aspirational, but maybe can be met which is the  
3 cornucopia of case management and social services,  
4 but let's have a studier 60-day mandate that every 30  
5 or 60 days, a meaningful case worker meeting, not how  
6 are you leaving, but what do you need, how are you?  
7 And my colleagues and I would be happy to help craft  
8 an appropriate questionnaire and thing for that. I  
9 do think there needs to be oversight, though, on  
10 that. Let me think if there was anything else. Do  
11 away with the rule. Asylum, the case management now-  
12 - well, thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

14 JORGE PAZ REYES: Okay. First, thank  
15 you. Thank you, Council Member Ayala and Council  
16 Member Alexa Avilés. My name is Jorge Paz Reyes.  
17 I'm the community organizer at Mixteca, a community-  
18 based organization located in Sunset Park and we  
19 serve many the Spanish-speaking community. We work  
20 there regularly with asylum-seekers, many who are  
21 living in shelters throughout the neighborhood, and  
22 of course, I'm here to speak against the 30/60 rule,  
23 and because it is really affecting the way we provide  
24 the services to a lot of the community that we serve.  
25 We serve a variety of services including for mental

2 health to immigration services as well as different  
3 workshops and development training. However, these  
4 policy is really affecting the way we can continue to  
5 provide the services, and when it comes to  
6 immigration processes, a lot of them don't have  
7 [inaudible] to have the stability for us to do  
8 follow-ups. We're trying to provide a lot of the  
9 case management that these immigrants need. However,  
10 this policy is really affecting the way we can do  
11 that work. I had a whole statement prepared, but I  
12 know you guys have heard a lot today, and I really  
13 want to thank you guys for creating this space,  
14 because the community that came here were encouraged  
15 to provide a testimony. A lot of them including both  
16 Teresa and Armando who are here were not planning to  
17 give a testimony and were encouraged to do it due to  
18 the space that you guys have created, and as a  
19 community organizer I really thank you for that, and  
20 I really encourage the advocacy against this rule  
21 that is really affecting them. So, now I'll just  
22 pass the mic to them. Thank you.

23 ARMANDO BREART: Okay. [speaking  
24 Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: First of all, I want to  
3 thank you for the opportunity to express myself.

4 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: Since I was a little child I  
6 felt a great admiration for this beautiful country  
7 the United States.

8 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: I am from Venezuela. I was  
10 born in Venezuela of immigrant parents.

11 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: My father is from Cuba and  
13 he fled from the dictatorship of Castro, and my mom  
14 is from Chile and she fled from the dictatorship of  
15 Pinochet.

16 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: And they went to Venezuela  
18 and I was born.

19 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: And I had to leave that  
21 country. Unfortunately, today it's ravaged.

22 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: So, I would like to make a  
24 request.

25 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: Just like Trump says, we  
3 immigrants we eat dogs, we eat cats, anything else.

4 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: We're already in the 21<sup>st</sup>  
6 century.

7 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: I cannot believe this could  
9 go on in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this racism that still  
10 going on.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

12 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: Nevertheless--

14 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: there is a lot of good  
16 people here today [inaudible] with the best  
17 intentions.

18 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: Organizations who has  
20 allowed me to study.

21 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: At the moment I study  
23 English and I'm doing other things as well.

24 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: So, what I'd like to say is-  
3 -

4 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: it's very important. At the  
6 moment I'm living at a shelter.

7 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: It's very important that you  
9 don't faint with this idea of immigration, because--

10 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: I am sure that I as an  
12 immigrant am a professional--

13 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: I cannot listen to you and  
15 talk at the same time. [speaking Spanish]

16 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: I am an educated person.

18 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: I'm a professor. I'm a  
20 teacher.

21 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: Media, mass media.

23 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: Not all immigrants that come  
25 here are burdened.



2 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: We cannot generalize all  
4 immigrants for one group, for one small group.

5 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: So, I will tell you again  
7 that it's very important--

8 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: this is-- if it is possible,  
10 this help with the shelters--

11 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: would at least so that you  
13 can stabilize, stabilize yourself--

14 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: and be able to integrate to  
16 this society of the United States.

17 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: I am very sure that none of  
19 us want to live in a shelter.

20 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: We all want to work, eat,  
22 cook our own meals.

23 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: Start from zero in new  
25 country.

2 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: And for my family--

4 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: And be the positive  
6 contributor to this country.

7 ARMANDO BREART: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: Well, everything else has  
9 already been said.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Gracias. Gracias.

11 ARMANDO BREART: Thank you.

12 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: Good afternoon.

14 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: My name is Teresa.

16 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: I'm a single mother of two  
18 child-- two daughters.

19 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: I am very grateful to the  
21 country of the United States.

22 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: When we emigrate, we don't  
24 have intention to be a burden, but to progress.

25 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: I have two daughters. One  
3 is 16, one is 13.

4 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: And now the eldest has  
6 psychological problems.

7 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: Because of the change.

9 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: Well, my daughters are in  
11 the Bronx--

12 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: going to school and I'm in  
14 Brooklyn.

15 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: and it's very difficult for  
17 them, and I go out and work.

18 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: But it's not every day, of  
20 course. TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: I have to take care of them,  
22 because they put in me in a shelter that is very--

23 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: How would you say it?  
25 Dangerous.

2 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: So, it is a worry. It is a  
4 worry because we are going through a process that  
5 wouldn't know if we were going to keep getting help.

6 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: In addition, the food-- and  
8 as I said before, I am grateful to the country, but  
9 it's not a food that is good for the children.

10 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: So, I would like to ask you  
12 only for one favor--

13 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: to help us.

15 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: Until we get our worker  
17 permit and find an apartment.

18 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: Just that. I will be very  
20 grateful as a mother.

21 TERESA: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

24 Thank you guys.

25 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can I say something?

