

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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Monday, March 14, 2022

Start: 10:04 a. m.

Recess: 2:19 p. m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Hon. Althea Stevens,
Chair of the Committee on Youth
Services

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés
Chi A. Ossé
Kristin Richardson Jordan
Kevin C. Riley
Nantasha M. Williams

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Shahana Hanif

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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

Alan Cheng,
Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer at
New York City Department of Youth & Community
Development

Nevita Bailey,
Assistant Commissioner at Department of New York
City Youth and Community Development

Darryl Rattray,
Associate Commissioner for Youth Services at New
York City Department of Youth and Community
Development

Valerie Mulligan,
Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Connect at the New
York City Department of Youth and Community
Development

Susan Haskell,
Deputy Commissioner at New York City Department of
Youth and Community Development

Preston Mitchum,
Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs at The
Trevor Project

Hana Carey,
Program Manager at Generation Citizen New York
("GCNY")

Dr. Darlene Williams,
President & CEO Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

Arthur Samuels,
Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of MESA Charter
High School in Bushwick

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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

Sabrina Lamb,
Founder and Executive Director of WorldofMoney

Jamie Powlovich,
Executive Director at Coalition for Homeless Youth

Michael Tenebruso,
Youth Program Development Specialist at New York
Road Runners

David McGillan,
Deputy Director at Salvadori Center

Kenneth Jones,
M.Arch. Executive Director at Salvadori Center

Carlos Cano,
Chief Operating Officer at East River Development
Alliance; Urban Upbound

Jimmy Meagher,
Policy Director at Safe Horizon

Stephanie Nilva,
Founder and Executive Director of Day One

Teri West, Director, Government Contracts & School
Partnerships [*Speaking on behalf of Rachael Gazdick,
CEO for New York Edge*]

Troy Philadelphia, Director of Outreach and Advocacy
for the Ali Forney Center

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Drew Higginbotham,
Director of Research & Innovation for the Girls'
Education team at Student Leadership Network

Awinna Martinez,
Project Director of the Staten Island Justice Center

Christine James-McKenzie,
Associate, Communications, Learning & Policy,
JobsFirstNYC

Tené Howard,
Executive Director at Sadie Nash Leadership Project

Brian Carmichael,
Activist, Organizer, and Member of Freedom Agenda

Jennifer Kundla,
Director at Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York
City

Darren Mack,
Co-Director at Freedom Agenda; Member of the
Commission of Reinvestment and the Closure of Rikers
Island

Stacey Hengsterman,
President and CEO of Special Olympics New York

Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez,
Executive Director of New Yorkers for Children
(NYFC)

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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

Wendy Flanagan,
Board President and Interim Executive Director of
the Fresh Air Fund

Shamar Watson,
Director of Youth Development of the Committee
for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF)

Alejandra Ng,
Program Manager for Community Tennis Programs;
New York Junior Tennis & Learning/NYJTL
[Speaking on behalf of Scott Daly,
Senior Director of Community Tennis]

Kari Kurjiaka,
Senior Manager of Literacy & External Affairs at
Reach Out and Read of Greater New York

Sherrise Palomino,
Director of Advocacy and Programs at New Yorkers for
Parks (NY4P)

Dante Bravo,
Youth Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses
(UNH)

KimAlysha Seligmilller,
Former Foster Youth and an Advocate at You Gotta
Believe

Jennifer Pinder,
Executive director at You Gotta Believe

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Joneé Billy,
Director, Strategic Partnerships and External
Affairs at PowerPlay NYC, Inc.

John Sentigar,
Director of Development and Communications at
Covenant House New York (CHNY)

Meredith Jones,
City's First Readers Program Manager; Literacy Inc.

Rachel Walman,
Director of Education at The Green-Wood Cemetery

Abraham Jones,
Executive Director at Claremont Neighborhood Centers

Cynthia Brackett,
New York City Regional Director for The Center for
Employment Opportunities (CEO)

Tamia Santana,
Chief Engagement and Inclusion Officer at Ballet
Hispánico.

Emily Corona,
Assistant Director of Institutional Relations at
Ballet Hispánico

Edwin Santana
Member and Community Organizer at Freedom Agenda

Gillian Miller, Coordinator of Early Learning
Services for the Queens Public Library

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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

Christopher Wilson,
Deputy Executive Director at Claremont Neighborhood
Centers

SERGEANT HOPE: Recording to the computer rolling.

SERGEANT LUGO: Cloud is up.

Good morning everyone, welcome to today's remote New York City Council Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget Hearing of the Committee on Youth Services. At this time will all panelists please turn on your videos? To minimize disruptions, please place all electronic devices to vibrate or silent mode. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so via email to testimony@council.nyc.gov, again that is testimony@council.nyc.gov.

Thank you for your cooperation, Chair Stevens, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget Hearing for the Department of Youth and Community Development. I am Council Member Althea Stevens, and Chair of the Committee of Youth Services. And I am pleased to be joined by my fellow colleagues, Council Member Keven Riley and Council Member Chi Ossé.

We are here today with Alan Cheng, Deputy Commissioner for the administration, and Susan Haskell Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services, along with the agency's team program specific deputies and

associate commissioners. Thank you all for joining us.

DYCD's fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget totals \$862.8 million, this includes \$42 million in personnel services to support a headcount of 501 positions and \$820 million for other than personnel. This reflects a reduction of \$150 million compared to DYCD's fiscal 2022 adopted budget of approximately \$1 billion. Changes are primarily attributed to \$134 million in council discrepancy funds not included in fiscal 2023 budget and changes introduced to DYCD's budget in previous fiscal plans.

Recognizing the critical importance of SYEP programs and the gap in supply and demand for jobs, the council has been a staunch advocate for the program. The council worked with the administration's to reconstruct the program through the Youth Employment Task Force and implanted an array of programmatic and systematic changes that improve services to both young people and for both younger youth and older youth.

Through the years, the council's commitment to the SYEP budget to add additional jobs all while urging the administration to permanently expand the

availability of jobs to ensure that as many New York City young people as possible have opportunities to develop professional skills and networks.

The Preliminary Budget includes a historical investment of \$79.4 million to expand SYEP from 75,000 to 100,000 jobs. Mayor Adams's commitment to secure funding for the program puts an end to annual budget jams for this program with an unprecedented expansion of paid summer jobs to invest in New York City's future -- our youth.

Beyond the public safety implementations, we know that summer jobs can offer life changing experiences for participants to discover a passion, connect with the mentors, gain the confidence that comes with successfully navigating the world of work. Producing accessible employment for young people around New York City is essential to the sustainability of futures for our city.

SYEP is not only about accessible employment, but we will also be giving young people the platform to develop professional (sic) while acquiring vast knowledge that will ensure their future.

The demand for jobs outpace supply, and that remains much to do with the order that every young

person who desires a job can get one. I applaud the administration for making this commitment.

Although there is no additional funding added to the budget yet, I am also excited to learn that The Mayor plans to expand the Summer Rising program for 2022 to include 100,010 slots. This expansion is vital for the program to provide unique hands-on experience for our young people as it creates new opportunities for its growth. And in those collaborative spaces, young people can get the change to connect and build professional relationships. Most importantly, they have the platform to discover their passions and effectively guide themselves to their future endeavors.

DYCD has been tasked with managing the preparation of the City's next generation of leaders to fulfill their potential. Programs like comprehensive afterschool systems COMPASS and SYEP -- Summer Youth Employment Programs -- are intended to help young people rise to the next level.

Historically, the budget process for this committee has always been contentious. It is a welcome relief to see that one of the core programs is fully funded. In light of the increase for SYEP

and Summer Rising, I would like to highlight a basic but often ignored point. The providers making these programs possible and ensuring our city's youth have opportunities for safe and engaging programs in summers are the same ones running our Cornerstones and our COMPASS programs and many more programs. They are stretched thin and are underpaid. So when we discuss how to support providers as they accommodate additional SYEP spots, we should really be talking about how we will work to support them more for all of the work they have been doing already.

The committee looks forward to working with the administration to secure additional funding for other programs in DYCD. For the committee, we want to ensure that those programs are servicing as many young people as possible and to do that they must have significant resources.

I look forward to productive conversations, but before I begin, I would like to thank Kate Connelly (sp?), my Chief of Staff, and always the A team, Michele Peregrin, Senior Financial Advisor Analyst to the committee; Eisha Wright, Deputy Director; Emi Briggs, Counsel to The Committee; Anastassia Zimina,

Policy Analyst to the committee; Alan Cheng, Deputy Commissioners and Susan Haskell.

Our committee counsel will now swear you in.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair Stevens, I am Emi Briggs, and I am counsel to the New York City's Committee on Youth Services.

Panelists, as a reminder, you will be on mute until it is time for you testify at which time your name will be called and you will be unmuted by the Zoom host. If you mute yourself after you have been unmuted, you will need to be unmuted again by the host.

Please wait for the Sergeant At Arms to tell you when your time begins, the sergeant will then let you know when your time is up.

Council member questions will be limited to five minutes, and council members, please note that this includes both your questions and the witness's answers. Please also note that we will allow for a second round of questions at today's hearing, and they will be limited to two minutes -- again including both your question and the witness's answers.

For public testimony, I will call up panels... individuals in panels. Council members who have questions for a particular panelists should use the Zoom Raise Hand Function, and you will be called on after everyone on that panel has completed their testimony.

I will now call on the following members of the administration to testify: DYCD Deputy Commissioner Alan Chang; Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell; Deputy Commissioner Valarie Mulligan; Associate Commissioner Darryl Rattray; and Associate Commissioner Nevita Bailey.

I will deliver the oath to you and after reading the oath, I will call on upon you to respond to the oath.

Please raise your right hand: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, before these committees, and to respond honestly to council member questions?

Deputy Commissioner Alan Cheng?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I do.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

Uh, Deputy Commissioner Mulligan?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

Associate Commissioner Rattray?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

And, Associate Commissioner Bailey?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner Cheng, you may begin your testimony when ready.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Thank you.

Good morning, Chair Stevens and members of the Youth Services Committee, my name is Alan Cheng, Deputy Commissioner for Administration. I am joined by Deputy Commissioners Susan Haskell and Valerie Mulligan, Associate Commissioner Darryl Rattray, and Nevita Bailey. We are pleased to be here to discuss the Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget. The Budget stands at \$862.9 million, which is the highest amount of funding in the Preliminary Budget in DYCD's history. \$624.6 million or 72.4% is City tax levied, \$92.3 million or 10.7% is federal, \$5.3 million or

less than 1% is state funding, and \$140 million or 16.3% is intra-agency funds.

We are fortunate that despite the City's fiscal challenges, Mayor Adams's first budget makes historical investments to support young people and creates new summer opportunities for youth from kindergarten to age 24.

The budget bolsters DYCD's mission to invest in a network of community based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish.

It is also great news for hundreds of nonprofit community based organizations funded by DYCD to operate a continuum of services that includes afterschool, community centers, and youth workforce development programs, drop-in programs, and residential programs for runaway and homeless youth, and fatherhood, immigration, literacy, and anti-poverty programs.

As we discussed at the March 4th hearing, Mayor Adams and Council Speaker Adams, announced a 100,000 summer opportunities for young people ages 14 through 24. The Mayor added an additional \$79 million for a

total baseline investment of \$236 million a record investment in the Summer Youth Employment Program. Ninety-thousand of these jobs and work based learning experiences will be available through SYEP making it the largest number of opportunities in the program's 60-year history. This is also the earliest commitment the City has made to SYEP in recent memory. And I want to thank the council for its unceasing support of this program.

This past Friday, Mayor Adams also announced the launch of the largest New York City summer program ever, Summer Rising. Thank you Chair Stevens for joining The Mayor at this historic announcement.

Summer Rising will connect 110,000 elementary and middle school students to fun, culturally relevant hands-on experiences to strengthen their academic, social, and emotional skills. The program builds on our previous summer programs and reflects what we have heard from families, providers, and other stakeholders. This includes adding enrichment services on Fridays for middle school students from 8:00 a. m. to 6:00 p. m. to ensure five days a week of summer programming and earlier enrollment so family, schools, and providers can better plan for

their summers. Families will also have access to supportive resources and referrals to enrichment opportunities.

Combined, Summer Rising and Summer Youth Employment Program will serve over 200,000 young people this summer with record investment of close to \$400 million in the future of young New Yorkers.

The Fiscal Year 2023 budget also maintains key programs including \$326.9 million to support approximately 900 COMPASS programs servicing over 120,000 youth, \$63 million, which supports 92 Beacon Programs serving 110,400 participants, \$63.9 million to support 99 Cornerstone Centers serving 20,000 participants, and \$47.8 million to support 813 beds for runaway and homeless youth. We also pleased that the budget includes baseline funding of \$9.7 million to support the council's signature Work, Learn, and Grow youth employment program during the school year.

As you aware, most city agencies were asked to identify savings in and current and out years, DYCD's Preliminary Budget achieves \$21.8 million in FY22 and \$16.8 million in FY 23 and out year savings. These savings were identified in unallocated COMPASS slots and the elimination of an adult literacy program

The budget also includes \$33.5 million from federal Community Services Block Grant funding. The current neighborhood development area contracts are scheduled to expire at the end of the Fiscal Year; and a new set of contracts will begin in July 1, 2022. We anticipate that these awards will be announced in the spring. Program areas funded through this RFP will include adult literacy, high school youth education support, healthy family support services, economic development, safety awareness and crime prevention, immigrant services, and senior services. CSBG also funds fatherhood and adult literacy programs through separate contracts.

Preparations will also begin in the spring for the 2022 Community Needs Assessment. This assessment is conducted every three years to hear directly from New Yorkers in neighborhoods most in need and to document their views on what is needed to improve their well-being and the well-being of their communities. We welcome the Council's continued support to assess the needs of our community members.

Thank you again for the opportunity to highlight the Preliminary Budget. We are pleased to answer any of your questions.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. I will now turn it over to Chair Stevens for questions for the administration.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hello, good morning.

So, for the Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary Budget, includes a baseline New Needs for DYCD Support for the expansion of SYEP. It does not include funding to support any of DYCD's other core programs. Historically, this committee has been where the agency does not include funding in the Preliminary Budget to support its core programs for young adults.... youth and adults. SYEP is funded; however, that comes off the heels of The Mayor's Blueprint for Public Safety which aims to reduce gun violence. What new needs, if any did DYCD request to The Office of Management and Budgets?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: In this preliminary plan, asides from the, uh, the ones that we did receive funding for, we did not have any, uh, other New Needs that we put in for. But, we are still in

ongoing discussions with OMB, uh, as we move in to exec and other plans.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: For providers who are not performing well in meeting the terms of their contracts, what are the requirements and process for terminating those contracts and reassigning the contracts to other providers?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, we take this issue very seriously. Termination is the last resort that the agency seeks to take. And, prior to that, I just want to highlight that we do a lot of program management. We provide capacity building support, uh, to make sure that our providers are equipped to successfully run their programs; however, if we do come to a, uhm, decision where the current provider is not a good fit, uh, we have to abide by the City's procurement rules to make sure that there is fairness and transparency in how we are identifying a replacement provider. We keep two things in mind when we do identify a replacement provider, we want to make sure that that new provider is competent in delivering those services, and we also want to make sure that it can deliver the services to the same community that the prior provider was serving. So,

that is, uh, essentially what we try to do in the high level.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: In the last couple years, how many providers' contracts have been terminated and switched over?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I do not know off the top of my head, but we can definitely follow up and provide, uh, that number [INAUDIBLE 00:18:46]...

(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, I would love to get that number when you guys, uhm, afterwards and the written testimony.

Providers have expressed concerns regarding the price per participant reimbursement rate for DYCD contracts. We understand that for Summer Rising there is opportunity for a price per participant reimbursement rate increase. Is DYCD exploring an increase in the price per participant rate for Beacons and Cornerstones and other program contracts?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: We always factor that in when we are preparing to, uh, introduce new RFPs for the programs. Over the years as you may know, the City did engage in a couple of initiatives to shore up some of those... some of the price

participant rates, uh, including increasing COLA as well as indirect costs, uh, rates to our providers. But, for the programs that you mentioned, we are definitely going to work closely with OMB as we prepare a new RFP for those portfolios.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But, could you give more details, because that sounded very vague around, uh, what are you actually doing, and what does that look like? And ,you know, we have been talking about RFPs that have not come out for a while, so what are we doing currently when we know that this is a huge concern for a lot of our providers?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, I can share again what we typically do is that we do engage, uh, all of the stakeholders. We look at basically comparing what the reimbursement rates look like for that and for comparable programs and other agencies. And, again, we work closely with OMB on that. Uh, but when we engage stake holders, we hear from providers as well as advocates as to what is fair. And, we are happy to work -- continue doing that work with those stakeholders including The Council... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: [INAUDIBLE 00:20:46]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: But we take feedback, and we want to know what... what a fair rate is and then we bring that back to OMB.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, that is very interesting, because I know stakeholders are often given a price per rate and that is never met. So, when you say you engage them, what does that look like? Are we just having conversations? How is that implemented and how is that considered?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I can share a little bit about, uh, that we have meetings with them. We definitely take, uh, you know, we understand that they have their desired rates, and obviously we have to look at whether or not that makes sense. And, again, we bring that back to OMB, and then we look what the impact would be, how that, uh, you know, may be... may affect other areas of comparable programming. But, yeah, that's essentially the exercise that we go through before every RFP.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Chair Stevens, just adding to that, one example of the work that we do, uhm, the Beacon RFP of 2016, prior to 2016, the Beacon contract rate was on average \$346,000 a year to operate a full Beacon program. And prior to 2016

1 and the RFP releasing, we had a series... We had a
2 concept paper that went out. We had a series of
3 meetings with providers and stakeholders about that
4 concept paper about the value that should go in to
5 that Beacon RFP, and eventually we settled on a
6 Beacon RFP with contracts that are now -- on average
7 -- \$602,000 per Beacon program site.

8 We are taking in the feedback that we were
9 getting over the years and incorporating that in to
10 the price per... well for the Beacons and the actual
11 contracts now.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I mean, and the other
13 problem we are having is -- right? -- when is the
14 last time RPF's been out? So, how are those things
15 being adjusted accordingly? So, if it's inflation
16 and things are still happening, so, yeah, since 2016,
17 that take place, we are currently right now in 2020
18 (sic). So, those are some... That's a huge issue.

19 Uhm, so, could you guys also please provide the
20 committee with a price point for participants for
21 Summer Rising?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I will ask Assistant
23 Commissioner Bailey to address the specifics of that
24 PPP.
25

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Sure, good morning, Chair Stevens, DYCD values our nonprofit partners, and for the Summer Rising Initiative, we have increased our price per participant, so for middle school providers this upcoming summer, their price per participant will \$13.20 and for elementary programs it is \$1,414.00.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, are you guys exploring the price per participant rate for the summer programs in the Cornerstones and community centers as well, or is this just for Summer Rising?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: The price per participant that I mentioned are primarily for the Summer Rising initiatives.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, then what happens to the programs that are not under Summer Rising? They have to stay under the old price participant?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes, because they are no changes to their program model. They are not participating in the Summer Rising initiative. And, so the price per participant would not be applicable to those program areas.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But, that's going to create disparities within agencies around contracts and

services. So, there's going to be a gap in programs as provided by the same providers and same families and the same communities.

Could you guys give me clarity around how that that's supposed to work and what that's supposed to look like?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Sure, so DYCD, uhm, procures a number of contracts with our CBO providers through our network. And, so, within each type of service is a different type of PPP. And, so for Summer Rising, that is not the same service model as Cornerstone, and so the price per participant would be different. And, so, if there are changes to the Cornerstone model that requires additional services, DYCD will work with OMB to ensure that the additional costs will be covered.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: This is interesting, and when you're thinking about community centers, they're already underfunded, and they're in community centers that are dilapidated, and the fact that they're going to be... being paid less because it's not a newer model, that's concerning for me.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: We understand your concerns, and, you know, if there are additional

costs that come to the Cornerstone model, we will work with OMB to ensure that those expenses are covered.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, why hasn't DYCD put this to the front? Why is this not something that you guys are fighting for with OMB?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I think for every RFP or any initiative DYCD continuously discusses with OMB the cost associated with it. We advocate weekly, sometimes daily with OMB with any costs for any programs and anything that we can consider a risk for our unfunded mandates for our CBOs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I just think it just becomes very concerning for me that, uh, ,you know, we're going to be increasing for one program, thus providing services to the same young people, and the same families, and underserved communities, and these are going to be the same providers again, and there's going to be disparities amongst the programs. And, it concerning to me. It's something that's going to be harming for me.

So, I have another question, has the DYCD discussed with The Mayor... Adams regarding expansion beyond 100,000 spots for SYEP?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So [INAUDIBLE
00:26:00]... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Yeah, I will... Oh,
go ahead?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Uhm, DYCD is in
ongoing conversations with The Mayor and OMB
regarding any additional costs for the summer
programs this year. We have been in ongoing
collaborative conversations with all of our
stakeholders about what we will be serving this year
and ensuring that funds are available.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Please provide the committee
with the total fiscal 2023 budget for SYEP including
all sources for funding and breaking out stipends
versus wages for summer 2022 for younger youth and
older youth participants -- including the projections
for the total number of younger youth and older
youths to be served.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So, I can provide
a total budget, but for program specific information,
I am going to defer to our Deputy Commissioner,
Valerie Mulligan.

And, so the SYEP budget for this upcoming year is \$209 million. And, that is inclusive of the additional funding that OMB provided.

I am going to defer to Valerie, uh, Deputy Commissioner Valerie for any additional questions.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Thank you, so approximately 30% of our slots, Chair Stevens, will be for younger youth in a stipended model and 70% will be for older youths in our traditional models.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

I'm sorry, I wanted to acknowledge that Shahana Hanif has joined us as well -- who will be having some questions about the adult literacy.

Uhm, so, my next question is, applications for New York City SYEP Career Ready and Special Initiative have opened on February 14th and the general community based applicant periods are all youth opened on March 1st. To date, how many applications have DYCD received for SYEP?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I am going to ask Deputy Commissioner Mulligan to answer that. She has the stats in front of her.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Yeah, sorry, I couldn't unmute for a second.

Uhm, so as of this morning, we have over 50,000 applications for the Summer Youth Employment Program across all of our models.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

What conversations has DYCD had with the administration regarding the expansion SYEP in the alignment of The Mayor's Blueprint for Public Safety?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: This is... Summer Youth Employment programming is one of the keystones of the plan, and we are pleased of not only the expansion but the timeliness of it. Also for part of the Blueprint for gun safety, we do... this agency does have a seat at the table with that taskforce. And, our Associate Commissioner Darryl Rattray is our liaison to that taskforce.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Given this expansion and providers' positions to support this expansion to provide job sites for participants, particularly as businesses are still recovering or even shattered, and what is DYCD doing to support its providers for work sites?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I am also going to, uh, defer that question to, Deputy Commissioner

Mulligan to provide some details on what we're doing on that front.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: [NO AUDIO]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: If you can unmute, uh, yeah... Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Got it, thank you.

