

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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March 26, 2018
Start: 10:16 a.m.
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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Carlos Menchaca
Chairperson

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Mathieu Eugene
Mark Gjonaj
Robert F. Holden
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Jaime Rogel

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Elizabeth Rieser Murphy
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Ariel Sobranski
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Public Policy Associate at LiveOn New York

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION 6

2 MCKENZIE JOSEPH: One, two, one two.
3 Today's date is March 26th, 2018. This is the
4 Committee on Immigration being recorded by McKenzie
5 Joseph.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Buenos dias, good
7 morning. My name is Carlos Menchaca and I am the
8 chair of the Committee on Immigration. I'm really
9 proud to be coming back and serving as your chair
10 again for immigration and this is a big
11 responsibility and so I'm really happy that the
12 speaker has entrusted me with that role. I'm also
13 excited to be working with the speaker. Speaker
14 Johnson, he is compassionate, he has an incredible
15 work ethic, but he's resolute in not backing down
16 when it comes to protecting our immigrant community.
17 And that is the best kind of relationship that we can
18 have as two members of this body. We have an
19 incredible group of members of the Immigration
20 Committee as well that I will present at the end.
21 This session, the council is focused on how the
22 administration prioritizes, focuses on immigrant New
23 Yorkers. By analyzing the overall budget structure,
24 adequate funding levels and transparency. The New
25 York City Charter mandates that the council in its

2 oversight capacity, review the activities of the City
3 agencies, including their service goals, performance,
4 and management efficiency on a regular basis. This
5 includes reviewing the budget as a whole. As well as
6 at the agency level to assess whether it accurately
7 meets and how the agency's performance goals and the
8 needs address the City. This council has really
9 highlighted, in a big way, and elevated our
10 immigrants by passing a number of bills, and adding
11 funding for critical services. We passed a bill that
12 expanded the roles and scope of the Mayor's Office of
13 Immigrant Affairs. Created a MOIA led inter agency
14 task force, tasked with reviewing the needs of the
15 City's immigrant community. And then identifying how
16 City agencies can work together to address those
17 needs efficiently and effectively. We also passed
18 legislation that prohibits the use of City resources
19 to support civil immigration enforcement and a data
20 privacy bill that requires City employees and
21 contractors to protect identifying information. The
22 council also added funding for immigrant services at
23 a historic level in FY 18. With \$12 million for adult
24 literacy. \$1.5 million for immigrant health
25 initiative. \$10 million for the New York Immigrant

2 Family Unity Project and more. But, let me be clear,
3 we still have a long way to go in the areas of
4 immigration legal services, adult literacy, health,
5 and small business support for our immigrants. Today,
6 the committee will conduct a hearing on the Fiscal
7 2019 preliminary budget and assess whether it
8 adequately addresses the needs of our immigrant New
9 Yorkers. We have the Mayor's Office of Immigrant
10 Affairs here. And I want to thank them for their
11 time. But, with everything that's going on, I want to
12 just share that I'm disappointed that we are in
13 absence of other agencies as well. We've asked for
14 them to bring as many agencies as possible and so
15 we're going to hear from everyone. But I want to make
16 it clear that we want to continue to build
17 relationships across agencies so that we can hear
18 about their resolve to address the needs of our
19 immigrant communities across every agency. However, I
20 am looking forward to MOIA and their strategy on
21 immigrants and how the office engages other agencies
22 including HRA, The Human Resources Administration,
23 The Department of Youth and Community Development,
24 The Department of Education, Small Business Services,
25 and others, in order to best serve our immigrant New

2 Yorkers. We also want to hear more about MOIA's role
3 and contracting process for immigrant service
4 funding. And that's going to be key here as we hear
5 from some of the service providers who are having a
6 lot of trouble taking dollars or bringing dollars
7 back in reimbursements. Because we believe it falls
8 under MOIA's duties to ensure that the City's
9 contracting practices are equitable and fair to the
10 community organizations doing the hard work on the
11 ground. That's why we're going to be asking and
12 focusing on that. Our City cannot adequately support
13 immigrant New Yorker's without adequately supporting
14 the organizations that serve them. That can't
15 actually work. So, after we hear from MOIA, the
16 committee will hear testimony from the public to
17 really understand what's going on. Immigrants make up
18 the fabric of our City. There are approximately 3.3
19 million foreign born immigrants in New York City from
20 more than 150 countries. Who comprise nearly 40% of
21 the City's population. Immigrants make up 46% of the
22 City's work force, and earn \$100 billion a year.
23 Which accounts for nearly 1/3 of all earned income in
24 New York City. Immigrant New Yorker's are found in
25 every sector of the workforce. Including

2 entertainment, construction, medical, technology and
3 financial industries. Furthermore, our undocumented
4 population also contributes to our vibrant economy.
5 With studies concluding that undocumented immigrants
6 pay \$1.1 billion in New York State and local taxes.
7 To give you a sense of the size of their
8 contributions, New York would lose \$28.7 billion in
9 economic activity, and approximately \$137 thousand
10 plus jobs if all undocumented immigrants were removed
11 as a result of President Trump's draconian policies.
12 Despite immigrant New Yorker's contributions, the
13 Fiscal 2019 preliminary budget, does not include any
14 new funding for immigrant services. Our status, our
15 commitment, our challenge every day to stay and keep
16 our promise to Sanctuary City, must be reflected in
17 our City's budget. And this committee needs to hear
18 from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and how
19 we plan to get their together. The Trump
20 Administration's anti-agenda continues to wreak havoc
21 on our hardworking immigrants and their families.
22 Washington still has left our youth in the Deferred
23 Action for Childhood arrivals, DACA, in limbo. Let me
24 be clear, Dreamers must be protected. This is no
25 longer a partisan issues, it's a moral issue. And one

2 that has the support of majority of Americans on both
3 sides of the aisle and it enrages me every time
4 Dreamers are being used in this political game.
5 Congress just failed them last week. And they
6 continue to be bargaining chips. On top of this
7 immigrants with the Temporary Protected Status, TPS,
8 also face an uncertain future. The Trump
9 Administration ended TPS for Nicaragua, Haiti, and El
10 Salvador. And the future of Hondurans for TPS, these
11 remain uncertain. To put things in perspective, there
12 are 26,000 TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras and
13 Haiti living in New York State. It is estimated that
14 \$1.5 billion would be lost from the States GDP
15 annually without TPS holders from these countries. To
16 make matters worse, ICE continues to escalate
17 senseless immigration arrests in New York City. And
18 we felt it deeply recently when we saw ICE targeting
19 immigrant's right's activists like Ravi Ragbir. This
20 is unconscionable. So, it's all important.
21 Everything we talk about during these times that the
22 Administration and the City Council continue to lead
23 the way when it comes to immigrants' rights, and
24 inclusion. And ensure that our City's economy and
25 culture continue to be built by everyone regardless

2 of their immigration status. Despite what Trump says,
3 we are a Nation of immigrants. They are a part of
4 this Nation and the City's fabric and part of what
5 makes us strong and unique as a City. What we do in
6 New York City, influences National conversation
7 around policy and budget decisions. People are
8 looking to us and the decisions that we make every
9 single day, big or small. Especially immigration
10 issues during this challenging time. So, I want to be
11 very clear that I firmly believe that restricting the
12 City's Immigration Legal Services for those convicted
13 of certain crimes is a serious and dangerous step
14 backwards. To quote the Mayor, The Mayor of the City
15 of New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio, he himself said
16 that everyone deserves a second chance. That we are
17 working to break the cycle of returning to jail for
18 those in City custody by making sure they have
19 opportunities to learn and grow while in jail. And
20 connecting them the reentry services to support a
21 pathway to stability when they leave. So, while the
22 Mayor is increasing funding to provide reentry
23 services and five hours of programming a day for
24 every person who enters City jails, I have to ask,
25 why do immigrants not deserve a second chance? In

2 fact, what we are asking for is for the Mayor to give
3 a chance everyone. So that they can have their fair
4 day in court. It is not up to the Council or the
5 Mayor who get to stay or who has to leave this
6 country. That is up to the immigration courts. Our
7 job is to make sure that New Yorkers understand their
8 situation, have access to legal representation so
9 they can have their fair day in court. And if the
10 individual must leave, have the support they need to
11 finalize their affairs and leave their families as
12 stable a situation as possible. It is wrong to
13 exclude the group of services simply because they
14 have or were born elsewhere and that is clearly what
15 is happening here today. That policy does not fit in
16 with our New York City, New York State values. And
17 undermines the progress we've made by the Mayor and
18 the Council on both criminal justice and immigration
19 issues. And so I urge the Mayor to reconsider the
20 stance so that our City can remain a City that treats
21 all New Yorkers equally with respect. By looking at
22 the fiscal 2019 preliminary budget, it's clear that
23 no additional funding or permanent funding for Vital
24 Services after this fiscal year are included. One
25 example is adult literacy. The fiscal 2018

2 preliminary Mayor's Management Report, The PMMR,
3 reports that during the first four months of fiscal
4 2018, there were 5,966 participants in DYCD funded
5 literacy programs. Up nearly 37% when compared to the
6 same reporting period in fiscal 2017. The PMMR
7 attributes this due to the \$12 million in enhanced
8 funding that the Council fought for. There are
9 positive results and yet funding is not baselined or
10 included in the FY 19 preliminary budget. I want to
11 emphasize the need for adequate funding levels for
12 services like Adult Literacy and Immigrant Health
13 because this is about the sustainability of our
14 services for immigrant New Yorkers. So they could
15 come to expect them and the organizations that serve
16 them. Yeah to year funding levels leave our community
17 organizations in a state of constant uncertainty.
18 Multiyear funding through baselining is essential to
19 community organizations that tackle inequality and
20 help immigrant families find stability in the face of
21 daily uncertainty. I'm interested in hearing the
22 administration's strategy and budget plan for
23 ensuring that NYC will be a true Sanctuary City that
24 protects the right of our immigrant population and
25 ensures that they have equal access and supportive

2 services so that they can thrive in our City. I look
3 forward to hearing updates on these topics and any
4 other budgetary management items that the agency
5 would like to address. Again, I would like to thank
6 bot the Speaker and the Mayor for supporting the
7 needs of our immigrant community and look forward to
8 building upon our many, many accomplishments. I want
9 to thank the committee staff for their hard work. Our
10 unit head, Carillion (sp?) Francisco. Financial
11 Analyst Jun Lee. Committee Council Iliana Porta.
12 Policy Analyst Elizabeth Cronk. Community Liaison Cio
13 (sp?) Min Zau (sp?). And my Chief of Staff, Veronica
14 Villareal-Leon (sp?). I want to seriously thank our
15 Commissioner, Nisha Agarwal and make sure that she is
16 recovering with speed. She made a mark in this City
17 and we want to wish her good health. And I think we
18 think about her a lot and we want to sure that she
19 can continue to come back to the City and Council in
20 any way and share her wisdom. I would like to welcome
21 acting Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of
22 Immigrant Affairs, Bitta Mostofi, and her team and
23 colleagues who have joined us today. And also
24 acknowledge as they set up, our incredible committee
25 on immigration starting with Council Member Danny

2 Dromm from Queens, thank you for being here. And
3 Council Member Holden from Queens as well. We're
4 going to swear you in. And when you're ready if you
5 can raise your hand and do you affirm to tell the
6 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
7 your testimony before this committee and respond
8 honestly to our council member questions?

9 COLLECTIVELY: I do.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. [audio
11 difficulties]

12 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Okay, good morning.
13 Thank you so much to Chair Menchaca and members of
14 the Immigration Committee. My name is Bitá Mostofi,
15 I'm the acting Commissioner of The Mayor's Office of
16 Immigrant Affairs. I will attempt to deliver a
17 shortened version of the testimony. You have a longer
18 version that was submitted to you in hard copy. So,
19 I'm going to highlight the City's key accomplishments
20 over the last year to make New York City more
21 accessible and inclusive for immigrants. In addition,
22 I will share how MOIA has worked hand in hand with
23 immigrant communities and other key partners
24 including the Council to respond to the Trump
25 Administration's xenophobic actions. I look forward

2 to sharing details about our achievements with you.

3 MOIA is tasked with the broad mission of promoting

4 the wellbeing of the immigrant communities in New

5 York City. Our efforts and resources are focused on

6 three priority areas. First, MOIA facilitates

7 immigrant's access to City services and resources and

8 promotes greater immigrant inclusion across local

9 government. Our role MOIA is to ensure that City

10 government is responsible and accountable to all New

11 Yorkers and to develop strategies to enhance the

12 economic, civic, and social integration of all

13 residents including immigrants. Second, we promote

14 access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers by

15 expanding access to high quality immigration legal

16 services, and legal rights education. We empower low

17 income immigrant communities and reduce income

18 inequality. The increase in federal immigration

19 enforcement has created acute needs for immigrant New

20 Yorkers navigating a complex and broken immigration

21 system. Needs that the Mayor and The City Council

22 have address with historical investments. Third, MOIA

23 advocates for reform at all levels of government to

24 fight the inequities facing New York City's immigrant

25 communities. MOIA monitors immigration related

2 developments and it advocates on the local, state,
3 and federal, and international levels to support pro-
4 immigrant policies and protect immigrant New Yorkers
5 right. MOIA's mission is more important now than
6 ever. In 2017, immigrant New Yorkers faced numerous
7 attacks including the end of DACA and TPS for many
8 countries. Multiple travel bans, increased
9 immigration enforcement and attacks against cities
10 with common sense laws and policies meant to protect
11 public safety for all. But despite these attacks, New
12 York City is, and will remain a City of immigrants.
13 We are proud to be one of the most diverse cities in
14 America. While the majority of foreign born residents
15 in New York City are now U.S. Citizens, there are
16 approximately 1 million New Yorkers who have lawful
17 permanent residency or another authorized immigration
18 status. In addition there are approximately 560,000
19 undocumented immigrant New Yorkers. Though non-
20 citizen New Yorkers are deeply rooted in our City,
21 this population faces additional barriers that MIOA
22 has sought to eliminate with innovative programs and
23 policies. MOIA has responded to new changes as well.
24 The Trump Administration has implemented major
25 changes to federal immigration policy that have

2 negatively impacted New Yorkers and their families.

3 The decision to end DACA and TPS for several

4 countries means that 30,000 Dreamers in our City and

5 10,000 TPS recipients from Haiti and El Salvador will

6 be at risk of losing work authorization and

7 protection from deportation. And dramatic increases

8 in immigration enforcement under the Trump

9 Administration have been felt within our communities.

10 By way of example, the number of non-criminal arrests

11 of immigrants in and around New York City increased

12 over 400% in the months following President Trump's

13 inauguration. Additionally, reports of ICE

14 enforcement at court houses in New York City

15 increased by over 1,000% from calendar year 2016 to

16 2017. The City also saw an immense increase in

17 detainer requests from ICE in fiscal year 2017

18 compared to 16. Against this challenging backdrop,

19 MOIA has led the City's efforts to support and

20 protect our immigrant residents. At the same time,

21 MOIA has steadfastly continued building on the

22 achievements that we have all reached together. I

23 want to turn to some of the achievements in the past

24 year which show how MOIA has fortified the City's

25 strong immigrant inclusive policies and programs,

2 even in the uniquely hostile federal environment. I
3 will start with our efforts to promote immigrant
4 inclusion. As you know, the IDNYC municipal
5 identification card program completed its third year
6 in 2017. The card connects residents to City
7 government and supports people who do not have access
8 to identification. This includes many of our
9 immigrant residents. IDNYC remains by far, the most
10 successful municipal ID card in the country. This
11 past year we're proud to have issued our one
12 millionth card. And as of the end of 2017 we have
13 issued over 1.2 million cards. The number of card
14 holders is only one measure of success, however, we
15 have also made the card more accessible and useful
16 for all New Yorkers including the most vulnerable and
17 hard to reach amongst us. In April of 2017, the
18 program launched IDNYC On The Go. IDNYC's mobile
19 command center, to travel to the communities in the
20 outer boroughs and parts of Manhattan for people who
21 do not readily have access to enrollment. In an
22 effort to reach hard to reach population, IDNYC also
23 partnered with the Department of Homeless Services
24 and educational institutions to organize on site, pop
25 up enrollments for homeless shelters and in schools.

2 The City has worked to connect card holders to City
3 services. Patients at the majority of New York City's
4 Health and Hospital Facilities can now connect their
5 IDNYC to their patient records and facilitate
6 registration and check-ins. In the coming months,
7 IDNYC and H + H will expand this to all facilities
8 across the city. Another piece of our immigrant
9 inclusion work is connecting immigrants to language
10 services that they need. In 2017 we significantly
11 expanded a number of our language access programs to
12 ensure the City speaks the language of all New
13 Yorkers. MOIA is coordinating the City wide
14 implementation of the City Council pass Local Law 30
15 which is now the most expansive language access law
16 in the nation. Since its passage, MOIA has convened
17 language access coordinators to review the law's
18 requirements, develop guidance materials and we've
19 held a series of one on one meetings with our agency
20 partners to assist with the implementation. We are
21 also currently reviewing the agency's language access
22 implementation plans which are due to the Council at
23 the end of this fiscal year. With support from the
24 Council, MOIA piloted a groundbreaking project to
25 place Russian and Haitian Creole interpreters at 20

2 poll sites in Brooklyn and Queens to help limited
3 English proficient voters during the 2017 General
4 Election. I am proud to report that the interpreters
5 that we hired and trained, they served nearly 500 LEP
6 voters through this pilot. We look forward to further
7 collaborations with the Council and hopefully the
8 Board of Elections, and others to engage LEP voters.
9 MOIA also worked to support LEP New Yorkers by
10 providing programming to help language learners
11 practice English. The We Are New York program helps
12 immigrant New Yorkers practice English while learning
13 about the City's resources using Emmy Award winning,
14 We Are New York video series and companion education
15 materials. MOIA recruits and trains volunteers to
16 facilitate 10 week English conversation classes at
17 libraries, community organizations and in government
18 agencies. The program served more than 3,500 English
19 language learners in 2017. MOIA is currently working
20 to expand WANY with the support of Council in 2018
21 with new videos, new educational materials, a new
22 website and our rebranding. Our outreach is to
23 historically underserved communities is another way
24 we work to integrate immigrants into the City's civic
25 life. In 2017, MOIA's outreach and community services

2 teams participated in approximately 1,400 events in
3 the City throughout the year. This included
4 trainings, community discussions, tabling and
5 canvassing with urgent information such as updates on
6 the travel bans and DACA. The outreaching is also
7 focused on bringing community centric town halls to
8 historically underserved communities. In December of
9 2017, we held the first ever Afghan community town
10 hall in Queens, conducted in the Dari and Pashto
11 languages. We are currently working on a series of
12 follow up engagements in the community including to
13 share the new IDNYC application in Pashto. We are
14 also planning a Garifuna and Central American town
15 hall in the South Bronx during immigrant heritage
16 week which will be on April 21st. This will be the
17 City's first town hall dedicated to this population.
18 Another key piece of MOIA's work is coordination with
19 agencies across the City in order to fully serve the
20 millions of immigrant New Yorkers. In 2017, MOIA kept
21 City agencies informed about critical federal policy
22 changes and the effects on their work. We held agency
23 briefings, distributed talking points and materials.
24 Worked with effective agencies to mitigate the
25 negative impacts of these policy changes among

2 others. Building on the City's research and data
3 about immigrants in New York City, MOIA analyzed the
4 effects of federal immigration policy changes on the
5 City and its residents. We circulated research to
6 elected officials including members of this
7 committee. MOIA works with City agencies to factor
8 immigrant community's needs into the everyday work of
9 how local government operates. In 2017, we worked
10 with our sister agencies to hold press conferences to
11 denounce housing discrimination and harassment in
12 response to instances of tenant harassment. We also
13 worked with sister agencies to address employers
14 concerns about immigration enforcement, and rights
15 and responsibilities at small business town hall.
16 MOIA and our sister agencies participated in panels,
17 trainings and breakout sessions with paid care
18 workers, many of whom are immigrants, through which
19 workers had the opportunity to learn about the rights
20 and share their experiences in the industry. In
21 addition, we worked with the Department of Social
22 Services to improve the processes for responding to
23 shelter requests by asylum applicants and victims of
24 trafficking to ensure their safety. MOIA has worked
25 with agency partners to expand public awareness about

2 the availability of U & T visas and to improve the
3 City's U & T visa certification processes. The City
4 has increased the transparency of these processes
5 which has led to a marked increase in the number of
6 applications and certifications issued. We saw a 35%
7 increase in the number of applications and 36%
8 increase in certifications compared to 2016. This is
9 an 86% increase in applications and 125% increase in
10 certifications compared to 2014 and reflects the
11 City's hard work to increase outreach and awareness
12 to immigrant crime victims. Finally, we continue to
13 work with our partners to ensure that immigrants are
14 connected to the healthcare services that they need.
15 Just last month, H + H announced a major new care
16 management initiative. The initiative builds on
17 lessons that we learned through our action health
18 demonstration project and recognizes the importance
19 of navigation and care management support regardless
20 of a patient's ability to pay or immigration status.
21 In 2017, we worked with others across the
22 administration working closely with the Council on
23 several new laws effecting immigrant New Yorkers.
24 Many of these laws codified or built upon the city's
25 inclusive policies. One notable example, is the

2 legislation to make it clear that the City's role is
3 to maintain a welcoming and safe city for all, not to
4 enforce draconian immigration policies. We look
5 forward to working with our sister agencies to
6 implement these local laws in 2018 and have already
7 begun this important work. Turning to an area that is
8 more crucial than ever, MOIA works to ensure access
9 to immigration legal services. Under the leadership
10 of the Mayor and the City Council, New York City has
11 made historic investments to promote access to
12 justice for immigrant residents. Through ActionNYC,
13 New York Citizenship and inner agency work with HRA's
14 Office of Civil Justice, MOIA and its partners
15 facilitate the provision of high quality immigration
16 legal services. And help community providers build
17 their capacity. ActionNYC serves as the entry point
18 for New Yorker's seeking immigration legal services
19 through its City wide hotline, centralized
20 appointment making system, and accessible service
21 locations at community based organizations, in
22 schools and in hospitals. Our model recognizes that
23 immigrant New Yorker's interface with the City in
24 many ways and leverages those points of interaction
25 to connect more residents to legal services. In 2017,

2 Demand for ActionNYC services was consistently high.
3 Providers conducted over 8,000 legal screenings over
4 the course of the year and opened approximately 5,000
5 new cases. In response to this demand, the program
6 has worked to increase its reach in the city. Our
7 legal navigation team which rotates through city
8 schools, grew to two teams in November of 2017. These
9 teams screened over 750 people. The ActionNYC and
10 Health + Hospitals long term care program conducted a
11 120 intakes. We are proud to say that we estimate
12 that Health + Hospitals will realize a \$2.8 million
13 annual revenue in Medicaid due to the clients newly
14 enrolled in Medicaid or expected to be enrolled
15 through this program. In 2017, ActionNYC also began
16 serving patients and community members at Gouverneur,
17 Elmhurst and Lincoln Hospitals. This expansion of
18 services has proven effective. The program provided
19 screenings for approximately 1,000 people at these
20 locations. ActionNYC also increased local provider's
21 capacity to provide high quality immigration legal
22 services. All sites and fellows receive support to
23 obtain and maintain Department of Justice recognition
24 and accreditation. And last year, ActionNYC
25 established a fellowship program in partnership with