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I just wanted to say  
4 to the two doctors as well, thank you for affirming  
5 that very simple question that posed to Doctor Long  
6 that clearly he could not answer, although he knows  
7 the answer to it. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: The last in-person  
9 panel consists of Lauren Migliaccio, Karim Walker,  
10 Angela Eslava Gonzalez, and Ariana Hellerman [sp?].  
11 Ariana? No? Okay, thank you. Alright, you may  
12 begin.

13 LAUREN MIGLIACCIO: Good afternoon and  
14 thank you to Chair Ayala and Chair Avilés. My name  
15 is Lauren Migliaccio. I am the Training and Legal  
16 Technical Assistance Director at the Immigrant  
17 Justice Court. I am going to reference today some of  
18 the main highlights that we have submitted in our  
19 written testimony, and since we have already heard  
20 such powerful testimony from affected community  
21 members, I would like to focus in on the finer legal  
22 points of why the 30 and 60-day rule is so  
23 detrimental to a vulnerable population. The first  
24 thing I would like to note for the committees is that  
25 asylum law is indeed entrenched in U.S. Federal Law,

2 and this is a lawful act that people are asserting  
3 here. This vulnerable population is asserting a  
4 claim based on a protected ground on account of race,  
5 religion, nationality, a particular social group, or  
6 a political opinion. This current federal  
7 administration has moved to curtail lawfully  
8 accessible rights to seek asylum here in this  
9 country, but New York has remained steadfast in its  
10 determination to provide legal representation to  
11 these communities. Without stable address and access  
12 to legal service providers, people do run the risk of  
13 missing Immigration Court documents. They also have  
14 an obligation to inform the court within five days of  
15 an address change. We've heard people missing mail-  
16 in notifications. Why that is so dangerous and  
17 serious is people can be ordered removed and ordered  
18 deported in Immigration Court if they do not appear  
19 due to missing any information and correspondence  
20 from the courts. Another point here is that people  
21 seeking to apply for work authorization only become  
22 eligible to do so after 150 days. That is long after  
23 a 30 or 60-day stay in the immigration shelters. One  
24 of the things that is so essential and important to  
25 communication from the federal government is because

2 people are only eligible for certain benefits once  
3 they are considered to be [inaudible], and in order  
4 to do so, that is based on their employment  
5 authorization documentation and communication from  
6 USCIS. Both communication from Immigration Court and  
7 USCIS are not available if people are without access  
8 to their mail. I see that I'm at time. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Are you aware of any  
10 program or nay resource that would ensure that  
11 migrants are equipped with the information, you know,  
12 like a Know Your Rights kind of, you know, I don't  
13 know, handout or posting that could better help them  
14 navigate this current climate?

15 LAUREN MIGLIACCIO: Thank you for your  
16 question. Yes, indeed some of our legal fellows are  
17 placed at legal service providers that do work with  
18 the asylum-seeker population. Know Your Rights  
19 presentations are provided by providers at Catholic  
20 Charities, the Public Defender organizations and some  
21 of the providers that had already testified today.  
22 But most notably and importantly is this is in excess  
23 to counsel issue and the language access issue. And  
24 there is no assurity that people are able to fully  
25 comprehend these things if they are between shelters,

2 and it is hard enough to access this vulnerable  
3 population in a language that they understand. And  
4 one thing I'd also like to note is that communication  
5 to the federal government for immigration must be  
6 submitted in written English. So, even if people are  
7 aware of their right to have access to counsel, this  
8 might not be something they are able to do on their  
9 own and in between housing and access to mail.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Absolutely. I got it.  
11 Thank you so much. Go ahead.

12 ANGELA ESLAVA GONZALEZ: Thank you.  
13 Deputy Speaker Ayala, Chair Avilés, Council Members,  
14 and staff, good afternoon and thank you for the  
15 opportunity to speak. My name is Angela Eslava  
16 Gonzalez and I am a paralegal case handler at the  
17 Shelter and Economic Stability Project at NYLAG.  
18 Council Member Ayala, you said to a previous panelist  
19 that if he reapplies for shelter, he will be given a  
20 placement. This is not true. I just want to make  
21 clear that single adult and adult new immigrant  
22 families can be put out on the street and can have  
23 their reapplication denied by the terms of the  
24 Callahan Settlement. New immigrant adults do not  
25 have a right to shelter. Although the city claims it



2 provides extensive case management services to assist  
3 in the process prior to reapplying, the criteria of  
4 what counts as evidence for a shelter extension is  
5 unclear to many applicants. Most often, new  
6 immigrants have taken many steps to exit the shelter  
7 system which counts towards being granted an  
8 extension, but since the criteria is unclear and the  
9 reapplication process inaccurately revolves around  
10 whether applicants have proof of status, new  
11 immigrants are unaware that they might have had  
12 additional evidence to support their application for  
13 an extension. Thus, they are often wrongly denied  
14 and forced out onto the streets. New immigrants are  
15 told that showing evidence that they have looked for  
16 a job or that they are working can help their shelter  
17 stay extension applications. Many who need to  
18 reapply are not legally authorized to work.  
19 Essentially, the city is asking people to violate  
20 federal law if they want to be granted an extension  
21 of their shelter stay. Many NYLAG clients have  
22 become street homeless as a result. Further, new  
23 immigrant families with minor children are being  
24 needlessly destabilized by the 60-day policy. Given  
25 that every family with minor children is given a new

2 placement when they reapply, this policy seems  
3 designed to destabilize families and try to force  
4 them out of New York City. These policies also  
5 affect new immigrant's public benefits and  
6 immigration relief applications due to unreliable  
7 access to mail. The centralized mail room is  
8 insufficient until it is clear when, where and how it  
9 will work. Finally, separating new immigrants into  
10 their own poorly-resourced and poorly-regulated  
11 shelter system discriminates against them based on  
12 their national origin and economic status. Shelter  
13 that's of new immigrants specifically have families  
14 with children that are staying in literal tents that  
15 do not provide shelter from the elements are given  
16 little food, sometimes even cold or frozen, and do  
17 not have access to caseworkers, childcare, or housing  
18 vouchers. Asylum-seeking immigrants should be  
19 provided with the same level of shelter and services  
20 as all other people experiencing homelessness in the  
21 city. We thank the committees on General Welfare and  
22 Immigration for the work you have done to facilitate  
23 services for vulnerable New Yorkers. Happy to answer  
24 any questions if there are any.