Uhm, so, the City is really taking an all hands on deck approach to supporting employer engagement in preparation for this summer we know this is one of the biggest challenges that we as a whole city are going to have to accomplish the ambitious goal that The Mayor has laid out for us.

So, in really close collaboration with all of our partners in city government, with the full backing of City Hall, The Mayor's Office Youth Employment with the Department of Education, uhm, and other City agencies who are involved in this space, we have launched a really comprehensive employer engagement initiative where we are going through all sectors -- corporate, nonprofit, we are engaging our city agencies to really step up their commitment to doing government placements. We are working with big retailers, uhm, and so we are really hoping that this sort of centralized coordinated approach, in addition

1
2 to the work that the providers do on the ground to
3 recruit small businesses in their communities, will
4 help us reach the goal of 100,000.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

6 Deputy Commissioner Cheng, could you talk... Can
7 you, like, elaborate a little bit more about The
8 Mayor's Blueprint conversations that you guys have
9 been having?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure, I am actually
11 going to ask Associate Commissioner Rattray, who's
12 been... who is the member of the taskforce
13 representing the agency, to expound on that.

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Good afternoon,
15 thank you, Chair Stevens. So, the Blueprint to End
16 Gun Violence, is a collaboration, it's probably over
17 30 agencies that have submitted plans of action. We
18 are looking at ways where we can collaborate
19 interagency collaborations -- of course a citywide
20 effort of course. DYCD itself will be launching a
21 campaign in the next few weeks. We are trying to
22 finalize a couple of areas on that, but it's a
23 campaign that is going to engage our young people,
24 our young adults who are in communities, and our
25 nonprofits.

One important example of the work that we are doing right now, that's the collaboration, is actually my backdrop - Saturday Night Lights. So, we have 106 programs actually, throughout the city, a 100 from the DYCD, and then six that are funded by the Parks Department, that are operating every Saturday night from 5:00 to 9:00 p. m. providing a safe space for young people with high quality services, but also that mentoring environment where they can connect with staff, connect with other community stakeholders, connect with NYPD. It's a collaboration with the Parks Department, with the NYPD, with the five DA's offices across the city, and it has been pretty successful.

I would love to invite the entire council out, perhaps, March 26th to one of the SNL sites, but we will get information out to you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, uhm, and I am excited about that. And we will be having a hearing on Cornerstones and Saturday Night Lights programs.

But, since you brought up Saturday Night Lights, one of the questions I have, and we'll explore a little bit more later on, I'm hearing that some of

the providers did not open their sites, because they say they have lack of staff.

So, can you talk a little bit more about that?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Absolutely.

Early... So, we started the expansion back in July - - so last July -- and, yes, there were some delays with a few sites that were wrapping up with their staff, closing out summer, having to wrap up. I would say by September/October we had all of the sites up and running. So, [INAUDIBLE 00:33:19]...

(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, currently all... All the... (CROSS-TALK)

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: At this... At this point, every site is open [INAUDIBLE 00:33:22]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All 100?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: All of...

Actually over a 100, because we have Parks Department as well.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: One hundred and six... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you... (CROSS-TALK)

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: If there is a site out there that you know of that is not running, please let us know. Have the contact me if they are having a problem. But, every site should be up and running... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I... I definitely will. You know I will, because I believe in these programs, and I think that they are very useful and needed and we need to have more of them. But, if providers are not providing the services, then we need to find providers that will.... (CROSS-TALK)

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Absolutely [INAUDIBLE 00:33:49]... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: because [INAUDIBLE 00:33:49] service to the community.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, what type of contingency plan, if any, does DYCD have in place if existing providers are unable to provide services for all 90,000 participants?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: You mean that's, uh, regarding SYEP and the... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, that's SYEP.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: The... Okay. And, I will ask Deputy Commissioner Mulligan to respond to that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Alright, so, first, you know, it's the goal of 90,000 was developed with the providers in close collaboration with them asking them what their capacity was. So, we are really confident that they are going to meet that goal as they always do. Uhm, that said, we definitely acknowledge that there are challenges and things we all have to work on together in order to achieve that goal, so we have a lot of innovative ideas that, you know, piloted last year for example, offering professional and technical development through the model, uh, providers were really happy with that as a component of the older youth model and other, you know, things like that that helped ease the burden, but still the goal is to reach 90,000 jobs -- 90,000 young people -- and I think we are going to get there.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, I love the enthusiasm and I guess we're going to get there, but that was not the question. Is there a plan? Because as we know, a lot of times people meet the requirement but

not meeting it. So, do we have a plan in place if they do not?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So, last year we launched a new model, uh, as part of the older youth portfolio. We called it Professional and Technical Development, PTD and SYEP Speak, uhm, and what this did was allow our providers to offer instead of just ,you know, the job opportunities, they wrapped that around with learning opportunities to a partnership with skill share so that the burden on recruiting employers was less. So, we plan to ,you know, do that model again and have that in our back pocket if we have to adjust the hours and the breakout of that model in order to help providers meet the goal. So, yes, we do have a plan in place if we don't meet 90,000.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I just that it's important that we have things in place so that, like, if it doesn't happen we are not scrambling. So those things are just very important to me that we are looking at all angles and ready to adjust and shift if need be.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Yeah, I think you have... It's a really great question, and I just

1 want to say that I think over the last several years
2 with the pandemic it has actually allowed us to come
3 up with a lot of really interesting innovations in
4 the Summer Youth Employment Program -- remote jobs,
5 remote, like, educational opportunities and all of
6 that. So, I think we are really well positioned with
7 a lot of different ideas and how to help us get to
8 that goal if it is not all traditional jobs.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

11 Are there still only 82 providers managing all of
12 the SYEP slots?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I... Don't quote
14 me on the exact number, but, yes, it's somewhere in
15 the realm of between 70 and 80.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, we only have between 70
17 and 80 providers, and we just expanded. We don't
18 think that we should be looking at adding additional
19 providers so that we can adequately expand and not
20 stretching those 70 to 80 providers too thin? Like,
21 why was that not considered?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So, you know, we
23 are currently in the middle of a contract. Right?
24 So, we follow all of the City's procurement rules.
25 We, uh, launched our RFP in 2019 and are renewing

1 those contracts as part of DYCD's standard
2 contracting practice. So, that makes it very
3 challenging to add new providers quickly, but
4 definitely something that we are very much looking to
5 do as we move towards the next RFP, because we know
6 that as we expand, we need to bring new providers in
7 to the fold.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I think that's very
10 concerning that we have such little providers
11 providing these services and that, you know, and I am
12 stressing again, that they have other things that is
13 going on this summer, right? Because the same
14 providers who are going to be providing summer camp,
15 they are usually also providing services for our
16 senior centers, and then we are adding additional
17 slots to them. We are stretching our people thin.
18 And, so we have to start looking at how we are making
19 sure we are supporting them and that they are able to
20 actually implement these, uh, programs with quality.
21 Like, we have to start being some place where we are
22 looking at quality over quantity. And, for me, that
23 is very concerning that we are not looking at that --
24 have not expanded this, but we keep putting more on
25 these providers. Because we are also expanding

1 Summer Rising. So, this is going to be a lot for
2 these providers with such a small pool of people.

3 Uhm, the current SYEP contracts are scheduled to
4 expire in 2025, is DYCD opening a program, new
5 contractors... Or, no, we just kind of went over
6 that, sorry about that.

7 How is DYCD working with city agencies to secure
8 worksites for the remaining 10,000 slots? Is there a
9 strategy to collaborating with small businesses and
10 major corporations to expand the pool of worksites?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So, I hear two
12 different questions in there, and tell me if I
13 misunderstood the questions. So, the first piece is
14 how we are working with our city agency partners on
15 the 10,000 additional spots on top of the 90,000 SYEP
16 slots to get to the goal of 100,000. So, The Mayor's
17 Office of Youth Employment is leading the effort on
18 those additional 10,000 slots, and, you know, they
19 are really well-positioned as underneath City Hall to
20 be the coordinator of that. But, we work in really,
21 I mean, daily, sometimes several times a day,
22 meetings with them, with daily with... with all of
23 our agency partners to make sure that we are
24 coordinated on those efforts. So, even though we are
25

not the lead on the 10,000, we are absolutely at the table as those plans are being developed to make sure we are not competing with either of and that we are coordinated. Uh, does that answer the question?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, it does.

Uh, the next question is, the number of DYCD sites... The... The number of DYCD sites have increased by 151% from 578 in Fiscal 2010 to 14,525 in Fiscal 2021. What does the worksite landscape look like for this year for SYEP?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So, that... You are asking how we are working on employer engagement for SYEP, correct?

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, what, like, what's the landscape like? Where are the jobs looking like they are going to be this summer?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So, we are still working on that. We really... It is important to us to have a really healthy mix of jobs across all sectors, because that is how we ensure that we have a really good variety of opportunities that match young people's interests. Uhm, and with the expansion, I don't know what the mix is going to look like just yet, but we are working on all sectors. So,

1 absolutely, engaging with every, single city agency
2 and saying, give us great opportunities for your
3 young people at your agency; teach them what it is
4 like to work in government, engaging with elected
5 officials, like, you, thank you very much, to help
6 ,you know, bring new types of worksites in to the
7 field. We are working with corporations, uhm,
8 business leadership council, with retailers, with
9 nonprofits. We are also doing a really coordinated
10 effort in collaboration with the Youth Services team
11 who is on this call to make sure that there is good
12 opportunities for young people to work in the Summer
13 Rising sites -- giving SYEP participants good
14 opportunities and also helping Summer Rising with
15 their staffing needs. So, I mean, again, it is real
16 all hands on deck sort of approach. And, we will see
17 how the mix sorts itself out at the end of the
18 summer.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, uhm, and I am
21 definitely calling on all of my council members to
22 take SYEP interns this summer. Uh, we are working
23 very hard to push, and everyone seems excited and
24 eager to take in a few interns this summer and give
25

1
2 them a very enriching opportunity. So, they are very
3 excited about that.

4 My next question is, while the number of work
5 sites have increased in number in the public
6 worksites, public worksites are down; in 2019 there
7 were 2,125 public worksites compared to 1,858 in the
8 summer of 2021. What is DYCD doing to increase the
9 number of public sites?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Sure, it's a great
11 question. I think for the whole city, uhm, all of
12 our city agencies the last few years were extremely
13 challenging with the pandemic, and we were all
14 absolutely stretched. But, this year, we are
15 reengaging every single city agency with the full
16 support of The Deputy Mayor's team, uhm, and asking
17 every agency to recommit to hosting Summer Youth
18 Employment participants. So, we expect that that
19 public number will really increase this year
20 especially as we all back in the office and have a
21 new sort of commitment from City Hall to really push
22 this out to our agency partners.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many jobs have city
24 agencies committed to for this summer?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Uh, I don't have the number in front of me, but I am happy to update you as we do recruitment of city agencies.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, that would be great. And, so you can send that in with your written testimony as well. And, you know, I think it's going to be important that we get city agencies to commit publicly that they will host these SYEPs... uhm, interns.

Uhm, I would like to know just acknowledge Council Member Nantasha Williams has joined us. And, I am actually going to open the floor up to Council Member Hanif, as she is going to be asking some questions about adult literacy.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. I will now call on Council Member Hanif to ask her questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you so much, Chair Stevens, and good morning everybody. Council Member Shahana Hanif here.

I have a couple of questions, uhm, and I will start with the adult literacy education funding, which is critical to support high quality community based adult literacy instruction and contribute to the social and civic life of those in need. However,

the fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget, DYCD's adult literacy programs decreased by nearly \$18 million.

How does this reduction impact the number of seats, and does it affect the quality of the classroom -- is my first question?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, I want to clarify that number. I do not believe \$18 million is the number. Uh, Assistant Commissioner Bailey can you verify that for adult literacy -- the reduction?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: The reduction for adult literacy program for Fiscal Year 2023 was \$1.6 million as a point of clarification.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Yes, that's what I am seeing. So, I just wanted to make sure. It wasn't... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Well, we will double check that. But, we did see that it was a substantial amount. And, \$1.6 million does not seem like the number that I read, uhm, nor our Immigration Taskforce, so I am happy to double check.

But, given that we have some differences in numbers, uhm, and still there is a decrease, could you speak to how that decrease might affect the

number of seats? And does it affect the quality of the classroom?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure, absolutely, thank you for that question and your support of the adult literacy programs.

So, just to start off, uhm, that reduction of \$1.67 million dollars did not result in any decrease in the number of seats. Uhm, that funding was used to support a pilot enchantment to the program... to the existing program, which we are still, uh, committed to -- to the end of the fiscal year. And, uh, we are going to evaluate to see if it was an effective pilot before moving on to make further decisions on it.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Understood, okay.

And, then how do you track enrollment to programs?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, we have a very robust system that all of our providers for virtually all of our programs are going in to, uh, not only to do the enrollment -- the intake enrollment -- but also to track participation.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: In... In what way?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, they are tracking it through attendance. There is also the ability to put in some case management-type data, uh, to see progress and things like that.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And is this data compiled into a report annually? Is there a mechanism which you share out more transparently?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: We do feed a lot of that information to the citywide, uh, Mayor's Management Reports. But, there are also specific reports and studies that are done on each of these programs. Most of which... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Okay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Most of which are public.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. And, I will be following up about much of the public information....

(CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: that has been shared out.

And, then, moving into Summer Youth Employment programs, how will you ensure that undocumented youth are part of SYEP?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: That is a very good question, and, uh, I am going to send that to the program person, uh, Deputy Commissioner Mulligan.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm sorry, I just wanted to jump in with a quick question, because... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, if the program has not been evaluated, how do we know that the cutting won't, like, enhance the services if it hasn't been evaluated yet? And, I am talking about the adult literacy program.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: You are absolutely right about that. We... The funding was committed in the last... the administration's last plan. It was baselined, and we are... Since we did not finish the pilot, it was something that ,you know, in our conversations with OMB, we were putting up ,you know, and after we get the results of the evaluation we would have continued ongoing discussions about whether or not it is something that we want restore.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, I'm sorry, go ahead, Shahana, I just wanted to make sure that was... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: [INAUDIBLE 00:48:13]
that... (CROSS-TALK)

UNKNOWN: [INAUDIBLE 00:48:15]... Extended

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Well, I can
address your question about undocumented young people
in Summer Youth Employment.

Uhm, so, you are right, this is really important
to us, and it is something we have not cracked yet in
terms of how we can incorporate them in to our 90,000
contracted SYEP slots. However, we are, uhm, ,you
know, as part of those additional 10,000 slots, we
are working with our other partners to see if there
are opportunities there to pilot ways to reach
undocumented young people through those 10,000 slots,
and take lessons learned as we go forward to try to
do, uh, something larger in the future. But, it's a
great question.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: That gives me a lot of
hope. And, could you share, uh, who the partners
are?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Uh, so we are
working with... So, again, this is all being led by
The Mayor's Office Youth Employment, so we definitely
encourage that we... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: that you talk with them. Uhm, like... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm... I'm okay with extending your time with Miss Hanif so that you can your questions in... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Uh, yeah, so I encourage you to talk to them as they are the lead on this, and I don't want to speak out of turn, but I understand that they are working with the DOE, CUNY, uhm, DOP, MOCJ, ACS, uhm, to see what programs they have that we can leverage for this population.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And, is there additional funding allocated towards the inclusion of undocumented youth?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: If, uhm... it will be part of the larger 100,000 announcement. The 10,000 are... So, DYCD will be doing 90,000 of those slots through our community based portfolio, and then 10,000 on top of that will be through those other city agencies that I just mentioned. And, those slots, some of them, we are trying to see how we can pilot the opportunities for undocumented.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: That's great, and I'd love to be a proactive partner in this work. I will be following how undocumented youth are able to participate and work with, of course Chair Stevens and The Committee on Immigration to ensure that undocumented youth are able to take in what all other young people are allowed to in the City.

Uhm, and then going back to adult literacy... The Adult Literacy Initiative, in partnership with the administration, The Council continues its joint investment of \$12 million for The Adult Literacy Initiative across the City for Fiscal 2022. Can you please update us with numbers of participants served in Fiscal 2021, 2022, and projections for Fiscal Year 2023?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Okay, I think we probably can give you... And, I'm looking to, uh, Assistant Commissioner Bailey give you, uh, the current year's projection of enrollment. But for the other years, we can back to you with that specific data.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Good morning, uh, Council Member Hanif, I will say that for The Adult Literacy Program, the budget for this current fiscal

year is \$20 million and we are anticipating to serve 16,000 participants.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Sixteen thousand?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Okay, got it.

Uhm, and then given that there is a need to expand slots and increase the quality of the classroom, how has the conversation been with the administration in expanding adult literacy initiatives?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Well, currently The Adult Literacy Program is being reviewed. We are in ongoing conversations with stakeholders as well as the literacy program area and OMB and City Hall on the best approach to expand this area that includes the price per participant and aspects of the model.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it, thank you. That is my final question. Appreciate it. Thank you, Chair Stevens... (CROSS-TALK)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, Council Member.

Uhm...

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council Member for your questions. I would like... As a reminder, I

will be calling on council members in the order in which they have used the Zoom Raise Hand Function. So, Council Members, please keep your questions to five minutes, including time for the witness's response, and the Sergeant At Arms will be keeping a timer to let you know when your time is up.

We will now hear questions from Council Member Ossé.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Hi, good morning, and thank you, Chair Stevens for hosting this important hearing.

Uhm, in Fiscal Year 2022, there were over... Over a 150,000 SYEP applications, but only nearly 75,000 people were enrolled in the program. As we recover from the pandemic, more youth will rely on programs like SYEP for employment and something to be engaged in during the summer. What are some active steps, especially within the budget, that DYCD, uh, will take to close or lessen the gap between the number of SYEP applications received and the number of SYEP jobs available?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, start off high level. I think the announcement and expansion to a

100,000 is going to go a long way to meeting that gap as you portrayed, as well as the timing, you know, allowing families and students -- the young people -- to plan sooner. And, I'll now turn it over to Deputy Commissioner Mulligan for some other things we are doing to make sure that we, uh, are able to provide every young person who is looking for a job an opportunity to get one through the SYEP.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Yeah, thank you. Uhm, it is a great question. I think just to reiterate this, investment gets us a huge step closer to meeting the needs of all of the young people who apply to SYEP. You know, although we always have a 150,000 applications, it often takes us many offers to fully enroll the program. So, we think that a true universal program is somewhere close to where we are. But it is all about system building. Right? So, this year gets us a really huge step closer. We are working with our providers to build their capacity. Like I mentioned before, we are looking to add other folks as we go, you know, in to the future with our new RFPs to continue to grow the capacity. But, we really think this gets us a huge step towards the universal program that we are all striving for.

COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, uh, I have a couple more questions. I have a quite a few more questions, but I would like to break it up with some of our colleagues.

But, just really quickly, uhm, in our last hearing, uhm, and especially in the testimony from our providers -- after DYCD had left after our last hearing -- from our providers there was a lot of questions around programs have students with special needs and how those programs are not really being met. Can we really talk about what SYEP is doing to make sure that we have program supports for students with special needs, and in our program, especially around Summer Rising and in the Cornerstones, please? Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure, I will also turn that over to our program, uh, Deputy Commissioners respectively.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Yeah, I could start just speaking to SYEP. So, an exciting thing that we are doing as part of our expansion is expanding our number of slots that are specifically targeted to youth with disabilities in partnership

1 with, uhm, the DOE. So, there will be more
2 opportunities available to young people in that
3 portfolio, which is really exciting to us. And, we
4 are also expanding our Emerging Leaders portfolio,
5 which I am sure there is a lot of overlap between
6 young people with disabilities, the folks in our
7 Emerging Leaders portfolio, and all of the different
8 portfolios that we have that target young people with
9 specific services based on where they are and what
10 they need.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Did you have a specific
13 number around, like, slots that might be allotted to
14 them or providers that have, uh, who can give them
15 additional supports? Because, I actually had a
16 couple of people who have already reached out to me,
17 uhm , saying that they have had trouble ,like,
18 filling out applications -- the students have been
19 very frustrated -- do you have that information?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Uh, I can
21 definitely get you details offline. I know we are
22 growing our slots in each portfolio, but I don't want
23 to misquote numbers. So, I will definitely include
24 that in our written responses to you. And, I would
25 absolutely love to hear if you're hearing that.

Please share that feedback, and we can work with the providers and young people to make sure that we're addressing those concerns.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Definitely.

Uhm, yes?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes, uh, quickly about Summer Rising, that one of the exciting things about working jointly with the Department of Education on this effort, is having, like, good coordination and access to student support during out of school time. And, last summer I think we served more students with disabilities than we had before. But, also acknowledging that, you know, it was trying something new maybe it was a little clunky -- those efforts to coordinate supports. We are really working to try to streamline that. But that is... I think that is one of the most exciting things about us working jointly with DOE is, you know, better understanding students who have support to open the doors for better access to DYCD programming. And, in this case, jointly supervising.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And, could you talk about, like, other programs, especially like with afterschools? Because, I often find that there is a

1 lack of programs for students with disabilities, uhm,
2 and providers are not able to provide services,
3 because some students need additional services.
4

5 So, can you talk about what is being done around
6 that, and, uhm, are there going to be more programs
7 that are specific for students with special needs to
8 make sure that we are supporting those parents as
9 well?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That is a great
11 question. We, to be clear, our providers, like,
12 currently serve many students with special needs
13 including IEPs. I think when we get in to this
14 conversation we are talking about in particular about
15 young people with higher needs that sometimes can be
16 a barrier to accessing programs. This school year --
17 and I will shout out to my colleague, Tracy Caldron,
18 who maintained that coordination that has been
19 developed in to summer to go in to the school year to
20 make requests for parents for example, and nurses to
21 come in to out of school time -- on top of that, in
22 previous RFPs we have, for after school, we have
23 offered additional funding for providers who want to
24 apply for seats to serve students with special needs
25 that may require additional funding. Not every

1 student with special needs requires additional
2 funding or additional accommodations. But, uhm, we
3 do allow providers in some RFPs for after school to
4 say that they need a higher price because they are
5 going to implement the special supports.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, do you have a number
8 for how many providers have gotten additional
9 funding, and how many students do you serve at that
10 price point?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes, I don't have
12 that number with me today, but we can get you the
13 number of providers and the number of students, yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, I will look
15 forward to that in the written testimony.

