

New York City Council, Committee on Economic Development
Hearing on FY2023 Preliminary Budget
New York City Economic Development Corporation
Testimony of President & CEO Andrew Kimball
March 16, 2022

Good morning, Chair Farías, and members of the Economic Development Committee. I am Andrew Kimball, the new President and CEO of New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC). It is great to connect with you all in this new role and I look forward to working in partnership to grow a resilient, inclusive, and competitive economy in every corner of the city.

Today, I am joined by my colleagues Joshua Kraus, our Director of Project Implementation; Carl Rodrigues, our Chief Operating Officer; Elizabeth Verostek, our Deputy Chief Financial Officer; and Faye Penn, our Executive Vice President for Initiatives.

For decades EDC has been responsible for driving economic development across all five boroughs. Its impact is realized through a number of pathways, including:

Real estate management, disposition, and land use:

- EDC controls 64M square feet of assets ranging from the Brooklyn Army Terminal and Made in NY Campus in Brooklyn where we are investing \$600M to bring new garment and light manufacturing, to the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center in the Bronx which you will hear more about in a moment.

- In the last eight years, EDC has led hundreds of real estate transactions as well as land dispositions and re-zonings to drive smart growth in key business districts. All this has led to nearly 6,000 units of new built or planned affordable housing, a million square feet of new commercial space, and \$7B in economic activity.
- Examples include:
 - The Inwood NYC Action Plan where we invested \$200M to create affordable housing, a new library, community space and more.
 - The \$200M Downtown Far Rockaway Rezoning, which includes the development of affordable housing, infrastructure improvements, commercial spaces, and open spaces.
 - The Deerfield's Cure innovation campus is bringing new life sciences space to Manhattan.
 - While the Tech Training Center in Union Square will help launch tech startups and offer career training.
 - Our new Office Anchor in East New York, which will bring new commercial office space and tenants to an underdeveloped area.
 - In Queens, Archer Green, a new 100% affordable housing complex just opened its doors to tenants in 387 apartments. The transformational project borne out of the Jamaica NOW Action Plan includes community space, commercial sq. footage, and a new supermarket.
 - And we've reactivated the Staten Island baseball stadium, through a new public-private partnership, which is bringing a new team and excitement to the North Shore – along with other local development. And we hope you will join us May 3 for the FerryHawks first pitch on opening day.

Sector Growth:

- From life sciences to advanced manufacturing to green-tech, EDC's mission includes diversifying the economy and tax base while creating equitable pathways to good-paying jobs.

Small Business/Entrepreneurship:

- In the last two years, through the Small Business Resource Network, we've supported 27,700 small businesses as they have navigated the challenges of the pandemic.
- In addition, we are piloting two new programs for underrepresented, early-stage tech founders through our partnerships with Newlab and Company Ventures to give them access to government, corporate, and tech resources to help them thrive.
- We are also partnering with the Department of Small Business Services on entrepreneurial bootcamps specifically for women over 50.

Waterfront revitalization:

- In 2017, EDC brought to life a citywide ferry system, executing on a long sought public transportation expansion on our waterways that has now served 22.3M riders in its first four years.
- Other waterfront initiatives include over \$1.3B in resiliency and green infrastructure projects and the development of the country's largest offshore wind servicing port.

Community infrastructure improvements:

- EDC is actively managing over 290 capital projects ranging from hospitals like our newest investment, the Ruth Bader

Ginsberg Hospital in Coney Island. This new \$900 million state-of-the-art facility is expected to open this fall.

- And to libraries like the Charleston Library in Staten Island which we are excited to open today and is the City's first Net-Zero Energy library.
- EDC is also helping to close the digital divide by investing \$161M to bring broadband to up to 1.6 million New Yorkers, many of whom are NYCHA residents.

And when the City faces a crisis, whether it's the tragic September 11th attacks, the 2008 market collapse, Superstorm Sandy, or the global pandemic of the last two years, EDC steps up.

At the height of the Covid-19 crisis, we pivoted our resources and collaborated with City partners and the private sector to help the city in its time of need. We partnered with more than 70 local businesses to manufacture and deliver up to 4.2 million gowns and 8.4 million face shields; we set up a local supply chain that created and delivered 1 million test kits to hospitals, clinics, and community testing sites; and we facilitated the city's \$110 million vaccine incentive program. In partnership with SBS, we also disbursed \$49 million in financial supports to help over 1,500 small businesses and 7 safety-net hospitals weather the pandemic.

And now, as the City begins to recover, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine the economy of New York City.

The pandemic showed us clearly the disparities caused by systemic inequities and injustices—things that have always been there—but now we have a unique opportunity on the economic

development front to build a stronger, more resilient, and equitable economy.

Today, EDC manages hundreds of projects and a nearly \$9 billion ten-year capital plan. For FY22, we have approximately \$2.2 billion in our capital budget. Our board-approved budget for FY22 is \$799 million, comprised of EDC's own funds, city capital, and expense.

Last Thursday, I was excited to stand with Mayor Adams and Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer at the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center to announce the "Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent—A Blueprint for NYC's Economic Recovery."

This blueprint is a bold, comprehensive, five-borough plan with over 70 initiatives that aim to accelerate the return to pre-pandemic employment levels while simultaneously laying the foundation for the City's economic future. So much of this work is EDC's bread and butter—from our work increasing opportunity for M/W/BEs; strengthening business districts; expanding life sciences, green economy and other growing industries; and much more.

There are five key pillars of the Mayor's plan:

1. Restart our city's economic engines and reactivate the public realm

- To restart the city's economic engines and reactivate the public realm, EDC's work around quality of life in business districts across the City will continue to grow from street-by-street cleaning and public space revitalization through Cleanup Corps.

- Plus, supporting outdoor dining through the development of a “kit-of-parts,” which will both boost local manufacturing and help small restaurants implement permanent outdoor dining.

2. Support small business, entrepreneurship, and a more equitable economy

- To support small business, entrepreneurship and a more equitable economy, EDC is continuing to expand the Small Business Resource Network, a public-private partnership among EDC, the Partnership Fund for NYC, and the city’s chambers of commerce. Already, the network has supported 27,700 businesses since its launch in October 2020.
- EDC is supporting and expanding our initiatives focused on BIPOC and immigrant entrepreneurs as well as M/W/BE’s.
 - We awarded \$198M in M/W/BE contracts in FY21, over 45% of contract dollars—our highest ever. And so far in FY22 we have exceeded FY21 and accomplished over \$293M through the 2nd quarter.
 - And, as I mentioned earlier, we are in partnership with Newlab to help underrepresented founders and funders access the resources they need to succeed in NYC’s tech ecosystem.
- To further innovation in the life sciences by BIPOC- and women-led start-ups, we partner with Deerfield’s Cure which awards \$100,000 to five researchers annually and gives them access to a network of other services and support.

3. Drive inclusive sector growth and build a future-focused economy

- To drive inclusive sector growth and build a future-focused economy, we look to innovation and new industry opportunities.

- One key example is our \$1B, ten-year commitment in life sciences. It will create over 2,000 companies and 40,000 jobs while generating \$82B in overall economic impact.

4. Connect New Yorkers to quality jobs and in-demand skills

- To connect New Yorkers to quality jobs and in-demand skills, EDC is investing and shaping the offshore wind and building-efficiency industries.
- We have an unprecedented opportunity to deliver on the green jobs of the future while meeting the City's ambitious carbon and energy reduction goals. The City's nearly \$200M commitment to offshore wind will create at least 13,000 jobs and generate an expected \$1.1B in annual economic activity.

5. Plan and build for inclusive growth now and in the future

- And to plan and build for inclusive growth now and in the future, the Mayor's \$100M investment at the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center in the Bronx will save and grow 2,500 good-paying jobs and give us the opportunity to address environmental injustice suffered by this community.
- The EDC team was thrilled that the Mayor also committed \$40M toward the Hunts Point Forward plan development—to be shared in more detail in April—in partnership with the local community for open space and other public realm improvements.

To implement the Blueprint and drive a fair, equitable and resoundingly successful recovery, it is going to take leadership at every level—community, government and business—coming together. EDC is committed to working with you and all stakeholders to do our part to make this vision a reality.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My colleagues and I welcome any questions you have.



Asian American Federation

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Economic Development

March 16, 2022

Thank you Committee Chair Farías and Council Members of the Committee on Economic Development for holding this hearing and giving the Asian American Federation the opportunity to provide written and oral testimony. My name is Rui (Angel) Yin, and I am the Small Business Programs Coordinator at the Asian American Federation (AAF). AAF represents the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

Over the past two difficult years, AAF saw growing needs and demand from our community members. To better serve our community, we increased capacity and response, and we are thrilled to share that we will be opening up a new office in Murray Hill, Queens in April, from which our small business team will continue to provide direct technical and business support to business owners across the City.

Introduction

Asian New Yorkers are a large and vibrant economic engine for the city. We are the fastest-growing community, with a growth rate of 34.4% in the past decade. We now comprise 17.3% of the overall population of New York City and represent at least 10 percent of residents in 28 out of 51 of the City Council districts¹.

Economic activity generated by Asian businesses in NYC from 2012 to 2017 grew by 34%, or \$57.7 billion, which accounted for about half of net new economic activity. In addition, more than 77,000 self-employed Asians and Asian Non-Employee Businesses (NEBs) contributed over \$13 billion to the NY metro economy in the same period. Asian businesses provided a significant share of jobs in select industries, and employed over 280,000 workers, about half of new net employment in the city². Asian New Yorkers, alongside New Yorkers from other communities of color, represent 70% of NYC's essential workers, working at the frontline during the pandemic as transit, health care, cleaning service, and postal employees³.