25 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Good job. Thank you.

2           KARIM WALKER: Members of the Council,  
3 good afternoon. My name Karim Walker. I'm an  
4 Organizing and Outreach Specialist with the Safety  
5 Net Project and I work with homeless New Yorkers  
6 every day. In the past several years as part of our  
7 work doing outreach with street homeless New Yorkers,  
8 I've had the great honor and privilege of meeting  
9 several newly-arrived immigrants who are staying on  
10 the street and in some of the city's immigrant  
11 homeless shelters such as HERRC at Randall's Island,  
12 the Creedmore [sic] in Queens, Meyers [sic] Street  
13 and Hall [sic] Street in Brooklyn. Through my  
14 interactions and dialogue, I've come to-- I've spoken  
15 to many people who have been subject to the 30 and  
16 60-day evictions that the city has imposed on them,  
17 and we've come to several conclusions. First and  
18 foremost, the 30 and 60-day limits are draconian,  
19 discriminatory and mean-spirited. We call for their  
20 immediate abolition. And contrary the city's claim,  
21 they are a clear attempt to wear people down, to get  
22 them to give up, and to deter them from accessing  
23 shelter at all. Instead of threatening and evicting  
24 immigrants, the city would do well to assist them in  
25 finding them permanent housing and advocate for work

2 authorization and its acceleration which many have  
3 asked for us to do. One of the people I've  
4 encountered, a woman named Ava, shared her thoughts  
5 as follows: "The 30-day rule has impacted me in all  
6 aspects because every few months I have to move and  
7 it impacts everything. I've been through six  
8 different shelters since arriving in New York, and  
9 it's impacted my health, studies and emotional health  
10 stability. I've been through Brooklyn, Staten  
11 Island, Queens, Randall's Island, and back to  
12 Brooklyn, and at one of those shelters I had found  
13 stability and I was feeling stable emotionally and  
14 moving forward. But after finding that stability, I  
15 was moved to a place where I had no privacy and had  
16 to live in really bad conditions in the shelter.  
17 We're immigrants who came here to be able to find a  
18 new better future and to work and to be able to help  
19 our families, but the displacements are making it  
20 impossible to work toward that better future."  
21 Undoubtedly, there's a demand for housing. Let me  
22 reiterate, housing, not shelter. It's a challenge  
23 that our city is facing, but this is not a new  
24 challenge and it will not be solved by subjecting  
25 tens of thousands of people to cruel shelter

2 evictions. The shelter population is at record levels  
3 because homeless New Yorkers cannot get housing.

4 People go into shelter and they struggle to get out.

5 Success-- city and state administrations have failed

6 to create affordable housing solutions that enable

7 homeless people to exit shelter. Our cities have

8 failed to address city warehousing and landlord

9 warehousing of tens of thousands of vacant

10 apartments, and currently the Mayor is outright

11 refusing to implement CityPHEPS laws that would help

12 thousands of people to move out of shelter and

13 prevent eviction. And we actually advocate for the

14 implementation of those CityPHEPS laws as an aside.

15 Until the city reverses course and engages

16 meaningfully with the root cause of homelessness,

17 most importantly lack of access to permanent housing,

18 these issues will continue to plague our city. I

19 have one last question. What kind of city do we want

20 to be? A city that embodies the original model of

21 America e pluribus unum, out of many, one, or do we

22 want to reiterate the darker and more tragic aspects

23 of American history. I'll be happy to answer any

24 questions.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much.  
3 I can't agree with you more. Thank you all for the  
4 testimony and your work, and we should be investing  
5 very differently, and we stand 100 percent in  
6 solidarity. We should be housing people with  
7 permanent housing. We should be utilizing PHEPS. As  
8 you know, that is a battle. We are engaged with it,  
9 with the Administration. So I just, I want to thank  
10 you for the work that you have been doing and that we  
11 will be doing together very soon, and thank you for  
12 your conviction and that question.

13 KARIM WALKER: And let me just thank you  
14 as well for all the good work that you've been doing.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. So,  
16 we'll go to the next panel. Laetitia Duler and  
17 Chandler Miranda. Okay, you can--

18 CHANDLER MIRANDA: Hi, thank you. I know  
19 you're ready to go. It's been a long day. I'm here as  
20 a professor of education and as a mutual aid worker  
21 with Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors. We are a  
22 collective dedicated to assisting residents of Floyd  
23 Bennett Field, and we have done a lot of things  
24 including coat drives and backpack drive and things  
25 like that. I really appreciate all of the things

2 that have come up today, but I did not hear a lot  
3 about Floyd Bennett Field. It is on federal land. It  
4 is a soft-sided structure. It is the type of  
5 structure that the Trump administration is talking  
6 about using as a detention facility. And so while we  
7 are talking about getting all of the newest New  
8 Yorkers into stable housing in the coming months. I  
9 would ask you to please, please, please prioritize  
10 the families at Floyd Bennet Field in the next 60  
11 days. We really would love to the see the closure  
12 and the removal of the infrastructure at Floyd  
13 Bennett Field so that it cannot be used as a  
14 detention facility by the federal administration. It  
15 is to my knowledge the only shelter that exists on  
16 federal land right now and has the infrastructure  
17 that is being described "as-needed" for large scale  
18 detention facilities near sanctuary cities. The city  
19 leased the land from the Federal Government to  
20 establish the shelter at Floyd Bennett Field. With  
21 the new administration we are fearful for the  
22 families that are currently there. As a sanctuary  
23 city, New York City must stand up to the Federal  
24 Government and anticipate what's to come. The city  
25 must take preemptive action to prevent our newest