16 Uh, so, I am going to talk a little bit about
17 Work, Learn, Grow, one of our babies here that we all
18 love and want to see continue to grow. In Fiscal
19 Year 2022, budget baselined \$9.7 million to support
20 2,213 Work, Learn, Grow jobs. And, additions to the
21 November plan added on one time federal funding of
22 \$15 million to support 323 additional jobs in Fiscal
23 2022.

24 For Fiscal 2023, how much of the current SYEP
25 budget supports Work, Learn, Grow and their plans to

replace the \$15 million in federal revenue with City funds to support the program?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I will start out by saying that, uh, there are two separate budgets. SYEP is SYEP, and Work, Learn, Grow is a separate, uh, funding stream for that. We have not begun looking specifically at Work, Learn, Grow for the next school year yet. But, we are working closely with OMB to look at where we can come up with the gaps as you pointed out from the loss in the federal funding.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But, have we come up with a solution or... Or is it just still in conversation?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: It's still in conversation.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: When do you think we will have plan or a date or how we will move forward?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: We definitely have a goal of trying to get this in before the adoption. So, you know, that's kind of our internal deadline here to try to get an answer to this.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, is DYCD committed to making sure that this expansion happens?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I will ask the program people, but I think the answer is yes. So, Valerie can chime in.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Yeah, so we are, you know, again, last year we had this really amazing opportunity to take advantage of one time federal funding to expand the program. We are really excited... So, there's two pieces to this, right? We are really excited that we have our baselined funding for our career ready Work, Learn, Grow model. But, we also really thought that the expansion that we were able to do last year was very successful, and we learned a lot of lessons from that. So, uhm, absolutely, we are always here to serve more young people. Are providers and our team are ready to that, uh, but it's about funding.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

Uhm, Fiscal 2022 marks the first year the program has been baselined by the administration, is there anything you would like to share with the committee on how the program has changed this past year? And this is Work, Learn, Grow.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Sure, uhm, so the... Talking about the baselined programs, uh,

over the last few years, we have moved to this program to really be an integrated partnership between DOE, DYCD, and CUNY, uhm, and we have added a lot of substance to the program. So, it's not only just a work opportunity, everyone young person who is enrolled in our Work, Learn, Grow program, through the Career Ready model, that's the baselined part of the program, uh, has the opportunity to take a CUNY credited course. This is a new innovation. It's not only helped us engage and excite young people participating in the program, but we have seen amazing academic results. My team can correct if I am wrong, but I think we had a 99% pass rate this year out of the program. So, there is real magic that happens when you sort of engage a young person with both the paid opportunity and the educational components and merging them together and then meeting that with a provider who is embedded in their DOE school. We have sort of found this magic between the three agencies that makes it a really comprehensive experience, and we definitely want to continue that model this year going forward.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

1
2 Work, Learn, Grow, the year-round component for
3 SYEP, allows young people who are interested in
4 continuing their summer jobs to do so during the
5 school year. It allows providers to keep their staff
6 year round and improve the quality of jobs and making
7 hiring their positions easier while also helping to
8 maintain employee relationships throughout the year.

9 Has SYEP given thought to adding money for the
10 budgets cover at least 10,000 slots for Fiscal 2023?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Oh, I'll defer that to
12 either Valerie or Nevita.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: So, uh, we you
14 know, look we are always... DYCD is here to serve as
15 many young people as possible. Right? Uhm that is
16 always our goal. I think we are doing everything we
17 can to learn from the program that we operated last
18 year with the expansion we were able to have. So we
19 love Work, Learn, Grow. We are here to advocate and
20 support for it, and we really appreciate Council
21 support of the program going forward.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

23 The Work, Learn, Grow program has proven
24 successful. And has DYCD given thoughts to funding
25

the program to support appropriately 30% participants?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: I mean, I think we have thought, you know, my team, I can speak for the program team, right? We spend a lot of time we have a dedicated you know team who works on the Career Ready model, who are the leaders of the Work, Learn, Grow program. We spend a lot of time thinking about it, thinking about what the right number is, thinking about what we want to do with that program is funding becomes available. So, yeah, we have thought about all of that, uhm, because we want to be ready for whatever opportunities come to us. But, right now, we are really just focused on the baselined funding that we have and making sure that as we work towards the fall, we have a great program in place with the dollars that we do have secured so far.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

Uhm, during the height of the pandemic the City received federal funding to support many of its core programs, across the financial the financial plans, DYCD received \$270.1 million in federal stimulus funding from the American Workforce Plan Act in 2021's grant, of which \$141.2 million was in Fiscal

2021; \$73.9 million was in Fiscal 2022 with \$55 million allocated across the last three years of the plan. The Fiscal 2022 budget includes approximately \$56.7 million in federal revenue supports 5,000 additional SYEP slots for City University of New York -- CUNY students in The Learning Lab, Summer Rising, Summer SONYC programs, federal funding is not included in the budget to support programs for Fiscal 2023.

The Mayor announced that Summer Rising would continue this year. Does the Fiscal 2023 include City funding to support CUNY jobs, Learning Labs, and Summer SONYC?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, the short answer is, yes. It does include funding for both. Obviously the two expansions that were announced by The Mayor are continuations of two of the major initiatives from last year. And, they are since, uh, federal stimulus money is drying up, they are being supported by CTL dollars at this time.

Nevita, is there anything that I am missing?
Thank you.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Sure, hi, good morning, Chair Stevens. So, regarding the Summer

1 Rising New Needs, that funding has not been added to
2 our budget yet. We anticipate that that money will
3 be coming in the Exec plan. Uhm, regarding the
4 stimulus funds, I just want to include a point of
5 clarification, over the next five years, DYCD will
6 receive \$331 million in stimulus funds. And,
7 generally, we have front loaded those funds for FY21
8 - FY22 to maximize revenue and minimize the usage of
9 City tax funds. And, so that is our plan.

11 Additionally, most of the funds are going towards
12 the liquidated CTL funds as well as wages from any of
13 our workforce programs. In the out years, it would be
14 primarily used for wages.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

16 So, we are going to move on to, like, Summer
17 Rising.

18 Uhm, so, on Friday, The Mayor announced that
19 Summer Rising would be expanding to connect 110,000
20 elementary and middle school students to programs
21 through DYCD and DOE in the summer of 2022. In the
22 summer of 2021, there were 99,808 slots budgeted and
23 enrolled a total of 110,000 slots. How many
24 applicants did DYCD receive for programs last
25 summer... applications, sorry.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I am going to tag, uh, Programs to answer that -- Deputy Commissioner Haskell?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I am going to look at my notes. I don't know if I have total applicants handy, so I may have to get back to you on that. I know the seats in the enrollment.... Uh, I think it is important to note while I'm looking for that number, that last year the City did make a commitment for any person who... Any applicant -- young person who wanted a seat would get assigned to a seat, and that commitment was fulfilled. So, uhm, there were not, uh, a lot of families... You know, there wasn't so much like a waiting list or over applications. Uh, acknowledging that that process again, you know, especially a small handful of very high demand sites got a little bit tricky. But, we essentially offered a seat to every applicant last summer.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, great, thank you.

And you can get the numbers to us in the written testimony as well.

For Fiscal 2023, what is the budget for COMPASS summer camp services by elementary, middle school, and high school programs model? How many students

will be served in each COMPASS program model, uh, additionally the funding for DYCD and DOE?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I am going to ask Assistant Commissioner Bailey --if she can be unmuted.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Sure, uh, Chair Stevens, can you please repeat that question, because I think there were a couple in there, and I just want to make sure that I answer... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: all of them.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, great, so I will break it down so you can just go one by one. Okay? If that makes the most sense.

For Fiscal 2023, what is the budget for COMPASS summer camps programs services by elementary, middle school, and high school program models? And how many students will we be serving in each COMPASS program model?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So, for the COMPASS Initiative, uhm, please be mindful that they are also participating in Summer Rising, so that will be part of the 110,000 slots for this upcoming summer. And, so, it is kind of hard to kind of parse

1
2 it out. I can give you the specific information in
3 the written testimony, similar to my other
4 colleagues, but to kind of go through it's kind of
5 hard to parse it out, because right now it is kind of
6 viewed comprehensively with the Beacon area for
7 Summer Rising this summer.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, I'm aware, but I would
9 love to just know the breakdown of it. Because, I
10 know that there is additional programs other than
11 Summer Rising.

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes, you are
13 referring to our COMPASS High and our special
14 initiatives with the COMPASS portfolio. (CROSS-TALK)

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: [INAUDIBLE 01:12:04]

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Uhm, again, I will
17 provide the details of that post hearing.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: thank you.

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: You're welcome.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: As part of the Fiscal 2020
21 year budget deal, \$24 million was added a one shot to
22 increase the DYCD funding provider rate for 2021
23 only. The elementary allocation was increased by 30%
24 and middle school allocations were increased by 10%.
25 The Preliminary Budget does not include funding to

support the increase for 2022. Will DYCD commit to providing this funding to the Executive Budget?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So, thank you, Chair Stevens. So, I think you are referring again to the Summer Rising price per participant? Is that correct? I just want to make sure of that... Okay. So, for the price per participant for this upcoming summer, DYCD will continue to provide the supplemental 30 and 10% that we added on to the price per participant for last summer. And, so, for this upcoming summer, the middle school PPP will be \$1,414.00 and for elementary... I'm sorry, that was the elementary PPP -- it's \$1,414.00, and for middle school it will be \$1,320.00.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

Last year, the DYCD and DOE Summer Rising Initiative, while successful, encountered many obstacles for the start. CBO providers warned that we could not match the demand -- they did. Within in weeks of one another Mayor Adams had boosted SYEP and Summer Rising. Many providers have both contracts for both programs. How is DYCD working with providers to ensure capacity and address the concerns of the providers?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I will defer to our Deputy Commissioner, Susan Haskell, to speak on provider readiness for this upcoming summer.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Thanks for that question, Chair, Chair Stevens. I think one of the biggest differences between last summer and this summer is, you know, the extraordinary circumstances of last summer was we were announcing this program in April, and we had just a few weeks to pull it together in the midst of what was still a pretty active pandemic, so... including a lot of pandemic considerations that providers had to take place, uhm, in respect to staffing, etc. So, I think the fundamental thing that we have heard from our providers, and we have heard from stakeholders that we can do is to communicate clearly and earlier this year than last year to help out with their capacity to operationalize this programming.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would like to go on record for saying this: I have been a provider for over 20 years, and March is not early enough to do the things that are required of us. So, be that it may, it may be earlier, it's still not sufficient time to be able to

put together a quality program. So, I wanted to make sure.

And, I would love to just know, can I get a little bit more detail about, like, what services or systems are being place to support them? These are two very big endeavors, because SYEP is expanding, and at this point summer... summer camp as well.

So, could I get some more specifics around what systematic things are being put in place? How are we supporting them, uh, to get this done?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Uh, we have... I'll start and if my colleague wants to talk about workforce... We have already shared some professional development opportunities around how to strengthen partnerships with schools -- how to get CBOs and schools working together on professional development, and, uhm, how to serve students with special needs, specialized curriculum, so we are working on professional development. We have been talking to some of our providers about how we can help them with their staffing needs. We have got some good ideas we are looking at pursuing, including what my colleague, Valerie, mentioned about sort of coordinating, uhm, summer program organizations that

could benefit from the increased seats in SYEP.

Those are two things that come to mind. A more streamlined enrollment process, uhm, yeah, that is what comes to mind, I don't know if Valerie or Darryl want add to that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MULLIGAN: Yeah, I would just add that on the SYEP side specifically we have done a lot of things to try to, you know, using Susan's words, streamline the process for providers to take some of the administrative burden off of them so they can focus their efforts on what we really want to be focusing on which is, you know, program quality. We have heard really positive feedback from the providers so far about some of those, you know, changes that we have made. I also know ,you know, DYCD is working on ways to support providers in hiring not just the link between ,you know, Susan's team and my team in terms of SYEP and Summer Rising , but broader capacity building, job fairs and things like that, so I think we have more to share on that soon. Uhm, but, yeah, I think that's all.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you.

What changes, if any, does DYCD anticipate making to the programs? Uhm, is this is Summer Rising specifically.

UNKNOWN: [INAUDIBLE 01:17:36]... (CROSS-TALK)

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: [INAUDIBLE 01:07:37] one of the questions that are going to... That are going to come up is... is the enrollment process and how are we streamlining that enrollment process making it easier for parents, making it easier for providers, making it easier for providers to coordinate with their school principals, administration. So, as mentioned a couple of weeks ago in the hearing, we have been in, uhm, deep discussions with DOE on what that is going to look like. I can say we have another meeting today. We are close to finalizing that approach and letting providers know about it. We have a meeting with providers on Wednesday where I am going to share some additional information with them. And the next step to that after we finalize and get feedback is going to be training for providers. So, we are training... Last year was... Things were happening at the very last minute. There wasn't a lot of time. We were trying to use existing systems that were not

necessarily talking to each other. We are cleaning all of that up. So, we are going to have trainings for providers before anything launches, so they are fully aware of how we works, uhm, how they can help inform parents, and then we are going to launch.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, I am happy to hear that there is going to be some trainings. I would love to hear about those and be a part of them so I can make sure when people reach out to me. Uhm, and I think that is important that we are streamlining some things and making sure that not only the providers are being trained, but, you know, we should be thinking about how we are doing collaborative trainings with our DOE partners, because I think it is important that everyone is on the same page. And what happened last year was there was a lot things that DYCD had requirements and then the providers (sic) and that was part of the confusion that was going on. So, we need to make sure that these are joint requirements, these are joint conversations, and that these things are being done together. Because having it done separately does not work. And at the end who suffers are our young people. So I just wanted to make sure that we pointed that out,

1
2 and any way that I can help to have that -- to get
3 that to happen -- will be really important, uhm, as
4 well.

5 Uhm, and I would be remiss not to bring this up,
6 because the providers would definitely kill me --
7 what are we doing about getting the providers who
8 have still not been paid for their contracts -- last
9 year -- for their Summer Rising contracts -- to be
10 paid before we go in to this next summer?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: So, I will address
12 that. Uhm, one, DYCD acknowledges that there were
13 significant delays to last summer's amendments. This
14 is due to a convergence of different factors some
15 within our control some not in our control. However,
16 I can assure everyone who is listening that this is
17 an absolute priority for the agency right now. We
18 have devoted all of our recourses to try to get all
19 of those moving, uh, so that providers are able to
20 get reimbursed for things that they have already
21 done. And, so, as you mentioned, to make sure that
22 the kind of like the, uh, the table is clear for this
23 summer so that we can focus on those.

24 Having worked at a CBO myself, I fully understand
25 that getting a paycheck on time is very important.

1
2 So, we are taking an all hands approach... all hands
3 on deck approach to this, uh, including we are
4 redeploying staff and things like that make sure we
5 do as much possible to make, uh, this summer... this
6 coming summer a success without any of the delays
7 from last year.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I think that is extremely
9 inappropriate that CBOs still have not gotten paid in
10 addition to disrespectful at this point. And we need
11 to make sure that they get paid ASAP. And, I want to
12 make sure... and, we need to make sure that we are
13 putting systems in place so that this does not happen
14 again. Like, at this point, it's extremely
15 disrespectful and inappropriate.

16 I also want to acknowledge that we have Council
17 Member Avilés here. Thank you for joining us.

18 I am going to go on to ask some questions about
19 the runaway and homeless youth. During Fiscal
20 Executive Budgets, the committee requested the youth
21 count. Do you know the new count yet? And, if not,
22 when will you have that tallied?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I am going to turn
24 to... Uh, Deputy Commissioner Haskell oversees our
25

runaway homeless youth programs. Can you address that?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Chair Stevens, I appreciate that question. I am going to get back to you on the results of the 2022 count. I... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You still don't have those numbers?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, I am fortunate enough to sit in the vicinity of the team analyzing that data, so I... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: [INAUDIBLE 01:22:19]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I can get back to you... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: [INAUDIBLE 01:22:20]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I'm... I'm not saying we don't have it [INAUDIBLE 01:22:22] we may have it ... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Are we gonna have it by the end of this hearing? Because I really want this number. Alright.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: [INAUDIBLE 01:22:27]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Uhm, so we are going to come back. I'm coming back to this question. I'm highlighting it right now. Before we get off...

The Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget totals \$48.8 million for runaway youth an increase from \$2.1 million compared to Fiscal 2022. The current budget reflects the increase of \$2.3 million. Please explain what the increase funding will support.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure. First I will turn to our, uh, this is Commissioner of Finance to talk about... the numbers the financial numbers there. Uh, can you unmute Nevita Bailey? Thank you.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Good morning, Chair Stevens, the \$2.1 million that you are referencing is to support the Thrive Initiative and for our wellness hub within the RHY portfolio.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

Do you believe that DYCD's current contract rate for runaway programs cover the true costs of runaway youth programs?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: The price per participant that was given to the RYH providers is based off of our previous RFP. It has been increased to reflect COLA and indirect. At this time, we are in

ongoing conversations with OMB. If the rate is not sufficient, what I can tell you is that as move forward newer incoming RFPs, we constantly review the rates to ensure that that they are marketable and competitive to other services.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Did DYCD do the right size RFP contracts?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: During the RFP process as we are moving forward with our price per participants and our budgets, we make every effort to right size the price per participant where possible.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: We have heard from runaway youth providers and advocates that DYCD does not allow providers to appeal their program evaluation results or ask for an inaccurate information to be edited or removed. Is this true?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So, DYCD has a robust repeal process regarding the performance evaluations. And providers are welcome to reach out to our Procurement Office if they want to contest their evaluations. Please be advised that there is at time limit for that. And so I believe it's 30

1 days. But, they can reach out to our Procurement
2 Office to get more specifics and that is our
3 Acco@dycd.nyc.gov and that will be able to provide
4 more information regarding that. But, in general
5 providers are able to submit an appeal if they are
6 not satisfied with their VENDEX ratings.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

9 The Fiscal 2022 budget currently supports 813
10 beds for runaway and homeless youth programs, 60 of
11 which are 21 to 24-year-olds. How many beds are
12 currently on line?

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Regarding beds
14 online, I am going to defer that question to our
15 Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell who can give you
16 more information regarding the RYH portfolio.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Good morning, Chair
18 Stevens. Uh, how many total beds of the 813 are on
19 line? I believe all 813 beds are operating.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Was that your
22 question?

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, how many... Yeah.

24 Are all budgeted beds certified at this point?
25

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I believe that we have a few... Uhm, a few of our sites, uh, the state law changed a couple of years ago to allow for programs to serve older youth, uh, 21 to 24 years old. And, I believe some of our 21 to 24-year-old sites are in the process of certification. I think we still have a couple of programs that are in that process with OCFF.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, great. Uhm, and I guess, just in your written testimony, if you can just add that information in as well so we can have an accurate count and number.

Uhm, do you believe that there are enough beds to support this very vulnerable population?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That is a good question. We have funded 753 beds for ages 16 to 20. It was a dramatic expansion from where we were, like, prior to the previous administration. And, all kudos to The Council for the advocacy to get us to that point. We do have beds on any given night for young people age 16 to 21. We have vacant beds every night, and we gather that data regularly from our providers about, like, hey, are you able to serve everybody who is coming to your site? Are there any

1 young people that you are not able to serve because
2 of capacity concerns? And we report that on a bi-
3 annual basis to Council. It is publicly available on
4 our website. So, I feel pretty confident say that we
5 do -- we are able to meet capacity for the ages of 16
6 to 20 for runaway and homeless youth definitely. I
7 mentioned we more recently have opened about 60 beds
8 for homeless young adults which is 21 to 24-year-
9 olds. There are more homeless young people who are
10 21 to 24 than there are under age 21, and those beds
11 tend to be more filled. And, there's a few ways that
12 we, uh, we work to support that age group. One way
13 is, uh, we have developed a strong partnership with
14 the Department of Homeless Services whereby young
15 people who are 21 to 24 who may be aging out or not
16 able to access a bed, can, uhm, go through a
17 streamline process and skip the initial intake. For
18 a lot of young people they don't want to go the
19 initial process with The Department of Homeless
20 Services, so we can work with them to make
21 streamlined referrals. And very often when they do
22 go to the adult system, they can be served in a youth
23 shelter, because the Department of Homeless Youth has
24 youth shelters as well.
25

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Were there specific program areas that you wanted to... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Oh, runaway health?

Okay. Susan?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Oh, uhm, were there specific challenges for Runaway and Homeless Youth Services providers in COVID? Absolutely. I mean, they were in... You know, they were in person in March of 2020, and they maintained in person services throughout the pandemic, uh, juggling the challenge of findings isolation spaces for young people who were tested positive or were symptomatic, uh, ,you know, figuring out getting them access to testing,

1 getting access to vaccinations when that became
2 available. And, uhm, I am really proud of the team
3 led by Randy Scott, uh, working closely with
4 providers to help ,like, meet each of those
5 challenges as they came along -- getting PPE in to
6 programs, uhm, it was absolutely a big challenge, and
7 I know, like, that team worked really hard and really
8 quickly to rise to meet those challenges.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

11 Throughout the COVID pandemic, Runaway Youth
12 providers maintained services and continued in person
13 services despite many of the frontline being under
14 paid. And, not just Runaway Youth, we know this is
15 all of our CBOs, what COLA increase is DYCD
16 advocating for in FY 2023? The #JustPay campaign is
17 asking for 5.4%, is that something DYCD is also
18 advocating for?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I can start that. We
20 are still reviewing that on top of, uh, I guess, we
21 want to make it... make sure that we take in to
22 account all of the other program areas and what that
23 impact would be. Back end, there are, as you
24 mentioned earlier, providers who have contracts in
25 different portfolios. Uhm, and the City has

committed in the past to COLA increases, so we continue to support that effort, uh, and work alongside OMB to make sure that that's, uh, equitably administered.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I hear you, but I just want to also just go... push forward a little bit that you guys shouldn't just be having conversations, you should be the advocates in pushing hard, because you know how hard the providers work. So, I just want to say that I think that it is important that ,you know, you said you have conversations with providers around their needs and around price per participant rates, and we need to make sure that we are fighting and pushing and making sure OMB and everyone know the importance and the need for the COLA.

Uh, I have another question around the runaway youth, we understand that the current Temporary Funding Housing Specialist and DYCD funded drop-in centers until the end of Fiscal Year. How many DYCD [INAUDIBLE 01:32:11] to fund the Temporary Housing Specialists is DYCD advocating for continuous funding to maintain those positons?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I will turn that to, uh, Nevita Bailey if you can unmute her.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Good morning, Chair Stevens, DYCD currently has a budget of \$1.5 million for the Housing Specialists for the Runaway Homeless Initiative, uh, that was one time funding; however, DYCD [INAUDIBLE 01:32:54] OMB recognize the value of this supplemental service for this portfolio, and so we are in ongoing conversations with OMB to assess the amount of money that is needed for next year to ensure that this service continues.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

Uhm, I have one more question, and then I am going to turn it over to Council Member... to, uh, my colleagues for some questions.

DYCD 's budget is comprised of six units of a corporation, three of the PS and three for OTPS, the bulk of the funding is \$556 million or 64% is in UA 312, which allows DYCD the flexibility to move funding around without oversight from The Council. The Committee has discussed this in previous hearings, is DYCD open to additional units of appropriation to provider further transparency in the budget beyond the budget function analysis?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: So, thank you, Chair. Uh, DYCD is welcome to conversations with The

Council and OMB regarding increasing UAs. At this time we have not been instructed by OMB to increase it but we are open to it. I can tell you that the 312 UA is primarily for our Youth Services, and so that is a large percentage of our program area. So that is why the representation is so large.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

I am going to turn it over to my colleagues

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair Stevens.

I would like to remind council members that if you have a question for the administration to please use the Zoom Raise Hand Function.

We will now be turning to Council Member Avilés followed by Council Member Williams for questions.

Council Member Avilés, you may begin your questions now.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Good afternoon, thank you so much, Chair Stevens, and thank you to the DYCD team.

I just... I have a two-part question, uh, one about adult literacy, and pardon me if you all covered this before, uh, but I would like to hear a little... I am little mystified coming from a

district where adult literacy is so, so critical.

Uhm, I have been mystified over the years why our city has not prioritized and significantly increased adult literacy funding knowing how foundational it is, uhm, for communities, for workforce, for education.

So, in the report, I see that there a reduction of \$1.7 million of baselined funding because it was un-allocated. This is a mystifying element to me given how needed these resources are in community, and so many service providers are asking for more.

So, I would love to hear a little bit more about what is happening there and why have those resources not been allocated?

But, furthermore, on the Adult Literacy Pilot Project, I think we have talked about this probably across other program areas, there is a huge... I know providers who have not been paid for work that happened a year ago -- and still, you know, really struggling throughout this time. So, I'd like to hear more about what are the delays in the payments there, and also if the committee could walk us through what is happening for the new Adult Literacy Pilot Project.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Uh, sure, I will start off with the first question about the \$1.7 million that was reduced from this budget. It wasn't unallocated. It was allocated to pilot enhancement. So, there was no impact on the number of seats in that program. This is a pilot that we are still going to continue for the end of this fiscal year. And it is subject to an evaluation that we are going to undertake to see how effective that pilot was. So, that is what was eliminated in the out years for now. I responded previously that we, because of the evaluation we want to see what the outcomes and results look like for that, uh, and we will continue to talk to OMB uh, after this pilot has ended.

So, that is the, uh, that was the \$1.7 million that was reduced from there. Again, no cuts to the seats or the number of students we were able to serve in that program.

Uhm, and, then, as far as there's... It is not to be confused with another pilot that we have that is, uh, that's Council funded. That is ongoing as well, uh, and we can follow up. You know, I don't have the details as to where we are, uh, with that

one, but we can definitely follow up with you and give you an update on that.

And, I think there was a third question in there about, uh, the contracting and the delays in payments. We definitely know that there a delay that stemmed from last... the beginning of this current fiscal year. We are working very hard to try to clear that up. Uh, the reason why we cannot make any payments on some of these is that they... We have had registered contracts, and in many cases these were amendments to existing contracts -- baselined contracts -- so we... they might have been in action on one of those based contracts that has to clear first. They kind of go in order. We are working closely with MOCS, with OMB and others, and internally to redeploy our staff to make sure that we clear that backlog of contracts that have to be registered so that we can pay our providers.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I wonder how the City would manage if we were all delayed a year and a half in payments.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: [INAUDIBLE
01:34:45]... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: [INAUDIBLE 01:38:46]...

(CROSS-TALK)

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Uhm, so...

(CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: [INAUDIBLE 01:38:46]

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Council Member
Avilés, can you... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I just wanted to
just quickly jump in. So, while we recognize that
many CBOs received a late payment due to the late
registration of contracts, I want to just stress that
DYCD works very hard to minimize cash flow challenges
for providers. We prioritize the registration of
these contracts to ensure that funds were available.
Once contracts are registered, DYCD initiates the
advance, and that's about 25% of the value of the
contract, and so we do that at the beginning of the
year.

Due to the delay of the registered contracts,
DYCD initiated additional advances for our CBO
network, so on top of the %25 that we gave out we

gave out an additional \$8 million in advances to our CBOs to help with their costs and to manage cash flow. And, where there were no registered contracts available, we worked with MOCS to ensure that additional funding was made with loans and that was an additional \$1.7 million. So, while we... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired... (CROSS-TALK)

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: recognize the challenges, and we understand completely and we do not try to put excuses forward for delays in registration, we value our providers and want to ensure that cash flow continues. And, we did everything we can to make sure that cash continued to the field.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, I definitely here that and I understand that some of these things are out of your control.

But, are we looking at possibly increasing the advances? Because that maybe would help on the front end instead of waiting until the back end and we wouldn't... you know, on some those delays?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Well, similar to CBOs, agencies have cash flow challenges as well, and

1 also they are the... We have to be mindful about the
2 available funds, because we want to make sure we keep
3 the flow of funds available for the CBO. And, so we
4 typically handle that on a case by case basis. The
5 \$8 million that I am referring to is in response to
6 CBOs reaching out to us and informing us that they
7 were having challenges. And, we looked internally to
8 see which one of their contracts were registered --
9 even if it was not a program area that they were
10 operating in -- to leverage additional funds to see
11 what we could do to help with the cash flow. So, we
12 understand the challenge. We are working hard on it,
13 and we are working very hard to minimize any issues
14 like this for this coming summer.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Alexa, do you have a
17 followup question? Because I see your hand's back
18 up. Could you unmute Council Member Avilés, please?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank you so
20 much, Chair. And, thank you to the DYCD team.

21 I wanted to just pivot very quickly to the, uhm,
22 to the Summer Rising. We know Cornerstones are not
23 administered through schools, so I wanted to hear a
24 little bit more about whether the expansion will
25

1
2 include Cornerstones, uhm, and NYCHA and what that
3 looks like.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure I am going to
5 pivot that to, uh, either Susan or Darryl, uh, from
6 the program side. Darryl? He's got his hand raised
7 there. Darryl Rattray -- please unmute him.

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Thank you,
9 Council Member Avilés. So, yeah, Cornerstones are
10 not part of Summer Rising. We have about 99
11 Cornerstones that will be operating summer programs
12 this summer. That is going to be about roughly 6,000
13 elementary seats that are occurring within our
14 Cornerstone programs. In addition to middle
15 school/high school programing that happens because --
16 everyone doesn't know -- every Cornerstone Program in
17 the summer is open seven days a week until 11:00 p.
18 m. And, we also have 39 Cornerstones that also
19 operate Saturday Night Lights programming Saturdays
20 from 5:00 to 9:00.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm sorry, could you just go
22 back a little bit? Because, all... So, you're
23 saying all of the Cornerstones will be open until
24 11:00 p. m. this summer?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Every... So
staring in I want to say 2014 -- 2014 -- so
Cornerstone program -- all 99 -- will be open seven
days a week until 11:00 p. m. during the summer
months.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Will they be getting the
additional funding that they have gotten in the past?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Yes, that's
already embedded and integrated in to the contracts.
So, part of the base contract includes... I'm gonna
[BACKGROUND NOISE] [INAUDIBLE 01:42:51] \$96,593.00
that supports the opening of their evening
programming until 11:30.... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, I think I am asking
about the extended program... the additional
extended program where they got an additional \$90,000
for the community [INAUDIBLE 01:43:03]... (CROSS-
TALK)

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: That's...
(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: programs... (CROSS-TALK)

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: That's the amount
that got embedded in to the base contracts. So, they
automatically get that amount. There is no need to

an amendment for that amount anymore; it is part of their base contracts to remain open during the summer months. And it was \$96,593.00 that got added on.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And when did that happen?

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: That happened with the RFP, which was... I always confuse it Beacon, but it had to be the 2015 RFP or the 2017 RFP. I always confuse it with Beacons, but I can get back to you. Uhm, but in the RFP, included in that base number, that base contract number, includes that additional funding of \$96,000 that supports opening each Cornerstone program seven days a week until 11:00 p. m. during the summer months.

Uhm, and then their new add-on, Eastside House, those three Cornerstones? They got a separate amendment for that when they got the additional funding to provide services for middle school, high school, and adult participants.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, thank you. Like I said before, we will be having a hearing on Cornerstones and Beacons and Saturday Night Light programs soon, so we will be able to deep dive in to that a little bit more.

So, could we could to Council Member Williams?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Chair, we can. Council Member Williams, you may now begin your questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thanks, Madam Chair.

I thought I didn't have questions, but it occurred to me a question that I asked, uh, all different types of agencies that are delivering certain services about essentially -- I know it's a nonprofit, but it still is contracting out the work to nonprofit organizations -- and so I know there has been a lot of conversation around budgets and the lack of the nonprofits receiving, uhm, they're funds for providing the services. I wanted to know if DYCD has taken a look at some of the services that you're currently contracting out to see if some of them could be brought back in to the agency. There is a lot of research around the fact that we actually lose a lot of money and spend a lot of money contracting work out that we could actually absorb as government entities. So, I just wanted to know --it's very high level, uhm, if DYCD has ever done any internal studies or reports on ways to bring back in some of the services that you are currently contracting out to different providers.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Sure, I will try to tackle that. I have been with the agency for over 16 years, uh, and I was in the nonprofit side before that. I think that DYCD has always been primarily a contracting agency. It is probably... You know, we value obviously the connection that our CBOs have directly to the communities, and that's why we utilize them. I would say that... I'll use an example and this will date me, but the Summer Youth Employment program, uhm, used to be a little bit more centralized here at the City when it was run by the former Department of Employment. They actually staffed hundreds maybe even a thousand people -- somebody can probably correct me if I am wrong -- but to actually administer the program they did everything. They did the, uh, the recruitment, the enrollment of the young people, even ,you know, they collected the time sheets, they did the payrolls ever two weeks at different schools throughout the City, uh, ,you know, security guards making sure the kids weren't going to get mugged after they got their paychecks. And, that was, uh... From what I understood, what I saw from the CBO side, very costly to the City. Because, the CBOs are still involved.

1 We still had to be involved in some respect, and yet
2 the City had a huge infrastructure to do all of these
3 other pieces.

4 When DYCD took over the program it was
5 decentralized, and there were immediate cost savings.
6 And, the primary reason to decentralize it was cost
7 savings. So, that's one case study that I can site.

8 Uh, but I think that is something that obviously,
9 you know, we should always be mindful of and revisit.
10 But for now we know that our CBOs, again, have the
11 direct contact, have the knowledge and expertise to
12 serve the communities that they are situated in. So,
13 we depend on them greatly. So, we don't see any
14 immediate, you know, alternative to that right now.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Council Member Williams, do
16 you have any more questions?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: No, uhm, thank you for
18 the history lesson. I probably was one of... an
19 early student in SYEP if you said about 17 years ago.
20 So, no, I mean, it is just always a question like I
21 said that I ask, because there are case studies that
22 show that government saves money when they contract
23 out services. But, then there are also certain case
24 studies that say, uh, we don't always save money. I
25

1 think the nonprofit space is a little bit different.
2 But, we also have for profit entities that are
3 delivering on government services. And, I kind of
4 have a problem with that when we are creating an
5 industry based off of your ability to get a
6 government contract, uhm, when again if it make sense
7 that some of these services could be brought back in
8 to the government space. But, uh, ,you know, if that
9 is something that has happened before, and there is a
10 track record that that did not save any money and in
11 fact cost the City a lot of money, then I understand
12 why it is the way it is now.

14 Thank you.

15 UNKNOWN: [INAUDIBLE 01:49:10]

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, uh, thank you,
17 Council Member.

18 I just... Before we go on to public testimony, I
19 would just like to urge all DYCD program folks to
20 stay on, because it is so essential to hear what
21 public testimony has to be said and heard. And, I
22 think it is just as important to, you know, answer
23 the questions form council member, but just as
24 important to hear from providers and young people and
25

families who will be testifying, uhm, now. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair Stevens.

Uhm, we have concluded the portion of the administration's testimony, so we will be moving on to public testimony at this point.

Uhm, for public testimony, I will call up individuals in panels. Council members who have a question for a particular panelist should use the Zoom Raise Hand Function, and you will be called on after everyone on that panel has completed their testimony.

For public panelists, once I call your name, a member of the staff will unmute you and the Sergeant At Arms will give you the go ahead to begin speaking after setting the timer. All public testimony will be limited to four minutes, and after I call your name just wait a brief moment for the Sergeant At Arms to announce that you may begin.

The next panelist will be in the following order:

Preston Mitchum, Hana Carey, Dr. Darlene Williams, and Arthur Samuels.

We will begin with Preston Mitchum from the Trevor Project.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

PRESTON MITCHUM: Alright, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to provide remarks this afternoon. My name is Preston Mitchum; I use He/Him pronouns, and I am the Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs at The Trevor Project -- the world's largest suicide prevention and mental health organization for LGBTQ youth.

We work diligently to save young lives by providing support through five key programs:

Crisis intervention, peer support, research, education and public awareness, and advocacy.

With an estimated 45,000 LGBTQ youth in New York City experiencing a crisis each year, the need for suicide prevention and mental health in the city is more visible and critical than ever. Of all major cities, The Trevor Project receives the largest number of crisis contacts from New York City. Last year, The Trevor Project served approximately 4,100 youth from the five borough region -- just over 9% of the total estimated LGBTQ youth in New York City in need.

We know that we are at a time when LGBTQ youth need our services more than ever. In March of 2020,

1
2 at the height of the pandemic, The Trevor Project
3 entered emergency response mode in order to address
4 the heart-breaking impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on
5 LGBTQ youth in particular.

6 LGBTQ youth mandated to stay home may not be out
7 or accepted in their homes, which can lead to
8 emotional and mental trauma. Fear and sadness around
9 not knowing when they'll be able to reconnect with
10 support systems can further exacerbate anxiety and
11 depression. Since the start of the pandemic, which is
12 still ongoing, the volume of youth reaching out to
13 our crisis services at our team has increased, at
14 times spiking to more than double volumes earlier in
15 2020 (pre-pandemic).

16 Critical funding will include: Supporting New
17 York City's LGBTQ youth during their moment of
18 crisis, recruiting additional volunteers to support
19 the growing needs, funding the training of those
20 volunteers, and increasing awareness of Trevor's
21 services so more youth know who we are and that we
22 are there for them in their most critical time of
23 need.

24 We hope this Council and Committee, of course
25 restores funding for the current fiscal year and

aligns funding for at-risk communities, including Black and Brown communities and , of course, LGBTQ young people.

For almost 25 years, The Trevor Project has worked to ensure that LGBTQ youth, including those living in New York City, have access to the highest quality and most diverse range of services and resources. We also know that suicide and mental health are not linear, and therefore, the funding and resources and responses must be intersectional and comprehensive.

Though we are still living in a time of unprecedented social, legal, and political acceptance of the LGBTQ community, there is still much work to be done on a local and state level to ensure that our community members can successfully combat the social and economic injustice they face daily. The Trevor Project is always ready as a partner to continue our life-saving services for LGBTQ youth in crisis.

And I thank you for your time and attention.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

We will now turn to Hana Carey.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hana, you have been... I'd ask to unmute, if you'd just accept that, please?

HANA CAREY: Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Generation Citizen at the New York City Council Youth Services Committee. My name is Hana Carey, I am the Program Manager at Generation Citizen New York. We first just want to say that we are thankful for the Council's \$500,000 investment this year in our programming through the Civics Education in City Schools Initiative. In Fiscal Year 2023, Generation Citizen will be seeking an increase of \$100,000 for a grant of \$600,000 to support our major expansion of programming throughout New York City.

Last year, Generation Citizen New York served 1,750 students in 70 classrooms through our "Action Civics" curriculum.

In fall 2021, Generation Citizen Students advocated on a range of issues impacting youth today and called for increased services to better support their communities.

As an example, 12th grade students at Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship High School in Manhattan, decided they wanted to stand up for and

support peers who were victims of sexual violence and assault. They designed a social media campaign to educate their peers about resources for survivors and advocated for the creation of a safe space at their school specifically for students who have experienced sexual violence. They plan to continue this work by raising awareness among city and state officials about the importance of supporting youth survivors, and they may be submitting written testimony to you all.

In order to continue supporting youth civic engagement, Generation Citizen New York has embarked upon an ambitious programmatic expansion from 70 classes to at least 170 classrooms, serving at least 4,250 students. We have been able to archive this growth in a challenging school year by highlighting to our school partners how our work supports social and emotional learning and buttresses their connection to each other and their communities as well as contributes to culturally responsive and sustaining education practices.

All students - especially youth of color, socio-economically disadvantaged youth, immigrant and refugee youth, need meaningful and empowering

engagement within our political institutions as an integral part of their core social studies education.

GC hopes to continue partnering with the Council and the Department of Youth and Community Development to bring civics education to more schools.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

We will now be calling on Dr. Darlene Williams.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dr. Williams, you may begin.

DR. DARLENE WILLIAMS: Good day, my name is Dr. Darlene Williams and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT). Thank you to the Council Members of the Committee on Youth Services for the invitation to speak with you today. I am here to advocate for increased funding to expand our youth services across the City.

Since 1983, OBT has been preparing New York City's younger generations obtain secure jobs and maintain fulfilling careers with a host of wraparound services.

Our mission at OBT is to break the cycle of poverty and inequity through education, job training,

and employment. With programming that ranges from high school equivalency training, employment, adult literacy and ESOL courses, and industry-certified training for high school graduates, we focus on meeting our participants where they are so that they can meet their goals.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we encountered numerous challenges in our DYCD funded programs due to City-wide budget shortfalls. OBT received \$300,000 less compared to our previous fiscal years. We saw lower program enrollment numbers connected to social distancing restrictions and limited community outreach during peak surges.

The biggest impact has been on our Sunset Park programs where we had to cut back on the number of full-time counselors for 120 participants. We serve a high needs population that includes parents, students with disabilities, homeless youth, immigrants, and 95% of our participants identify as people of color in high need areas. Losing counselors affects our wraparound support services, which in turn impacts our community in detrimental ways.

We strongly believe that we can recover from the last two years by your investment in the following:

We want to enhance how we evaluate, use our program data, and more efficiently meet the needs of our participants and our partners. Nonprofit organizations play a vital role in building healthy communities by providing critical services that contribute to economic stability and mobility. Researching trends, understanding market sectors, and the needs of the communities are critical components for effective service delivery.

Two, Expand our ability to offer young people sector-based programs in healthcare, technology, masonry, childcare, climate-based careers and more through programmatic training that is blended, flexible and industry-specific.

Digital literacy and basic technological skills are essential for all workers. The transition to hybrid and remote ways of working across sectors has further demonstrated the need to address the digital divide. We need bold investments in wraparound services that empower our participants to use an array of technologies in a fluent manner.

Thank you on behalf of everyone at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow for giving us this platform to testify about the challenges that we have been

facing. Your support and your continued partnership will help us to ensure that we can make sure our youth have a better opportunity for tomorrow.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Arthur Samuels.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

ARTHUR SAMUELS: Uh, good morning, thank you so much for having me. My name is Arthur Samuels and I am the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director MESA Charter High School in Bushwick.

Early last year, the Mayor's office put out a report indicating that up to a quarter of New Yorkers ages 18-24 are neither working, nor in school. Eighty percent of these so-called "disconnected youth" are young people of color like the students we serve at MESA. The financial cost to the City is hundreds of millions of dollars, and the social and emotional cost of this lost potential is, of course, incalculable. But 75% of disconnected youth have a high school diploma. And that means there's an institution they're tied to. At MESA, we're working with our alumni who have struggled to help them enter high-quality workforce development programs. For

1
2 example, one young man dropped out of college to
3 stock shelves at CVS for \$15/hour, but helped him
4 become a fellow at the Marcy Lab School. This is a
5 free coding boot camp for low-income students --
6 think of the Flatiron School but for our kids -- when
7 he graduates this fall, he'll be placed in a six-
8 figure tech job.

9 Schools spend four years developing relationships
10 with kids and building trust with families. We can
11 leverage these relationships to develop a gradual,
12 warm handoff from schools to post-secondary
13 institutions, either colleges or workforce training
14 programs. But the system that we have not tosses
15 this relationship aside. Schools are neither funded
16 to do this work nor evaluated on our outcomes. In
17 other words, your high school is the most important
18 institution in your life for four years, but once you
19 get your diploma, you're someone else's problem. This
20 is an inefficient, ineffective setup, and most
21 importantly, it's hurting our youth.

22 Schools can play a major role in supporting young
23 people after graduation, but we need the resources to
24 staff this work, and institutional partners within
25 the City.

I encourage The Council to think more about how high schools can play a greater role in re-connecting our youth.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair Stevens, and other council members, if you would like, we can ask questions to this panel, or we can begin our next group of panelists.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No questions. We can continue.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

In our next panel, we will be hearing from Sabrina Lamb, Jamie Powlovich, Michael Tenebruso, and David McGillan.

I will now be calling on Sabrina Lamb to begin your testimony.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

SABRINA LAMB: Chairwoman, Althea Stevens and Committee on Youth Services esteemed members, good afternoon. I also acknowledge our former WorldofMoney graduate, City Councilmember Chi Ossé. We are very proud of you!

On behalf of over 6,000 WorldofMoney children and their families, I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I am Sabrina Lamb, the Founder and Executive Director of WorldofMoney, a 17-year New York City-based non-profit and leading provider of 120 annual classrooms and online hours of diverse and immersive financial and entrepreneurial education for ages 7-18. America's Promise Alliance and AOL Impact awarded WorldofMoney as one of America's top 10 social good organizations.

By way of this testimony, you will learn about the need for funding to enable WorldofMoney to partner with more schools and New York City youth organizations, and our desire to be your resource and a long-term partner with the City Council in helping to eradicate financial vulnerability in historically excluded families.

Because money influences every aspect of our lives, we believe that every New York City student should receive culturally diverse financial education - from elementary to high school. Our curriculum includes: budgeting and saving, credit, investing, insurance, ethics and so much more.

We also have leveraged the power of technology with WorldofMoneyOnline.org to teach more children with our culturally relevant lessons so that children accessing this platform will see children who look like them. Thus far, four of the videos have been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Swahili.

Maximillian Johnson, a 13-year-old Harlem resident, shared, "World of Money has taught me how to build financial security for myself and my family. Saving? Investing? Compound interest? Most adults don't know about these things, and my learning about finance at such a young age and how money works puts me at a great advantage."

