

Testimony from NYCHA's Senior Director of Resident Initiatives Shanna Castillo
Resident Hiring and Section 3 Requirements
Committee on Public Housing with the Committee on Civil Service and Labor
Thursday, April 20, 2023 – 1 p.m.
New York City Hall Council Chambers

Chairs Alexa Avilés and Carmen De La Rosa, members of the Committees on Public Housing and Civil Service and Labor, other distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and members of the public: good afternoon. I am Shanna Castillo, NYCHA's Senior Director of Resident Initiatives. I am pleased to be joined by Chief Procurement Officer Sergio Paneque, Chief Asset and Capital Management Officer Shaan Mavani, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer Kerri Jew, Vice President of Design and Construction Matthew Charney, and other members of NYCHA's team.

Connecting residents to high-quality job training and employment opportunities is an integral part of NYCHA's mission to strengthen communities across the city. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these efforts, which are so impactful to residents' quality of life.

Connecting Residents to Opportunity

NYCHA's Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability Office, known as REES, helps residents increase their income and assets through programs, policies, and collaborations in the areas of employment and career advancement, adult education and vocational training, financial empowerment, and business development in all five boroughs. The results of our work are tangible – since its inception in 2009, REES has established over 80 economic opportunity partnerships and has launched numerous initiatives tailored for NYCHA residents.

The NRTA is a key REES program that has provided residents with employment-linked training in maintenance, painters' apprenticeship, construction, janitorial services, and pest control, equipping residents with the knowledge, skills, and industry certifications they need to succeed. Since its creation in 2010, 3,486 residents have graduated from the NRTA, 89 percent of whom have gained employment at NYCHA or with NYCHA vendors and other employers. NYCHA has worked strategically to create career pathways opportunities for NRTA graduates, navigating the civil service system and receiving New York State Department of Labor recognition as a direct entry provider for construction training. We are proud that NYCHA's and the NRTA's success in training and hiring have been recognized by leading industry organizations.

To further our resident training and hiring efforts, NYCHA and the nonprofit Fund for Public Housing announced the NYCHA Clean Energy Academy last year, securing State and private funding. The two-year program will prepare 100 NYCHA residents for cutting-edge clean energy careers while helping the Authority achieve its sustainability goals. The first cohort starts this spring.

As part of our economic empowerment work, REES connects residents to Section 3 employment opportunities. Section 3 is a HUD regulation that requires recipients of HUD financial assistance to generate jobs and other economic opportunities for public housing residents and other low-income members of the community to the greatest extent feasible. From 2019 to 2021, NYCHA secured 3,070 Section 3 placements, of which 2,081 were internal NYCHA hires and 989 were vendor hires. This does not include Section 3 hires made by our PACT partners. Additionally, during this same time period, NYCHA and its partners secured 720 placements outside of Section 3 obligations.

Residents interested in working on a Section 3 project can get their skills, interests, and qualifications assessed at a REES info session. Interested residents are connected to partner providers for skills-based training. Residents are added to REES's database, which is used to make referrals to contractors. Residents may also utilize Opportunity Connect, one of NYCHA's self-service portals, to register their interest in Section 3 with REES and to refer themselves to vocational training services. Importantly, residents may apply directly for work with NYCHA contractors, as all vendors are responsible under the regulation for performing their own Section 3 workforce outreach.

NYCHA's Section 3 Program

Section 3 requirements are applied to NYCHA's capital projects and operations work. Our PACT construction work is also subject to Section 3 requirements.

In accordance with HUD's previous Section 3 rule, NYCHA has aimed to ensure that at least 30 percent of new hires are Section 3 hires. HUD's new rule on Section 3 went into effect in November 2020; it updated the Section 3 benchmark metrics and the applicability of Section 3 across funding sources and contract types. The new benchmarks require 25 percent of all labor hours to be worked by Section 3 workers and 5 percent of all labor hours to be worked by

targeted Section 3 workers, for contracts awarded after the new rule went into effect. NYCHA public housing and NYCHA Section 8 residents are included in the definition of a targeted Section 3 worker. The change to HUD's new rule requires significant changes to our internal policies, processes, and systems.

In recent years, NYCHA has undertaken several internal enhancements to improve NYCHA's Section 3 program and transition to the new rule. That includes centralizing Section 3 compliance tracking under the Procurement Department; launching new technology to improve Authority-wide visibility of contractor commitment and performance; diversifying employment offerings by extending resident hiring requirements to building management post PACT conversion; implementing Other Economic Opportunities (OEO) requirements for professional services vendors; and developing updated procedures and training for staff across the Authority.

In July 2022, NYCHA launched a new, vendor-facing software solution to strengthen labor compliance. In the first phase of the rollout, contractors subject to prevailing wage requirements began submitting certified payroll data online as part of their invoice package. Through regular, required payroll submissions, NYCHA has greater visibility into contractors' Section 3 hires and labor hours. In October 2022, NYCHA expanded the scope to capture a broader range of Section 3 activities. Once fully implemented, the system will enable NYCHA to set Section 3 goals or 'commitments' on individual solicitations; allow proposers to submit Resident Economic Opportunity (REO) and Other Economic Opportunity (OEO) plans online; and allow all contracted vendors to submit Section 3 labor hours, including for workers not in prevailing wage titles. Contractors will also be able to submit payments to subcontractors directly into the system.

The technology will vastly streamline compliance activities for NYCHA and its vendors, improve visibility, and enable NYCHA to better track compliance and take action when contractors fail to fulfill their obligations. The system has other benefits, including robust reporting, flexibility to configure NYCHA-specific data fields, the ability to build and maintain a publicly available directory of Section 3 Business Concerns, and facilitation of more effective outreach. The expanded functionality will be introduced to all NYCHA contractors over the course of 2023.

In 2022, NYCHA introduced two procurement policy changes to strengthen Section 3. The "Section 3 and M/WBE First" policy gives first preference to Section 3 Business Concerns

(S3BC: businesses majority-owned or operated by Section 3 residents) and then to Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) for all procurements up to \$250,000. In addition, NYCHA began assigning value to RFP proposal evaluation scores for the quality of proposers' Section 3 and M/WBE plans.

To foster equity and economic advancement, NYCHA regularly promotes contracting opportunities for Section 3 Business Concerns and M/WBEs. In February 2023, NYCHA Procurement hosted "NYCHA Connect – A Section 3 & M/WBE Event" at the Borough of Manhattan Community College to connect S3BCs and M/WBEs with NYCHA departments so they could learn about micro and small purchase opportunities. The speed networking event enabled attendees from nearly 100 businesses, including 36 S3BCs, to engage in brief conversations, round-robin style, with NYCHA staff from various departments, including Borough Property Management teams, Central Operations (Heating, Elevators, and Waste and Pest Management), Asset and Capital Management, and IT. Approximately 500 unique conversations were facilitated between vendors and NYCHA staff. Vendors also had the opportunity to obtain additional resources from NYCHA's Procurement Department, REES, NYC Small Business Services, the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, and the Mayor's Office of M/WBEs. Procurement and Asset and Capital Management are currently planning the next networking event.