2 neighbors from being detained or from the  
3 infrastructure put up by the city being used to  
4 detain people in unhumane [sic] ways. We, again, we  
5 would just really like to ask the Committee to please  
6 focus on Floyd Bennet Field and getting it closed,  
7 and taken apart before January 20<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm speaking on behalf of  
10 Mariella Costa [sp?]. "My name is Mariella Costa,  
11 CUNY student, public school kid's mom, and a mutual  
12 aid volunteer and organizer supporting newly arrived  
13 migrants for the last year and a half. I'm here today  
14 to denounce and stand against the unjust and  
15 unreasonable 30/60-day shelter limit created by Molly  
16 Schaeffer that began to be implemented last summer at  
17 single adult shelters in January 2024 at family  
18 shelters and that more recently has expanded to DHS-  
19 run migrant family shelters. Evicting people,  
20 shifting them around after they've found some  
21 stability only so that city officials can eliminate  
22 them from the system or plan that they have moved on  
23 is not a laudable feat as Schaeffer and the Mayor's  
24 Chief of Staff have touted in self-congratulatory  
25 remarks. For the last two years, the Adams



2 Administration has put forth two contradictory  
3 discourses. On the one hand, the claim that New York  
4 is a sanctuary city and stands with migrants, on the  
5 other discourse that vilifies and criminalizes  
6 immigrants and portrays them as a financial burden  
7 that have cost taxpayers billions and who the city  
8 needs to get rid of. The latter is exactly what the  
9 shelter limit policy does as a deterrence tactic that  
10 involves extra layers of unnecessary Kafka-esque  
11 bureaucracy that aims to get rid of people through  
12 this arbitrary rule without first supporting asylum-  
13 seekers transition to stable, permanent housing. A  
14 number of families supported by our mutual aid  
15 network have been relocated to shelters in boroughs  
16 far away from jobs, schools, and the communities they  
17 started forming and becoming a part of. I know  
18 families who have been transferred to shelters hours  
19 away from their kid's school, moved back to their old  
20 shelters the second eviction and reapplication  
21 process, and then been moved away to a different  
22 borough yet again. In this sense, it is  
23 unconscionable shelter limit-- this unconscionable  
24 shelter limit rule represent a blatant violation of  
25 the McKinney Vento act. This inhumane and

2 destabilizing policy intersects mutual human right  
3 issues, the right to stable housing, access to  
4 education, to services. It disrupts formation of  
5 community and support networks and job stability. One  
6 last thing that I want to highlight is that there is  
7 no shortage of housing for anyone in New York. As it  
8 was reported earlier this year, there are about  
9 90,000 empty, rent-stabilized apartments, apartment  
10 warehoused by landlords, and who knows how many  
11 thousands of empty New York apartments. There are  
12 more empty apartments than there are people that need  
13 housing, not to mention the gross mismanagement of  
14 city funds and no bid contracts or private companies  
15 to run shelters where immigrants and asylum-seekers  
16 have been the least benefitted from the millions of  
17 dollars-- billions of dollars invested. Liberate  
18 these apartments and house the people.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Here, here. Thank  
20 you. Thank you both for your testimony. We are  
21 going to shift to online testimony, but thank you for  
22 being here and all the work you're doing.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, this concludes  
25 the in-person portion of our public testimony. We

2 will now move to remote testimony. If you are  
3 testifying remotely, once your name is called a  
4 member of our staff will unmute you, and you may  
5 begin once the Sergeant at Arms sets the clock and  
6 ques you. So, we will call Stephanie Cordero,  
7 Carolyn Gleason, Shobana, and Josanna.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Stephanie, can you  
10 go first?

11 STEPHANIE CORDERO: [inaudible] right  
12 here. Good afternoon. Sorry about that.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: No worries. Thank  
14 you so much for being here.

15 STEPHANIE CORDERO: Thank you so much for  
16 the opportunity to testify. My name is Stephanie  
17 Cordero. I'm the Director of the Immigrants' Rights  
18 and Advocacy Project at Brooklyn Legal Services.  
19 Brooklyn Legal Services is part of the Legal Services  
20 New York City which is a legal services organization  
21 with a mission to fight poverty and seek racial,  
22 social, and economic justice on behalf of low income  
23 New Yorkers. We have been around for 50 years and  
24 our practice areas include housing, immigration,  
25 public benefits, among others. I will share a couple

2 of experiences we have had personally as the legal  
3 services provider organization with the 30- and 60-  
4 day rule. So, the first anecdote we have is about a  
5 mother we assisted who was from Honduras and she was  
6 here with her four children at a shelter. All her  
7 children were under the age of 12 years old, school  
8 aged, and she had the same experience as what you've  
9 heard today in terms of being moved from shelter to  
10 shelter. She told us she was moved three to four  
11 times within a months' time, and the moves were so  
12 disruptive that she did end up going to California  
13 permanently. So this interrupted the services that  
14 we were providing as we were unable to represent her  
15 and her case, obviously, but what was most striking  
16 about this was that she had actually entered the  
17 United States in 2021, and thus, the rules should  
18 have not applied to her, but it's not surprising to  
19 us to see such a Draconian policy sweep up far more  
20 people than it intended because of the chaos that  
21 it's caused logistically, and particularly, when  
22 shelter residents themselves are often given little  
23 or any information about the 30- to 60-day rule and  
24 the extensions that they could request. And we  
25 experienced this firsthand as well when we went to

2 the Kingsborough men's shelter in Brooklyn to provide  
3 Know Your Rights Workshops--

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
5 you. Your time expired.

