



Louis A. Molina
Commissioner

New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation

Testimony of Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Louis A. Molina

March 21, 2025

Introduction

Good morning, Chair Restler and members of the Committee on Governmental Operations.

I am Louis Molina, commissioner of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services – commonly known as DCAS. I am pleased to be here to discuss the proposed DCAS budget for fiscal year 2026.

Since joining DCAS last July, I've become keenly aware of the many ways our agency plays a critical role in delivering the resources and support all agencies need to succeed. Each decision we make, each dollar we allocate, is a reflection of our mission to make city government work for all New Yorkers.

DCAS Accomplishments

With that objective in mind, before looking forward, I would like to start by briefly looking back and provide a few updates about the critical work we've accomplished at DCAS since our agency testified before your committee last year.

Fleet Advancements

Making sure our streets and buildings are among the greenest in the nation has been at the forefront of much of our work. And over the past year, we've made great strides to improve our city's fleet operations.

In October 2024, we announced that the City's entire heavy-duty fleet—one of the largest in the country—has fully transitioned to using renewable diesel. Before the end of the year, we further announced that our city's ferries will now run on renewable diesel as well. This marks a significant advancement for our city's environmental footprint, eliminating approximately 162 million metric tons of carbon emissions annually.

Encompassing the transition to renewable diesel, our onboarding of electric vehicles, and hybrid prioritization, from sanitation trucks to emergency response vehicles, and everything in between, the City's fleet is now greener than at any time in the past 100 years.

Solar Installations

But it's not just our streets becoming greener, so too is our infrastructure. This past December, we celebrated the completion of New York City's largest collection of solar arrays—a groundbreaking project that underscored our long-term commitment to clean energy. Over 100 public school buildings have been equipped with solar arrays, and our latest portfolio added nearly seventeen megawatts of solar energy to the City's power portfolio. With this latest installation, we have nearly tripled the municipal solar capacity since the pandemic.

What's more, over half of these projects—55% of them—are in disadvantaged communities, building green-energy equity in our neighborhoods, and ensuring that the benefits of clean energy reach those who need it most.

Workforce

Beyond energy, as you all know well, one of our biggest tasks is to maintain the City as an employer of choice for New Yorkers. In fact, we play a critical role in supporting agencies' efforts to recruit and retain employees and foster an accessible civil service system with minimum barriers to entry.

Our retention rate at 90 percent is similar to other large public sector employers. Data shows that our civil servants are staying in municipal work more than three times longer than their private sector counterparts. This is tremendous progress coming out of the pandemic, and a true testament to the success of our work. To advance this effort, we've streamlined hiring processes and expanded opportunities—especially through our Minimum Qualification Review.

Our Minimum Qualification Review initiative is a major effort to modernize civil service requirements and ensure that experience, skills, and talent matter most. By removing outdated requirements that limit access, we're opening doors for New Yorkers. We are actively reassessing qualifications to better align with the modern job market, ensuring that hiring standards reflect real-world skills and competencies rather than unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, we're exploring and implementing strategies that build upon our successes.

Renewable Diesel Implementation Expansion

Following the widely successful implementation of renewable diesel for heavy-duty fleet vehicles, this year, we will be working with other city vessel programs—including the NYC

Ferry, NYPD Harbor Unit, the Department of Environmental Protection sludge boats, and FDNY Fire Boats—to explore the use of renewable diesel.

By replacing conventional diesel, and through our continuous work to transition from gas to electric cars — of which we expect to have 6,000 of by year's end — we are eliminating harmful emissions from our air and paving the way for a cleaner, healthier New York City for all who call it home. This is just one step in our broader efforts to decarbonize the City's fleet and move toward a zero-emission future.

While we are already ahead of schedule on this goal, it remains front and center as we look ahead this year.

Sustainability

Similarly, we are working to build upon our sustainable infrastructure. We plan to install another seven megawatts of solar on city property over the next year, with 50% located in environmental justice communities. According to our latest report, city government has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 26% since fiscal year 2006. This effort has outpaced the private sector, showing that the City is leading by example as we work towards our mandate to reduce emissions in city government operations 50% by 2030.

By continuing to scale up clean energy and other energy efficiency initiatives, we are making meaningful progress toward reducing emissions, cutting costs, and building a more sustainable future for all New Yorkers.

Beyond the environmental impact, our solar installations on schools have been an educational tool, providing city students with a firsthand look at solar technology and renewable energy solutions—hopefully inspiring the next generation of leaders.

Career Pathways

We also recognize that education is the foundation of opportunity. Not just for students, but for all New Yorkers looking to build successful careers.

Whether it's creating pathways to public service, expanding career-readiness programs, or supporting lifelong learning, we are making critical investments to ensure that education remains accessible, equitable, and tied to real-world opportunities.

One of the ways we're delivering on this commitment is through the expansion of the DCAS Automotive Internship Program—a major initiative to connect young New Yorkers with hands-on training in automotive technology and fleet management.

Last year, we announced that DCAS will more than double the number of participating high school students, providing them with paid internships in city fleet garages and exposure to one of the largest municipal fleets in the nation.

We've also worked hard to expand our Civil Service Pathways fellowship—one of the premier opportunities in the city to bring real-life work experience to students. In partnership with the City University of New York (CUNY), we have significantly enhanced

the Civil Service Pathways Fellowship (CSPF) program. This expansion not only provides recent graduates with valuable career opportunities but also infuses our municipal workforce with fresh perspectives and diverse talents.

Looking internally, we are just as committed to supporting the continued learning and advancement of our city's workforce. That's why we launched the first-ever High School Equivalency and College Credit Program for municipal employees in partnership with Metropolitan College of New York (MCNY). Through this program, municipal employees can earn a high school equivalency diploma while simultaneously earning college credits, giving them the ability to pursue higher education with fewer barriers.

This initiative isn't just about education—it's about economic mobility. A high school diploma is a stepping-stone to better wages, new career opportunities, and long-term stability for our municipal workforce, and we're proud to lead this effort.

Understanding the DCAS Budget

As we work to not just meet, but exceed our benchmarks, it's necessary to establish a clear understanding of our budget and our limitations. As the primary service provider for city agencies, much of our budget is dedicated to supporting the critical functions of their daily operations.

In FY26, our budget is \$1.9 billion inclusive of all funding sources, with \$236.3 million covering payroll and other personnel services costs, and \$1.7 billion covering other than personnel services costs. \$966 million, or 51% of our budget, will be used to support citywide utility payments for heating, lighting, and power. These are fixed costs based on forecasted energy usage and utility rates. The good news is that DCAS is working every day, both internally and with our sister agencies through multiple programs, to reduce energy use. I'm proud to say that this work has generated more than \$141 million in annual energy savings since 2014.

Beyond providing utilities to our sister agencies, we are also tasked with identifying physical spaces for city agencies and other public entities to meet their operational needs. When a need arises and city owned space is not available or feasible, our real estate team identifies and negotiates leases on behalf of the city. Of our overall budget, \$163 million is dedicated to these costs associated with multi-tenanted leased sites.