Maximillian is correct, because 38% of teens report feeling unprepared to manage their personal finances and fear that they will not experience lifelong economic well-being.

The lack or inadequate financial education may lead to poor health, lack of self-worth, predatory victimization, and low college attainment.

WorldofMoney's vision is a community of youth motivated and empowered to realize their fullest potential and achieve personal and financial success

so they become savers, investors, entrepreneurs and philanthropists. Imagine!

According Mayor Adams' vision, imagine World of Money supporting SYEP employers to provider hired youth with financial education. There is no better time to include our curriculum in classrooms and after-school programs throughout the city. We can harness the power of our technology and deliver it to where children and youth, like Maximillian, spend most of their time—in the classroom and on their mobile devices.

So, Remember the WorldofMoney motto: Learn. Earn. Save. Invest. Donate.

Thank you for allowing me to share a bit of the WorldofMoney story with you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Jamie Powlovich.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

JAMIE POWLOVICH: Good afternoon, my name is Jamie Powlovich, and I am the Executive Director of the Coalition for Homeless Youth; I use She/Her/Hers pronouns.

CHY has advocated for the needs of runaway and homeless youth for our 40 years in New York State.

The coalition is comprised of 65 providers of services to runaway and homeless youth across the state including 29 here in New York City.

I would like to thank Chair Stevens and the members of the Youth Services Committee for holding today's hearing, and I look forward to working together to meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness in New York City.

I will be submitting longer written testimony, but I would like to limit my verbal testimony to five investments that we believe will significantly improve the financial stability of Runaway and Homeless Youth providers and the quality of services for the youth themselves.

The first ask is to right-size Runaway and Homeless Youth Services provider contracts. DYCD-funded Runaway and Homeless Youth provider contracts continue to fall short of covering the true cost of running the programs. We are requesting that all current DYCD RHY funded shelter contracts be increased to the 2019 levels and that a 10% general contract increase be implemented for all current DYCD-funded Runaway and Homeless Youth Services.

The second one is that we are echoing the #JustPay campaign ask of a 5.4% COLA increase across the board for Runaway and Homeless Youth contracts. This increase will more adequately meet the needs of the essential workers who have stepped up during the pandemic to provide non-stop, in person services to youth experiencing homelessness.

We know that to adequately meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness who enter the programs, providers must ensure that all of their staff are being paid livable wages.

Our providers consistently tell us that due to low wages they are left with many vacant positions and high staff turnover. This in turn impacts the youths' access and the quality of services at the programs.

Number three, we need to maintain the funding for the 16 current Housing Specialists that are housed in the Runaway and Homeless Youth drop-in centers.

In Fiscal Year 2021, DYCD's on data shows that less than 4% of homeless youth in the DYCD shelter system transitioned in to permanent housing. Unlike in DSS shelters or in the foster care system, DYCD does not have baselined funding for Housing

Specialists. The current Housing Specialists that are in the programs are temporarily funded through federal Emergency Housing Voucher relief funding, which is set to expire at the end of the Fiscal Year of June 2022. These positions must be supported past June, so that we can ensure that young people experiencing homelessness have adequate support to find stable housing.

Number four, we need to fund two mental health specific Transitional Independent Living programs. Youth often share with us that they wish they had better access to meaning mental health supports. And providers continue to express that they often do not have the staff capacity or appropriate structure to support runaway and homelessness youth who have significant mental health needs.

The City needs to fund programs that would include onsite clinical services and intensive case management to provide youth with the services that they need.

And last, we need to create 40 additional DYCD-funded Runaway Homeless Youth beds for older youth ages 21 to 24 years old. There is currently on 60 beds in the DYCD system for these older youth 21 -

24. However, providers consistently report, as do young people, that they are hard to access because they are regularly full.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

We will now be calling on Michael Tenebruso.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

MICHAEL TENEBRUSO: Good afternoon, Chair Stevens. My name is Michael Tenebruso, and I serve as the Youth Program Development Specialist at New York Road Runners. And thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Committee on Youth Services today.

New York Road Runners' mission is to help and inspire people through running. And while New York Road Runners is best known for organizing the TCS New York City Marathon, our organization is one of the largest nonprofit providers of free youth fitness programs in New York City.

New York Road Runners is asking The City Council to once again generously fund our critical services for youth under its Physical Education and Fitness Initiative, which is critical to our ability to bring our program, at no cost, to over 500 New York City

educators and over 75,000 students in every single council district in the upcoming school year.

I have a unique reason for presenting this testimony today. Being born and raised in Queens, my first exposure to running was through New York Road Runners' free youth programming nearly 15 years ago. I can personally attest to the impact it had on my life. Participating in this program took me from being a shy kid, who couldn't run down the block, to be the outgoing athletic person that I am today.

The friends that I have made in this program are still friends to this day. I remember we looked forward to the end of the school day, because it meant that we were able to just have an hour of fun through the program where our teachers would introduce new and exciting activities to keep us moving.

Reflecting back on these memories, I understand how at a young age I was taught the importance of being active, and participating in youth running and fitness programming gave me the confidence and desire to continue being physically active for life. Soon after joining the program, I was exploring different sports, playing pick-up games at local parks --

activities I wouldn't normally do. This early foundation that New York Road Runners Youth Program provided, allowed me to eventually compete in college, complete eight different marathons all across the country, and now I am training for my first international race.

Now as an employee at New York Road Runners, I have come full circle, and by helping teachers implement our program successfully at their schools and providing them with the resources they would otherwise not have, I am now driving the process that helped me be inspired when I was younger.

Beyond the significant impact on kids, this program also empowers teachers by providing them with the quality programming and support -- and equipment-- as they strive to shape our City's youth.

The COVID-19 crisis has made New York Road Runners' work to support schools, educators, parents, and youth more important than ever.

This coming school year, our goal is to continue to support teachers and afterschool professionals to help ensure their students have the physical, emotional, and social foundations to lead an active and healthy life. The importance of the seemingly

1 simple job of keeping New York City's kids active
2 should not be underestimated. Helping kids benefit
3 from being physically active and empowering those who
4 teach them, has lasting effects on the school and our
5 City and school communities in our city.

6 I respectfully ask The City Council to reinforce
7 the importance of keeping students active by renewing
8 and increasing funding under its Physical Education
9 and Fitness Initiative so that New York Road Runners
10 may continue at no cost to help the youth across the
11 five boroughs stay healthy.

12 Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

14 We will now be calling on David McGillan.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 DAVID MCGILLAN: Good afternoon, everyone, and
17 thank you to Chair Stevens and The Youth Services
18 Committee for the opportunity to testify today. My
19 name is David McGillan; I am Deputy Director at the
20 Salvadori Center.

21 We started the meeting today hearing about The
22 Mayor's goals for Summer Rising, which are project-
23 based STEAM learning with pathways to careers, and
24 that is exactly what Salvadori does.
25

We teach math, science, and the arts using hands on, collaborative, project-based learning, so students work together in small groups to solve real world problems.

So, for example, if I am in a group with Chair Stevens and Sergeant Lugo, then Chair Stevens will know something that I don't know and Sergeant Lugo doesn't know, and Sergeant Lugo will for sure know something that Chair Stevens and I don't know, and there is even a change that I will know something that neither of them knows. So, between us we share knowledge and skills and we come up with better solutions.

We have provide Summer Rising and Career Crew programs for the past few years, and our students work with young professionals from the architecture and construction and engineering industries so that the students receive mentorship, and they see pathways to successful STEAM careers.

We can be ready to deliver programs with two weeks' notice, and we have been doing this for 50 years --STEAM education in under resourced communities -- and we are here to help realize The Mayor's vision for Summer Rising.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next group of panelists will be in the following order, Kenneth Jones, Carlos Cano, Jimmy Meagher, and Stephanie Nilva.

I will now be turning to Kenneth Jones to begin his testimony.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

KENNETH JONES: Good morning, everybody -- or now it's afternoon, but I just wanted to echo -- I work with David McGillan, the previous presenter of the Salvadori Center -- and I am not going to use the whole four minutes, but I just wanted to say thank you to DYCD , to the council members, to everyone who is considering serving students and helping them to stop the learning loss during summer, but more importantly to give them opportunities to succeed -- to see themselves in careers where they can grow and ,you know, become vital members of our society -- and to create programs that keep the bridge between young professionals and the students so that they can have mentors and ask the good questions and ,you know, connect with them.

At Salvadori, we serve about 10,000 students a year. Now that's not just through one program and we're done; all of our programs are multiple days. So, those 10,000 students share about 100,000 contact hours. Our programs during the school day run about eight sessions all the way up to 36 sessions, which is the entire academic year. But, we also have a robust afterschool program, which are 12 sessions, and they run 90 minutes each, and like David said, it's all collaborative, project-based, and hands on.

But, two of the most exciting things we have done in the last 2 years, is we have done a study with NYU, and NYU researchers were really interested as to when children form the self-perception that they are going to be good at something. And most people think it is around middle school, but the truth is these researchers thought it was much younger so they did a survey of kindergarteners through the fifth grade using Salvadori's program, and realized in fact children do start that early to get a sense that they are going to be good at something.

And, then the second thing that they measured was relevance, does school matter? You know, we always that thing of "Why do I need to know this, I'm never

Now, when they introduce Salvadori, their sense of relevance spikes -- and it better, because you wouldn't hire us if it didn't, because we tell you about how we use the world in which the kids live, the bridges they see and cross, the buildings they enter, the schools and playground and, you know, the parks and communities -- but, the coolest thing is, is after Salvadori that sense that what they are learning in school -- that decline -- it stops. And the reason it stops is because they are learning collaboratively with their friends, they are doing it through a project-based hands-on activity and it's fun. And, you know, with these summer school programs, they get to see kids that look like them that are young professionals, and they see themselves in what they are learning, and they see pathways to success.

So, we totally support everything that you are doing. We are here for you. We have been doing it

for years. We are ready to help The Mayor's vision and your vision be successful. So, please continue the good work, and we appreciate it.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Carlos Cano.

CARLOS CANO: Hi, good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for the opportunity to present testimony at this hearing and Youth Services.

My name is Carlos Cano, and I am the Chief Operating Officer at East River Development Alliance doing business at Urban Upbound.

Since our founding in 2004, youth services, in particular college access, has been a core element of our integrated model to break cycles of poverty in public housing communities. The Urban Upbound and College... Uh, College and Career Access Program offers four services:

One, college preparation, which includes SAT preparation course, one of one counseling for the high school students and their parents, support in writing their essays, and assistance with FAFSA and college applications.

Our second main service is career exploration for those who are looking for more of a vocational path.

We also have financial counseling, again for the youth and the parents. And we compliment this with mentoring and coaching sessions.

Our program serves an average of 75 students every year between sophomore, junior, and senior cohorts.

Right now our senior class, we have a success rate of 100% of them getting admitted to and going to attend the collage of their choice.

This year started a new part of our program; we are working with our program alumni from their first or second year of college to ensure their success is translating to their initial classes, initial semesters, and making sure that they have a good life balance -- life/study/work balance.

Most of our students are first time college in their family -- first time in the family that they have someone who goes to college. And I should add that for NYCHA residents -- NYCHA high school students, this is the hardest population to reach. It is hard for this population to believe in their own future. So we devote a lot of resources to convincing these youth to participate in the program and to believe in themselves.

We are very grateful for the funding from City of New York for us to be able to accomplish our goals. Right now we focus on Western Queens developments [INAUDIBLE 02:21:59] Astoria Housing... Queens Bridge Housing, which is the largest development in the continental US, Woodside, and Ravenswood. And we are hoping that we can expand this to our other locations in Far Rockaway and East Harlem.

Thank you so much for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now call on Jimmy Meagher.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

JIMMY MEAGHER: Good afternoon and Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Jimmy Meagher, my pronouns are He/His, and I am Policy Director at Safe Horizon, the nation's largest non-profit victim services organization. Safe Horizon offers a client-centered, trauma-informed response to 250,000 New Yorkers each year who have experienced violence or abuse.

I will limit my remarks today and submit written testimony.

I am here to focus on the needs of the nonprofit human services sector, with specific focus on the

core asks of the #JustPay campaign and to highlight The City Council initiative funding contracted through DYCD that Safe Horizon relies on to provide essential healing and safety services to RHY and young survivors of violence and abuse across the five boroughs.

Lastly, we urge The Council to listen to the Coalition for Homeless Youth and implement our collective recommendations regarding RHY funding for Fiscal Year 2023.

Safe Horizon is a proud member of the #JustPay campaign, which is a racial equity and gender justice campaign committed to ending the government exploitation of human services workers.

I also want to say, Chair Stevens, you really fired up the crowd last week at our #JustPay rally, and we really appreciate that support and that advocacy.

Each year, you hear from providers who are struggling due to the crisis of underfunding of the human services sector as budgets are balanced on the backs of low- income neighborhoods and BIPOC communities.

To address this crisis we ask the City to immediately adopt three core reforms:

An automatic annual cost-of-living adjustment, a living wage floor of no less than \$21 an hour, and a comprehensive wage and benefit schedule for government contracted human services workers.

The COLA is the biggest action that can be taken during this budget season. Ideally we would love to see a multi-year COLA agreement, but in the absence of that we are asking for a 5.4% COLA, which mirrors the State COLA included in the Governor's budget.

My written testimony goes into detail on our initiative funding requests, but briefly, The City Council supports our Streetwork Project for runaway and homeless youth through the supports for persons involved in the Sex Trade Initiative, and our digital Safe Chat platform through our Speakers Initiatives. These funds allow us to provide trauma informed healing and care to RHY and young people impacted by violence, and we urge The Council to continue to invest in these initiatives.

Finally, we echo the recommendations of the New York Coalition for Homeless Youth, of which we are a

proud member, and Jamie spoke earlier in an earlier panel, but the five asks are:

One, right-sized Runaway and Homeless Youth service provider contracts.

Two, a 5.4% COLA increase as echoing the asks of the #JustPay campaign, and this is especially meaningful to our Streetwork Project staff who continued to provide in-person services during this pandemic.

And three, maintain funding for the 16 Housing Specialists in the RHY system. As Jamie said, the current Housing Specialists and DYCD funded drop-in centers are temporarily funded through federal EHV funding, which is set to expire at the end of the fiscal year. Continuing the funding for this position would support youth experiencing homelessness in successfully obtaining safe, long-term housing.

Four, fund two mental health focused transitional independent living or TIL support program pilots. Youth often share that they wish they had better access to meaningful mental health supports -- I think especially we have learned that over these past two years. Providers continue to express that they

often do not have the staff capacity or appropriate structure to support RHY who have significant mental health needs. The City should issue an RFP for two new pilot programs to serve RHY with mental and behavioral health needs.

And, five, lastly, create 40 additional DYCD RHY beds for youth age 21 to 24 years just to meet this overwhelming need across our five boroughs.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify, and thank you for your support.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Stephanie Nilva.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

STEPHANIE NILVA: Good morning. Thank you to Chair Stevens and to all of the City Council members present. Thank you Jimmy Meagher, we agree with all of the requests that he made as well.

We appreciate the support of the City Council for Day One and the opportunity to speak today.

The pandemic, the racial justice reckoning, the isolation, and the many transitions of the past year have been particularly difficult for young people, and more so for Black youth and other youth of color.

Day one is an organization focused on building healthy relationships among young people, and we have seen the effects of skyrocketing domestic violence, technology-facilitated abuse, a mental health crisis, and the limited services tailored for this issue and tailored this age group. Demand for our domestic violence services has been as much as 70% higher in our direct services programs since prior to the pandemic.

Day One only works with youth 24 and under, and we combine prevention and intervention services reaching over 10,000 annually. We ensure that all of our youth focused services acknowledge the intersecting identities and complex dynamics of domestic violence, youth sexuality, and consent. Our educational programs teach middle and high school students about healthy relationships and link them to direct services, which include legal assistance and counseling services. Our legal department assists young people with obtaining protective orders, custody and visitation, and child support orders, and criminal justice advocacy. Our social workers provide counseling services to young survivors equipping them with the tools to heal. Year-round youth development

programs help cultivate the next generation of leaders by building their transferable job skills like advocacy, organizing and public speaking.

The vast majority of our consultations have involved at least one form of technology-facilitated abuse. We have advocated for clients whose partners shared intimate photos and videos on social media without permission and others whose abusers track their location and access the contents of their cell phones without their knowledge. Our social services team recently supported a student being harassed and threatened by a classmate while attending a mandated Zoom class.

My name is Stephanie Nilva, and I am the Founder and Executive Director of Day One. Day One has submitted a request for allocations to all of the City Council members for the following: district-specific and citywide funding from the DoVE Initiative, \$60,000 in continued funding from the Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault, new funding from the Young Women's Initiative, Immigration, and Sexual Assault Programs.

We are very proud to be delivering services right now in Council Members Stevens and Ossé's districts,

and we also hope to meet with your offices and expand services in the districts of Council Member Jordon, Council Member Williams, Council Member Riley, and Council Member Avilés.

I would also like to briefly address a bigger picture issue. Day One shouldn't be asking schools if they need information about healthy relationships when a third of young people are consistently found to be experiencing harm in their relationships. Domestic violence is already draining hundreds of millions of dollars from New York City each year. The City can meet this crisis with a new initiative that would fund preventive education for youth and training for youth workers and teachers. This need is dramatic; the biannual Youth Risk Behavior Survey in New York City steadily finds that just when asked about the immediate prior 12-month period, one in five girls and one in ten students in New York City experienced harm in their dating relationships. Also in the City, teen survivors of dating abuse are three times more likely to miss school due to not feeling safe and three times more likely to carry a weapon to school.

So, you might wonder if they come forward for help. Multiple studies show only 10 to 15% of them at most will speak to an authority figure about harm in a dating relationship. And when they do come forward, institutions such as DYCD and the Department of Education did not require youth workers, teachers, or guidance counselors to be trained about warning signs of abuse or how to manage disclosures of harm.

While over 60% of guidance counselors say that they have had the occasion to advise a survivor of dating violence in the previous two years, 90% say that they have not gotten training in that period of time.

The DoVE Initiative is wonderful... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

STEPHANIE NILVA: Let's put an equal amount of funding toward prevention.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you, Stephanie for your testimony.

Our next group of panelists will be in the following order: Rachael Gazdick, Troy Philadelphia, Drew Higginbotham, and Awinna Martinez.

I will now call on Rachael Gazdick to begin.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

TERI WEST: [NO AUDIO]

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Racheal, you have been unmute.
You can... If you just accept our request to unmute.

TERI WEST: Okay, can you hear me?

Okay, thank you, sorry about that.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Teri West, Director, Government Contracts & School Partnerships. I am here today on behalf of our CEO, Rachael Gazdick to ask that you prioritize New York Edge's fiscal year 2023 citywide funding request of \$1.2 million under The Council's After-School Enrichment Initiative.

New York Edge has partnered with The Council for the past 30 years in providing free school-based afterschool and summer programming to youth in all five boroughs. Our mission is to help bridge the opportunity gap among students in underinvested communities by providing programs designed to improve academic performance, health and wellness, self-confidence, and leadership skills for success in life.

Students need healthy minds, bodies and relationships, as well as creative outlets, to thrive. Our programs help them develop all four.

New York Edge is a leader in the afterschool community, well-regarded for our evidence-based approach to afterschool programming, grounded in Social Emotional Learning.

Targeting underserved communities throughout the city, New York Edge programs focus on academics, the arts, sports and health & wellness. We are also one of the City's largest providers of college access programs.

New York Edge's entire student population is 90% or more African American or Hispanic, with an approximately equal number of males and females. More than 85% come from low-income households eligible for Title 1 free or reduced-price lunches.

With funding under the Council's After School Enrichment Initiative we annually impact tens of thousands of students in grades K-12 from over 100 sites across the city through our school year and summer programs. Programs run before or after the school day, year-round including Saturdays, over the summer, and holiday periods.

For 30 years, New York Edge has been able to substantially impact the lives of hundreds of thousands of New York's most vulnerable youth by

leveraging City Council funding not only to run our flagship New York City Council Summer Camps but to bring our school year leagues, special events, weekend programs, and holiday break programming to youth across the five boroughs.

New York Edge, its students, and families are extraordinarily grateful for the past three decades of support from the New York City Council. We are now looking to you to meet the needs of the next generation of young people by supporting our FY23 citywide funding request of \$1.2 million. These funds will enable us to keep providing youth throughout the city with the edge they need to succeed.

Thank you very much for your time today and for letting us present our testimony before The Council.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Troy Philadelphia to begin his testimony.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

TROY PHILADELPHIA: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today. My name is Troy Philadelphia, my pronouns are He/Him/His. And I am the Director of Outreach and Advocacy for the Ali Forney Center.

The Ali Forney Center was founded in 2002 in memory of Ali Forney, a gender non-conforming youth.

AFC's mission is to protect LGBTQ youth from the harms of homelessness and empower them with the tools needed to live independently.

We have 124 beds across all of our programs, which include our emergency housing program, our transitional housing program, and we have a transgender specific housing program as well, and we also have a 24 hour Drop-In Center.

We at the Ali Forney Center stand with the Coalition for Homeless Youth on the following points:

Right-size Runaway and Homeless Youth Service Provider Contracts. While our contracts do assist, they can't possibly provide all of the funds needed to adequately run our programs. We could also use assistance with Metrocards, assistance in fine tuning residential treatment models, and creating a sustainable crisis response team. And of course, COVID has and continues to impact our organization financially. The costs of PPE, essential items, and testing have been astronomical.

5.4% COLA increase: Human services workers in New York are some of the lowest paid workers in New York

1 City's economy. How can we expect workers to provide
2 adequate care to our young people if they are not
3 making a living wage? As essential and front-line
4 workers; especially during these trying times of
5 COVID, they should be compensated accordingly. And
6 when they are not compensated accordingly, they
7 sometimes leave. This leads to massive amounts of
8 turnover. And as a result, our young people
9 experience disruptions in their care, which can re-
10 traumatize them and be difficult to cope with yet
11 another change. They then must get acclimated to a
12 new care team; after already building up trust with
13 someone else. These disruptions in care can have
14 negative lasting effects on the young people and how
15 they view the services they are receiving.

17 Maintain funding for the 16 Housing Specialists
18 in the RHY System: (That's a \$1.481 million.) The new
19 Housing Specialists have been immensely helpful since
20 they started in our programs. They shoulder and take
21 on the daunting task of assisting our young people
22 with obtaining permanent housing. Before, the care
23 manager would be doing all of the leg work required,
24 with that process being very arduous and time
25 consuming. The new Housing Specialists are taking on

1 a lot of those tasks, leaving the case managers free
2 to continue working through their ever-increasing
3 caseloads accordingly. Housing Specialists can also
4 help with the followup and dealing with the
5 bureaucratic systems in place that aren't always the
6 smoothest to navigate.
7

8 Fund two mental health focused Transitional
9 Independent Living Support Programs: We cannot stress
10 the importance of mental health support regarding our
11 young people and their living situations. I've seen
12 countless situations where a young person has a
13 negative experience in our programs because they
14 require a higher level of mental health support than
15 some of our staff can provide and there weren't other
16 programs that we could refer them to that were safe.
17 I mean, these young people find themselves in housing
18 situations that have too many people and not enough
19 privacy. This in turn can exacerbate their mental
20 health conditions, like PTSD or Flashbacks and lead
21 to an incident.

22 Creating 40 additional DYCD RHY beds for youth
23 aged 21-24: The fact of the matter is that there are
24 just not enough beds for individuals between the ages
25 of 21 and 24 making them much more vulnerable. Most

1 individuals would rather not go to a DHS shelter,
2 which is why the age was raised in the first place.
3 Older youth prefer to remain in a DYCD shelter as
4 opposed to a DHS shelter, where there is constant
5 risk of sexual and physical abuse/assault. Those
6 environments are not beneficial for healing and
7 growing; 21-24 year olds should not have to wait any
8 longer than 16-20 year olds.
9

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 TROY PHILADELPHIA: Thank you for the opportunity
12 to testify today.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

14 We will now be calling on Drew Higginbotham to
15 begin their testimony.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 DREW HIGGINBOTHAM: Good morning, on behalf of
18 Student Leadership Network and the Young Women's
19 Leadership Schools thank you to Chair Stevens and all
20 of the members of the Youth Services Committee for
21 this opportunity to testify about the services
22 Student Leadership Network provides the youth of New
23 York City that has been made possible in part by
24 funding from the New York City Council.
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Student Leadership Network operates two programs in New York City that support young people from underserved communities in gaining access to valuable education opportunities. The Young Women's Leadership Schools -- which we call TYWLS, is a high-performing network of girls schools within the New York City Department of Education and CollegeBound Initiative, a comprehensive college access, persistence, and success program for young people which places and supports college counselors in 20 co-ed DOE schools in addition to the five TYWL schools.

The Young Women's Leadership Schools are open to girls and gender expansive youth of all academic abilities who aspire to postsecondary education. At TYWLS "whole girl education" is based upon girls' education research and is guided by the overarching goal of elevating young women's voices, confidence, and expanding their resources to thrive in college

and beyond. As such, our programs are designed to support skill building in four core areas:

College and Career Awareness; STEAM; Leadership Development; and Health and Wellness. In these four areas, students have access to dozens of in -and -out of school enrichment opportunities that deepen their learning, broaden their exposure, and strengthen their self-regard. The four core areas permeate nearly every facet of TYWLS and are supported Student Leadership Network through programs, partnerships, and professional development for teachers. As a result, TYWLS boast a 98% high school graduation rate, at 95% college enrollment rate, and an average financial aid package of \$20,000 per student annually -- excluding loans -- to help pay for college.

We hope that this testimony is a starting point to continue to talk about ways that we can collaborate to deepen our support of young women and gender expansive youth in New York City.

The ongoing pandemic has disrupted students' lives and learning on a monumental scale. In the wake of this, we offer a number of mental health supports to students who are experiencing extended

trauma and provide critical services through on-site, in-person counseling sessions.

As the pandemic recedes, we are restarting and reimagining the early college and career awareness events we support at the five TYWLS. These events -- Jumpstart To College, TYWLS in the Workplace, College Discovery Day, TYWLS Glows, and Cool Careers, Potential Paths provide students with multiple experiences beginning in 6th grade to explore their postsecondary... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

DREW HIGGINBOTHAM: and career options through interactions with inspiring women who reflect their identities and experiences.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Awinna Martinez to begin their testimony.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

AWINNA MARTINEZ: Thank you, good afternoon, Committee Chair Stevens and esteemed council members, my name is Awinna Martinez, and I am with Center for Court Innovation. The center researches and

implements justice reforms that advance fairness and effectiveness.

Some of our projects include Bronx Community Solutions, the Brownsville Community Justice Center, and the Queens Community Justice Center.

I am the Project Director of the Staten Island Justice Center. We proudly have served the Staten Island Community since 2009. We offer alternatives to incarceration, a pretrial supervised release program, and access to social services to youth and adults aimed at reducing the effects that come with be involved with the justice system.

Today I would like to speak about SIJC's Youth Wellness Initiative, a program that provides robust mental health services to youth participants who are justice-involved or at risk for justice involvement.

In 2021, The Justice Center expanded the Youth Wellness Initiative to include a 10-session workshop series designed to address trauma and promote healing with a focus on servicing young men of color exposed to violence.

The trauma associated with exposure to violence is complex, intergenerational, and is not something we expect to be fixed right away. It takes work to

1 build rapport with youth, and we first take the time
2 to get to know them, their lives, their families, and
3 how they see themselves in the world.

4 Our services focus on getting to the root of the
5 trauma by applying a humanistic approach where youth
6 have had the space to be open and vulnerable. We
7 understand there may be resistance, but patience in a
8 trauma informed lens fosters a relationship that SIJC
9 can be a home away from home for them and an off-ramp
10 to other services and opportunities in the community
11 of Staten Island and beyond.

12 Additionally, we provide wrap-around services to
13 caregivers whose youth are referred to our program.
14 It is critical to engage caregivers as part of this
15 work. Navigating the justice system along with other
16 possible life challenges can be so difficult for our
17 families. For example, one of our youths was
18 recently rearrested and sent to placement. We
19 quickly built a plan that included visits to the
20 placement center and regular check-ins with the
21 youth's mother. As a service provider, we are one
22 piece of a young person's life, again we prioritize
23 understanding their life, build that trust, and work
24 with youth and their families to connect them to
25

resources, pro-social activities, and most importantly our support.

To conclude, I ask that City Council continues to support the Center for Court Innovation by expanding our innovation core funding to further empower our direct service community sites like SIJC. This funding is used to flexibly respond to the needs as they arrive through all of our sites in the five boroughs.

Over the last two years, the needs have spanned everything from expanding remote youth engagement programming during the pandemic to implementing new methods of gun responses.

I thank The Council for continued partnership in ensuring our young people have access to services, who see them for who they are, and opportunities that empower and promote sustainable success.

Thank you so much for this opportunity.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next group of panelist will be testifying in the following order: Christine James-McKenzie, Tené Howard, Brian Carmichael, and Jennifer Kundla.

I will now begin with Christine James-McKenzie.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

CHRISTINE JAMES-MCKENZIE: Good morning. Dear council members, my name is Christine James-McKenzie and I'm the Manager of Communications and Policy at JobsFirstNYC, a nonprofit intermediary that creates and advances solutions that break down barriers and transform the systems supporting young adults and their communities in the pursuit of economic opportunities.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony to the Youth Services Committee. We are looking forward to your leadership to address the unrelenting crises that young adults in New York City face. JobsFirstNYC is particularly concerned about the young adults between the ages of 16-24 years old who are out of school and out of work. We join our colleagues in the call to immediately direct resources and attention to the fact that young adults are not being provided with practical and sustainable solutions that will allow them to thrive.

Last year, JobsFirstNYC published a report titled *Equitable Recovery for Young Adults: An Agenda for Young Adult Workforce Development in New York City*, and it provides a set of citywide policy priorities that are rooted in the real needs of young people,

the perspectives of on-the-ground practitioners, and the literature on successful policies and interventions. It details the changes needed to quickly connect these 18- to 24-year-olds to employment now. It builds on JobsFirstNYC's comprehensive, system-level view of the City's young adult workforce ecosystem. We must act now to connect young adults to training, education, and work opportunities.

Our report outlines six recommendations for the City that were informed by a diverse coalition of young adult workforce development and education stakeholders as well as 18 to 24-year-olds. To enact these recommendations, JobsFirstNYC calls for a \$770 million increase in annual investment by New York City; \$100 million to go towards Bridge programming; \$150 million to sectoral training; \$357 million for subsidized jobs; \$105 million for high school degree attainment and career preparation; and \$58 million for capacity building and system enhancements.

These recommendations are specific:

1. Collaboration: Encourage and reward collaboration across young adult workforce programs and providers.

2. Focus on Equity: Meaning, prioritize economic mobility and pathways to prosperity for historically under-resourced and disproportionately harmed communities.

3. Employer Partnerships: Significantly expand partnerships with employers and industry groups to create employment and career pathway opportunities.

4. Also to have youth-centered strategies: Design youth-informed solutions that center young adults, their experiences as well as their goals.

5. Continuum of Services: Create a seamless continuum of integrated services across education and youth workforce development institutions.

6. We believe in capacity building. Build the capacity of workforce providers to deliver high-quality, culturally competent, market-aligned services to young adults.

JobsFirstNYC and young adult service providers across New York City are asking you to commit to all young adults and especially those who are out of school and out of work to invest in resources,

skills, and opportunities they need and deserve to find success in work and life. The future of New York City depends on these young adults.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we will submit a complete testimony.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Tené Howard.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

TENÉ HOWARD: Hello, everyone, my name is Tené Howard, I use She/Her pronouns, and I am the executive director at Executive Director at Sadie Nash Leadership Project.

Good afternoon, Chair Stevens, and the Committee on Youth Services. I am here to speak in support of the Sports Training and Role Models for Success Citywide Girls Initiative, otherwise known as STARS CGI.

Members of our initiative are here to ask for your continued support in ensuring that STARS CGI funding is not only restored, but that each of our organizations receives an increase in funding of \$50,000 each, totaling \$2 million for the STARS CGI Initiative to be able to support out critical work at this critical time in the City.

I started as The Executive Director at Sadie Nash Leadership Project in March 2020 -- actually on March 16th right as COVID was beginning to impact our work. This coalition has been critically important to me and Sadie Nash Leadership Project during the last two years and has enabled us to provide collective support for young people in our programs -- who we call "Nashers" -- who represent young people from 44 districts across New York City.

Our organizations are a lifeline to the young people we serve. It's through our organizations that young people are gaining opportunities to sustain and be resilient during this unprecedented time.

At Sadie Nash Leadership Project the support from the STARS CGI cohort has enabled us to show up for Nashers and their families during this time.

Specifically in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, we have been able to develop creative and adaptive responses that centered the voices and experiences of Nashers.

We are really proud of the work we have done to bring our programs on to virtual platforms and then in to a hybrid kind of situation, which we are in right now, and create opportunities for healing and

self-care, and develop spaces in which to bring our community together for collective support and action.

Nashers are members of communities of color who have been feeling the impact of the pandemic, in the last years, and now especially. We have been able to provide direct cash and food assistance to families who have lost jobs and been impacted by this crisis. We know how important it is for us to deliver on our promise of supporting young people's ability to grow as leaders who can work now and in the future to create communities committed to collective care and justice for all.

Our organizations work together to look to the future of this city, our young people, and our gender expanded youth, who are actually the now and the future of our city. We are thankful for your investment in them. This is an investment in our collective success as a city. We need you to fight to ensure our programs remain available along with our STARS CGI partners, again, we are seeking an increase in funding for \$2 million for this initiative that really provides critical support for young women and gender expanded youth across the city.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to share our testimony.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

We will now be calling on Brian Carmichael.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

BRIAN CARMICHAEL: Good Afternoon, and thank you Chair Stevens and the Youth Services Committee Members. My name is Brian Carmichael. I am an activist, organizer and I am appearing before you today as a member of Freedom Agenda. Like most of you, I believe in an equitable budget. However, for too long our City budgets have not been equitable, especially when it comes to youth services.

The Department of Corrections budget is bloated and the agency needs to be right-sized. The DOC has one and a half uniformed staff for every one incarcerated person. This is two times more staff per capita than they had eight years ago, and seven times more than the national average. The DOC has an extraordinarily high number of officers who call out sick on any given day. From July through December 2021, an average of 1,638 officers --that's 21%-- called out sick each day, and about another 12% -- or a 1,000 officers -- are out on long term sick leave.

We believe there are tens of millions of dollars being squandered in waste, fraud and abuse by the DOC that could otherwise be invested in our young people, and a future free from incarceration.

I urge The City Council to strategically divest from the Department of Corrections budget in key areas, so that those resources can be redirected to expand programs and services in those communities that the Commission on Reinvestments in Communities Impacted by Rikers Island submitted. I urge the Council to maintain the funding of the programs and services provided to young adults who are currently or were previously in DOC custody. Redirect other funds to meet community needs like programs and services for youth and that will reduce the flow of young people into the criminal legal system.

Further, the Commission reported that "There is a lack of quality spaces for young people, and the community centers located across housing developments are often under-resourced, underutilized, or inaccessible. The City should increase capital fund investments to ensure young people have access to safe, quality spaces to participate in programs and engage in prosocial activities. Capital plans should

be designed in partnership with young people and community organizations, and priority should be given to community centers across housing developments."

Lastly, I urge this committee and the entire City Council, to have the strength and wisdom to remain visionary, and not reactionary, in ongoing and future analysis of how successful these new spending priorities are. Every time there is a spike in crime, or some violent crime featured on local news channels, many politicians immediately begin to second guess policies that support decarceration. But the status quo has been built over hundreds of years, and the changes that Freedom Agenda believes in and advocates for are transformational, and can only be fairly judged by years, even decades of analysis, before the effects can be measured fairly. Truly, a generation of freedom.

Please consider these recommendations, fund them and remain resolute in your support. And we at Freedom Agenda will remain resolute in our support of you and our campaign to decarcerate New York.

Thank you for your time and allowing me this opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now call on Jennifer Kundla.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

JENNIFER KUNDLA: Good afternoon, thank you, Committee Chair Stevens and the members of the New York City Council for holding today's hearing.

My name is Jennifer Kundla, and I am a Director at Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City. As leadership of the nation's first and our city's largest youth mentoring organization, I am here to advocate on behalf of the thousands of youth that our organization serves each year and the young people across the five boroughs who deserve to have access to enrichment programs like ours.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City has been successful in adjusting our operations throughout the pandemic to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of the youth we serve and support of their families. This possible only because of the generous support of the City Council and our stake holders.

As our city begins to enter this phase of the pandemic, it is important that we emerge with supports firmly in place for youth that encourages their development after two very difficult years.

One in five of the youth that we served in Fiscal Year 2021 lived in the neighborhoods most effective by COVID-19. Many of these families experienced loss of income and had to manage through extended periods of financial hardship, putting these children at greater risks for social isolation.

Through our programming, children gain access to valuable mentorship and social enrichment that will help support them in to young adulthood. We do this through our community based and workplace mentoring and our college and career success programs.

In the past two years, we have doubled the median match length extending it to 26 months. This would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteers who join us in driving mentorship forward, contributing more than 95,000 hours in mentoring in Fiscal Year 2021. We must recommit that we are not making cuts when it comes to supporting and investing in New York City's future leaders. It is imperative that New York City Council fully funds our organization and all of the programs that are providing these essential programs to the youth in our city.

Amid the disruption of the past two years, it is critical that we aggressively invest in restoring support to youth services and appropriately fund and allocate to ensure that the youth thrive.

Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next group of panelist will testifying in the following order: Darren Mack, followed by Stacey Hengsterman, Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez, and Wendy Flanagan.

I will now call on Darren Mack to begin their testimony.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

DARREN MACK: Good afternoon, thank you so much, Chair Stevens and Youth Service Committee members. My name is Darren Mack. I'm a Co-Director at Freedom Agenda. I'm also a member of the Commission of Reinvestment and the Closure of Rikers Island established by Local Law 193. This Commission is charged with ensuring significant reinvestment recommendations are made in vulnerable communities disparately and historically impacted by mass incarceration.

Research and data have shown a significant percentage of individuals incarcerated at Rikers Island and our youth impacted by the criminal legal system reside in historically underserved neighborhoods in New York City.

As a co-chair of the Youth sub-committee in the Commission, our mission is to identify investments that will prevent or remove young people from the criminal justice pipeline. The question remains, where will the city get the funding from? New York City's Department of Corrections has the highest DOC budget in the country. The proposed Fiscal Year 2023 DOC budget is \$2.679 billion dollars. We spend the most money in DOC and get the worst results.

To be clear, we want the programs and services that the people held in pretrial detention rely on to continue to be funded to meet their basic needs. Therefore, we want to be strategic in right-sizing DOC's bloated budget in key areas and simultaneously strategic in reinvestments in youth programs and services.

The City has increased investments in credible messenger models, but more funding is needed to support these programs expansion into schools and

giving them adequate salaries to reflect the hard work and on-call nature of their work with COLA -- The Cost Of Living Adjustment.

I want urge the City Council, one, take seriously the recommendations made by the commissions; two, you know, deflate DOC's budget; and three, you know, by doing that, we will be able to reinvest those resources to fund all of the organizations providing programs and services to youth and young adults testifying today.

So, thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Stacey Hengsterman.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

STACEY HENGSTERMAN: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Stacey Hengsterman, and I am the President and CEO of Special Olympics New York.

Special Olympics New York serves more than 31,000 athletes - children, youth and adults with intellectual disabilities. We provide year- round sports training and competition. We also partner with schools to offer unified supports where students

with and without disabilities compete as teammates.
All of our programs are free for athletes.

In short, we change lives. People with intellectual disabilities who never dreamed they could play a sport, be part of a team, or compete - really compete - are given the chance.

To understand the impact of Special Olympics on someone's day-to-day life, let me tell you about a 17-year-old young man with Down syndrome who joined our program two years ago. Before finding Special Olympics, Alex went to school every day, and while he was included in some activities with his neuro-typical peers, most of his time was spend with other students who have varying disabilities. He was happy but he was lonely. He did not have a lot of friends outside of school, and certainly not many friends who would call him to hang out after school or on the weekends.

When Alex first joined Special Olympics, it was at his parents urging. He didn't see himself as an athlete, so he took his time, tried activities here and there, what he ended up enjoying most was powerlifting. Flash forward to today -- Alex meets his Special Olympics teammates at the gym three days

1 a week and trains as a powerlifter. He has become so
2 confident in his athletic abilities that he has also
3 joined the Special Olympics Unified Bowling team at
4 his high school.
5

6 Alex has new friends, teammates, and coaches. He
7 has upcoming team events and competitions on his
8 calendar. He isn't lonely anymore. He is too busy
9 to be lonely.

10 Not long ago, Alex said to me, "Mom, Special
11 Olympics changed my life."

12 I am the President and CEO of the organization
13 that changed my son's life, and I cannot separate the
14 pride that gives me as both a parent and a leader. I
15 only wish we had found Special Olympics sooner.
16 Like so many people living with disabilities in New
17 York City, we were not aware of the impact that
18 Special Olympics could have on our family. So, now I
19 am determined to make sure that kids like Alex and
20 parents like me know what we know that Special
21 Olympics New York can improve their lives.

22 New York City is where we are most urgently
23 needed. Despite being the highest populated, most
24 diverse area of the state, it's home to only 1,371
25 Special Olympics community athletes.

Part of the problem is that while City funding is set aside for youth activities, too often these activities are not accessible to youth with intellectual differences. We have programs for children of all ages -- programs that are easily adopted at little to no cost. I urge you to reach more about them in my written testimony.

But, in the essence of time, I will leave you with this: There are tens of thousands of people with disabilities in New York City who would benefit from Special Olympics and don't know it yet. So many Alex's out there with a champion sleeping inside of them, waiting to be awakened. Special Olympics can do that with your help. I see it happen every day.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now call on Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

SAROYA FRIEDMAN-GONZALEZ: Okay, Hi, my name is Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez, and I am the Executive Director of New Yorkers for Children, a non-profit that works to improve the well-being of children and families in the child welfare system, with a particular focus on those aging out of the foster

care system. We provide direct educational and financial support to youth, and also support other child welfare-focused organizations by developing innovative initiatives to fill gaps in the system. We do this through our long-standing partnership with the Administration for Children's the 26 contracted foster care agencies, and many community partners.

We typically serve about 1,000 youth per year, as they transition out of the child welfare system and into adulthood a moment when their need for support is greatest, but there are very few resources available.

Our programs make a difference in the lives of the youth we serve: one program, which provides wraparound supports to youth in college, has seen a 78% graduation rate, compared with a 3% graduation rate nationally for youth aging out of foster care.

While New Yorkers for Children has been around for more than 25 years, the past few years have proved to be an inflection point: due to significant increases in demand, and we have seen exceptional growth in demand for every area of our work. In particular, at the height of the pandemic, New Yorkers for Children served over 2,000 youth,

1
2 distributing more than \$1.8 million in direct cash
3 transfers to youth and families. We are a key
4 resource and trusted partner to the young people we
5 serve. And I share this to merely highlight the
6 immense needs.

7 Beyond our direct services work, New Yorkers for
8 Children designs, pilots, and manages city-wide
9 initiatives. Since our founding, New Yorkers for
10 Children has served as a longstanding partner to ACS,
11 managing multiple grant projects that spur innovation
12 and improve the child welfare system. Additionally,
13 we've launched community partnerships for
14 transformative initiatives supporting over 14 other
15 New York City child welfare-focused organizations-
16 big and small. We aim to improve the child welfare
17 system by supporting organizations doing innovative
18 work in areas such as transition age youth needing
19 holistic community-based support, education and
20 career development, mental health needs, permanency
21 for youth exiting the foster care system to adoption
22 or KinGap, parenting youth, youth who are victims of
23 sex trafficking, and two generational caregiver
24 support.

While we commend many of the existing investments already made, we believe additional investments are needed.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony. I am hopeful that with support from City Council we will be able to build a stronger child welfare landscape for New York City.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling in Wendy Flanagan.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

WENDY FLANAGAN: Thank you, Chair Stevens and distinguished members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Wendy Flanagan; I am President of the Board of Directors and the Interim Executive Director of the Fresh Air Fund.

For 145 years, the Fresh Air Fund has provided the City's children summer experiences that help them thrive and succeed emotionally, academically, and socially.

Despite having to suspend our traditional camp and Visiting Host Family Programs for the past two summers due to the pandemic, the fund ensured that

New York City children were able to have summer experiences that they both deserved and needed.

Last summer we served over 2,400 children in New York City based in-person and virtual programming, and we employed over 200 youth, ages 18 to 24, as counselors across our programs. We continued our Summer Spaces programming working with The Department of Transportation in the Open Streets Program to give children age five to 12 across four boroughs safe places to play outdoors under the guidance of counselors and mentors.

Our Summer Teen Academy, for teens ages 13 to 17, was a stipended program that gave young people insights in possible careers, work experiences, and through partnerships, skills and a credentialing certificate.

Although we did not have traditional camp, we have whole families about to visit our camps for three-day - two-night overnight trips to relax and enjoy the outdoors together. And we had some virtual programs to keep children engaged, learning, and having fun.

This summer we are delighted to be returning to our camping and Visiting Host Family programs while

continuing some of the programs we developed during COVID. Children will have the opportunity to go to four of our six camps and to reunite with volunteer host families they have visited before the pandemic.

In addition, we are excited to continue our stipended Summer Teen academy and will have the opportunity to provide more in person programming. We will still give families the opportunity to visit camp together through Family Wellness, and we are renewing our Summer Spaces Program. And we will again give youth opportunities to work with us as counselors at camp and in city-based programs.

We look forward to working with this committee and with other council offices to ensure that as many New York City children as possible have access to our in-person programming happening in the City this summer. The past two years have been especially difficult for the children in our city. Access to summer programming to keep kids engaged, interested, learning and having fun is critical.

We encourage the City Council to support and fund organizations that will provide essential summer programming to our City's children this year.

Thank you again for your time this morning and for your commitment to our City's children.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next group of panelists will be testifying in the following order: Scott Daly, Shamar Watson, Kari Kurjiaka--apologies, and Sherrise Palomino.

I will now be calling on Scott Daly to testify.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

SCOTT DALY: [NO AUDIO]

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Scott, if you could please accept the request to unmute yourself? Okay, we are having a few technical difficulties with Scott Daly, so I will call on Shamar Watson.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

SHAMAR WATSON: Okay, good afternoon, all.

Thank you to the Honorable Chair Stevens and The Committee on Youth Services for the opportunity to offer testimony.

My name is Shamar Watson and I am the Director of Youth Development for the Committee for Hispanic Children & Families, better known by its acronym, CHCF. We will be submitting a full, more comprehensive testimony and we will invite any

further questions. Today I will just be touching on some of the top elements that our work is focused on.

During a typical school year, our school-based program serves 550 students in three Bronx schools. We know the significant value-add of connecting community-based partners with schools to comprehensively meet the unique needs of students and their families. Above and beyond the academic supports we are able to offer in after school programs, we support mental health and social emotional development, interest and career exploration, and connection to additional resources and opportunities beyond the school walls.

CBO contracts at both the state and city-levels have historically been underfunded, not meeting the true cost of care. This places undue financial burden on CBO partners to cover the remaining costs that go into delivering programs that truly respond to the unique needs of students, families, and communities. CBOs already functioning on razor thin margins or in the red were faced with difficult decisions about laying off staff, service reduction, and in many cases closure ultimately harming our communities by

disrupting the flow of services and minimizing resources access.

We join our partners in the #JustPay campaign in calling on the City to improve its practices of partnership and contracting to ensure that the Nonprofit Community Services sector and their staff are not only sustained by able to thrive. Through of all this CHCF, like so many CBOs across the City, have continued to show up for our schools.

When the City needed to rapidly expand extended day/year programming to deliver Summer Rising, CHCF was ready and willing to continue or SONYC programming for middle school students at PS/MS 279.

As we move towards Summer Rising 2022, we feel it is worth noting that the City missed opportunities to truly optimize existing CBO relationships in schools by only building upon city-funded SACC programs for Summer Rising 2021.

We echo the sentiments of our CBO partners and of Chair Stevens as delivered in the summer programming oversight hearing, that the ambition of DYCD alone is not sufficient to making high quality programs that truly meet the needs of our youth and families a reality. The city must be proactive in engaging CBO

partners as thought partners in program design and delivery planning from the beginning. They must honor the value of our work and the skilled staff on the ground working with communities day in and day out by funding is in sustainable and equitable ways.

In addition to after school programming, CHCF strongly supports the Community School model as a means of investing in CBO partnerships with schools. We also strongly support increased funding and equitable access to youth employment programs, connect youth to opportunities to explore career pathways, build experience, and grow networks.

For any questions about our testimony, please contact Danielle Demeuse at ddemeuse@chcfinc.org or 212-206-1090 ext. 359.

Thank you

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now call on Scott Daly.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

ALEJANDRA NG: Hi, good afternoon, thank you, Chair Stevens and members of the Youth Service Committee for allowing me to testify today on behalf of New York Junior Tennis & Learning/NYJTL. Uh, Scott Daly, the Senior Director, unfortunately could

not... is unavailable. I will be speaking in his stead. My name is Alejandra Ng, and I am the Program Manager for Community Tennis Programs.

I will start by talking about the programming that we have that is funded by the New York City Council.

Firstly is our Community Tennis Program which provides free tennis instruction and programming in schools and parks during the spring, summer, fall, and winter seasons across New York City. Kids and parents are able to register at any of our locations during anytime during the season. No kid is turned away or put on a waitlist. This is not an application. These kids register, show up, and they start playing tennis as soon as they can.

Next is our School-Time Tennis Program, where we provide training to teachers to allow them to bring tennis into the schools during the day. We give them free equipment as well as ongoing support from our coaches. All of these teachers are also able to receive Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) credit at no cost to them.

Lastly is our CTP+ Program, which we implemented this past year, uh, in which we provide additional

1 training to kids who are performing at a higher
2 potential level. It is a tryout basis, but we give
3 them extended hours of play, smaller coach to student
4 ratios, and let them achieve new heights in their
5 tennis.
6

7 We annually reach about 85,000 kids citywide.
8 Our demographic ratios show that our majority of our
9 population are Black, Latino, Asian, and new
10 immigrant populations. Approximately 70% of the
11 children that we serve are also ten and under. NYJTL
12 does provide age appropriate equipment to give them a
13 higher success rate on court and to establish the
14 basic schools they need to grow their tennis game.

15 Talent is universal, but access and opportunity
16 are not. A lot of our kids to come from low-income
17 families and neighborhoods where our young people
18 lack access to tennis. The sport is usually
19 available only to kids in affluent neighborhood,
20 suburbs, and private schools. That is why we have
21 strived over the past to introduce the sport of
22 Tennis to everyone including those with special
23 needs.
24
25

For over 50 years, with The Council as our partner, we have been a driving force for New York City's youth and tennis communities.

We are more than just learning tennis. We help these kids physically, emotionally, and mentally. They build self-esteem, they learn values, and as one of our coaches says, "We make them model citizens."

Lastly, COVID has affected everyone, and NYJTL has become a safe haven for these kids in an escape of loneliness and uncertainty, uh, we provide cognitive and social stimulation -- we develop motor skills that are needed.

NYJTL is seeking funding in Fiscal Year 2023, this will keep with the rising costs. Our budget has been flat over the last 12-13 years, uh, the minimum wage has increased at least five to six dollars over that timeframe. This will allow us to continue servicing as many kids as we can and possibly providing additional hours at any of our locations.

Lastly, I do want to just touch upon our employment. About 70% of our coaches are alumni of these programs. I am an alumni of this program. I started when I was 10, and I am still here 20 years later. These kids grow through our programs. The

volunteer, they coach, they give back, so the cycle doesn't end with our community tennis programs.

Your continued support and advocacy is needed for the Fiscal 2023 budget, and I want to thank you on behalf of all of the families served by NYJTL.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Kari Kurjiaka.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

KARI KURJIAKA: Hello, everyone, thank you so much for the opportunity to submit testimony today. I am very excited to submit this on behalf of Reach Out and Read of Greater New York in support of New York City Council's Early Literacy Initiative, City's First Readers, uh, which supports New York City's youngest readers.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the Speaker and City Council Members for their ongoing commitment to ensuring that New York City children who participate in all of our programs will begin school with the literacy skills that will enable them to succeed in school and in life.

Decades of research show that early literacy skills are key to building positive futures for

1 children and breaking those cycles of poverty, so
2 this needs to happen in the first five years of a
3 child's life. A child's brain is already 90%
4 developed by the time they turn five, so programs
5 like Reach Out and Read and City's First Readers are
6 crucial for making sure that these first five years
7 include stimulating and positive experiences that
8 support healthy brain and language development.

9 Reach Out and Read, specifically, has been
10 engrained in this early literacy work for more than
11 20 years. We partner with healthcare providers to put
12 books and literacy resources into the hands of
13 children and their caregivers during regular
14 pediatric checkups. So, what does this look like?
15 Our pediatrician, family physicians, nurse
16 practitioners hand out new, developmentally
17 appropriate -- and culturally appropriate -- book to
18 children from birth through five years old. And they
19 also talk with parents and caregivers about the
20 importance of reading aloud together. For many
21 children, the books that they receive through our
22 Reach Out and Read Programming are the first and
23 sometimes the only books that they have at home. We
24 have heard from children whose faces just absolutely
25

light up when they receive the book from their pediatrician especially when they receive our high quality books with characters and authors who look like them and look like the communities we serve.

In addition, many of the other resources that we are able to provide our families with at these visits, are connections and referrals with our 17 City's First Readers partner organizations, who we know are going to continue to further the early childhood education and support that these families need.

Reach and Read Partners with 144 different hospitals, clinic pediatric care sites in New York City, we are in 44 council districts. In 2022, we served over a quarter of a million children with books and early literacy resources through our network of over a 1,000 medical professionals.

However, there is much more we can do. At the current funding rates, we are not able to meet this book need for 31% of the children in New York City. This means that we have thousands of children that are leaving their doctors' offices without a book and without that literacy guide, and it is because we do

not have the funding to support them in the way that they need at this time.

We are hoping to change that with continued and increased support from New York City's Council. We support City's First Readers in asking for their additional \$6.5 million in Fiscal Year 2023 that will be disseminated among the 17 different First Readers partner organizations -- including our program.

And if the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything it is how crucial health care workers and health care systems are in supporting New Yorkers. Providing early literacy resources through this system has carried through the pandemic and is still thriving through this challenging time. We continue to need financial support to allow the Reach and Read of Great New York program to reach maximum impact, serving more families in New York City.

So, we thank you for the opportunity today to submit this testimony.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Sherrise Palomino.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

SHERRISE PALOMINO: Good afternoon, my name is Sherrise Palomino, and I am the Director of Advocacy

and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks. We are a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs. Thank you to the Youth Services Committee for the opportunity to speak about our city's recreation centers. I also want to thank Chair Stevens for her leadership on this important issue. Members of this committee have a unique opportunity to push for adequate funding for our parks systems as it is critical component of supporting positive youth development.

The NYC Parks Department operates and maintains 59 recreation centers across the city to serve a population of over 1.8 million youth. Of the 59 community board districts, 26 don't have a New York City Parks recreation center meaning that 44% of community boards do not have a recreation center.

New York City's recreation centers are used to support community with programs for youth and seniors alike. They should provide critical opportunities for youth development and empowerment with free programming and sports. New York City's recreation centers should be a hub for positive youth development where young people socialize and liaise

1 in a safe and supportive environment, which is
2 essential to their overall well-being. Instead, New
3 York City's recreation centers are chronically under-
4 staffed, under-funded, and badly in need of repairs,
5 with roughly one third of them closed at any given
6 time.

7
8 We are overdue for transformative investment in
9 our parks system - 1% of the city budget for parks
10 could ensure that recreation centers are fully
11 staffed and functioning to provide the programming
12 that young people need. The New York City's Parks
13 Department does a valiant job maintaining these aging
14 resources but needs more funding to do so. This is
15 one of the many reasons why NY4P and the Play Fair
16 Coalition are calling for an increase in the Parks
17 budget to 1% of the City's budget - a call that the
18 majority of City Council Members support along with
19 Speaker Adams.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

22 Our next group of panelists will be testifying in
23 the following order: Dante Bravo, Kim Alysha
24 Seligmiller, Jennifer Pinder, and Joneé Billy.

25 I will now call on Dante Bravo.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

DANTE BRAVO: Thank you, Chair Stevens and members of the New York City Council, for the opportunity to testify. My name is Dante Bravo, I use They/Them pronouns, and I am the Youth Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses (UNH). UNH is a policy and social change organization representing 45 neighborhood settlement houses, 40 in New York City, that reach 765,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life.

Despite the increase in baselined funding for SYEP in FY23, funding for Work Learn Grow (WLG), the complementary school-year youth workforce program, sits at less than half of its pre-pandemic level, with no baselined investment. The City should invest \$20 million in baselined funding for Work Learn Grow in the FY23 budget in order to increase opportunities for young people.

The SYEP expansion should be celebrated as well as an example of what can happen when government, CBOs, and advocates work together towards the same goals. This model shows what is possible and the City should work to draw key lessons learned from this work in to summer and year-round programming for elementary to high school.

staffing challenge as a key issue facing there organizations.

While UNH will analyze the SONYC rate with the larger provider community, UNH calls for a higher rate for COMPASS programs at \$1,848 specifically for elementary school programming.

Summer Rising 2.0 must include funding, staffing, and other resources so CBOs can focus on the well-being of their participants, curriculum and other markers of program quality instead of basic elements of programming - in addition to the higher cost-per-participant rates and other investments into summer 2022.

The City should make a robust, \$28.5 million investment in expanding school-based mental health clinics in the FY 2023 budget. Staff retention at existing school-based clinics is a challenge due in large part to a lack of pay parity between community-based providers and DOE-employed professionals.

To address the gap in particular with funding for community-based adult literacy services, UNH also calls on the Mayor and the City Council to baseline an additional \$13.5 million in Adult Literacy Funding; renew \$4 million for Adult Literacy Council

Discretionary Funding; and Double funding for the Adult Literacy Pilot Program to \$5 million.

Finally, UNH supports to the ##JustPay campaign's ask which include automatic COLAs for all human services contracts to help wages keep pace with inflation; a living wage floor for human services workers of no less than \$21 per hour; and the creation and funding of a comprehensive wage and benefit schedule that is compatible to similarly-qualified City and State government employees.

We urge the City Council to emphasize the needs of the human service workforce in budget negotiations.

Thank you for the time and the opportunity to testify today. For more information you can reach me at bravo@unhny.org, and our written testimony includes two sample budgets for this year's summer programming.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Kim Alysha Seligmiller.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

KIMALYSHA SELIGMILLER: Good Afternoon, Chair Stevens and the Youth Services Committee.

At 17 years old, my heart was set on finding a family. I had been in the system since I was 2 and my parents were no longer an option. During this time, I was in an all girls group home where I expressed that Family was something important to me and I wanted a chance to have it. I told my workers time and time again, and they would disregard what I had to say. My group home told me that I had to get my head out of the clouds and start focusing on finding an apartment and supporting myself. I was okay with that, but having an apartment didn't stop me from wanting to have a family. I will never forget I went to my bi-yearly court hearing and decided to speak up for myself. I told the judge I wanted adoption to be an

option. The judge looked at me and said "With your age and history, you will never be able to get a family. Start looking for an apartment".

Although the judge did not specifically say it, what my teenage ears heard was that I was not worthy of a family. The amount of defeat I felt that day traumatized me even more. All my life, I had people come in and out my life who only judged me based on my actions and my paperwork. Still I knew that if I had people who loved and supported me, that I could get through anything but sadly my judge and my foster care agency had written me off as just another failure to come out of the system. However, through my experience with You Gotta Believe, not only did I have other foster care alumni teaching me the importance of family, but I also had people who believed that I was more than just my behaviors, and no matter what, I deserved to be loved.

Through my years in foster care, one thing was very clear -- my voice didn't matter.

Minors in foster care are often spoken for and told what to say. However, once you are older and start to advocate your needs, nobody wants to listen

and not many people care because you will be aging out soon.

You Gotta Believe gave me chances to speak and be heard, no matter what I had to say. In addition, You Gotta Believe helped me understand what permanency really means, not just having a safe place to stay but having people unconditionally committed no matter what, something a lot of foster care agencies lack to teach families and youth in foster care.

You Gotta Believe not only helped me find a family, now who I now call my Godparents, but they helped me understand that my story has power and it should be shared to make change in the foster care system. At a young age, You Gotta Believe allowed me to speak on panels to help potential foster parents understand the meaning of commitment when taking in older kids in the system. Those panels lit a fire in me, and helped me realize that advocacy is something that I want to do as a career path. Now that I am out of survival mode and I have a family, I can focus on those efforts and finally make change in a system that tried to fail me.

You Gotta Believe made such a major impact on my personal and professional life and has done so for

many older foster youth in New York City. YGB needs the support of the City Council to continue to work with the older youth who are about to face the worst outcomes alone. YGB knows that we can find them loving families. I, as a former foster youth and employee of YGB, support its efforts in supporting older youth in care and I hope the city council will do the same.

Thank you for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony, I will now call on Jennifer Pinder.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

JENNIFER PINDER: Thank you, good afternoon, Chair Stevens and members of the Youth Services Committee. My name is Jennifer Pinder, and I am the Executive Director of You Gotta Believe (YGB), a foster care and adoption agency with a focus on permanency.

I have the pleasure of working with KimAlysha, who testified just before me, and other advocates like her who have powerful voices just like hers. We just can't get our mission executed without KimAlysha and our other advocates.

YGB has received support from the City Council since FY15 to support our Nobody Ages Out Program as

well as our efforts to provide wrap-around services for transitional-aged foster youth.

We are really thankful that the majority of our current discretionary funding is contracted through DYCD. We have submitted a request for continued support of our programs, uh, specifically the Nobody Ages Out Program as well as for mental health services for LGBTQ youth.

For 27 years, You Gotta Believe has focused on finding loving unconditionally committed parents specifically for kids in foster care who would otherwise age out to be essentially alone.

While there is a lot of great work being done around providing services to youth aging out, You Gotta Believe is the only agency focused specifically on permanency. Everyone on our team is a credible messenger. I am an adoptee myself, and others on the team are either parents of older youth from foster care or survivors of the foster care system. This gives us a unique advantage to deliver the highly specialized support our youth and families need.

We have also recently launched a mental health program that allows us to provide adoption competent therapy for our families free of charge.

YGB primarily serves Black and Brown foster youth between that ages of 10 and 24. We also work with a larger proportion of LGBTQ youth, since they are also over represented in this system as well as Black and Brown youth. Approximately 25% of the youth we serve identify as LGBTQ; 15% of our parents identify as LGBTQ.

It is important for everyone to remember that people don't stop needing family support at the age of 21. Youth who age out alone face homelessness, continued welfare dependency, and often join the pipeline to incarceration.

Youth negative outcomes are avoidable for the youth who we reconnect with permanent families. Our preliminary survey data indicate that youth who age out of the New York City foster care system without a family are more than twice as likely to be incarcerated than youth we place with permanent families. And on the national level, youth age out alone are more than 10 times as likely to be incarcerated compared to youth that we place with permanent families.

YGB needs the support of the City Council, because our staff is at capacity. We are relying on

you to help us scale up so that we can reach more foster youth with our proven model so that they don't age out alone.

We need your help to increase our impact and prevent more kids from aging out of foster care without a permanent loving family.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now call on Joneé Billy.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

JONEÉ BILLY: Hi good morning... Sorry, good morning, my name is Joneé Billy, and I serve as the Director for Strategic Partnerships and External Affairs at PowerPlay.

I would like to begin by thanking Chair Stevens and The Council Committee Members for your unwavering leadership, your focus on creating sustainable future for our youth, and your support of our work in youth development.

PowerPlay advances the lives of girls through sports helping them grow physically, emotionally, and academically stronger. We created a continuum of opportunities for girls ages eight through 18, and utilize structured sports activities to foster

critical social and emotional learning skills girls need to succeed in school and life.

We partner with title 1 schools and community based organizations to conduct afterschool and summer programs emphasizing social emotional skills, health and wellness, leadership, and college and career readiness programs.

The Women's Sports Foundation Report shows that urban girls of color have the least opportunities to participate in sports of physical activity of any demographic group of youth. This is who we serve.

PowerPlay also serves at the lead agency for the Sports Training and Role Models Success Citywide Girls Initiative, aka STARS CGI, a collaboration of 10 leading nonprofit organizations helping girls and young women of color overcome barriers to success, gain access to high quality out of school activities, and develop as leaders in their communities. Now in our seventh year, we have collectively served over 40, 000 girls and gender nonconforming youth.

During the last two years, STARS CGI provided a constant source of academic, social and emotional support for our young people.

A 2021 report from McKinsey & Company shows the pandemic left students, on average, five months behind in mathematics and four months behind in reading by the end of the school year. And that the pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps hitting historically disadvantaged students the hardest. This demonstrates an even greater need for our programming. In FY22, STARS GCI seeks to assist our young people in closing the mental and physical wellness gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic, amplifying their voices through activism and advocacy, and forging a path to leadership while maintaining steadfast in our mission to be a resource for our youth.

As of March 2022, the STARS CGI partners have already served 1,850 youth in all 51 city council districts.

On Saturday December 11th, STARS CGI hosted its third youth town hall entitled "Pass the Mic" with Council Member Farah Louis.

We look forward to sharing ideas and ways to foster female leadership in in NYC with Council Member Stevens at our upcoming Leadership Breakfast.

1
2 Lastly, we plan to capitalize on the success of
3 our past youth focused initiatives by again hosting
4 our Leadership Breakfast and our Self-care Saturday
5 Series with Nike.

6 Today the STARS CGI Girls initiative respectfully
7 requests an enhanced FY23 funding from The Council in
8 the amount of \$2 million dollars.

9 Again, on behalf of girls and gender
10 nonconforming youth of color across New York City,
11 thank you in advance for your continued support.

12 Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

14 Our next group of panelist will be testifying in
15 the following order: John Sentigar, Meredith Jones,
16 Rachel Walman, and Abraham Jones.

17 I will now call on John Sentigar.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 JOHN SENTIGAR: Good morning, my name is John
20 Sentigar; I use He/Him pronouns, and I am I am the
21 Director of Development and Communications at
22 Covenant House New York (CHNY), where we serve
23 runaway and homeless youth (RHY) ages 16 to 24. I
24 would like to thank the New York City Council
25 Committee on Youth Services, especially Chair Althea

Stevens for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning.

Covenant House New York is the nation's largest, non-profit adolescent care agency serving homeless, runaway and trafficked youth. During this past year, we served over 1,600 young people in our programs. On a nightly basis, we provide shelter to approximately 200 young people, including, LGBTQ youth and pregnant women and mothers with their children as well as survivors of human trafficking. Our youth are primarily people of color and over a third of our youth have spent time in the foster care system. Many of our youth have experienced abuse or neglect at the hands of parents or other caregivers, and a disproportionately high percentage of our youth struggle with the pervasive impacts of trauma, mental health issues, and substance abuse. We provide young people with food, shelter, clothing, medical care, mental health and substance abuse services, legal services, high school equivalency classes and other educational and job-training programs, as well as a safe house and specialized services for survivors of human trafficking. All of these services help young

people overcome the trauma of abuse, homelessness and exploitation and move toward stability.

Covenant House New York has submitted several requests this year for discretionary funding, and we hope The Council reviews these and looks closely at how this funding will provide more services to youth in need. This includes \$75,000 in funding to provide anti human trafficking services, \$500,000 in funding to provide transitional housing services for victims of the sex trade, \$100,000 in funding to provide continued legal services for our youth, and \$100,000 in funding to provide continued mental health services for our youth.

But most importantly this morning, we want to highlight the needs regarding Runaway and Homeless provider contracts overall.

We are asking that our essential workers and direct care staff, who have risked their lives every day of this pandemic caring for our young people, be paid a living wage. New York State has cut Human Service's local aid by 5% annually since 2012. DYCD funded RHY provider contracts continue to fall short of covering the true costs of running RHY program.

Sadly, it's the Human Services workforce that bears the brunt of this reduced funding.

Low and stagnate wages due to insufficient state and city funding cause staff turnover rates in parts of the nonprofit sector that are over 40%. These high turnover rates are detrimental to the young people we serve, as it is important that our youth develop a rapport with the adult staff who act as mentors and guides as they rise out of poverty and lead self-sufficient lives. Frequent staff turnover changes disrupt rapport and make it difficult for our youth experiencing homelessness to leave poverty behind.

We are therefore requesting and echoing the requests of others who have testified this morning including Jamie with The Coalition for Homeless Youth, we are requesting that DYCD and funded shelter contracts be increased into the 2019 contract rate of \$50,410 per bed and that a 10% general contract increase be implemented for all current DYCD funded residential, street outreach, and drop-in center contracts.

We are also asking that DYCD echo the 5.4% COLA increase for staff working on RHY contracts. This

right sizes DYCD contracts to more closely resemble the true cost of a bed for a young person experiencing homelessness in New York City.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. And thank you as well to my colleagues at other nonprofit organizations who have echoed these requests in order to promote the dignity of youth receiving services in the RHY continuum.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Meredith Jones.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

MEREDITH JONES: Hi everyone, and thank you Chair Stevens, for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Meredith Jones, and I am the City's First Readers Program Manager based at Literacy Inc.

Literacy Inc. is both a program partner and the facilitating organization for this impactful initiative. City's First Readers is the New York City Council's only early literacy initiative, harnesses the power of collaboration between 17 nonprofit organizations, including all three public library systems, to build equity of opportunity for children birth through five affected by systemic poverty.

City's First Readers, or CFR, engages nearly one million families in all 51 council districts every year. Our work ensures that New York City children in every neighborhood have a solid foundation to start school successfully, thrive academically, and succeed beyond their school years.

CFR is an essential initiative of the City Council that addresses a critical and longstanding literacy crisis. This crisis is not new and has accelerated because of the pandemic. Just last week, the New York Times reported the increase in children, particularly Black and Hispanic children, English Language Learners, those from low income families, and children with disabilities who entered kindergarten this year with gaps in their early learning skills.

CFR was founded on the knowledge that a disproportionate number of children impacted by systemic poverty had historically and consistently entered school with these gaps. The solution to this problem, as we have always known, is not catching up with children in kindergarten, but supporting them before they begin their formal education.

City's First Readers delivers proven strategies that directly address early learning opportunity gaps.

In Fiscal Year 2021, while largely functioning remotely, CFR partners engaged 800,000 families and caregivers with early literacy programming including a 53% increase in enlargement among some partners. We distributed 41% more books compared to FY20, put 380,000 books into children's homes, and expanded our Hallmark Education Campaign through the launch of a new family facing website to connect families to programs in their language and in their neighborhood.

There is so much more work to be done. A budget of \$6.5 million in FY23 will enable CFR to expand and enhance our evidence based approach to engage even more children and families.

An equitable city begins with an investment in children when it matters most. City's First Readers offers a sustainable solution with a long term investment in families of children younger than five. We urge you to recognize the importance of a preventive approach for our youngest learners.

Thank you so much for your time and for the opportunity to testify today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Rachel Walman.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

RACHEL WALMAN: Good afternoon Chair Stevens and other esteemed members of the committee. My name is Rachel Walman, and I'm the director of education at The Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. I very much appreciate this time to speak to you today and to hear about the inspiring work of other organizations. To cut to the chase, I'm here seeking your help with funding for Green-Wood's Education and Welcome Center.

As you may know, Green-Wood is a 184 year old working cemetery that borders six Brooklyn neighborhoods: Sunset Park, South Slope, Green-Wood Heights, Windsor Terrace, Kensington, and Borough Park. Green-Wood is, literally and figuratively, an oasis in the under-resourced cultural landscape of South Brooklyn. We are Brooklyn's first large public green space and we're something totally new: a cemetery that is also a place of exploration and learning. Our work with youth is a vital part of what we do and is poised to grow exponentially—with your help.

Since starting a formal education department in 2019, Green-Wood has served over 12,000 youth through standards-based, guided field trips, internships, and virtual programs. And that's in addition to the tens of thousands of families that can visit us for free 365 days a year and use our self-guided learning materials which has been happening throughout the pandemic.

In our guided programs, we teach kids about nature, architecture, American history, and more. Approximately 35 DOE schools are in a short walking distance from one of our four entrances, so, yes, we've been busy with field trips even during the pandemic. Two examples of our unique school programs: UPK students have come to explore century-old trees, and graduating seniors have visited the gravesites both of overlooked Black civil rights leaders - and that of a beloved teacher of theirs who had recently died. Profound learning experiences abound here, ones that every New York City students deserves to enjoy.

This summer, we will continue to work with SYEP through the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park as well as with students from Sunset Park High School, the Mather Building Arts and Craftsmanship High

School, and the Williamsburg High School for Architecture and Design in an expanded high school internship. In this program, up to 25 youth will fully restore, landscape, research, and interpret a section of the cemetery. This program will combine training in horticulture, soil science, and historic preservation with college-level writing and public speaking. Participants will gain so many skills while making a meaningful impact on our grounds.

We also have a Bridge to Craft Careers masonry restoration technician training program for young adults that we run in partnership with Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, and that is in its fourth year with 14 trainees enrolled this year. Last year, upon completion of the program, 100% of participants were offered full-time employment.

And we do all of this without one square-foot of indoor classroom space.

We could, and want, to do more. For this year's budget, Green-Wood is seeking capital support for our Education and Welcome Center. The Pre-K-12 programs I have mentioned above could quadruple or more, and additional programming could be developed, with the resources this Center will provide. There are stories

about public health history, climate change, and more that Green-Wood is best suited to tell, and that youth would be fascinated to learn, but we need indoor gallery space for this work. There are hands-on STEAM experiences inspired by Green-Wood that would absorb youth, but we need a roof, a sink, and lab equipment. Please help us create essential space for improved and expanded learning experiences for New York City youth.

We are honored to be a part of the landscape of support for NYC youth, and we look forward to working with City Council towards our shared goals.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

I will now be calling on Abraham Jones.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

ABRAHAM JONES: Good morning, everyone. It is a pleasure to speak before the Youth Services Committee. I want to thank, uh, the Honorable Councilwoman, Miss Stevens, for this opportunity as well as the Youth Services Committee.

Claremont Neighborhood Centers, uhm, is grass roots, community based organization located in the Chairwoman's district. While we are not a

1 Cornerstone, we do serve as Cornerstone with four
2 housing developments -- Morris Houses, Morrisania
3 Houses, Butler Houses and Webster Houses. And we are
4 sort of sandwiched in between two Cornerstones, but I
5 dare say that Claremont Neighborhood Centers serves
6 more families and children than both of those two
7 Cornerstones combined; although, we do not get nearly
8 the kind of funding that they get to serve families.
9

10 I want to take this opportunity to thank the
11 Chairwoman for probing questions that kind of helped
12 me to understand some of the thinking processes of
13 DYCD.

14 Last year for the Summer Rising, as a community
15 based organization, a couple of things happened:
16 Number one, we were left out of the loop, but I want
17 to say that because of our dedicated pushing and
18 advocacy and constantly bugging saying, we can do
19 this, we can do this, we were allowed to become a
20 partner with the Summer Rising Initiative. I want to
21 thank my staff person, Christopher Wilson, The Deputy
22 Executive Director, for his efforts as well as my
23 own. And so we were given three schools to partner
24 with to provide Summer Risings -- although they were
25 out of our districts.

1 As a CBO, uh, a couple things happened. There
2 was no summer program for standalone CBO programs, as
3 well as there was no Summer Risings for charter
4 schools. We are programmed that we are in a charter
5 school, but because we felt like we were sort of
6 caught up this quagmire between public schools versus
7 charter schools... and so the charter school that we
8 were in, there were no charter schools funded to
9 provide Summer Rising programing. And to me that's
10 problematic. As well as one of the other things I
11 wanted to take note of, I want to thank Commissioner
12 Rattray and his team and Mary for eventually coming
13 through and helping us to find us slots, which we
14 were ready and well-prepared to do and sort of at the
15 ninth hour, we were given the slots, and so we were
16 put in to action.

17 I was glad to hear that there will be training
18 for providers, and we hope to be part of that. We
19 hope to also have early notices. One other thing I
20 wanted to point out that was problematic for the
21 Summer Rising program is that DOE had an application
22 out with DYCD which required the parents fill out--
23 go online-- to fill out this application. But as a
24 grassroots organization, I know that many of our
25

1 parents, because of language barriers, uh, have
2 difficultly filling out applications, and do not have
3 the technical savvy to be able to go online and
4 navigate some of the quagmire that was required to
5 get to the application -- navigate to this link and
6 move to that link and do this, that, and the other --
7 which, fortunately, because we understood that we
8 were able to have on staff and hire Spanish speaking
9 folk as well as an individual who spoke eight African
10 dialects to help us navigate through the processes of
11 filling out applications so we can get our families
12 served.
13

14 We look forward to working with DYCD, and I want
15 to thank the Chairwoman for hearing my concerns. God
16 bless, everyone.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

18 Our final group of panelist will be testifying in
19 the following order: Cynthia Brackett, Tamia Santana,
20 Emily Corona, Edwin Santana, and Gillian Miller.

21 I will now be calling on Cynthia Brackett.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 CYNTHIA BRACKETT: Hi, good afternoon, my name is
24 My name is Cynthia Brackett, and I am the New York
25 City Regional Director for The Center for Employment

1 Opportunities (CEO). Thank you to Chair Stevens and
2 the members of the Youth Services Committee. I
3 appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony about
4 our program model and work across New York City, and
5 the need for increased resources to help at-risk
6 young individuals and those coming home from prison.

7 CEO's mission is to provide immediate, effective,
8 and comprehensive employment services to individuals
9 recently returning home from incarceration and young
10 adults who have had interactions with the criminal
11 legal system. As the largest provider of reentry
12 employment services in New York, our intentional
13 focus is to serve individuals facing the most
14 significant barriers to gaining and maintaining
15 employment, while also returning \$3.30 for every
16 \$1.00 of public investment.

17 Our four stage program has two core components:
18 transitional employment and vocational services.
19 After our participants complete job readiness
20 training, CEO hires and provides them with immediate
21 paid employment through our transitional work crews.
22 To provide transitional jobs, CEO operates more than
23 20 work crews across New York City that provide
24 public sector agencies with a variety of general
25

labor services. Access to immediate work on a transitional work crew helps our participants gain stability and motivation as they work with a dedicated team of staff to attain long-term employment outside of CEO, and support them to navigate any potential obstacles to employment.

On January 24, 2022, Mayor Adams announced his "Blueprint to End Gun Violence"; and as part of this strategy, the City of New York will implement long term solutions that focus on community based intervention and prevention strategies to break the cycle of violence. A key component of prevention strategy is to provide access to and readiness for career opportunities for out of school young people ages 18 to 24.

CEO will use its evidence based Credible Messenger Initiative to immerse enrollees in daily prosocial activities including facilitated workshops lead by Credible Messengers; job start readiness preparation through our transitional jobs program (Crew works), an experiential earning environment where youths will learn how to take direction and regulate their responses to workplace stress; and access to a wide range of occupational skills

training; and individualized job coaching and development.

With more than half of our participants between 18 and 30 years old, CEO is committed to continuously building, implementing, and evaluating programming that addresses their needs and affirms their agency.

There are many reasons why an investment in additional youth services is critical for CEO and other organizations like CEO, and CEO respectfully asks \$100,000 through the DYCD Youth Initiative.

The unemployment rate for young adults is almost three times higher than the rate for older adults. Additionally, about half of all young adults will return to prison within three years following release.

Being given the opportunity to direct funds toward our young adults returning home would provide them with the resources to gain stability and motivation so that they can ultimately succeed in long-term employment.

These are sound investments the city can and should adopt through the budget. At CEO, we don't just put young individuals to work; we help keep them out of prisons and jails.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

We will now turn to Tamia Santana.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

TAMIA SANTANA: Good afternoon my name is Tamia Santana, I am the Chief Engagement and Inclusion Officer at Ballet Hispánico. Thank you, Chair Stevens, and members of the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I am here to advocate for The City Council's expanded support for cultural organizations in Fiscal Year 2023 In particular BIPOC led organizations like Ballet Hispánico as part of its commitment to serve the City's youth through excellent cultural programs.

At this critical juncture, support of the City's cultural leaders, like Ballet Hispánico, as we work to expand access to the arts for underserved BIPOC youth and communities is more important than ever.

As the nation's largest Latinx cultural organization, and one of America's cultural treasures, we depend on City Council Support in order to fulfill our mission of service to BIPOC communities.

Approximately 27% of all New Yorkers identify as Latinx, and 40.1% of all children in the DOE identify as Latinx, and more than half of all of these children born in New York City are born to immigrant families; 75% of all of the schools that we serve are title 1.

Research shows that immigrants and Latinx individuals unparticular are grossly underrepresented in popular culture. Through Ballet Hispánico's Latinx and African diaspora public programming, many not only have access to excellent artistic programs and instruction, but some see themselves and see their stories reflected in the culture for the first time.

The ripple effect across New Yorkers' lives is profound leading to, amongst other benefits, improved educational and career outcomes for the young people we serve.

As we join our fellow Arts leaders in post pandemic recovery, we look to City leaders for guidance and support. The economic impact of a thriving arts ecology to New York City cannot be overstated. Nonprofit cultural groups generate over \$8 billion annually in citywide economic impact and

employ more than 120,000 people. And in an error or stark division, the voices of BIPOC led cultural organizations like Ballet Hispánico founded on the principles of bringing people together through art and dance are essential to our city.

Ballet Hispánico's community programs feature not only culturally relevant pedagogy, but BH is actively engaged in 21st Century creative economy skill building. Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks of the DOE stated that studies show schools who take six more cultural field trips report higher grades and higher rates of student enjoyment. Our Bienvenidos Ticketing Program and performances for young people are one of those opportunities.

Our community programs reach thousands of New Yorkers of every walk of life, uplifting young people of Latinx and African diaspora heritage and culture through the lens of dance.

Through City Council Initiatives like CASA, Coalition Theaters of Color, Cultural Immigrant Initiatives, The Speakers Initiatives, and more, the City has indicated that it deeply values a thriving arts ecosystem.

The ability of our organization and other BIPOC led cultural institutions to strive and thrive in a post pandemic economy, will be dependent on continued City support.

More than ever, organizations like Ballet Hispánico will need robust public support in order to continue amplifying underrepresented voices in the field. The expansion of critical City funded cultural and educational programs ensure our ability to continue to provide crucial arts access and education... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

TAMIA SANTANA: to communities of color.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Emily Corona.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

EMILY CORONA: Thank you so much. Tamia Santana has spoken on behalf of Ballet Hispánico.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

I will now be calling on Edwin Santana.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

EDWIN SANTANA: Hello, first and foremost, good afternoon, everybody. Thank you all for taking this time out to conduct this hearing.

Thank you Chair Stevens and the Youth Services Committee members. My name is Edwin Santana. I'm a member and Community Organizer at Freedom Agenda. I believe, like most New Yorkers believe, that the City budget should reflect what we value. We value the youth, and if we value our youth then we should invest in the programs and services that serve our youth. We need a budget that reflects the needs of our youth.

The Department of Corrections has the largest DOC staff in the country. Lack of accountability for DOC staff has created a humanitarian crisis in New York City jails. There are hundreds of officers each day who work in non-jail posts either because they are prevented from working directly with incarcerated people because of an ongoing disciplinary case or they are being medically monitored, or they have been assigned to a different job like working in the laundry room, as a baker, or even as a secretary to a warden. These posts have been widely used in DOC as rewards to officers favored by supervisors, but in

other jail systems, these tasks are performed by civilians.

The Commission on Reinvestments recommend that "Young people who require access to a range of services often face barriers accessing them for many reasons, including a lack of awareness of available services, distrust in government, or a need for a community peer support person to help them in identifying needs and matching them with services. The City should invest in community-based navigation initiatives hiring navigators from the communities they serve and live in to help make social services more navigable." Right?

So, I say please take these recommendations very seriously. City Council must right-size the DOC -- let me repeat that again -- City Council must right-size the DOC, they must deflate DOC's way bloated budget, and redistribute those resources to our youth needs to stop the stream of the youth into the criminal legal system.

So, thank you very much to everybody for listening to my testimony, and I bid you all farewell, and have a good evening.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

I will now be calling on Gillian Miller.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

GILLIAN MILLER: Greetings, my name is Gillian Miller, Coordinator of Early Learning Services for the Queens Public Library. I am pleased to represent the three public library systems of New York City as partners in the City Council's initiative for early literacy, City's First Readers. On behalf of the three systems, I would like to thank Committee Chair Stevens and the members the committee.

We are truly grateful for the Council's generous support of City's First Readers. Each year, Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library, and Queens Public Library offer neighborhood early literacy programs with an annual attendance exceeding 600,000 New Yorkers.

As part of City's First Readers, each library system is developing and expanding its own ways.

Brooklyn Public Library has offered storytimes in over 12 languages. They provide training to child care providers and staff in early literacy, supporting children with disabilities, talking about race with young children, and screen time balance. Children's librarians created Grab and Go activity

kits available to families with hands-on supplies to promote play and learning at home, and their signature school-readiness program, Ready, Set, Kindergarten, continues to be offered virtually in Spanish and English.

New York Public Library (NYPL) offered robust virtual and in person early literacy programs including bilingual storytimes, outdoor storytime in the park and STEAM storytime. The library distributed bilingual English/Spanish early learning activity booklets and take-home activity kits for families to engage in developmentally appropriate literacy activities at the library and at home. NYPL partnered with pediatric health clinics to provide library resources and over 2,000 books. They also did professional development for staff, which includes a variety of experts on important topics such as Anti-Racist Storytime, Woke Read Alouds.

Queens Public Library (QPL) continues to reach our families through programs that are available in many ways - virtual, social, and in-person. Every week we offer a storytime in one of nine languages. We are grateful to be able to provide take-home learning kits in English and Spanish at all of our

branches, which engage young thinkers in higher order thinking practices. Our New Mama's group continued this year with a deeper investment in needed parenting resources across the borough. This group focuses on educating new mothers and caregivers about their young child's literacy needs while also addressing postpartum health, infant health, and general parenting issues.

The City's First Readers initiative has also allowed the three library systems to collaborate with program partners in unique ways:

Literacy Inc. has worked with the libraries to provide programs to families citywide. Their staff offers virtual storytimes regularly in East New York (BPL); throughout Manhattan, Bronx, and Staten Island (NYPL); and weekly in the South Jamaica.

Reach Out and Read of Greater New York partners with the New York City libraries to purchase multilingual, diverse children's books to give to New York City families, encourage families to sign up for library cards, and attend library programs.

We are aware that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children born during

1 this time. Early literacy programming in local
2 neighborhoods will be essential to support early
3 literacy and school-readiness before children enter
4 3K and Pre-K. City's First Readers funding will be
5 instrumental and help us make sure we have the
6 spaces, books, materials, and staff trained to
7 respond in the libraries.
8

9 If the City Council authorizes funding for Fiscal
10 Year 2023 for the City's First Readers Initiative,
11 this vitally important work will only grow in New
12 York City's libraries, as we look towards a future
13 where we can once again provide our services in-
14 person - at library branches, and in classrooms and
15 child care settings.

16 Our Libraries are the first social and
17 educational experience many of our young families
18 have, and we want it to be the most enriching
19 experience it can be.

20 Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony
21 today.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

23 At this point, we have concluded public
24 testimony. However, if we inadvertently missed
25 anyone who would like to testify, please use the Zoom

Raise Hand Function, and we will call on you in the order your hand was raised.

Alright, seeing no other hands raised, Chair Stevens... Oh, I am sorry, it looks like we have testimony from a Christopher Wilson.

If you wouldn't mind, hold on, I will unmute you and you may begin.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

CHRISTOPHER WILSON: Hi, good afternoon, my name is Christopher Wilson I am currently the Deputy Executive Director at Claremont Neighborhood Centers. You heard from the Executive Director, Abraham Jones.

I have worked at this nonprofit organization for the past five-six years, and I have seen ups and downs in this community. I am from this community, and I love where I work.

Claremont Neighborhood Centers serves a whole set of families in our communities. We provide afterschool programs and summer camps to the residents of the Claremont section of The Bronx.

Over the past three years, Claremont has been able to provide childcare support for families during the pandemic. We have been open. We have not closed. Through programs such as our DYCD Learning

1
2 Labs, our SONYC afterschool programs, our Summer
3 Rising Initiatives that Mr. Jones spoke about
4 earlier, as well as provide services for our fee for
5 service summer camp for families in our community.

6 We have also served as a partnership to Woody
7 Crest Development Center, where we serve as worksite
8 for the SYEP program where we urge our young people
9 to sign up for SYEP. Currently, right now, we have
10 enrolled about 70 young people in SYEP in our
11 community -- and counting.

12 While we are a small nonprofit agency, we are on
13 the ground. We are doing the work. I think it is
14 important that we look at the funding in our
15 community, especially for a small nonprofit agencies
16 that are being considered and not a lot of large or
17 outside nonprofit organizations -- who are not rooted
18 here in the community -- to not allow them to a
19 monopolize all of the funding that is being given out
20 as funding to our youth services in New York City.

21 I believe investment in smaller nonprofit
22 agencies should looked into and considered --
23 especially considering the history of the nonprofit
24 organizations and the connections that they have with
25

our local schools, health providers, and churches as well as NYPD.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. I believe at this point, we have now concluded public testimony for this hearing.

Chair Stevens, I will turn to you for any closing remarks.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you so much. Uhm, I am honored that so many organizations and young people and families signed up today to testify about the importance of making sure that we have adequate funding to support our young people in communities through the City. I look forward to my continued partnership with DYCD and providers and being the bridge for all of them. Like I said in my opening testimony, I think that it is important that as we are expanding, we are also making sure that we are evaluating and supporting the providers so that they can implement quality programs. You know, I think we have to get to a place where we are looking at quality of quantity. And so, as it is important that we are having programs available to everyone, we need to make sure that at the same time that those programs are producing quality.

Thank you for today, and 2:19, I adjourn this hearing. Thank you.

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 April 27, 2022