2 the Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity to build
3 small and medium sized community organizations
4 capacity to deliver immigration legal services and to
5 conduct outreach. In addition, ActionNYC undertook an
6 extensive consultation process, including community
7 input on the needs of immigration legal services to
8 reach hard to reach communities. Having just
9 completed a competitive selection process, I am very
10 pleased to announce today that six CBO's have been
11 selected to provide immigration legal services to
12 these hard to reach communities in 2018. These
13 organizations are uniquely placed to meet community
14 specific needs and they are; Council of People's
15 Organization, Korean Community Services, CHIA
16 Community Development Corporation. Chinese American
17 Planning Council, Lutheran Social Services of
18 Metropolitan New York, and the New York Legal
19 Assistance Group. Services are expected to launch in
20 late spring or early summer of this year. MOIA's New
21 York Citizenship program provides legal assistance
22 and financial support for green card holders who are
23 eligible to naturalize. NY Citizenship provides free
24 legal assistance with citizenship applications at 12
25 public libraries across the City. Clients are

2 connected to free and confidential financial
3 counseling as well. New York Citizenship provides
4 citizenship services to a subset of DSS-HRA clients
5 who stand to benefit significantly if they obtain
6 citizenship. Our partners at HRA-New York Citizenship
7 place an emphasis on reaching the most financially
8 vulnerable New Yorker's such as the disabled or
9 senior clients who may be eligible for federal Social
10 Security programs once they've naturalized. New York
11 Citizenship is a public/private partnership and 2017
12 marked the introduction and the first infusion of
13 public dollars through the Mayor's Office for
14 Economic Opportunity with a \$675,000 investment. In
15 2017, NY Citizenship reached over 7,200 individuals
16 and filed over 850 applications. I know want to talk
17 about MOIA's advocacy on the nation and international
18 level. Together, cities have the power to shape the
19 immigration debate and the law through policy making,
20 litigation and collective advocacy. Cities for Action
21 founded by Mayor de Blasio is a bipartisan coalition
22 of U.S. cities and counties that collaborate to
23 advocate on immigration issues, and exchange best
24 practices. In 2017, MOIA added 47 cities to the
25 coalition for a total of over 175 U.S. cities and

2 counties across the country. In March, member cities
3 met in San Francisco for a national convening to
4 develop municipality based advocacy strategies. And
5 in a few days we will be holding another convening in
6 Chicago. There, we will work together to chart the
7 coalitions agenda for the coming year. In 2017 a
8 major part of C for A's work with advocacy focused on
9 a solution for Dreamers. Coalition mayors held calls
10 with the press in support of the DREAM Act and mayors
11 and commissioners met with their congressional
12 delegates to advocate for Dreamers in their Cities. C
13 for A organized a tele-town hall in support of the
14 DREAM Act which New York City hosted alongside
15 representatives from Chicago and Los Angeles. Which
16 reached over 50,000 callers. While congress has
17 failed to pass any legislation for Dreamers, we
18 remain committed to pushing for a permanent solution.
19 We will not give up on our advocacy for the thousands
20 of young immigrants across our nation, including over
21 150,000 New York residents who would stand to benefit
22 from the DREAM Act. On the international front, the
23 federal government has stopped participating on the
24 global impact on migration negotiations, but cities
25 across the U.S. have stepped up to shape the

2 conversation. In September, New York City with
3 partners, hosted a global mayor summit which was
4 attended by representatives from 34 cities across six
5 continents. The summit provided and opportunity for
6 cities to discuss issues of shared concern and to
7 begin to develop international city to city
8 partnerships. The conference also allowed cities to
9 have their voices heard and brought their immigration
10 priorities to the attention of international decision
11 makers working on global compacts and was followed by
12 the submission of a joint city led letter calling for
13 city voices to be included. MOIA will continue our
14 work to engage in and shape national and
15 international conversations in the coming year. As I
16 mentioned earlier, MOIA's mission and work is more
17 important than ever. Facing a wave of hate and
18 bigotry, immigrants in New York City have experienced
19 immense anxiety, fear and in some cases confusion.
20 Let me be clear, MOIA and this administration will
21 not be intimidated by Trump's Administrations
22 attempts to bully cities and states in complying with
23 its deportation agenda. We are in full compliance
24 with the law and our welcoming policies will not
25 change. This is the message we have strived to

2 disseminate to immigrants across the city through the
3 efforts of our outreach and community services teams.
4 In 2017, our teams participated in approximately
5 1,400 events with immigrant New Yorkers. We shared
6 with community members, information about the
7 availability of city services including an overview
8 of programs such as IDNYC, We Are New York, Action
9 NYC, New York Citizenship and other legal services
10 and resources the City offers. MOIA also took more
11 targeted action in reaction to specific federal
12 policy changes. With the support of volunteers and
13 partners across the City we coordinated four DACA
14 days of action at the end of the DACA program
15 reaching an estimated 36,000 people. Immediately
16 following the announcement to terminate DACA we
17 organized a local tele-town hall joined by over 9,000
18 New Yorkers. MOIA also worked with partners to hold a
19 DACA themed know your rights forum, two DACA renewal
20 clinics and two Dreamer dinners. The aim of these
21 events was to provide services to effected New
22 Yorkers while ensuring the voices of, and impact on
23 Dreamers themselves were front and center in the
24 advocacy. In response to the Trump Administrations
25 decision to end TPS for Haiti and the uncertain fate

2 of TPS for other countries, MOIA formed a TPS
3 coalition. The coalition consists of more than 20
4 stake holders including legislators, unions, advocacy
5 groups, CBO's and faith leaders. MOIA organized three
6 TPS town halls in Brooklyn and Linden Public Library,
7 Medgar Evers College and Flatbush YMCA. This is in
8 additional to seven more TPS town halls, seven TPS
9 press conferences, two TPS rallies, multiple days of
10 action and three faith weekends of action. These
11 efforts demonstrate the City's commitment to all New
12 Yorkers and the ways in which we've moved swiftly to
13 inform and support the many immigrants negatively
14 affected by trumps policies. Finally, the
15 administration has also sought to advocate on behalf
16 of individuals and their immigration matters and
17 provide connections to services as needed. For
18 example, the City worked to support the family of
19 Private First Class Emmanuel Mensah. On December
20 28th, 2017, a deadly fire in The Bronx killed 13
21 people including Private Mensah, an immigrant from
22 Ghana and member of the Nation Guard who heroically
23 ran back into the burning building multiple times to
24 save the life of his neighbors. The fire took the
25 lives of the Donkor family, Hannah, William and their

2 father, Solomon. In a true team effort, MOIA, the
3 Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, International
4 Affairs, HRA's Office of Civil Justice in
5 coordination with the Legal Aid Society, secured
6 expedited travel documents from the U.S. embassy in
7 Akra, Ghana for the relatives and close family
8 members of both families so that they could attend
9 their loved ones funerals. MOIA's work at a time when
10 the federal government has targeted immigrants in
11 historically xenophobic ways, reflects the Mayor's
12 strong commitment to protecting and serving New
13 Yorkers no matter where they are from. We know there
14 is more work to be done, but we are confident that in
15 collaboration with the City Council and with our
16 partners we can continue to be the most inclusive
17 immigrant friendly city in the world. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you,
19 commissioner. And I want to take this moment, we're
20 going to take a quick recess, a minute, two, three
21 recess. There is some technical difficulties with
22 sound so we're going to get that up and running. So
23 we'll take a quick one to two minute recess, thank
24 you. And we're back, okay. Louder than ever, thank
25 you to the tech team and sergeant of arms for getting

2 us there and I am assured that sound did go through
3 in your original testimony. So, thank you so much for
4 giving that. I'm going to start off with a first
5 question and I know that members of our committee
6 also are looking to ask a few questions as well.
7 There are a few budget hearings today so our members
8 are going to be going around the entire City Council
9 to do that work. So, the first thing I want to ask is
10 something I mentioned in my testimony which was that
11 there doesn't seem to be, and this is an opportunity
12 for you to either correct or clarify, any new needs
13 and requests from the Mayor's Office for immigration
14 related services. Can you confirm or help clarify
15 that?

16 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sure. Thank you for
17 the questions. One, I want to start by saying that
18 we've been very lucky to have a Mayor and a City
19 Council that have been responsive to the needs as
20 they've arisen and as we've identified them by way of
21 examples; bolstering the IDNYC program to now have a
22 budget of \$19 million to ensure that we're
23 effectively enrolling everybody that's interested in
24 that program. Responding to the needs that we
25 identified for immigration legal services with the

2 historic investments last year, amongst other things.
3 So, I think just out the gate I want to emphasize
4 that we've continuously seen a willingness to step in
5 and provide resources where there's been a gap that's
6 been noted. So, in terms of how we've approached
7 these conversations and continue to approach them
8 with OMB it is in that spirit of working to identify
9 where the gaps really are, what we're sort of seeing
10 on the ground. How things and programs are playing
11 out now, some of which are newly launched or for the
12 first year we're working on. This year, and we'll
13 continue those conversations as we go through the
14 budget cycle.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, and I'm not
16 sure I completely understand the answer. So let me
17 just respond with what I think I heard was, and I
18 think language is important here and I think it's a
19 function of not necessarily luck, but real commitment
20 right?

21 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Real commitment
23 that we have alignment.

24 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that there has
3 been an increase, you kind of mentioned increases in
4 services, but that the focus was not necessarily in a
5 presentation for a preliminary budget, but more about
6 fixing things and gaps as we see them and then
7 addressing needs in that way. Is that what I heard?

8 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yeah, I mean...

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] I just
10 want to make sure that you can give a clear answer.

11 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: For sure, thank
12 you. It's been a combination of both, right? I gave
13 IDNYC as an example of we needed outside of a budget
14 process, right, a more immediate, an immediate need
15 in that program and that we met by the administration
16 and the council. In terms of identifying needs, we
17 certainly identified last budget cycle, a need to
18 increase capacity in the ActionNYC program, as well
19 as immigrant legal services and complex, and
20 deportation defense. That was met at the end of last
21 fiscal year as well. And so I think, what I'm saying
22 is that it's both. And that there we are certainly in
23 the process of implementing new programs, evaluating
24 newer programs that we've launched in this year and
25 looking at the best ways to get some of the new

2 historic investments in the field in the best
3 possible way.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. And the
5 reason I'm focusing on this, and I'm going to have it
6 over to the council members to ask questions is:
7 there's a reality here that I just want to outline,
8 which is in a preliminary budget, the Mayor offers
9 his priorities. And we're talking about the Mayor's
10 office here and we don't see immigrant related
11 service increases presentation that lacks that
12 increase. And that happens later after the council
13 engages, after the counseled hearings preliminary
14 exec, and last year we saw some bumps in some of
15 that. And so I just want everyone to know that we
16 don't see it at the preliminary budget. We see it
17 later after our negotiations and so that's an
18 important thing that I think is important as we move
19 through. That what I want to shift, what I want to
20 see a shift from this Mayor is that that's a priority
21 at the front end and not after a negotiation. And
22 that the gaps that are understood through negotiation
23 are gaps that we understand year round and that
24 should happen in the front. So, I think that's an
25 important piece and I think that's an important

2 distinction between finding an emergency crisis
3 moment, filling the gap with dollars rather than
4 making that a front end piece. Because I think a lot
5 of the testimony that we're going to go back to when
6 I go through some of my questions, implies a national
7 organizing effort as well. And organizing other
8 mayors and so this is important. This is going to be
9 important base and foundation for discussion moving
10 forward in this budget discussion. So, with that, I'm
11 going to hand it over to Council Member Holden from
12 Queens who has a few questions. Thank you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair
14 Menchaca and thank you for all you do on behalf of
15 the immigrants of New York City. In my previous life
16 I was a professor at CUNY and does MOIA track the
17 number of immigrant students attending CUNY schools?

18 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I don't believe we
19 track that number. Certainly CUNY does. We work in
20 close collaboration with CUNY though at looking at
21 what, how best we can make sure that those students
22 have access to the things that they need. We've
23 talked about generally resources that are needed,
24 curriculum that is needed. Ways that we can interface
25 more with that population, but I don't have the

2 number for you and we're happy to work with our CUNY
3 partners to get that to you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: And you identify
5 the programs that CUNY has currently and the success?
6 You do that?

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We do.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We work with the
10 CUNY administration to have...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [interposes] All
12 right is there any, in your office though, do you
13 hire or at least work with, have internships,
14 certainly within CUNY we have talent in the immigrant
15 population.

16 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: In fact I might, I
18 must say as a professor there for 40 years, I've
19 found the immigrant population of CUNY to be the
20 hardest working and they have the toughest road
21 because many of them work two jobs. Many of them had
22 problems with technology. They didn't have a
23 computer. So, they had challenges but they rose to
24 the occasion usually and at least in my programs. So
25 identifying internships, I think getting students to

2 actually communicate with their own population, the
3 immigrant population, is that, would you consider
4 that or do you do that?

5 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We would certainly
6 consider it. One way that we do it is we actually
7 have a robust volunteer program and we do work with
8 CUNY. CUNY was one of the main partners that we
9 worked with to galvanize interest in that program in
10 the last calendar year. They helped us with multiple
11 blasts and teachers shared with their students and
12 other things. As a result we went from having a
13 volunteer corps of 50 individuals in 2016, to over
14 600 individuals in 2017.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Good, (INAUDIBLE).

16 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: And so certainly I
17 don't know the exact number that came from CUNY and
18 or that are CUNY students, but that was a primary
19 partner in doing that outreach and engagement to
20 increase that corps.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: At least on the
22 communications area, I have some ideas so I'd love to
23 meet with your office at one point.

24 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yeah, we'd love to
25 that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Because
3 understanding how to communicate, we taught in the
4 communications department and I thought more could be
5 done actually to reach out to the immigrant students
6 and so I have some ideas I'd like to meet with you.

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: That sounds great
8 I'll follow up.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: At some point,
10 thanks.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Council Member
12 Danny Dromm.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very
14 much, Chair Menchaca and congratulations and thank
15 you for the hard work that you do on this committee.
16 Good to you, commissioner.

17 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Good to see you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: I have a couple of
19 questions regarding things that are going to be
20 coming up in the future. One, is that IDNYC,
21 congratulations on a hugely successful program. I
22 think you said you had 1.2 or more than 1.2 million
23 people that signed up for the IDNYC, but I'm looking
24 here also at some of the councils information and it
25 probably comes from your records, which says that at

2 the height, in 2016, we issued 544,000 cards and this
3 year, so far, 61,000, so that's a big difference. And
4 I guess the novelty of it is wearing off a little
5 bit, but my question really is about what are we
6 doing to prepare for renewals as well moving forward
7 because I certainly want to see those 1.2 million
8 people renew and of course pick up others as we move
9 along down the road.

10 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Thank you for the
11 question. We have already begun planning for the
12 renewal process both from a back end operational
13 standpoint which requires a little bit more of a head
14 start, right, as well as thinking about really the
15 future of the program. And ensuring that not only the
16 current card holders are participating in the
17 program, but that we're reaching new, New Yorkers. So
18 this is something we would love to continue to engage
19 with your office on in terms of some of the thinking
20 and ideas. But as we've done in the last year or so,
21 it's really looking at how do we make this the card
22 for everybody, right. Looking at how we ensure that
23 as you're getting City services or looking to
24 interface with the City, you're doing so on an easier
25 way and in a more efficient way. And so it's a part

2 of the thinking that we're doing for the renewal time
3 frame, but we also welcome continued conversations
4 with you and your office.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Has any money been
6 budgeted towards that? One for the renewal process
7 itself and then the other for advertising?

8 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, we have very
9 much, through the support of the City and in the
10 budget for the program, sort of brought in house the
11 technological development. One way that we've done
12 that is in the last year we announced an online
13 portal where you can go and have, do a preliminary
14 application and do your process learn, what you're
15 eligible for, et cetera. Part of that is in line with
16 sort of the direction that we're going with the
17 program. So we've gotten the resources and the
18 support to do that work and that will kind of take us
19 into the 2020 renewal period.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay. I look
21 forward to having that discussion with you as we move
22 down the road.

23 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: The other question
25 that I had is also about the future.

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Great.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And that's the
4 census.

5 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Because community
7 like mine, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, the communities
8 that I represent in the City Council, I think were
9 very much under counted in the last census and I
10 think that we find that City wide as well, but
11 particularly in my communities. And of course with
12 what the Trump Administration is doing now has
13 instilled a lot of fear in immigrant communities as
14 well to avoid having any contact with government
15 offices. Never mind filling out a census form. And
16 then there's also the idea of this question that they
17 want to include on the census about immigration
18 status. And so I'm wondering what your office is
19 doing to prepare for that, and how that roll out
20 would look like.

21 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, thank you for
22 that question. So, we've been already in very close
23 conversations with the Department of City Planning
24 and other's in the City that are working on this
25 issue. We've worked to issue letters and op-eds

2 calling on the federal government not to include a
3 question related to citizenship. That is an area of
4 both focus and interest with not just New York City,
5 but with mayors across the country that we work with.
6 So it's an issue that we will continue to work on
7 together on the advocacy on front. On the local
8 front, we've also already begun thinking about how
9 best to do the very thing that you're suggesting
10 which is to ensure that all residents are counted. It
11 is a multi-agency conversation both our public
12 engagement unit, City Planning, our outreach folks
13 have already begun some of the thinking and certainly
14 the City in moving towards establishing an office.
15 We'll have a centralized space where we'll be able to
16 kind of pool our efforts and make sure that we're
17 being strategic about how we're going about really
18 filling a gap that we know the federal government
19 will not fill.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: So, the big
21 question, I think is the question so to speak, what
22 do we do if in fact we get that question about
23 citizenship status on the immigration, on the forms?

24 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I think that's a
25 very question. I think we are hopeful that we will

2 continue to advocate so that that does not happen.
3 The census already carries with it a tremendous
4 amount of privacy and confidentiality protection so
5 that's something that we're looking at monitoring and
6 better understanding what implications would be. I
7 don't think we're at the stage at this moment to tell
8 you exactly what the recommendation would be or what
9 the next steps would be, but we are closely
10 monitoring it. We are advocating very strongly
11 against it and looking at how we locally are engaging
12 in a way that most effectively reaches all of our
13 residents.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And have any
15 dollars been allocated towards this effort?

16 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I can't speak
17 directly to number, but certainly the City has
18 indicated that it will create a census office and a
19 coordinator.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: So that's going to
21 involve some dollars?

22 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Will we see that in
24 the executive budget?
25

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Again, not within
3 my purview, but certainly happy to share the question
4 to OMB and others, yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Have you reached
6 out to community based organizations and religious
7 groups?

8 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We have. We've
9 started some of those conversations already with
10 those very organizations to kind of understand what
11 they're thinking, and concerns that they have as we
12 look into our planning, yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay. All right,
14 thank you, I look forward to continuing to work with
15 you.

16 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And great job,
18 especially on IDNYC, thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council
21 Member Dromm. And we have also been joined by Council
22 Member Gjonaj from The Bronx. And we also were joined
23 earlier by Council Member Mathieu Eugene from
24 Brooklyn. I'm going to jump in with a couple more
25

2 questions and then hand them back over to some of the
3 Council Members.

4 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sure.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, I want to start
6 with, this morning we just had a big press conference
7 outside with our NYCAL, New York City Coalition for
8 Adult Literacy, and so much of the work we've been
9 doing, they've been at the table helping us think
10 about adult education. One of the programs that you
11 mentioned in your testimony, We are New York, WANY,
12 and so I want to ask about a previous testimony from
13 the Mayor's Office that said that there was an
14 evaluation on the We are New York program and that it
15 would be released in fiscal year 2018. Can you tell
16 us a little bit about that evaluation?

17 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sure, yes, that is
18 true. There was an evaluation on the program and it
19 will be released in fiscal year 2018. So, I think
20 that they're currently wrapping the evaluation,
21 putting the materials together and the report
22 together. It's an external or independent firm that
23 did the evaluation and so I think we're hoping to be
24 able to release it around the time we're also going
25

2 to release the new videos and other features of the
3 program.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Do you know what
5 that is?

6 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: It's before the end
7 of this fiscal year. I think we're...

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: As I said, they're
10 currently in the process of finalizing the
11 evaluation. It's just not yet complete.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And is there an
13 expected need for more dollars for this program?

14 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We did have more
15 dollars this fiscal year to infuse in the expansion
16 of the program including the development of the video
17 series. Many of those investments were one time needs
18 as it related to building, doing the videos and the
19 production, and the building out the new website. But
20 we are currently sort of looking at and evaluating
21 what would be a continued need beyond kind of the
22 onetime allocation. We don't have a specific ask at
23 this moment.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, I guess I want
25 to understand this a little bit more to the

2 negotiations for budget are underway. And I think an
3 evaluation would be super helpful in understanding
4 how we can fund this program and so is there a
5 commitment from the Mayor's Office to get this
6 evaluation in time so that we can make a good
7 decision? An informed decision about this program,
8 and some of the questions that I want to ask now, and
9 I don't know if you can answer this today.

10 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sure.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Without a
12 consultants process or evaluation is how do we
13 measure success for a program like this?

14 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I can speak very
15 top lines to the methodology that they used. Though I
16 cannot promise that the evaluation will be complete.
17 We're happy to circle back with you and give a
18 better, a clearer sense of the timeline that we're
19 looking at or sort of preliminary findings before a
20 release that we can share. We'd also be happy to do
21 that. What I can tell you in terms of the methodology
22 of evaluation is a lot of it was speaking to people
23 who went through the program. Speaking through the
24 facilitators, conducting surveys, visiting classes
25 and things like that. Certainly recognizing that the

2 experience of the individual was very central in
3 understanding the impact of the program and how they
4 took the learnings and applied it into their daily
5 lives and interactions. So, that was a big part of
6 the methodology, but we're also happy to circle back
7 with you, as I said, even before the release of the
8 evaluation to give you more of those pieces before
9 it's complete.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I just want to,
11 I think, note that it's important to understand as
12 much as can before we make a decision about budget.
13 And without knowing how we can measure success, how
14 successful it's been, I think it'd be very difficult
15 for us to make a decision to fund and continue to
16 fund this program without that. I think we've moved
17 forward with a lot of assumption, and let's move
18 through some of those assumptions. One of those is
19 that there is a larger conversation around adult
20 education classes. WANY is not an adult accredited
21 educational class. It's something different. And so
22 we wanted to ask whether or not it should be an entry
23 point for adult literacy education students for the
24 city?

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Can you, I guess
3 put a finer...

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I guess, I kind of
5 want to now start talking about the continuum of
6 experience for our community members.

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And whether or not,
9 where does WANY fit into all this and whether or not
10 our adult learners that want that education that has
11 accredited, that is accredited.

12 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Where does this
14 fit? At the end, in the middle, in the beginning, and
15 that's something I'm assuming can kind of come in
16 before an evaluation happens since we've spend so
17 much money on it already.

18 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, so I think one
19 of the ways that the program has operated was to
20 serve as a supplement to the more traditional
21 classroom setting. One feedback that we get often
22 from students or individuals is just the need to be
23 able to apply and practice their English in kind of
24 more day to day conversations. The curriculum is very
25 much focused on that. It's focused on giving a space

2 and emphasis on basic conversation and settings where
3 folks find themselves. By way of example, going to
4 your child's school and having a parent teacher
5 conference, right, so we bring sort of real world
6 examples into the classroom setting to create a space
7 of both education as well as practice for
8 individuals. And do so in a non-traditional way to
9 make them more accessible, frankly, to individuals.
10 So, I think one of the things that we are looking at
11 in terms of the evaluation is sort of the level of
12 the learners within the class and the level of the
13 curriculum; beginner, intermediate I think going more
14 directly to your question. But it's very much
15 designed for people who have a level of English,
16 right, and are looking to have a supplemental kind of
17 practice or experience to help them apply it in real
18 world application. So, I hope that answers your
19 question a little bit more directly.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes, it did. And so
21 I think what's important here is that this is kind of
22 described as a supplement.

23 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes. Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: To the larger eco
25 system of classes in our communities. I didn't, and

2 forgive me if I scanned too quickly, but did you
3 mention adult education in your testimony as far as
4 policy, recommendation, need, and if you did can you
5 just point to it or?

6 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I did not in terms
7 of the policy need. I focused on the program.
8 Certainly in terms of the work that we do as a City
9 around language access and services that is a
10 tremendous part of not only the City's investment but
11 the City's work towards that space. I can speak now
12 to generally the way that adult education works
13 within the City. There's approximately \$90 million
14 dollars that go to adult education in various forms
15 including sort of your more traditional classroom
16 setting as well as workforce development. It lives
17 across agencies, it's not in one particular location.
18 The Department of Education, DYCD, HRA, our public
19 libraries, CUNY, and MOIA. The funding comes from
20 both federal, state and city funding. It's about an
21 even divide, if you will, across the three. And
22 certainly I think as a part of this conversation we
23 have much welcomed the concerns that there is a
24 tremendously great need here and in the last two
25 years, as you noted, there has been a decision to

2 provide an additional \$12 million in the adopted
3 budget for these classes. And something that we are
4 committed to continuing to look at and evaluate where
5 we are certainly in that mode at this moment. In
6 terms of trying to better understand that we have
7 engaged in conversations with our agency partners on
8 this question to really understand what's working and
9 what isn't in the work that they're doing in this
10 space. And are continuously committed to having that
11 conversation with the Council and providers to come
12 to the right resolution here.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And can you
14 describe to us how that's happening?

15 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Internally?

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, we have
18 proactive or affirmatively engaged with sister
19 agencies on this question as a part of the work that
20 we do in our office. Most, I think acutely or
21 recently with the Department of Education and others
22 to really understand their programming and what they
23 are seeing. We've also met with advocates who have
24 raised concerns on this question and brought our
25 sister agencies into those meetings so that they can

2 hear directly from the advocates as well so that it's
3 not just coming from MOIA.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And is this a
5 formal conversation and is this focused on adult
6 literacy?

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: This is, okay. Got
9 it, okay thank you. Okay, I'm going to move on to
10 Council Member Gjonaj, do you have questions? I'm
11 going to pass it over to Council Member Gjonaj from
12 The Bronx, thank you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you,
14 Chairman. So, New York City has the largest foreign
15 born population of any city in the United States.
16 According to a report from the Center of the Urban
17 Future, between 2000 and 2010, foreign born senior
18 population grew by 30% while the native born senior
19 population declined by 9%. The report found that as
20 of 2015, 21% of the immigrant born seniors lived
21 below the poverty line. While a relative smaller
22 number of native born seniors live below the poverty
23 line. What has MOIA done to work with OMB or the
24 Department of Aging to discuss either potential
25

2 budget increase or ways to use current budget levels
3 to increase the services for immigrant services?

4 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Thank you for the
5 question. So, a part of the work that we do is very
6 focused interagency wide because as you pointed out
7 it's a tremendously large foreign born population.
8 And it's important that all of our agencies are
9 looking at how they can better serve immigrant New
10 Yorkers. We do work closely with the Department of
11 the Aging. There have been a number of kind of issues
12 that worked most acutely with each other on. One
13 being IDNYC, the other being immigrant legal services
14 and just making sure that seniors have access to
15 these needs. Another being health. We've worked with
16 the Department of Health, and Health and Hospitals on
17 just making sure that immigrant seniors have access
18 to healthcare regardless of immigration status. I
19 know that our colleagues at the department of aging
20 have also worked with community organizations and
21 others who work specifically with this population. I
22 think looking at needs that have arisen for
23 particular communities to have senior housing or
24 other needs met for their immigrant communities. I
25 can't speak to the specifics of that, but we're

2 certainly happy to circle back with the specifics
3 from our colleagues at the Department of Aging. And
4 certainly the work that HRA's public engagement unit
5 does to ensure that individuals are aware of rent
6 freeze, kind of doing door to door engagement and
7 knocking very much impacts seniors and immigrant
8 seniors for sure. In terms of the importance of that
9 program and making sure they have awareness of their
10 right to it. So, there is kind of a myriad of ways
11 that the City agencies approach this. This specifics
12 on what the Department of Aging does beyond what
13 we've directly worked with them on, we're happy to
14 circle with you on as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: That would be
16 great. And that program you're referring to is the
17 Senior Rent Increase Exemption Program, SCRIE.

18 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, SCRIE, I know
19 I thought I would get it wrong so I sort of skipped
20 over, but thank you for that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Getting back to
22 the (INAUDIBLE) but I have an additional question.
23 According to the analysis of census estimated by the
24 Department of City Planning, from 2000 to 2011 the
25 African born population increased by 39% to 128,000.

2 About a third of Black New Yorkers were born abroad,
3 mostly in the Caribbean. Additionally, Africans
4 constitute about 4% of the City's foreign born
5 population, but as much 10% in the borough of The
6 Bronx. It's a borough that I'm very fond of. Does
7 MOIA have a community liaison dedicated to the needs
8 of the immigrants in the borough of The Bronx?

9 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We do. We have
10 organizers that focus on The Bronx area. I would say
11 in particular to be responsive to what you noted just
12 now too, a part of the work that we've done with the
13 Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity is we launched
14 a capacity building fellowship. That fellowship is
15 really geared out and targeted towards ensuring that
16 some of the organizations that are smaller, or less
17 established, that are working newer arrival
18 populations and harder to reach populations are able
19 to build their capacity to eventually do sort of in
20 house legal service provision. Too I believe of the
21 organizations that are part of our fellows are in The
22 Bronx, Sotu Yetsie (sp?) being one of them. African
23 Communities Together being another.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Repeat that again
25 please?

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, African
3 Communities Together and Sotu Yetsie, and I'm happy
4 to also share the names with you as well. The other
5 thing that we recently did through the ActionNYC
6 program is we expanded services into The Bronx
7 through the Northern Manhattan Immigration, Immigrant
8 Improvement Corporation, NMIC, I always say the
9 acronym, NMIC, so they now have more appointment and
10 services in The Bronx.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, its sounds
12 like you're familiar with the community based
13 organizations and continue to support them. And my
14 last questions here, because we talk about the most
15 vulnerable of our citizens, hate crimes.

16 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: How are you
18 tracking hate crimes?

19 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, it's an
20 important question, thank you for it. So, immediately
21 in the aftermath of the election we started to
22 closely monitor the, really the impact of the federal
23 rhetoric on utilization of benefits in the City. One
24 area that we looked at closely was just this
25 question; increased hate crimes or harassment. We did

2 see a demonstrative increase that was reported
3 through NYPD's hate crime unit as well as through the
4 City's Human Rights Commission. Most of that, I
5 believe there was about a 31% increase.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: 31?

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes. Most of that
8 has leveled off since that time, though we are
9 continuing to monitor. What's happening, what has not
10 level off or sort of has maintained in terms on an
11 increase is that there is still about a 17% increase
12 of bias, hate crime or harassment against individuals
13 who are Muslim or perceived as Muslim. So, this is
14 certainly an area of concern. We work closely with
15 out sister agency, the Human Rights Commission at
16 effectively providing information to communities
17 about their rights in the City as well as NYPD. We
18 create forums where we bring NYPD and CCHR into
19 communities to talk about their rights and the
20 ability that they have to report incidents against
21 them. We have, on ourselves in the last calendar
22 year, done over 37 visits to mosques and disseminated
23 this information with our sister agencies. And
24 certainly in the last few months, worked closely with
25 the Human Rights Commission to disseminate a survey

2 to Muslim communities and populations to understand
3 their experiences better. To better inform what the
4 City can be doing in response.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, because hate
6 crimes are serious crimes in nature in itself, and go
7 under reported because of the sensitivity in and
8 around our immigrant population, what dollar amount
9 are you asking for in this budget that will spearhead
10 hate crimes?

11 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Spearhead sort of
12 combatting hate crime?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Combat it, to
14 inform immigrants throughout this great City of the
15 rights that they have to follow through, to working
16 with local organizations and communities, various
17 ethnicities. What is the dollar amount that you're
18 asking for, the allocated to getting the word out as
19 to what their rights are?

20 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, so thank you
21 for the question. So, I would emphasize that a
22 tremendous amount of this work is led through our
23 Human Rights Commission who as I said, we work
24 closely with to ensure that they're effectively
25 reaching these populations, but they have individuals

2 within the commission through their outreach and on
3 the ground teams that do focus on these populations.

4 And do focus on the areas of ensuring that
5 individuals know their rights and how they can report
6 things both to the commission and to the NYPD.

7 Additionally, we, in the last several months
8 partnered with the Robin Hood Foundation and the
9 Mayor's Fund to launch a City wide Know Your Rights
10 program. And the City provides both through our
11 ActionNYC program, as well as through our offices.

12 One part of this work that then funds community based
13 organizations to do forums as well and within the
14 curricula and the workshops that the providers are
15 facilitating, they provide information on your rights
16 should you be harassed or the victim of anti-
17 immigrant or antimuslim crime. And so a part of that
18 education that we're doing includes the sort of more
19 systematic and targeted way that we're doing the Know
20 Your Rights forums. And that's something that we're
21 continuously looking at and would love to hear where
22 there are gaps, where there are ways we could be
23 doing that better. Where people aren't getting this
24 information and how we could more effectively work on
25 it. but definitely in terms of the centralized agency

2 that's focused on this population, that's the Human
3 Rights Commission and we work closely with them.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: But specifically
5 how many, what's the number of employees that you
6 have that will be working on hate crimes within your
7 department?

8 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, within us, we
9 work across agencies on this issue which is what I
10 want to emphasize. So, we work closely with our
11 partners at HRA, as well as the Human Rights
12 Commission...

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes]
14 Commission, if I can pause you there. I think that
15 was a pretty clear question. It might be zero and
16 that's okay, and I think we get it, right, that
17 there's collaboration with other agencies. But is
18 there anyone that is coming from the Mayor's Office
19 of Immigrant affairs that is working on hate crimes?

20 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, what I want to
21 say is that what we do as an office in partnership
22 with our agencies includes this. But the direct, just
23 working on hate crimes work is done at the Human
24 Rights Commission. So there isn't a singular
25 individual that just focused on this question, but

2 the work that we do in partnership with our sister
3 agencies includes this. So ever outreach event, every
4 engagement includes this.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So the answer is
6 you don't have a single person in your department
7 that is tasked with the responsibility of dealing or
8 following up with, or outreach when it comes to hate
9 crimes.

10 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We have multiple
11 people that both track this and disseminate this
12 information, but whose sole job is this, we do not
13 have, that lives at the Human Rights Commission. I
14 think that's the distinguishing thing that I'm trying
15 to impart.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I want to continue
17 this, if I was to call your department today and ask
18 for the hate crime division, do you have a division?

19 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We do not.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Then we have a
21 real problem. We understand the severity and the
22 sensitivity around hate crimes, but your department
23 doesn't have a single person that we can refer to
24 when it comes to hate crimes.

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: You can certainly
3 refer to individuals and we will follow up as we always
4 do as things get...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: [interposes] Who
6 would that person be is my questions because how many
7 employees do you have in your department?

8 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We work with
9 different agencies on this issue. So in total across
10 we have dozens who work on this issue. But in terms
11 of an individual person that you could follow up with
12 directly, Laurie Davidson spearheads our outreach
13 team and she would certainly be somebody that if
14 you're seeing things or see the need for education or
15 information, could directly be contacted to be
16 responsive. And she would work with sister agencies
17 that do this work to make sure that everybody that
18 needs to be activated is.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I would encourage
20 that because of the sensitivity in and around hate
21 crimes and understanding that it is an under reported
22 crime for various reasons, that the initiative by
23 your department be a task force, if you will, or a
24 specific department that will handle and address
25

2 these hate crimes that are plaguing our City, and the
3 most vulnerable residents that we have. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council
5 Member Gjonaj from The Bronx. And I know there's
6 nuance there so what I wanted to do is just make sure
7 that there was a clarity there, but it kind of points
8 to the relationship that I spoke about in my opening.
9 That the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs works
10 with multiple agencies to address certain issues and
11 I think it's important that the kind of member
12 questions that are being asked is about
13 accountability at the end of the day. And it even
14 asked at the core of the question about
15 accountability and members that have relationships
16 with different agencies including this one,
17 strengthen around issues that are being seen on the
18 ground in our district offices. And so whether it's
19 CUNY or hate crimes and that's an NYPD conversation
20 as well, and some of the other things that we were
21 talking about which I'm going to go right into.
22 Around our community organizations that we work with
23 and that we depend on to bring legal services, and
24 all the Know Your Rights work, health education, that
25 we understand where the buck stops at the end of the

2 day. And what the role is for the Mayor's Office of
3 Immigrant Affairs. So, with that, a lot of community
4 based organizations, and I do want to also mention
5 that Council Member Miller from Queens is here today
6 as well, a member of the Immigration Committee.
7 Community based organizations face many challenges
8 today in the City's contracting process. And so MOIA,
9 we want to ask you how you help CBO's face these
10 challenges with the City's contracting process and do
11 you have staff dedicated to working specifically on
12 moving some of this work through the contracting
13 process?

14 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, I will take a
15 shot at answering the question, but if you have more
16 specificity please kind of share it my way if you're
17 looking for some contacts in particular. So, we, a
18 hugely important part of what we do, which is I think
19 getting to the heart of the nuance that you're
20 asking, is kind of being situated in the Mayor's
21 Office allows us to work across the City. And where I
22 started was we have a tremendously large foreign born
23 population, right, so the needs of that population
24 touch on everything that the City does from the
25 Department of Sanitation to our Human Resources

2 Administration. Agencies are working with immigrant
3 New Yorkers every single day. So the ability to be in
4 the Mayor's office and work across the City is hugely
5 advantageous and very important. It doesn't minimize
6 the work that's being done in any way, shape or form,
7 to say that we do it in concert with other agencies.
8 And I pride myself on the fact, I think, that our
9 office is actually very responsive to things that
10 come to us in making sure...

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Can we
12 focus on the OMB focus or the concentration on OMB
13 and the contracts?

14 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sure, of course. I
15 think that this is just important that in terms of
16 understanding the roles that we play. So I want to
17 bring emphasis to that for point of clarity. I think
18 in terms of the contracts there have been, certainly
19 in our understanding of the landscape or concerns
20 around legal services, by way of example, this is an
21 area we've taken acute leadership in making sure that
22 there is a space and that there is an affirmative
23 outreach from the City to providers who are smaller,
24 who might not otherwise readily be competitive for
25 contracts the way that they previously existed.

2 Taking some of the learnings from the Resiliency
3 Committee that the Mayor's Office of Contracts put
4 together and that many community providers were a
5 part of. In terms of populations that needed to be
6 served and we've been responsive in that space by
7 working in partnership with CUNY and other providers
8 to create competitive selection processes that really
9 do focus on picking organizations that are community
10 based, that have cultural and linguistic competency,
11 that are trusted providers that immigrants go to.

12 That is one of the things that I announced today is
13 that these learnings over the course of the last
14 year, two years, have allowed us to have launched a
15 competitive selection process that really looked at
16 reaching vulnerable and harder to reach populations.

17 And today we were happily able to announce the
18 selection of six organizations that really will work
19 to serve these communities that otherwise have not
20 been able to get contracts from the City in order to
21 do this really important work. That is one way, in
22 terms of the direct contracting process that we've
23 hugely focused and committed in making sure that
24 we're helping smaller providers, trusted community
25 based providers that do indeed have the cultural and

2 linguistic competency, be able to do the service and
3 be competitive for City dollars and also build their
4 capacity to be competitive for other contracts that
5 the City has moving forward.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. So, what I
7 heard was there's a real focus in relationship
8 building with organizations so that as you build
9 RFP's, as you build new programs that you can get the
10 right organizations to come to the fold and do that
11 work that we have to do. Legal education, health, et
12 cetera, that's what I heard.

13 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, in addition to
14 having launched a capacity building fellowship with
15 the Office of Economic Opportunity to do exactly that
16 work where we give money...

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Across
18 agencies and so...

19 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great. So there's
21 another pretty crucial component that goes beyond
22 being identified as a community player that can do
23 the work, there's problematic issues with significant
24 delays in receiving contracts as well as the
25 disbursement of funds. What is MOIA doing to advocate

2 for these organizations at the end of the day with
3 whatever, I'm not even going into specifics about
4 what kind of contract, I want to keep it a little
5 general and figure out how are you fighting for those
6 organizations?

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We certainly
8 hear...

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes]
10 Especially the small ones.

11 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, we certainly
12 hear the concerns. We've had many conversations with
13 folks and appreciate the difficulty of the situations
14 that they will find themselves in if the cash flow
15 isn't available to them. We do, do a tremendous
16 amount of advocacy on this front to ensure that
17 things are moving as fast as they possibly can.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: How successful have
19 you been in this advocacy?

20 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I'd like to say
21 that we've been pretty successful in the past. I know
22 that there have been more recent challenges in terms
23 of the speed of contracts being more delayed
24 recently. And so we've been both aware of this as
25 well as advocating to move them as quickly as we can

2 with our partners. I have also had conversations with
3 providers about contracting systems that work better
4 for them to see if there is ways in which, as a city
5 as can kind of look at the way we do the contracting
6 and try to make it so that it's more digestible if
7 you will, and works better for providers. That is
8 obviously part of a longer terms strategy that we
9 have, but in the short, we take the concerns very
10 seriously. We work very closely with partners to try
11 to move things as quickly as we can. And I think that
12 in the last couple of years it's been better. This
13 has been a challenging year and we recognize that and
14 are moving to swiftly advocate to try to move them as
15 fast as possible.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: What has made this
17 a challenging year?

18 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I can't speak to
19 the specifics of it now, and I'm happy to circle back
20 as to what have been all the barriers in kind of
21 moving the contracts forward quickly. But, certainly
22 I can attest to the fact that our folks have a
23 regular line of communication with providers. And are
24 working very closely, in particular, to try to move
25 some of these pieces forward.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. So, let's go
3 into some specifics. There are some contracts that
4 have, in the middle of their fiscal year, received
5 new limitations and restrictions that have been kind
6 of added to the contracts. And some members of the
7 CBO community are kind of confused and concerned
8 about this. What has MOIA and either MOCJ or others
9 kind of, how have you heard feedback from
10 organizations about some of these new limitations and
11 new kind of negotiations in the middle of the year
12 for some of these contracts?

13 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, I can start and
14 I can turn it to my colleague, Jordan from the Office
15 of Civil Justice, to chime in. So I think certainly
16 in terms of the current contracting process, the City
17 has sought to implement that the Mayor announced last
18 fiscal year in terms of new language in the
19 contracts. And as a result have engages in
20 conversations with the providers about that, the
21 insertion of that language and sort of what it means
22 in terms of the city's policy, vis-a-vi immigrant
23 legal services. I think this is what you're getting
24 at specifically and so this is sort of the moment of
25 operationalizing that policy and having that be a

2 part of the contracting process is sort of normal in
3 terms of the course of the way that things get rolled
4 out. But we've definitely had conversations with one
5 on one providers, we've definitely gone back to
6 providers who've raised questions to us. I believe we
7 are continuing to have those conversations, but I'll
8 turn it over to my colleague, (INAUDIBLE) if he has
9 anything to add.

10 JORDAN DRESSLER: Thanks. For the record,
11 I'm Jordan Dressler, Office of Civil Justice, Civil
12 Justice Coordinator. Council Member, thank you very
13 much. This has been a process. We have been in touch
14 with all of our providers and have communicated the
15 change to them. And in some cases we've received
16 general questions about approach. In some cases we've
17 received specific questions about implementation. And
18 in some cases we haven't received questions or
19 concerns at all. In all cases, one of the main
20 strengths of having an Office of Civil Justice, and I
21 should say we're a relatively new office. Is that we
22 are a place that these kinds of dialogues can happen.
23 Not just at one point, but throughout the year. And
24 so those dialogues continue and we continue, and we
25 continue to stay in touch with all of our providers

2 about implementation, operationalization within the
3 Mayor's policy.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, let me ask
5 about that too because I think it's important that I
6 understand fully how this happens. And again, this is
7 from my understanding, an organization is told, say
8 in July as the new fiscal year starts that they have
9 a contract to perform certain services. And you're
10 saying that after that point, in the middle of, and
11 it'd be great if you have specifics, there are
12 moments where the contract and expectations change.
13 Or maybe they weren't defined well in the beginning
14 and need to be clarified, or the criminal carve, for
15 example, starts showing up in contracts, in language,
16 kind of becomes clear. And there are questions and so
17 there's back and forth, after the July 1st fiscal
18 year begins. Am I hearing that correct, that that's
19 what happens and that's been happening? And that's
20 what you were referring to with kind of feedback that
21 you're getting from organizations?

22 JORDAN DRESSLER: I think generally
23 speaking, that is the case, though I think it's
24 important to realize that given the contracting
25 process for the City generally...

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Sorry,
3 can you repeat that one more time?

4 JORDAN DRESSLER: I said I think that's
5 generally been the case, that it's been a back and
6 forth.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Again, that's it,
8 so it's generally been the case. So, I think that's,
9 two things I want to say right now. One is we believe
10 that at one o'clock we're going to have to end this
11 hearing because of the multiple hearings that got
12 canceled for the snow and that might have to come in.
13 so I'm preparing for one o'clock end on this
14 conversation. We haven't heard from the public as
15 well and I want to make sure that that happens. We
16 also have a council member that has questions and
17 maybe some follow ups and I'm going to try to move
18 this as quickly as possible. And so that's why I'm
19 also cutting in and asking for clarity. So, just bear
20 with me. Will you commit to sitting down with me, as
21 MOIA, as the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, and
22 MOCJ, to sit down and talk through some of this work
23 that happening and kind of get a better sense about
24 what's happening? Understanding if we have the same
25 issue, feedback, loops and join our thoughts on this?

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: We have already sat
3 with you. We are happy to sit with you more, of
4 course. There's nothing about this that we aren't
5 committed to having conversations about with you or
6 with providers. I believe we, as Jordan pointed out,
7 we've had conversations that have proactively reach
8 out to us, that's not everybody. Those that have,
9 we've set up conversations with those who have
10 continued questions. There is nothing about the way
11 that MOIA or OCJ conducts their work that isn't kind
12 of open or willing to have continued conversations
13 with anybody. So of course we're willing to do that
14 and our interest is in making sure that as we look at
15 implementation and operationalization of things that
16 there's clarity for everybody.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, and the
18 reason I want to, and we have been in conversations,
19 but this is now a kind of post preliminary budget
20 hearing conversation that I want to have with
21 urgency, is that I know providers have been making it
22 clear to you all that the restrictions impede their
23 work. And that they have recommendations that are
24 pretty specific about what can change, and be done to
25 address some of those concerns. And so what has

2 prevented the administration from listening to the
3 providers and implementing some of these
4 recommendations?

5 JORDAN DRESSLER: I think that there's a
6 difference between dialogue and conversation, and
7 changing minds. I think it's important to realize
8 that there was a policy announced approximately one
9 year ago and we've been in the process of
10 implementing that policy through contracts and
11 through operationalization. And that continues. Now
12 within the construct of the policy, we are very much
13 interested in hearing about issues related to
14 implementation concerns, about implementation of
15 things that perhaps we haven't thought about. But
16 it's important to set the terms and so I think those
17 conversations are precisely what are happening now.
18 At least certainly with those providers that have
19 raised it and sought those conversations. And they
20 will continue. We're interested in hearing about
21 that.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can you define what
23 the policy is, from your words?

24 JORDAN DRESSLER: Defer to my colleague.
25

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Certainly. So, as
3 announced by the Mayor, the policy is that in the
4 provision of immigrant legal services, this City will
5 not, actually let's take a step back. In speaking
6 about, as I said I think earlier, the historic
7 investment in immigration legal services and looking
8 at sort of what that means for bringing that to the
9 field and serving immigrant New Yorkers. The Mayor
10 indicated that we would not provide services to
11 individuals who had been convicted of one of the 170
12 crimes that are outlined in the City's, the City
13 Council and Administrations detainer policy. So,
14 violent or serious offenses in the last five years.
15 So, individuals who fall within having had one of
16 those convictions or have one of those convictions
17 would not be eligible for representation in the
18 City's Immigrant Legal Services Contracts. I think
19 that decision is made in light of what we know is
20 this tremendous increase in enforcement in
21 immigration. As I said earlier, we estimate a 400% in
22 arrests of individuals who have not committed any
23 crime in the city finding themselves now in the
24 process of deportation or subject to enforcement. As
25 well as the reality that while the federal government

2 conducts immigration enforcement, they do not provide
3 counsel. And so there is a tremendous gap, to say the
4 very least, in the need here. And it has been really
5 on cities and states stepping in, in a way, to meet
6 the need that the federal government has wholly
7 unmet. And the City has done so in a way that is
8 larger than any other location in the country with
9 the largest investment in this last year, \$30 million
10 from the administration side alone. And so looking at
11 what that means, in terms of how it gets applied in
12 the field, knowing that we aren't even close to
13 universal representation, knowing that the federal
14 government has not stepped into this space at all.
15 And knowing that the City, the City Council and the
16 Administration has made a decision; that individuals
17 that are convicted of one of the se 170 offenses
18 serve as a public safety concern for the City in
19 which it would cooperate with enforcement. The Mayor
20 announced that the provision of City of tax levy for
21 legal services for these individuals, who are quite
22 small, would not be allowed. And that's I think the
23 crux of the policy.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. So again, and
25 there was a lot that. You kind of packaged the policy

2 with a lot of context so I really appreciate that.
3 And so I want to get to the core, the core drivers of
4 this policy because this is the Mayor's policy and
5 that's a true statement. This is a question of, and I
6 think I've kind of jotted down all of the kind
7 particulars, the pillars if you will, of this policy.
8 This is an economic funding question about we are in
9 a time where there are a lot of needs for legal
10 services because of the Administration and therefore,
11 we have to prioritize. This is, we can't get to
12 everybody, so we've got to prioritize our funding
13 streams that provide legal services for individuals
14 that need immigration support. That we will only kind
15 of focus based on economics. Is that one pillar? Have
16 I got that correct?

17 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: That is one, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And the second one
19 was a sense of public safety is that right? You
20 mentioned public safety in terms of the 170 listed
21 crimes and can you expand upon that please?

22 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sure, of course. In
23 the I think the determination on the detainer bill in
24 2014, the Council and the Administration outlined a
25 number of offenses and kind of factors, that should

2 somebody be convicted of one of those offenses in the
3 last five years, the City would cooperate with
4 immigration enforcement. And the policy decision
5 there is based on a public safety consideration. That
6 these are individuals that the City, Administration
7 and the Council have determined could serve as a
8 public safety risk for all New Yorkers. And
9 therefore, are ones where the City would cooperate
10 with immigration enforcement. And so I think part of
11 the consideration of where the City should put its
12 priorities takes that into consideration and that's
13 why the sort of factors, if you will, that inform the
14 policy are derived from that law.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And so the
16 determination about who gets services or not, is made
17 by these two different pillars. Is there a third
18 pillar or did I get both of those pillars? Is there
19 another pillar I should say.

20 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I mean I think
21 you've articulated sort of the crux of these...

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] You
23 articulated, I just regurgitated.

24

25

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Repeated them, I
3 didn't articulate them as pillars so I don't know if
4 there's a third, but yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. Those are the
6 two main points.

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So how do we
9 reconcile, and if we can go back to the slide, how do
10 we reconcile the Mayor's Office with the commitment
11 about the kind of due process and making sure that
12 everyone has their day in court, and they get second
13 chances and they can prove them to themselves, and
14 we're making, it sounds like a clear assumption about
15 a person, a New Yorker, an immigrant, that is in our
16 community right now. A mother, a father, et cetera,
17 and make that determination in a legal process with
18 legal representation, separate and apart from a
19 pursuit that requires a warrant from our detainer
20 law. It's a kind of different world in some ways. How
21 do we reconcile this? Can you help me understand
22 that?

23 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I can certainly
24 try.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Let's try.

2 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Okay. I think that
3 the reality is where I started, which is that the,
4 first off, we have not seen a determination by the
5 Supreme Court that immigrants who face immigration
6 proceedings have the right to counsel. That is
7 something that I think we would all wish, right, that
8 there would be a right to due process at the federal
9 level. And that the federal government would step in
10 and meet the need as they are responsible for federal
11 immigration enforcement. I think we see tremendous
12 daylight in terms of what the actual need is and then
13 where cities and states have been able to be
14 responsive. And it is within the responding that
15 you're always, frankly you're always making
16 decisions, right, there are programs that were
17 created to serve unaccompanied minors and adults with
18 children because this is a particular population that
19 the City has cared about serving. There are programs
20 that were created that were intended to ensure that
21 individuals who are seeking citizenship have the
22 ability to go through those process. So, the City has
23 consistently been making decisions around priorities
24 and where it's going to put its money, and how tax
25 dollars are used. I would note that there a number of

2 actors in the space that provide money for immigrant
3 legal services. It is not just the City, so funders,
4 and others, who also share an interest in trying to
5 meet the gap that the federal government has left so
6 greatly. So, providers themselves are also making
7 decisions about the kinds of cases that they're
8 taking and who they're serving. So everybody in this
9 space is making some of these decisions, right, and
10 are forced to. The decision that was made and
11 announced last year by the Mayor is an attempt for
12 the City really to reflect its value as it relates to
13 looking at the immigration space, right, and thinking
14 about where to put its dollars in a way that is
15 consistent with the City's policies on this. I
16 appreciate the distinction that you're drawing, but I
17 think I'm trying to give you sort of the context or
18 the information that has informed that.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, thank you.

20 And I'm going to hand it over to Council Member
21 Miller for his questions and because we only have an
22 hour leftover I might limit more questions, but let's
23 go through two questions for Council Member Miller.
24 And I'll come back to this topic.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Wow, how do I do
3 two, okay. So I want to state, right just where you
4 are now and on, in terms of contracting and providing
5 these services. And as it pertains to the community
6 health centers that often provide services for
7 immigrant population, how are they being impacted?
8 What are we doing to ensure that support?

9 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: For health centers?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So thank you for
12 that question. So, I want to start by saying that I
13 think the City in many ways has one of the most
14 tremendous public health systems in the country and
15 we work very closely with Health + Hospitals and the
16 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, at looking
17 how we can better serve our uninsured population.
18 Some of the ways that we've done that kind of more
19 recently or most recently, is we've been looking at
20 some of the learning from the Action Health NYC
21 demonstration project and how we can better apply
22 those or adapt those to the way that H + H serves
23 these populations. So they recently announced a care
24 management program that would aim to serve
25 approximately 32 thousand people this year. It

2 launched at Bellevue Hospital and what they're doing
3 is pulling exactly from our learnings from the
4 demonstration project. And looking at this population
5 who has had sort of high utilization or increase
6 need, but hasn't always had sort of somebody that can
7 help them manage their care.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Are we providing
9 this service equitably City wide? Because a lot of
10 this is in the outer borough, obviously...

11 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: [interposes] Yes,
12 of course.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Where there's a
14 large immigrant population in the outer boroughs.

15 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: It just started in
16 Bellevue and they're looking at expanding. And I'm
17 happy to circle back with you at the expansion plan
18 on where they're going to roll this out. But, the
19 idea is to reach this population and to do so
20 effectively. So certainly in the outer boroughs and
21 at the hospitals within them. And then similarly, the
22 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has launched
23 a Connections to Care initiative. Which is part of
24 the Thrive NYC initiative that works with community
25 based providers to increase their capacity.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And what data do
3 we have to support that our targeted audience is
4 being reach here?

5 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sorry, can you
6 repeat the question?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: What data do we
8 have to support that we're reaching our target
9 audience in terms of supporting the immigrant
10 population?

11 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, this is a
12 fairly new initiative. They've funded a series of
13 community based organizations that serve this
14 population some, by way example, are the Arab
15 American Association of New York, Voice Latinos,
16 NMIC, I believe also Northern Manhattan Improvement
17 Corporation and CAMBA among others. And so certainly
18 looking at funding and supporting providers that
19 directly serve the immigrant community.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: [interposes] Okay.
21 Because I didn't see any Queens based, but I do want
22 to move on and I'm sure that the Chair will request
23 that data and hopefully we'll get it in the near
24 future.

25 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Sure.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So how do we, what
3 is being done to support those that are in eminent
4 danger of TPS, obviously the Haitian community, El
5 Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and particularly the
6 African diaspora that is particularly hard to reach.
7 What are we doing?

8 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Yes, so as I
9 indicated in my testimony, we actually helped launch
10 a coalition of elected officials, community based
11 organizations, unions and others to work on TPS
12 together. To have both coordinated advocacy as well
13 as delivery of services. Some of the ways that we've
14 done that work include working through our faith
15 communities and institutions. We've disseminated
16 information on TPS, when things will expire, when
17 people are eligible for renewal and how to connect to
18 services to thousands of faith institutions. We've
19 conducted number of days of action with our coalition
20 partners. We have done and infused within all of the
21 Know Your Rights forums and with the providers that
22 we work with, information on specifically, country
23 specific experiences and tailor some of those
24 workshops to communities that we're in.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, my office has
3 (SIC) been engaged in all the things that you're
4 talking about and sometimes I don't know if we're
5 reaching out target audience. And what that audience
6 is. I know that we've focused on the Haitian
7 community and others because that is a big part of
8 the demographics of my community. In fact the largest
9 portion. What I do know, is that the CUNY Immigration
10 Center does not have a Haitian interpreter. So, there
11 is somehow a disconnect and we want to make sure that
12 all our resources are being focused where they need
13 to be. How do we kind of make sure that all of our
14 partners are doing so?

15 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: In ensuring that
16 they're reaching the right audience or?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Right.

18 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: The effected
19 audience, some of the ways we've tried to do that is
20 through community and ethnic media. And some of the
21 ways has been in partnership with community providers
22 that we know or faith institutions that we know that
23 work with these particular communities. So the First
24 Lady actually recorded a radio PSA that went out on
25 Haitian radio just a few months ago to reach the

2 impacted community. We similarly had worked with our
3 legal service providers like CAMBA and others who
4 have focused on these populations to make sure that
5 they have the capacity and are prioritizing the
6 populations for renewal as deadlines are fast
7 approaching. Certainly I think the rule of funding
8 that we're using, all the tactics that we know, do
9 you help us reach target populations, but if we're
10 missing anything or you know we're not reaching folks
11 in the right way, we certainly want to hear that so
12 that we can adjust accordingly.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, thank you,
14 thank you, Mr. Chair (SIC).

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council
16 Member Miller from Queens. And a follow up question
17 from Council Member Gjonaj from The Bronx.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you,
19 chairman. Commissioner, what is the budget line item
20 for salaries for your department?

21 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: For salaries, let
22 me look. So there are approximately seven individuals
23 who work in our department through the Mayor's Office
24 and our total budget I just under a million. I think
25

2 salaries I have to specifically get you. I'll have to
3 get you that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I'll wait.

5 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: No, I don't
6 actually have it here. I'd have to get it for you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Oh. The document
8 that I'm looking at shows personal services at \$759
9 thousand does that sound about right?

10 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: I think that sounds
11 about right for the budget. Whether that's the
12 breakdown for the salary is what I wanted to get back
13 to you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Well I'm looking
15 at it here, it says personal services \$759 thousand.

16 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Okay.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, how many
18 employees do you have at the Mayor's Office of
19 Immigrant Affairs?

20 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: There are seven
21 employees at the office directly, but as I said
22 earlier we work with agency partners on various
23 programs and policy initiatives. So across the
24 agencies we work with dozens of individuals.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, how many
3 individuals work through the Mayor's Office of
4 Immigrant Affairs led initiatives, with other
5 agencies?

6 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: There are dozens. I
7 think approximately 70 or so that would work directly
8 on some of the programs, but there are even more than
9 that that work on immigrant specific initiatives
10 within our sister agencies.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, commissioner,
12 what is the number of employees that work directly
13 for your department or initiatives led by your
14 department across the board?

15 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: So, Council Member,
16 respectfully, I said there are seven individuals that
17 work at the Mayor's Office and there are dozens that
18 work on the initiatives that we work on,
19 approximately 60 to 70 in the other agencies.

20 Specifically staff that work within other agencies
21 that work on immigrant initiatives that we don't
22 directly work on with them, would have to come from
23 those agencies. That sheer number, but again, going
24 back to the fact that we are a city of immigrants,
25 where every agency has staff that work on this issue

2 in various ways, both through language access work
3 that they're doing, as well as outreach and
4 engagement work, it spans...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: [interposes]
6 Commissioner...

7 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: the breadth of all
8 of the work that the City does do.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: For better sense
10 of transparency and defining this is your preliminary
11 budget, you're asking the City Council to approve
12 this budget, and you're here to answer questions
13 based on your preliminary budget. And a simple
14 question of what number of employees for a specific
15 line item in your preliminary budget hearing, is all
16 I'm asking. And if you say there are dozens, it's not
17 transparent enough and I would hope that you'll get
18 back to me with a more defined or definitive answer.
19 Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council
22 Member Gjonaj. And I think that's where we're going
23 to end. I'm going to offer some final remarks on this
24 hearing.

25 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Before we get to
3 public testimony. I think the final point that
4 Council Member Gjonaj underscores was this lack of
5 transparency. I think we are at a moment in time when
6 we really need to understand exactly how we can hold
7 you accountable for the work that this office, this
8 Mayor's Office is doing across city agencies. And
9 because we don't have agency heads here that can
10 answer these questions that Council Member Gjonaj,
11 and I, and others are having, that presents a problem
12 for us in really understanding exactly how the flow
13 of information, the flow of work, that we approving
14 every year for this budget. The budget has increased
15 for MOIA. A lot of it was the Councils initiative and
16 prerogative actually, to increase your role and
17 responsibility as a Mayor's Office of Immigrant
18 Affairs. This presents a lot of issues for us at the
19 Council who have the oversight power to ask these
20 questions. And so we are hoping that you come back to
21 us and this council to really understand exactly
22 what's happening across, because there is, and I
23 called it nuance, but there is a reality that the
24 Mayor's Office has tentacles in other agencies, but
25 each of these are important. Whether it be hate

2 crime, or health initiative, or adult education or
3 legal services. And so we're going to ask that your
4 staff stay for the rest of the testimony. And for
5 everyone that's hearing us right now, we are trying
6 to figure out a way to get into the chambers so we're
7 trying to figure out a way to make sure that we hear
8 from everybody, and I want to hear from everybody
9 that has, I know there's a line outside actually
10 waiting to share their voice about how we can make
11 this better. And so my final point to you today,
12 Commissioner, and everyone else that's been here
13 today, is that we're lacking transparency. That we
14 are endangering our ability to keep trust in a
15 community that has incredibly dynamic, negative
16 draconian policies that are coming down from the
17 federal government. That we have not seen an ask of
18 increase from all of you publicly, this might be
19 happening behind the scenes, but we haven't seen it
20 in the preliminary budget. That you have under this
21 criminal carve out, identified two pillars around an
22 economic situation where we can't serve everyone, so
23 we're going to determine who gets funding based out
24 of a public safety issue. And essentially
25 predetermine that someone cannot get resources for

2 legal representation because of the convictions that
3 we've defined in another law, that's called the
4 detainer law. That can have active investigation that
5 will require a warrant at the highest level of
6 judiciary inquiry and we are automatically saying you
7 cannot get legal representation. And that sets a bad
8 tone for us, when the Mayor goes out nationally and
9 talks, and internationally, and talks about inclusive
10 policies. This does not seem inclusive to me, or to
11 others, including our service providers on the ground
12 who are trying to figure out how to respond and bring
13 feedback to Jordan and the team about how these
14 contracts can be different, while they're being
15 changed in the middle of their work within a fiscal
16 year. These are some serious, serious problems. And I
17 think that we cannot hide behind this sense of
18 victory and success in disseminating resources to our
19 communities, our immigrant communities, and then come
20 with incredibly foundation shaking policies at the
21 same time. We cannot hide behind our success when we
22 start deteriorating our ability to do the things that
23 we say we're going to do. And so that is where I'm
24 going to end this discussion. We're going to hear
25 from a lot of providers today and some of them might

2 not even have the courage to come out and talk about
3 it because they're getting from the City. And that is
4 where we are right. And that is an unfortunate
5 situation because then we have to go back into the
6 shadows and get feedback from folks, the people we're
7 serving and the organizations that are serving those
8 folks. And that is a dangerous place to be right now.
9 And I hope that you not only understand that, but
10 that you can take this back so that the negotiations
11 that we end here today or this fiscal year leave us
12 in a better place. And so as the Council, we are
13 determined and have the charter mandate to create the
14 policy for this City. We are the voice of the people.
15 The Mayor and his office creates policies as well,
16 but hopefully we will be able to trump that in a very
17 big way to continue with the values that make this
18 City what it is. Thank you for your time today and I
19 look forward to the continued conversations about all
20 of these things.

21 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Thanks.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Effecting our
23 immigrant communities. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER MOSTOFI: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION 101

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, as our
3 administration gets ready to head out, and again, I'm
4 asking you, I'll ask who you're leaving before you
5 leave, but if we can have the next panel from the
6 Comptroller NYC Comptroller Office, Scott Stringer,
7 Dylan Hewitt, Zachary Schechter-Steinberg, and Aliya
8 Latif. We are going to limit time. So, I hope you
9 came prepared to be specific. Will one of you be
10 testifying?

11 ALIYA LATIF: I will be testifying.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, thank you.
13 You may begin, oh and before you begin, can the MOIA
14 staff raise their hand? Awesome, thank you. What is
15 your name?

16 MARTIN KIM: Martin.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Martin, last name?

18 MARTIN KIM: Kim.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Kim, Martin Kim
20 from MOIA is here, thank you so much for being here.
21 Okay, you may begin.

22 ALIYA LATIF: [INAUDIBLE 02:02:02-
23 02:03:03]... tool that we have not fully taken
24 advantage of, is encouraging more eligible immigrants
25 to naturalize. By using local resources to promote

2 citizenship applications, we can hope more New
3 Yorkers gain enhanced legal protections, greater
4 economic opportunities, and the right to vote. To
5 this end, in May 2017, Comptroller Stringer called
6 for New York City to create a public/private
7 partnership to provide financial support to help the
8 670,000 immigrants living in New York City, who are
9 eligible to naturalize but have not done so. As the
10 comptroller documented, in the May 2017 report
11 titled, The New York City Citizenship Fund, expanding
12 access to citizenship in the five boroughs, a major
13 barrier to some immigrants becoming citizens is the
14 fees associated with filing an application, which
15 have grown over 500% in the last 30 years. Today, it
16 costs \$725.00 submit the application for citizenship
17 to the government. When you add the cost of English
18 classes, attorney's fees, and other related expenses,
19 the cost for naturalization can run the thousands.
20 That takes a big bite out of a working family's
21 budget, potentially even putting citizenship out of
22 reach. Currently, applicants for citizenship, with
23 incomes under 150% of poverty, can have the \$725 fee
24 fully waived and those with incomes between 150% and
25 200% of poverty, can have their fee reduced to

2 \$405.00, but with over half of those eligible to
3 naturalize, in New York City, living below 250% of
4 poverty, or less than \$51,950.00 for a family of
5 three, these fee waiver programs are not enough. In
6 the immigrant capitol of the country, the decision to
7 naturalize should not be based on income. A city
8 program to reduce the cost of applying for
9 citizenship would help make this a reality. Such a
10 program would be a good use of City funds. Indeed the
11 benefits of naturalizations extend beyond greater
12 legal protection and the right to vote. In fact,
13 studies show that citizenship results in increased
14 employment opportunities, earnings and tax revenues
15 in a way that is good for all New Yorkers.

16 Specifically, a study authored by the Center for
17 Popular Democracy, the University of Southern
18 California Center for the Study of Immigrant
19 Integration, and the National Partnership for New
20 Americans Found, that immigrants who naturalize in
21 New York, see annual income gains of as much as
22 \$3,200.00. And Governor Cuomo's office estimates that
23 if all eligible immigrants in New York became
24 citizens, it would increase tax revenue by \$789
25 million dollars and reduce public benefit use by \$34

2 million. Leading to \$823 million in overall benefits.
3 For these reasons, Comptroller Stringer and 80 heads
4 of immigrant advocacy groups, houses of worship and
5 civic organizations around the City sent a letter to
6 the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs expressing
7 support for a public/private program to support the
8 cost of citizenship applications. To make that a
9 reality, Comptroller Stringer urges the Council to
10 include funding in this year's budget, to support a
11 program that would provide financial assistance to
12 immigrants filing citizen application forms with the
13 federal government. Existing programs provide support
14 to immigrants in completing application documents and
15 becoming eligible to naturalize and a more robust
16 City program could provide a ground breaking model
17 for cities around the nation. Therefore, given our
18 City's large immigration population and our shared
19 desire to protect them from the hostile federal
20 government, Comptroller Stringer urges you to fund
21 this program as generously as possible. Thank you
22 again for this opportunity to testify and we're happy
23 to take any questions.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Miss
25 Latif for your incredibly, I think timely discussion

2 about the economic impact. I mentioned that in my
3 remarks when we started this hearing and I, one,
4 applaud the Comptroller and the work he's doing with
5 his team to really think about the economic impact of
6 our immigrants. The continued support for
7 naturalization, the recommendation is to continue to
8 support these kind of initiatives and I think the
9 only questions I have are really around, have you
10 seen a real growth in response from that private part
11 of the private/public relationship. And if there's
12 anything you can kind of tell us about what the
13 private sector funding streams are seeing, thinking,
14 feeling about what's happening right now in terms of
15 naturalization?

16 UNIDENTIFIED: I can do my best to answer
17 that question. I think there are existing
18 relationships at the Mayor's Office and the Mayor's
19 Fund have with funders to support some of the
20 citizenship work that MOIA does already. I think CITY
21 is a particular funder of that effort, the financial
22 institution, CITY, and so I think there is interest
23 in the private sector although we have not engaged
24 particularly with them at this point into trying to
25

2 solicit funding or anything like that for this
3 purpose.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, I want to, oh
5 go ahead?

6 UNIDENTIFIED 2: I would also like to add
7 that there's a very similar program at the state
8 level. That the Governor's Office has also initiated
9 that has existing partnerships with foundations like
10 Robin Hood or City Bank. And other actors in the
11 private sector so that appetite is certainly there
12 and I think that this is a wonderful opportunity to
13 extend such a program down to the City to effect all
14 five boroughs here.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, thank you
16 again for your testimony today. It was really
17 important to kind of set that tone in collaboration
18 and so I want to welcome you, I think you heard a lot
19 of the discussion with the Mayor's Office and I would
20 welcome you to join us in the City Council to think
21 about some of those topics that we talked about with
22 adult literacy, health, legal services and the
23 criminal carve out. And just talk about it in terms
24 of your perspective, and if I could ask that we sit
25 down and talk through some of that work and join us

2 and not just for this particular budget season, but
3 really for continuing to commit to our values in New
4 York City. And it'd be great and we'd welcome that
5 conversation.

6 UNIDENTIFIED 2: We'd love to, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much.

8 Okay, we're going to have our next panel. Okay, we're
9 going to start with the panel that has the multiple
10 panels that we're going to have that are going to be
11 holistic. So, representing the adult literacy, I'm
12 going to call up the Adult Literacy Coalition, NYCAL,
13 Kevin Douglas. I want to bring up Miss Monica Sibri
14 from CUNY DREAMers and then from the Worker
15 Cooperative Panel there are a few, if you maybe want
16 to self-elect a person to get us started, but Mary
17 Bautista, or Anthony, or Susanna, or Clara. If one of
18 you can just come up and start us off from the Worker
19 Cooperative? And then from the Day Laborers Team, if
20 one of you could come out, maybe Gonzalo Mercado, if
21 you could come out. Unless Lethea (sp?) is here, you
22 know what let's get Lethea here please? And so this
23 is a panel that's going to represent the other panels
24 that are on their way that we're going to have
25 holistically just adult literacy, et cetera, but in

2 the interest of time I want to make sure that we get
3 all the different voices from the different
4 communities here. Thank you, if we can start with
5 Monica on my left, if that's okay that'd be great.

6 MONICA SIBRI: Good afternoon. I'm Monica
7 Sibri, a Dreamer. An immigrant and a proud New
8 Yorker. I'm sitting here by myself for the first time
9 in six years of organizing by myself, I have friends
10 here, but in reference to the Dreamers because of the
11 21 undocumented immigrants that we chose to join me,
12 seven told me that they were afraid. Ten told me that
13 they needed this time to work to pay for next
14 semester's tuition. Two told me that they needed to
15 be able to work to be able to return to school. And
16 two, were studying or are studying for their AP exams
17 so they could get good grades to apply for private
18 scholarships in other states. Although I just shared
19 with you the stories of 21 immigrants, there are
20 thousands just like theirs and three minutes is not
21 enough time to talk about them. I'm speaking here
22 today to first say thank you. Thanks to the City
23 Council, the Mayor's Office of Immigrants Affairs and
24 to the City for showing me that I can walk in my own
25 neighborhood knowing that all of you will be there to

2 help me in the case of deportation. Second, I'm here
3 to express my deep level of appreciation for
4 mentoring me throughout these years to be able to be
5 here. And to be the first one in my family to have a
6 college education. With the support of the City of
7 New York I would have never made it this far in my
8 education and in my career. Your support was crucial
9 to my success. I'm here today because I need your
10 help. To ensure that the same success happens for all
11 Dreamers. Right now the state of New York feels like
12 the state of Trump. My fellow Dreamers and I cannot
13 forget the words of Governor Cuomo who said four
14 years ago at the Silverton (SIC) School in Harlem,
15 that he will pass the DREAM Act in the next four
16 years. Attached to my testimony, I have provided you
17 with a letter I sent him almost four years ago and
18 the letter I'm sending him today. Should I continue?
19 Thank you. I do not have to tell you what we're
20 facing as immigrants under this Trump Administration,
21 but I feel a duty to inform you that resistance (sic)
22 is not enough. I would love to see your committee and
23 the entire City Council, consider two things to help
24 New York Dreamers. One, actively engage with the
25 state legislature to get the New York State DREAM

2 Act. If Mayor de Blasio was able to get mayoral
3 control of the New York City Schools, why can't there
4 be the same level of investment to get the New York
5 State DREAM Act? Two, restore the City Council
6 Emeritus Scholarship and open it up for undocumented
7 immigrants. In my testimony I provided more facts and
8 information as to why we need to help undocumented
9 immigrants. Thank you for your leadership and for
10 listening to my testimony.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. And
12 because of time we're putting on a timer if we could,
13 thank you.

14 ANH-THU NGUYEN: Good afternoon, Chairman
15 Menchaca and members of the immigration committee. On
16 behalf of the 13 organizations that make up the
17 Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative
18 including the Democracy At Work Institute. My name is
19 Anh-Thu Nguyen, and I'm Director of Special Projects,
20 I forgot to introduce myself, for Democracy At Work
21 Institute. I want to thank the Committee on
22 Immigration for this opportunity to testify on how
23 worker owned cooperatives play a key role in creating
24 increased equity, greater opportunities and better
25 working conditions for immigrant workers in New York

2 City. We're thankful for the support that City
3 Council has provided the initiative in years; fiscal
4 year 15 through 18 and we urge the Council to invest
5 \$3.95 million in the Worker Cooperative Business
6 Development (SIC) Initiative for fiscal year 19 to
7 continue our work in improving wages and transforming
8 industries that provide more equity and economic
9 opportunity for the immigrant workers that make up
10 almost half of New York City's workforce. According
11 to 2016 City of Immigrant Workers study by Center for
12 an Urban Future, immigrants make up 47% of New York
13 City's workforce. And in 2011 they accounted for 31%
14 of the City's gross product or \$210 billion. However,
15 despite immigrant's significant labor force
16 participation rates and economic contributions,
17 immigrant workers have lower incomes than their
18 native born counterparts, higher poverty rates and
19 are more likely to be working in low wage industries
20 where there is little room for advancement. Worker
21 cooperatives have the potential to address chronic
22 economic and social inequalities faced by our
23 communities most vulnerable residents including
24 immigrant communities. As worker co-op developers and
25 focus on economically and socially marginalized

2 communities, the bulk of our cooperative development
3 work in New York City is in low wage occupations with
4 a high concentration of immigrant workers. Such as
5 home healthcare, janitorial work and construction.
6 According to a 2017 report from the New York City
7 Comptrollers Office, 77% of nursing and home health
8 care workers, 65% of janitorial services and 74% of
9 construction workers are foreign born. Do you want me
10 to go on or?

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, so you have
12 written document?

13 ANH-THU NGUYEN: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That's great, so
15 the main point here though is the \$3.9 million
16 request for worker cooperatives, great, thank you so
17 much.

18 ANH-THU NGUYEN: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON NGUYEN: And just for the
20 other speakers, if you can kind of go right into the
21 ask for, for budget items and then anything you want
22 to do to respond either to what you heard today in
23 the hearing. We're going to read everything that you
24 submit today. I just want to let you know. It's going
25

2 to be an opportunity to really make it relevant and
3 make it clear, thank you.

4 MARIBEL TESA (sp?): Hi. My name is
5 Maribel Tesa, I'm the Director of Cooperative
6 Development at the Center for Family Life. Thank you
7 for your time and listening to us. The same ask is to
8 increase the funding from \$3.1 million this fiscal
9 year to \$3.9 million next year for fiscal year 19 for
10 the worker cooperative business development
11 initiative. I just want to highlight that we have
12 seen firsthand the power that at immigrant and impact
13 of worker cooperatives have in immigrant communities.
14 Workers own and run their own businesses and through
15 the principal of one member-one vote, they are able
16 to set the terms of their labor and receive the
17 benefits and profits from their own business
18 successes. In the past decade, immigrant led
19 cooperatives in service industries such as
20 residential cleaning, child care, elder care, dog
21 walking, handiwork, catering, and tutoring in Sunset
22 Park, have generated more than \$12 million in
23 revenue. And this revenue has been going straight to
24 worker-owners. Since worker-owners are not in this as
25 investors, but are members of their own communities,

2 they are more actively involved in the wellbeing of
3 their local neighborhoods. Families with worker-
4 owners are not only spending more locally, but are
5 more likely to participate in their social community
6 boards. Engaging and ensuring their voices are heard
7 in how their communities operate. We've been grateful
8 for the generous support of the City Council for the
9 Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative
10 for the past three years and Center for Family Life,
11 and others, have been able to reach more immigrant
12 entrepreneurs, develop more worker cooperatives and
13 scale the work in innovative ways. Center for Family
14 Life will publish the first immigrant led cooperative
15 franchise model for the Brightly brand of commercial
16 and residential cleaning cooperatives and leverage
17 the brand building and operational efficiencies of
18 traditional franchises. And introducing accessible
19 structures and fees, business supports, shared
20 ownership and profit sharing. We will also continue
21 strengthening and expanding Up & Go. A web
22 application for customers to book home services from
23 worker cooperatives. Up & Go is assigned with, and
24 controlled by the participating worker-owned
25 business. While harnessing the technology of today's

2 economy, Up & Go enables immigrant worker-owners to
3 secure consistent work at a lower cost and gain a
4 larger market share rather than being at risk of
5 exploitation of a tech company and outside investors.
6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much
8 for continuing the layout for worker cooperatives in
9 the City and the day laborers, was there a day
10 laborer that was identified that will be speaking
11 today? I want one person, is that okay? So whoever,
12 if you can sit in one of the chairs, can we bring
13 another chair, Sergeant of Arms? A fifth one? Any
14 then, Kevin, take it away.

15 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Good Afternoon, Council
16 Member Menchaca, members of the finance and staff
17 committees. We really appreciate your support. I want
18 to touch on a couple of items today. I'm going to go
19 rapid fire per your request. The first one on adult
20 literacy is a big thank you. I remember the years
21 when we lucky if adult literacy even came up in the
22 Youth Services Committee hearing, now we have a much
23 broader conversation and the City has actually moved
24 in a positive direction in terms of actually putting
25 dollars into community based adult literacy. So,

2 thank you to your leadership, thank you to the
3 Mayor's Office for making that commitment in the last
4 two years. We are a member of the New York City
5 Coalition for Adult Literacy which we'll talk more
6 about the need and importance to continue that work.

7 I want to talk systemically on two pieces really
8 quickly. One is we want to move out of this sort of
9 groundhog sort of every year come in, sort of talk
10 and make our case. It would be fantastic if we could
11 baseline the funding. We know that that stability is
12 necessary for nonprofits to retain qualified staff.

13 Right about now they're starting to prepare their
14 layoff notices to let their teachers know the budget
15 is going to be done in a couple months, we don't know
16 if you're going to have a job. And they have to
17 formally notify their staff because of union or other
18 obligations. Similarly for students, they're going to
19 be left wondering, do they have a class to come back
20 to in the fall and we want to end that. And really
21 get a baseline system that we can really build on.

22 Second, we really want to address the reimbursement
23 rates that are in contracts. As you know, DY City
24 commissioned a study by the Literacy Assistance
25 Center which they'll speak to later today, the short

2 story is that we know that the City is dramatically
3 underfunding not just the system at large, but the
4 actual contract reimbursement rates for those
5 services. And finally, we heard the MOIA commissioner
6 talk about sort of the fact that adult literacy lives
7 in many places, and that's great, but it also
8 presents challenges. And so one of the strong
9 recommendations we have is that a task force is
10 established so the City comes together in a
11 comprehensive way to come up with a vision for the
12 City. We have a vision for older adults in the City,
13 Age Friendly NYC. We have a vision for early
14 childhood education. We have a vision for workforce
15 development. There's no clearly articulated vision or
16 leadership in the City to say this is our vision for
17 supporting the 2.2 million New Yorkers who lack
18 English proficiency or a high school diploma. So, we
19 think it's really important all those stake holders
20 get together in the same room. Lightning round,
21 family literacy is a new idea we want to bring to the
22 City Council and build on the strength of early
23 childhood education, build on adult literacy
24 investments. Bring them together and support a whole
25 family in learning. And then finally, sort of across

2 the broad we want to encourage the City Council to be
3 supportive of contract reform. We know last year we
4 saw some COLA and indirect rate increases. We need to
5 go further. Last year was the down payment on that.
6 We're recommending that the City establish principles
7 for all contracts that provide a 37% fringe rate.
8 Also a 15% indirect rate to help them cover the cost
9 of healthcare, staff, et cetera. And then also
10 increase its occupancy, liability and casualty
11 insurance. So, I will leave it there and thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. And then
13 our final speaker?

14 GONZALO MERCADO: Thank you, Chairperson
15 Menchaca for the opportunity to testify on behalf of
16 the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative. I am Gonzalo
17 Mercado, Director of La Colmena Community Job Center
18 in Staten Island. We are a community based
19 organization working to empower day laborers and
20 other low wage immigrant workers through education,
21 organizing, and economic opportunities. Our founding
22 members are day laborers, domestic workers and
23 community's allies. And our three program areas are
24 workers' rights, community development and cultural
25 organizing. I am here to speak on behalf of the Day

2 Labor Workforce Initiative. The initiative which
3 supports the expansion and development of day labor
4 centers across the five boroughs to provide essential
5 services to day laborers working in New York City.
6 These initiative partners include the Workers Justice
7 Project in Brooklyn, North Manhattan Coalition for
8 Immigrant Rights, in Manhattan new immigrant
9 community empowerment nights in Queens. La Colmena
10 Community Job Center in Staten Island, Catholic
11 Charities in The Bronx and FPWA as a policy partner.
12 Each of whom have a long history of engaging
13 immigrant communities and working with day laborers
14 in all the five boroughs. We are thankful for the
15 support so far from the City Council who has provided
16 to this initiative in the past couple of years. And
17 for fiscal year 19 we're requesting to invest \$2.292
18 million in the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative. Day
19 laborers in New York operate all in the five boroughs
20 and the street corners across the City providing
21 essential services to local construction industry,
22 landscaping business owners, renters and home owners.
23 In addition, day laborers play an important role as
24 secondary responders in the post Sandy, local, state
25 and federal reconstruction and relief efforts. Day

2 laborers from reconstruction brigades and they were
3 some of the first volunteers on the ground after the
4 devastation of hurricane Sandy. Even though day
5 laborers are an integral part of the City of New York
6 workforce, their contributions often remain invisible
7 and unrecognized. The problems faced by this
8 community are often ignored and the needs often left
9 unmet. In Staten Island, this initiative has allowed
10 to the opening of a space where day laborers can
11 create a wage scale, access work, training,
12 information and critical services such as wage theft
13 prevention and intervention. And now workers have a
14 safe space where they can congregate and have access
15 to basic facilities such as bathroom and protection
16 from the elements. And now moreover, anti-immigrant
17 attacks which has dramatically increased in the past
18 two years. And many workers experience harassment on
19 the street on a daily basis. Thank you very much. The
20 rest of my testimony is here and I just want to
21 acknowledge that all of our partners from our City
22 wide coalition are here if you guys can say hi. Thank
23 you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for this
25 and I just have a couple questions before I let you

2 go, to go through the rest of the, and by the way
3 we're still trying to figure out if we can get
4 another room. So hold tight, I'm hoping that that
5 happens. All of you came with budget requests. Some
6 of you actually came with budget requests for the
7 state and for us to advocate on your behalf for the
8 DREAM Act for example at the state level. Have all of
9 you made your voices heard at the level of the
10 administration? Has Mayor de Blasio received
11 communication from all of you? Raise your hand if
12 you've communicated to the Mayor himself and his
13 office or some kind of, in some way whatsoever. Okay,
14 great. Are you still consulting or? You have, you
15 have as well, great, thank you. The reason I ask that
16 is, the Mayor's Office is here taking notes, Mr.
17 Martin, and a lot of the discussion right now is
18 about how they can respond with us as a team member
19 for the multiple agencies that are trying to figure
20 this out because so many of our New Yorkers are
21 immigrant or English language learners that are
22 needing these services. And so I just want to let the
23 record show that you are communicating as well to
24 this administration. And our work as oversight is
25 trying to figure out how we weave all of this in

2 together. Whether it be education, or a DREAM Act at
3 the state level, and so I hear you, we have a robust
4 agenda at the state level and to Miss Sibri, I want
5 to just let you know that we have a robust agenda at
6 the state level that includes this kind of work. We
7 don't have jurisdiction in the state, but we are New
8 Yorkers and we are New York City people and we make
9 our voices heard. And so I just want to let you know
10 that that's pretty clear. The other thing I want to
11 say or ask is about the work that's happening around
12 adult education and the request for baselining, and
13 the request for expansion in family literacy. And
14 that it's not just more money, there's actually a
15 healing of the contract itself so that we can get
16 some of those principles. Have you communicated as a
17 coalition, the principles contract concept to the
18 Mayor's Office?

19 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

21 KEVIN DOUGLAS: I just want to quickly
22 add...

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Sure.

24 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Since you asked about the
25 Mayor's Office and we have them here. One of the

2 things I would encourage this committee to do is to
3 work with the Mayor's Office to dig into the numbers
4 that were shared a little bit earlier, a little bit
5 deeper. I know that lots of the folks in the room
6 were a little bit perplexed at the reference to \$90
7 million equally split between the city, state and the
8 federal level in adult education. I think the City
9 investment is a far, far smaller portion than that
10 remark might have suggested although I'm happy to
11 sort of learn more and understand about that.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well said, yes. And
13 we're going to want to follow up on that as well.
14 This is a new City Council. We have a whole new, real
15 commitment to transparency and I think you heard that
16 loud and clear. That it's not just coming from me,
17 it's from all the Chairs and we're empowered by the
18 speaker of the City Council, Corey Johnson, to really
19 figure this out and not let the darkness in. And what
20 I'm referring to when I say darkness is the spaces
21 where there's no transparency. When decisions get
22 made in the middle of a contracting process or don't
23 get made, and force us, and I'm talking about adult
24 literacy for example, where dollars are injected
25 before even coming up with a plan to spend. Those

2 days are over and we need to figure out how we can
3 work together because you are all interacting with
4 multiple agencies. You're all interacting with the
5 agencies that this Mayor's Office is contracted by
6 their own mandate to work with. And I'll stop there
7 actually. That needs to change. So, thank you so much
8 for your work and the things that you do and we're
9 going to move over to our next panel. Which I want to
10 bring representatives up from different programs to
11 talk about legal services and so bear with me here.
12 Sara Oshiro from The Bronx Defenders to talk a little
13 bit about NYFUP. We have Eve Stotland that will talk
14 a little bit about ICARE from The Door. Natalia Renta
15 from Make the Road, and then Hasan Shafiqullah from
16 Legal Aid. Okay, so again we're trying to figure out
17 how to get as many different voices in this
18 discussion. So this panel, I'm going to charge with
19 one topic which is what's happening with our legal
20 services as we understand them today? And help me
21 understand through a very short two minutes. We're
22 going to take your testimony, we're going to read it,
23 we're going to analyze it. We've already been in
24 discussions. Let's drive some of the point's home
25 today so that we can understand what's happening

2 across the different contracts and the different
3 commitments that City is making to our immigrant
4 families. I want to understand issues, I want to
5 understand gaps in services. How much more funding do
6 we need, if you are prepared to talk about that. And
7 any recommendations you want us to take as we
8 continue to negotiate this budget. And we'll start
9 over here to my left. Thank you.

10 SARA DERI OSHIRO: Good afternoon. My name
11 is Sara Deri Oshiro and I'm the managing director of
12 the Immigration Practice at The Bronx Defenders. And
13 I'm here today on behalf of the three organizations
14 that comprise The New York Immigrant Family Unity
15 Project, or NYFUP which is The Bronx Defenders, the
16 Legal Aid Society and Brooklyn Defender Services. And
17 thank you Chair Menchaca for your commitment to this
18 issue, to the committee, and to the Council for stand
19 up this program. I want to focus on three key things
20 today. The demonstrated success of our program, the
21 challenges that we are facing in light of changes in
22 federal law and policy. And the need for continued
23 funding from the Council going forward. NYFUP was
24 created after studies showed that detained immigrants
25 in New York rarely secured counsel and that detained

2 unrepresented immigrants lost their deportation cases
3 97% of the time causing the wrongful deportations of
4 people who have strong defenses to removal and
5 tearing apart families who would lose a spouse,
6 parent or bread winner. I've cited to the Vera
7 Institute of Justice's study from just November of
8 last year which found that 48% of NYFUP cases end
9 successfully which is an 1100% increase from the
10 success rate before NYFUP with unrepresented people.
11 And our offices staff three weekly dockets at the
12 Varick Street Immigration Court in New York City. We
13 accept all unrepresented clients who cannot afford an
14 attorney and provide high quality representation in
15 immigration court, related family or federal court
16 matters, appeals and we offer social work services as
17 well. And NYFUP has inspired the creation of similar
18 programs across the country including upstate New
19 York with a NYFUP project in the Batavia, Fishkill
20 and Ulster Immigration Courts. And a network of
21 similar deportation defense pilots in 11 other
22 jurisdictions across the United States.

23 Unfortunately, this has been the most challenging
24 year in recent memory in New York with respect to
25 immigrants facing ICE enforcement. This has resulted

2 in new challenges for the NYFUP program such as
3 indiscriminant ICE enforcement against people who
4 were previous marked as low priority. We are seeing
5 rampant courthouse arrests which means that New
6 Yorkers who are going court, complying with the law,
7 trying to vindicate their due process rights are
8 getting snagged away and thrown into ICE detention.
9 We're seeing false allegations of gang membership
10 particularly against Central American young people
11 and we're seeing a change in who is being detained
12 and who has the right to get out on bail. So, these
13 are outlined in my written testimony, but these are
14 some of the most intense challenges that we're facing
15 right now and we are also getting push back from the
16 City about our ability to provide very robust Padilla
17 counsel to immigrants that we're representing under
18 our criminal justice contract which means that we are
19 at times concerned about losing out opportunity to
20 get people legal services on the front end of an
21 issue. And instead we have to meet them at the Varick
22 Street Immigration Court where we're in the defensive
23 posture with more difficult and more expensive
24 options in terms of how to secure their status and
25 their right to remain the United States. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much
3 for that. And I've just been informed that we're
4 actually going to keep the room so everyone's voice
5 will be heard today which is great. So the pressure
6 is a little bit off in some ways. We're going to keep
7 going through and which means that if you've given us
8 paper, stay, we're going to put you on a panel and
9 you're going to be heard. Thank you to everyone that
10 made that happen. Let me do a quick follow up just
11 because I think it's important that we understand
12 NYFUP and for everyone that's listening to NYFUP, and
13 thinking about NYFUP. That you mentioned the Padilla
14 case and the changes in the administrations contract
15 work. When did that change happen? Did that happen
16 after the fiscal year started and tell us a little
17 bit about that timeline? The change in policy?

18 SARA DERI OSHIO: So, the three service
19 providers that do NYFUP defense work also have
20 contracts with the City, with the criminal justice
21 contract. And that is to represent everybody, the
22 indigent New Yorkers who are faced with criminal
23 charges, but we also have historically offered
24 Padilla services to our non-citizen clients at our
25 criminal defense practices. And we are right now

2 negotiating our contract, all of the providers are
3 working on our criminal defense contracts and don't
4 have anything final. And in those discussions there
5 have been concerns about our ability to continue to
6 provide the type of robust Padilla counsel that is
7 necessary. Which means not just advising someone.
8 This particular guilty plea might have immigration
9 consequences x, y and z, but actually doing more
10 complete legal screenings and figuring out does this
11 client qualify for a U-visa, or a T-visa, or
12 naturalization and actually then engaging in
13 representation to get those people those benefits
14 that they're eligible for. We have concerns going
15 forward that we will be facing more limitations from
16 the City about, with respect to our ability to
17 actually go forward and then provide affirmative
18 representation to those clients of our criminal
19 defense practice.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. We've
21 noted that and we want to work with you to think
22 about not only the consequences, but understanding
23 maybe some solutions and feedback we can give
24 directly to the Administration. So thank you for
25 that. Next?

2 EVE STOTLAND: Good afternoon. Thank you
3 so much, Council Member Menchaca, Chairman Menchaca
4 and to the Committee. My name is Eve Stotland, I'm
5 the Director of Legal Services at The Door and I'm
6 here today on behalf of ICARE, Immigrant Children
7 Advocates Relief Effort which was started by the City
8 Council and you were very involved yourself and we
9 want to thank you. And as private funders as well in
10 2014. And ICARE comprises of The Door, Legal Aid
11 Society, Catholic Charities, Safe Passage, CALA and
12 KIND. And we have a really short message here today,
13 powerful, important, but short. One, there is a
14 national war on immigrant children. Two, New York
15 City is ready to fight back, but we need your support
16 and we need increased support. So, one, there's a war
17 on immigrant children, many people throughout this
18 hearing today have talked about the very real
19 crackdown by ICE and immigration enforcement. And
20 it's real for all immigrant, however, the
21 Administration has particularly targeted children.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: The federal
23 Administration?

24 EVE STOTLAND: The federal Administration,
25 thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Be clear these
3 days.

4 EVE STOTLAND: Yes, we need to be clear.

5 The federal administration has particularly targeted
6 children in the immigration system there have been
7 historically special protections for children.

8 Understanding that their age, and development leave
9 them particularly vulnerable. And the current federal
10 administration is chipping away at those protection.

11 And I'm a lawyer so I'm going to offer a response,
12 which is that children need lawyers. Children need
13 more lawyers, you'll see in our testimony and it's

14 well established that a lawyer makes all the

15 difference. Right now, there are New York City

16 undocumented children who are in immigration court,
17 who do not have a lawyer and we are all at capacity.

18 So, we are ready to grow in size. We are ready to

19 serve more children, but for that we have requested

20 \$4.9 million so that we can make sure that as many

21 children as possible do not have to face immigration

22 court alone. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Two quick

24 questions, follow up. One, do you have a sense about

25 your private funding and how, what's the longevity of

2 that commitment? And then two, have you made it clear
3 to the administration, the local municipal Mayor's
4 Administration your need for...

5 EVE STOTLAND: [interposes] Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: More legal
7 assistance?

8 EVE STOTLAND: Sure. I'm very pleased to
9 say that while we're still in the ICARE, providers
10 are still in our current funding cycle with Robin
11 Hood. There have been very positive signs from the
12 Robin Hood Foundation that this is an issue that they
13 are doubling down on, and that they will continue to
14 make this a hallmark issue of their grant making
15 portfolio. And we do have plans to bring our message
16 to the Mayor and the Mayor's Office and we certainly
17 will be doing so.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

19 NATALIA RENTA: Good afternoon. I'm
20 Natalia Renta and I'm an immigration attorney at Make
21 the Road New York. Thank you Chair Menchaca and to
22 the committee on immigration for the opportunity to
23 testify today on behalf of Make the Road New York and
24 it's 22,000 members. To start we thank the City
25 Council for making possible generous funding for

2 immigration legal services especially in the past
3 year of unprecedented federal attacks on the
4 immigrant community. And the City's commitment has
5 supported thousands and sent a powerful signal to the
6 immigrant community that New York City is ready to
7 stand with them. Unfortunately, last year's
8 investment is not enough. The need today is far
9 greater than ever and it has become the new normal
10 for previously straight forward cases to become more
11 and more complicated and resource intensive.

12 Immigrant clients are more fearful than ever. Demand
13 for services has skyrocketed and sadly, it is becoming
14 more and more common to hear about the detention of
15 our community members. So, we have five asks and
16 three directly related to this panel. The other two
17 are outlined in the testimony, but it includes \$5
18 million towards the wage worker initiatives and \$12
19 million in adult literacy, but I'll just focus on the
20 three directly about immigration legal services. So,
21 the first, we really need your leadership to address
22 contracting delays. Which have escalated to post
23 egregious hardships. It is March 2018, and most
24 organizations still do not have contracts for much of
25 our City funded legal services for fiscal year 2018.

2 Organizations are either meeting our anticipated
3 contract goals by floating hundreds of thousands or
4 even millions of dollars to cover expenses. Or taking
5 the safer route of waiting for the contracts to come
6 before hiring and beginning services that were
7 intended to begin nine months ago. This poses
8 unsustainable cash flow problems, and it puts us in
9 jeopardy even if we can somehow float the cash
10 because auditors are understandably demanding
11 explanations for how we could possibly claim to have
12 millions of dollars coming to cover last year's work,
13 when we have no contracts to cover that work at all.
14 Cash flow and contract delays are a long standing
15 problem with City funding and government streams, but
16 the situation has become far worse than in the past
17 years. And then second, we want to increase, just
18 very quickly, we just want to increase flexibility so
19 that legal services providers can be nimble in
20 responding to ever evolving community needs and
21 crises. The City is moving away from flexibility is
22 IOI and other contracts at a time when we need
23 maximum flexibility because cases are becoming more
24 and more complex and we need to take on sometimes
25 many different matters for the same client to have

2 the best chance for that client to avoid deportation.
3 And third, you've already spoken several times today,
4 very powerfully against the criminal carve out, Make
5 the Road sent a letter to the Mayor's Office at the
6 end of last year and there were many organizations
7 that signed onto that letter. But this is something
8 that we are really concerned about and we want your
9 help in pushing back against that.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that.

11 And did you hear the administration's response? Or
12 multiple responses? So, I'm not going to put you on
13 the spot necessarily, but they did, they got to
14 respond, and I think on just the criminal carve out,
15 I think it's important that anybody who wants to
16 testify today, I want to hear from you. But I won't
17 necessarily put you on the spot to go... I welcome
18 more feedback on that discussion. Thank you for the
19 letter that you sent to the Mayor's Office, thank you
20 so much. That's another opportunity for us to kind of
21 circle back, provide oversight and get responses from
22 them. So we are looking forward to continuing that
23 discussion. Thank you for reiterating the fact that
24 contracts are an issue. I almost kind of want to ask
25 anybody in the room if their part of an organization

2 that hasn't had a contract or this year, can you
3 raise your hand if? Okay, yeah, and some people are
4 like... got it. And so that's a problem. And so know
5 that we know that and we need to get to the bottom of
6 that. Have you communicated that issue to the Mayor's
7 Office of Immigrant Affairs? Or the Mayor himself?

8 NATALIA RENTA: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You have, great,
10 thank you. Thank you. Hassan?

11 HASAN SHAFIQULLAH: Hi. Good morning. My
12 name is Hasan Shafiqullah. I'm the attorney-in-charge
13 of the Immigration Unit at the Legal Aid Society. In
14 our written testimony we address the Padilla
15 expansion, the RFP, we echo Bronx Defenders plea to
16 allow us to not only provide advice, but also full
17 representation through the Padilla practice. We
18 encourage refunding of the NYFUP program at the full
19 amount and an increase in ICARE. And for the
20 Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, we know that the
21 City is looking at an expansion. We, and several
22 providers had written to the Mayor's Office of
23 Immigrant Affairs asking for more affirmative cases
24 rather to focus entirely on removal. More
25 reenrollments and allowing...

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Can
3 you define affirmative cases for everyone that's
4 listening?

5 HASAN SHAFIQULLAH: Yes, so it's either
6 I'm fighting deportation removal in immigration court
7 or I'm affirmatively applying for citizenship, green
8 card, U-visas, asylum, all sorts of things that are
9 not about removal defense. And if I can get those
10 statues I avoid removal all together. And we want the
11 ability to focus on those sorts of cases too. I do
12 want to take a little of my time to address the
13 criminal carve out. So, I was listening to the
14 Administration saying that they stand behind the
15 criminal carve out, which we strongly oppose, saying
16 that they have to prioritize funding and that's it's
17 a public safety issue. But, these are people who have
18 already done their time. They've paid their debt to
19 society and these are the same people that the City
20 is saying let's help on the reentry process which we
21 welcome that part of it. We believe that people
22 should not be defined by their past actions and we
23 should support rehabilitation and reintegration into
24 our communities. And it's important to remember that
25 congress, in the Immigration Nationality Act has

2 given us the tools to help these same people. Just
3 because I have one of these 170 convictions doesn't
4 mean that I have no relief available, but it's going
5 to be really hard for me to put forward my claim for
6 relief without an attorney. These are really hard
7 cases for pro se litigants. And so we ask that the
8 City not tie the provider's hands, allow us to these
9 cases and help these members of our community obtain
10 immigration status and reintegrate fully back into
11 the social fabric of New York City. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCAHCA: Hear, hear, thank
13 you for that. And it's just good to hear that or get
14 confirmation that I think we're on the right track to
15 aligning ourselves as a City to the values that the
16 City believes in and there's no better way to kind of
17 do that through legal services and education
18 services. And health services and really maintain
19 that commitment. So, thank you for that piece and
20 that analysis. I agree.

21 HASAN SHAFIQULLAH: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I agree. Thank you
23 to this panel.

24 COLLECTIVELY: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, I want to hear
3 next from the day laborers, Lethea, you put together
4 a panel, can we get that panel up onto, the days?
5 [speaking Spanish]

6 JAIME ROGEL: [speaking Spanish]

7 INTERPRETER: So, good morning. My name is
8 Jaime Rogel and I am an active member of NICE.

9 JAIME ROGEL: [speaking Spanish]

10 INTERPRETER: So for my personal
11 experience to the daily contact with construction day
12 laborers I'm able to say the following.

13 JAIME ROGEL: [Speaking Spanish]

14 INTERPRETER 2: Our time is up, so.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: If you want to
16 translate.

17 INTERPRETER 2: Sure, I'll translate. From
18 personal experience and through daily contact with
19 construction day laborers I am able to say the
20 following. Workers who are hired at day labor status
21 by an employer who picks them up and takes them to
22 work, in most cases do not know exactly what kind of
23 work they would do. In many cases their economic
24 situation forces construction workers to accept high
25 risk occupations without any objection. Such as

2 climbing on rooftops or entering ditches and
3 unprotected excavation sites. The construction
4 companies, in their effort to avoid expenses, do not
5 show any interest in investing resources to acquire
6 the necessary personal protection equipment for their
7 workers. And much less, in providing free training
8 for the benefit of workers. In order to address a
9 large gap in health and safety knowledge, NICE has
10 developed a set of institutional efforts to meet the
11 growing demand for OSHA safety courses reaching more
12 than 150 workers per month. However, the demand is
13 much higher now because of new laws making it crucial
14 for the assignment of greater resources that allows
15 us to fulfil the demand for these courses. The
16 continued support to NICE and to the organizations of
17 the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative, will ensure
18 that workers are able to obtain these critical
19 courses and also have the opportunity to learn more
20 about their rights. Learn how to protect them and
21 learn more about their professional trades and
22 achieve a dignified wage. Thank you so much.

23 LETHEA: So, my name is Lethea and I'm
24 here with Victor, who is going to be testifying on
25 behalf of Workers Justice Project:

2 VICTOR CAMACHO: [Speaking Spanish]

3 INTERPRETER LETHEA: So, good morning,
4 Chair and distinguished members of the Immigration
5 Committee of the City of New York. My name is Victor
6 Camacho and I'm a construction worker, and a member
7 of the Workers Justice Project. First, I want to
8 thank you for the opportunity to testify today and to
9 talk about the impact we're making through the day
10 labor centers. As an immigrant worker and member of
11 the Workers Justice Project that represents day
12 laborers, and immigrant construction workers, I am
13 thankful by your unconditional support given to us in
14 the last two to three years. In which we have won
15 better wages, and gained more control over our
16 working conditions. I came to the United States 25
17 years ago looking for a better future for my family.
18 And previously it was very difficult to find work
19 without being prepared to do a skill job such as
20 carpentry and painting. Also, not know my right as a
21 worker, I experience wage theft and other labor
22 abuses. But, this changed when we formed the Day
23 Labor Center in Bay Parkway in which we organized
24 ourselves a space to negotiate a fair wage, to make
25 the employer respect the eight hours of work. Our

2 lunch time and ensure that we get paid at the end of
3 the day. Now, everything has changed because of the
4 Day Labor Center. I have prepared myself to become a
5 skilled worker and ensure employers respect my
6 rights. Thank you for your support and the power we
7 have gained through the organization. Now, my minimum
8 wage through the center is \$25 per hour as a
9 carpenter. We have also managed to do more training
10 in health and safety. For example, this month we
11 conducted our first two OSHA classes in construction
12 which benefit us because we learn to work safely in
13 construction. In this year, we hope to continue
14 counting on your support and together to achieve
15 better working conditions. And that together we can
16 change the culture of insecurity that exists in
17 construction. We want to work together because we
18 know that there is a strength in unity. So, thank
19 you, Council Member, you have heard from them. First
20 of all, thank you for your unconditional support for
21 the Day Labor Workforce Initiative and recognizing
22 the value that day laborers bring to the City of New
23 York and we hope to continue, counting with your
24 support especially now more than ever because the
25 challenge is much bigger. And we recently passed a

2 new law that you know, it aiming to protect workers,
3 but at the same time we need to build resources and
4 infrastructure in New York City to do that. And
5 obviously maintain the life of the Day Labor Centers
6 in New York City. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that,
8 Lethea, and I want to thank both you and Mr.
9 Manicastro (sp?) from NICE and the two workers who
10 just testified. Thank you for your service and
11 helping us pass 1447, The Construction Safety Bill.
12 That really makes sure that every New Yorker,
13 remember that we're an inclusive City, every worker
14 gets services and you are all part of that discussion
15 and so I want to thank you for that commitment. There
16 are a lot of things were trying to figure out there,
17 but the one thing that is clear in hearing from you
18 all today, that we need to continue to spend more of
19 our City dollars in making sure that the centers have
20 what they need to continue to bring more
21 infrastructure for organizing, representing,
22 educating our workers no matter who they are. If
23 you're a New Yorker, you should get access to that.
24 So, thank you for that commitment and we're going to
25 keep fighting together. We have one more speaker. And

2 actually is there a Mari Kozma (sp?) in the room?
3 Awesome, can we get you on the stand? I want to make
4 sure you are, you're a client is that right or a
5 adult literacy... you work for OBT. Is there anybody
6 OBT that has gone through an adult education class
7 that can speak to us today? Is there anybody who is
8 an adult literacy class student in the house? Okay.
9 All right, we're going hold on thank you, you can go.

10 ELIZABETH RIESERMURPHY: Good morning.

11 Thank you so much, or good afternoon, Chairman
12 Menchaca. My name is Elizabeth Rieser-Murphy, I'm
13 from the Legal Aid Society and I work as part of the
14 ICARE initiative with unaccompanied minors. And I'm
15 here today with my client, Elison (sp?), and I will
16 give it over to him to speak.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

18 ELIZON ZEGOVIA (sp?): Hello. My name is
19 Elizon Zegovia. I'm 12 years old and I'm from El
20 Salvador. In about 2014, I came to the U.S. with my
21 sister Diana. When I was only eight years old we
22 traveled many miles to get here. We had to leave many
23 things behind we loved, including our grandparents
24 because we could no longer safely live in El
25 Salvador. We saw terrible things, and the only way to

2 escape the terrible violence was to flee to the U.S.
3 When I arrived to the United States I felt both ways,
4 happy and scared. I was happy because I would finally
5 be able to hug my mom after not seeing her for years,
6 but I was also scared about what was going to happen
7 after. For example, would I learn the new language
8 and make new friends? After spending some time in the
9 shelter with my sister, we were able to reunite with
10 my family in New York. When we first arrived to New
11 York I felt really happy to be reunited with my
12 family. There was many things I had to get used to. A
13 new school, new food, and new friends. Besides all
14 the new things, my sister and I had to go to
15 immigration court. My first time in immigration court
16 was really scary because, for me and my sister,
17 because we thought it was going to be a mean person
18 that didn't like us at all. I was also worried about
19 being separated from my mom again. In immigration
20 court I met a lawyer from Legal Aid, my sister and I
21 had been represented by lawyers from Legal Aid since
22 2015. We have gone to family court, immigration court
23 and finally interviewed at USCIS. The asylum process
24 was hard for me because I had to remember some of
25 things that I would rather not remember anymore. The

2 good thing is that I had my lawyer, Elizabeth,
3 helping me and my sister out. She made it easy for me
4 and my sister. Now that I have asylum, my life has
5 changed for the better. I finally feel safe. My dream
6 is to be in the U.S. Marines because I want to serve
7 the U.S. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Elison
9 for your testimony today. And you make New York
10 proud. So thank you so much for bringing your
11 testimony. Something I tell everybody whether they're
12 a student in one of our education classes or someone
13 like you who have gone through a very difficult time
14 and you talked about your courage and you're
15 demonstrating your courage today. I want to say thank
16 you.

17 ELISON ZEGOVIA: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And to continue to
19 speak, we are hearing young people right now, left
20 and right, and I don't know if you were part of any
21 of the things that happened. Did you go to the march
22 at all this weekend or...

23 ELISON ZEGOVIA: No.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Or do anything that
25 was connected to safety? Young people like you are

2 rising up and you being here today is the same kind
3 of thing we're seeing across the entire country. And
4 you're the future of this counter. Whether you're
5 going to be in the Marines or one day become an
6 elected official representing the community which I
7 hope you consider, to be on this side, asking those
8 hard questions. That's the power that you just
9 demonstrated today. So I want to say thank you again
10 and we welcome you back to the City Council in any
11 way that you want. To teach us and to hold us
12 accountable.

13 ELISON ZEGOVIA: Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, thank
15 you. So that concludes this panel and I want to say
16 thank you for your words. And again, we have a lot of
17 work to do be it ICARE, adult literacy or the worker,
18 the Day Laborers Initiative. We have a lot more work
19 to do and so thank you so much for telling us exactly
20 what we need to do. For validating the work that we
21 do and we've got to more of it, no doubt. Thank you
22 so much. The next panel we're bringing up is an adult
23 literacy panel from the Arab American Family Support
24 Center, Miriam Fidulo (sp?). She left? Okay. Ira
25 Yankwitt from the Literacy Assitance Center, Jeffrey

2 Lao (sp?), Chinese American Planning Council. Ariel
3 Sorenski from UJAA Federation, are you here? Yes?
4 Come on over. Mari Kozma from the Opportunities For a
5 Better Tomorrow. Okay, so you have two minutes each.
6 We want to get through as many testimonies as
7 possible before people leave. You've kind of been in
8 the room so we've already kind of been discussing
9 things. We're going to take your testimony. So I'm
10 asking you just to kind of talk to us. Talk to me
11 directly. What do we need to do, what do you want to
12 emphasize and underscore in this discussion? If we
13 can start with you, Miss Mar. Is the red light on?

14 MARI KOZMA: Now it is. Good afternoon,
15 Chair Menchaca and member of the City Council. My
16 name is Mari Kozma and I am the Director of
17 Immigration Services at Opportunities for a Better
18 Tomorrow. I am here today to provide a testimony on
19 the need to restore and baseline the \$12 million for
20 adult literacy services in this year's budget to
21 ensure that immigrants are provided with an equal
22 opportunity to access economic mobility within our
23 City. At OBT we see firsthand, how talented and
24 experienced individuals are unable to access
25 employment opportunities because they lack sufficient

2 English language skills. This not only serves as a
3 barrier for individual families and communities, but
4 stagnates the economic development of our City as
5 employers have unfilled positions and the lack of
6 skilled workforce to meet their demands. According to
7 the recent Comprehensive Economic Development
8 Strategy conducted for Brooklyn, almost 60,000 job
9 opening remain unfilled by Brooklyn residents. The
10 time is now for a continuous investment in education
11 and training, so that we can address employer needs
12 and up skill immigrants and create access to higher
13 wage jobs. To our dismay, Mayor de Blasio's \$88.6
14 billion executive budget, failed to include a \$12
15 million reinvestment for adult literacy programs. A
16 historic investment was made in last year's budget,
17 and it must be fully funded and baselined in order to
18 meet the overwhelming need across the City. Under the
19 current funding levels, OBT receives \$958.00 per
20 participant. According to a recent study conducted by
21 the Literacy Assistance Center, the actual cost is
22 \$7,400 per seat. Subsequently, we are often unable to
23 hire sufficient full time staff, retain quality
24 instructors, or cover necessary administrative costs
25 around the program. Additionally, we are also seeing

2 an increase in the number of individuals who are
3 homeless, have food insecurities, lack the means for
4 transportation to attend programing and have mental
5 health challenges and learning disabilities. By
6 moving away from single year funding and baselining
7 the \$12 million, the rates can be readjusted and
8 properly funded through a new RFP process.

9 Additionally, one of the long standing impediments
10 New York City having a comprehensive strategy and
11 system of adult literacy is...

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] So,
13 Mari, I'm going to pause you there since I'm going to
14 be able to read all of that.

15 MARI KOZMA: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So I'm going to
17 pause you there. Thank you so much for your
18 testimony. And so I'm going to ask all of you again,
19 so we, I'm going to read everything so if you want to
20 focus on something that hasn't been said, that want
21 to underscore, that's what I want to hear right now.
22 But thank you so much for, and we love OBT and all
23 the work that they're doing on the ground.

24 MARI KOZMA: Thank you.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for being
3 here today.

4 JEFFREY LAO: Good after noon, Ladies and
5 Gentleman. Thank you, Chair Menchaca and the
6 Committee on Immigration. My name is Jeffrey Lao and
7 I'm an English instructor representing the Chinese
8 American Planning Council. Thank you for today's
9 invitation and thank you for hearing about the
10 importance of adult literacy education programs.
11 Success, what does success mean? For some students,
12 success means being able to enter the workforce. For
13 others, it means being able to enroll into college.
14 For one student, success meant finally being able to
15 communicate with a nurse, in English, to discuss care
16 for her mother. Another student told me, when he was
17 not studying English, he spent all of his time with
18 his little grandson. He said that his grandson was
19 growing up so fast and his English was becoming so
20 good. He was afraid that there would be a time when
21 he could no longer speak to his grandson anymore so
22 he came to English class every day and success for
23 him, was being able to make new memories with his
24 three year old grandson every day. The successes of
25 these students and the impacts on their families are

2 made possible through adult literacy classes. In the
3 previous year, CPC saw over 1,500 students and so far
4 this year, with a little more than half the year
5 over, we're up to 1,550. At CPC we've had a 6%
6 reduction in our wait list meaning more average
7 students have been able to enroll into English
8 classes. We have been able to provide additional
9 classes, but without the baseline of \$12 million,
10 English programs like ours lack the stability needed
11 to provide consistent English classes year round.

12 Single investment and low reimbursement rates mean we
13 are not able to provide staffing for the wrap around
14 services and counseling that students need outside of
15 the classroom. While wait lists are easily measure by
16 numbers, the full impact means that parents are
17 unable to assist with their children's homework.

18 Workers are unable to enter the workforce. Students
19 are unable to earn their high school equivalency or
20 go to college. And immigrants are waiting to become
21 citizens. Your continued support will allow providers
22 to maintain an active role promoting self-sufficient
23 and self-reliance in our communities. We stand with
24 our students to ask for a baselined \$12 million that
25 allows sustained long term change in our communities.

2 I, and the thousands of students who have benefited
3 from these classes, thank you for the Councils
4 support. I'm available to take questions and can be
5 contacted for further information. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much
7 for that testimony.

8 ARIEL SOBRANSKI: Good afternoon, Chairman
9 Menchaca and members of the immigration committee. My
10 name is Ariel Sobranski. I'm an advocacy and policy
11 advisor at UJA Federation of New York. First I really
12 want to thank you, the Council and the Administration
13 for the dedication to ensuring that adult literacy
14 funding has become a part of the budget and an
15 important conversation that we're continuing to have.
16 I'm not going to take much time to go through my
17 testimony. You've just heard from my two colleagues
18 and Kevin Douglas, and you're going to hear from a
19 few more on this panel. So I just want to echo the
20 ask to restore and baseline the \$12 million which you
21 know the challenges with not baselined funding.
22 You've heard all about them and we've had
23 conversations before. Kevin had also mentioned the
24 importance of establishing an adult literacy task
25 force so that we can find out where adult literacy

2 really lives and create a unified system. And then
3 I'd also like to echo what he talked about with the
4 nonprofit sector and the issues that we have with
5 contracting. As a member of the Human Services
6 Advancement Strategy Group, we urge the Council to
7 include it its March response, a \$200 million ask for
8 FY 19 to address some of the areas that Kevin already
9 brought up. The last thing I want to say is that it's
10 more important than ever, that New York City kind of
11 take the lead on this issue because we're facing deep
12 proposed cuts to key workforce innovation
13 opportunity, ACT programs. So we really need New York
14 City to step up and make sure that we invest in adult
15 literacy programs. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, Council Member
18 Mechaca for the opportunity to testify today. I'm Ira
19 Yankwitt, I'm the Executive Director of the Literacy
20 Assistance Center and I'm hear testifying today on
21 behalf of the New York City Coalition for Adult
22 Literacy or NYCAL. As this committee is well aware,
23 today in New York City, there are approximately 2.2
24 million adults who lack English language proficiency,
25 a high school diploma or both. And over 75% of these

2 are immigrants. Yet public funding for adult literacy
3 is so limited, that fewer than 4% of these 2.2
4 million adults are able to access basic education
5 high school equivalency or English language classes
6 in any given year. NYCAL wishes to thank you, Council
7 Member Menchaca, for being a champion for these 2.2
8 million adults and for your steadfast leadership on
9 this issue. And we wish to express our deep
10 appreciation to the City Council and the Mayor for
11 the \$12 million expansion of adult literacy funding
12 and services over these past few years. Yet, once
13 again, this \$12 million in funding is imperiled.
14 Putting at risk nearly 6,000 adult students whose
15 programs rely on it. Moreover, as Ariel mentioned, as
16 a result of changes in the federal Workforce
17 Innovation and Opportunity Act, which puts an
18 increased emphasis on employment outcomes and
19 eliminates funding for standalone English language
20 civics classes, an estimated 8,000 immigrant students
21 currently attending classes in New York City are at
22 risk of being deemed ineligible or inappropriate for
23 WIOA funded classes beginning July 1st. When it comes
24 to funding for adult literacy there are really three
25 issues. The first is the paucity of funding itself

2 which shuts the door to over 95% of those adults in
3 need. The second is the short term and unreliable
4 nature of the current funding streams which pose a
5 continuous threat to program stability, staff
6 continuity and the ability to full achieve program
7 and policy goals. The third is the inadequacy of the
8 funding formulas and rates which undermine programs
9 ability to provide the full array and level of
10 services that students need. As was mentioned from my
11 colleague from OBT, my organization, the Literacy
12 Assistance Center, recently released a report which
13 you should have entitled, Investing in Quality, a
14 Blueprint for Adult Literacy Programs and Funders.
15 Funded by the Department of Youth and Community
16 Development, the program details 14 building blocks
17 of a comprehensive community based adult literacy
18 program. Identifies the resources needed to full
19 implement the building blocks, and includes the first
20 of its kind cost model. Based on our cost model we
21 have found that community based adult literacy
22 programs would need to have their current funding
23 rates increased by at least four times in order to
24 fully implement the components and services outlined
25 in the report. And while this might sound like a big

2 leap, we know that at current funding rates, many of
3 the critical program components that we identify such
4 as; full time teachers, counseling, student support
5 service, work force transition services. Professional
6 development and planning time for staff, and
7 integrated technology are often compromised. And so
8 once again, I just want to reiterate NYCAL's call to
9 restore and baseline the \$12 million in funding to
10 ensure programmatic stability and continuity. To
11 commit to a new procurement that adequately reflects
12 the true cost of providing high quality comprehensive
13 adult literacy programs. And to launch an adult
14 literacy task force that would bring together
15 multiple stakeholders to examine the current adult
16 literacy system and develop recommendations for
17 building a high quality, well-coordinated,
18 comprehensive system that meets and advances equity
19 and opportunity for all New Yorkers. Thank you very
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank
22 you so much for that. And I just want to make sure
23 that we get it on the record, every organization that
24 testified today, has a waiting list is that right? Is
25 there anybody that is meeting with the funding of the

2 city, everyone that is asking for an adult literacy
3 class?

4 IRA YANKWITT: Absolutely not. And in
5 fact, many programs are reluctant to take waiting
6 lists because it gives false hope to so many people
7 and their communities who are desperate for these
8 services, and who go on waiting lists and just
9 languish there, hoping and anticipating that they'd
10 be able to get those services. So, even the numbers
11 you get for waiting lists from NYCAL and from the
12 individual providers, grossly understates the demand
13 much less the need. And we suspect that there's
14 latent demand that if there was an increase in seats
15 and services that you'd see even more people coming
16 out, than are coming out now. That already many
17 people know that it's almost hopeless because those
18 seats are already filled.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. So, even
20 with the increase, we're seeing a massive demand and
21 we're not meeting it.

22 IRA YANKWITT: That's right.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. And our
24 final panelist.

2 UNIDENTIED: Good afternoon, Chair

3 Menchaca. I want to thank you for this opportunity to
4 allow me to speak. [Speaking Spanish] I grew up in a
5 predominantly Spanish speaking household and I saw
6 how the lack of English proficiency severely impacted
7 my family member's ability to fully engage with their
8 community. As a child, I had to watch my grandmother,
9 a certified elementary school teacher in the
10 Dominican Republic, succumb to the all too familiar
11 pleasant smiles, nods, and gestures and she tried to
12 navigate through her community. It is for this
13 reason, and many other reasons that I decided to
14 become an ESOL tutor. For the last two years I've
15 been tutoring at La Guardia Community College which
16 provides affordable and intensive English courses to
17 immigrants at all walks of life. Over the course of
18 eight weeks we learn pronunciation, we identify
19 idioms and we've overcome self-awareness as
20 immigrants try to adapt to the large cultural
21 differences in New York. One of the largest cultural
22 shocks that immigrants receive when they arrive is
23 the ability, or rather how fast New Yorkers speak.
24 They're amazed at how many words we can fit into a
25 single sentence without running out of breath. We

2 also work on listening skills in tutoring sessions as
3 well. And I'll try to wrap it up, because I know I
4 have a time constraint. So, in order to achieve fluid
5 conversational skills, I ask my students open ended
6 questions. And in one session I asked them, what
7 animal best represents you? And this student, his
8 name is Ken, and before I tell what he says in
9 response to the question I want you to know that Ken
10 is an amazing student. He had a PhD back in Thailand,
11 he presented in numerous international conferences
12 and was a tenured professor at a prestigious
13 university back in his home country. And his response
14 to my question, what animal best represents you, he
15 says, back at home I am a tiger, but in New York I
16 feel like a bug. So I am here asking you to not only
17 restore the \$12 million to adult literacy, but to
18 baseline it so that more programs like La Guardia
19 Community College can continue to provide services to
20 our immigrant communities. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that
22 testimony, and I think we have to applaud when so
23 many of us in the immigrant community that have
24 immigrant experiences at whatever level, join the
25 work. And so thank you for that and I'm sure you're

2 making your family proud. And you're making us proud
3 and thank you for all the work that you do on this
4 panel and the work that you do in your organization,
5 in the communities that right now are under attack
6 and need every sense of lift, because I hear you. Our
7 New Yorkers, some of them are feeling not heard and
8 insignificant and that's the wrong message we need to
9 send. And these classes are an opportunity to open up
10 and given them skills, education, legal services,
11 health, all of that. So thank you so much for being
12 here today. We're going to move on to the next panel
13 which is going to focus on the LGBT community, Trans
14 community and if we can have, Everett Arthur, Andrea
15 Bower, Margo Rivera, Vianay (sp?) Garcia, Kathy
16 Garcia, and Mateo Guererro Tabares. It's a big panel
17 so if I can more chairs, thank you so much. Our
18 immigrant community is a diverse community and the
19 work that we do has to touch every single New Yorker.
20 And so I'm really proud as someone who is openly gay
21 in the City Council, the only openly gay member of
22 Brooklyn, to be hearing from you today. It's an
23 important conversation that we have. When we talk
24 about immigrant services we're talking about so many
25 different communities. And so it's a particularly

2 proud moment for me to hear from all of you today. If
3 we can start with Vianay on the left, my left.

4 VIANAY GARCIA: [Speaking Spanish]

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Speaking Spanish]

6 INTERPRETER: I'm going to interpret what
7 Vianay just said. So, good afternoon. My name is
8 Vianay. I am a trans immigrant woman from Mexico. I
9 work at Make the Road New York as an organizer and
10 I'm also part of the TGNCI Solutions Coalition. I've
11 been undocumented for several years in the United
12 States. I migrated for about 14 years and I left
13 because of transphobia in my country. When I first
14 came here I had no knowledge of any immigration
15 lawyers or any lawyers in general. In 2009 I was
16 accused of a crime and I was held in Riker's for 18
17 months and I was desperate. Nobody knew much about my
18 case and it wasn't until later on, seven years later,
19 where the lawyers realized that I could qualify for a
20 T-visa. So I'm also here to testify that the police
21 is often harassing Trans women. Particularly Trans
22 women of color and profiling us as sex workers. And
23 that impacts anything really to immigration. I'm here
24 also to say that the Trans community needs to be more
25 visible not only in our community, but also in the

2 government. And so there are two asks that I have
3 right now. One is that we need more lawyers that are
4 competent and culturally sensitive to support Trans
5 women, especially when it comes to supporting
6 conversations with gender, et cetera. And the second
7 one is to also provide training for other lawyers in
8 the immigration areas. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for
10 translating. Muchas gracias. Who's next? Please.

11 EVERETT ARTHUR: Thank you Chair Menchaca
12 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Everett
13 Arthur and I work at the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and
14 Transgender Community Center or The Center. Since
15 1983, the Center has empowered its community members
16 to lead authentic lives while advocating for justice,
17 equity and opportunity for LGBTQ people. While this
18 translates into many life altering and affirming
19 experiences for the people who walk through our
20 doors, some communities like immigrant LGBTQ people
21 are impacted far greater because external resources
22 and protections for them are far and few between.
23 According to Maria Fernanda Andia Escalante, the
24 Centers immigration support coordinator, the majority
25 of people access the Centers immigration services are

2 first generation asylum seekers that are here alone.
3 Taking into consideration the unique challenges this
4 community faces, the Center offers free drop in
5 support groups in English and Spanish. That provide a
6 safe, nonjudgmental environment where LGBTQ
7 immigrants can connect with each other. Discuss
8 issues relating to living in a new country, and most
9 importantly, find community so they are not alone.
10 Hailing mostly from the Caribbean, Latin America,
11 Eastern Europe and Africa, many of the Centers LGBTQ
12 immigrant constituents are seeking asylum from their
13 home countries because they persecuted for their
14 sexual orientation, gender identity or both. As
15 survivors of torture frequently, their accessing long
16 term mental health counseling can be a really arduous
17 process given the extensive wait lists for these
18 programs throughout the City. In recognizing this,
19 the Center continuously works to fill these gaps by
20 providing mental health counseling, assessments and
21 short term counseling to help the immigrants begin
22 processing their situation alongside the skilled
23 mental health professionals and providers. And
24 finally, the Center works to integrate the services
25 and programs offered to LGBTQ immigrant population

2 ensuring that they can access programs that will make
3 living in a new country easier. Our wrap around
4 services include individual career coaching sessions,
5 support and referrals for immigrants living with HIV
6 and AIDS and the Centers annual LGBTQ fair just to
7 name a few. Maria Fernanda and so many others on our
8 staff work tireless to ensure the Centers LGBTQ
9 immigrant population has the highest chance of
10 success. And thank you so much you can read the rest
11 of that.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much
13 for the work and for the LGBT Center and everything
14 you do there as well.

15 EVERETT ARTHUR: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

17 KATHY GARCIA: [Speaking Spanish]

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Speaking Spanish]

19 INTERPRETER: So I'm going to interpret.

20 Okay, good afternoon to the Council and staff. My
21 name is Kathy Garcia and I am a leader at the Trans
22 Immigrant Project at Make the Road New York. I am
23 here to demand that our community that is Trans and
24 immigrant is to be respected. The police do not
25 respect us, our gender and neither our humanity. They

2 discriminate against us and they talk to us really
3 badly. The NYPD is constantly persecuting Trans women
4 like me and accuses us as sex workers only based on
5 our gender expression. These interactions with the
6 police are directly connected with immigration
7 because any decision that is taken at the criminal
8 court has an impact in our cases to adjust our
9 immigration status. For example, section 233 of the
10 felonies in New York City is called compelling
11 prostitution. This is the charge that can lead to
12 deportation and it allows for the NYPD to get
13 information to ICE to pick up the person. So we need
14 the police department to listen to us and for
15 immigration lawyers to understand us. And to help us
16 fight for our cases. Many Trans women like myself
17 qualify for T and U visas, but we won't be able to
18 find out if we don't have lawyers that can
19 communicate with us and can understand us. Our
20 capacity to live and exist depends on the immigration
21 support that we receive. Thank you for your time.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

23 MARGO RIVERA: Good afternoon all the
24 Council members and staff. My name is Margo Rivera
25 and I'm a leader in the Transgender and Immigrant

2 Project at Make the Road New York. I migrated from
3 Mexico into the United States in 2009 in search in
4 being able to start on my transition and to live
5 without fear as a transgender woman. With effort and
6 discipline, I have obtained my general education
7 diploma, GED. I have been learning English in the
8 courses offered by NYU and now I'm interested in
9 continuing learning and starting to become a nurse
10 and work in the health field. However, as an
11 immigrant I have to deal with my legal state in the
12 country that has led me to have many disadvantages
13 for many years. It's not only the lack of access to
14 basic rights, but also has become having to continue
15 to pursue my dreams of accessing a higher education
16 degree that is affordable and access to a license to
17 practice nursing. It wasn't until recently, in 2016
18 where I found Make the Road New York where I managed
19 to get legal assistance and support with my
20 immigration procedures. It after a search of many
21 years that I came across with competent lawyers who
22 referred to me by my name and pronoun in which I
23 express myself. And I have, and they have a knowledge
24 between the field of immigration law and the struggle
25 of transgender people. Because of this, I have come

2 today to ask the City to provide financial funds to
3 different organizations so they can hire and train
4 more immigration lawyers, who specialize in
5 transgender communities. It is right to be able to
6 live without fear and I think it's very important to
7 have special lawyers in the Trans community. Thank
8 you.

9 MATEO GUERRERO: Good afternoon City
10 Council, good afternoon, Menchaca and staff. My name
11 is Mateo Guererro. I am (inaudible) development
12 coordinator at Make the Door New York and I also
13 participate with the TGNCI Solutions Coalition. So I
14 am here today because I am transgender man who
15 migrated from Colombia. And I remained undocumented
16 for several years here in the United States. So in
17 2012 when President Obama announced the executive
18 order of DACA I was really excited because I thought
19 I was going to qualify for that. However, I realized
20 I couldn't qualify for DACA because I hadn't been in
21 the country long enough. The lawyers at Make the
22 Road, I was very lucky that I had already been
23 participating in Make the Road and they decided to
24 screen me to see if I could qualify for another type
25 of immigration relief. That's when they found out

2 that I could qualify for something that is called a
3 special immigrant juvenile statuses. Which is a type
4 of status given to folks that have been abandoned by
5 their family. And so I am here to testify that the
6 reason the lawyers were able to find that I could
7 qualify for this (sic) was because I was in a safe
8 space to share my personal story. To share the
9 traumatic experiences of my life, to really fully
10 open up to lawyers. That that is why it's so
11 important that we have immigration lawyers that are
12 culturally competent and also sensitive for us to be
13 able to open up. Trans immigrant communities members
14 are often times eligible for different types of
15 immigration relief such as U-visas, T-visas such
16 statuses because of the life struggles that we face.
17 We are often the victims of hate violence, attacks in
18 the streets for walking in our gender, we face
19 homelessness because of our identities. And because
20 of our race and our gender, it puts us at more risk
21 to be victims of police brutality and even face
22 deportation. And face different random charges by the
23 NYPD. And so I'm here to demonstrate the importance
24 of having immigration lawyers that understand the
25 complexities of immigrant communities, and especially

2 of lawyers that have gone through cultural and
3 sensitivity trainings. We need lawyers that can
4 connect with Trans gender and gender non-conforming
5 immigrants in safe environments. We cannot have
6 immigration lawyers that don't know how to
7 communicate and that consistently misgender us. I'm
8 here to ask that the City includes in the budget,
9 funding for nonprofit organizations to conduct
10 training geared for immigrations attorneys about
11 attaining specialized visas that particularly help
12 undocumented TGNCI people and also provide funding
13 for nonprofits to hire more attorneys across the City
14 that specialize in the afore mentioned TGNC sensitive
15 immigration law. Thank you.

16 ANDREA BOWEN: Hi Council Member Menchaca
17 and committee staff. My name is Andrea Bowen. I've
18 been working with Mateo, and Vianay, and Kathy, and
19 Margo and a coalition of other organizations
20 including antiviolenace projects, Sylvia Rivera Law
21 Project, Audrey Lorde, we work with the Center
22 earlier in our process in developing policy asks. And
23 so we've boiled this down to six asks that we've
24 discussed before. So, you know, we're here today to
25 talk about the needs specifically for, to fulfill a

2 need in the legal community that's not there. You may
3 have lawyers who are understanding of how to get U-
4 visas, T-visas and other things that help
5 undocumented people, and who have capacity, but might
6 not know about to help the TGNC community. Sort of
7 conversely, you may have lawyers who are
8 knowledgeable about the TGNC community and can help
9 with U-visas and T-visas and what not, but who don't
10 have the capacity. So we're looking for money to
11 build that capacity. So, these programs that we've
12 proposed and we've proposed these to MOIA and also
13 made the offers or presented to HRA, two programs.
14 One, a training program at \$100,000 that would
15 basically get organizations like Make the Road, that
16 sort of know this work, to train lawyers and build
17 the cadre of lawyers that can do this. And then
18 \$715,000 to go to agencies to hire lawyers who know
19 this and who know the kind of visas that can be
20 attained and who also are knowledgeable about the
21 Trans community. So, again, we've made this ask of
22 MOIA and HRA and the Mayor's staff, but in the event
23 that doesn't come through we would seek the Councils
24 support in trying to get that into the budget.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, thank you for
3 that. [Speaking Spanish] And so I heard very clearly
4 that we need to, in a very big way, to demonstrate
5 our commitment to the Transgender community, Gender
6 nonconforming community, the LGBT community, to
7 create safe spaces for our lawyers. That we're
8 spending so much time advocating for to be able to be
9 inclusive, to have culturally competent practices.
10 And so I heard that loud and clearly. And so I'm
11 really happy to know that you've communicated that to
12 MOIA, MOIA is still in the room, Mr. Martin is still
13 here taking notes which is great. We're going to
14 follow up on that and make sure that we can figure
15 out a way as we grow our legal services, that we
16 maintain our commitment to every New Yorker. Not one
17 New Yorker is more deserving than the other, period.
18 No matter who you are. You're New Yorkers and you
19 deserve that. So, thank you so much for your
20 testimony today and I look forward to working with
21 you to keep moving this through the budget
22 negotiations. Thank you. We're going to back to adult
23 literacy and bring up Rama Issa, from the Arab
24 American Association. Maru bautista from the Center
25 for Family Life. Susan Schneider, Asi and is Rabi

2 Silver here? He's gone, okay. Who else is in the room
3 because what I understand is the Sergeant of Arms did
4 a great job of making sure to get everyone that
5 wanted to get in, got in. who is here that has not
6 yet testified that wants to testify, we have one,
7 two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. Okay,
8 we're going to do the mega panel at the end with
9 those last eight to hear from all of you before we
10 conclude today. Thank you so much for your patience,
11 every voice is incredibly important to me and to this
12 committee so thank you so much for being here today.
13 Rama, go ahead?

14 RAMA ISSA: Good afternoon, everyone.
15 Thank you, Councilmember Menchaca and the Committee
16 for allowing us the opportunity to testify here
17 today. My name is Rama Issa and I and I am the
18 Executive Director of the Arab American Association
19 of New York. And I wanted to talk a little bit more
20 about the grassroots aspect of our organization and
21 how much funding is needed to support grassroots
22 organizations like ours. We're actually the largest
23 legal service provider in Southwest Brooklyn. We have
24 around eight navigators and we continue to have an
25 incredible waiting list. We're working with Arab and

2 Muslim immigrant communities and given the federal
3 political climate right now, the community is under a
4 lot of anxiety and looking for relief in any way they
5 can. Which makes them very vulnerable to immigration
6 fraud. So, we're very aware of that and we're working
7 the Brooklyn D.A.'s office to be able to address
8 that. But also, having more services like an attorney
9 in our staff, to be able to handle cases of asylum is
10 one thing that unfortunately we're not able to do
11 because of funding. Our ESL classes serve around 80
12 to 100 women every single day. And some of the
13 classes are taught by volunteers, and as much as we
14 love our volunteers, unfortunately there is also a
15 big waiting list for our services and we want to be
16 able to provide high quality English services to our
17 community. We're talking about folks who are
18 illiterate both in English and in Arabic so we're
19 doing very simple English classes for folks like
20 holding pencils, how do you do that. And then so it's
21 important who have teachers who are qualified to be
22 able to deliver those services. So, as you know, ESL
23 classes are probably one of the most important
24 services that we offer to our community. Without
25 English classes we're not able to lift our

2 communities out of poverty and help them achieve the
3 highest potential. I just want to do this really,
4 really, quickly. One of the things that is very
5 challenging for us is late contracts because that
6 allots a lot of stress and anxiety for grassroots
7 organizations like ours that have to front the money
8 and wait for that to come in like two or three
9 quarters later. And then we're also asking for a \$12
10 million baseline investment in adult education
11 program that way we can retain qualified staff and
12 ensure that students are able to sign up for the
13 fall. And it will allow us to plan accordingly ever
14 single year. And one last thing is, indirect costs
15 are so important for small grassroots organizations
16 like ours because so much money goes into programming
17 and we don't have enough to build on the
18 infrastructure of the organization, to build the
19 capacity of the organization in order to support
20 frontline staff. So thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: One quick question.

22 RAMA ISSA: Yes?

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: The contracting
24 issues, has this been something that you're just
25

2 experiencing this year or has this been kind of
3 consistent for some time?

4 RAMA ISSA: No, that has been really
5 consistent.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, thank you.

7 CLARA CALVO (sp?): [Speaking Spanish]

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Speaking Spanish]

9 INTERPRETER: Good afternoon, Chairperson
10 Menchaca and distinguished members of New York City
11 Council Committee of Immigration. My name is Clara
12 Calvo and I'm a member of Cooperative Homecare
13 Associates where I've worked for 17 years. Today our
14 cooperative has more than 30 years in the industry
15 thanks to immigrants now that 90% or 2,100 employees
16 and members are immigrants from different parts of
17 the world. At the beginning I did not think that I
18 would last so many years in this cooperative because
19 I came from working many years in a traditional
20 company with a boss always behind me. Now, I have
21 realized that working in a cooperative is very
22 different and once you gain more responsibility, you
23 help with the development of the other members of the
24 cooperative. We realize the importance of
25 cooperatives and how they help The South Bronx

2 community where I work. CHCA greatly helps many
3 single mothers and women who have suffered from
4 domestic violence. From our perspective, the WCBDI is
5 a very good initiative. It helps the immigrant
6 communities of the City because are often working
7 alone and without rights, but if we unite together
8 with our other partners we are supporting our growth
9 as individuals. More so giving jobs and opportunity
10 to other people. Eventually we get off of public
11 assistance. With the support from the WCBDI, the
12 cooperatives formed also have the potential to grow
13 to the level of CHC and improve the standards in
14 different industries. With the support of the City,
15 our cooperative started a new co-op for the first
16 time in the cleaning industry. Nonetheless, more is
17 always needed. We still need support from all of you,
18 from the organizations, the community, so that
19 everyone knows a cooperative type of business that
20 helped us so much. I am part of the leadership
21 council if NICNOC (sp?) a local trade association of
22 worker co-ops. We've identified other things that the
23 new co-ops need like space, a place where their
24 business can be carried out in a better, more
25 efficient way. Contracting with City entities is also

2 a dream that the co-oper's want to realize. For that
3 reason I am here, first, to give you thanks for
4 bringing us this far. And secondly, so that you do
5 not forget us and continue in helping these needs we
6 still have. We hope to be in touch with you to be
7 able to maximize your support to other immigrants and
8 small business owners.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Gracias.

10 SUSANA PERALTA: [Speaking Spanish]

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Speaking Spanish]

12 INTERPRETER: And you're hearing me again.

13 Distinguished members of the Committee on
14 Immigration. My name is Susana Peralta. I am a member
15 of the Childcare Cooperative Beyond Care and I'm also
16 the sub treasurer of the organization Cooperatives
17 united for Sunset Park. I come here today bringing
18 the voice of my colleagues in the cooperative
19 movement, as we believe that New York City can be a
20 model for creating economic opportunities for all
21 people regardless of their place of origin. To
22 achieve this dream our cooperative movement is
23 working every single day to generate opportunities
24 for personal economic development for the immigrant
25 community. My cooperative, Beyond Care, and my

2 organization cusp (sic) and the Center for Family
3 Life support women and men entrepreneurs to develop
4 their business, management and leadership skills. And
5 initiate cooperative business. In addition, we create
6 space for dialogue and coexistence to generate that
7 cohesion our neighborhoods need to thrive. Thus, we
8 have seen the personal, professional transformation
9 of many of our colleagues who come to the United
10 States looking for a better life their families. My
11 story is an example of how the cooperative business
12 can transform lives. In 1994 I came to New York City
13 from my native Mexico with nothing in my pocket,
14 fleeing poverty I was facing in my country. The first
15 years were very difficult, I was taking care of my
16 three young children and my husband provided the only
17 income in my family. I decided to start working. For
18 many years I worked as a super market cashier with a
19 salary of \$5.00 per hour. Long working hours and
20 exploitative working conditions. In 2008 I decided to
21 learn English as a second language and I approached
22 the Center for Family Life. There, the idea of
23 starting a childcare cooperative came by. I became
24 interested in that, and this is how we started Beyond
25 Care Childcare Cooperative. For a period of one year,

2 we met three times a week to develop the cooperative.

3 We received training in business management and in

4 technical nanny skills. After one and a half years,

5 working on developing my cooperative, I got my first

6 job as a professional nanny and there I saw the

7 results of my education. I started earning a living

8 wage, receiving better treatment as a worker and a

9 reasonable work schedule. Now, due to that income

10 from my nanny jobs I have had the opportunity to save

11 in case of any family emergencies. Now I am someone

12 who knows their worker rights. For all of this I

13 would like to ask the City Council to continue to

14 financially support the Worker Cooperative Business

15 Development Initiative which makes possible the

16 creation of opportunities for our immigrant

17 community. We would also ask the City Council to

18 connect us with training and resources for our

19 movement and never stop listening to our family needs

20 so we can stay in our neighborhoods and not be

21 displaced by predatory housing policies. If you

22 support our movement in this way, our immigrant

23 community will continue to invest in our

24 neighborhoods to create a more just and prosperous

25 New York City. Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank
3 you to this panel. And for the last panel, if you
4 rose your hand, come on up and I think we're going to
5 have enough chairs for all of you. I want to thank
6 everyone for their patience and for working with us
7 to ensure that everybody who wanted to speak, spoke.
8 For leaving testimony if you were not able to speak
9 and for your courage to speak truth to power. This
10 budget will reflect the values of this City and
11 that's coming through you as service providers,
12 that's coming through you as members of our community
13 who are getting served by the community. And those
14 who are not getting served by this community or this
15 City. So I want to say thank you so much for being
16 here today to represent. So, we'll start on our left
17 right over here. Introduce yourself and make sure
18 that the light is on before you speak and you can
19 speak right into the mic. Thanks again and this will
20 be our final panel.

21 BABI ULELA (sp?): Good afternoon Chair
22 Menchaca and thank you to the City Council for
23 hearing my testimony today. I'm Babi Ulela. I'm an
24 asylee from Uganda who won my asylum case with the
25 help of the New York City Antiviolence (SIC) Project.

2 I identify as a lesbian, a visual artist and an
3 activist. My art focuses on LGBTI issues. In Uganda,
4 2009 the anti-homosexuality bill was passed and it
5 was tabled in 2009 and it became a bill in 2013 which
6 put my life and other gay activists and gay people in
7 my country at risk. When I came to the U.S. in 2015 I
8 had no way to start off with asylum case.

9 Accidentally I met my lawyer, my legal advisor
10 Christina Pena on one the exhibition shows. She has
11 been there with me since 2015, applying for the
12 asylum processes is not an easy thing going forth and
13 on more than 10 times. Listening to my story, my
14 worst story, things that have happened to me as an
15 individual way back home. She took me through wait,
16 the process wasn't very easy, but I'm grateful I went
17 through it through her. And the reason why I'm here
18 is to say that AVP really needs support from the
19 City, New York Council funds because they really help
20 us immigrants. When we come here in country have no
21 way of applying the asylum case itself, even paying
22 the legal attorney. It's a lot of money but they do
23 it for free. I also want to talk about they help us
24 in a lot of things. I'm a little bit nervous, but I'm
25 trying to put myself up. They, when I talk about

2 escort, they take us, taking their clients to the
3 immigration court which is very helpful as an
4 individual. I don't know how I would do it as a
5 person in case they hadn't escorted me to the
6 immigration courts which takes a lot of time and it
7 takes a lot of patience to kind of stand with us. I
8 feel like it's very important for these
9 organizations, they support us emotionally, they
10 support us in every little thing that we really need
11 when we come in the United States of America. I think
12 that is what I have to say.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much
14 for your testimony, for your experience and that
15 courage just to walk us through exactly what AVP and
16 other organizations are doing for our community and
17 especially our LGBT community as well. So thank you
18 so much for that. I heard that today and we had the
19 other panel and it's something that I can connect to
20 as well, but nothing is more powerful than someone
21 who has gone through the system, understands what is
22 needed and can demand from the City. We have the
23 power to make these decisions, to be able to bring in
24 resources.

25 BABI ULELA: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So thank you so
3 much for your testimony today.

4 BABI ULELA: Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

6 PERSEPHONE THAN: Good afternoon. Thank
7 you, Chair Menchaca and the committee on immigration
8 for convening this hearing today. I am Persephone
9 Than, the Associate Director of Immigration and
10 Policy at the Asian American Federation. We represent
11 our network of over 60 member organizations and their
12 work in health and human services, education,
13 economic development, civic participation and social
14 justice. Specifically we are here on behalf of the
15 Asian immigrants of New York City. Overall, Asians
16 make up 15% of the City's population. Among this
17 group about 7 in 10 were born abroad making
18 immigration issues particularly salient for our
19 community. There are three areas I want to highlight
20 for you today and four recommendations. One, Asian
21 immigrants need protection and guidance in the form
22 of adequately funded, accessible immigrant legal
23 services. In New York City, 95% of Asian children
24 have at least one immigrant parent. For comparison,
25 60% of Hispanic children have at least one immigrant

2 parent. Two, the City must stand by and honor our
3 immigrant sanctuary values. Immigrant workers are
4 often uniquely vulnerable due to the fact there is
5 such limited English proficiency, and low wage
6 employment. It is critical that the City considers
7 this when engaging with civil issues such as the
8 recent push for increase e-bike enforcement which
9 includes ticketing and e-bike confiscation.

10 Additionally, under employment due to the lack of the
11 English language skills is a key contributor to
12 poverty in the Asian immigrant community. Three, the
13 Asian community is drastically underrepresented in
14 receiving City contracts for social service agencies.
15 Only 1.4% of contract dollars from City social
16 service agencies went to programs run by Asian led
17 community organizations. For these reasons, and
18 others, we urge the Committee on Immigration to
19 continue to invest in their immigrant communities by
20 considering the four following recommendations. One,
21 invest in overburdened, under resourced Asian led
22 community organizations to develop their expertise on
23 immigration issues and build partnerships with a
24 variety of legal assistance organizations and
25 programs. Two, ensure the city lives up to our

2 immigrant sanctuary values by protecting immigrant
3 workers. Three, support community based adult
4 literacy programming to address the gap between
5 community needs and education opportunities for all
6 immigrants. Not just young immigrants. So, we ask
7 that you increase the funding to \$15.4 million for
8 adult literacy education. And lastly, ensure City
9 agencies are given adequate funding to fully
10 implement the language access plans as required by
11 local law 30. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that.
13 Thank you so much.

14 SARIKA SAXENA: Got it. All right, it's
15 on. Thank you so much for sticking through and
16 listening to this last panel. My name is Sara
17 Kessicks and I'm a staff training project manager at
18 New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. We are a
19 civil rights nonprofit. I am civically here on behalf
20 of the Health Justice program. We have two different
21 programs under the Immigrant Health Initiative and
22 really thank the Councils support for continuing to
23 support our programs. After the election I testified
24 here under the oversight committee and we've really
25 seen quite a, as everybody has and has been

2 testifying to the change. And just how intense and
3 complex cases have become. One of the programs that I
4 lead is, well we call it undocucare. It connects
5 people who are undocumented, uninsured and seriously
6 ill to immigration representation with the goal of
7 attaining their health goal which always requires
8 insurance. So, we've had some really complex cases in
9 terms of people who are undocumented and
10 incapacitated where they are in guardianship
11 proceedings and this is really, a lot of other urgent
12 health issues which really can't be serviced anywhere
13 else and I end up getting very complex cases. Which
14 under this administration have become even more
15 urgent and really, there's no word, but high stress.
16 Right, just the level of needs are just highlighted
17 by somebody who is undocumented and incapacitated.
18 This one case after I started working on it, and this
19 was in Staten Island, the judge was immediately,
20 okay, great, you know after we started discussing
21 this case, he said I have 10 other cases and there
22 are no other nonprofits who are doing this and so,
23 and now I've been working on trying to, with my
24 limited capacity trying to advise on those other
25 issues. Which becomes difficult when you have

2 somebody who is undocumented, they're whole family is
3 undocumented. And then trying to go through the whole
4 guardianship proceeding. Lastly, just want to talk
5 about we also are working in health and detention
6 issues to expose the inadequate healthcare, and the
7 lack of healthcare in immigrations jails. I did want
8 to just really quickly underscore what a lot of my
9 colleagues earlier were saying in terms of the
10 criminal carve out. It really seems very unjust and
11 I'm really glad that you've taken such a forceful
12 attempt at getting some transparency on that. The
13 reason I wanted, sorry, really quickly, just really
14 underscore that is because the impacts of limiting
15 that representation also impacts other services that
16 would be available to people, right, so for example
17 once we got NYFUP in detentions centers we were able
18 to get a lot of information about the inadequacies
19 and the issues in detention in terms of the health
20 exposed and so the City has been a leader on that and
21 just to continue to push everyone to see what a huge
22 issue that could become from so many different
23 angles. And not just, it's obviously the
24 representation which is super important. So also the

2 other issues that come to light from there. Thank
3 you. so, I really quickly...

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Thank
5 you for that.

6 SARIKA SAXENA: Want to say we're asking
7 for enhancement given the complex issues and
8 everything. Thanks.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. From the
10 Health Initiative?

11 SARIKA SAXENA: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

13 LAUREN REESE: Hello. My name is Lauren
14 Reese. I am a supervising attorney with the New York
15 Legal Assistance Group. I'm going to keep this very
16 quick, I promise because I know it's been a long day.
17 I want to thank the Council for convening this
18 committee meeting. We've been very proud at NYLAG to
19 partner with the Council and the City on a number of
20 different legal services issues and programs. There
21 are a few areas that we've identified as currently in
22 need of enhanced support from the City. First of all,
23 we're hoping that the City will be able to expand
24 capacity to take on complex immigration cases that
25 are not in removal right now. With the intention of

2 catching people before they are in that system and
3 preventing it all together. It's a more efficient use
4 of resources and we hope that that'll be considered
5 as many dollars previously devoted to that have been
6 moved to removal. In addition, we hope that the City
7 will enhance capacity to take cases for immigrants
8 who are in removal, but are not in detention. NYFUP
9 is a fantastic program and we really applaud the City
10 for having broken ground on that universal
11 representation, but there are many, many immigrants
12 in removal. Not detained, who also requiring help and
13 we hope that you'll see that as a distinct issue from
14 the cases not in removal and also requiring
15 significant attention. And then we'd just like to
16 echo things that have already been discussed such as
17 increased capacity for helping minors, children both
18 in removal and out of removal who are undocumented.
19 And assistance for low wage immigrant workers. And in
20 terms of policy issues, not necessarily related to
21 increasing funding, we also want to echo our concerns
22 with the criminal carve out. We would like to be able
23 to present meritorious cases on behalf of anyone who
24 has them regardless of their past which may or may
25 not be extremely sympathetic when you really delve

2 into the facts and move past the paper. And finally,
3 we hope that the Council will work with the City and
4 the state to keep ICE out of New York Courts. Thank
5 you very much for your leadership and assistance.

6 TERI LAWSON: Good afternoon. Hi. Thank
7 you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Teri
8 Lawson. I'm the Director of Family and Immigration
9 Unit at Bronx Legal Services, The Bronx Office of
10 Legal Services NYC. I also co-lead The Bronx
11 Immigration Partnership, a growing collaboration of
12 legal and social services providers seeking to
13 increase services for residents in The Bronx around
14 their immigration related needs. First I would like
15 to thank the Council for its enduring commitment to
16 funding organizations with deep roots in their
17 communities like one of our partners who is here with
18 us today, Garifuna Community Services. And with the
19 City's leadership and funding we have been able to
20 listen closely to the voices of the communities that
21 we serve. And get their guidance when developing
22 immigration related programs. And to that end, we are
23 asking, on behalf of The Bronx Immigration
24 Partnership for \$300,000 from the City Council for
25 the 16 partners that make up The Bronx Immigration

2 Partnership. Second, in honor and recognition of the
3 City Councils leadership around immigration, we urge
4 the City Council, the Committee on Immigration, and
5 the Mayor's Office, and we're grateful for Mr. Martin
6 for staying until the end. To eliminate the
7 restrictions on immigration related services for
8 persons involved with the criminal legal system.
9 These restrictions that treat people differently
10 based on their histories have devastating ripple
11 effects on the City's record of supporting its
12 immigrant populations. As we have seen with ICE in
13 the courts, there is a very real chilling effect when
14 the City and state fail to dispel fears that there
15 will be dire consequences when accessing the courts,
16 legal services and social services. In our current
17 climate, messaging is everything. And when the
18 message gets out, that if you are arrested, you
19 cannot go to a free provider, there will be a
20 tremendous decrease in the number of people seeking
21 our services. A result directly contrary to the
22 City's goal of ensuring access to high quality legal
23 representation. This is a set up for low income
24 communities and immigrants. In The Bronx, and
25 elsewhere, desperate immigrants who feel that they

2 have no alternatives, will resort to non-attorneys
3 and other bad actors who charge them hundreds and
4 thousands of dollars to legalize their status and
5 keep their families together. Lastly, I just want to
6 quickly close by asking that any funding continue to
7 be flexible, stay flexible, become more flexible and
8 responsive to our communities as possible. There is a
9 real need, as my colleagues have said for money, for
10 defensive and affirmative cases which become more
11 complicated every day. And lastly, we just ask that
12 being able to report more than one form of relief per
13 individual on our grants, is critical to ensuring
14 that all immigration options are explored for
15 families. Thank you.

16 GLORIA FLORES: [Speaking Spanish]

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes]

18 [Speaking Spanish]

19 GLORIA FLORES: [Speaking Spanish]

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes]

21 [Speaking Spanish]

22 GLORIA FLORES: [Speaking Spanish]

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Speaking Spanish]

24 GLORIA FLORES: [Speaking Spanish]

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Speaking Spanish]

2 SUSANNA SAUL: Hi. So I can summarize
3 briefly, the previous speaker. I will try my best, it
4 was very quick. Thank you so much, I am the director
5 of Garifuna Community Services. We were founded in
6 2014. We are a human rights organization assisting
7 people of Garifuna background who come over the
8 border from Guatemala, Honduras and many other
9 countries. We need help to present our cases for
10 asylum. We are members of other organizations
11 including The Bronx Immigration Partnership. We
12 connect people to services, basic fundamental
13 services like medicine, food, clothing. But, people
14 need help navigating these systems. We need support
15 from the IP. We need legal services. There is also a
16 huge need to help people with the Garifuna language,
17 Spanish is not their native language and so they need
18 help preparing their cases to present to lawyers in
19 Spanish. They need to know which documents are
20 needed. They also need the capacity to work. Many are
21 professionals in their home countries. They have a
22 desperate need for attorneys. Many of them enter the
23 United States and are fitted with ankle bracelets and
24 they have to pay bail, but they can't pay because
25 they can't work. Okay and...

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposes] Thank
3 you. So, if you have that written we'll take that
4 written as well and so we can get to our final. Do
5 you also have testimony that you're presenting?

6 SUSANNA SAUL: I also have my own
7 testimony as well so if you want to read that.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Oh. We want to hear
9 that as well. Okay. Thank you.

10 SUSANNA SAUL: Okay. So thank you so much
11 Chair Menchaca.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Absolutely, thank
13 you.

14 SUSANNA SAUL: And the Committee on
15 Immigration. My name is Susana Saul. I'm a managing
16 attorney at Her Justice. It's a nonprofit
17 organization that stands with women living poverty.
18 We offer free legal services through a pro bono first
19 model. Meaning that we leverage the power of New York
20 City's law firms to provide over 3,000 women with
21 legal services per year in the areas of family,
22 divorce and immigration law. And our immigration
23 practice focuses on relief under the Violence Against
24 Women Act, VAWA. But, in the past year we've
25 dramatically increased our outreach efforts to

2 isolated immigrant communities that do not have
3 access to quality, free immigration legal services.

4 And that's the point I want to emphasize today is the
5 importance of early legal intervention, and legal
6 screening to prevent the complex removal cases that
7 we see later on. Lack of access, as you know, to
8 information and resources in immigration communities
9 is leading to a climate of fear. It's preventing many
10 people from accessing legal services. Rumors abound,
11 but the fear is real and it's rational because
12 enforcement by ICE is increasing in New York City.

13 And ICE actions in the courts in the City are adding
14 to the message that our City's institutions are not
15 safe places to access help. And so low income
16 immigrants in these areas are not seeking help at
17 all, or they are seeking help from people engaged in
18 the unauthorized practice of law. They're paying for
19 unscrupulous attorneys who are charging thousands of
20 dollars for services that are going to put them at
21 further risk of removal. And those who are at highest
22 risk, are those with criminal convictions who may
23 still be eligible for immigration relief. Indeed many
24 of our VAWA clients have criminal convictions and
25 we're still able to get them relief. And so many

2 immigrant communities still do not have links to
3 quality, free, legal immigration services and we need
4 more resources to enable legal services
5 organizations, to train community groups and do know
6 your rights presentations to prevent people from the
7 fast track to removal that's happening right now. So
8 thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And we totally hear
10 that. And you have a larger testimony.

11 SUSANNA SAUL: I do.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. And we
13 want to reach out to you again and talk a little bit
14 more in depth about some of those cases. We want to
15 take some of these cases as we talk about in rooms
16 with administration and I think you'll be able to be
17 helpful for that as well.

18 SUSANNA SAUL: Yes. Absolutely, thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank
20 you.

21 KATELYN HOSEY: Thank you. So, my name is
22 Katelyn Hosey. I am a public policy associate with
23 LiveOn New York. LiveOn New York is a base of more
24 than 100 community based organizations that provide
25 senior services throughout the five boroughs. What we

2 are coming here to talk about today is the fact that
3 what it means to be an older New Yorkers is
4 constantly evolving. In New York City, by 2020, the
5 majority of older New Yorkers will be non-native
6 born. The demographic trends that are important to
7 note of a growing and diversifying senior population
8 will mean increased demand and the increase important
9 of cultural and linguistic competency for New York
10 senior service providers. The availability of
11 services is critical for older immigrants as the
12 population faces increased barriers with two thirds
13 of immigrant seniors speaking English less than very
14 well. And immigrant seniors being 1.5 times as likely
15 as other native born seniors to live in poverty. This
16 is on top of the other complex challenges of growing
17 old in New York today. Despite these challenges,
18 older New Yorkers are contributing to the strength of
19 our communities through civic engagement,
20 volunteerism, care giving for younger generations as
21 well as their peers. Unfortunately, a lack of funding
22 in the senior service network puts this population at
23 risk. The underfunding for the Department for the
24 Aging has been chronic for years. And this is an
25 important access point for immigrant seniors as the

2 community based service organizations in their
3 communities are a trusted source of information.
4 Despite the funding increases, one last year for the
5 Department for the Aging, the years of stagnation
6 that has led to staff burnout, growing wait lists and
7 risk of insolvency for nonprofit service providers
8 especially the smaller community based service
9 providers that often serve immigrant populations. It
10 is imperative that increase investment be made in the
11 Department for the Aging to serve this diverse cohort
12 with cultural competency as is deserved. Really
13 quickly, a couple of specific funding asks related to
14 this. Administration has acknowledged that the need
15 for senior centers and has agreed to invest \$10
16 million over the next three years of new additional
17 funding. We would love to see that expedited in two
18 years as we know the need for service providers is
19 great now. Additionally, we are requesting \$12.1
20 million for home and congregate meals so that the
21 reimbursement rate can be increased. So that Kosher
22 and Halal meals, culturally competent meals that are
23 mandated are able to be fully funded and do not
24 result in a deficit for those providers as is
25 currently happening. In total, we really are

2 supportive of the human services contract changes
3 that are happening and we hope that those continue to
4 be expedited so that nonprofits are fully reimbursed
5 for the services that they are providing and are able
6 to continue to serve the populations such as
7 immigrant seniors and of the other great services
8 that have been explicated earlier today. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. You are
10 our final speaker. And I want to thank this panel,
11 this final panel. Again, I want to thank everyone and
12 their patience. I want to thank this incredible team
13 here that has supported not just me, but this entire
14 committee in this work that we were able to do today.
15 To listen to all of you. Our unit head in the finance
16 department, Carillion Francisco, financial analyst,
17 Jun Lee. Committee Council Iliana Porta, policy
18 analyst Elizabeth Cronk. Our community liaison, Cio
19 Min Zau. My Chief of Staff Veronica Villareal-Leon.
20 And all of the members of our essential staff. You
21 have to know that there's an incredible team of folks
22 working in the City Council to analyze and understand
23 what's happening right now. And I hope that you got a
24 sense about everything, not just from listening to
25 yourselves in your testimony. We heard from our

2 seniors, we heard from our LGBT community, we heard
3 from our youth who spoke for themselves, from
4 Dreamers. We heard from service providers that are
5 providing legal services, that are providing
6 education services that are providing health
7 services. We're hearing from you and we're hearing
8 that we are deviating from a very, very core list of
9 values that make New York City, New York City. And so
10 that is a huge concern. And so what I heard too from
11 legal service contracts, so that we started with
12 flexibility and now we've moved away from
13 flexibility. We started with a real commitment to
14 ensure that everyone gets access and so now we're
15 hearing that some communities are not being invited.
16 Or that we're leaving some communities behind because
17 of the cultural competency around them. And I said
18 this earlier to MOIA, but we will not behind our
19 victories and our successes. That is beautiful, but
20 that is not what's going to keeping us from moving
21 examining ourselves as a City when we're failing. And
22 we have a lot of work to do in the City. And so much
23 of that opportunity is in our decision making power.
24 The Council has a lot of power and we're going to
25 examine how we can move these issues. And where we

2 can't, like in the state for example, we heard from
3 Miss Sibri here today, who wants us to fight for the
4 DREAM Act in the state, we will do that. And we're
5 going to do that with the voice of the City Council
6 because we are the voice of the people in our
7 neighborhoods. Whether you're documented or not. We
8 represent your voice and that is the most beautiful
9 thing that I think we can take away from today. That
10 we're going to keep fighting. So, thank you for your
11 courage in speaking about criminal carve out or about
12 your constituency that you represented today. This is
13 the beginning. We're in the preliminary budget season
14 right now and I'm confident that we're going to make
15 our voices heard, and get to the bottom of a lot of
16 things that were revealed today in, not only in
17 concern, but also in the power of what New York City
18 is. A city of immigrants. We are the backbone of this
19 community and we're going to continue to fight,
20 period. So thank you so much. And we will now adjourn
21 this hearing.

22 [gavel]

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1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION 203

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 26, 2018