In Fiscal Year 24, DCAS procured a total of \$125 million worth of contracts towards city certified M/WBEs. For contracts under Local Law 1, \$62.5 million went to M/WBEs, representing a 33.3% utilization rate.

In addition to these efforts, we have also invested in extensive maintenance, repair and energy efficiency work across our portfolio of city-managed buildings.

To support these efforts, our FY26 budget includes:

- \$152.8 million to support cleaning, maintenance and repair work across DCAS managed buildings
- And \$110 million to achieve the City's climate goals as outlined in Executive Order 89 and Local Law 97.

Revenue Generation

In addition to these programs, every year DCAS generates a significant amount of revenue on the City's behalf. In FY26, our revenue target is \$63.7 million, primarily due to three areas:

- \$44.7 million in private rentals of city-owned properties, DCAS' largest source of recurring revenue.
- \$9 million for the sale of surplus vehicles and other city-owned equipment.
- And \$4.8 million from applicant filing fees for civil service exams.

DCAS Capital Plan

The final piece of our budget is our capital plan, or the funds allocated towards upgrading and renovating our infrastructure. The preliminary budget reflects an updated five-year plan of \$8.8 billion from FY25 through FY29, including \$5.5 billion for projects managed by DCAS. This plan includes maintenance and enhancements to DCAS facilities, the renovation of leased spaces, and continuing our energy conservation and fleet electrification work.

The preliminary budget for DCAS managed projects in FY26 is \$1.2 billion and includes:

- \$724.5 million for energy conservation and green energy projects.
- \$382.9 million to support our capital construction program for city-owned offices and court buildings.
- \$17.8 million for information technology system upgrades to improve our Human Capital front-end systems, Internal Agency Application Support, and the modernization of our Civil Service Exams system infrastructure.
- And lastly, \$39 million for fleet electrification work.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to thank the Council for its partnership and for providing me with the opportunity to testify. I look forward to working with each of you to improve our operations and advance our mission. With that, I would be happy to answer any questions.



**Statement by
Chief Administrative Law Judge & Commissioner Asim Rehman
of the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings
to the City Council Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal
Legislation in Connection with the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026**

March 21, 2025

Good morning. My name is Asim Rehman and I am the Chief Administrative Law Judge and Commissioner at the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). I would like to start by thanking Chair Restler and the members of the Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation for the opportunity to testify today.

In today's testimony I will first describe the successful efforts of the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings over the past year, and will then address the budget projection for this coming year.

OATH is New York City's central, independent administrative law tribunal. In the past calendar year, fiscal challenges have not deterred us from our mission to ensure due process, fair and impartial hearings, and timely decisions for everyone who comes before OATH. All of OATH's adjudicators approach this responsibility with the utmost seriousness, as do the OATH staff who help support our hearings. I can personally speak to this commitment. As the Chief Administrative Law Judge, I myself conduct trials and conferences where I meet with litigants and their representatives, listen to the evidence, help parties find opportunities to settle, and issue decisions that are based on the law. Even when faced with challenges, OATH has been able to maintain our standards by adapting our practices so that we continue to seamlessly deliver our services to New Yorkers, city agencies, and all other parties who appear before us.

The proof is in the numbers. In calendar year 2024 alone we processed almost 660,000 summonses, held close to 250,000 hearings, issued over 2,500 appeals decisions, conducted over 670 trials, and closed over 17,000 special education cases. This is a notable increase from the volume of work we did in calendar year 2023. These tremendous figures are a testament to the amazing public servants who are part of the OATH team. In each of these thousands of cases, the tireless and committed staff at OATH take great care to ensure that every party who appears before us is treated impartially and is accorded due process.

A key ingredient to ensuring due process is keeping OATH impartial and independent. For OATH, impartiality and independence means that our administrative law judges and hearing officers listen to all sides, review the evidence without favor, apply the law fairly, and do all of this without any external influence. At OATH, we believe that there is one standard of justice for all; the members of the public who have cases at OATH are treated no differently from the city agencies that appear before us. We do not take direction from any city agency on our cases. Independence and impartiality also mean that OATH does not comment on the enforcement policies, rules or regulations, or disciplinary practices of agencies that file cases with us. Our role is to adjudicate cases, not to set policy. Consistent with this, when we regularly provide City Council with data reports concerning cases filed with OATH, you will note that we do not analyze that data or make recommendations. Such analysis is not in our purview.

Whatever challenges await the city, OATH's amazing staff have dedicated themselves to meeting the moment and making sure that New Yorkers receive impartial hearings and timely decisions. OATH's staff is, very much, "New York's Fairest."

Trials Division

OATH's Trials Division adjudicates a wide range of cases filed by City agencies, boards, and commissions. Trials are conducted by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) who are appointed to five-year terms. The Division's caseload includes employee discipline and disability hearings for civil servants, as well as cases involving City-issued license suspensions and revocations, City vendor contract disputes, the Conflicts of Interest Law, the City Human Rights Law, consumer and worker protection laws, the Loft Law, retention of police-seized vehicles prior to forfeiture proceedings, and campaign finance violations.

OATH Trials Division conducts proceedings both by video and in-person. This expansion of options has enabled parties to participate and view video and other evidence simultaneously, receive interpretation in their languages of preference, and communicate clearly with the ALJ virtually or in person. The tribunal remains consistent in dispensing justice and rendering impartial decisions that protect the due process rights of all parties appearing before the independent ALJs. During the first half of FY 2025, more than 98% of decisions issued by OATH ALJs were adopted by the agency heads who referred those cases to OATH.

Hearings Division: Adjudications, Clerk's Office, and Appeals

The OATH Hearings Division is comprised of Adjudications, Clerk's Office, and Appeals. Adjudications conducts hearings on summonses issued by more than 20 different City enforcement agencies for alleged violations of law or City rules. City enforcement agencies that issue these summonses include the Department of Buildings, the Department of Sanitation, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Fire Department, the Parks Department, the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Finance's Office of the Sheriff, and the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

As previously noted, in calendar year 2024 OATH held hearings on close to 250,000 summonses. Adjudications continues to conduct most of its hearings telephonically. Telephonic hearings are safe, easy, and very convenient. With a telephonic hearing, residents and small businesses, their representatives, and City agency attorneys and inspectors do not have to travel to OATH Hearing Centers and appear in person, and they can schedule their remote hearings by email. A call-back option is also available for residents and small businesses to use once they check in to their Hearing by Phone, which adds convenience by eliminating the need to wait on hold and allowing New Yorkers to get on with their day until their hearing is called. That said, we know that some individuals do want to physically come to OATH for their hearing. Accordingly, OATH continues to make in person hearings available to respondents who request them. Residents and small businesses also have the opportunity to submit their defense by mail or through “one click” computer submissions.

As part of this work and for nearly a decade, the Clerk’s Office staff handles all of the administrative steps associated with hearings, from scheduling to responding to inquiries to mailing out decisions to processing refunds and accepting payment on penalties imposed. In calendar year 2024, the Clerk’s Office processed close to 660,000 summonses that were filed with OATH. Among other things, the Clerk’s Office also facilitates the payment of fines and penalties to the City for respondents who want to pay outstanding summonses, and processes refunds for those who are entitled to one.