From 2019 through 2022, nearly 8,500 micro, small, and larger purchases worth about \$1.2 billion were awarded to M/WBEs as prime vendors; an additional \$173 million was awarded to M/WBEs as subcontractors; and over 3,000 purchases worth more than \$80 million were awarded to S3BCs. These S3BC figures will be further refined as part of our technology enhancements.

NYCHA's Section 3 Performance

In 2021, 314 hires or 20 percent of hires under NYCHA's completed capital projects and operations contracts subject to the old HUD rule were Section 3 hires, an increase over 13 percent in 2019 and 14 percent in 2020, but falling short of the 30 percent benchmark for these contracts.

However, through 2022, all PACT projects subject to the old Section 3 rule where construction is complete exceeded the required benchmark of 30 percent, with 356 hires or 58 percent qualifying as Section 3 hires in total across five completed projects. PACT projects with construction work subject to the new Section 3 rule are ongoing. NYCHA monitors and manages Section 3 performance of capital projects and operations contractors, and PACT partners, throughout the period of work contracted, and works with these contractors and partners to maximize Section 3 performance by the conclusion of construction.

Iris Collado, a 15-year resident of Ocean Bay Apartments, is one of the many residents hired by our PACT partners. She was originally hired to serve as a Construction Administrative Specialist and Resident Liaison for her development's conversion to Section 8. She has now been employed by MDG Design + Construction for over six years, working on three different PACT projects. Another MDG employee started out on the painting team with a sub-contractor working on comprehensive renovations at Betances Houses and was later hired by MDG as a full-time carpenter. He has also helped connect other residents to hiring opportunities at Betances. A Hammel Houses resident graduated from the NRTA and was referred by REES to work on comprehensive renovations at Linden Houses; she was hired full-time by the PACT partners' contractor and, thanks to the partners' support, joined the Local 79 union last summer.

Additionally, our PACT partners have been working with the YouthBuild program to provide training and internship opportunities throughout the city for Section 3 candidates, helping to create meaningful jobs for young people and provide them with the resources and support they need to succeed in their careers.

Hiring residents is not just a mandate but is integral to the culture of our organization – residents make up about 20 percent of NYCHA's workforce.

Additional Resident Economic Empowerment Activities

Empowering residents with vital economic opportunities is at the heart of our work, and REES carries out this mission in various ways beyond connecting residents to Section 3 job opportunities through its partnerships with City agencies and local service providers. For instance, City and federal funding have enabled NYCHA, HRA, and other City agency partners

to launch and expand the Jobs-Plus program, which is currently at 12 sites, offering residents of 43 NYCHA developments life-changing employment, education, and financial empowerment services.

Also, NYCHA worked with the NYC Health Department and various local community organizations to prioritize NYCHA resident hiring and on-the-job training for new Community Health Worker opportunities. Forty-six residents were hired to support their neighbors at 43 developments by connecting them to highly beneficial health and social services.

Additionally, REES's Food and Catering Business Pathways, Childcare Business Pathways, and Construction Business Pathways programs for residents are helping budding entrepreneurs launch or grow their businesses. And our partnership with HPD, Enterprise Community Partners, and Brooklyn Workforce Innovations is training NYCHA residents for quality jobs in the affordable housing industry.

Partnering on Pathways for Success

Providing residents with economic opportunities has significant and lasting impact on communities across the city – and it's through partnership that we can best foster these pathways for success and a brighter future. We thank the Council and other partners for their support with these efforts. And we look forward to collaborating with you to identify additional ways we can better serve NYCHA residents, as well as further strengthen our organization.

Thank you. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC HOUSING AND COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR**

APRIL 20, 2023

Good Afternoon.

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you very much Chair Avilés and Chair De Le Rosa and members of the Committee on Public Housing and Committee on Civil Service and Labor for holding this hearing and allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony.

It has been roughly seven months since my office and I released a report on NYCHA called, [*How the Other Half Lives in Public Housing*](#), as well as when this Committee and the Committee on Contracts held a hearing regarding oversight of examining NYCHA's contracting and hiring processes. During a 5 Borough Tour hosted by my office, it was brought to our attention that residents who had frequent issues with mold, leaks, and rodent and insect infestation would end up resolving the issue themselves for various reasons. Residents would often submit a ticket order to request someone to fix these issues but would never get an update and no one showed up. On the seemingly rare occasions that NYCHA sent a contractor to their apartment, the issue wasn't sufficiently addressed, and the problem recurred. . Many residents started turning down these contractors because they know the job will be done incorrectly or improperly.

These unresolved issues impact the lives of NYCHA residents everyday which is why I would like to speak about one of the recommendations from my report today. NYCHA must enforce and comply with Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968. If OMB approves additional capital projects to go through the JOC process, then there are immediate opportunities to utilize Section 3 with the added benefit of employing people who live in or near NYCHA that look like or are the residents of NYCHA. The current hiring system is unreliable and NYCHA may hire someone for the lowest price, which often results in NYCHA's crippled housing infrastructure remaining so.

According to the annual reports NYCHA submits to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, no more than 0.3% of NYCHA construction contracts went to Section 3 businesses between 2016 and 2020.¹ This is incredibly disappointing. NYCHA residents deserve quality housing. If NYCHA isn't making these repairs, who can these residents rely on? It has

¹ <https://www.gothamgazette.com/state/11798-nycha-missed-local-hiring-requirements>



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

been far too long that NYCHA residents have not been prioritized. It is about time they are prioritized for the hiring process and Section 3 is preserved. I expect to hear a thorough update by the NYCHA administration today about any improvements they have made thus far to ensure that the Section 3 residents are being hired.

Thank you.

Testimony of Aaron Shiffman, Executive Director
Brooklyn Workforce Innovations
NYC Council Committee on Public Housing (Jointly with Committee on Civil Service and Labor)
April 20, 2023

My name is Aaron Shiffman, and I am the founding Executive Director of Brooklyn Workforce Innovations.

Brooklyn Workforce Innovations ([BWI](#)) is a city-wide nonprofit workforce development organization whose mission is to empower low and moderate-income people by helping them gain access to living wage employment opportunities and career paths. Since its inception in 2000 BWI has helped connect more than 11,000 New Yorkers to careers.

BWI finds career-path opportunities in the local economy and designs and delivers skills training to help people access them. Through job training, job placement, and long-term career support, BWI programs permanently lift hundreds of people out of poverty every year. BWI has been partnering with NYCHA's Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) department for more than 13 years.

Specifically, since 2010 BWI has directly collaborated with NYCHA REES to offer the NYCHA Resident Training Academy. In the time since the Academy was launched, the collaboration – via training facilitated by both BWI and other workforce development partners – has served more than 3,800 low-income residents of public housing. BWI has directly trained nearly 3,100 residents, primarily for roles as Housing Caretakers and entry level pest control aides. The Academy has directly assisted more than 3,000 public housing residents to connect to career path employment with NYCHA or secure work with NYCHA contractors via Section 3 hiring. The municipal jobs NYCHA continues to offer to Academy graduates remain essential and they offer economic stability, family-supporting health benefits, pensions, and true opportunities for upward mobility.