Among Asian New Yorkers, 70% are immigrants and 67.5% of low income working-age Asian adults (18-64) have limited English proficiency⁴. While our contribution to the economy remains significant, many in our community were left in the dark during the pandemic due to lack of language access and culturally appropriate outreach efforts regarding pandemic policies and assistance programs.

¹ Khan, R. (2022). State of Change: Asian Populations Transform New York. Asian American Federation. <https://www.aafederation.org/research/state-of-change-asian-populations-transform-new-york/>

² Khan, R. (2022). Asian Small Business Report 2022 [Unpublished]. Asian American Federation.

³ Chinese Planning Council. (n.d.) Highlighting Essential Workers. <https://www.cpc-nyc.org/campaigns/essential-workers>

⁴ Khan, R. (2022). State of Change: Asian Populations Transform New York. Asian American Federation. <https://www.aafederation.org/research/state-of-change-asian-populations-transform-new-york/>



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Asian New Yorkers Face Multidimensional Challenges

Since the beginning of this pandemic, the Asian American community has withstood unprecedented trauma, from senseless attacks inspired by anti-Asian hate, to lack of language access to time-sensitive information, to experiencing the largest increase in unemployment rates across all racial groups. Our small business owners are still struggling to keep their businesses afloat while the City looks forward to the pandemic recovery.

Anti-Asian Bias and Public Safety

In light of the Atlanta Spa Shooting anniversary today, I would like to bring your attention to the second pandemic our community is facing. The rise of anti-Asian hate has deeply traumatized our community and hampered the local economic activity in our commercial corridors. In a 2020 survey⁵ AAF conducted to assess the early impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Asian small business owners, over 60% of respondents expressed fear for the safety of their staff and establishments and the lack of timely response or adequate victim support in the unfortunate event of a hate crime. Their concerns have materialized over the past year, amidst numerous anti-Asian tragedies, as well as numerous incidents of Asian small businesses being disturbed and robbed. In our work with city agencies to revitalize commercial corridors within Asian neighborhoods, safety has proven to be one of the biggest concerns among business and property owners as well as visitors and local residents.

Furthermore, according to a 2021 report by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth based on anonymized data of credit card spending in 2020⁶, consumer spending in Asian American business districts in New York City fell between 71% to 82% compared to a city average of 65% decline beginning in late February and continuing to decline into March in 2020. The same report found that the spending slowdown in Asian communities started about six weeks earlier than citywide (NYC) spending. The decline in restaurant spending was sharpest in NYC Asian American neighborhoods, especially Chinatown and Flushing, where restaurant spending declined respectively by a striking 96% and 94%, versus 85% citywide. Our commercial corridors remain relatively empty while the rest of the City is celebrating the return of tourists and office workers. As long as our local economy suffers, the longevity and sustainability of our City's economy will remain questionable. We cannot afford to delay addressing the issue of hate crime and mental health any longer--we urge the Council to prioritize addressing anti-Asian hate and public safety concerns to recovery.

Unemployment and Poverty

The challenges our small businesses faced during the pandemic also led to a surge in unemployment rates in our community. According to our 2021 research report, *Hidden In Plain Sight: Asian Poverty In The*

⁵ Kim, A., Khan, R., & Shih, H. (2021). Small Business, Big Losses. Asian American Federation. https://www.aafederation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/05/Small_Biz_Survey.pdf

⁶ June 08, 2021. "Asian American communities hit earlier and harder by COVID-19," <https://www.mastercardcenter.org/insights/asian-american-communities-hit-earlier-and-harder-by-covid-19>



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New York Metro Area, the unemployment rate of Asians in New York City doubled during the first year of the pandemic. In particular, the food services industry lost nearly three-quarters of its workforce in April 2020 (compared to 2019), with staggered recovery even now⁷. Meanwhile, our business owners have been citing difficulties in hiring skilled workers.

The skill mismatch and labor shortage is further exaggerated by anti-Asian hate and the shortage of in-language, affordable skill and certificate training programs. Job insecurity and absence of basic benefits like health care or childcare have triggered a resistance in returning to work among Asian Americans who were in the service industry prior to the pandemic. Immigrant essential workers have been the most vulnerable to the precarity of labor-intensive, low-wage, service industry jobs during the Pandemic.

Yet, much of the City's existing workforce development programs do not cater to the language needs of the Asian community, are not financially accessible or have eligibility requirements on immigration status, age and education level. In addition, the pandemic revealed the problem of the digital divide, hindering candidates from joining or completing programs like the free Construction Site Safety Training AAF is actively promoting in collaboration with SBS.

Small business owners in our community also say they need in-language certification programs for mandatory licenses for their workforce, such as food handling licenses. Our member and partner organizations that provide workforce programs also cite barriers to job placement or completion of workforce development programs, such as lack of sufficient childcare or basic income during job training periods.

In AAF's February Roundtable event on Workforce Development, our member and partner organizations shared their concerns about the lack of reliable funding to provide in-language, free, and inclusive workforce development programs. Their shared experience sheds light on the challenges our community faces in workforce development; low digital literacy, lack of affordable and in-language professional training, the mismatch between employers and the job seekers, and low industry tolerance of seniors and people with disabilities. Our community deserves a fair chance at moving into more stable, upskilled jobs with benefits—we urge the Council to provide secure funding for trusted CBOs to provide sustainable and affordable in-language training programs that cater to the needs of Asian workers.

In-Language Information and Resources for Immigrant Businesses

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on how the immigrant small business community is more vulnerable due to their immigration status and limited English proficiency (LEP). Throughout the

⁷Shih, H. & Khan, R. (2021). Hidden in Plain Sight: Asian Poverty in the New York Metro Area. Asian American Federation. <https://www.aafederation.org/hidden-in-plain-sight-asian-poverty-in-the-new-york-metro-area/>



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pandemic, we witnessed how Asian small businesses often do not meet eligibility requirements for relief programs, as well as the inadequacy of government agency-led outreach efforts with business owners –barring them from obtaining information and applying for programs for which they are eligible in a timely manner.

Median wages and earnings are also related to English speaking ability and citizenship status. Lower English speaking ability is associated with lower median earnings⁸. Asians who reported they spoke English “Very well” had median earnings of \$30,393 compared to Asians who responded “Not at All” and earned a median of \$11,601⁹. *There simply is not enough support to get the information out to hard-to-reach communities and those who need help the most are still unsure who they have to reach out to.* To this end, AAF urges the City Council to focus on providing in-language and timely information on the following topics:

- **Anti-Asian Hate and Safety Prevention**

There’s simply not enough victim- and business-support addressing anti-Asian violence. During AAF’s canvassing within the neighborhood, we discovered that business owners and their staff who experienced anti-Asian bias incidents were not adequately helped. Police told them there is little that can be done, survivors were not offered available assistance, economic losses were borne by themselves, and repeated concerns of public safety were left unaddressed. Our community is at a breaking point and the negative influence of this second pandemic of hate on our community’s economic development will not end without ample support from the City.

- **Technical Assistance to Grant/Small Business Support Programs**

In the past year, our Small Business Team has been inundated with calls from immigrant small business owners asking for information or support applying to assistance programs. Business owners called in with desperation as they were lost in terms of language access and procedural assistance. While some programs such as the Commercial Lease Assistance program offer invaluable assistance for businesses facing eviction and other conflicts with their landlords, LEP business owners were and are largely unaware of such programs, or refrain from asking for help out of fear that they will not be able to communicate with legal counsel due to language barriers.

- **Burdensome Regulations/Inspection Practices**

⁸ Shih, H. & Khan, R. (2021). Hidden in Plain Sight: Asian Poverty in the New York Metro Area. Asian American Federation. <https://www.aafederation.org/hidden-in-plain-sight-asian-poverty-in-the-new-york-metro-area/>

⁹ https://docs.google.com/document/d/17RuauTfdz3irzgsOzuGUE22-bEohxg2f4ML3NY_COtQ/edit



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Since before the pandemic, immigrant business owners have experienced inconsistent inspections and inspector practices with the added burdens of heavy fines. City agencies' regulation webinars were and are near impossible to access for LEP business owners, yet they must know all new regulations at the risk of incurring violations and fines. We strongly recommend that small business outreach efforts return to in-person outreach efforts to close this gap.

Efforts to increase educational value of inspections, as in the implementation of the Key to NYC project, have increased adherence to new regulations among immigrant business owners while nurturing a cooperative and trusting relationship between city agencies and businesses. We strongly encourage city agencies to advocate for business-friendly inspection practices that prioritize education and correction over punitive measures like burdensome fines.

- **Slow Information Dissemination on Disaster and Emergency Preparedness**

Climate hazards are already impacting New York City and communities of color are disproportionately bearing the climate burden as its impact grows every year. Thirteen New York City residents who died in Hurricane Ida were of Asian descent and had limited English proficiency¹⁰. During AAF's outreach to Asian business and property owners after Hurricane Ida last year, we witnessed tremendous economic losses for Asian businesses, many of whom went out of business. Immigrant small businesses continue to have little knowledge of how to prepare for a disaster, what to expect if a disaster happens, and remain unaware of resources available for recovery.

Alongside the lack of information and resources being provided are the issues of long translation turnout time and translation quality. Five years after the City Council passed Local Law 30, we are still not seeing relevant material being properly translated into commonly spoken Asian languages while in-language materials were offered weeks later than English materials. Many online resources are still relying on Google Translate and the quality of the translation is often questionable at best. It's crucial to make sure all New Yorkers get timely, correct information, especially in emergency situations. These gaps in information dissemination need to be addressed with adequate in-language outreach and culturally relevant engagement to ensure sustainability in our local economy– we urge the Council to make sure Local Law 30 is implemented across City agencies and results in timely, quality translations for our Asian communities.