Lastly, the Appeals team receives and adjudicates matters that are filed with OATH when a party appeals the decision of a Judicial Hearing Officer. In 2024, Appeals issued 2,543 decisions.

In May of 2024, OATH began adjudicating summonses issued by the New York City Office of the Sheriff to respondents alleged to have sold or offered for sale unlicensed cannabis to the public. The law requires that OATH adjudicate these complex and time sensitive hearings, which involve the Judicial Hearing Officer making a final determination on the summons, and, where applicable, a recommendation to maintain or lift the Office of the Sheriff’s sealing order. Despite a very short time between the effective date of the new cannabis law and the first hearing dates for these cases, OATH upheld its commitment to providing due process and ensuring that its Judicial Hearing Officers were ready to hear these complicated cases and issue expedited decisions.

Special Education Hearings Division

The Special Education Hearings Division was established by Mayoral Executive Order 91 of 2021 and a memorandum of agreement executed by OATH, the City Department of Education (DOE), and the State Education Department, all to address the growing number of filings related to claims for services for students with special needs, and the extensive delays in the adjudication of such claims. Federal law provides that students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education. A parent who believes that DOE is not providing the appropriate services for their child may file a due process complaint. The due process complaint is assigned to an Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO), who must adjudicate the matter in a fair and timely manner. Our OATH IHOs are appointed to four-year terms to ensure greater judicial

independence. The IHOs are also bound by ethical rules to afford each party appearing before them due process and impartiality.

OATH has completed the mammoth task of building up the division, and on January 1, 2024, the State Education Department authorized OATH to receive all new special education cases filed in New York City going forward. Over the past three years, OATH has adjudicated thousands of special education cases, and we are achieving our goal of reducing the time it takes to adjudicate claims filed by parents. Specifically, for the 2023-24 school year, cases were completed within compliance deadlines at a target rate above 90%, and overall case length, as compared to before OATH adjudicated these cases, has been reduced by over 50%.

Center for Creative Conflict Resolution

Since 2016, OATH's Center for Creative Conflict Resolution (CCCR) has served as the City government's central resource for conflict resolution services and restorative practices in support of City government agencies, businesses and the general public. CCCR offers a number of workplace conflict services for City agencies, including mediations, conflict coaching, group facilitation, restorative circles, dispute system design services, education, and training. A primary goal of CCCR is to support city government agencies and offices build alternative dispute resolution and restorative programs to strengthen agency's internal conflict capacity, including in their public facing work. During the past year, CCCR has provided 562 consultations, coaching sessions, trainings including for Council Central and Member Staff, workplace and community mediations, and group facilitations.

Access to Justice

OATH's mission requires that it prioritize the public's access to justice, and there are a several ways that OATH achieves this. First, OATH ensures information is accessible by providing it in plain language and translating it into the top 10 languages spoken in NYC. Everyone has access to free translation services for help sessions, trials, hearings, community service and mediations. OATH also makes all forms and applications available in the top ten languages and has also made other documents such as outreach flyers, informational fact sheets and handouts available in the top ten languages. Additionally, OATH provides hearing decisions in any language requested free of charge at both of its high-volume adjudicatory divisions, namely the OATH Hearings Division and the OATH Special Education Hearings Division.

Second, not having a lawyer should not limit one's ability to navigate OATH's processes. OATH has a Help Center which ensures that unrepresented respondents receive answers to their questions, are aware of their rights, and understand the hearing process, but without providing legal advice. At OATH, we have Procedural Justice Coordinators who provide assistance by engaging with unrepresented respondents, in their language of preference, via telephone, text, email, and in-person at OATH's offices. The Help Center's response time to requests for help sessions is less than one calendar day on average, and in 2024 OATH's Help Center staff conducted over 55,311 help sessions and assisted over 58,981 individuals who came to the customer service windows at our various locations. That means that in 2024, our Help Center had over 100,000 interactions with members of the public where we were able to answer

their questions and provide non-legal guidance regarding OATH and summonses. For eligible cases, the Help Center staff can also refer unrepresented respondents to independent legal services providers for possible representation at an OATH hearing at no cost to the respondent. This type of personalized assistance helps OATH ensure that all New Yorkers have access to justice.

In addition, OATH's Help Center has specialized units to focus on assistance to Small Businesses, Veterans, and older adults. Since 2021, the Help Center began conducting Help Sessions in OATH's Trials Division for unrepresented For-Hire Vehicle drivers facing license suspension or revocation, and vehicle owners seeking to recover their vehicles after NYPD seizure pursuant to an arrest. More than a dozen explanatory fact sheets on enforcement agency processes and OATH's hearing process are available at the Help Center and can be translated into the top ten languages. These include but are not limited to the following fact sheets: DOB Certificates of Correction; DOB Stipulations; DCWP Settlements; Helpful Information for Haircutters, Hair Salons, and Barbershops; New York State Cannabis Law violations; and Summonses Where Your Property Was Taken Away.

As a testament to the rising importance of the Help Center in OATH's work, and as a reflection to OATH's commitment to transparency and accountability, we have now added a new stand-alone service section to the PMMR and MMR that is focused on the work of the Help Center.

If you, your staff, or your constituents would like to learn more about our Help Center, please reach out to us and we would be happy to provide it. The information is also available on OATH's website.

Third, OATH leverages technology to make our adjudications more accessible to parties. A text-message reminder system is available to all OATH respondents to help ensure that people never miss a hearing. Since the inception of the text-message reminder system in September 2020, more than 20,000 respondents have registered for these reminders. The text message system can also be utilized to initiate contact with our Help Center.

In addition, during the pandemic, OATH added a call-back option to the Hearings Division remote hearings system, allowing respondents to avoid waiting on hold and instead request a call-back when their hearing is ready to go forward. Since this option was launched, around 82% of respondents have taken advantage of it.

OATH also created its own QR Code which takes users to a specific page on the OATH website called "You Received a Summons, Now What?" This webpage enumerates all the options available for someone who has just received a summons including links to other webpages and online forms such as reschedule form, payment websites, hearing request forms and other pertinent information. This QR code can be found on summonses, on OATH outreach materials, in the email signature block of OATH's public-facing staff, and in other correspondence.

Fourth, OATH has redesigned a majority of the summonses that agencies use to have clearer plain language instructions, fewer words, and the QR code just referenced.

Fifth, appreciating that access to justice also requires transparency, OATH continues to facilitate requests from the media for records, information, and access to hearings. Additionally, our Trials Division decisions are made available online, our Hearings Division appeal decisions are accessible online, and we make the outcome and current status of hearings available for anyone to see online. Further, our average FOIL response time is approximately 12 days.

Lastly, with respect to access to justice, OATH recognizes that even with the technological advances and conveniences that I outlined, there are New Yorkers who want to engage with the City in-person. OATH meets people where they are. We have offices in every borough where people can come in person to ask questions and take care of OATH business. Each year, thousands of respondents come to our borough offices to get work done.

These are just some of the measures that OATH has put in place to ensure that its operations are fair and transparent and that everyone has access to justice.