NYCHA REES has proven year after year its deep commitment to public residents through their collaborative programming that connects a wide range of public housing residents to training with BWI and the Academy's other workforce training partners. I have been consistently impressed with the leadership team at NYCHA REES and strongly value our organization's collaborations with the department. BWI and NYCHA's work together was recognized in 2012 by NYC Employment and Training Coalition when it earned its Opportunity Award for Employer-CBO Partnership. A few years later, BWI honored NYCHA at its 2015 Spring Gala as one of BWI's Outstanding Employer Partners, and NYCHA's hiring of Academy graduates has only increased since then.

More recent examples of BWI's successful partnership with REES include our collaborative efforts launching Housing Career Pathways. Through BWI's customized training portfolio, BWI is leveraging exciting new training and employment opportunities for low-income jobseekers leading to office-based careers in affordable housing management. BWI is particularly energized by the Housing Career Pathways (HCP) program in partnership with Enterprise Community Partners, NYCHA and NYC HPD. Through HCP, BWI has already enrolled 33 individuals into training and 81% of graduates were quickly placed into upwardly mobile, office-based career opportunities in affordable housing

**Testimony of Aaron Shiffman, Executive Director
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management with average initial starting wages of \$21.88 per hour. NYCHA has been an excellent referral partner for this initiative that will commence its next cohort of training later this month.

The true impact of NYCHA's partnership work with skills training partners is best communicated through the sharing of stories of transformation and impact. Below are highlights of two individuals selected from thousands of instances of success:

Christine T. completed Pest Control Technician Training with the NRTA days before New York City went into lockdown in 2020. After significant COVID-related credentialing delays, Christine earned her credential and was hired by NYCHA later that year. Christine excelled in her role. More recently Christine completed additional hours of required training which paired with at least one year of employment as a Technician enabled her to apply for a promotion to the role of NYCHA Exterminator. Christine, a mother of six children, has worked consistently since being trained by the Academy, earned a significant salary increase when promoted by NYCHA, and loves her career and benefits with NYCHA.

Alisha B is a single mother and long-time NYCHA resident living in Far Rockaway, Queens. Before her acceptance into the Housing Career Pathways training program, Alisha was working in the food industry, sometimes working two jobs just to pay her bills. Passionate about helping others, Alisha saw the HCP program as an opportunity to build a career and make a positive impact on the lives of others. After graduation and a paid internship, Alisha secured a job as a Housing Lottery Associate at the Fifth Avenue Committee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have any questions about our partnership activities with NYCHA that continue to directly lead to transformative workforce outcomes for low-income jobless residents of public housing.

Respectfully,

Aaron Shiffman (he/him/his)
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Margo Alexandria Boykins, Director of Participant Engagement at Grace Institute

MISSION

Grace Institute empowers underserved women in New York City to achieve employment and economic self-sufficiency. Within a supportive and structured environment, Grace Institute provides job-skills training, counseling, placement services and continuous learning opportunities that lead to upwardly mobile employment. We offer these services so that participants can realize their inherent strength, resilience, and limitless potential.

The partnership with NYCHA and Grace Institute has been fruitful. Each year we collaborate with NYCHA to host and conduct (12) Open Houses a year. At these Open Houses we invite NYCHA residents to learn more about our free workforce development training programs. Grace Institute provides strong wrap-around services for our participants. Internally we offer case managers for each participant to address any challenges. We also offer laptops to participants who require access to technology. Grace collaborates with Dress for Success and Bottomless Closet to offer Professional Clothing. We also partner with Community Services Society (CSS) to offer immediate needs like Monthly Metro Cards, Professional Clothing, and other resources.

After completing our program, our team works with graduates to help them secure career ladder administrative and customer support positions in industries including healthcare, banking, insurance, hospitality and more. Once graduates are placed in a job, Grace Institute continues to support our alumnae through additional technology boot camps, networking opportunities and resources for career advancement.

Our employer-driven training includes:

- Comprehensive classes and workshops in business communications, project management & digital administration.
- Training in office technology (Microsoft Office Suites, Cloud Computing, CRMs)
- Internship Opportunities
- Resume support and interview practice
- Counseling and crisis-management assistance

- Referrals to outside services (food pantries, clothing, and housing resources)
- Workshops in stress management, time management, and financial literacy

After graduation participants receive:

- One year of job-placement assistance
- One year of job-retention support
- Lifetime access to post-graduate workshops, networking, and Grace Institute community

REES supports the recruitment of NYCHA residents by hosting several Recruitment Open Houses each year. REES markets these Open Houses for a few weeks prior to the Open Houses and ensures that the NYCHA residents are present and prepared to participate.

Our data indicates that the most recent classes in February 2023 had 43 NYCHA residents enrolled.

Since 2019, 130 NYCHA residents have enrolled in Grace Institutes programs."

**New York City Council Oversight Hearing on Resident Hiring and
Section 3 Requirements
Committee on Civil Service and Labor and Committee on Public Housing
Testimony From Stephanie Klocke, [Green City Force](https://www.greencityforce.org) Director of Career Services
Stephanie@greencityforce.org
Thursday, April 20th, 2023
1pm - 4:30pm
Council Chambers, City Hall**

Good afternoon Committee on Civil Service and Labor Chair De La Rosa, Committee on Public Housing Chair Aviles, Deputy Speaker Ayala, and members of the New York City Council. I am Stephanie Klocke, Green City Force (GCF) Director of Career Services. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the importance of resident hiring and section 3 requirements in NYCHA and low-income housing communities. GCF has been proud and thankful to receive funding from the Council via the Speaker Initiative for a Green Jobs Corps as well as discretionary support from other council members, some of whom are here today.

For the past six years, I have worked at GCF in partnership with NYCHA and NYCHA's Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) team as well as a city wide range of employers and workforce training partners, to position 18 - 24 year old NYCHA residents to qualify and be competitive for Section 3 job placements.

Green City Force's mission is to train young leaders to power a green and inclusive economy through service. Through our innovative holistic AmeriCorps service learning model, we have trained and prepared over 600+ graduates who have gone on to work in various roles in the green economy including energy

efficiency, green infrastructure, urban agriculture, green construction, community health and zero waste.

GCF's inaugural and strongest ongoing partner has been the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). In April 2010, GCF began partnership with NYCHA's REES office to recruit our first cohort of participants. Fast forward 13 years and our partnership has strengthened and continued. We are currently working with our 25th Cohort of 60+ members recruited in partnership with REES and preparing them for jobs tied to Section 3 opportunities and long-term careers in sustainability. We work across many divisions of NYCHA. But, our REES specific partnership has included pilot construction training opportunities via NYCHA's Resident Training Academy, design of an energy efficiency career track model under a partnership project with JobsFirstNYC, as well as a variety of recruitment initiatives and upskilling opportunities for our graduates following their initial service term at GCF.