6 STEPHANIE CORDERO: Oh, apologize.  
7 Anyway, just to request again, it's very disruptive  
8 to the services that we provide to due process rights  
9 of the newest New Yorkers, and as New York we need to  
10 do better for those who are coming here to make this  
11 city better. Thank you so much for listening.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes, and we  
13 encourage-- if you would submit your testimony in  
14 written form, we can hear the full for the record.  
15 Thank you so much. Carolyn Gleason?

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 CAROLYN GLEASON: Hello. I'm Carolyn  
18 Gleason. I'm proud to see my Council Member Rita  
19 Joseph there. Thank you, Council Member Ayala and  
20 Avilés. I'm a community member. My son's school  
21 last November received dozens of new families, and  
22 the infrastructure we had built of mutual aid and  
23 support immediately went into action to offer each  
24 family that arrived \$500 in support, clothing, and  
25 access to services. This was a parent-led volunteer

2 opportunity-- operation. Our school was under-  
3 enrolled, and because of the new arrivals of the  
4 families we finally were fully-enrolled. We built  
5 deep relationships. They were part of our community.  
6 Yet, 60 days in, as soon as that role went into  
7 effect, we scrambled to find them suitcases. Many of  
8 them went to the reprocessing center only to be sent  
9 back to Floyd Bennett Field. Floyd Bennett Field is  
10 no place for children. I've long said that. It is a  
11 flood zone. It is dangerous. And as the Trump  
12 administration is threatening mass-deportation, I  
13 agree with the previous speaker, that it is dangerous  
14 to keep Floyd Bennett Field open. But the truth is,  
15 is that Floyd Bennett Field residents, many of them  
16 are working. Many of them are desperate to find  
17 permanent housing, and New York City's housing crisis  
18 is deep. There is not even a room to rent. And so I  
19 highly-- I request that there be a mass investment,  
20 not just for our new arrivals, but for all New  
21 Yorkers to expand access to truly affordable housing,  
22 expand access to the vouchers that allowed  
23 opportunity for people to find permanent homes.  
24 People are working. They can pay rent, but there's  
25 just not enough housing, and so it is a false idea

2 that people are not doing enough to find housing.

3 And so I would-- that is like a whole other dimension

4 to this, and I--

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
6 you. Your time expired.

7 CAROLYN GLEASON: do have worries about  
8 what's ahead for those families. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much,  
10 Carolyn. We agree. Shobana?

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

12 SHOBANA RAMASAMY: Yes, thank you for  
13 this opportunity to speak today. My name is Doctor  
14 Shobana Ramasamy and I am a Primary Care Physician in  
15 New York City. Today, I'm speaking on behalf of the  
16 New York Doctor's Coalition. We are an organization  
17 of over 900 physicians working in New York City with  
18 over multiple decades of experience caring for  
19 patients. Being on the front lines of healthcare  
20 here, we have within the last year cared for and  
21 advocated on behalf of hundreds of newly-arrived  
22 people including single adults and families from over  
23 50 countries. We write and speak with urgency and  
24 immense concern regarding the 30- and 60-day rule of  
25 temporary shelter. As healthcare workers and

2 trainees, we know intimately the importance of safe  
3 and stable affordable, and as such, we are staunchly  
4 against the 30- and 60-day shelter stay limits. We  
5 recall the case of a young family from Venezuela who  
6 was seen in one of our clinics. This family of five  
7 experienced severe PTSD from their journey. The  
8 younger children, in particular, we struggling with  
9 depression caused by difficulties with sustaining a  
10 stable school environment and exacerbated by  
11 disruptions in the continuity of their medical and  
12 mental health care. Their story is one of so many  
13 hundreds. The current policy of 30- and 60-day  
14 notices, as we've heard by everybody here, is not  
15 only deeply harmful at present, but it creates deep  
16 rifts of trauma that echo forward in multiple aspects  
17 of an individuals' health for years to come. The  
18 negative impacts are incalculable, and they are  
19 include and are not limited to, interruptions in  
20 healthcare, obviously for patients who have  
21 underlying chronic health conditions, suboptimal  
22 childhood growth and development due to inadequate  
23 nutrition and difficulty obtaining specialized  
24 services, and of course, the enumerable traumas  
25 implicated on children who don't get to have a steady



2 connection with their school. Furthermore, we have  
3 also had cases where this policy was unpredictably  
4 applied at the individual HERRC level. I recall a  
5 case of a young women who arrived into the city with  
6 an openly draining fistula--

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
8 you. Your time expired.

9 SHOBANA RAMASAMY: and despite an  
10 extension-- I just want to say, we believe that the  
11 only way to stop the harmful impact is to eliminate  
12 the 30- and 60-day shelter limits in their entirety.  
13 Thank you for your time and consideration.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much,  
15 Doctor Shobana. Thank you for your testimony and  
16 your work, and we agree. Thank you. Next we have  
17 Josanna.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 JOSANNA VAZ: Good afternoon. Thank you  
20 to Chairs Avilés and Ayala for hosting this hearing.  
21 My name is Josanna Vaz and I'm ESL instructor and  
22 advocate at Fifth Avenue Committee, a 46-year-old  
23 nonprofit community development corporation rooted in  
24 south Brooklyn. Our mission is to advance economics,  
25 social and racial justice across New York City. Each

2 year, we serve nearly 7,000 participants, many of  
3 whom are newly-arrived New Yorkers. Since June we've  
4 been conducting English classes at a men's shelter in  
5 Brooklyn to teach English as a second language, but  
6 also to help these men integrate into the community,  
7 find employment, and navigate their asylum-seeking  
8 processes to continue their journey here in the U.S.  
9 However, a significant obstacle to our work is the  
10 limited time we have with each student. After just  
11 four to six weeks, they're evicted from the shelter  
12 and new students arrive. Because of this, we adapt  
13 our curriculum to teach what we call Survival  
14 English. While practical in the short-term, it is  
15 far from enough. For these men to truly integrate  
16 into the community, secure stable employment, and  
17 gain confidence in speaking English, they need  
18 continued education and support. In addition to this  
19 challenge, I've observed how this timeline negatively  
20 impacts mental health. These men are already facing  
21 the hardships of living in a shelter, and the  
22 constant instability only heightens their anxiety.  
23 They begin their classes and start making progress  
24 only to be abruptly transferred to a shelter far  
25 away. These uncertainties surrounding their housing

2 situation creates a deep sense of instability in  
3 their lives. It is not only necessary, but--

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
5 you. Your time expired.