Public Education & Outreach

Understanding that city government can sometimes be challenging to navigate, OATH has various vehicles for keeping respondents and practitioners updated on new developments. This includes the agency's social media presence, our monthly BenchNOTES e-newsletter, and, as of last fall, the publication of OATH Trials Division case summaries in the New York Law Journal.

For a nearly a decade now, OATH has been committed to practicing its mission to bring greater access to justice to all New Yorkers by leaving our offices, getting out into neighborhoods, and educating residents and small businesses about what we do. During the past year, OATH's Communications & Public Affairs, Legislative Affairs, and Strategic Initiatives professionals continued to provide public education services about how New Yorkers and New York City businesses can resolve their civil violations. In 2024, OATH conducted 81 public-facing educational events in collaboration with elected officials, business associations, community groups, and more. These educational events included trainings about OATH for Council Members' District Office Staff who handle constituent services. We recognized that some of your constituents will have a summons-related issue at one time or another, and we are happy to give your staff information about how OATH works. OATH's outreach programs/initiatives focused on providing greater access to justice to New York City residents and small business owners includes one of OATH's most successful initiatives, *OATH-Resource*. This involves OATH staff working with Council Members and the Brooklyn, New York, and Queens Public Libraries on location at library branches and meeting with and assisting library visitors on matters related to their summonses and the hearing process. The libraries are a resource for our communities and a place where people learn can about OATH. Our *OATH-Resource* work cannot be made possible without the help of Council Members and their staff, and the libraries, and for this we are quite grateful.

We are proud of our work partnering with the Council for nearly a decade to provide assistance to the residents of this City. We look forward to working more with the Council to continue to find new ways to ensure New Yorkers have greater access to justice with OATH.

Budget and Headcount

OATH's Fiscal Year 2025 adopted budget was \$73.4 million and the Fiscal Year 2025 current modified budget was \$74.6. million.

OATH's total preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2026 will be \$77.2 million. Of the \$77.2 million, \$60.5 million is in personnel services and \$16.7 million is in other-than-personnel-services.

Agency headcount will be 455 in the Fiscal Year 2026 preliminary budget. This does not include the 363 per session Judicial Hearing Officers in the Hearings Division, all of whom work on a part-time schedule.

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In closing, OATH is dedicated to providing access to fair and impartial justice for all New Yorkers. I look forward to our continued efforts with City Council and I welcome any questions that you may have.

**Statement by Corporation Counsel Muriel Goode-Trufant to the City Council
In Connection with the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026
March 21, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Restler and distinguished Members of the Government Operations Committee. It is a pleasure to come before you to discuss the Law Department's fiscal year 2026 Preliminary Budget. I'm joined by First Assistant Corporation Counsel Sheryl Neufeld, Managing Attorney Eric Eichenholtz, and Chief of Administration Jennie Nagle-Yndigoyen.

The Law Department represents the City, the Mayor, the City Council, other elected officials and the City's agencies in all affirmative and defensive civil litigation. As a prosecuting agency, the Department brings proceedings in Family Court alleging violations of criminal laws and represents the People of the State of New York in proceedings filed in Criminal Court to enforce the City's Administrative Code. Law Department attorneys draft and review local and state legislation, real estate leases, procurement contracts and financial instruments for the sale of municipal bonds. The Department also provides legal counsel to City officials on a wide range of issues such as civil rights, education, intellectual property, land use and environmental policy. The Department's work embraces all City entities and operations; our impact is tremendous.

The Department currently has approximately 770 assistant corporation counsels and 685 legal support professionals. We are proud to be a leader in the legal profession with approximately 29% of our lawyers ethnically diverse and 57% percent women.

The Law Department plays an important role in enhancing the City's fiscal strength, providing internal support to agencies and elected officials to ensure legal

and ethical compliance and in advocating for the public good. This fiscal year, our Municipal Finance Division has closed nearly \$18 billion in bond deals bringing needed financial resources to the City. Through the work of our Affirmative Litigation Division, in the first half of this fiscal year we recovered over \$30 million dollars for the City and City entities. This includes monetary recoveries for property damage, breach of contract, attorney's fees recovery in insurance cases, restitution, false claims act cases, securities fraud, anti-youth vaping, and opioids settlement payments, among other things. In addition, Collections law firms supervised by the Law Department recovered another \$12.8 million.

We also anticipate saving the City over \$100 million dollars this Fiscal Year in payouts from the judgment and claims fund through our continuing activity to compel insurance companies to defend and indemnify the City. In these cases, we are enforcing coverage for lawsuits arising out of the work performed by private contractors and permittees. Every case that the insurance company steps up to defend is a case that does not have to be defended by city attorneys, thus saving enormous legal resources. Settlements and judgments paid by insurers in cases falling within the policy coverage also save the City substantial sums. As of January 2025, the Affirmative Litigation Division has saved more than three billion dollars since the start of the program in the late 1990s.

A further example is our Commercial and Real Estate Litigation Division, which defends the City in a wide range of contractual disputes. These disputes include three categories of agreements: contracts with private companies to build or repair the City's infrastructure; leases of important public properties; and contracts for all types of goods and services. These claims are largely based upon negotiated terms of pre-existing agreements and typically involve significant exposure to the City. In FY24, the Division saved the City \$60 million by resolving \$90 million

dollars in claims for \$28 million. Similarly, our Tax & Bankruptcy Division's defense of real property tax assessments protected \$76 million in property tax receipts in FY24 and almost \$51 million during the first half of FY25.

A large focus of our work this year has been addressing ongoing challenges in our City as well as advising on asylum seekers, including the evolving landscape of federal policy and enforcement, as well as potential challenges to grant funding the City receives. Lead by our executive team, a multi-disciplinary group of attorneys from across several Law Department divisions, continue to provide critical and timely legal advice to the Mayor, City agencies, and independently elected officials. For example, the Law Department recently brought a lawsuit seeking to recover \$80 million in grant funds that were improperly clawed back by the federal government. These efforts by the Law Department support the City as it faces existing and new challenges, while ensuring compliance with federal, state and local laws and rules.

As you are aware, our office works side by side with Council staff on crafting legislation. We also represent the Council when local laws are challenged. We were pleased to represent the City Council's interests in the non-citizen voting law case, including before the State's highest court.

The Law Department represents the City and its employees in litigation in more than 70,000 cases annually. We have experienced an increase in pending cases, particularly in our largest division, Tort, where there are now more than 31,000 pending cases, including a large number of Adult Survivor Act and Child Victims Act cases.

The Tort caseload remained steady this year due to our ongoing efforts to efficiently address case backlog, despite budget constraints. For example, the new

Universal Legal Search, ULS, discussed last year continues to help significantly reduce a backlog of discovery motions, including motions to strike the City's answer in cases in which the City otherwise has a meritorious defense.

Additionally, within this fiscal year, we have made advances in rebuilding, following the unprecedented level of attrition we have talked about in past years. Nonetheless, growth of new and challenging cases remain a concern as our mitigation efforts continue.

Notably, we continue to address the influx of hundreds of cases brought against the City pursuant to the Child Victims Act, the Adult Survivors Act and the Gender Motivated Violence Act. Look back periods reviving time-barred claims for these three Acts has resulted in claims with an estimated value of more than \$1 billion.