The best illustration of why Section 3 is beneficial and why we value our partnership with NYCHA is through the stories of our graduates. As their stories illustrate, there are typically multiple steps along their paths towards economic mobility and career success:

- Matthew Lajara, of Wagner Houses in Manhattan, graduated from Green City Force knowing only that he wanted to work with his hands within the sustainability sector. By continuing his career exploration through GCF's social enterprise, he worked on energy efficiency and HVAC retrofits within NYCHA developments. When an opportunity came through REES to interview for the Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local #1, Matthew's experience working on Section 3 projects within NYCHA helped him realize what he wanted to pursue, where he is today, a union apprentice.
- Tyler Kennedy, from Marlboro Houses, began working with Green City Force's Social Enterprise team as a direct installer under the Constellation Energy Performance Contract in 2018. Over the course of the next few

years he advanced his skills before becoming a Lead Laborer and then Crew Leader. In early 2023, he secured work as a Project Administrator with Dynamic US through Toro Construction, where he's leading work within NYCHA developments.

- Nyasia Phyll, of Brooklyn's Bayview Houses, was passionate about communicating with people and sought out an opportunity to grow those skills with NYCHA's Tree Inventory project. In late 2021 and early 2022, she counted trees and types on NYCHA campuses, interviewed staff & residents on the environment and collected data to be shared back. Leveraging the skills developed, she landed a Fellowship with Edelman, a PR team where she connected with major brands around corporate social responsibility and sustainability.
- Torrey Ellison, from Frederick Samuels in Manhattan, grew his skills working on Energy Performance Contracts before moving on to be a porter with L&M Development. Two years later, he's seen significant professional growth and is excited for the next steps in his career.
- Johan Ortiz, a resident of Albany Houses in Brooklyn, initially worked for his uncle's electrical firm after graduating from Green City Force in February 2020. When COVID 19 caused the business to close, he connected with the Multiply Solar project at Queensbridge Houses. A top performer during his time in the work, he was selected to remain on with the installer, Venture Solar, where he was able to connect to a prevailing wage job earning \$68/ hour. To date, more than 30 NYCHA residents have obtained work installing solar panels in NYCHA developments through projects where GCF is the workforce lead, with another cohort expected to begin working in May.

One of the barriers to young residents accessing jobs in the sustainability sector is that they lack a way to develop an interest and meet people working in these fields. GCF offers a point of entry. Through GCF's Service Corps, young NYCHA residents serve as AmeriCorps members, earning money and working towards certifications and an education scholarship, while greening NYCHA communities.

They drive large-scale initiatives that reach thousands of residents: building and maintaining urban farms that provide residents with organic produce, and promoting zero waste through composting and recycling. In the process, GCF AmeriCorps members learn 21st century skills and prepare for careers related to sustainable buildings and communities. GCF provides support services and works with graduates to ensure a next step into work, apprenticeships, school or a combination, and we continue to partner with alumni to help them advance along their career path. Research shows that if young adults do not have a successful work experience before the age of 25, the likelihood of their accessing family-supporting work plummets. In addition, research points to the effectiveness of sectoral training and employment for young adults.

Bold and affirmative effort is needed to ensure that NYCHA's young adult residents, unemployed in overwhelming numbers, can benefit from Section 3 and get on a path to careers. Funding to continue the ongoing training and upskilling of low-income New Yorkers is critical so that they can earn enough income to support their households while pursuing the training opportunities that will lead to higher salaries and a career path for union trade roles and other good jobs. Collaboration and creativity are needed to turn what are often short-term contract jobs into rungs along a career ladder. NYCHA and REES have been strong innovation partners and problem solvers for GCF and our participants.

Our model corps in New York City enlists and trains young people from low income housing communities for a new and more equitable economy. We equip them with the tools to change the trajectory of their lives and access good jobs. Corps Members develop a passion for sustainability and service through driving large-scale environmental and health initiatives in public housing and other frontline communities. We design service as a path to greater well being and means to enlist young people to become contributors and leaders in the movement to build a greener, fairer and more just world. Graduates go on to jobs or college, directly or through alumni initiatives that build towards sectoral jobs and apprenticeships, via social enterprise contracts or advanced training

developed with employers. Our network of alumni, partners and supporters constitutes a growing ecosystem anchored in our corps.

We see first-hand the strategic effort NYCHA is making to connect its residents to employment opportunities, including contracts subject to Section 3. We also know how labor and resource intensive it can be to prepare and connect NYCHA residents to Section 3 opportunities, from recruitment, training, coaching, ongoing communication, to partnership development, support services, iterative design, and creative problem-solving. Community-based workforce and training organizations play an essential role in ensuring that residents have the baseline training and experience to meet the requirements of the jobs covered by Section 3. The City Council has been one of GCF's biggest supporters and champions and we thank you for your support which has helped us cultivate a talent pipeline for the green economy in NYC, and turn historic investments into retrofitting NYCHA into jobs for young residents unemployed in overwhelming and unacceptable numbers.

With current local, state, and national entities focused on policies and investment related to economic, environmental and racial justice, we are excited to continue partnership with the Council, NYCHA and our other government leaders working towards a Just Transition and #FutureGreenCity. My entire written testimony has been submitted for Council's review. Thank you.



MSWAB Testimony

Committee on Public Housing and Civil Service and Labor Joint Public Hearing

April 20, 2023

Hello, my name is (DeNeile or Diana) and I am Co-Chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board's NYCHA Recycling Committee.

Thank you ***Chair Avilés*** and ***Chair De La Rosa*** and the ***members of the Public Housing and Committee and Civil Service and Labor Committees*** for holding today's ***Oversight hearing on Resident Hiring and Section 3 Requirements***.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today.

I would like to comment on the current benefit and greater potential of resident lead initiatives and job hires as part of NYCHA's Sustainability Agenda.

NYCHA's Sustainability Agenda seeks to bring clean energy, waste diversion and greener infrastructures to its campuses. This Agenda has created an opportunity for a "double gain" by bringing in NYCHA residents to help with a green transition on the campuses they call home.

Resident participation in implementing this agenda has and will help the Housing Authority complete its capital projects by instilling a sense of ownership in residents as they actively create positive changes that ***are sustainable*** and ***achieve sustainability*** at developments like their own.

We would like to underscore that today NYCHA currently contracts with three sustainability organizations that are either Section 3 businesses, hire Section 3 employees, or both.

First, and the largest, [Green City Force](#), has graduated over 600 local young leaders from low-income housing to train them in solar panel installation, sustainable food systems, and other green careers. Together their work has positively impacted the lives of over 50,000 NYCHA residents.

The second is [Inner City Green Team](#), a resident-owned recycling initiative, employs five residents to collect and process NYCHA residential recyclables. This small but mighty team has increased recycling participation from 0 to 335 households in only 18 months. They are now recycling an average of 485 lbs of residential recyclables per week.

And the third is [Compost Power](#), a food waste processing organization now serving over seven NYCHA campuses, partners with Green City Force to train residents in composting organic waste. **(GET STATS)**

The benefits of just these three programs that employ and engage residents in NYCHA sustainability projects are far more than the completion of a work order.

Like many New Yorkers, NYCHA residents have long wanted to participate in recycling, be part of the clean energy transition, and live in a healthy environment. Including NYCHA residents in the infrastructural changes that NYCHA is making, especially those that will reduce NYCHA's environmental impact on the planet, provide residential workers with a sense of pride, empowerment and hope for the future. These benefits are lost when NYCHA hires outside contractors who simply see the campuses as job sites.

The MSWAB NYCHA Recycling Committee urges Council Members and city agents to take green job hiring into consideration as they review and improve NYCHA's Section 3 program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and I look forward to further conversations regarding this matter with members of both committees.



Audience: New York City Council Committee on Public Housing

Date: April 20, 2023

Presenter: Darron Henry, Enrollment Manager, State University of New York Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center

My name is Darron Henry, Enrollment Manager with the State University of New York, Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center in Downtown Brooklyn. BEOC offers tuition-free training and services to eligible NYS residents. We offer *ESOL*, *GED Prep*, *Medical Billing*, *OSHA* and other academic and career programs and services.

BEOC has a history of working with NYCHA REES. Over the years, we have provided test prep for applicants seeking employment at NYCHA via Section 3, assisted residents with earning a GED, national certifications, or Security Guard license, and job placement.

During the pandemic, we worked with REES to continue connecting residents to our programs and services. This was done through regularly scheduled information sessions via Zoom. It allowed interested residents to learn about BEOC, and in some cases, enrolled and attend classes online or in-person.

Recently, BEOC attended a career fair at the Whitman Houses. Next month, BEOC and NYCHA REES will host their first in-person information session since the start of the pandemic. This session will allow NYCHA residents the opportunity to engage with BEOC staff in-person, learn about BEOC programs and services, and receive assistance with their online admissions application.

Our partnership with NYCHA REES has allowed us to connect even more residents to valuable trainings and services, that otherwise would not be available. For example, in 2018 of the 1,082 enrollees at BEOC, about 18% of our total enrollment, were NYCHA residents. In 2020 our enrollment number jumped to 1,493 with NYCHA residents making up 20% of all enrollment.

BEOC looks to continue and grow our partnership with REES to reach and serve even more NYCHA residents."



"Alimentamos Grandes Apetitos" "We Feed Big Appetites"

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Phone: 347-368-4407/347-542-3130 Fax: 347-542-3614

Website: saborrestaurantbakerynyc.com

My name is Cristiana Franco, I am a graduate of the **Food Pathways program sponsored by REES and the Owner of Sabor Restaurant & Bakery.** Because of the Food Pathways program, we finally realized our dream to open our restaurant in January 2016. With my background in event planning/hospitality and my husband's background as a chef, we knew we had what it takes to create an incredible dining experience! We use our family recipes to make mouth-watering Colombian & Dominican dishes. Our inspiration for our restaurant comes from our rich culture of preparing homemade dishes that reminded us how important it is to bring families together.

But our dream would not have been possible without the food pathways program. There was so much to learn about running a restaurant that we learned from the program. The connections that we made through the program that helped us continue our journey are priceless. Connections that helped grow our business and stay open through the pandemic. Also, the program graduates were allowed to sell their products in the Navy Yard for two weeks at a time. Once I entered the yard I fell in love with the energy of the people. I told myself I want to be permanent in the yard. It took 4 years but finally, I got my own spot. Incredible but true, it is one of the things I am the proudest of in my career and it was made possible because of the food pathways program.

Another great opportunity with the food pathways program is Governor's Island. We are allowed to be on the Island for 2 months during the summer. I have never heard of Governor's Island. Until one very cool winter, we were given a tour. I fell in love with the Island. For 2 years we have been selling our food on the Island for 2 months each year. "Someday I will also have a permanent spot on the Island" with the help of the food pathways program.

Another of my great experiences with the food pathways is serving our most needed NYCHA community. Every time we are asked to serve our community by providing healthy culturally appropriate food it warms my heart. As I was raised and still live in NYCHA I know the needs that the NYCHA community needs.

Sincerely

Cristiana Franco (Owner)

Sabor Restaurant & Bakery

Resident Testimonial – April 2023

Niani Taylor – Van Dyke Houses, Food Business Pathways Graduate

My name is Niani Taylor, and I am resident of Van Dyke Houses in Brooklyn, and I graduated from the NYCHA REES Food Business Pathways (FBP) program in August 2015. Through my passion for cooking and wanting to change from my corporate career, I started my catering company, Munch Hours, Inc. in October 2015 after completing the FBP program and received my first order in my business in February 2016. FBP helped support my idea of being a food business owner by paying for my NYS business registration, providing classes, business coaching and relevant resources.

As a Section 3 Business Concern (S3BC), I am a registered vendor through NYCHA's iSupplier vendor portal. I have also benefitted from the market access opportunities offered by REES' FBP program which has included being a food vendor for projects including – Brooklyn Navy Yard, GrowNYC, NYCHA Thanksgiving Meals, Governors Island vendor and the NYCHA Food Expansion program funded by the Mayor's Taskforce of Racial Inclusion and Equity that hires Food BP graduates to provide meals for residents without gas. Because I was a Governors Island vendor, I was also selected to provide small plate dishes at the Friends of Governors Island fundraising event in 2021. Even now after so many years post-graduation, the NYCHA REES team continues to provide me with business resources and market access opportunities that help me to grow my business.

I have also been a NYC certified MWBE business since January 2020 and was one of the selected vendors to provide meals for the workers at the NYC Covid-19 vaccine sites in 2021. It would help me greatly if NYC would provide more opportunities to connect S3BC with city contracts. Additionally, the city should ensure that the timeline to pay vendors is faster. While I appreciated the city contract to provide meals for the Covid-19 vaccines sites, it took a long time for me to be paid and I had to get a loan to bridge the gap between providing the meals and waiting for the city to pay me.

One of the things that has been very challenging for me is finding affordable commercial kitchen space. NYC requires food business owners to cook in a commercial kitchen that has been approved and inspected by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. As a NYCHA REES FBP graduate, I

received a kitchen scholarship to a commercial kitchen incubator space which really helped me early in my business. I started out at a kitchen in Brooklyn. Then I moved to a kitchen in the South Bronx and from there to a kitchen in Lower East Side. I am currently finalizing the application process for Mangrove Kitchen in Brooklyn. I have been in 4 kitchens since I started my business, and it is frustrating to keep moving around but I must do so, to find affordable space so that I can make a profit.

Many food vendors continue to cook out of their homes because for so many the cost to rent commercial kitchen space and pay for the business insurance that is required to cook in a commercial kitchen is often too costly for small business and they don't make enough profit when they follow the rules of being in a commercial kitchen. NYC can help to locate affordable commercial kitchen space for S3BC small food business owners and provide more funding to kitchen incubators so they can offer kitchen scholarships to S3BC.

Munch Hours, Inc.

Website: <https://www.munchhoursinc.com/>.

My name is Carol Hodges and I live in South Jamaica Houses, in Queens New York. During the summer of 2001, I needed \$1,500 and had no job or means to get money. This was also during the height of a drug epidemic plaguing my community, where selling drugs was my only option, at least I thought it was. By the end of that summer, I caught my first criminal case in which I served 6 months in prison and 5 years' probation.

Soon after release I became pregnant, and thing's suddenly seemed very grim. I needed to change my life. While having my daughter was one of my blessings, she was and still is my motivation to turn my life around!

I had minimal education and no real skills. The only connection to any kind of real help was through the South Jamaica Tenant Association, who gave me some information about the NYCHA REES programs. It was REES that introduced me to a career path to change my life. I scheduled an orientation and worked with a case manager who became my guiding source for employment and training opportunities.

I enrolled in different training opportunities, where I received certificates to work various construction jobs. My first job was with a non-union contractor, which offered me a night job position starting on New Year's Eve.

Not fully realizing this was my paved introduction to the construction industry and all the opportunities that followed. While on the job, I took even more certifications and was offered an opportunity to work on a union job and am now a UNION MEMBER!

It was because of NYCHA/REES that I was given a different outlook on life where I didn't have to do something strange for some change. I tell everyone I know how grateful and now I'm telling this panel of how grateful I am to have connected with NYCHA'S/Sec 3 and the REES programs. It is an impactful part of NYCHA that has saved my life.

Sincerely,

Carol Hodges

majormovezzz46@icloud.com

City Council Testimony: The Committee for Public Housing and the Community on Civil Service and Labor

Christine Taylor, East River, April 18, 2023*

NYCHA RESIDENT TRAINING ACADEMY (NRTA) Graduate, Pest Control Training

Good afternoon, my involvement in the Rees program has truly been a blessing. At the time I was working part time jobs and not able to make ends meet for myself or my children. I would always see flyers in my lobby and thought why not give it a try. So, I made an appointment and went to Atlantic Ave and took the test to get into the caretaker program. When it was time to go over my scores, I was told I scored well and that I could actually enroll into the pest management program. So, I did. Brooklyn Workforce Innovations provided the course and have been still very helpful to me til this day. They provided me with the 30hour course to be eligible to get my state license in pest management. They also provided me with the tools needed to secure a job with NYCHA. When first hired by NYCHA I was a Seasonal Community Service Aide for the first 6 months and then promoted to Pest Control Aide. While as a Pest Control Aide I develop a deep passion for the work I do. I received my Civil Service status and as of July 2022 I am currently a Housing Exterminator. I owe my success to the Rees program for providing the tools and the opportunity to make this career for myself and my family. It's amazing to me that a simple flyer in my lobby lead me to career that has become my passion. Being able to help fellow resident improve the quality in their homes brings me joy. The example I am making for my 6 children that see their mom get up every day and work hard to provide for them is indescribable. Programs like this need to continue need to be expanded. Who better to take care of NYCHA than the people who live within. Providing the tools and opportunities this is extremely important and I hope continues.

*Testimony submitted via email to Josephine Melendez, NYCHA REES. Christine Taylor consented to have her testimony uploaded by Josephine Melendez to the City Council website.

Marie (Irma) Lance, Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program Manager

April 19, 2023

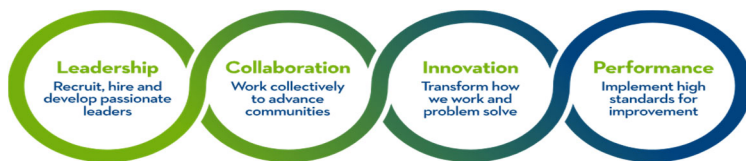
Borough of Manhattan Community College Department of Continuing Education and Workforce Development (BMCC) continues to maintain a successful partnership with the Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability (REES) / New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Since 2018 BMCC has served over 350 NYCHA students, providing literacy services and classes leading to the high school equivalency diploma (HSE) and classes in English for students of other languages (ESOL).

As part of the CUNY system, BMCC Adult Basic Education is a college preparatory program emphasizing regular attendance and academic discipline; we are continually impressed by the many NYCHA students who commit fully to our high standards despite some economic challenges and instability in their lives. Two NYCHA students who recently completed our program received their HSE diplomas. One is attending Kingsborough Community College with full tuition paid by a Within Reach Foundation Scholarship. The other student received her diploma in January 2023 and is attending a medical billing and coding program. NYCHA students understand that education is one way to try to break the cycle of poverty for themselves and their children. NYCHA students often say how important it is for them to be part of the community learners here at BMCC. We are proud of our NYCHA students, and we look forward to an ongoing relationship with our NYCHA partners.

REES Partner Success Story
Submitted by: Marisol Figueroa, Project Director
Equus Workforce Solutions, Jobs-Plus, 1 Edgewater St. Suite 305A, SI, NY 10305

Equus Workforce Solutions is dedicated to advancing economies and communities thrive through our Work Smart. Do Good. Get Better. Creating Opportunities and Changing Lives, philosophy and our LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, INNOVATION, and PERFORMANCE initiatives that empower our teams to build customized workforce solutions for our operations locally and nationwide. Our dedicated and passionate team of 4,000+ workforce professionals put the industry's best practices to work across more than 356 North American locations, assisting approximately 1.6 million job seekers and thousands of employers annually. Together with our partners and collaborators, we work every day to change lives, advance economies, and help communities thrive. We help businesses meet their human capital needs through best-in-class business solutions delivered by trained staff working collaboratively with other business-serving organizations.

Our Staten Island team utilizes our philosophy and initiatives to serve working-age residents of **Richmond Terrace, Stapleton, West Brighton, South Beach, Todt Hill, Mariners Harbor and Berry Houses**, as well as a small number (less than 10% of total) of non-residents who reside outside of these developments but seek and can benefit from services. applying some of the strategies that lead to successful outcomes for residents of the Staten Island communities we incorporate program specialization for targeted populations to address the workforce development and other needs of all residents. Our focus rest on the targeted industry sectors of health care/social assistance, maintenance and security, and food service/accommodation and retail to prepare members for demand occupations that provide career pathway opportunities and self-sufficient wages. We will also connect members to virtual job opportunities, customer service/administrative jobs as the Our extensive presence throughout New York City ensures we are connected to employers in these and other targeted sectors to secure employment for members. To ensure our members are prepared for and secure the highest earnings achieving long-term stability. This is achieved through leveraging on employer and community partner relationships already in place on Staten Island and expanding the network of employers as and more employer relationships are developed to help support the demand of members seeking employment. We encourage and support the members to adopt the same sense of ownership we expect from our staff. No matter the approach being utilized, Fast Track, Employment Prep, Literacy, or Financial Counseling the member must remain motivated, enthusiastic, and committed to succeed.



Equus Workforce Solutions through our HRA funded Jobs-Plus program , currently serves over 2,500 residents of 7 NYCHA development in the following zip codes: **10301, 10304, 10303, 10310, 10305, 10306, 10314, and 10% of residents who reserve in those communities of service along the North Shore of Staten Island.**

Our partnership with REES started in 2013 through the Jobs-Plus contract. Our model includes working with REES to connect residents to employment, training, business solutions, and financial services that help increase their financial stability and independence. Since the beginning of our contract with HRA, Jobs-Plus, Equus has partnered with REES collaborating in various events and activities throughout each

quarter of the annual contracts. We collaborate with NYCHA/REES and the property managers and housing assistants connecting and supporting residents to apply for Earned Income Disallowance, this benefit supports residents who are unemployed to build savings as they re-enter the workforce. The collaboration with REES and the property management offices also supports the tabling/outreach events that help connect the residents to one-stop-shop services through pop-up tent and office engagement. The residents meet where they reside. We promote events prior to arriving in the communities and work closely with our REES Zone Coordinator to canvass and inform residents when we are stationed in their communities. Through the outreach collaborative events we connect the residents to services/employment/resources and information on specific REES opportunities available to them to help them connect with higher wage opportunities, quality vocational training, starting a small business and other needed resources, childcare, continuing their education for HSE/TASC and short-term vocational training programs that increase their potential to earn a higher wage. (Economic Self-Sufficiency). Our biggest WIN was in 2018 prior to Amazon opening the warehouse on Staten Island, Jobs-Plus Equus in collaboration with the property managers allowed us to host a tabling event in all of the NYCHA communities on Staten Island. Our REES Zone coordinator at the time also worked to support those tabling events that lead to many of the NYCHA residents obtaining employment with Amazon who at the time paid over the minimum wage \$16.50 per hour with night differential, benefits and room for advancement. Amazon is now the largest employer on Staten Island and is still working with Equus, Jobs-Plus and REES to connect residents to higher wage opportunities. We also partnered with REES to connect residents to the customer service training and job placements in jobs at the Empire Outlets. We collaborated on seasonal retail opportunities and permanent job opportunities with TARGET, placing over 20 residents in those jobs with Target. We also partnered with Workforce 1 ITC, SI career center, and REES to bring job opportunities to the residents in their communities through the property management offices. Section 3 hiring has been one of the most successful projects in collaboration with REES, over 40 Jobs-Plus members/NYCHA residents have been connected to high wage opportunities in the construction industry over the last several years. Residents have also been connected to the seasonal job opportunities with NYCHA as maintenance and grounds' keeping workers. Some residents have been hired permanently with NYCHA. Several members have also been connected to HSE/TASC classes at CSI through REES. We strongly support the Section 3 program through REES, it has expanded offering other skilled labor training and higher wage opportunities i.e., Pest Control, Janitorial, in addition to Construction, OSHA, and Retail. The completion of the training and internships has led to higher wages and an improvement in quality of life for NYCHA residents. Our partnership with REES has led to an increase in enrollments through a well-established referral and follow-up system. REES referrals make up 30% of new members enrolled in Jobs-Plus per year.

I'd like to talk about two success stories through the partnership with REES and Jobs-Plus that helped to change lives and connect NYCHA residents to employment and economic self-sufficiency.

Success story #1

Gender Identified – Female- living in South Beach Houses, Staten Island, was unemployed and was sitting outside with some neighbors when she was approached by the REES Zone Coordinator. As a single parent who was struggling to support her family she needed a higher wage opportunity and job-readiness preparation to help her succeed. The Zone coordinator referred her to Jobs-Plus and connected her with a Jobs-Plus, Equus staff who was partnering with REES during an outreach at South Beach Houses. The resident enrolled with Jobs-Plus, received pre-employment services, 1:1 resume upgrade workshop, career coaching and connected with an employer who was providing home health care services. The member/resident was prepared for her interview and highlighted her skills and experience in customer service and wowed the employer. She became one of their top recruiters and

helped to increase their customer service and support their home health aides. Her bilingual Spanish skills also helped her to engage clients and aides who primarily spoke Spanish. She was promoted and started earning over \$20 per hour. Through her experience with the HHA company she was hired by a local large community organization as a PT employee as a crisis case manager. Her marketability increased and she is now earning a higher wage to support her family.

Success story #2

Gender identified- Female- from Todt Hill Houses, single mom who was volunteering with a non-for-profit organization helping women who are victims of domestic violence, was unemployed due to the pandemic from 2020. She was connected through REES and supported by Jobs-Plus to an employment opportunity with a city agency, she is continuing to give back to her community and is earning over \$30 per hour as a coordinator. Her former experience in workforce services helped her to upgrade her resume and prepare for the interview. She has a passion to serve the NYCHA residents.

NYCHA REES Testimonial

My name is Sara Ezike. I currently live in Walt Whitman houses in Brooklyn Ny. I have used REES services to assist me in employment and training for 6 years. REES has helped me with many different employment avenues. My first REES interaction was Janitorial Job training. I did not take advantage it began my interaction with the services REES provide. This training opportunity would have provided paid training, carfare, on the job training and a job placement close to my housing development. I continued my REES journey by taking a few seminar classes; The business training where I was given steps on how to prepare to start a business and First-time home buyers seminar to get you started with NHS. I also inquired about the cable installation job that provides the same training through BWI. They provide several trainings other than the ones I inquired about. They also have Movie and film directing classes that work right out of Steiner studios in The Brooklyn Navy yard.

I have used REES to obtain my job now. I was referred to The LiRo group, in the administrative field by REES. I was encouraged by the REES to take the position. I was interviewed and given the job on 1/02/2020 and am still currently employed. Previously I was traveling to long Island for minimum wage. I spent most of my money on travel and childcare. On this job I have gain my OSHA 10,30 AND 40, Advanced my Microsoft Knowledge (Word, Excel). I have become a sort after Administrative Assistant for LiRo construction. They also look to me for other NYCHA resident referrals. I have been able to assit two other NYCHA residents with gainful employment by me being employed. I have created a 401K and am able to provide for myself and my children, without government assistance. This employment Opportunity has opened many avenues in the connections I make in the construction field with my company and Nycha. I believe if it was not for the REES program, I would have stayed governmental dependent or making minimum wage and not have access to knowing what a good job is and how to maintain it. Even being Employed the coordinators at REES still stay in contact to see if I am still employed. I would just like to take this time to thank REES for all the opportunities provided.