Envisioning An Equitable, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy

New York City recently celebrated its essential workers in a ticker-tape parade and we see tourism making a slow comeback across different corners of the city, painting a hopeful prospect for economic recovery. To achieve a complete economic recovery and create a hopeful future will require the city to

¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/03/nyregion/severe-weather-alerts-languages-ida.html>



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address needs from everyone, including Asian New Yorkers and other minority groups. As we start to re-emerge from our homes into a city that now has staggering unemployment, permanently shuttered small businesses, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers wondering how their essential needs will be met, and families struggling with the grief of losing loved ones, AAF requests that the City Council:

1. Center the economy on the working class and local neighborhoods

Make sure the very people who kept the city going while most New Yorkers had the privilege of being at home during the pandemic are being protected. Preserve commercial corridors and their diversity, the building blocks of the city's economy, and incentivize residents to buy locally and businesses to hire locally.

2. Strengthen communication and interaction among different city agencies and between the government and community

AAF would like to express our appreciation for the SBS Asian American Small Business Taskforce, which connected city agencies with community stakeholders for conversations and information sharing. We encourage such facilitation of community conversations catered to immigrants and people of color on all aspects of economic development, and expand its functions to do more on-the-ground outreach and merchant organizing to strengthen its relationship with local immigrant small business communities.

3. Invest in community-based culturally competent programs, with a focus on small business support and workforce development

The city's FAIRER initiative, which offered partial amnesty to businesses that were issued violations during the pandemic, was welcome news to small business owners already struggling with financial difficulties. The COVID Resilience Small Business Grant administered by SBS was a welcome relief effort, as it reflected small business practices on the ground and its eligibility and document requirements were not too restrictive. The expansion of language access in the Commercial Lease Assistance (CLA) program was also welcomed by immigrant small business owners facing legal challenges.

AAF would also like to point to the Key to NYC initiative, which incorporated community feedback and was far more cooperative with the community. With greater in-language compliance education and outreach, inspectors were taught to offer warnings before issuing violations and direct work with community organizations led to the initiative being smoothly and successfully implemented.

AAF is pleased to work with SBS on delivering the in-language Construction Site Safety (SST) training to Chinese-speaking individuals who need this certificate to work on larger construction sites. Such workforce development programs allow members of our community to work in better paying roles in a



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safe environment. In response to our outreach efforts for this program, many workers and construction company owners have requested similar programs that address certification needs in the LEP community.

We urge the Committee and City Council to model after these great programs and to continue allocating resources to expand programs that better reflect the needs and practices of the Asian community. There needs to be continued effort to invest in new in-language programs which address the foreseeable issues and emerging needs in job mobility.

4. Provide stable funding to trusted Asian-led, Asian-serving organizations so they can continue and expand their services to the hardest-to-reach small business communities

In the past year, AAF has provided direct technical support, capacity-building and training referral services to over 2,000 small businesses and more than 100 job seekers across the City. As with our member organizations, our small business program has been functioning as a critical hub for business education and as a critical conduit between the City, our small businesses and employees. We request that the Council continue to support our work by allocating \$1 million in support for our small business program so we can continue serving immigrant small businesses and expand our reach to small business communities by adding more language capacity.

5. Make sure all information and resources are being properly translated and delivered in time, especially on disaster emergency preparedness and recovery, and the information is centrally stored

AAF applauds the additional language capacity seen in client-facing departments in SBS and increased collaboration between city agencies to bring in-language webinars such as AAF's collaboration with OATH on resolving summons. We encourage continued efforts to increase language access for the immigrant community by creating information dissemination channels and working closely with trusted CBOs to establish lines of communication and procedures on information dissemination in preparation for future emergencies. In addition, related information and resources should be integrated and stored on a central platform for easy navigation.

This Budget is a pivotal opportunity for our government to regain the trust of our immigrant communities. I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify before you today. As we work towards reopening and recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, we hope that the Council will keep in mind the urgent needs of our community and of the measures that are necessary to address these needs. While the challenges we face are daunting, there are solutions. There are organizations already engaging in the work, organizations that need your support to succeed. We look forward to working with all of you to overcome the long shadow that the pandemic has cast over our communities and together create an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future.



**New York City Council Committee on Economic Development
Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Wednesday, March 16th, 2022**

Testimony submitted by: The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF)

Thank you to Hon. Chair Farías and the Committee on Economic Development for the opportunity to offer testimony. My name is Danielle Demeuse and I am the Director of Policy for the Committee for Hispanic Children & Families, better known by its acronym, CHCF. CHCF is a non-profit community-based organization with a 40-year history of combining education, capacity-building, and advocacy to strengthen the support system and continuum of learning for children and youth from birth through school-age.

We are excited that the call for Universal Child Care is growing across New York State and City¹, among advocates, families, providers, city and state leaders, and a growing number of folks in the business community. The necessity of accessible, responsive, quality child care options for all families must be an integral part of any business, economic, and workforce recovery and development planning. There is growing research demonstrating the impact of investing in child care quality and capacity as an effective method of economic development. We know the turnaround on investment to the child care sector and the families and children who have access— not only on the immediate ability for parents to fully enter and remain in the workforce^{2 3 4} and stabilization of the thriving child care workforce⁵; but also, long term impact on economic, health, and social, outcomes for individuals, families, and our communities at large.^{6 7}

As one of four Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies in NYC,⁸ CHCF is funded by the state through federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds to support child care programs with

¹ ESCCC Principles for Universal Child Care Vision (2021) Empire State Campaign for Universal Child Care: [Principles for Universal Child Care, FINAL](#)

² Grose, J. (2021) The New York Times. Retrieved on March 10, 2022 from nytimes.com: [The Primal Scream: America's Mothers Are In Crisis - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

³ Supporting Families and Powering New York's Economic Recovery (2020) Raising NY Study: [Raising NY May 2020 Supporting Families and Powering New York's Economic Recovery](#)

⁴ Parents of Infants and Toddlers Continue to Struggle During the Ongoing Pandemic (2021). Raising NY Study: [NY- Early-Childhood-Memo-F02.12.21.pdf \(raisingnewyork.org\)](#)

⁵ Jabola-Carolus, I., Luce, S., & Milkman, R. (2021). The Case for Public Investment in Higher Pay for New York State Home Care Workers: Estimated Costs and Savings. CUNY Academic Works, CUNY Graduate Center. [The Case for Public Investment in Higher Pay for New York State Home Care Workers: Estimated Costs and Savings \(aqeny.org\)](#)

⁶ Heckman, J. (2012) Invest in Early Childhood Development: Reduce Deficits, Strengthen the Economy. Retrieved on March 10, 2022 from : <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/invest-in-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-the-economy/>

⁷ Redefining Economic Development in New York State (2022). Retrieved on March 10, 2022 from AQE.com: [final one pager childcare and homecare as economic development \(aqeny.org\)](#)

⁸ The New York City Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium: www.nyccrr.org





technical assistance and intensive coaching to support quality, holistic infant/toddler/child care across modalities; and to support parents/guardians in accessing child care that is responsive to their family's schedule and needs. Through our work as a CCR&R, CHCF predominantly (but not exclusively) delivers supports to licensed child care providers in residential settings (Group Family and Family Day Care), overwhelmingly providers whose primary language is Spanish, across all five boroughs of New York City. Citywide, these residential-based licensed programs are overwhelmingly owned and operated by women, particularly by women of color and immigrant women. This group disproportionately cares for infants and toddlers and are most able to offer non-traditional hours of care, which is particularly critical for those families who do not work Monday through Friday, 9 to 5.

Our bi-lingual provider supports span technical assistance with licensing and compliance, and intensive coaching around health and safety, as well as quality and curriculum. We also offer supports and training on sustainable business model development for these unique small businesses. It is critical that the city and all groups focused on economic and workforce development recognize child care programs, especially those in residential settings, as small businesses that are the backbone of the entire workforce, business community, and economy. Even though their stability and growth are knowingly integral to any larger plans for workforce and economic development, residential-based licensed programs are often stigmatized and marginalized and have been historically underinvested in and under-resourced by the state and city.

As a result of longstanding flaws in city systems and decisive underfunding, these providers were already on the verge of collapse as we entered the pandemic.⁹ Though many of these providers kept caring for children, especially children of essential workers, through the pandemic – jeopardizing their health and that of their families – relief was not delivered quickly enough for some, and the finite stabilization grants with federal relief dollars in 2021 have not been enough to withstand the financial devastation imposed by city systems that are stagnating or limiting their ability to enroll children just as families are steadily trying to return to the workplace. Many child care businesses have closed their doors over the past five years, both leading up to and during the pandemic; and many more are positioned to do so in the immediate future, needlessly growing child care deserts across NYC.

While New York State is launching a new competitive grant this spring, focused on creating new child care programs in communities that are child care deserts, there are limitations to both what those dollars can be used for and to their ability to prepare new child care programs to enter the existing market and thrive, given the problems with NYC's systems. We know that the state Office of Children and Family Services and CCR&Rs have been in communication with REDCs to discuss supplemental funding opportunities to meet the limitations of the child care desert grants, specifically for capital and facility expenses. It is critical that funds directed toward child care startup capital costs are established immediately to make it possible for programs to successfully make it off the ground. Providers that are positioned to expand their capacity or those who are interested in entering the field are not sitting on

⁹ OCFS Facts and Figures:

2017: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/factsheets/2017-DCCS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

2018: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/factsheets/2018-DCCS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

2019: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/factsheets/2019-DCCS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

2020: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/factsheets/2020-DCCS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

2021: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/factsheets/2021-DCCS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>





the necessary capital to cover these costs. Even with this new grant focused on creating new capacity, it is tone deaf to the fact that we have a very real child care sector with significant capacity already in existence, who have been sorely let down by state and city leaders for far too long and have been barely able to keep their heads above water. Federal stabilization dollars have been fully distributed for the most part and the city must act immediately to sustain this invaluable sector citywide.