The Family Court Division is the second largest Division in the Law Department with our largest prosecutorial practice. Its mission is two-fold: through Juvenile Justice and Interstate Child Support. We are the presentment agency for all Juvenile Justice, Adolescent Offender and Interstate Child Support cases referred to the NYC Family Courts. Under the rehabilitative mandate of the Family Court Act, the Family Court Division must work to achieve outcomes that serve the needs of each individual youth brought before the court, while at the same time, protecting the interests of crime victims and ensuring the safety of the community at large. Our Family Court Attorneys work in approximately 30 locations, 365 days and nights a year including nights, weekend, and holiday operations.

The number of serious matters handled by the Division continues to rise. In 2024 Juvenile Justice case referrals increased 20% to 6864 from the 5790 referrals in 2023; 70% of the referrals represent felony charges. This is in addition to the 52%

increase in case referrals in 2023. New York City continues to experience a high volume of cases surrounding violence and the possession of firearms. In 2024 there were 411 firearms cases referred to the Division. Mirroring a national trend, the child support case referrals, after recent increase, decreased this year by approximately 8%.

My testimony today provides a limited survey of the very broad and varied legal work performed by the Law Department. By keeping the interests of all New Yorkers at the center of our work, we can do what is right and reinforce trust in government and that is our core commitment.

I thank you for your support of the Law Department and look forward to our continued collaboration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

FREDERIC M. UMANE
PRESIDENT
JODI MORALES
SECRETARY



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ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

Testimony of Michael J. Ryan, Executive Director and Vincent M. Ignizio, Deputy Executive Director

Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation - Council of the City of New York

Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget

March 21, 2025

Chair Restler, members of the New York City Council's Committee on Governmental Operations, State and Federal Legislation, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the Board of Elections (Board). I am Michael J. Ryan, the Executive Director of the Board.

Joining me is Deputy Executive Director Vincent Ignizio.

Fiscal Year 2025 Review

Before discussing the Mayor's Executive Budget for FY 2026, let me thank the City Council and the Mayor's Office for providing the necessary support to the Board in FY2025. That funding met the Board's constitutional and statutory mandates as well as the needs of the voters of the City of New York. I extend a special thank you for addressing the Board's funding needs during very difficult times.

In FY2025, the Board's budget includes the cost to conduct (4) election events impacting citywide, borough wide and city council races, including the November 5, 2024, Presidential Election, March 25, 2025 Special Election 44th

Council District, April 29, 2025 Special Election 51st Council District and June 23, 2025 Mayoral and City Council Primary.

This includes nine (9) days of Early Voting with each election event; except for the Special Election for the 51st Council District – to accommodate religious observation early voting was reduced to seven (7) days by action of the New York State Legislature and signature of the Governor of the State of New York.

Depending on the outcome of the Special Election for the Special Election for the 44th Council District, there may be an additional special election to fill a state office vacancy.

In FY2026, the Board expects to conduct two (2) election events, the November 4, 2025, General Election for New York City Offices and the June 24, 2026 Primary for Federal and State Offices. Additional costs may arise if there are special elections; however, the Board cannot predict this cost variable. There were several recent New York State legislative enactments that continue to impact election operations and costs including the following:

- A change to the canvassing of absentee ballots requiring extending public access to the canvass process prior to election day.
- Establishing a statewide online absentee ballot application portal and absentee ballot tracking portal.
- Online voter registration portal and automatic voter registration.

The Board is working closely with OMB to finalize the funding for the upcoming elections mentioned above.

Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

The Board would like to express its gratitude to the City Administration and the City Council for partnering with the Board. The Board projects a budget of \$260 million for FY 2026. The Board is requesting \$160 million to be allocated to Personal Services (PS) and \$100 million to be allocated to Other Than Personal Services (OTPS).

Conducting two (2) election events for FY2026, including multiple Early Voting sites, bring annual expenses in line with the current budget of \$260 million. With the enactment of the Make Voting Easy Act, The Board has achieved its goal to obtain 156 EV sites. This expansion necessitates additional funding for equipment, office space, staff, training, and leasing costs to meet the demands of the increased Early Voting sites.

The Board acknowledges that its fiscal needs are or will be fully met through the end of FY2025 to meet its legislative mandates. It is important to note that FY2026 will continue to realize significant changes in the conduct of Elections. To ensure the success of the Make Voting Easy Act, appropriate funding will be required to meet the Board's needs.

Conducting EV for a continuous period of nine (9) days has fundamentally altered the Board's approach to elections. Elections have been single day voting events and are no conducted for 10 days (nine days of EV and Election Day) over a period of approximately two (2) weeks.

The budget also includes upgrades and enhancements to the Board's computer and phone systems. This will include a new system for the Board's call center, new desktop computers (PC's) for all Board employees (all PC's are at end of life and must be replaced to ensure compatibility with required software upgrades and cyber security requirements), network circuit redundancy and upgrades to cyber security. For total estimated cost \$8.3 million. The Board is working with the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) to ensure the best price and compatibility with other City systems.

All of the poll pads currently utilized for poll site voter check-ins require replacement after the November 2025 General Election. The operating system for the current poll pads will no longer be supported and system security mandates replacement.

The Board has effectively utilized advertisements on mass transportation for poll worker recruitment. Increasing the poll worker pool remains critical to a successful voting experience. The Board intends to continue robust poll worker and interpreter recruitment using various forms of media including

TV, radio, social media platforms and local and language-specific newspapers to ensure all Early Voting sites are fully staffed. The Board reaffirms its request to establish a municipal workers/poll workers program.

Voter education is also a critical element of election success. For Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), the Board will continue to work with various groups to implement a media campaign akin to poll worker recruitment efforts. The Board has also partnered effectively with the Campaign Finance Board (CFB) to ensure message consistency and maximization of coverage.

The Board conducted a supplemental voter information mailing for the Presidential General Election in the fall of 2024. The mailing was very well-received and provided election information to the voters proximate to the General Election. The Board will build on the success of this process and provide a supplemental mailing in the fall of 2025 to ensure that all voters receive more timely information for the Mayoral General Election.

The introduction of EV further underscored the necessity for a robust cyber security monitoring and upgrades to effectively keep pace with modernization. The Board is in a perpetual state of monitoring, evaluating and addressing protection from external threat vectors. Since the summer of 2016, the Board has developed and enhanced an effective working relationship with the group now known as NYC3.

The New York State Board of Elections (State Board) will be directing enhanced cyber security requirements which may require additional staffing and/or external vendor assistance. To ensure that current efforts are enhanced and future needs are fully met, the Board must continue its internal/external cyber security efforts and be prepared to enhance present assets with additional staff.

The Board will continue to effectively cooperate with the New York State Board of Elections (State Board) Tier Grant Program, making all necessary submissions to the State Board to ensure timely reimbursement for eligible expenses.