6 JOSANNA VAZ: It is not only unnecessary  
7 but cruel to impose such conditions on human beings.  
8 I just want to thank you and say that we urge the  
9 city to put a stop to these inhumane policies that  
10 destabilize lives, puts people on the street, and  
11 worsens the homelessness crisis. We also urge the  
12 Administration to share updates and accurate data on  
13 the impacts of these policies. These New Yorkers  
14 deserve the opportunity to build a better future, and  
15 that starts with stability and support. Thank you  
16 for your time and consideration.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much  
18 for your testimony. Next we have Karin.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Karin Takahashi?

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 KARIN TAKAHASHI: Hi. Yes, thank you.

23 My name is Karin Takahashi and I'm a social worker of  
24 the Immigrant Rights and Advocacy Project at Brooklyn  
25 Legal Services. Thank you so much for the

2 opportunity to testify today. As a licensed social  
3 worker with my experience working in the HERRC  
4 migrant shelters as a social worker, I have witnessed  
5 firsthand the profound and destructive impact of the  
6 current shelter policy on the vulnerable population  
7 and the fear and the distress that it has caused on  
8 these residents. Many of the migrants in these  
9 shelters are seeking asylum, as we know, and they  
10 have already endured significant trauma ranging from  
11 violence, displacement, trafficking, sexual abuse,  
12 incarceration, and loss. As we know, this policy  
13 exacerbates these challenges and creates a cascade of  
14 many significant negative effects. So for these  
15 children, this policy is a devastating disruption to  
16 both their education and emotional development. When  
17 families are moved from shelter to shelter, children  
18 are frequently forced to change schools, face  
19 extended commutes, sometimes are unable to attend the  
20 schools at all, as we have all heard. The constant  
21 instability undermines their academic process,  
22 progress, and significantly harms their mental  
23 health. Many of these children have diagnoses of  
24 anxiety, depression, PTSD, as I have seen in the  
25 shelters previously and at my current position. For

2 example, I have worked with a 10-year-old child who  
3 suffered so much from this instability that the child  
4 expressed thoughts of suicide. Additionally, I have  
5 counseled countless children who refuse to go to  
6 school due to the overwhelming challenges of  
7 adjusting to their new schools or their new  
8 environments, often resorting to drugs and other  
9 maladaptive behaviors as they seek a sense of  
10 community and belonging. And for individuals with  
11 both physical and mental health concerns, this policy  
12 exacerbates existing health risks and disrupts  
13 continuity of care, also we have heard countless  
14 times. These frequent moves between shelters force  
15 people to switch healthcare providers, travel long  
16 distances to access--

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
18 you. Your time expired.

19 KARIN TAKAHASHI: [inaudible] I just want  
20 to say that many of these residents when I worked at  
21 the shelter I lost contact with them, disrupting the  
22 coordination and loss of referrals and ultimately  
23 interrupted other ongoing treatments with both their  
24 physical health and their mental health. Thank you so  
25 much for your time.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you, Karin.  
3 Thank you for the work that you are doing. Thank  
4 you. Next we'll have Taina.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Taina Wagnac?

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

8 TAINA WAGNAC: Yes, good evening, Chair  
9 Avilés and Chair Ayala. My name is Taina Wagnac. I  
10 am the Senior Manager of State and Local Policy at  
11 the New York Immigration Coalition. I am here today  
12 to once again condemn Mayor Adams shelter limit stay  
13 which has forced people to give up their room or bed  
14 after 30 or 60 days. Getting people into permanent  
15 housing must be the number one priority and solution  
16 to freeing up space in the city's overburdened  
17 shelter system, not limiting how long they can have  
18 roof over their head or access to a warm bed for a  
19 couple of nights. Mayor Adams came into office, saw  
20 the urgent challenges facing our shelter system, and  
21 instead of working with Council for real solution, he  
22 said I can do worse. Rather than addressing  
23 overcrowding with innovation, humanity, he has made  
24 our city his playground, experimenting with policies  
25 that have worsened the very crisis he claims to

2 address. Getting straight to it, the Mayor's 30- and  
3 60-day shelter limit stay is a bad policy that has  
4 contributed to an unconscionable humanitarian crisis  
5 in our shelter. The shelter stay limits are not only  
6 cruel, but a blatant betrayal of process made to our  
7 vulnerable system. Not only is there a lack of  
8 clarity, oversight, and guidance from the  
9 Administration, but the Administration is also  
10 reporting false data and information. At first,  
11 community providers was told that the 30-day limit  
12 applies to all single adults and the 60-day limits  
13 for those age 18 to 23 and that pregnant persons and  
14 families with children will not receive shelter  
15 notices. However, that turned out to be a lie as  
16 families with children are also getting entrapped and  
17 have been given notices to leave sometimes with  
18 little time to prepare. Because while the notices to  
19 leave are after 30 or 60 days, the notices themselves  
20 are not necessarily given within those time frames,  
21 and families often learn that they have few days to  
22 pack up and leave. Also, the ripple effect this  
23 policy has had on school-aged children and disrupting  
24 their education in school enrollment, where often  
25 families are given notices and have to change

2 placement the middle of them getting enrolled and  
3 connected to support services or their kids getting  
4 into school. For--

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
6 you. Your time is expired.