It is critical that the city immediately and comprehensively (across multiple agencies and oversight bodies) address the systemic flaws and inequitable funding and resourcing to citywide child care sector, in all care settings and regardless of direct affiliation with the Department of Education. There must be specific funds set aside for these small businesses to support capital and facilities funding needs; as well as to stabilize this workforce given that current market rates (which are state set) and contract rates (which are offered through DOE contracts) are grossly insufficient to meet the true cost of delivering these services *with* compensation and benefits to child care workers reflective of the high value of their skills and services.

Additionally, the city needs to invest in expansion of technical assistance for these specific small businesses. There are many opportunities to strengthen relationships with existing structures and organizations who are already positioned and delivering technical assistance to these child care small businesses, to optimize the reach and impact of existing structures of support - i.e. Child Care Resource & Referral agencies. While our state contract funding does allow for limited, but effective delivery of business supports and training for long term financial sustainability within the current child care market and system, and small grants to support with some startup costs, it is insufficient to meet the critical needs of these small businesses reflective of the scale of the sector and the crisis of this moment; or to creatively expand the scope and impact of business training, technical assistance, and referral to existing funding opportunities to providers, that would not only sustain, but grow a thriving child care sector.

While the Mayor has proposed two tax breaks that would offer long term and limited child care capacity growth citywide – they target funds to business owners and developers, particularly focusing on creating child care centers, with no attention paid or resources proposed to existing child care businesses; and particularly disregarding the mostly women of color small business owners who are presently running state licensed and monitored, quality child care programs in residential settings, who have significant available capacity due to systemic flaws that are stagnating family enrollment. Immediate investments in the existing child care sector, in *all* modalities – with a particular, but not exclusive focus on the most vulnerable parts of the sector (home-based child care and child care programs that are independent of the DOE) would have more immediate stabilizing and capacity building effects.

If we truly want to actualize a universal system in the long run, we must take action *now* to stabilize and grow upon our existing child care sector and workforce, so that we have the capacity to universally offer care that centers quality and equity, and honors family need and choice. While we are calling on the Federal and State Governments to make the necessary investments, it does not remove the City's responsibilities in designing, equitably funding and resourcing, and administering responsive systems and supports that uplift the workforce at the heart of this essential sector and truly centers and reflects families needs; a sector that NYC's families, businesses, and economy can continue to rely upon.





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

Thank you.



75 Broad Street, Suite 620 | New York, NY 10004 | (212) 206-1090 | info@chcfinc.org

**Testimony to the City Council Committee on Economic Development
March 16, 2022 – Preliminary Budget Hearing**

Good afternoon Committee Members,

Thank you so much for hearing the public testimonies today. I am testifying on behalf of Exodus Transitional Community (Exodus) and as a Co-Chair of the Employment & Entrepreneurship Subcommittee with the Commission on Community Reinvestment and the Closure of Riker Island (Reinvestment Commission).

Founded in 1999, Exodus is a preventative, reentry and advocacy organization built on the fact that individuals released from incarceration need resources and support to transition successfully. We currently operate 15 sites City/State-wide, including 6 Reentry Transitional Hotels and offices throughout Rikers Island. We employ nearly 300 staff, over 80% of whom are justice-impacted, and serve 3,000 New Yorkers every year, over 90% of whom are people of color. We offer a myriad of programming for people affected by – or at risk of – justice involvement. Services include: reentry transitional housing, youth empowerment and diversion, prison/jail-based CBT groups, substance use disorder treatment, non-traditional and traditional forms of therapy, a variety of arts offerings including a music studio and podcast center, workforce development training, and transitional reentry services (such as case management, assistance obtaining vital documents, CBTs, support groups/mentorship). We also engage in robust policy/advocacy to end a racially discriminatory era of mass incarceration that has become a defining feature of America.

Our communities have been economically under-resourced for decades. The communities most impacted by incarceration also have the highest poverty rates, lowest education rates, highest food insecurity rates and poorest health outcomes/rates. For generations, justice impacted people and their families have been particularly discriminated against with respect to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Today, more than 27,000 rules bar formerly justice-involved people from holding professional licenses. Of the 27,000 licensing restrictions on those who have been formerly incarcerated, over 12,000 disqualify any individual with any type of felony, over 6,000 disqualify those with misdemeanors, roughly 19,000 exclusions are permanent and over 11,000 are mandatory, which denies agencies any discretion to consider mitigating circumstances or rehabilitation.¹

These limitations and the corresponding lack of job opportunities traps people in poverty for decades after incarceration allowing people to be perpetually punished. The vast majority of people incarcerated are released back to our communities at some point. Unfortunately, they often lack the education and training needed to obtain living wage employment. According to a 2013 Alliance report: 56% of federal incarcerated persons, 67% of people incarcerated in state prisons, and 69% of individuals incarcerated/detained in local jails have not completed high school.² In addition, formerly incarcerated people experience rampant discrimination when searching for employment: having a criminal conviction reduces the likelihood of a job applicant receiving a call back by 50% for white applicants and by nearly two-thirds for Black applicants.³ Furthermore, justice-impacted people who do obtain employment are likely to begin their working lives earning roughly \$7,100 less per year than individuals of similar socioeconomic status without a criminal record. Consequently, they trail their peers by more than \$20,000 in income annually.⁴

¹ Haggerty, J. (May 2018) HOW OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING LAWS HARM PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE FORMERLY INCARCERATED. R STREET POLICY STUDY NO. 143. <https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Final-No.-143-for-posting.pdf>

² Alliance for Excellent Education. (September 12, 2013) Saving Futures, Saving Dollars: The Impact of Education on Crime Reduction and Earnings. Available at: <https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SavingFutures.pdf>

³ Pager, D. The Mark of a Criminal Record. AJS Volume 108 Number 5 (March 2003): 937–75. https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/pager/files/pager_ajs.pdf

⁴ <https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/EconomicImpactReport.pdf>

The Reinvestment Commission worked extensively and collaboratively to highlight key recommendations the City can take to impact economic development and ensure economic equity through investments in opportunities to reduce reincarceration, build entrepreneurship opportunities, and invest resources in communities most impacted by mass incarceration. We highlight five key guiding principles to fulfill this mission including recommendations for each.

Principle 1: Remove all legal barriers that prohibit individuals with convictions from obtaining employment and/or professional licenses.

➤ Recommendations:

- Support New York State Clean Slate legislation (the legislative version), which ensures people's criminal convictions will be sealed after 3 years for misdemeanor convictions and 7 years for felony convictions, through drafting a resolution of support.
- Automate the process upon sentencing for individuals to obtain certificates of relief from disability, which is a certificate issued by the Court that is intended to help remove barriers for individuals seeking employment/licensing.
- Enact City Council Intro 1881 (assist with obtaining birth certificates and education records) to ensure detained/incarcerated people have had their identity verified and are authorized to be hired for employment in the United States (I-9 compliant) prior to their release from DOC custody.

Principle 2: Invest in multi-generational education/training centers and initiatives in the communities most impacted by incarceration; and such centers and initiatives must focus on stable career pathways.

➤ Recommendations:

- Provide detained/incarcerated people with access to New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funding to complete an educational/vocational program.
- Extend Summer Youth Employment (SYE) as a year-round program to increase opportunities for paid transitional employment; allow students from the communities most impacted by incarceration to have top priority to access, regardless of their current educational status.
- Expand Bridge Program Funding, with a focus on STEM and Green industries, without discounting fields in City Sanitation, Parks, and other horticulture fields.
- Developing Educational/Training Centers in the communities most impacted by incarceration that focus on the tools and skills needed (such as language proficiency) to obtain stable career pathways, with a primary focus on the Green and STEM fields.

Principle 3: Invest in entrepreneurship programs and small businesses, including nontraditional opportunities.

➤ Recommendations:

- Eliminate licensing costs for justice-impacted communities to open their own businesses, such as marijuana dispensaries.
- Increase funding for the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative.
- Provide specific funding for targeted approaches to support justice-impacted communities. For example, providing funding to someone who was incarcerated for cannabis to start their own dispensary upon release.
- Support small businesses in the communities most impacted by incarceration by paying 30% of their employment taxes.
- Help people who desire to be entrepreneurs attain business permits and licensing. In addition, provide workshops and training, such as the Incarcerated Persons to Entrepreneurs program, as well as financial literacy courses, including accounting.

Principle 4: Ensure people who are detained/incarcerated have access to fair labor wages and benefits.

➤ Recommendations:

- Have the person's time spent detained/incarcerated while working count towards retirement, social security, and living wages.
- The City Council should submit a resolution in support of passing the Prison Minimum Wage Act (A1275/S3138), as well as work on drafting city legislation that supports labor reform within the City's corrections system. Salary can be based on the scale outlined in the Prison Minimum Wage Act (\$3.00 an hour). This will allow people to save money during incarceration that can support reentry, as well as provide a legal pathway to protect access to fair labor wages.

Principle 5: Invest in vocational and hard-skills training, and GED and college programs, for individuals who are detained/incarcerated.

➤ Recommendations:

- Invest in hard-skills training for incarcerated people that are connected to career-oriented employment upon release. Skills should be comparable to the current market, and additional funding should be invested to offer wrap-around supportive services to help them maintain employment/stability.
- Provide detained/incarcerated people with access to technology. Ensure that the tablet program is offered to all detained/incarcerated people and that this technology remains in all facilities in 2022 and beyond.
- Support the drafting of this Commission Subcommittee's plan to infuse the Import Model⁵ into the Department of Corrections (DOC). Detained/incarcerated people would work in the community during the last third of their sentence and retain employment in those positions upon release. Educational and vocational training would be overseen by private and public business sectors and non-profit providers.