Conclusion

The Board is dedicated to collaborating closely with government partners and interested parties to effectively serve New York City voters. All resources allocated will be responsibly used to meet the public's voting needs. The Board is aware of the city's fiscal challenges and is committed to its obligations, maintaining a strong partnership with the Administration and Council. Additional funding requests are expected to enhance the Board's ability to serve voters and to effectively maintain all of the Board's data systems and networks. The Board reaffirms its commitment to wise resource utilization and maintaining public trust. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or for any additional information needed.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Governmental Operations Hearing on the FY26 Preliminary Budget March 21, 2025

Good morning Chair Restler and Thank you for holding this hearing today. I am representing Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso to once again note that despite this committee having oversight over the city's 59 community boards, their budgets are not part of today's agenda. Community boards are a critical link between the public and City government, weighing in on important issues that impact everything from small businesses to street safety to the availability of affordable housing, and their individual budgets, as well as the support they receive from external partners, deserves the Council's attention.

The Charter mandates community boards with 22 responsibilities, including holding public hearings on issues facing their districts, creating their annual Statements of District needs and Budget Priorities, weighing in on local land use proposals, working with City agencies to communicate information to residents and evaluate service delivery, and much more. Yet due to chronic underfunding, community boards struggle to carry out these mandates, let alone day-to-day work. Most community boards have very small staffs, with little money left over to hire other assistance, such as professional planners or communications support.

Additionally, Charter's framework for external support for community boards is confusing and scattered, calling on the Borough Presidents' offices, the Civic Engagement Commission, and other agencies to provide various (and sometimes overlapping) support. However, none of these entities receive enough funding to do so adequately, and none of them have supporting community boards as their primary mandate. An example of the difficulties this can cause for day-to-day operations is regarding IT support - the Charter mandates the Office of Technology and Information (OTI) to assist boards with some technological needs because OTI only has one staff person who supports all 59 boards, it can take the agency three or more months to create an email address, three years to remove one, and weeks to address email access issues.

The following recommendations build on the work of the Future of Community Boards Working Group and incorporate the experiences of Brooklyn District Managers and the Brooklyn Borough President's Office:

Recommendation 1: Adequately Fund Community Board Staffing:

Increase community boards' budgets to allow for the payment of competitive salaries within existing City employee pay ranges, as well as necessary OTPS for day-to-day operations. This would support hiring an experienced District Manager and at least three full-time, professional support staff, as well as OTPS for upgraded technology, livestreaming meetings, office supplies, etc. We have proposed a change to the Charter that would base this budget on a percentage of the budget for Borough Presidents' offices; the funding for each community board district office should be the total expense funding amount for all five Borough Presidents' offices as outlined in Charter Section 82 Subsection 18, divided by 59. For example, based on the FY2020 numbers in the Charter, the budget that year for each community board office would have been \$498,087, a significant increase over current funding levels. The City could commit to this funding increase without a Charter mandate.

Recommendation 2: Create a Central Office to Support the City's 59 Community Boards:

We have also been advocating for Charter change to streamline the responsibility to provide external support for community board operations into one entity, the Community Board Central Office (CBCO). Should this proposal move forward, it will require a budget allocation. Based on the model of the Independent Budget Office (created through the 1989 Charter Revision Commission), the CBCO would be an independent agency funded consistently at a percentage of the City's total budget. This would protect the CBCO from vulnerability to budget cuts by the Mayor or City Council, insulate it from political volatility as Mayoral and Borough President administrations change, and ensure that the CBCO can hire and maintain the qualified staff needed to meet its mandate. Inspired by the City Council's Central Staff, the CBCO's professional staff would provide expert support to community board staff in the areas outlined below.

Overseeing the CBCO would be a rotating committee of five District Managers, representing each of the five boroughs. These representatives would be elected every two years by all the District Managers and have a term limit of four two-year terms. This committee would hire and conduct regular performance reviews for a CBCO Director, who would be in charge of everyday operations of the Office.

The City should create and fund the CBCO to provide the following support to community boards:

1. **Planning Expertise:** Provide professional technical assistance in land use planning to inform the boards' role in the ULURP process.
2. **Communications and Technology:**
 - Hold and livestream hybrid meetings (as required by State law).
 - Assist with office IT needs, such as installing hardware, creating specifications for new equipment and software pertinent to community boards' needs, creating and removing email addresses, and fixing internet access issues.
 - Produce website and social media content.
 - Create flyers and mailers in multiple languages and provide translation and interpretation at meetings as needed; and
 - Assist Borough Presidents' offices with informing the public about the opportunity to participate with community boards and apply for membership.
3. **Space needs:**

- Assist with identifying public meeting space that meets accessibility requirements.
 - Conduct regular Physical Needs Assessments of community board offices and liaise with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) on necessary repairs and upgrades; and
 - Work with DCAS to locate permanent, accessible office space as needed and support lease negotiations.
4. **Human Resources and EEO:**
- Provide guidance on hiring and firing staff.
 - Approve job postings and post on the City's hiring website; and
 - Provide trainings for both staff and board members that are available to all City employees, including discrimination, harassment, and reasonable accommodation.
5. **Procurement:** Provide support for purchasing, paying bills, and signing off on vendor payments.
6. **Intergovernmental Support:**
- Ensure meaningful engagement from City agencies on budget consultations and other district issues; and
 - Regularly convene community board staff and provide digital tools for information sharing and communication between the boards.
7. **Legal Support:**
- Handle any FOIL requests that the board receives.
 - Provide guidance on updating and enforcement of bylaws; and
 - Provide other legal support as the CBCO deems necessary.
8. **Training:** Provide training for board members on:
- Land use and housing
 - Parliamentary procedure/Roberts Rules of Order
 - Conflicts of Interest
 - City budget and legislative processes; and
 - Other trainings as the CBCO deems necessary.

Thank you again for holding this hearing today. We look forward to working with you to develop, codify, and fund these proposals.



**BROOKLYN COMMUNITY
BOARD 14**
FLATBUSH–MIDWOOD COMMUNITY DISTRICT
810 East 16th Street
Brooklyn, New York 11230

March 21, 2025

Testimony to the Committee on Government Operations – March 21, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Wrestler, Committee Members, Members of Council and Agency Representatives,

My name is Shawn Campbell. I am the District Manager at Brooklyn Community Board 14. I am here to offer testimony on the need for resources and support for Community Boards across the City and appreciate the opportunity to do so even though Community Boards are not on today's agenda. My testimony will provide historical context for the need for baseline support and will be followed by several colleagues who will specify the impacts of inadequate resources and support.

Community Boards are independent city agencies which have not had a significant budget increase in over 20 years. Annual budget changes ranged from an increase of 5.74% to a 7.3% decrease, (with two outlier years when this committee, then chaired by CM Cabrerra allocated \$42K for OTPS to the boards in FY19 and 20). The average is a 1.5% annual increase over that 20-year period. Note that during the same period inflation averages to 2.55%. CBs are not keeping up.

Inarguably, we have far more to do than CBs did in 2002 yet fewer staff with whom to get it done. In 2002, CBs had 159 full time staff; in 2022 we were down to 148. Compare this to the Mayor's office, which went from 859 to 1133; or to another small agency like the Department of Cultural Affairs, which employed 31 full time staff in 2002 and 49 in 2022; or to an agency that provides support to CB – OTI which went from 285 to 1539, yet still only provides one tech support staffer for all 59 community boards!