Good morning everyone,

My name is Shamecca Shannon and I have lived in NYCHA all of my life. I received my GED at 17 years old and tried many times to pursue a degree but the timing was never correct due to the fact I was a single mother raising my kids. Over the years I had several mediocre jobs, nothing career worthy. One day during the height of the pandemic I received an email from REES introducing the CHW Program, I said, hey let me give it a try. I trained for the CHW Program with LaGuardia Community College for 3 months. After completing the program and receiving my CHW certificate I got hired as a CHW for NYU Langone in Population Health for 1 year. While working for NYU I received many certificates in the health and wellness sector. When the grant funded program came to an end at NYU I was hired with HCCI as a CHW Supervisor and recently got promoted to Program Manager, making an annual salary of \$70,000. In October of this year I will receive my bachelor's degree in Business Administration and I will then continue to pursue my Masters Degree .The REES Program has given me a NYCHA resident with only a GED ,an opportunity to finally obtain a career and I am so thankful.

City Council Remarks/Testimony

City Council Members,

My name is Shirley Jones, and I am a 2022 recipient of the NYCHA CUNY Scholarship. Being a member of two public institutions, NYCHA and CUNY has brought me an array of positive experiences that have greatly impacted my desire to pursue my professional goals and give back to my community. In 2009 I enrolled as a freshman at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. This turned out to be one of the best decisions I ever made. Unfortunately, personal circumstances forced me to take a break from school.

Ten years later, in 2019, I enrolled back into college with a renewed sense of hope and purpose. I also wanted to turn my pain of losing my mother in 2013 into honoring her memory by achieving my goals. I was determined to finish school, so I took summer and winter classes as well to increase my chances of completing school sooner. However, during the summer of 2021, while I was in the middle of my summer class, I experienced the loss of my mother-in-law whom I took care of up until her passing and began to face some challenges in my marriage which forced me to take yet another break from school.

In May 2022, I was contacted by my college to participate in a program called "Commit to Complete" ---a program to help me graduate by offering to pay some of my past-due balances if I agreed to finish school. I seized the opportunity immediately because due to my financial situation I would be unable to pay off my balance to register for school. I was extremely excited to be enrolled back into school and I signed up for a summer class in 2022. Then a few months later, I received an email from NYCHA about an opportunity to apply for the NYCHA-CUNY Scholarship so therefore I decided to give it a shot.

In the middle of the application, for some reason, I became discouraged and started doubting that I would even win. I did not complete the application and one day, Pam Arnett from REES called and encouraged me to complete the application, but I still did not finish it. Then she followed up again and gave me that spark that I needed to finally complete my application, and I submit it before the deadline. I still remember how excited I was when I received the email that I was a recipient of the scholarship. The news did something to my confidence and self-esteem. This win gave me the confidence to go on and apply for another scholarship offered by my college which I also won!

After winning the NYCHA CUNY scholarship, REES informed me of other opportunities that I could participate in such as the KPMG internship recruitment webinar with the opportunity to win a laptop. Initially, I did not sign up for the webinar, but I did when Josephine Melendez from REES called to encourage me to do so, I did. I am so happy that I did because not only did I get the opportunity to attend an amazing webinar, but I was also one of the recipients who won the new laptop. After winning the laptop, I felt unstoppable and from that point on I started believing in myself again and was thankful for winning something that I did know that I needed until a few weeks afterward when my desktop stopped working. If I never attended the webinar then I would have never won the laptop which would have affected my ability to attend my online classes.

Throughout my journey, I have learned the importance of helping myself so that I can ultimately help others. I'm thankful for the support of family and friends which helped sustain me and I am pleased to announce that I will be graduating from Borough of Manhattan Community College on June 8, 2023. Despite all the challenges along the way, I know who I am and what I can achieve. I hope to become an entrepreneur to help make a difference in my community and to participate in future REES events related to entrepreneurship.

I give my consent to share for the city council hearing...

Hi, I'm Trenell Wells.. I have participated in the NYCHA Resident Training Academy- Janitorial Training Program... REES program, who I reached out to for employment... then directed me through the application process. I was accepted into the NRTA Janitorial training Cycle 95A and I'm now hired by NYCHA working in Carver Houses. REES has been very resourceful Any documents that I needed was given in a timely matter.... Great work REES..... thank you!

This was the best life changing experience for me! There was a flyer in my building hallway lobby by NYCHA REES offering FREE construction training and I signed up right away. Being that I was unemployed, I had time to apply myself to the 8 weeks program while earning FREE certifications and I did just that. I've learned so much in that short time frame such as how to drill, nail, saw, read blueprints, build a drywall with a light fixture, lay tiles, paint an entire room etc. I also had the greatest instructors that made sure I succeeded and did as well as I wanted to do while reaching out to different unions and employers on my behalf while I was working on my certifications so I could start work when I completed. I got my OSHA 30, SST, flagger, scaffolding, paint, mold & bedbug awareness, cpr, and more. About 2 months after receiving all my FREE certifications I received a call from union local 79 offering to sponsor me into the union AND giving me a job. I work full time Monday thru Friday and the pay is GREAT!!! I've been with them for 9 months and counting working on a NYCHA project in Linden houses. I'm a general laborer so my assignments switch from day to day which I love because I get to learn different things. Being that I'm new in this field, I make sure to network with the contractors, learn as much as possible, go to my union meetings/classes, and just basically anything I can do to evolve in this industry. But I couldn't have done any of this without the NRTA NYCHA REES PROGRAM! Not only do I have a great job with benefits, I have a career because of them! Oh and if for any reason I wasn't working right now NYCHA REES would help me find employment without hesitation as to why they check up on me still to this day. I'll never be able to thank them enough but THANK YOU GUYS SO MUCH!!!

**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: Shameera Shannan

Address: E 105th St

I represent: NYCHA REES

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: 4/20/2027

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darion Henry

Address: Livingston St BK 11201

I represent: NYCHA - BROC

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: Manuel Martinez

Address: 160th St Apt 65

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shawn Maxani

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA Chief Asset & Capital

Address: Management Officer

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sergio Lantieri

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA - Chief Procurement Officer

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shanna Castillo

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA Senior Director of Resident

Address: Initiatives

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kerri Jew

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA EVP & Chief Administrative

Address: Officer

**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: Matthew Charney

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA VP of Design & Construction

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: Robert Wells

Address: SA in Edwards T

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: 4-20-23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Infante George

Address: _____

I represent: Local 79

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: 4/20/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arlene S. Henry

Address: Broadway

I represent: Section 3 Local 79

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: 4/20/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jasmine Byrd

Address: Prinardway

I represent: Section 3 Local 79

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: 4-20-23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Justice Favor

Address: _____

I represent: Local 79

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: 4-20-2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tamara Harris

Address: 8th Ave. Brooklyn NY 11215

I represent: Integrative Addressat's Sanctuary Inc.

Address: 9025

**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: 04-20-2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kaiti Rodriguez

Address: West 23rd Street

I represent: NYCHA (REES Program)

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: Corneil Robinson

Address: E 163 St Bx 11 NY 10456

I represent: NYCHA

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: 4-20-2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NIAHI L. Taylor

Address: LIVONIA Ave Bklyn

I represent: NYCHA

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: 4/20/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephanie Klorke

Address: _____

I represent: Green City Excl Section 3 & NYCHA living

Address: _____

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