7 TAINA WAGNAC: [inaudible] organization  
8 that have recorded to affect clients that were in the  
9 middle of them getting enrolled, getting their  
10 vaccination shots, and having to file [inaudible]  
11 that they have placed to another shelter. And also,  
12 to the issues-- the notice are being issued in  
13 English and many of our recent arrivals are limited  
14 in English proficiency are not aware and able to  
15 follow the full instruction. We call for the passage  
16 of Intro 214 to end shelter eviction, and we ask that  
17 New York pass the Working Family Tax Rate  
18 legislation, and we thank you Council for the work  
19 that you're doing in supporting immigrant  
20 communities.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much  
22 Taina. Next we'll have Magdalena.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Magdalena, can you  
25 hear us?



2 MAGDALENA BARBOSA: Yes, hi. Hi, good  
3 afternoon.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. Thank you.

5 MAGDALENA BARBOSA: hi, honorable Chairs.  
6 My name is Magdalena Barbosa. I'm the Director of  
7 Legal Services at Catholic Migration Services. I  
8 thank you so much for this opportunity to provide  
9 testimony. Catholic Migration Services provides free  
10 legal services and information to low income New  
11 Yorker residents in three main areas, immigration,  
12 worker's rights and housing. For the past two years,  
13 Catholic Migration Services has been a member of the  
14 Pro Se Plus Project which is a collaborative of  
15 nonprofit immigration legal services agencies and  
16 community-based organizations that provide legal  
17 orientation, screening, legal advice and pro se  
18 assistance with applications for asylum, temporary  
19 protected status, work permits, and a variety of  
20 immigration court motions to immigrants who have not  
21 been able to find legal representation. Through PSPP  
22 we have had direct contact with thousands of newly  
23 arrived immigrants over the last two years, many of  
24 whom have been or are still in shelter-- who are  
25 still shelter residents and have been or are being

2 negatively impacted by the 30- and 60-day shelter  
3 rules. We have seen fear about personal safety when  
4 individuals and families have been ordered to  
5 evacuate from shelters. We've seen people who have  
6 had to sleep outside and in subway stations where  
7 they are vulnerable to robbery, verbal harassment and  
8 physical attacks. When they have to pack all of  
9 their belongings and lug them around on public  
10 transportation and through city streets from one  
11 borough to another, they do so in fear of their  
12 property, including very important information for  
13 their immigration cases. Second, being homelessness  
14 is particularly hard on immigrants who speak  
15 languages other than English and Spanish who find it  
16 hard to communicate with other New Yorkers or with  
17 law enforcement. They wander the streets in public  
18 transportation hubs confused and unable to  
19 communicate. The inability to communicate  
20 effectively when homeless, hungry and without basic  
21 resources--

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
23 you. Your time expired.

24 MAGDALENA BARBOSA: can escalate normal  
25 encounters and even lead to arrest. Even minor

2 arrests that stem from misunderstandings aggravated  
3 by language barriers can have a negative impact on  
4 eligibility for legal immigration status. Under the  
5 incoming administration, arrests will likely lead to  
6 deportation. Third, the 30- and 60-day shelter rules  
7 interfere with the ability of asylum-seekers to  
8 obtain work authorization because they need a stable  
9 address to receive notices for fingerprints and later  
10 their physical work permits and social security  
11 cards. For those who have been fortunate enough to  
12 have already received their work permits, life on the  
13 streets is not conducive to finding and keeping a new  
14 job. Ideally, the city would provide stable housing  
15 until immigrants can work legally and save money to  
16 make other housing arrangements. Access to language  
17 services and case management in shelters and free  
18 immigration services would also help those who speak  
19 languages other than English or Spanish to get their  
20 bearings, understand our systems better and realize  
21 they have rights.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Magdalena, could  
23 you--

24 MAGDALENA BARBOSA: [interposing] 30 days  
25 at a shelter is simply not enough for someone who's

2 suffered persecution and endured dangerous journeys  
3 to begin to make a transition to life in the United  
4 States, let alone navigate our complex immigration  
5 system.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Magdalena, could  
7 you-- could you wrap up your testimony as we have  
8 others? Thank you.

9 MAGDALENA BARBOSA: Oh, sure, yeah. I  
10 think I'm just about done. Thank you so much for the  
11 opportunity to provide testimony this afternoon.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much  
13 for your work and your testimony. Next, we have Kat.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Kat, you're up next.

16 KAT: Hi.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes, you may begin.

18 KAT: Thank you for this opportunity.

19 So, I'm here to testify to support the elimination of  
20 the 30- and 60-day policy and agree with others who  
21 have referred to it as Draconian. I also am  
22 considering that might be an understatement, given  
23 the New York City housing situation along with the  
24 employment challenges that the new Americans face.  
25 As a past shelter resident, I know that I've helped

2 testify to the shelter conditions for over six years,  
3 and these haven't improved. Whether it's the  
4 testimony you've heard about the food or the lack of  
5 food or the spoiled food or the cold food, the hour  
6 restrictions, being kicked out of the shelter during  
7 the day despite the weather, the lack of staff  
8 actually helping or knowing how to help or knowing  
9 what they're supposed to do are just some-- and  
10 that's as a single adult. Not even-- I've had  
11 friends go into the shelter with children and they  
12 have the same problems with like no help for the  
13 children or how to find places to take the children,  
14 how they can get the children enrolled in schools.  
15 Currently, I'm a volunteer with Networks of Children--  
16 - sorry, with Networks of Churches with Interfaith  
17 Network and other nonprofits, primarily in Manhattan.  
18 This includes homeless and supportive housing  
19 organization. And I know that it takes longer than  
20 60 days to find an apartment, even after you happen  
21 to get funding secured or a voucher, that applying  
22 for a work permit is at least six months. Some  
23 people have aid it can even take a lot longer. And  
24 that this-- as though somebody doesn't have health  
25 challenges or school challenges or other challenges

2 just living in New York City, and that those  
3 challenges can also add to health problems or stress  
4 problems while people are trying to just survive New  
5 York City, survive New York City shelter, survive New  
6 York City's housing situation.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time  
8 expired.

9 KAT: Thank you. Just look into the  
10 history of New York City, like [inaudible] and Sister  
11 Cabrini. Like, those are examples of immigrants who  
12 ended up with housing and helping with hospitals, and  
13 that's part of what made New York City, New York, our  
14 immigrants like that. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much,  
16 Kat, for your testimony. Next we have Alana  
17 Tornello.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 ALANA TORNELLO: Hello. My name is Alana  
20 and I'm testifying on behalf of the Human Services  
21 Council. We are a coalition of over 175 nonprofit  
22 human services providers in NYC. For over two years  
23 we've engaged hundreds of providers serving new  
24 arrivals who informed the written testimony that we  
25 will submit. We urge the City of New York to end its

2 30- and 60-day shelter limits for new arrivals. The  
3 City should be investing in stead in sustained  
4 community-driven human services, especially the  
5 advocacy and support provided in continual case  
6 management and legal services by our community  
7 partners. These shelter limits create hardships for  
8 new arrivals, and as my colleagues have describe,  
9 they add cost for the city and providers by  
10 complicated and extending human services. It does so  
11 by disrupting the completion of critical steps and  
12 services that bring new arrivals out of a state of  
13 crisis. New arrivals who are forced to keep moving  
14 miss important notices, become disconnected from  
15 communities and services that link them to  
16 employment, housing, legal and health opportunities,  
17 and are re-traumatized. This policy along with a  
18 lack of investment and coordination for human  
19 services blocks sustainable pathways and to NYC  
20 communities. With that in mind, we ask the city take  
21 all resources used to enforce shelter limits and  
22 relocation associated with the 30- and 60-day rule  
23 and instead redirect them towards comprehensive human  
24 services and community care, especially coordinated  
25 case management services with strong data

2 protections, expanded capacity for legal services,  
3 sustainable communities , housing, and other human  
4 services. The city should then work with human  
5 services partners to design a stronger coordination  
6 and more equitable resource sharing model. We  
7 continue to see resources, rules and rhetoric in this  
8 city send the message to new arrivals that they're  
9 not welcome, and that divisiveness has created so  
10 much anger in NYC communities, directing the real  
11 frustrations of struggling New Yorkers towards new  
12 arrivals who are not the cause of that really-- that  
13 pain. Imagine if we invested instead in the community  
14 services that would truly help all New Yorkers,  
15 including new arrivals. In the tough times ahead,  
16 let's focus on that care infrastructure. Thank you  
17 for the opportunity to testify.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Here, here. Thank  
19 you so much, Alana. Thank you for the work you're  
20 doing. And lastly, we have Jennie Spector.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 JENNIE SPECTOR: Hi, everybody. Thank  
23 you very much to Chair Avilés and to Chair Ayala for  
24 holding this hearing. My name's Jennie Spector. I  
25 am a immigration advocate, mutual aid organizer, and



2 caring citizen. I wanted-- I mean, it's been very  
3 clear from all the testimony that you've heard from  
4 impacted people that this rule is just meant as a  
5 deterrent and to create chaos for migrants, and what  
6 needs to happen first, we need to end this rule, but  
7 we also need to end this state of emergency which  
8 created the reason for the rule to be put in place.  
9 So that pressure needs to be put on the Mayor to end  
10 the state of emergency. We are not in a state of  
11 emergency and we never were. He has, you know,  
12 created a crisis where there wasn't one. We've had  
13 this number of migrants and immigrants come to New  
14 York City for years, and it's been dealt with in a  
15 very different way. I also want to advocate for, as  
16 others have said, for permanent housing, for the  
17 expansion of CityPHEPS vouchers which I know that  
18 you're in favor of. Also, as other people have said,  
19 increase case management. It's just sorely, sorely  
20 lacking. We have WhatsApp groups for-- I've focused  
21 on the Hall Street shelters in Clinton Hill. We have  
22 WhatsApp groups for all of the free shelters there,  
23 and they are-- you know, there's so information and  
24 education that's required that they are not getting  
25 from anywhere, not getting from any-- you know, any

2 city agency, not from the case managers there in the  
3 shelter. I spend hours a day responding to messages  
4 and providing--

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
6 you. Your time expired.

7 JENNIE SPECTOR: And I just want to also  
8 advocate that this-- that the bill 210 should be  
9 passed, but also it needs to be part of a package of  
10 bills with Intro 942 which would be minimum standards  
11 for emergency shelter, and Intro 943 which would be a  
12 notification that you have a right to shelter at DSS  
13 shelter when there are vacancies which is not  
14 happening now. And we can do so much better, and I  
15 know that you know that, and happy to continue to  
16 work with you and your committee on this. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much,  
18 Ms. Spector. Thank you for the work you do and for  
19 being our last public testimony. So, seeing no one  
20 else-- if there's anyone else present in the room or  
21 on Zoom that hasn't had the opportunity to testify,  
22 please raise your hand. Seeing no one else, I would  
23 like to note that written testimony which will be  
24 reviewed in full by committee staff may be submitted  
25 to the record up to 72 hours after the close of this

2 hearing by emailing it to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

3 And with that, we will-- I guess, what we heard today  
4 was pretty resounding that this policy is not a good  
5 policy. It needs to end immediately. We will do our  
6 best and work with the agencies, with the advocates  
7 and residents and people on the ground to make sure  
8 that we protect each other and we hold the dignity of  
9 all. So thank you for your testimony everyone and  
10 thank you for-- to the staff for all their work on  
11 this hearing. And with that, we bring this hearing  
12 to a close.

13 [gavel]

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1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE WITH COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION 268

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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 2, 2024