Not only do we need a baseline adjustment in keeping with our growing populations, growing responsibilities and the economy itself; but that budget must be stabilized by tying it to a funding formula that considers full staffing minimums, or creating parity with another service agency, or a percentage of a percentage of the citywide budget, for instance.

My colleagues will continue with specific examples of how serving our communities and meeting New York City Charter mandates are challenged by the lack of support and baseline budget resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony – Committee on Governmental Operations – March 21, 2025

Greetings Chairperson Wrestler, esteemed Committee Members, Members of the Council, and city agency representatives in attendance,

My name is Melinda Perkins, and I am honored to serve as the District Manager for Brooklyn Community Board 5. Our board represents over 190,000 residents across the neighborhoods of East New York, New Lots, Spring Creek, Cypress Hills, City Line, and portions of Broadway Junction and Highland Park.

I stand here today in solidarity with Community Board District Offices across the city to underscore three critical needs:

1. **An increase in baseline budgets for our Community Boards.**
2. **The implementation of comprehensive training and education programs for onboarding new Community Board Members.**
3. **Consistency in how the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) manages Community Board budgets.**

While all Community Boards operate with the same baseline budgets (excluding rent), we continue to observe discrepancies in budget management that remain unexplained by OMB. Additionally:

- Operating budget funds have been transferred without prior knowledge or input from District Offices.
- Merit-based salary increases are not reviewed or approved consistently, even when Boards adhere to guidance provided by their ByLaws.
- Fiscal mandates are implemented without adequate reasoning or legal explanation.

Our District Offices are tasked with managing increasingly complex responsibilities, often with minimal staff and constrained resources. At a minimum, we request **greater transparency, uniformity, and support** in how our budgets are handled and sustained.

This appeal is not merely about financial allocation—it is about ensuring that Community Boards can effectively serve as the vital link between residents and city government. Empowering Boards with the resources, training, and equitable budget oversight they need is an investment in the communities we represent.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I urge the Council to take these concerns into account and advocate for the changes needed to support Community Boards citywide.



COMMUNITY BOARD #14

CITY OF NEW YORK - BOROUGH OF QUEENS

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FAR ROCKAWAY, NY 11691



718-471-7300
QN14@CB.NYC.GOV

March 21, 2025

RE: Community Board Budget increases

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Felicia Johnson, and I am the District Manager of Queens CB #14, which covers the entire Rockaway Peninsula. I am submitting this letter as testimony on the need for increased baseline funding for community boards. This is particularly needed for staff to cover the increased workload and new technology needs.

CBs are often forgotten agencies of the NYC government and treated as such. Community Boards are in fact independent City agencies. We serve as the vehicle for communities to have input for decision making and participation in planning for their communities. So many of you have served on community boards before pursuing elected office. Yet, our annual pleas for a responsible increase to our baseline budgets goes unheard. Policies are adopted that create unfunded mandates, but our budgets are not adjusted to reflect the new responsibilities. Because of the increase in work without the increase in funding for additional staff we are faced with less time spent working with and serving particularly our most vulnerable communities. Because our costs have increased but our budget has not, our office staff have become smaller or remain stagnant because of our inability to reward merit or recruit new talent with such small salaries to offer given our budget constraints.

When the OCM application window opens, we will again have an additional burst of applications to process. We don't just process paperwork, there is a lot of education necessary to work with the applicants and the community.

Since COVID our technological needs and required expertise have increased. To be more inclusive of our community constituents and partners, and increase attendance and participation, we are looking to contract to provide equipment and staff to create hybrid meetings. We desire to have subscriptions for an air table and a note-taking app. to hire a technician to set up and maintain zoom equipment and create zoom meetings since it is very difficult to find locations that have their own zoom equipment. The need for more funding is very clear and obvious. It is our desire that this request is taken more seriously and addressed and funded during FY26.

Respectfully,



Felicia Johnson
District Manager CB #14Q



SANDY MCKEE
CHAIR

JOHN KELLER, FIRST VICE CHAIR
GABRIEL TURZO, SECOND VICE CHAIR



JESÚS PÉREZ
DISTRICT MANAGER

LIVIA SHREDNICK, TREASURER
BEATRICE DISMAN, ASST. TREASURER
JUSTIN GOLDBERG, SECRETARY
JERRY WEINSTEIN, ASST. SECRETARY

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
211 EAST 43RD STREET, SUITE 1404
NEW YORK, NY 10017

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation at their Budget and Oversight Hearing on The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2026 - 2029 and The Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report

Delivered at the City Hall Chambers on March 21, 2025.

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Jesús Pérez, and I am the District Manager of Manhattan Community Board Six.

You've heard from some of my colleagues regarding the underinvestment in our City's 59 community boards. In the interest of time, I will not repeat their points, but I enthusiastically echo their testimonies.

I'd like to address you today on an unexciting, but important, matter: the fact that community boards across the city are struggling with their office spaces and meeting venues.

Some community boards report offices that are too small for their needs, in disrepair, or are not ADA compliant.

Some community boards struggle to find suitable venues for their meetings.

In many districts, venues that previously welcomed community boards before the pandemic, have now closed their doors to them or have instituted significant fees for renting meeting space. Some boards rely on the generosity of one or two free meeting venues but would be at a loss for where to go should that generosity ever come to an end. And while always appreciated, spaces we don't control often come with drawbacks: like unreliable A/V equipment or wifi—which are essential for making community board meetings as transparent and accessible to the public as possible.

For many boards, simply undertaking our most fundamental function: holding monthly public meetings is an exercise in frustration and precarity.

Manhattan Community Board 6's official position is that community boards, being city agencies which are Charter-mandated to hold monthly public meetings, must have adequate facilities that they control that would accommodate district office space, meeting space for committees, and larger spaces for full board meetings.

We ask you to work with us to help address this important, and long neglected, need and bear it in mind in your budget deliberations.

Thank you.

Susan Kent, *Chair*
Valerie De La Rosa, *First Vice Chair*
Eugene Yoo, *Second Vice Chair*



Antony Wong, *Treasurer*
Emma Smith, *Secretary*
Brian Pape, *Assistant Secretary*
Mark Diller, *District Manager*

COMMUNITY BOARD No. 2, MANHATTAN

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Greenwich Village ♦ Little Italy ♦ SoHo ♦ NoHo ♦ Hudson Square ♦ Chinatown ♦ Gansevoort Market

March 21, 2025

Hon. Christopher Marte
NY City Council District 1
65 East Broadway
New York, NY 10002

Hon. Carlina Rivera
NY City Council District 2
254 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10009

Hon. Erik Bottcher
NY City Council District 3
224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Re: Prioritizing Baselined Increases for Community Board Budgets

Honorable Council Members Marte, Rivera and Bottcher:

On behalf of Community Board 2/Manhattan, which overlaps with each of your Districts, we write to request that you work with your Council Colleagues to prioritize a baselined budget increase for Community Boards for Fiscal Year 2026 and beyond.