The plan to infuse restorative justice into all of our systems and decarcerate Rikers Island to reach a smaller, safer jail system can only be done through a coordinated legislative and fiscal plan. The City has an opportunity to divest from inflated budgets (such as the Department of Corrections that has over 8 times the national staffing average yet remains on a federal monitor for egregious use of force rates) and invest in communities. We have an opportunity as a City to fund solutions to scale while creating true systemic transformation. As a Commission Member, Vice President of a leading reentry organization, and most importantly, a survivor of Rikers Island – a toxic penal colony, it is my hope that this Committee works to infuse the above recommendations into the City budget.

Thank you,

Kandra Clark, MPA

Vice President of Policy & Strategy with Exodus Transitional Community

Co-Chair of the Employment & Entrepreneurship Subcommittee with the Commission on Community Reinvestment and the Closure of Riker Island

⁵ Prisons/jails in Norway are often considered as "models", mostly because they reflect the Norwegian welfare-punishment approach. The penitentiary system is organized by the so-called import model: the prisoners lose their freedom of movement, but they are still part of the Norwegian welfare state. The Norwegian Correctional Service, under the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, is in charge of the execution of the sentence, but the welfare service (as education, health care, social welfare services, etc.) is under the jurisdiction of the same authorities as for those outside. <https://www.prison-insider.com/countryprofile/prisons-norway2019>. Kandra Clark also personally toured Norway/Amsterdam facilities with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the Department of Corrections in 2019 and is happy to conduct a presentation for City Council Members.

Testimony: New York City Council Hearing Committee on Economic Development

**Submitted to
New York City Council**

**Submitted by
Diana Caba
AVP for Policy & Community Engagement
Hispanic Federation**

March 18, 2022

Good afternoon, Chair Farias, Ranking Members Avilés, Gutiérrez, Kagan, Riley, Salamanca, and Williams and all members of the Committee on Economic Development, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Diana Caba, and I am the Assistant Vice President for Policy and Community Engagement for Hispanic Federation (HF); a non-profit organization seeking to empower and advance Hispanic communities through community programs and legislative advocacy.

HF's testimony today is also informed by over 38 Latino non-profit organizations in all five boroughs that contributed to the development of *La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for New York City's Latino Community*¹; a policy blueprint with recommendations on how the New York City Mayor and Council can improve the lives of nearly 2.5 million Latinos who call New York City home.

New York City's economy has been significantly shaken by the pandemic. The COVID-19 lockdowns cost Latino families their jobs and their businesses. For the poorest Latino New Yorkers, the loss of employment meant long lines at community food banks and concerns over being evicted from their homes. The economic recovery from this crisis will require significant investment from the City. Much of that recovery will depend on addressing immediate concerns such as jobs, small business support, food security, and, importantly, affordable housing and eviction protection. It will be especially important to craft an economic recovery agenda that reaches Latinos in all five boroughs, expands loans and grants for businesses hurt by COVID-19, helps individuals and families stay in their homes, and supports workers' sense of stability and security by expanding programs such as the City's retirement savings program. HF's network of Latino nonprofits is committed to continue to serve as a connector and resource for workers and businesses in New York City, helping them access government support and providing those in need with educational, technical, and social assistance programs.

¹ Hispanic Federation. "La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for New York City's Latino Community," 2021.
https://www.hispanicfederation.org/advocacy/reports/la_gran_manzana_the_road_ahead_for_new_york_citys_latino_community/.



The policy proposals in *La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for New York City's Latino Community* reflect the best thinking about the most significant challenges facing our communities. They build not just on the wisdom of our most respected nonprofit community leaders but also their decades of on-the-ground experience serving those in need.

Therefore, the City Council can support working families and create a brighter future for all of New York City by:

Boosting Job Quality & Growth

Boosting job quality and growth by enforcing and expanding current laws and policies such as \$15 minimum wage, pay equity and anti-harassment laws; increasing safe and healthy workplace protections like Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) on the city level and enforcing accountability with an eye towards emergency management planning for the future; expanding the city's retirement savings program to informal and nonprofit workers and creating a benefits package (such as health, dental, vision, life, and disability insurance) for informal workers to purchase; supporting the enforcement and expansion of paid family leave policies; and streamlining the system to ensure enforcement of the NYC Fair Chance Act by creating a straightforward and accessible system for job seekers to submit complaints if they feel that a potential employer violated the NYC Fair Chance Act and providing community education on how to submit complaints.

Educating the community via know your rights campaigns to ensure workers are informed is critically important. Also critical is designing and implementing culturally competent know your rights campaign to ensure that workers are informed about city minimum wage and benefits, including paid sick leave; ensuring that employers are informed about restrictions on hiring practices regarding women, including inquiring about marital status, salary history, family planning, number of children, etc.; and launching Know Your Rights education programs for women re-entering the workforce due to family leave / pandemic unemployment.

Leveraging Workforce 1 resources are also vital for access to opportunities. The community would benefit greatly from requiring Workforce1 centers to build and maintain relationships with local community-based organizations (CBOs) via "meet and greet" sessions to foster information sharing about programs and opportunities available to neighborhood residents; expanding Workforce1 center training offerings to focus on resilient employment opportunities; fostering collaboration between Workforce1 centers and CBOs to provide workforce trainings; and formalizing a process by which Workforce1 centers work with CBOs to find job placement for clients enrolled with workforce development programs and increase hires of neighborhood residents.

Equally important is expanding workforce development programs and wraparound services. This includes properly funding adult literacy (English for Speakers of Other Languages, Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency), and immigration services to city workforce development programs to help address the needs of immigrant job seekers; encouraging grantees of city-funded workforce development programs to work with all community members, regardless of



criminal history; increasing training and opportunities for “green jobs”, jobs requiring digital skills, and remote employment options; increasing access to childcare and encourage employers and the City to provide childcare for children of employees; and addressing transportation issues that affect employment prospects.

Supporting Small Business

Supporting small businesses through educational workshops that continue to expand entrepreneurial training to foster growth amongst Latino and immigrant small business owners and CEOs is crucial for entrepreneurs hard hit by the pandemic. Some ways to accomplish this include providing financial education for efficient financial management and capacity building for small business operations; educating small business owners about the importance of credit, opportunities to expand their line of credit, and have confidence with financial institutions; creating microlending opportunities for small business owners and increasing training and access to financial technology; expanding access to services for harder hit communities considering the pandemic; encouraging and supporting women-led enterprises by investing in the cooperative movement; and increasing trainings and opportunities for women entrepreneurs, especially home-based businesses, and remote opportunities.

Additionally, creating specialized campaigns to support local businesses in Latino and immigrant neighborhoods require targeted attention. This can be achieved by encouraging tourism in East Harlem, Upper Manhattan and the outer boroughs intentionally focusing on Latino and immigrant neighborhoods in all five boroughs; analyzing the equitable distribution of tourism marketing funds to Latino and immigrant communities especially the “New York is Back” campaign; launching ‘shop local’ campaigns in Latino and immigrant neighborhoods; implementing culturally competent outreach and education campaigns to inform small business owners about various forms of access to capital and ensure equitable access to capital for small to medium enterprises; and launching a Know Your Rights campaign to educate small business employers and employees about gender and LGBTQ regulations regarding non-discriminatory hiring practices. Equally important is launching special projects for small businesses like developing physical, safe marketplaces for informal vending; and uplifting and strengthening informal businesses by decriminalizing street vending.

Investing in our community and its future health and success is an investment in New York City. It is precisely because of the central role that Latinos play in both the recovery and future of our City that we respectfully ask you to make the bold and necessary investments in our community. Investing in our community and its future health and success is an investment in New York City. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you.

ROGER THOMAS
Chief Executive Officer
FLORA LUYANDO
Chief Wellness Officer
ERIC SPENCER
Chief Compliance Officer



March 16, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Chairwoman Amanda Farias
And Committee on Economic Development
250 Broadway, Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007
Email: District18@council.nyc.gov

Re: Cannabis Funding for Cannabis Entrepreneurs in New York City

Madame Chair Farias and Members of the Committee,

My name is Roger Thomas and I am the CEO of Mello Tymes LLC, a Minority, Latina, and Returning Citizen owned Social Equity Brand hoping to partake in the new Cannabis Industry that is supposed to create opportunities to our communities that have been ravaged by the War on Drugs for decades. I too have been directly impacted by the inequitable prohibition.

I come before this Committee today confident that our elected leaders in New York City, the undisputed Financial Capital of the World, will be able to solve the most pressing issue in the white dominated Cannabis Industry (Industry). A lack of access to capital is the main barrier that the Industry has created that keeps black and brown communities from becoming entrepreneurs.

New York has a very robust and inclusive adult use cannabis law centered on racial and social justice. The law's goal is to allot 50% of all cannabis licenses to Social Equity Participants. Recently, New York took a Request for Information for a proposed program by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY). This particular program would create cannabis opportunities for 100-200 men and women with prior cannabis convictions throughout the State including New York City. DASNY's goal is to remove the real estate barrier to entry. The proposed program would allow some individuals with prior cannabis convictions get a head start. However, the proposed program would leave thousands of individuals behind at the starting gate who have been incarcerated for their cannabis conviction but could not meet all of the criteria that DASNY propose. Anyone with a cannabis conviction should get an equal opportunity to start at the same time. The provocateurs of the War on Drugs rounded everybody up leaving nothing but carnage behind.

We believe that this City Council has a chance to create additional resources for its residents that are not chosen through DASNY's potential program. Also, without the support of the City, current cannabis businesses which are all white-owned and operating in the City will expand their footprint too and leave those of us who have borne the brunt of the War on Drugs at a great disadvantage to compete or even able to participate because of the numerous and biased barriers associated with the Industry as a whole.

Now that cannabis is legal recreationally in New York City, I am asking this esteemed Committee, whether we will be treated the same as other small businesses including restaurants by being eligible for grants, loans and technical assistance.

ROGER THOMAS
Chief Executive Officer
FLORA LUYANDO
Chief Wellness Officer
ERIC SPENCER
Chief Compliance Officer



Therefore, and for the sake of time, I am requesting that this Committee allot \$100 Million to a cannabis fund. Black and brown communities have always paid their fair share of taxes and deserve the right to have access to grants and loans to open and operate cannabis businesses in New York City, the Financial Capital of the World. The grants and loans will enable those of us who are still Social Equity Participants to get access to technical assistance, help with applications, real estate, security and inventory. In turn, these cannabis businesses would provide jobs.

In conclusion, I truly believe without reservation that New York City is in a position to move the needle and start the path to equity, inclusion, and fairness for those of us harmed by the War on Drugs to participate in the new Cannabis Green Rush. Thank you and I am here for any questions from the Committee.

Thank you,
Roger Thomas
CEO and COO
Mello Tymes LLC
917-809-0420
roger@mellotymes.com



SBS Hearing by New Immigrant Community Empowerment, NICE.

Angelica Novoa, angelica@nynice.org

Director of Training & Education

Nilbia Coyote, nilbia@nynice.org

Chief of Staff

- Good afternoon, my name is Angelica Novoa. I'm the Director of Training & Education at New Immigrant Community Empowerment, NICE. We are grateful to share our testimony on behalf of our organization and the thousands of immigrants, day laborers, and families in New York City.
- We urge the City Council to invest in the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, the Low Wage Worker Support, and the Construction Site Safety Training to continue the work that organizations such as New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE) provides to over 15,000 immigrant workers per year.
- Day laborers, especially newly-arrived immigrants and women work in some of the most unsafe and unregulated industries. They experience rampant wage theft, pervasive construction accidents, unchecked workplace hazards, and lack of access to free, in Spanish and culturally dignified training.
- This is particularly true for elder workers, and women who are transitioning from domestic work to construction.
- On day laborer corners (known as paradas), day laborers also lack access to workforce development training and access to shelter, water, bathrooms, and other basic necessities.
- The goal of the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative is to work together with NICE, and other job centers, and address these issues by connecting workers to critical services, providing training on safety and legal rights, leading wage theft legal clinics, facilitating access to good jobs, and, most importantly, creating safe, dignified spaces for day laborers looking for a

job. The services we provide at NICE Center for Workers are more essential now than ever before.

- Every year, over 7,500 workers use NICE Job Center during the morning shift, and NICE dispatches over 1,200 jobs per year. Only in the last 2 years, our membership has increased up to 12,000 members because of the pandemic.
- This past year, more than 3,200 workers participated in our Construction Site Safety Training (OSHA and SST), and our Professional Development skills training, which includes painting, plumbing, demolition, framing, digital literacy, ESOL and Apprenticeship programs. One-third of the participants were women.
- Through our partnership with SBS, and the Site Safety Training under Local Law 196, NICE has provided over 2,000 SST cards to our members and continue to empower them in the use of the new Training Connect card.
- Additionally, our NICE center referred approximately 1,500 people to “critical services”, including health clinics, registration to NYC Care, legal services, financial services, among others.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, partnering with MOIA and other agencies, NICE has distributed more than \$3.3 million dollars in direct cash relief, close to 200,000 meal and grocery packages to help fight the growing hunger among immigrant workers, especially day laborers, and connected tens of thousands of immigrant workers and their families to vaccines and COVID testing.
- We urge the Council to continue investing in the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, the Low Wage Worker Support, the Construction Site Safety Training, to empower thousands of day laborers, women and men in the construction industry and fight for their dignity and their economic recovery.
- In particular, we urge the Council to renew and expand the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative Coalition budget for FY23 to \$5.4 million (an increase of approximately \$1.6 million) to expand the access to workforce development and training opportunities for immigrants, day laborer centers and low income New Yorkers. We also urge the Council to renew and expand the Site Safety Training funding under Local Law 196.
- Thank you very much for your time and consideration.



Immigration Hearing

- Good afternoon, my name is Estefania Galvis I'm the Director of Workforce Development at New Immigrant Community Empowerment, or NICE. We're grateful to share our testimony on behalf of our organization and the thousands of immigrants, day laborers, and families in New York City.
- We urge the City Council to invest in the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, the Low Wage Worker Support, and the Construction Site Safety Training to continue the work that organizations such as New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE) provides to over 15,000 immigrant workers per year.
- Day laborers, especially newly-arrived immigrants and women work in some of the most unsafe and unregulated industries. They experience rampant wage theft, pervasive construction accidents, unchecked workplace hazards, and lack of access to free, in Spanish and culturally dignified training. This is particularly true for older workers, and women who are transitioning from domestic work to construction.
- On day laborer corners (known as paradass), day laborers also lack access to shelter, water, bathrooms, and other basic necessities.
- The goal of the DLWI is to work together with NICE, and other job centers, and address these issues by connecting workers to critical services, providing training on safety and legal rights, leading wage theft clinics, facilitating access to good jobs, and, most importantly, creating safe, dignified spaces for day laborers looking for a job. The services we provide at NICE Center for Workers are more essential now than ever before.
- Every year, over 7,500 workers use NICE Job Center during the morning shift, and NICE dispatches over 1,200 jobs per year. Only in the last 2 years, our membership has increased up to 12,000 members because of the pandemic. Day laborers who secure work through Centers like ours experience less wage theft, higher wages and work development.
- This past year, more than 3,200 workers participated in our Construction Site Safety Training, and our Professional Development skills training. This training included painting, plumbing, demolition, framing, Apprenticeship

programs, ESL classes through the Adult Literacy ,digital literacy and more. One-third of the participants were women.

- Every year, NICE hosts 100 workshops where members learn about their rights as immigrants and workers and we refer approximately 1,500 people to “critical services”, including health clinics, registration to NYC Care, legal services, financial services, among others.
- **Since the onset of the pandemic**, NICE has distributed more than \$3.3 million dollars in direct cash relief, close to 200,000 meal and grocery packages to help fight the growing hunger among immigrant workers, especially day laborers, and connected tens of thousands of immigrant workers and their families to vaccines and COVID testing.
- We urge the Council to renew and expand the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative Coalition budget for FY23 to \$5.4 million to increase the access to workforce development and training opportunities for immigrants, day laborer centers and low income New Yorkers. We also urge the Council to renew and expand the Site Safety Training funding under Local Law 196,, the Low Wage Worker Support and the Adult Literacy Initiative to empower thousands of day laborers, women and men in the construction industry and fight for their dignity and their economic recovery.
- It's more important than ever that New York City protect immigrants and do everything we can to help them get the services they need and deserve to succeed in our City.



Economic Development hearing

- Good morning, my name is Francisco Tecaxco
- I am the (TITLE) at New Immigrant Community Empowerment, or NICE. We're grateful to share our testimony on behalf of our organization and the thousands of immigrants, day laborers, and families in New York City.
- We urge the City Council to invest in the **Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, the Low Wage Worker Support, and the Construction Site Safety Training** to continue the work that organizations such as NICE provides to over 15,000 immigrant workers per year.
- Immigrant Workers are Essential to NYC's Economic Recovery. They built construction sites, delivered food, cleaned houses, buildings and hospitals, and continue to do so as the city reopens.
- They work in some of the most unsafe and unregulated industries. They experience wage theft, construction accidents, workplace hazards, and lack of access to free, dignified training.
- On day laborer corners (known as paradass), day laborers also lack access to workforce development training, and to shelter, water and bathrooms.
- The goal of the **Day Laborer Workforce Initiative** is to work together with NICE, and address these issues by creating access to good jobs, providing training on safety and legal rights, and creating dignified spaces for day laborers looking for a job.
- Every year, over 7,500 workers use NICE Job Center and we dispatch over 1,200 dignified jobs per year.
- With the **City Cleanup Corps**, NICE created an apprenticeship program for women workers who harness their skills by rebuilding the homes of New Yorkers affected by Hurricane Ida. In this program, so far 44 women have been trained and they have helped rebuild 23 houses, affecting over 100 low income immigrant community members.
- The **Low Wage Worker Support funding** is key to ensure we can meet the increasing demand for **wage theft support**. Every month, more than 60

workers come to NICE to report cases of wage theft. We help each person try to recover their wages, and make sure they know their rights.

- This past year, more than 3,200 workers participated in our **Construction Site Safety Training**, and our Professional Development skills training, including painting, plumbing, demolition, framing, Apprenticeship programs, ESL classes through Adult Literacy, digital literacy and more. One-third of the participants were women.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, NICE has distributed more than \$3.3 million dollars in direct cash relief, close to 200,000 meal and grocery packages, and connected tens of thousands of immigrant workers to vaccines and COVID testing.
- We urge the Council to continue investing in the **Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, the Low Wage Worker Support, the Construction Site Safety Training, and the Adult Literacy Initiative** to empower thousands of day laborers, women and men in the construction industry and fight for their dignity and their economic recovery.
- In particular, we urge the Council to renew and expand the Day Laborer **Workforce Coalition** budget for **FY23** to \$5.4 million. We also urge the Council to renew and expand the **Site Safety Training funding** under **Local Law 196**.
- Thank you so much for your time.

The Honorable Amanda Farías
250 Broadway, Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007

Dear Madam Chair,

My thanks to you and to the Council Members of the Committee on Economic Development for this opportunity to submit my written testimony requesting your investment in the outreach and education needed to ensure that critical legislation like Intro 339 is understood, complied with, and enforced, to support over 5,000 domestic workers and employers this year. My name is Salua Baida, and I am a Latina lawyer, the daughter of a now retired housekeeper, the descendent of Mexican and Lebanese immigrants, the mother of a Queens kid, and a lover of books—and I am also a domestic employer and an advocate for domestic workers as a member of Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network. Hand in Hand is a national network of employers of nannies, housecleaners and home attendants working for dignified and respectful working conditions that benefit the employer and worker alike. Hand in Hand is a member organization of the NYC Coalition for Domestic Work, along with National Domestic Workers Alliance-NYC Chapter, Adhikaar, and Carroll Gardens Association. Together we represent 30,000 domestic workers and employers across New York City.

As a domestic employer, I write to you to request your support for the Domestic Worker and Employer Empowerment Initiative, a new City Council Initiative for FY23 that will provide much needed funding to support outreach, education, and enforcement support to over 5,000 domestic workers and employers this year. There are over 200,000 domestic workers and nearly one million domestic employers in New York City, and while we have celebrated many transformative wins over the past decade including the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, Paid

Safe and Sick Leave, and most recently Intro 339, a majority of domestic employers still do not have adequate guidance of what these laws entail, and how they can create a fair and safe workplace for the domestic workers they employ, or how to comply or enforce these laws. The initiative is requesting \$300,000 to enable the coalition to broaden their capacity to conduct comprehensive outreach and education so that domestic employers know the laws and are able to comply with the laws protecting domestic workers.

Today, I am joining the NYC Commission on Human Rights to celebrate the passage of Intro 339, which expands human rights protections to domestic workers. Now is the time to invest in the outreach and education needed to ensure that critical legislation like this is enforced. Thank you for your consideration, Madam Chair Farias and Committee Members. I look forward to continuing to support the Coalition alongside you, to build a city where domestic work is valued and dignified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Salua Baida', written in a cursive style.

Ms. Salua Baida, Esq.

Queens, NY, 11375

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TAKEROOT JUSTICE

**Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Economic Development
Preliminary Budget Hearing for FY 2023
March 16, 2022**

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Farías and members of the Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Višnja Vujica, and I am speaking today as Staff Attorney in the Equitable Neighborhoods practice of TakeRoot Justice. TakeRoot works with grassroots groups, neighborhood organizations and community coalitions to help make sure that people of color, immigrants, and other low-income residents who have built our city are not pushed out in the name of “progress.”

TakeRoot and 19 partner organizations are part of a citywide Community Land Trust (CLT) Initiative that seeks \$3 million in City Council discretionary funding in FY2023, to develop CLTs and permanently affordable housing, commercial and community spaces, in all five boroughs of NYC. CLTs are organizing in Black, brown and immigrant neighborhoods across NYC to stabilize housing, combat speculation, and ensure a just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We urge the Committee and Council to support \$3 million in funding for the Citywide CLT Initiative, in the FY2023 budget. (Please see attached one-pager.)

Launched in FY2020, the citywide CLT Initiative has catalyzed CLT organizing in the South and Northwest Bronx, East Harlem, Richmond Hill, Brownsville, East New York and beyond. CLTs are community-controlled nonprofits that own land and ensure that it is used to provide permanently affordable housing and other community needs. CLTs are flexible and can support permanently affordable rental housing, limited-equity cooperatives, and 1-4 family homes at risk of foreclosure, as well as commercial and cultural spaces, community gardens, community-owned solar, microgrids and other infrastructure.

The CLT Initiative has made major strides— engaging thousands of renters, homeowners and small business owners in education and organizing; developing CLT steering committees and founding boards; incorporating new CLTs; and acquiring and preserving hundreds of permanently- and deeply-affordable housing units as well as community and retail spaces. Emerging CLTs have completed comprehensive property research and planning in their CLT catchment areas, and formalized developer and other strategic partnerships.



At TakeRoot, we use the CLT Initiative funding to provide legal services to CLTs in New York City— everything from education on orientation and incorporation, to transactional representation in negotiating ground leases and joint venture agreements. This fiscal year, we represented the East Harlem El Barrio CLT on a precedent-setting transaction, in which they took title to four City-owned buildings— which had been in the limbo of the Tenant Interim Lease program for decades. We worked to negotiate the terms of the deal, *and* to make sure that residents and CLT board members were included in these technical conversations so they could drive decision-making. We also represented the Bronx CLT and Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition as they established their CLT as an independent organization, developed board members, and have been exploring both preservation and development projects. In addition, we regularly advise groups that are considering forming community land trusts about the considerations and path to formation— several of these groups are today, sharing their stories with this council and seeking funding so they can take next steps on the path. Finally, in addition to direct legal services, we provide technical assistance and trainings on topics like the preservation potential of properties with municipal, CLT governance, and potential ground lease terms to other members of the initiative.

Renewed FY2023 discretionary funding will build on this tremendous progress, as more groups secure legal and technical assistance, launch CLT operations, sustain comprehensive organizing and community planning, and acquire and steward properties for long-term preservation. In the coming year, we will be working with East Harlem El Barrio CLT as they close out their construction loans and enter into their permanent legal structure with the Mutual Housing Association that they have incubated to be the owner of the buildings on their land. We will support the legal formation of community land trusts in Edgemere, Queens and Flatbush, Brooklyn, where we are already working with steering committees aiming to establish CLTs to stabilize their neighborhoods.

We would like to be able to meet the need for both trainings and individual representation more fully— as the CLT network grows, and individual CLTs begin to develop and require more advanced legal support, we will need additional resources for be able to provide that support. The increase in funding that the Initiative is seeking would be instrumental for us to be able to do that.

CLTs are a powerful tool to expand community control of land and stabilize housing in the wake of the pandemic. Strong CLTs, combined with policymaking that removes land and housing from the speculative market, will be key to a just recovery in Black and brown neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic.

We urge the City Council to redouble its commitment to CLTs at this critical time, and thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Contact:

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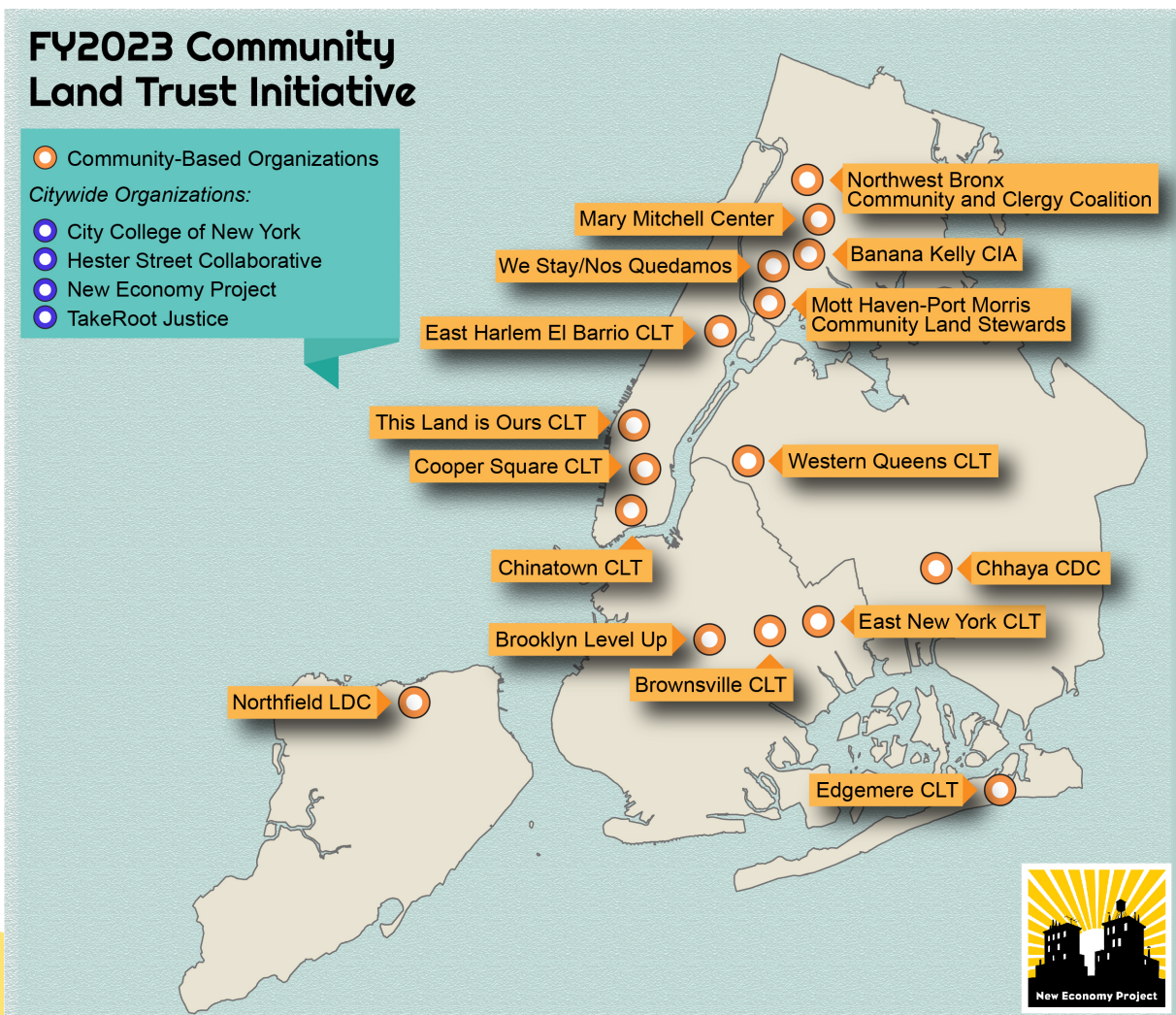


Community Land Trust Initiative

FY2023 Discretionary Funding Request

The **citywide Community Land Trust (CLT) Initiative** requests **\$3 million** in FY2023 City Council discretionary funding to support 20 organizations working to develop CLTs and permanently-affordable housing, commercial and community spaces. The initiative combats displacement and promotes community-led development in Black and brown neighborhoods hardest-hit by the pandemic – by incubating CLTs and providing comprehensive outreach, education, organizing, and legal and technical support.

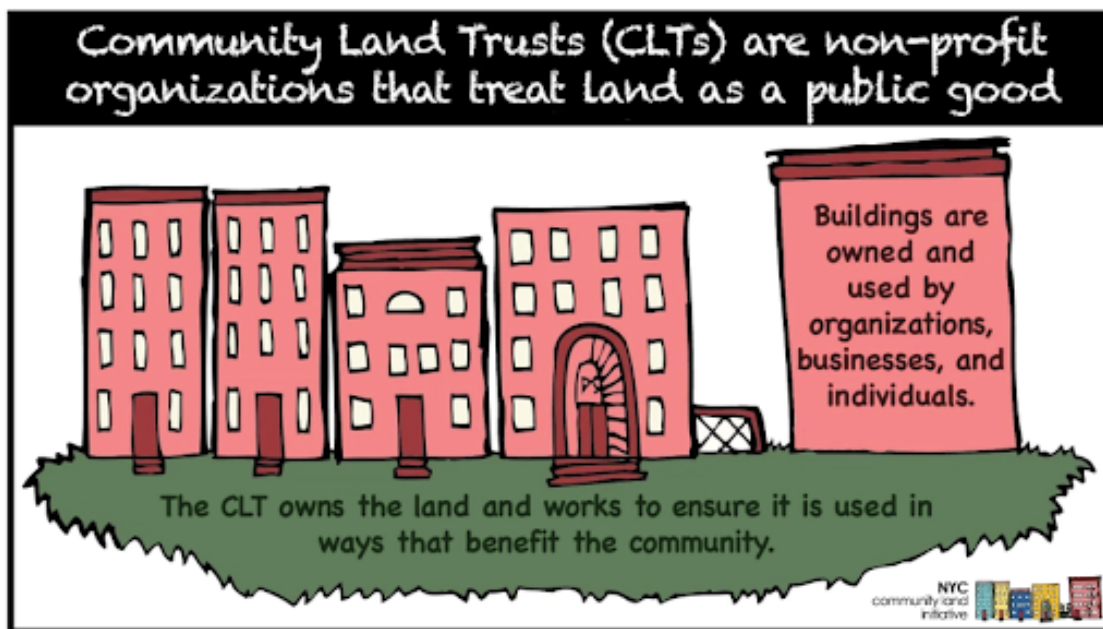
Launched in FY2020, the initiative has catalyzed the growth of CLTs across the five boroughs. Groups have engaged thousands of New Yorkers in community and tenant organizing and neighborhood planning; surveyed vacant and underutilized property in their communities; preserved hundreds of units of permanently-affordable, tenant-run housing – including more than 80 recent acquisitions; and advanced campaigns to shield land and housing from predatory development.



In FY2023, the CLT initiative will engage two new groups and deepen CLT capacity to steward land and housing. We will engage 20 organizations to:

- ◆ Provide 100+ CLT education and organizing sessions – in multiple languages – for tenants, homeowners, small business owners, and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Develop training curricula to support community and tenant governance.
- ◆ Provide 50 legal and technical assistance engagements to emerging CLTs on incorporation, bylaws, developer partnerships, property feasibility research, and more.
- ◆ Provide capacity-building training for 50 CLT board and steering committee members.
- ◆ Complete feasibility studies and bring more properties into CLT stewardship.

Over the long-term, the CLT initiative will create and preserve thousands of units of deeply- and permanently-affordable housing; provide affordable commercial space for small and worker-owned businesses; support community solar and other resilient infrastructure; and build community wealth in historically-redlined Black and brown neighborhoods.



CLTs protect public subsidy by taking land and housing out of the market – ensuring that housing stays affordable, over generations. CLTs are flexible and support diverse community needs, from limited-equity co-ops and mutual housing to commercial and mixed-use development, cultural and green spaces, and more. Manhattan's Cooper Square CLT and East Harlem El Barrio CLT, for example, provide housing that is affordable to families earning 30-35% AML, as well as storefronts for two dozen community-serving small businesses.

With evictions and speculation looming in the wake of COVID-19, NYC must invest in CLTs and democratic housing and land ownership models that combat displacement, stabilize neighborhoods, and promote community safety and self-determination. To learn more about CLTs in NYC, visit nyccli.org.

Justin Collins

Workforce Professionals Training Institute

New York City Council Testimony

Joint Hearing – Committee on Economic Development and Committee on Oversight and Investigations

The City's Evolving Workforce Development Plans in the Wake of the Pandemic

Monday, March 21 – 1pm

Good Afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Justin Collins, and I represent Workforce Professionals Training Institute (WPTI). WPTI increases the effectiveness of people, programs, and organizations that are committed to generating pathways out of poverty through employment. Our three-tiered approach strengthens capacity at all levels of the workforce development system, incorporating professional training and skill-building for individual workforce development professionals; capacity-building for programs and organizations that provide job training, placement, and wraparound services; and systems building to create linkages, foster research and influence funding and best practice priorities. We serve 80% of New York City's CBOs providing workforce services and their staff, a community that is overwhelmingly made up of women, people of color, and disproportionately women of color.

As mentioned by my colleagues at the New York City Employment and Training Coalition and others, we are encouraged by the Mayor's plans for workforce development, but we are hoping to see more specifics with regard to investments, funding, and timelines, and we want to stress the importance of racial and economic equity in the city's approach to its economic recovery. Workforce development must play a central role in this recovery, as hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers have been disconnected from employment, and the labor market more broadly, and they're looking to return to work in an economy that has fundamentally changed. This changed, increasingly digital economy requires new approaches, and new investment in workforce development.

We echo the Coalition's ask for \$250 million for reemployment programs, which will play a clear role in the city's recovery, and connecting displaced workers to reemployment. We also support an investment of \$100M in workforce training programs annually, including \$20 million for bridge and pre-apprenticeship programming, \$15 million to support development and scaling of new programming and required digital infrastructure, and the development of a Workforce Fund. And we want to stress the importance of having workforce providers and the workforce development community at the table when decisions are being made regarding the city's economic recovery.

I also want to emphasize a few key areas where we believe the city must place its focus, its efforts, and its investment.

Capacity Building

As the city emerges into a changed economy in which workers must be prepared for an increasingly digital labor market, shifts in sectors, and more, workforce development professionals and organizations require real support, training, and capacity building in order to meet changing needs. We've not only experienced a pandemic, but significant losses to the city's retail and hospitality sectors, which have often provided significant entry-level opportunities to young workers and others looking to enter the workforce for the first time. Meanwhile, with investments in areas like technology, green jobs, healthcare, and life sciences, workers will need to be prepared for a new array of occupations and career pathways. Workforce providers themselves need to be upskilled and reskilled for this new labor market, including in sector-based approaches to recruitment, training, and employer engagement, and this requires real investment for the public workforce system.

Digital Transformation of Workforce Development

As the broader labor market has digitized, so has workforce development. Today, as the city continues to emerge from the economic crisis, workforce providers must invest in, and rely upon, increasingly digital and data-driven strategies to support their jobseekers. This means investment in new technology to serve clients remotely, both synchronously and asynchronously – enabling them to access training at any time, from any device, around their own schedule. It means investment in data management systems that can collect, analyze, and share intake and outcomes data, and engage in data-driven employer engagement. And it requires real investment in training and upskilling for workforce development professionals so they can effectively maximize this new data and digital infrastructure.

In 2021, WPTI conducted a survey of more than 200 New York City-based frontline workforce development professionals as part of our *Voices from the Frontline* initiative, which began in 2020 with a survey of over 360 frontline workforce professionals conducted just prior to COVID. Among other findings, this study revealed that while workforce providers were using a variety of new technologies in the aftermath of COVID-19, including learning management systems, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, virtual meeting software, and more, they had virtually no training on these platforms. Many, in fact, considered themselves “beginners” or “intermediate,” rather than advanced, on a wide range of software, including Excel, for example. The evidence is clear – the workforce system requires digital infrastructure, and training on this infrastructure, in order to meet the needs of clients as the city emerges from the pandemic.

Overall Conclusions

We are happy to share our six *Voices from the Frontline* reports, based upon our two surveys, with the committee, as they offer detailed information on training needs for workforce professionals, as well as issues related to low pay, insufficient opportunities for advancement, and a lack of racial diversity at senior levels across the workforce system. Our findings around pay and benefits, in particular, dovetail directly with the #JustPay campaign, which we wholeheartedly support. Human services workers and workforce development professionals, who are largely women and people of color – and disproportionately women of color – require better pay and more opportunities for advancement in their careers. Without these, the city will lose a critical pool of talent that must play a central role as the city advances out of the pandemic and toward an equitable economic recovery.

We should talk a bit about the homeless. They didn't ask to be homeless, though they are at your whim, things you have done for them, have failed them. Many around us are suffering, we give them food but no little clothes or hygiene products but those are just as important, but you chose not to put any money are drives to these issues. Why? I think we should advocate for those people who need you to help them. You have the power though you seem to focus. There is never enough for hygiene, clothes, possible jobs, mental outreach, and etc. I see those around me suffering, suffering because they don't know if they have a home for them to come back too. The aftermath of covid is making this even worse than it should be so my classmate are stressed thewy or their family can't pay for a place to say. To me it's sad, the poor are getting poorer, then become homeless.