Community Boards have not had a budget increase in more than 15 years (other than to match dollar-for-dollar wage increases included in collective bargaining agreements). Yet Community Boards have been tasked with doing much more with less.

Nowhere is that more true than in our collective back yards. CB2M's District Office is on track to process more Dining Out NYC applications than any other District in the City. Current estimates see CB2M alone processing more than 15% of all Citywide outdoor dining applications. Most of those applications will spawn coordinate applications to the State Liquor Authority for permission to serve alcohol in the outdoor spaces. And CB2M already fields two SLA Licensing Committees because the volume of applications is too great for just one. Add to that the continuous need to review applications for use of public plazas and thoroughfares for product launches, pop-up marketing, and other street activities, and the stream of applications to license cannabis dispensaries in our area, and it is clear that the workload never abates.

At the same time, CB2M's Office is called upon to facilitate hybrid meetings, including several each month at off-site venues. After Covid, fewer organizations and venues are willing to host the Community Board, and fewer still will do so without charging a fee we simply cannot pay.

Making the meetings fully hybrid, or at the least creating a complete audio and video recording of the proceedings and uploading it to be available to the public, requires improvisation as well as equipment typically mastered only by DJs and engineers – we simply do not have the budget to hire outside audio/video producers for every off-site meeting. Neither do we have the budget to purchase the sophisticated equipment (and the consulting fees to explain its use) needed to perform these functions ourselves. Perhaps you have experienced these challenges at one of our meetings.

In addition, in recent months, various agencies have notified Community Boards that our limited Staffs must shoulder even more responsibilities. While we endorse initiatives to make our Offices, meeting venues and online presences truly accessible to those with disabilities and to reflect and be welcoming to the gorgeous diversity of our City, and to report on these efforts, we simply lack the expertise and staff hours to produce the sophisticated work product and analyses now expected of us.

CB2/M attempts to meet these demands by squeezing salaries for four people into a budget meant for three, and by eschewing any meeting venue or facility that requires a fee, however modest or discounted.

Community Board perform an indispensable role in our City's democracy. It is through Community Boards that the most effective and robust public engagement on matters to be determined by agencies and officials is accomplished, and the voice of the Community is heard in response.

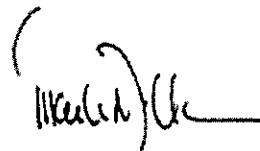
It is time that the City recognized that the increased demands on Community Boards must be met by increased funding. It is equally necessary that such increased funding be baselined year over year so that we may recruit and retain the staff needed to continue to deliver a professional result to the Community we all serve.

As the Chair and District Manager of CB2M, on behalf of our Board and Community, we respectfully request that you join those advocating for a substantial and baselined increase to Community Board budgets for FY 2026 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted –



Susan Kent, Chair



Mark Diller, District Manager



**Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.
Testimony at the New York City Council Governmental Operations, State & Federal
Legislation Committee
Honorable Lincoln Restler, Chair
March 21st, 2025**

Thank you Chair Restler and members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today. The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community-based organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded since our founding to include three key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 80,000 people per year through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. With the firm belief that social service can incite social change, CPC strives to empower our constituents as agents of social justice, with the overarching goal of advancing and transforming communities.

As a member of CACF's [Invisible No More](#) campaign, which has pushed for data disaggregation in New York State for over a decade, the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) has seen firsthand how clear, disaggregated data on our diverse AAPI communities is necessary for the creation of strong and equitable public policy.

The broad "Asian" category often masks significant disparities among diverse ethnic subgroups. For instance, socioeconomic outcomes can vary widely between East Asian, Southeast Asian, and South Asian communities in NYC. Disaggregated data would reveal these nuanced differences, allowing for more targeted and effective policy interventions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, aggregated data masked disparities in health outcomes among different ethnic groups within the Asian American population. Data from the NYC Department of Health revealed that the Asian American community faced higher rates of severe illness and barriers to healthcare access compared to the general population. By disaggregating this data, policymakers would have been able to identify specific needs within sub-groups, such as Mandarin-speaking elderly individuals, who faced unique challenges in accessing healthcare services and information. Disaggregated data would transform how our City offers vital resources and services to our marginalized communities.

Furthermore, this granular approach to data collection across NYC agencies would promote greater transparency and accountability in addressing the unique challenges faced by specific Asian ethnic groups, such as educational disparities, healthcare access issues, or economic

inequalities. By mandating the collection and reporting of detailed ethnicity data, we would empower Asian communities – from Chinese and Korean to Filipino, Bangladeshi, and beyond – to advocate for their distinct needs and monitor progress on issues affecting their specific populations.

We strongly urge the City Council to pass Intro. 1134, which would establish uniform standards for the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data across all NYC agencies. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to collaborating with the Council to address the issues that matter most to our communities.

If there are any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to Ashley Chen, Policy Analyst at achen9@cpc-nyc.org.

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

6

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jesús Pérez

Address: _____

I represent: Manhattan Community Board 6

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

5

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SUSAN STETZER

Address: _____ 10009

I represent: MAN. COMMUNITY BOARD 3

Address: 59 E 4 ST 10003

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Celestina Leon

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Community Board 4

Address: " " See above

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shawn Campbell

Address: _____

I represent: BK CB 14

Address: 810 916 St BK

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 21 MARCH 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARK DILLER

Address: _____

I represent: COMMUNITY BOARD 2 / MANHATTAN

Address: 3 WASHINGTON SQ VILLAGE

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/22/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown

Address: _____

I represent: Rose of Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street 3F

BKLYN NY 11238
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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karen Herman

Address: NYC Fleet

I represent: DCAS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katrina Porter

Address: DCAS

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Louis A. Molina

Address: 1 Centre St, New York, NY 10007

I represent: DCAS

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shanna Middleton

Address: 1 Centre St, New York, NY 10007

I represent: DCAS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SANA BARAKAT

Address: 1 Center Street, NYC

I represent: DCAS Energy Management

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ranar Cohen

Address: DCAS

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOSEPH WAGNER

Address: 1 CENTRAL ST.

I represent: DCAS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Muriel Goode-Trufant

Address: 100 Church Street, NYC

I represent: Law Department

Address: 100 Church Street, NYC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eric Eichenholz

Address: 100 Church Street, NY 10007

I represent: NYC Law Department

Address: Same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennie Nagle - Yndigoren

Address: [REDACTED] 32 NY, NY 10034

I represent: NYC Law Dept

Address: 100 Church St, New York, NY 10007

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sheryl Newkild

Address: 100 Church Street NY NY 10007

I represent: NYC Law Department

Address: 100 Church Street NY NY 10007

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shameka B. Overton

Address: _____

I represent: DCAS

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ASIM REHMAN - CHIEF JUDGE & COMMISSIONER

Address: _____

I represent: OATH

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ARNAB DAS DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ADMINISTRATION

Address: _____

I represent: OATH

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/21/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BRIAN CONNELL ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FINANCE & DATA ANALYTICS

Address: _____

I represent: OATH

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MICHAEL J. Ryan

Address: 42 BROADWAY

I represent: NYC Board of Elections

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VINCENT IGNIIZIO

Address: 42 BROADWAY

I represent: NYC BOE

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms