

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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March 20, 2019
Start: 2:00 p.m.
Recess: 4:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Carlos Menchaca,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Daniel Dromm
Mathieu Eugene
Ark Gjonaj
Robert F. Holden
I.Daneek Miller
Kalman Yeger

A P P E A R A N C E S

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Jesse Laymon
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

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United Neighborhood Houses of New York

Ira Yankwitt
New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy

Caroline Iosso
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

Guillermo Rodriguez
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

Venessa Dell
Make the Road New York

Zoe Levine
The Bronx Defenders

Ellen Pachnanda
Brooklyn Defender Services

Hasan Shafiqullah
Legal Aid

Mario Russell
Catholic Charities

Howard Shih
Asian American Federation

Maya Gurung
Adhikaar

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Tsering Lama
Adhikaar

Mae Lee
The Chinese Progressive Association

Dr. Venessa Salcedo
The Union Community Health Center Coalition
Against Smoking in Immigrant Communities

Naumi Feldman
Charles B. Wang Community Health Center and
Coalition Against Smoking in Immigrant
Communities

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

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Chinese American Planning Council

Kelly Sabatino
Coalition Against Smoking in Immigrant
Communities
Yoojin Kim
Korean Community Services

Danny Salim
Arab-American Family Support Center

Tasfia Rahman
Coalition for Asian American Children and
Families

Chisato Horikawa
JASSI - Japanese American Social Services

Jessica Franco
We are United

Greg Waltman
G1Quantum

Zach Mallick on behalf of Kerry Brodie
Emma's Torch

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Gavel] Thank you for being here today. We have a full house and we are really excited to start this conversation in this Preliminary Budget hearing and the work that we do everyday in service to our immigrants should be spoken to. It should be talked about, but this conversation is a budget conversation and so, we are really trying to understand in this budget from the Administration what are we doing? How are we doing it? How much is it going to cost? And how we are going to make that happen in this next years budget. And so, thank you so much for being here today.

Joining us here from the immigration committee is my Brooklyn colleague Council Member Kalman Yeger, and today we will focus on the Administration's funding for services and programs that serve immigrant New Yorkers. We will assess the adequacy, the effectiveness and the transparency in serving our immigrant communities.

The work that we are going to be seeing done by you all as advocates, we will hear from the public testimony component. We are not going to be hearing any public testimony today, in this portion, but at 4:00 we will hear from the public.

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2 We will hear from so many of you including Day
3 Laborers who are going to kick us off. So, I am
4 really excited that you are hear today in full force.
5 Thank you for being here.

6 So, every year I stress that immigrants make up a
7 fabric of our city. The recently published annual
8 report from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
9 really lays out a lot of that work that is connected
10 to the immigration populations and so, we are really
11 excited that they have published that report and we
12 are reviewing it. It just got released this week.
13 Yet the Trump Administrations Anti-Immigrant Agenda
14 continues, even with that good work. Continues to
15 wreak havoc on our immigrants and their families,
16 including immigrants in our very own city, in our
17 boroughs and our neighborhoods.

18 In October of 2018, the Trump Administration
19 proposed its rule to expand public charge threatening
20 to directly harm nearly half a million immigrant New
21 Yorkers and inspiring fear and confusion in countless
22 others. There are over 150,000 dreamers in New York
23 City, yet Washington still has not made a decision
24 regarding the deferred action for childhood arrivals,
25 DACA. Immigrants with temporary protected status

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2 TPS, of which there are about 15,000 in New York City
3 continue to face uncertainty every single day of
4 their life.

5 Additionally, for immigrants who are detained,
6 the video conferencing of their hearings effectively
7 diminishes their access to legal counsel, that's due
8 process. That is something that is guaranteed in the
9 Constitution and their ability to have a full and
10 fair hearing. These are just a few of the threats
11 that are part of a larger set of policies that are
12 designed to terrorize our immigrant communities.

13 And I will say this, the Trump Administration has
14 not been effective at moving legislation. They have
15 not been a productive Administration, but where they
16 have been productive is in the terrorizing of our
17 immigrant communities through their ability to
18 control ICE and those operations impacting our
19 immigrant communities. This systematic assault on
20 our immigrant communities is why it is all the more
21 important that the Administration, our New York City
22 Administration and the New York City Council continue
23 to lead the way in making sure that our most
24 vulnerable residents and their needs are met, and
25 that they are met holistically. And as a testimony

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2 that you will hear in the public panels tell you that
3 these immigrant communities and the needs and the
4 workforce development that they need in the fair and
5 safe working conditions and the housing and the adult
6 literacy and the health care and the education, all
7 of that in addition to legal service, are all part of
8 the things that we can do as a city to address those
9 needs.

10 So, I am proud to that the New York Immigrant
11 Family Unity Project NYIFUP, a council funded
12 initiative, providing universal legal representation
13 for immigrants facing deportation is an example of
14 this commitment. So, this project now serves as a
15 model for other cities across the nation who have
16 also committed funds to protect due process. The
17 work that they are doing right now is impacting other
18 cities so that can built their NYIFUP proposals.

19 As we move forward, we must continue to use the
20 budget to serve our immigrant New Yorkers as they
21 face ongoing challenges.

22 In 2018, the Council held hearings on how the
23 city supports immigrant parents of children ages zero
24 to five. The impacts of the Administrations family
25 separation policy on New York City abolishing ICE,

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2 LGBTQ immigrant youth in New York City, language
3 access implementation plans. The impact of the
4 proposed public charge rule on New York City, and the
5 other public hearing we held was on the need for
6 legal representation and immigration courts under
7 Trump.

8 We covered many topics, but we do not see these
9 issues addressed in the Fiscal 2020 Preliminary
10 Budget. However, the Preliminary Budget does include
11 \$25 million for the NYC Care Program, which proposes
12 to increase access to the city's public health
13 insurance option, MetroPlus and ensuring that anyone
14 ineligible for insurance has direct access to
15 services at H and H locations. While this is a step
16 in the right direction, we still do not see baseline
17 funding for adult literacy and the immigrant health
18 initiative. Items that the Council has been fighting
19 to add into the Adopted Budget every single year. We
20 also need additional funding to support Census 2020
21 work including dedicated funding for the community-
22 based organizations who will be on the ground driving
23 this grassroots effort and they are the ones that are
24 going to know the hard to reach New Yorkers, our
25 CBO's. They know our communities best and they are

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2 the ones that are holding the trust in our City of
3 New York.

4 Additionally, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant
5 Affairs recently released its second annual report,
6 that I just mentioned, and while this report
7 indicates that there are increased needs facing our
8 immigrant communities, there are no new asks that the
9 Mayor has made. There are no new asks in this
10 Budget. And so, how is this possible? Robust
11 funding is essential for tacking inequality and
12 building stability for our immigrant families. If we
13 are to ensure that New York City is a true sanctuary
14 city, and I know that that struggle is on a daily
15 basis something that we do. We struggle towards a
16 sanctuary city and this commitment must be reflected
17 in the budget. We can not expect our communities to
18 come out without getting funding and I look forward
19 to hearing from the Administration represented by the
20 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs on the plan on
21 how we get there through the questions that we're
22 going to be asking.

23 And so, before I move forward, I just want to
24 also let you know that our Bronx colleague Mark
25 Gjonaj. Council Member Mar Gjonaj is here today as

1 well and I want to say thank you to our financial
2 analyst Jin Lee, she is part of the Finance Unit and
3 she will be leaving us, this is her last day, so we
4 are really thankful. She has done a lot with her
5 team to prepare for today and so, I want to say thank
6 you for your service. A lot of what you are going to
7 see today has been prepared by her and we couldn't be
8 the strong committee that we are, especially in this
9 budget hearing without her, thank you Jin.

11 Unit Head Crilhien Francisco, our Committee
12 Counsel Harbonnie Owsha[SP?], Policy Analyst
13 Elizabeth Krunk[SP?], Community Liaison Stella Chin,
14 and my Chief of Staff Sociata Ming and my
15 Communications Director Tony Toretto.

16 We are fueled by an incredible team here at the
17 City Council for this Committee. So, with that, I
18 want to ask the Commissioner for the Mayor's Office
19 of Immigrant Affairs, Ms. Bitta Mostofi to come up
20 and her team, whoever will be with her team.

21 I had a quick conversation before the hearing
22 started and I understand you have written testimony
23 and so, I just want to let you know we have the
24 testimony, super thankful for that. We are going to
25 be working diligently to comb through it. But

1 because there are no new needs that you are
2 presenting to the Council and we have received the
3 annual report, I'm going to ask that we go right into
4 questions with an opportunity for you to have a quick
5 statement to introduce yourself and to the world
6 that's listening and then we have some questions.
7 But I also understand you have to leave a little
8 early, so I want to make sure that we get you out on
9 time. Thank you for your cooperation and we look
10 forward to talking.
11

12 BITTA MOSTOFI: Good afternoon and Happy Nowruz
13 or Persian New Year, today marks the day. So, happy
14 to join with all of you in celebrating and thank you
15 to Chair Menchaca and Members of the Committee on
16 Immigration. As the Chair noted, I have submitted
17 written testimony, we've also published this really
18 incredible annual report that speaks to immigrant New
19 York and the work of the office over the past year.
20 We have extra copies for folks who are interested
21 that we can share, and it is also available on line.

22 I think you rightly now that this has been a
23 difficult time for our communities with countless and
24 endless attacks from everything from public charge
25 proposal to the end and termination of TPS and DACA.

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2 Both the city as well as providers throughout our
3 city have taken leadership roles and really stepping
4 up and being responsive to this context. Before we
5 go into questions, the additional note I would say,
6 is we have done this in parallel to ensuring that we
7 have simultaneously been moving towards the full
8 realization of a vision of a city where all
9 immigrants can thrive regardless of their status or
10 English proficiency. So, we're happy to talk
11 specifically about some of that work in the Q&A but
12 we'll turn it over to you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much
14 Commissioner and we want to swear you in as we enter
15 the Q&A process. Thank you.

16 CLERK: Please raise your right hand. Do you
17 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing
18 but the truth in your testimony before this Committee
19 and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

20 BITTA MOSTOFI: I do.

21 CLERK: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. So, I'm going
23 to start with some opening questions and I guess the
24 real conundrum here for us is the report really
25 highlighted a lot of the work that has happened in

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2 the city and what I saw most telling across the
3 charts were the connection to status and the need
4 that connects to status for our undocumented
5 neighbors and the need was highest always with our
6 undocumented brothers and sisters that live in the
7 city. And so, where there any new needs that you saw
8 as Commissioner that you presented to the Office of
9 Management and Budget OMB, but did not receive as an
10 affirmation if you will, in the Preliminary Budget
11 that led us to no new needs as the final Mayor's
12 presentation to us a month or so ago?

13 BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure, so for point of
14 clarification, I would say a couple of things that
15 may have gone missed. So, we did throughout the last
16 year as the Council knows and you held a hearing on
17 this, do incredible amounts of work in the
18 implementation of Local Law 30 and increasing and
19 broadening the language access work of the city.
20 That's so critical particularly for undocumented
21 populations who have greater rates of limited English
22 proficiency and in accessing sort of the ability to
23 increase services around interpretation and
24 translation, working with our agency partners
25 additional support was allocated to provide increased

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2 services and coordination in Local Law 30
3 Implementation. Mainly in the shape of additional
4 staff to support it.

5 Additionally, we are happy to say we've in
6 partnership with the Office of Civil Justice have
7 been supporting our domestic violence work in
8 providing immigration legal services to folks who
9 come in through the Family Justice Center at about
10 \$500,000. That money got baselined this year, so
11 there is an additional \$500,000 that we will be
12 moving towards allocating towards immigration legal
13 support.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And these are all shifts
15 within the budget right, so you're moving money from
16 one place to another, this is new money.

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: New money.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, I get where it landed
19 for the work for Local Law 30, where did that money
20 come from? So, what I heard you say was it's part of
21 the kind of work to comply with Local Law 30,
22 especially for limited English proficiency New
23 Yorkers that you announced new money for?

24 BITTA MOSTOFI: But there was additional staff to
25 help coordinate service of increased translation and

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2 interpretation working with agency partners at DCAS
3 to implement those where our contracts are.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And what date was that?
5 When did that happen?

6 BITTA MOSTOFI: When the budget was introduced.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. Thank you for
8 clarifying. I heard that this has already kind of
9 been implemented. You're saying as part of the
10 Preliminary Budget; this already included this work
11 that you just --

12 BITTA MOSTOFI: This is a new allocation.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: This is a new allocation,
14 a request?

15 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it, thank you.

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: And obviously highlighting need
18 for increased immigration legal services. One of the
19 ways that that was addressed was looking at
20 baselining \$500,000 that we previously allocated as I
21 said, through our family justice centers for support
22 for immigrants who receive legal services.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that's a baseline?

24 BITTA MOSTOFI: And that's new baselined money.
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2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, got it. Thank you,
3 those are two notes to have and the Mayor made it
4 very clear from the first minute of his presentation
5 on the budget that there was going to be PEG's. Can
6 you describe a little bit how you understand PEG's to
7 be from your perspective and you being within the
8 Mayor's Office, your budget as we've learned over the
9 years is connected to other agencies and so, how are
10 you thinking about those cuts as Commissioner within
11 the Mayor's Office and your relationship to the other
12 agencies. How does that work? How do you negotiate
13 that?

14 BITTA MOSTOFI: I think as you know, agencies
15 were given are allocated portions of the PEG's and
16 agencies are in the process of working with OMB to
17 identify where they will happen. So, we will stay in
18 close contact with Agencies and OMB as that process
19 is undertaken, but nothing was specifically allocated
20 to us.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, nothing has been
22 allocated from MOIA the Mayor's Office of Immigrant
23 Affairs, okay, and then we're talking about an
24 additional savings of about \$750 million that he is
25 asking agencies and across the board to cut. This is

1 pretty big and so, more than the intention that I
2 just heard, what work have you done so far to
3 understand those cuts? How are you protecting the
4 work that we've been highlighting together in the
5 work that we've done? So, give us a little bit more
6 sense on that because we don't know yet across the
7 board. This is the kind of notes that are coming
8 back from all of the budget hearings, that anybody
9 has a sense about any cuts whatsoever and we're
10 already at the end of our Preliminary Budget process,
11 before the Executive. That's pretty scary.

13 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, I mean, I think I'll have
14 to reiterate what I noted, which is that we're in
15 close conversations with agencies as they're going
16 through this decision making.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And what are those
18 conversation. Tell us a little bit about what those
19 conversations are.

20 BITTA MOSTOFI: Obviously, we want to ensure that
21 the level of service that we're providing, we're able
22 to continue to provide. That we're also able to
23 continue to look at the needs and be flexible in
24 addressing those needs as we see them. That's been
25 the message we've communicated with OMB as well

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2 across programs that we help oversee as well as key
3 initiatives. So, we will continue to do that work,
4 but there hasn't been I should say, final decision
5 making on this front, so it's difficult to give you
6 more without hypothesizing.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: What agencies are you in
8 communication with right now?

9 BITTA MOSTOFI: Primarily with DSS.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: DSS?

11 BITTA MOSTOFI: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, so that's really
13 probably the most funding is held under DSS.

14 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Which I understand is HRA
16 but it's DSS.

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: It's both.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Oh okay, HRA was under the
19 umbrella of DSS?

20 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes, remember the chart.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, I'm trying to
22 visualize it now. I'm trying to share my learning
23 here.

24 Okay, I'm going to move on there because it
25 sounds like this is just the typical stuff that's

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2 happening right now. Everyone is still in
3 negotiations and we don't know that yet either what
4 the cuts are going to be, and I really do hope that
5 you fight for every dollar that goes out to immigrant
6 communities.

7 Okay, so, what are your goals then and priorities
8 for the immigrant communities and for Fiscal Year
9 2020? And anything that you see as really at the top
10 of the priority list?

11 BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure, I mean, I think as we
12 previously noted for us it's really important to
13 continue to monitor what we're seeing in terms of the
14 federal shifts and how they are impacting our
15 communities. One of the obvious key areas and you
16 see this in a discrepancy in the report on service
17 delivery is in the area of health and increased
18 concerns. So, a big focus of ours in the coming year
19 we're very happy to say, is working closely with H&H
20 in the implementation of NYC Care. We've already
21 begun that partnership. MOIA is helping to advise on
22 the programs, as well as to lead on the outreach
23 pieces of it. And so, that will continue to be a
24 huge area of focus for us in making sure that we're
25 chipping away at those disparities on health access

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2 for immigrant New Yorkers. Similarly, we will
3 continue to monitor as I noted, what's happening in
4 the landscape around legal representation. We were
5 very happy to now have this additional half a million
6 allocation. We're continuing to look at what other
7 needs are. How that can help flood and address some
8 of the gaps but we're in ongoing conversations with
9 providers and community service organizations to make
10 sure that we're not missing anything.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, these are kind of
12 topical areas of focus for you as you move forward
13 and —

14 BITTA MOSTOFI: Sorry, I would add one more thing
15 before we go on.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, please.

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: Which is the huge piece of what
18 we've been doing and building on and partnership with
19 you all and others is just increasing the level of
20 education and information for communities. This is a
21 confusing period. It results in people being caught
22 up in increased fraudulent activity and one of the
23 things also that you see in our report, is the
24 disparity in economic income and stability for New
25 Yorkers. And so, we want to make sure that we're

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2 helping through pervasive engagement, education,
3 campaigns, getting information out, we're preventing
4 people from losing important money through some of
5 the fraudulent activity that is undertaken and the
6 predatory and vulnerable kind of populations falling
7 victim to that.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for outlining
9 that. I think that we're going to want to stay close
10 on those items as we move forward. Thank you.

11 We have sort time with the Commissioner, so I
12 want to give opportunities for the Council Members.
13 We're going to put up a clock, if I can get the
14 Sergeant of Arms to do a clock for the questions.
15 Let's do as many rounds as we need to but let's keep
16 our questions focused.

17 We are also joined by Council Member, Finance
18 Chair Dromm and Council Member from Queens, Holden.
19 Okay, first question up is Council Member Gjonaj.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you Chair. It's
21 not enough time to ask all the questions that need to
22 be asked but in particular, I need to hear from you
23 about the PEG cuts. You have not been approached as
24 to what dollar amount should be cut from your budget,
25 I'd like to hear more. Have you had conversations?

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2 If you have, with whom and when? It's a little
3 disturbing to me that a budget for this particular
4 cause which is less than one percent of the overall
5 budget is being cut. I believe it's one percent of
6 the overall budget that we're referring to here and
7 at a time when we're increasing our budget by over \$3
8 billion why there is any cuts going to immigrants is
9 beyond comprehension.

10 More disturbing is the \$4.3 million that's being
11 allocated for Census 2020. That amounts to about
12 \$0.50 per New York City resident. Aside from being
13 able to send out one piece of mail, how are we going
14 to reach our most vulnerable communities, non-English
15 speaking, what's the outreach plan knowing that we
16 have so much to lose that if we don't account for
17 every single resident. And in this report, it
18 doesn't mention or there is not reference to the
19 federal government announcing the question of whether
20 or not you are a citizen or not. I don't see a
21 response as to what this Administration is going to
22 do about the Census question as we move forward.
23 This is truly a difficult and challenging time for
24 all New Yorkers, but it's never been more challenging
25 then for our immigrant population.

BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Stop the clock.

BITTA MOSTOFI: Save my time for later. Thank you, Council Member for the questions. So again, on the PEG, we have not received a particular cut; however, many of the programs that we help oversee and the initiatives of the city that serve immigrant New Yorkers lives at other agencies that have received overarching cuts. So, we are in close conversation with those agencies to help ensure that we don't see impacts on services that were providing immigrant New Yorkers. That we are ensuring that we are able to continue to do the work that we're doing and that we're not taking unnecessary risks in ensuring that the delivery of those services are accomplished. So, that's ongoing conversations that agencies are having about those cuts with OMB. I have reiterated my own concerns across both agencies and with OMB on this and will remain in contact and I'm sure update the Council as decisions are made about where cuts will take place.

COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: By the way, the only place I see an increase here is in MOIA, which is disturbing because that just means same headcount,

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2 but people are getting raises and were cut in vital
3 programs.

4 BITTA MOSTOFI: I'm not sure what that's in
5 reference to but I'm happy to connect and make sure I
6 understand what you are seeing and be responsive to
7 that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: There's a \$49,000
9 increase in MOIA's budget line item, which is only
10 one of several that have been cut and the detail
11 reveals the same headcount but yet there is an
12 increase in PS?

13 BITTA MOSTOFI: So, I don't know what that's
14 referring to. It might be the increase language
15 access coordination work but without seeing it, I
16 can't specifically be responsive to it but as I noted
17 to the Council Member, we did discuss the need for
18 increased language services to make sure that we're
19 effectively implementing Local Law 30, and that was
20 granted.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that's maybe where -

22 BITTA MOSTOFI: That might be it, but I can't
23 speak specifically.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, right, okay.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: And the point I'm making
3 is that we're cutting across the board but yet, the
4 only place I see an increase is in salaries due to
5 the Mayor's headcount and where it gets to a point
6 and we've grown our headcount to a high of 330,000
7 people employed by New York City. While we cut
8 services and to whom the most vulnerable, immigrants.

9 BITTA MOSTOFI: I would just say that really the
10 goal is to increase services and access with the
11 support. So, the way that interpretation and
12 translation services work is that you are able to
13 effectively leverage move that work by having
14 somebody that's receiving the requests and able to
15 process and move them. So, we do see this as an
16 increase in access and service for New Yorkers by
17 increasing interpretation and translation services
18 across programs and outreach. On your question
19 around Census, I would note a couple of things. One,
20 the city has been directly involved with the
21 litigation to ensure that the inclusion of a
22 citizenship question does not happen. We are
23 committed to continuing to do that fight. There is
24 oral argument at the Supreme Court in April, and we
25 look forward to what we all hope is a just

1 affirmation of what the lower court noted, which is
2 that the inclusion of that question should not
3 continue. And as to sort of increase need for
4 outreach and engagement, I think it's very important
5 as we're doing to continue to speak to community
6 members and others to ensure that we are responsive
7 to the needs. As the Council Member knows, I'm happy
8 to have joined the States Complete Count Commission.
9 Part of my role on that Commission is to inform the
10 state budget process and make recommendations as to
11 budget needs to ensure that there is a complete
12 count. There should be a heavy responsibility on the
13 state in ensuring that there is money allocated
14 towards community-based organizations and others to
15 be able to do this outreach. So, we look forward to
16 advocating in that process as well.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: The proposed budget shows
19 only \$4.3 million allocated to the Census, which
20 breaks down to \$0.50 per resident. I couldn't run a
21 campaign on that dollar amount let alone how do I
22 reach the 8.6 million residents to make sure that
23 they register, that they understand the importance of
24 the Census. Let alone, the difficulties of reaching
25 out to the immigrant population, those that are

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2 undocumented and explaining to them that they should
3 not be fearful of the Census and this is actually
4 going to help them more than hurt them. This dollar
5 amount couldn't get out more than a mailer let alone
6 allow for any real follow through or follow up.
7 That's the point that I'm making.

8 BITTA MOSTOFI: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council Member
10 Gjonaj and I want to be cognizant of time, because I
11 know we don't have you here for a long time
12 Commissioner but that is a grave situation were in
13 right now and I stand by those words that were just
14 said. Next questions are coming from Council Member
15 Holden.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you Commissioner
17 for being here. I have a couple of questions. I
18 know we're on the clock, so I will have to do it
19 quickly.

20 I recently met with ISSA director and they were
21 throwing out numbers than you are doing. They said
22 that roughly 90 percent of ICE deportations were for
23 undocumented aliens who were either charged with a
24 crime or had prior convictions. Now, out of nearly
25 \$50 million going into legal services, how much of

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2 this money is appropriated for saving criminals from
3 deportation?

4 BITTA MOSTOFI: So, I'll say a few things here.

5 The first is to say that as our recently released
6 fact sheet indicates and we're happy to share those
7 with others, our team to do an analysis of what ICE
8 arrests and removals have been and look like. I
9 think it's important to note here that ICE has
10 dramatically increased arrests across the city and
11 the Metropolitan area that it covers, over 80 percent
12 since the end of the Obama Administration. I want to
13 note that of that increase, there's been an over 400
14 percent increase in individuals who actually don't
15 have a criminal conviction. So, I think its really
16 important to ensure that the message that ICE is
17 sharing is actually further explained with their own
18 data and we underscore the fact that there are so
19 many families across the city who have not yet fully
20 gone through their process who are very vulnerable at
21 this moment and time and whom with an over rod
22 enforcement operation ICE Is conducting our risk of
23 deportation.

24 We have as a city, proudly struck a balance that
25 we believe allows us to ensure that we're advancing

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2 public safety while maintaining the trust and
3 confidence of our community members and we live in a
4 moment and time where we have the most immigrants
5 we've ever had in a century in our city and we're the
6 safest big city in America. So, we're clearly doing
7 something right on that path. I would say in terms
8 of the allocation of resources, the city does not ask
9 for a break down of somebodies history. The Mayor
10 has noted that where somebody has been convicted of
11 one of the 170 offences on our detainer list, city
12 allocated full representation funds would not go to
13 that representation.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, is if somebody
15 commits multiple felonies or they commit let's say a
16 felony, you'll actually represent them in the courts?

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: So, I'll repeat that the
18 Administration and the City Council have determined
19 that there are a number of violent and serious
20 felonies in which we believe somebody might be a
21 public safety risk. It is in those instances that
22 the Mayor's policy indicates that city allocated full
23 representation for cases should not be afforded.
24 However, we don't otherwise ask providers to indicate
25 to us the histories of their clients.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Alright, because there have been some cases where for instance, Charles Cooper, he is a Liberian war criminal. He was recently and again, they were convicted, at least charged for war crimes and Cooper was part of a regime that killed women and children in vicious ways. He was arrested in 2017 and the NYPD and sanctuary city's policy ended with ICE detainer being disregarded. Luckily, ICE did get him, and he is in for a deportation, but again, I'm getting ISSAS part of it. I don't know have you met with ICE to really go over this because they disputed everything that you're putting out. So, I think there is another side that maybe we can get ICE here. They haven't been invited but I think we might want to hear another side because we're protecting the public obviously from — there is criminal involved here and I'm not really sure that we shouldn't be cooperating to an extend when the criminal are involved. And in fact, I believe that we should cooperate, especially for individuals like Charles Cooper who get out. Or the individual that was arrested multiple times for the murder on the number seven line and shooting the

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2 victim five times as part of a gang member. So,
3 gangs that we're getting into.

4 By the way, Nassau County police and Suffolk
5 police are cooperating with ICE and they see the
6 dramatic decrease in gang related activities and
7 murders. While New York City is starting to see an
8 increase. So, I'm just concerned that the felons,
9 the real Korea criminals, that's being addressed by
10 this Administration.

11 BITTA MOSTOFI: I would simple note a few things.
12 One is to say that public safety is clearly a primary
13 concern and interest of the Administration and
14 everything that we've done has been to ensure that we
15 are effectively doing what advances that interest.
16 That includes ensuring that our immigrant populations
17 feel confident and trusted reporting crimes to us
18 that they feel confident serving as witnesses to
19 crimes that they feel that they are able to advocate
20 on behalf of themselves and seek out their rights.
21 You have a very complicated immigration system and I
22 think the city has struck the right balance as
23 evidenced by our decline in criminal activity in the
24 city and as I noted, the robust and incredible
25 immigration community that we have.

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2 I am happy to talk further with you. We do
3 maintain a line of communication with ICE. That is
4 a certainly appropriate and necessary thing to ensure
5 that there is an open line of communication. I can't
6 speak to the specifics of the cases that you have
7 noted; however, I would point back to the fact that
8 we feel confident in our policies because they are
9 actually working in what we're seeing transpire in
10 our city.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you Commissioner and
12 thank you Council Member Holden for your questions.
13 We will continue with questions. Next on the line is
14 Council Member Dromm and we are also joined by
15 Council Member Mathieu Eugene.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you. Just a little
17 bit in regard to what Council Member Holden was
18 asking you as well. I believe that under the Obama
19 Administration, there was some discretionary
20 enforcement of it meant to have committed a crime and
21 whether or not it was a real threat or danger to the
22 community. Do you know if there has been any uptick
23 in just overall. I mean are these 90 percent that
24 they're saying have a criminal record, are those
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2 criminal records for misdemeanors for jumping the
3 turn style or are they serious felonies?

4 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, thank you for the question.

5 So, that's accurate to say that there was previously

6 a memorandum that laid out discretion that the

7 Administration was abiding by and that discretion was

8 really to hone in on where public safety risks exist

9 and to ensure that what you weren't seeing were

10 individuals who have low level offenses or otherwise

11 may have just simply been undocumented who have

12 family ties and other interests in the United States.

13 You weren't seeing a short of breakage of that family

14 for long term individuals that really don't pose a

15 serious public safety risk. I think as I noted, the

16 overbroad and sort of kind complete, they've

17 completely put that prosecutorial discretion aside.

18 They now have a very overbroad agenda. They do not

19 look at people who have had convictions actually. As

20 I noted an over 400 percent increase in people who

21 have not actually been yet convicted of a crime at

22 all or an offense at all. And in terms of the range

23 of convictions in which they are seeking to

24 potentially deport people, as you noted, it's not

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2 just people who have committed violent or serious
3 offenses who pose real public safety risks.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: I just wonder if they're
5 batching them all in there together. You know, I
6 also did have the opportunity when I was Chair of the
7 Immigration Committee to meet with ICE particularly
8 around the issue of getting ICE trailers off of
9 Rikers Island and I remember they basically laughed
10 at us and they would not come to a public hearing but
11 they did meet with the Speaker at the time to discuss
12 that issue and they told us that we could not remove
13 ICE trailers and the issue of jurisdiction I guess,
14 was one. Obviously, they were wrong, and we were
15 right, and the ICE trailers have been removed from
16 Rikers. So, I find that often times even when we
17 have discussions with ICE that they're not 100
18 truthful in their answers. That's just in my
19 observation with them.

20 BITTA MOSTOFI: I would affirm that by noting of
21 course that recent federal court in other cases have
22 a firm that municipalities actually don't have the
23 authority to hold people pass their release dates and
24 in fact, where a certain cooperation resulted in that
25 happening. That now including on Long Island,

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2 district areas are prohibited from holding people
3 past their release dates and times under the
4 Constitution. So, I think you're accurate to say
5 that and in fact the courts have affirmed that. New
6 York State court decision, I'm being told to affirm.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Well, I was going to ask
8 some things about the Action New York City Plan. Do
9 you currently partner with CBO's and health and
10 hospitals in locations in schools and places like
11 that? Do you have plans to expand this to other
12 sites around other than those locations?

13 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes, hopefully. We are in the
14 process of looking at potential expansion to
15 libraries. We currently operate our New York
16 Citizenship program and libraries. We have a lot of
17 learnings and continued learnings to undertake to
18 understand the need of immigrant New Yorkers as they
19 are coming through the libraries, but this is
20 something that we are looking at and interested in
21 doing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Are you working with TPS
23 recipients also in light of some of the recent
24 decisions that have happened around that issue?
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2 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes, so part of what we've
3 undertaken through our outreach and community
4 engagement work is just ensuring that TPS recipients
5 know how to access legal support through Action NYC.
6 Council Member Eugene has been a great partner in the
7 administration of clinics. Specifically, in your
8 area, thank you for your work on this issue. We have
9 adjusted if you will and kind of finer tuned our
10 hotline. So that as people call, the hotline is able
11 to see sort of the urgency of a case and make sure if
12 you need a doc or renewal or your TPS might be ending
13 that you are prioritized and can see somebody
14 immediately.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Also, in light of a recent
16 court decision regarding special immigrant juvenile
17 status. The first piece of legislation that I passed
18 in the Council was in regard to that and the
19 relationship that ACS has with juveniles in their
20 custody. Have you had an opportunity to discuss with
21 them the implications or the ramifications for the
22 court decision, although it was in our favor. Where
23 they holding off? What were they doing or what is
24 your view on what's going there now?
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2 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, as you know, this is a very
3 recent decision just this week but one that needs
4 great celebration and gratitude towards the legal
5 service providers that brought it. Unjustly, of
6 course the Trump Administration was trying to limit
7 special immigrant juvenile status for older children
8 who are here. I would say that we as you know, in
9 this past year we allocated over \$4 million towards
10 the representation of unaccompanied children. So,
11 increasing the ability to represent these very kids
12 and we are in conversations to ensure that as I
13 believe the court has indicated it is asked to sort
14 of look at cases that had been denied and to revisit
15 or re-adjudicate those. So, we'll maintain
16 conversations with providers to make sure that they
17 have what they need to be able to take these cases.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: My last question, just on
19 Action New York City, I know had said in the last
20 report that you were going to do more outreach to
21 Asian speaking immigrants, how is that going?

22 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, thank you for the question.
23 So, we've just in this last year increased provider
24 services across a number of Asian serving CBO's and
25 as a result of that, we've actually seen an increase

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2 of about 67 percent in the number of cases of
3 individuals across these communities.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you Chair Dromm and
5 our next in line is Council Member Yeger.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you Mr. Chairman.
7 Good afternoon Commissioner. My colleague to
8 Mainland, I told him I was going to ask this, but he
9 had to run to another event, another meeting. Asked
10 about the \$49,000 increase to the MOIA budget and his
11 questions were around whether or not we think we're
12 doing enough and obviously we can always do more, but
13 I just wanted to be clear and to have you discuss
14 this on the record. The MOIA budget is not the full
15 breath of the services that are provided to the
16 immigrant populations of New York, is that correct?

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: That's correct.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, because an enormous
19 amount of funding flows to other agencies and it's
20 from those agencies that the services are provided,
21 whereas your office functions as the coordinating
22 body if you will, of those services. Is that a clear
23 statement?

24 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes. And thank you for that.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: So, the \$49,000 that is
3 being increased while not that great and obviously
4 every penny is important, is not necessarily a
5 deprivation if you will, of the services and the
6 commitment that this Administration has to the
7 immigrant populations in New York City, is that
8 correct?

9 BITTA MOSTOFI: That is correct.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, can we talk for a
11 moment about the translating services that your
12 office has fought very hard in a valiant battle to
13 bring to bring to the poles and the voters of New
14 York City and recognizing of course that you had
15 elections thrown upon you that were not anticipated
16 and that I would love to have not had but not
17 withstanding we had them. Can you discuss that a
18 little bit?

19 BITTA MOSTOFI: Of course.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: You coordinated this
21 effort to bring translators above and beyond what was
22 being provided by the Board of Elections, is that
23 correct?

24 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes, in partnership with other
25 agencies.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: In partnership, yes, but
3 you spent money on that because a. it was not being
4 provide by the Board of Elections and b. obviously
5 the city and the Administration has a commitment to
6 try to increase the number of people who have fair
7 access to our poles.

8 BITTA MOSTOFI: That's right.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, how much do you
10 know, if you know, how much additional was spent on
11 the translating services above and beyond what had
12 been anticipated?

13 BITTA MOSTOFI: So, I'm not sure I fully grasp
14 the question, but I can say that we allocated about
15 \$640,000 this Fiscal Year towards this initiative.
16 We have not over spent on that yet, so we are within
17 that budget and you are correct to note that there
18 are unanticipated elections and we're currently in
19 the process of accessing how best to ensure that
20 we're continuing to do this work and what might be
21 needed to do so.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: It's like whack-a-mole,
23 every time I try to stop a special election another
24 one pops up, but not withstanding. Your office's
25 commitment is to continue that program and to grow it

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2 because obviously we did a couple of sites, its not
3 as many as we would love to do but you know our
4 limitations are what they are but you intend to
5 continue growing that to try to bring translating
6 services to wherever they are needed across the city,
7 is that correct?

8 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, and to be clear, this is
9 what the voters have asked for as well. As many of
10 you might know in the general election in the charter
11 revision questions, the second question actually
12 specifically noted that the new Civic Engagement
13 Commission would actually incorporate this work as a
14 part of its mandatory tasks and initiatives and the
15 voters overwhelming supported that decision. So,
16 that would take effect in 2020 and of course when
17 that happens, you'll see the continued commitment
18 that the Administration has in ensuring that we're
19 acting on the voters wishes and continuing to do that
20 work and until then, my office and other city
21 agencies will continue to increase language services
22 at elections.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: And Mr. Chairman nodded to
24 me that I get one more quick question. And you read
25 my mind because I wanted to ask you about how your

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2 office falls into the new Civic Engagement Commission
3 and I know that hasn't actually been created yet,
4 although the voters created but it is a time period
5 by when it's supposed to be created. I know the
6 Mayor is out there looking for people to appoint to
7 the Commissioner, I know that's part of it. Do you
8 anticipate offloading some of your work into this
9 Civic Engagement Commission or to folding MOIA into
10 it or how would that work?

11 BITTA MOSTOFI: So, what we had proposed and
12 again the voters affirmed would be that as we do
13 across the Administration and as I think you rightly
14 articulated serving as a coordinated kind of expert
15 on services to immigrant communities, we anticipate
16 continuing to do on this initiative, the Commission
17 is required to consult with our office on looking at
18 what languages and communities we should be serving
19 and how best to do that. So, we will continue to
20 maintain that role and ensure that we're smartly,
21 effectively looking at the immigrant communities.
22 How they are changing, what the needs are and that
23 we're using that data and information to make
24 decisions about where we're providing these services.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you very much for
3 your work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 BITTA MOSTOFI: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you Council Member
6 Yeger and we have been joined by Council Member
7 Miller as well and Council Member Eugene has a
8 question.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very much, Mr.
10 Chair. Just a very quick question, only one. I've
11 been looking through the draft, this one, and I see
12 that they say the TPS recipient in New York City and
13 I see 15,000, is that correct? Because only for the
14 Asian people we have about 60,000 Asians on TPS?

15 BITTA MOSTOFI: So, I'm not sure what you're
16 looking at, but my office did produce a fact sheet on
17 TPS recipients in the city. We tried to isolate -
18 so, you might be looking at also statewide numbers.
19 We tried to isolate the number of individuals within
20 the city specifically and while the state has more
21 TPS recipients, the city, the five boroughs, we
22 estimate to have about 15,000. The largest number of
23 those recipients are Asians.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Alright, thank you very
25 much, I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Now, it's three o'clock. I'm going to ask a few more questions but I'm going to let you tell us when you have to leave. So, you tell me.

BITTA MOSTOFI: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: My next question is really about the adult literacy initiative that we've been fighting and championing for awhile now. I think everyone probably knows about the adult literacy love that we have here and the partnership that hold with you and everyone else. Of the \$12 million that we allocated as a team last year, do you need additional funding in 2020 from the adult literacy funding source? If so, how much and did you submit these new needs for FY 2020 to OMB yet? And I think you know what I'm talking about here. I'll leave it at that.

BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So, I think that you're aware but we have been lucky to be working with our partners at the Mayor's Office for Workforce Development who are sharing in the leadership on this issue with us, really hoping I think in response to requests from you and from this committee and from advocates to ensure that the city is sort of systematically looking at this work broadly. Making

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2 sure that we have somebody that's committed to really
3 identifying the needs and thinking about how best to
4 address them. We have been in conversation with them
5 about the specific needs around literacy and ensuring
6 that we're addressing some of the gaps there and
7 we've included in those conversations, the We Speak
8 Program and making sure that we see that as a
9 supplement to classes and that we are continuing to
10 infuse in the fields. The ability to rely on more
11 curriculum, professional development and other
12 resources that the program seeks to offer.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And how much are you going
14 to be requesting to pull out of the adult literacy
15 funding to do this?

16 BITTA MOSTOFI: We have not requested to pull
17 anything out of the funding to do that.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it, okay, thank you
19 for sharing that. I think that's kind of a broader
20 context of the work we're doing on adult literacy and
21 workforce development. Super helpful and now I guess
22 this is the moment where I kind of reiterate my
23 yearly commitment to adult literacy classes and
24 making sure that we have classes and then every year
25 a portion of that goes to other things that are not

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2 classes and part of that is MOIA work. And so, I
3 don't want to be surprised again from this because
4 this is an opportunity for you to talk to us about
5 that and if there's going to be anything that we
6 should expect as we move through those negotiations,
7 so it's not a surprise later. And what I want to say
8 now is that we're going to fight for that \$12 million
9 again or the baseline and higher rates for contracts
10 in teachers and paying our teachers what they
11 deserve. You can comment on that if you'd like to
12 but every year a portion of that goes to other non-
13 classroom instruction for adult literacy work and
14 some of that is to MOIA.

15 BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So, yeah, I'd like to
16 comment on that if that's okay. So, I guess a couple
17 of things. One, I think as you are also aware, we
18 last year allocated funding to Q and E to do an
19 evaluation for us around adult literacy broadly and
20 to make sure that we're understanding sort of what
21 the needs are and where they exist and how best to
22 look at addressing them. As you are aware the DYCD
23 holds the contracts and some of the challenges have
24 been not because there wasn't an interest in doing it
25 but because there was a challenge in increasing

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2 amounts outside of the RFP process and ensuring that
3 we could do so effectively. Our hope is to get this
4 evaluation to best understand it. DYCD will be
5 going, as I understand it into an RFP process this
6 coming year and so, hopefully some of I think the
7 things that you've expressed get addressed because we
8 are at the rate kind of conjured to be able to do so.

9 In terms of the kind of use or the kind of other
10 ways that we've tried to address the needs in this
11 moment and time in this juncture, I would just kind
12 of put an asterisk on the fact that a lot of what we
13 sought to develop has been looking at how to ensure
14 the field actually has more resources. So, even if
15 they are not going directly to the classroom setting
16 for reasons like this, we've worked closely with Q&E
17 experts who are the leaders really on adult literacy
18 in developing ESLL curricula using the second season
19 of We Speak. So that those materials are available
20 to the field, to put those on line. So, I would just
21 want to ensure that there is awareness. That the
22 resources are going to the field and we have a shared
23 interest in ensuring that there is also increased
24 classroom opportunities.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that. We're
3 going to hear from the advocates on this too, so I
4 think we're going to get a fresh perspective and I
5 think you are right. Everything is moving towards
6 fixing the system that we continue to rely on and
7 don't give it the resources that we need to ensure
8 that the adult literacy education work that we're
9 doing in our neighborhoods get fully funded and so,
10 let's work together on that.

11 Let's talk about IDNYC and we've had some
12 hearings in the past few months about IDNYC and how
13 you are preparing for the next version and I think
14 what's important here as we focus on the budget is
15 where do we see in the budget the added resources
16 necessary for the vision that we all kind of all been
17 learning about in terms of IDNYC 2.0? I don't think
18 that's official but I'm going to call it IDNYC 2.0
19 and again, this is part of this conundrum of no new
20 need and yet we're being visionary about the concept
21 of IDNYC 2.0.

22 BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So, I think a couple of
23 things to say there. As you are aware, we are in an
24 exploratory process. We are trying to understand
25 what is possible both in terms of the increase in

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2 technology that would allow us to integrate with city
3 agencies and services and access that New Yorkers
4 have with IDNYC as well as the possibility of
5 connecting that technology with a thinking partner.
6 We are still in that exploratory process; we are
7 continuing those conversations. As you know, we are
8 hearing from advocates from you and others and
9 engaging with a number of experts to make sure we
10 have done our due diligence before making a
11 determination on this. So, while is undertaken, we
12 don't have a budget request for it until we make the
13 decision and then of course we were greenlit to do
14 the exploration, so there is an understanding that
15 there might be budget costs, but we also don't know
16 that until we actually see kind of where we land.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, does this mean that we
18 lose the opportunity to do anything for IDNYC 2.0 if
19 we don't land it in this budget, we will have to wait
20 until the next Fiscal Year to outlay whatever final
21 decision is made?

22 BITTA MOSTOFI: I think we'll have to make that
23 determination when we have a recommendation. So, as
24 folks are aware, we haven't rushed the process. We
25 definitely have an interest in making sure that when

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2 we begin our renewal period, we are making sure that
3 New Yorkers have access to new ways in using their
4 card, but we won't rush that decision in a way that
5 jeopardizes the process in the due diligence. So, I
6 think again, it's ensuring that we're on the right
7 timeline but at the same time, making sure we are
8 being smart about the decisions and when we are
9 making them.

10 I don't think that that means we would have to
11 wait a whole other year for the budget process, I
12 would hope not but that because we were given the
13 ability to do the exploration there is an
14 understanding that a recommendation might come
15 sooner.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, the only thing I
17 want to say here is this is almost like how not to do
18 a budget, right. I think part of what we are seeing
19 in some other pockets when we think about, because I
20 want to move over to legal representation next. I am
21 thinking about adult literacy and how we've done the
22 adult literacy. It has felt uncomfortable at times
23 because we essentially put the money in and then we
24 spend it later within the Fiscal Year and that's been
25 tricky. That's been uncomfortable when making

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2 decisions and some of those are delayed and, in this
3 case, we have situation where we don't know the
4 budget. You are doing the due diligence about
5 understanding and if we don't put the money in, we're
6 going to have to find it somewhere and so then we
7 lose the power of a transparent process which is what
8 this is. So, then it just happens and that makes a
9 lot of New Yorkers uncomfortable and that's what I
10 don't want to do. And so, in some ways the best way
11 to budget is in a transparent way so we can talk
12 about it and understand it. Once there is a proposal
13 and you have a good sense; that's the work that we
14 have to do openly and that doesn't seem like that is
15 something that I am hearing from you right now. So,
16 if you can help just clarify that and understand our
17 intentions here, so that we can work together to land
18 whatever that might be. Especially if we're moving
19 into an Executive Budget, we have no idea what is
20 going to happen there and we run again into the
21 throws of negotiations after the Executive Budget
22 hearings; which I'm hoping we have another one of
23 because I think there is a lot of questions we are
24 leaving on the table here that we really examine that
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2 and have an open transparent process about all of
3 these pieces, especially IDNYC.

4 BITTA MOSTOFI: So, I would just say as with all
5 the things with the program, we have been very
6 transparent about what we are doing and our
7 intention, we will continue to do that.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, and then again, what
9 I'm saying is if we have to find the money after the
10 Fiscal Budget has been presented and adopted and we
11 have to summon the dollars to pay for the vision that
12 we all agree on, we escape the transparent process of
13 the budget hearings. And that's a different process
14 and that makes me feel uncomfortable, that's all I'm
15 saying.

16 BITTA MOSTOFI: I understand. I think there's a
17 you know, trying to not put a square peg in a round
18 hole situation, right? Cart before horse kind of
19 thing. Which is unfortunate but where we're at.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. Let's go onto legal
21 representation. Varick Street and the work that
22 we're doing around Varick Street to understand what's
23 happening there. Varick Street is opening two new
24 court rooms and the press has been really good at
25 really announcing the work that's happening there.

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2 Well, what I think both of us would agree on are mal
3 intentions for the community that we're trying to
4 support. Two new court rooms to hear detained cases,
5 but NYIFUP providers caseloads will increase by two-
6 thirds as a result and so the provider currently do
7 not have the staff to keep up with their increases or
8 anticipating a lot more need and so, how are you
9 following that? Are you working with the Civil
10 Justice Office securing emergency funding for this
11 work? How are taking this on? This is a City
12 Council funded imitative but essentially this is
13 still a city project and so, I know that you hold a
14 lot of these cases because they come to you, they
15 come to me and so how are you thinking about this in
16 how to solve this moment?

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, thank you for the question
18 and I would reiterate a few things about the
19 challenges with the courts. There are myriad, they
20 run across the gamut, not just in the detained docket
21 but in the non-detained docket as well as in folks
22 who are coming in for ICE supervision check-ins as
23 well as people who are going to Administrative
24 interviews. As well as people who are being picked
25 up in raids. So, part of the challenge that we face

1
2 of course broadly and has been the goal that we've
3 had as a city in looking at our immigration legal
4 services funding is funding a spectrum of need.
5 Trying to look and understand where gaps are, trying
6 to make sure that we are addressing them effectively
7 and hearing from legal service providers and others
8 in the process to make sure that that's informing the
9 decision because they are the experts on the ground
10 in seeing what's happening. We've had regular
11 conversations with the Office of Civil Justice as
12 well as Administrator Bonia[SP?]. Legal service
13 providers across NYIFUP but across community-based
14 organizations, the new sanctuary coalition, legal or
15 lawyers rather who are taking some of the habeas
16 cases and so forth to really try and wrap our minds
17 around where the needs really are. How are they best
18 addressed? How can we create some efficiencies
19 across these needs and then making some of the hard
20 decisions about what we can do to be supportive in
21 this space. As I noted one of the things of course
22 we will be looking at is the \$500,000 allocation and
23 what we are doing with that and we will continue to
24 have these conversations and make sure that we're
25 taking that into consideration.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And the \$500,000, that's the Local Law 30 work, is that right? That's different, okay.

BITTA MOSTOFI: As I noted, this was money that had been allocated to the domestic violence task force for immigration legal support.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That's the one, okay.

BITTA MOSTOFI: They have now happily had that money baselined. So, there is an additional \$500,000 to go towards immigration legal services.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. Thank you for that. Looking forward to talking through that with you. I think the ultimate question comes before us as we look at the intentions of NYIFUP and our partnership with IOI and the administration taking on a baselined approach to bringing resources to lawyers to defend our New Yorkers as they are engaging in the courts. Detained NYIFUP, non-detained IOI, and now with this new court situation and the flood of more cases that are going to get heard we are going to need more lawyers, right and I hear that. Our goal for universal representation is real. Every New Yorker that is getting picked up and you said this in many ways to the questions that were being asked,

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2 it's not a situation where only people who have
3 violent crimes are getting picked up. Everyone is
4 getting picked up and Baba Sella[SP?], who we were
5 all watching last week and all of us united around
6 him and his family presents that conundrum of both
7 the ICE focus and that deportation mission that's
8 real. The judges that are now ready to take everyone
9 and push them out as quickly as possible and so now
10 is the time, are we going to commit to universal
11 representation model and what is the role of MOIA in
12 pushing this internally with your conversations at
13 OMB with DSS, banks, the Mayor, and so, are you ready
14 to give us a sense about where you are on that?
15 Because that is going to be fierce council
16 prerogative.

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: I think you know, as we've said
18 before, we believe as an Administration that there
19 has to be some broad range of services that's
20 provided in this space. It is challenging to try and
21 prioritize where resources are going. So, beyond
22 removal defense, we believe that there should be
23 representation for docker recipients. We believe
24 there should be representation for people who are
25 seeking to apply for relative petitions, adjustment

1
2 of status or naturalization. So, as we do
3 constantly, we are looking at where those gaps are
4 and how to best address them and recognize the
5 urgency particularly for folks who are in removal.
6 So, that will be a focus of ours in terms of looking
7 at how best to sort of access and meet those needs.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, then here's a more
9 pointed question. Where in your priority list does
10 removal of detained and non-detained fit on your
11 stack? Where does it fit?

12 BITTA MOSTOFI: For immigration legal services?

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: For immigration legal
14 services.

15 BITTA MOSTOFI: Very high.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: At the top, okay. So,
17 we're going to start there because there are needs
18 that are legal in relation across the entire system,
19 but removal is the name of the game for this person
20 in the White House and deportation machine is real
21 and that's I think, the thing that's separated in our
22 families in our city. So, that I think needs to be
23 said here at this budget hearing and for the world to
24 know that that's something that we're talking about
25

1
2 in a very transparent way and we will be making the
3 case.

4 Moving on to contracting and the Mayor's Office
5 of Contracts, a lot of the CBO's face challenges with
6 the city's contracting process and this is one of
7 those things that just keeps coming up and we're
8 getting it from everywhere. So, how does MOIA help
9 CBO's face those challenges with the city contracting
10 process? What role can you play and what role can
11 you tell the world and especially the non-profits
12 that are here today who are trying to do their work
13 and get tripped up along the way with the city
14 process that gets them off the focus of helping our
15 immigrant communities.

16 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, I mean, so for areas where
17 we have sort of are providing direct support and
18 advice particularly around immigration legal services
19 contracting, we work very closely with our partners
20 to try and move these as fast as possible. We
21 recognize the challenges for our CBO's, and you know,
22 are committed to continuing to do the advocacy to
23 ensure that they are moving as fast as possible and
24 that there is recognition of why that's so important.
25 One additional thing that I would note is tangential

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2 but semi-related is we have been working with the
3 immigration coalition to develop a training and
4 webinar around city procurement processes to ensure
5 that you know, sometimes the challenges that
6 community-based organizations have is their ability
7 to be competitive to understand what that entails or
8 what it means. We want to make sure that folks have
9 good training, good information so that they can
10 compete, they can understand what it looks like and
11 we're hoping to be able to role something out in the
12 coming months with their partnership.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And just give me a sense,
14 a texture of like what the advocacy is. I hear the
15 intention that you're helping. What does that look
16 like? Are you talking about like you picking up the
17 phone, talking to the Commissioner and saying, yo,
18 what's up? This organization, their cash flow. You
19 understand the issue. Is that what we're talking
20 about or is there like a staff?

21 BITTA MOSTOFI: Also working on moving scopes of
22 work faster. You know, defining the scope of work
23 more quickly particularly with our Action NYC
24 providers. Hoping that that helps it move faster.
25 So, taking a more hands on approach where we can but

1
2 also if we're hearing of issues, picking up the
3 phone, saying what's happening.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, because I think
5 we're going to want to make sure that you hear as
6 much as possible from them about how important that
7 is and just so I can get a sense that you don't have
8 a dedicated staff of — I don't like the connotation
9 with another agency of ours, expeditors to help
10 expedite these contracts, so that they can get their
11 funding. The cash flow issues reveal with the small
12 amount of profits and the reason I'm asking all these
13 questions is we're going to get to a situation where
14 we're going to be asking for \$40 million for the
15 Mayor to fund Census to CBO's and the CBO's that are
16 speaking today at the public panel are — and this is
17 the work that we've been doing just to get a sense
18 about how healthy are they to be able to take on this
19 \$40 million injection. And if we have a problem with
20 the contracting, this whole thing falls apart and
21 that is real and that is of the mechanics and that is
22 our responsibility, yours and mine. And so, how do
23 we do that? This is telling me how you're doing it
24 right now. Do you have a staff, do you have a team?
25 Do you have a team of expeditors? Can you build

1
2 that? Can you get that ready? Because Census we
3 can't get wrong. All this money that we're talking
4 about is in jeopardy.

5 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, I hear you. We have folks
6 that we work with on the Action NYC side where we
7 have more kind of direct programmatic management
8 over. So, yes, they are focused on expediting those
9 contracts. I think otherwise it's escalating, which
10 is a little more my bailiwick.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, we're going to do
12 our part to, but I think unless we come up with a
13 system that makes it better, it's going to be a
14 distraction and that's not what we need right now,
15 for a lot of the things that we've been talking
16 about.

17 BITTA MOSTOFI: One thing that I would note that
18 I left out was in the training that I described in
19 thinking about how best to make that robust and also
20 provide the right question and answer framework for
21 folks. The Mayor's Office of Contracts is also
22 supporting.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it, and that's the
24 procurement Stuff that you are doing? So, they are a
25 part of it?

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BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, they are coming in to support that?

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BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, that's great. I think that's the kind of partnership you want with the expertise that's coming in.

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BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Let's go over to NYC Care, because that did show up in the budget and that's a more holistic uninsured and that's a positive thing that we saw. So, is the adman using any of the lessons learned from Action Health NYC pilot, and if so, can you share what program details are a result of those lessons that were learned from Action Health NYC?

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BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, for sure. Yes, we are. A

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lot of what we learned is the role that MOIA is helping to play and looking at and advising on NYC Care as a whole. So, what are some of the areas of specialty care that kind of registered at the top including mental health services to making sure that those are specialty care that are incorporated in the boarder plan that people are accessing. What are

1
2 ways in which we are insuring kind of robust privacy
3 protections for individuals who are going to engage
4 in the program and how are we reaching folks. So,
5 how are we doing outreach to individuals? How are we
6 making sure that we're equipping not just sort of our
7 teams but working with community-based organizations
8 to do that work effectively?

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, so let's continue
10 that conversation as we move forward because I think
11 that's a big chunk of change but also, I think
12 rolling out a program like this really requires
13 partnerships on the ground.

14 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes, we agree as does H&H.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, okay great. We're
16 going to wrap up now. I think that really when I
17 think about all the projects before us, it falls on
18 two pillars of trust and funding which is why this
19 budget hearing is so important and the inspiration
20 that I've been hearing from organizations as we've
21 been preparing for this budget hearing has really
22 been centered around the work that they're doing
23 everyday to save — so many of these cases about
24 saving families from being separated. This is the
25 ICE response, the deportation machine. At the same

1
2 time, the legal case that's connected, the legal
3 representation that's connected to this case of a
4 family trying to stay together comes with housing
5 issues. It comes with an eviction situation. It
6 comes with health. It comes with education. A
7 family has mixed status family, a child that needs to
8 be registered at UPK, but the parent is focused on
9 their legal case and so, how do we bring a holistic
10 approach and it's the organizations on the ground
11 that are doing this work, that need the funding to be
12 able to pay. Because asking them to do anything for
13 free or volunteer is immoral and that's not going to
14 happen in our city because we have the power to do
15 that. We have to go to the federal government and
16 ask for a budget bill that gets passed to this
17 congress or we don't even have to go the state and
18 ask the Governor. We get to do that here in our city
19 and that's the message that I want you leave with and
20 I understand you're going to be meeting with the
21 Mayor very soon today, I hope you can take that
22 message. That there is no way in hell that we're
23 going to let our CBO's go unfunded at a time where we
24 have a \$3 billion surplus this year. That I know he
25 has plans for because the people who are being

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2 separated and impacted the most are immigrant
3 communities, the backbone. The annual report says it
4 well. This is what makes New York City, New York
5 City and we can't do that — well, that's not an
6 option. We're going to do it.

7 BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And we're going to make
9 that happen.

10 BITTA MOSTOFI: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, thank you so much for
12 being here today, to you and your team and I hope
13 they can stay to listen to what I'm talking about
14 here because it's not coming from me, it's coming
15 from them.

16 BITTA MOSTOFI: For sure.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I can't wait to see
18 the first panel come up and it's going to be a bunch
19 of Day Laborers. I don't know if you have any final
20 thoughts you want to share with me now.

21 BITTA MOSTOFI: I do, I have one more. I know I
22 didn't get to read my testimony, which is fine
23 because people will really be excited reading it
24 later today, but I did want to share one example of a
25 success story that really speaks about kind of

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2 partnerships and why that's so important to good
3 coordination and kind of show what New York City
4 leadership looks like in this moment and time.

5 We've been seeing an increase in the need and
6 requests that come through our constituent services
7 line, which I'm sure many Council Members are as
8 well. I want to speak to one particular request that
9 kind of highlights what I noted. So, we provided
10 crucial support to a U.S. Citizen father, a long time
11 New York City resident. He had filed an immigrant
12 municipal petition for his daughter to come to the
13 U.S. to live with him and her sister. Her sister
14 suffered from a serious health condition and she was
15 a perfect bone marrow match. After she was initially
16 denied a VISA by the Council it erroneously on a
17 public charge ground, MOIA was contact and worked
18 with NYLAG's legal health team and others to bring
19 the case to Senator Gillibrand's Office and I'm happy
20 to report that the decision was reversed. She was
21 able to secure her immigrant Visa, travel to the
22 United States to join her family and her sister is
23 now preparing to receive a life saving transplant.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

25 BITTA MOSTOFI: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That's the story of New York City right there. Thank you so much for your work.

BITTA MOSTOFI: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: To be continued.

BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We're moving onto our public panels and as we bring on the public panels, I want to remind everyone that if you have not yet filled out a form, please fill it out. We want to hear from you, all of you. And the first panel we're going to call up are a group of Day Laborers and the first one from La Colmena is Herber Campa. Come on up. The Workers' Justice Project, Prospero Martinez. From Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Sylvia Flores. Oswaldo Mendoza from New York Immigrant Community Empowerment.

Just the four of you? Oh, we are going to get translation, that's right. There is another seat on this side.

GONZALO MERCADO: Thank you, Councilman. My name is Gonzalo Mercado. I am the Executive Director of La Colmena and I am here to translate for Heber Campa

1
2 who is one of our workers that participates in the
3 program.

4 HEBER CAMPA-GONZALO MERCADO (TRANSLATOR): Good
5 afternoon, my name is Heber Campa and I have been a
6 member of La Colmena for a year just after the
7 opening of the Day Laborers' Center. Thank you
8 Chairperson Menchaca for the opportunity to testify
9 at this important hearing.

10 I arrived into the United States ten years ago in
11 search for better opportunities and security for
12 myself and my family. I first worked in the
13 restaurant industry, but I left it because of the
14 long hours of work and lack of adequate
15 transportation. With the advice of friends, I left
16 the restaurant and shaped up for the first time at a
17 day laborer corner where I received my first job in
18 construction.

19 In that first job, I suffered my first workplace
20 accident because the employer did not give us gloves
21 or the necessary protective equipment for the job and
22 after a cut on my finger that got infected, I had to
23 be two weeks out of work, and I had to pay for the
24 doctor.

1
2 A year ago, I met La Colmena after being the
3 victim of a wage theft in which a boss didn't pay me
4 for a week's worth of work and I was able to access
5 legal assistance to recover my stolen salary. I also
6 learned about my rights as a worker and after
7 becoming a member I was able to receive my first job
8 through La Colmena doing sheetrock and compound that
9 are my specialty in construction.

10 Today, I am here to give testimony of the
11 importance of the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative.
12 Day Laborer Centers like La Colmena that help the day
13 laborer community that is on the streets of Staten
14 Island and ask you to continue supporting our
15 community that every day goes out to look for a
16 dignified job. Day laborer centers are a sanctuary
17 for us, especially in these times of so much attack
18 against our migrant community and a place to
19 socialize, especially workers who are here without
20 other family and we can help each other in difficult
21 seasons like, lack of work in the winter or
22 festivities like the holiday season, birthdays, etc.

23 Thank you for the support already given and on
24 behalf of the Staten Island day laborers, we ask that
25 you continue to support us with the necessary funds

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2 so that our centers continue to grow and support our
3 community and those who hire us. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

5 SYLVIA FLORES: Hello. Good afternoon. My name
6 is Sylvia Flores and I am a member of the Worker
7 Center at the Northern Manhattan Coalition for
8 Immigrant Rights. An organization that for over 35
9 years has been providing high quality, trustworthy
10 immigration-related legal services to the immigrant
11 community. The Northern Manhattan Coalition for
12 Immigrant Rights is a non-profit organization founded
13 in 1982 to educate, defend and protect the rights of
14 immigrants, through direct services, civic
15 engagement, community organizing and advocacy. The
16 Worker Center grew out of the community service and
17 we have created a safe space for workers looking for
18 better job opportunities and a trustworthy place to
19 receive critical OSHA and Know Your Rights trainings.

20 I migrated to New York City from Ecuador
21 approximately 20 years ago. Like most immigrants, I
22 am not afraid of work or hard work, and I'm not
23 afraid of different kinds of work. As a result, I
24 have worked as a waitress and as a maintenance office
25 cleaner. When I worked in the restaurant industry, I

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2 had my wages stolen from me from my boss. I endured
3 sexual harassment from clients and managers, and I had
4 to withstand verbal abuse from managers. I remember
5 one manager telling all of us, "Because you are
6 illegals you are less intelligent and don't try going
7 to a government agency to get help because you have
8 no status, you have no rights. No one will listen to
9 you." I had another manager yell, "You are an idiot.
10 You are worth nothing." It was like living in a
11 toxic hell.

12 About a year ago, I learned about the Northern
13 Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights Worker
14 Center through one of their Facebook postings. At
15 that time, I was working as an independent contractor
16 and their Facebook posting invited community members
17 to attend a Know Your Rights training. Even though I
18 felt that I knew about workers' rights, this
19 particular Know Your Rights meeting really opened my
20 eyes to additional rights that we, as workers, have
21 in New York City. It was also in this meeting that I
22 heard for the first time the term OSHA. I wanted to
23 learn more about what OSHA was and I decided to sign
24 up for the OSHA 10 training that Northern Manhattan
25 was holding the following weekend.

1
2 The OSHA training was another eye-opening
3 experience for me. For example, during that training
4 I learned about how to handle chemicals safely. This
5 is very important to understand, because it provides
6 us with the knowledge, we need to stay safe while
7 cleaning houses or clearing newly constructed
8 buildings.

9 But not only were we learning important technical
10 information, we were creating a community thanks to
11 the compassionate and respectful environment that the
12 Northern Manhattan Coalition of the Immigrant Rights
13 Workers' Center promotes. It was this that motivated
14 me to return on a weekly basis to participate in
15 advocacy meetings, where our experiences and
16 perspective led me to the decision-making process
17 when strategizing and executing an action.

18 After a number of months, I asked the Worker
19 Center Director if I could volunteer in the Legal
20 Department of the NMCIR and that is when he invited
21 me to apply and interview the position of Workers
22 Center Assistant and Job Dispatcher, a position made
23 possible through the City Council funding. From this
24 new position I work side-by-side with our Worker
25 Center members helping them seek dignified

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2 employment, linking them to the Northern Manhattan
3 Coalition for Immigrants Rights vital legal and
4 educational services and facilitating Know Your
5 Rights workshops.

6 We are part of the coalition that makes up the
7 Day Laborer Workforce Initiative. The initiative
8 partners include Worker's Justice Project, the New
9 Immigrant Community Empowerment, Staten Island
10 Community Job Center, and Catholic Charities. Each
11 of which has a long history of engaging immigrant
12 communities and working with Day Laborers in all five
13 boroughs.

14 The Day Laborer Workforce Development Initiative
15 came together to address the needs of this
16 underserved population, services that are even more
17 essential now than ever before. As members of the
18 city's informal workforce, day laborers experience
19 rampant wage theft, pervasive construction accidents,
20 workforce hazards, lack of access to workforce
21 development training and lack of infrastructure. The
22 Initiative goal is to address these issues by linking
23 the day laborers to vital services, providing
24 trainings on workforce safety and legal rights,
25 addressing wage theft, providing access to jobs, and,

1
2 most importantly, creating safe and dignified spaces
3 for day laborers to congregate as they search for
4 gainful work. New York City has the potential to
5 lead the nation in the fight for day laborer rights.

6 We are thankful for the support that City Council
7 provided the Initiative for Fiscal Year 2019 and we
8 urge the Council to invest \$3.6 million in the Day
9 Laborer Workforce Initiative for the next fiscal
10 year.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can I stop you there.

12 SYLVIA FLORES: Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I think that's a good
14 place to stop, the \$3.6 million and I think that
15 that's more than we allocated before, so we're want
16 to talk about that to. So, you can talk a little bit
17 about the initiative. I'm going to ask the next
18 person because I have your testimony and we're going
19 to go through a lot of testimony today, so I want to
20 see if I can keep you shorter as well.

21 PROSPERO MARTINEZ (TRANSLATOR) MARIA VALDEZ: My
22 name is Maria Valdez; I am here to translate for
23 Prospero.

24 Thank you, very much and good afternoon, to
25 everyone. My name is Prospero Martinez and I'm a

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2 member of Workers Justice Project. I deeply
3 appreciate the opportunity and space that you have
4 provided us on the New York Council Committee on
5 Immigration to make possible for our voices to be
6 heard so that our interests in general from the
7 immigrant community and the workers are taken into
8 account.

9 By the end of 2018, I had to leave Oaxaca, Mexico
10 of United States, running away from the violence,
11 crime and persecution. In New York I found the
12 opportunity to leave without fear and to be able to
13 work decently to provide a better life for my family.
14 When I came to New York, I began working in
15 construction without fear, but with a lot of
16 necessity to be able to cover the basic expenses of
17 survival in this city so expensive for working people
18 like, rent, food, public transportation, and other
19 basic necessities.

20 On January 2019, a contractor hired me to do a
21 demolition on a building in the Bronx. On this job
22 the contractor made me demolish at heights without
23 using any protection against falls. Before I began
24 the job, I asked the contractor to provide me with a
25 harness, but he denied to do so. Making fun of my

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2 necessity, he told me that "the job was not for a
3 whole year, it was for a day. He told me that if I
4 didn't like it, I could leave." In that moment I
5 thought of leaving, but I decided to finish my day
6 and I did not come back the following day. While I
7 was working at height, I step on a wooden board that
8 was unstable, and fell off with the board to the
9 first floor. In that moment I felt a lot of pain in
10 my arm, back and legs. The contractor didn't care
11 about my pain he took me out from the worksite and
12 offered to take me to a clinic. Without being able
13 to get up and with an endless pain, I asked him to
14 call an ambulance, but he denied. He insisted not to
15 call anyone, that he could take me to a clinic.
16 Without being able to get up and with a lot of pain,
17 I called the ambulance while the employer went out to
18 hide in his car.

19 This is the daily reality of hundreds of workers
20 in this city. The immigrant worker not only faces a
21 struggle for daily life, but also with the burden of
22 the past and with an uncertain future, that has
23 established a life where it develops as human being
24 through work, family, and social obligations,
25 constantly fighting to improve conditions of life,

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2 but nevertheless, the reality goes beyond when we
3 face a diversity of problems for being an immigrant.
4 It is limited in many areas, coupled with little or
5 no basic education received. It reaches to the point
6 to ignore our human rights that this big city offers.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, I'm going to stop you
8 there, because we have the English version but I'm
9 glad that we were able to hear his story in English.
10 Oh, and actually, we have one more. Okay, lets hear
11 from NICE as well.

12 OSWALDO MENDOZA: (Testimony in Spanish)

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I just wanted to say
14 that Oswaldo Mendoza talked a little bit about the
15 work that NICE is doing to really confront the labor
16 abuses that are happening within NICE as an
17 organization but this is a coalition effort to really
18 confront irresponsible employers who are connected to
19 wage thefts safety and we heard from all of our Day
20 Laborers about that issue. I think what I want to
21 just bring to light here is what we had just heard
22 from the Administration about how we bring more
23 funding, the funding that they're asking for -
24 actually, this is a question I want you to answer
25 because I think it's better coming from you. Who

1
2 funds this initiative, this Day Laborer Workforce
3 Initiative? Who funds it?

4 GONZALO MERCADO: So, right now the initiative is
5 being funded by the City Council for the past three
6 years.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Do you get any funding
8 from the Mayor's Office to do Day Laborer Workforce
9 Initiative?

10 GONZALO MERCADO: No, not us.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And would you like for it
12 to come from the Mayor's Office in a three-year
13 contract, which is called baselining?

14 GONZALO MERCADO: At some point yes, because for
15 us as an organization it is very difficult to plan
16 ahead when we don't know if we are going to be either
17 refunding or at what levels every year. So,
18 obviously that is a cost to the workers because we
19 don't know if we're going to be able to operate. Are
20 we are going to be able to open the Centers; we're
21 not going to be able to pay the staff and as you also
22 mentioned earlier with the contracting process also
23 makes it even more of a headache for us.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right, because the Council
25 funding is one year funding and a baseline project

1
2 like some of the adult literacy, not all of it but
3 some of it is a three year contract, which means that
4 you can plan ahead as an organization and grow and so
5 I will note that you are asking for more money than
6 the Council has given in the past year. Can you talk
7 a little bit about what that extra funding will go to
8 for this initiative?

9 GONZALO MERCADO: So, right now, with this
10 imitative, we've been able to open Day Laborer
11 Centers in each borough but not in the Bronx yet.
12 So, right now from having no centers funded by the
13 City in three years we now can say we have five
14 centers including the center for Women Day Laborers
15 in Brooklyn. That they can talk more about. So,
16 that is the increase, so also with this increase we
17 are going to be able to fund a Day Labor Center in
18 the Bronx making it a truly citywide initiative where
19 in each borough there is a designated city funded Day
20 Laborer Center for all the workers in that borough.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And my last question is
22 about Census and how important that is. So, can
23 anyone tell me a little bit about how important the
24 Census is?

25 OSWALDO MENDOZA: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, so it's really
3 important for workers from every industry, not just
4 for the workers but for the families that are part of
5 the workers.

6 OSWALDO MENDOZA: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

7 Thank you and I think what Oswaldo is talking
8 about is in my response to what are the workers going
9 to do to help the Census conversation is that, and
10 the key thing he said here was, they already do a lot
11 of workshops. You heard from all the workers about
12 OSHA and we just created a law last year that a lot
13 of you were really at the table helping us construct
14 that's bringing construction safety standards at 50
15 hours across the entire worker workforce.

16 You are already talking to people. There is
17 already a relationship and trust and you can use
18 those spaces to bring Census messages to your
19 workers, your brothers and sisters who are on the
20 ground and this is the message that we need to send
21 to the Administration and how important it is to fund
22 CBO's like you to do the Census work because if
23 everything you just talked about, getting safety
24 standards up across the board and fighting for
25 contracts with developers to get good salary and

1
2 fight your salaries because they are getting stolen
3 and on top of all of that to do Census, is not –
4 that's the immoral question here if we don't answer
5 it with yes, funding to you all. So, that's just the
6 point that I wanted to make here and if there is any
7 final thoughts, I'm going to move to the next panel.
8 Any other final thoughts.

9 OSWALDO MENDOZA: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Let me just translate
11 really quick. Oswaldo is saying how important it is
12 that the reason immigrants don't want to get involved
13 in the Census is because of the fear and really
14 through the workshops that you can do is to change
15 that mindset. People don't understand this is a
16 benefit to the city if people get counted in the
17 Census and again, that message can't come just from
18 us as government, that has to come from our partners
19 on the ground.

20 PROSPERO MARTINEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I think the only
22 nugget that I want to pull out from what Prospero
23 said is they know their corners, the day laborer
24 corners and yeah, everybody has the sense of distress
25 of everything. Like, I think we sometimes start with

1
2 distress, but they know their workers. They know
3 their corners and they can talk to the workers and
4 the workers have families and can get everybody
5 counted. So, thank you, thank you. Last word
6 Gonzalo.

7 GONZALO MERCADO: No, I just wanted to agree with
8 the workers. You know, first of all the day laborer
9 communities are one of the hardest to reach New
10 Yorker community deemed like that. Also, with all of
11 the controversy around the Census and the question
12 about citizenship and now the immigrant community
13 across the country being fearful of having any type
14 of information given to the government is going to
15 take a real effort to make sure that everybody is
16 counted this time around. And as the workers said,
17 you know, we know our workers, we know the corners,
18 we're able to talk to them. We're able to make sure
19 that they are trusting you know, to make sure that
20 this information is not going to go anywhere else.
21 Just to make sure that New York City gets the fair
22 share of resources because of the Census.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank you so
24 much.
25

1
2 MARIA VALDEZ: So, basically I guess our
3 organizations we do work, we're more close working
4 with the community, so I guess they feel more
5 connected to us and basically they can come to us and
6 as an organization we can work together to educate
7 our community better and inform them, so they lose
8 that kind of like fear that they have about the
9 Census.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Exactly. Thank you, thank
11 you for your time. I'm going to call the next panel
12 and, on that note, what I want to say is the - well,
13 I'll keep this in my final thought, actually I'll
14 hold my thought. Esmeralda Flores from WCBDI
15 Brightly Cleaning Coop. Christina Fox from NYCNoWC.
16 Oh, NYCNoWC yes, of course come on over. Ralph
17 Palladino, Jesse Laymon.

18 Okay, thank you. Lets get started. Who wants to
19 start? Push the red light.

20 CHRISTINA FOX: Is it on? Can you hear me now?

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes.

22 CHRISTINA FOX: Great thank you. So yes, thank
23 you so much and good afternoon Chairperson Menchaca
24 and the rest of the City Council Committee on
25 Immigration. Thank you for hearing our testimony

1
2 today. My name is Christina, I am here on behalf of
3 NYCNoWC, the New York City Network of Worker
4 Cooperatives and also on behalf of WCBDI. The Worker
5 Cooperative Business Development Initiative. So, you
6 have our testimony in front of you. I won't take too
7 much time to boast about our accomplishments.

8 You know in five short years being able to
9 organize hundreds of jobs. 130 cooperatives amongst
10 the 14 organizations that make up the initiative. I
11 could go on and on and you can see in the testimony
12 the real benefits, intangible benefits and impact on
13 the worker owners themselves who are primarily a
14 large majority immigrants and women of color. But
15 what I'm actually going to take the time here today
16 is to really share with you all why co-ops are beyond
17 being good business. Actually, because their value-
18 based businesses based on justice, equity and
19 opportunity, really actually are what can push your
20 policy priorities forward and help connect the dots
21 in ways that none of us could ever imagine.

22 So, a good example of this is you know, you
23 mentioned in the last testimony and with the day
24 laborers Intro 1447 in Local Law for increased OSHA
25 training in the city. So, in that same year 2017,

1
2 the Brooklyn Bangladeshi community mourned the loss
3 of Sirajul Hoque, who passed away on Father Day after
4 falling off of scaffold in Brooklyn. At that same
5 time is when Intro 1447 and Local Law passed to help
6 increase that training, really to protect workers
7 like him and like this community.

8 Today, now, this same community is really
9 struggling to get access to these trainings by a
10 trainer who is authorized in the language that they
11 speak and with materials in Bangla. That doesn't
12 just mean lack of access to training. At this point
13 with this new law, it puts their jobs at risk and
14 their ability to continue to work at risk. So, who
15 fills this gap? You might wonder and I'll tell you
16 who. It's the immigrant led OSHA Coop Action OSH.
17 And so, this is a really good example of really how
18 this embeddedness and it's connectedness in community
19 can come together. So, Action OSH is partnered in
20 the last year or so with DRUM, Desis Rising Up and
21 Moving in working with their members in Kensington.

22 We are really proud to say that we're going to be
23 offering in partnership with them the first ever 30-
24 hour Bangla language OSHA training. We've translated
25 180-page participant manual that is for the first

1
2 time — you know, this is not information available by
3 OSHA or anybody else in this language. We were able
4 to translate it by the help of CEANYC, the
5 Cooperative Alliance of New York City with a micro-
6 grant and so, you can see how all of these things
7 connect to really push things forward. This is
8 important for Action OSH because of our own histories
9 with organizing and access for OSHA in Spanish
10 language, so it's really important and exciting for
11 us to be able to extend this branch.

12 So, we ask you — you know, it wasn't OSHA, it
13 wasn't Department of Buildings, it wasn't anybody
14 other than the connectedness of the coop ecosystem
15 and the coop community that can not only make
16 wonderful opportunities for business ownership and
17 sustainable jobs like Esmeralda will share with you
18 but also really deeply impact in ways that we can't
19 do on our own. So, we do want to ask the City
20 Council to please enhance the WCBDI imitative. We
21 are looking for an enhancement to \$4.8 billion for
22 Fiscal Year 2020. This is going to help us respond
23 to the growing interests from worker centers across
24 the city as well as different CBO's, unions, and
25 academic institutions who are interested in

developing cooperatives in their communities and to make this lasting impact.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, remind us, where is the funding coming from?

CHRISTINA FOX: This funding is coming from the City Council on a yearly basis.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. I'm just going to be asking that question over and over again.

CHRISTINA FOX: Absolutely, I'm glad to answer it.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

ESMERALDA FLORES: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

ESMERALDA FLORES: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

Is there an English testimony that is getting submitted, do we know? Do I have that. Okay, got it, thank you.

RALPH PALLADINO: Good day, my name is Ralph Palladino, 2nd Vice President Local 1549 Clerical Administrative Employees representing 14,000 city workers in the City of New York providing services in 911, 311, Medicaid and Snap eligibility and public hospitals.

1
2 We are asking you to support NYC Cares. The
3 health initiative by the Mayor which is excellent,
4 which is going to mainly target immigrants or service
5 them that will service many others and we also ask
6 you to reach out to the state in the budget process
7 to support New York City health and hospitals.

8 Medicaid funding at the state level is not
9 meeting the cost of care for an NYC H&H.
10 Disproportionate shared DSRIP funding is not fairly
11 distributed and is ending soon. So, we ask you to
12 reach out to the state and support these programs
13 now. H&H has to survive. Immigrant people need
14 health care. We don't want a pandemic, epidemic
15 because of short sidedness and people being denied
16 their health care rights.

17 The second thing, the need for improvement in
18 language services for immigrants. The influx of
19 immigrants from all over the world using city
20 services is great. This requires that communication
21 efforts be enhanced. In some cases, this can mean
22 life and death. This is especially true in health
23 care settings. I am a health care worker by the way.

24 Currently, the city contracts out to private
25 vendors interpreter and language services. It is

1
2 done by phone. This is providing inadequate service
3 to those who need this service. Obviously, we could
4 see that today. It's much better to have someone
5 here then someone on the phone.

6 The New York Immigration Coalition has documented
7 that the most efficient way to provide language
8 interpretation is face to face, especially with the
9 Asian communities. This service should be performed
10 by city employees not private phone line employees.
11 We hear stories from our members working in hospitals
12 SNAP and Medicaid about wrongful advice and
13 interpretations being performed at times. The best
14 way to have total quality control and to deliver the
15 services by using the Civil Service Interpreter Title
16 throughout the city. In New York City H&H, this can
17 be done by Client Navigators.

18 Interpreters can do face to face interpretation.
19 They also can interpret documents and assist those
20 who are applying for benefits and providing
21 application filing information.

22 I refer you to New York State Report on Social
23 Services chaired by the then Senator Rivera that
24 summarize the importance and need for interpreters.

1
2 So, finally, I just want to say because it's
3 upsetting that there are 3 million immigrants and
4 750,000 undocumented in New York City. Like the
5 Italian, Irish and other immigrants, my four fathers,
6 in the 17, 18, and 1900's who came to this country
7 legal and illegally they worked to provide services,
8 goods, and help build our city. They are tax payers
9 contributed to the economy and social life of our
10 city. They have a human right to services that their
11 taxes help provide. This includes services such as
12 health care and language interpretation. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you Mr. Palladino
14 for your words and I just want to say that I endured
15 listening to all the pieces, what I'm going to lift
16 really quick is the interpretation piece that you
17 spoke about and how important that is to have a face
18 to face conversation and to have people and
19 interpreters within the confines of spaces where
20 democracy is happening. There is this really great
21 idea that I hope you can get behind of an interpreter
22 bank, where essentially we can bring another
23 cooperative style model to hire people to do this
24 work in our communities and our community boards
25 here, everywhere, where we can kind of go and get -

1
2 So, anyway that's an idea that we've heard so far and
3 so, know that a lot of people are thinking about this
4 with you and that you are joining a chorus of New
5 Yorkers that are asking for this kind of thing.

6 RALPH PALLADINO: That is a good idea except for
7 one thing.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Oh, tell me.

9 RALPH PALLADINO: Well, to consider, the problem
10 that we're hearing in Medicaid eligibility and SNAP
11 eligibility is that you're on the phone line with
12 somebody not from the agency, does not know the rules
13 and regulations dealing with Medicaid eligibility or
14 in SNAP eligibility and sometimes that person on the
15 phone and someone has to be denied or needs other
16 documents and stuff, it's like a miscommunication
17 goes on and so, it's much better to have someone
18 who's familiar with some of the legal requirements of
19 some of these services. We don't want to get into a
20 situation where this present administration in
21 Washington, God help us, the wall building and
22 everything else and denying people rights, comes down
23 and says you know, because of mistakes that happen
24 that fraud is going on. Do you understand?

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I do.

1
2 RALPH PALLADINO: In these kind of programs and
3 not give an excuse to those wrongful people who want
4 to destroy these programs.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We're thinking of that to.

6 RALPH PALLADINO: I'm just cautioning on that.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, that's a good point.
8 We're thinking about that to.

9 RALPH PALLADINO: Because we represent the city
10 interpreted title.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It's about training as
12 well. Thank you. Is MOIA in the house? If you're
13 from MOIA, thank you, one person? Thank you so much
14 for being here. Okay, Jesse.

15 JESSE LAYMON: Thank you Council Member Menchaca
16 for holding this hearing on the City's budget and how
17 it effects immigrant communities and thank you in
18 fact for the existence of this Committee that can
19 raise these issues and hear from these voices and
20 address how the city interacts with immigrant
21 communities. It's really a critical Committee for us
22 to have.

23 My name is Jesse Laymon, I am the Director of
24 Policy at the Employment and Training Coalition. We
25 are an association that represents over 150

1
2 community-based organizations, educational
3 institutions and labor unions that provide job
4 training and employment service to more than half a
5 million New Yorkers a year and so, I'll be focusing
6 my testimony on how this years city budget can
7 address income equality and chronic poverty among New
8 York's immigrants and I have three in my written
9 remarks here, three recommendations that I'll briefly
10 summarize for you. But before I do that, I want to
11 actually draw attention that's not in our written
12 remarks because these are things that we've been
13 going to multiple committee's about but in this
14 committee, I wanted to particularly also raise that
15 several of our member organizations have worked with
16 or sponsored worker co-ops and that we think from our
17 experience and in my opinion that the growth and rise
18 of worker co-ops in New York over the last few years
19 is an inspiring and really critical development for
20 workers empowerment and rights in general and for
21 economic opportunities, but especially for workers in
22 sectors that are traditionally disenfranchised and
23 don't have a lot of power relative to their employees
24 whether that be janitorial services, health care
25 services and especially day laborers.

1
2 And so, I want to thank you for your support of
3 co-ops and for the day laborer centers and the
4 Council's support and I urge the Administration to
5 get with the program and baseline the funding that is
6 necessary to make programs like that live on.

7 So now briefly, my three recommendations around
8 this years budget number one that we have is that it
9 is time for the City to finally fully invest in
10 Bridge Programming for marginalized communities. The
11 number one thing that we hear from workforce
12 development providers is that to many of the clients
13 that come in their doors, have foundational skills
14 deficits. Literacy, numeracy, English language
15 skills. The Administration knows this. They
16 promised \$60 million for Bridge programs that would
17 address these issues a few years back. 2020 was the
18 year that they promised to get to \$60 million in
19 annual funding, so this is the year that we want them
20 to keep that promise and we want to urge the City
21 Council to put that in the budget response and fight
22 for \$60 million for Bridge programs. In particular
23 DYCD has a new Bridge program called Advance and
24 Earn, that they are proposing. That's a step in the
25 right direction, but it needs to be funded a lot more

1
2 and serve a lot more people. My second
3 recommendation, we are members of the New York City
4 coalition for adult literacy and proud to be for many
5 years and we fully support their call once again this
6 year for restoration of the full funding for Adult
7 Basic education and baselining of the \$12 million
8 that ought to have been baselined year ago and my
9 third recommendation, we were just here a couple days
10 ago with the economic development and oversight
11 hearings and we just want to highlight that any money
12 that the city spends on economic development and job
13 creation in New York needs to be primarily focused on
14 creating jobs and employment pathways for the people
15 that need it most. And that means immigrants for
16 sure who represent nearly half of New York City's
17 workforce but especially it means people who have
18 educational or other foundational skills deficits.
19 Those should be our top priority when we're spending
20 public dollars.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and I think that
22 rounds out this panel. The reason we started with
23 two economic engines, is for that reason. That we
24 could be spending money in the city to do good things
25 but if we're not focused on the equality question

1
2 that I think this Mayor was talking about a few years
3 ago when he first ran, we're not focused in public
4 for the public good and I think you just ratted out
5 perfect that that's where we need to be focusing our
6 attention, our funding and I couldn't agree with you
7 more. And so, that's the case we have to make across
8 the board. So, thank you. That was a fun hearing.

9 JESSE LAYMON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And a lot of new
11 legislative ideas came out of that for me. Thank
12 you. Okay, thank you so much. Our next panel is
13 Lena Cohen from United Neighborhood Houses of New
14 York, Ira Yankwitt, Caroline Iosso, Guillermo
15 Rodriguez, and Venessa Dell. You can come on up
16 please. I'm feeling we're going to be talking about
17 adult literacy.

18 And if you could raise your hands if you are
19 still waiting to testify. I just want to see who is
20 still here, great, stay patient. Thank you so much,
21 I hope you are enjoying the conversation. Let's go,
22 who wants to start?

23 IRA YANKWITT: So, I just want to begin by
24 thanking you Chair Menchaca for the opportunity to
25 testify. My name is Ira Yankwitt. I am the

1
2 Executive Director of the Literacy Assistance Center
3 and today I will be testifying on behalf of the New
4 York City Coalition for Adult Literacy or NYCCAL. As
5 you already are well aware, today in New York City,
6 there are approximately 2.2 million adults who lack
7 English language proficiency, a high school diploma,
8 or both. And over 75 percent of these are
9 immigrants. Yet public funding for adult literacy
10 education is so limited that fewer than 4 percent of
11 these 2.2 million adults are able to access basic
12 education, high school equivalency, or English
13 language classes in any given year.

14 NYCCAL wants to start by thanking you Council
15 Member Menchaca for being a champion for these 2.2
16 million adults and for your steadfast leadership on
17 this issue, really from day one of the time you
18 entered the Council and we wish to express our deep
19 appreciation to the Council and the Mayor for the \$12
20 million expansion of adult literacy funding and
21 services over these past three years. Unfortunately,
22 one again, Mayor de Blasio has failed to include this
23 \$12 million in his Preliminary Budget, imperiling the
24 education of the 8,500 adult students in New York
25 City whose programs rely on it. Moreover, as a

1
2 result of changes in the federal Workforces
3 Innovation and Opportunity Act which puts an
4 increased emphasis on employment outcomes and
5 eliminates funding for standalone English language
6 Civics classes, an estimated 8,000 immigrant students
7 who attended WIOA-funded civics classes in New York
8 City prior to this past July, were displaced or
9 deemed inappropriate for WIOA-funded classes as of
10 July 1st. It's time for the Council and the
11 Administration to stand up for the thousands of New
12 Yorkers in need and baseline the \$12 million in
13 addition to the \$3.5 million currently baselined to
14 support DYCH funded adult literacy programs.

15 When it comes to funding for adult literacy,
16 there are really three issues. The first is the
17 paucity of the funding itself, which shuts the door
18 to over 95 percent of those in need. The second is
19 the unreliable nature of the current funding streams,
20 which poses a continuous threat to program stability,
21 staff continuity, and the ability to fully achieve
22 program and policy goals. And the third is the
23 inadequacy of the funding formulas and rates, which
24 undermine programs ability to provide the full array
25 and depth of services that students need and deserve.

1
2 My organization recently release a report
3 entitled Investing in Quality A Blueprint for Adult
4 Literacy Programs and Funders. Funded by DYCD, the
5 report details 14 building blocks of a comprehensive,
6 community-based adult literacy program, identifies
7 the resources needed to fully implement the building
8 blocks, and includes a first of its kind cost model.
9 And based on our cost model, we found that community-
10 based adult literacy programs would need to have
11 their current funding rates increased by at least
12 four times in order to fully implement the components
13 and services outlined in the report. While this
14 might sound like a big leap, we know that at the
15 current funding rates, man of the critical program
16 components that we identify, such as full-time
17 teachers, counseling students, support services,
18 workforce transition services, professional
19 development and planning for staff, and integrated
20 technology are often compromised.

21 NYCCAL is calling on the City Council and the
22 Mayor to take two crucial steps toward creating a
23 city that truly provides quality education
24 opportunity for all. First, restore and baseline the
25 \$12 million for DYCD-funded adult literacy services

and combine these funds with the existing \$3.5 million in baseline DYCD-funding.

As we enter the final year under the current DYCD contracts, programs can use some of the additional baseline funds on critical short-term resources. For example, in FY 2020 programs could hire a Census 2020 Coordinator to develop curriculum, educate, and do outreach to students and their families to better insure that the most marginalized and vulnerable New Yorkers get counted; or programs could purchase additional technology needed, expand case management capacity, receive an enhancement that incentivizes hiring full time teachers or pay for additional professional development.

Second, as DYCD begins to draft it's next RFP for multi-year funding scheduled to be released in the coming year, commit to funding programs at a rate that will better enable them to provide high quality, comprehensive services that adult students deserve. Currently, DYCD programs provide less than \$1,000 per student. NYCCAL is calling on DYCD to establish a rate of n less than double that amount or \$2,000 for every student. While this rate falls short of the level of funding called for in the Investing in

1
2 Quality Report, NYCCAL is sensitive to the need to
3 balance quantity with quality. With baselined
4 funding of \$15.5 million and a rate of \$2,000 per
5 student, DYCD programs would be able to serve over
6 7,500 students a year, maintaining capacity and
7 increasing the quality of services.

8 Finally, should the \$12 million be baselined
9 NYCCAL urges the Council to work with the
10 Administration to ensure that all programs that
11 received funding for adult literacy in 2019,
12 including those funded with discretionary dollars,
13 are able to secure the funding they need to continue
14 to provide their programing.

15 Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you IRA for that and
17 I know that the Administration said a couple things
18 about Adult Literacy and actually, you know, I'll
19 come back and ask the panel to see how we can openly
20 discuss this in a way that sets us up for a baseline.
21 Thank you.

22 VENESSA DELL: Hi, good afternoon. My name is
23 Venessa Dell and I am actually an immigration
24 attorney at Make the Road New York although I will be
25 talking about adult literacy as well. So, thank you

1
2 for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of
3 Make the Road and our 23,000 members. We would like
4 to thank the City Council for supporting an increase
5 in funding for immigrant legal services especially
6 over the past two year of unprecedented federal
7 attacks on the immigrant community. This funding has
8 greatly increased representation, but the need
9 continues to grow with more cases becoming
10 complicated and hard one.

11 Based on the experiences of our staff and
12 communities, we are making the following
13 recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget.
14 First, Make the Road and our partners requesting
15 urgent City Council funding for a Raids Rapid
16 Response Initiative to address increased ICE
17 enforcement impacting the communities we serve. This
18 funding would provide emergency legal support to
19 detained communities members at eminent risk of
20 deportation who did not qualify for the NYIFUP
21 program.

22 Second, we urge the City Council to increase
23 NYIFUF funding from \$10 million to \$16.6 million
24 Fiscal Year 2020 and immediately increase current
25 funding by \$1.5 million in light of additional

1
2 detained dockets at Varick Street Immigration Court
3 beginning this week. At current funding levels,
4 NYIFUP providers will only staff three out of the
5 five dockets at Varick leaving many who qualify for
6 the program without legal representation.

7 Third, we ask that the City Council allocate \$5
8 million to renew and increase the critical funding
9 awarded last year under the Low Wage Worker
10 Initiative. Without renewal, vital services will
11 need to be phased out across the city.

12 Fourth, we request that the City Council increase
13 its allocation for the Access Health Initiative to
14 \$2.5 million and maintain its \$1.5 million allocation
15 for the Immigrant Health Initiative. Both programs
16 allow Make the Road and other community-based
17 organizations to reach immigrant families about their
18 rights and available resources and address health
19 care disparities.

20 Fifth and finally, we ask that the City Council
21 restore and baseline \$12 million in adult literacy
22 funding so that thousands of immigrants can continue
23 to learn English and access economic opportunity.
24 Without restoration of this funding 8,500 students
25 will lose their classes this year.

1
2 Thank you again for the time today and your
3 ongoing leadership. Make the Road New York
4 appreciates our partnership with everyone on this
5 Committee and your partnership to ensure the respect
6 and dignity of immigrant families in New York City.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that
8 comprehensive review of all the programs and requests
9 for the baselining and where it is. Thank you.

10 LENA COHEN: Good afternoon, my name is Lena
11 Cohen. I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood
12 Houses, the federation of 42 settlement houses across
13 New York State. Thank you Chair Menchaca for having
14 us here today to talk about specifically adult
15 literacy and how it impacts our immigrant communities
16 across the city.

17 With your leadership we have been able to make a
18 lot of progress throughout the past few fiscal years
19 and each year as you know, the Mayor eliminates the
20 \$12 million for community adult literacy programs and
21 of course the Council has been essential in helping
22 us get that back and maintaining it. So, as my
23 colleagues have said before, we're hoping the Council
24 can help us baseline that funding as well as address
25 the reimbursement rates issues that prevent providers

1
2 from really being able to provide as high quality of
3 the service with the funds provided through DYCD.

4 So, there's more information on those issues in the
5 testimony and I actually want to shift to focus on
6 how adult literacy funding can be used for more than
7 just improving workforce development outcomes.

8 Really, adult literacy is geared toward improving
9 a individuals ability to integrate into all aspects
10 of their society whether it be through civic means,
11 social means, or economic means.

12 Further, adult literacy really does provide a
13 window for talking about civic engagement
14 effectively. When you have a classroom full of
15 students that are looking for ways to not only
16 improve their literacy skills to support their
17 families, their children, talk to government
18 officials, health administrators, they are also
19 looking for ways to build community power and speak
20 up and be able to hold their elected officials
21 accountable in a very transparent way.

22 So, that's where we see adult literacy programs
23 coming in as a key player in this goal that we all
24 share to get every single New Yorker counted. As you
25 said at the beginning of the hearing, there is so

1
2 much at stake over \$800 billion worth of federal
3 funding's over the next ten years. New York cannot
4 stand to lose any of that and that's why United
5 Neighborhood Houses really sees the role that
6 settlement houses and other CBO's play in promoting
7 the 2020 Census as a key way to reaching the hardest
8 account communities. We believe a great place to
9 start is through adult literacy. If we're able to
10 secure baseline funds and really make sure that that
11 entire \$12 million goes directly to the DYCD funded
12 adult literacy contracts, then our programs will be
13 able to plan to have a Census coordinator and hold
14 community forums that express the importance of the
15 Census through culturally fluent means.

16 So, you know, we're prepared to work with our
17 members. We've already started a pretty
18 comprehensive outreach campaign to use what resources
19 they have right now to address the 2020 Census and
20 all of our members see the emerging of adult literacy
21 programs as they relate to supporting their
22 communities and connecting with elected officials as
23 a way to lift up the importance of every single voice
24 in their community.

1
2 So, we're excited to work with you on that and
3 please let us know how we can partner with you moving
4 forward.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. The only think
6 I want to lift up on what you said is the connection
7 of the Census piece and I'm asking everybody that
8 question because that needs to stay at the front of
9 the work as we bring the funding in. And so, I'm
10 glad to hear that adult literacy programs are already
11 thinking about Census and integrating it, but that
12 can't happen without funding to really support that
13 work as fragile as it is right now without the rate
14 increases. What we don't want to do is break the
15 system and so, thank you for really laying that out
16 for us and I'm seeing nods across the table and we're
17 not alone in that and that's part of the argument
18 that we have to make to not just the Mayor's Office
19 of Immigrant Affairs, but the Mayor himself and his
20 OMB people. Great, thank you.

21 LENA COHEN: Great thank you.

22 CAROLINE IOSSO: I'm going to have our student
23 testify first.

24 GUILLERMO RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon everyone,
25 Chair Menchaca and everyone. I'll try my testimony.

1
2 My name is Guillermo Rodriguez. I started coming
3 to OBT in 2017. Since then, I attend English, Basic
4 Computer, and financial literacy classes. My
5 experience at OBT has always been great. I have
6 learned to speak and read English, develop my
7 relationship skills, Microsoft Office, how to save
8 money, and setting goals. I am grateful for the OBT
9 school because they offer us the opportunity to study
10 and develop our skills for a good and better future.

11 Thank you for listening.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, thank you so
13 much for your testimony today and representing all
14 the students that our initiative is funding right now
15 in the city. Thank you.

16 GUILLERMO RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And do you have your
18 testimony as well, will you be giving it?

19 CAROLINE IOSSO: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, great.

21 CAROLINE IOSSO: Well, thank you so much
22 Guillermo and thank you very much Chair Menchaca for
23 having this hearing and for allowing me the time to
24 speak. My name is Caroline Iosso and I am the
25 Director of Community and Government Affairs at

1
2 Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow. We are a proud
3 member of the New York City Coalition for Adult
4 Literacy and here to also advocate for that \$12
5 million to be restored and baselined.

6 OBT is one of New York City's largest providers
7 of workforce development and education services for
8 opportunity youth and adults. We also provide
9 immigration services for those seeking naturalization
10 and we serve over 4,000 youth and adults annually
11 across six sites in Brooklyn and Queens. Each year
12 we serve over 600 immigrants through our adult
13 literacy programs. Participants come to class
14 everyday after long multiple or overnight work shifts
15 to build the skills that will allow them to access
16 living wage jobs. Our city is home to 3 million
17 foreign-born residents, approximately 49 percent of
18 which have limited English proficiency and the City's
19 immigrant population comprises 45 percent of the
20 city's workforce and yet despite working at the same
21 or greater rates as native-born New Yorkers,
22 immigrants median earnings are \$15,000 lower than
23 native born residents. And we know that education
24 has always served as a pathway to economic success in
25

our countries and for immigrants. It is an absolutely vital vehicle to a middle skill job.

As a member of NYCCAL, we join them in calling for the City Council and Mayor to take two steps towards providing educational opportunity for all. That's restoring and baselining the \$12 million. As a provider we see the consequences of the lack of baselining every day and for each cohort. Not having secure funding means that we cannot promise that our teachers will have a job next cohort and then we have to spend time and resources hiring and training new teachers and we may lose that continuity of education that is so valuable for our students.

And then secondly, the city must commit to funding programs at a rate that really represents the true cost of doing these programs. We receive \$928 per participant and according to my colleagues research, the actual cost is over \$7,000 per seat.

So, thank you so much for this opportunity to testify. We are hopeful and grateful for your support in this budget negotiation. And I also just want to highlight what Lena said about the importance of adult literacy as more than just a workforce development, part of a workforce development goal. I

1
2 think it's so much about being able to participate
3 fully in your community and that's part of what we
4 really value at OBT and with our students. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Awesome, thank you for
7 that and really the only questions I have before we
8 move to the next panel is really the integration of
9 the Mayors Office and their work around Census. Have
10 you all met with any of the Census folks at the
11 Mayor's Office? Yeah, so is there a line that's
12 open?

13 LENA COHEN: Yeah, so UNH along with being a
14 member of the New York Coalition for Adult Literacy,
15 we're also part of New York Counts 2020. And we've
16 had several conversations with Deputy Mayor Phil
17 Thompson and we've also been in touch with the
18 recently appointed Census person, Julie Menin and you
19 know, with their leadership we have been able to
20 secure that \$4.3 million which is excellent; however,
21 like you said at the very beginning of this hearing,
22 we don't know how that money is going to reach
23 community-based organizations.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, and it's really not.
25 \$4.3 is for the staffing of the office and so, that's

1
2 the conundrum, that's the problem that we're in right
3 now. And the \$40 million that we're going to be
4 asking the Mayor is going to be the CBO dollars and
5 then the \$40 million from the state that's in the
6 assembly in the Senate right now, hopefully it comes
7 out in the Governor, part of that will come to the
8 city as well hopefully for CBO injection. So, yeah,
9 I'm glad you're talking on that. That was my
10 ultimate question about that integration because I
11 think that's going to make the case for baseline
12 stronger and I think we need to really organize that
13 conversation as we move through the budget process.

14 LENA COHEN: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, thank you. Go
16 NYCCAL. Next, we have from the Bronx Defenders, we
17 have a NYIFUP panel here. Zoe Levine, Ellen
18 Pachnanda from the Brooklyn Defender Services, and
19 Hasan Shafiqullah. You're going to have to give me
20 your name again, you're going to have to say your
21 last name again Hasan from Legal Aid and then Mario
22 Russell from the Catholic Charities. If you can come
23 up.

24 The dream team. Alright, let's hear it. Who
25 wants to start?

1
2 ELLEN PACHNANDA: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Ellen Pachnanda and I am a Supervising Attorney in
4 the Immigration Practice at the Brooklyn Defender
5 Services. First of all, I want to thank the City
6 Council Committee on Immigration and Chair Menchaca
7 for this opportunity to testify about the impact of
8 the last year of aggressive immigration enforcement,
9 attacks on due process in immigration court and the
10 need for increased funding in order to meet the needs
11 of the communities we serve. And I also appreciate
12 having listened to prior testimony and comments from
13 the Council on your ongoing recognition of NYIFUP
14 which is the practice I'm in and our role in fighting
15 for due process for all and thank you for your
16 continued support.

17 We are here today to ask for increased funding.
18 Specifically, we submitted a joint request for \$16.6
19 million dollars split evenly across the three
20 providers to fully fund NYIFUP and fulfill this
21 city's commitment that no family is torn apart by
22 deportation just because they could not afford a
23 lawyer.

24 In my office, Brooklyn Defender Services, we have
25 an immigration practice that has grown and grown in

1 large part thanks to the city's support. We now have
2 27 attorneys, we have social workers, we have
3 paralegals, we are working consistently at all ends
4 of immigration speaking about our youth and
5 communities team which represents Brooklyn residents
6 in their applications for lawful immigration status
7 and in defending against deportation in the non-
8 detained removal proceedings. Additionally, we have
9 Padilla team that works to work with our criminal
10 defense attorneys and advise our clients of
11 immigration consequences and also NYIFUP, which we
12 work with in representing in the first in the nation
13 public defender program that exists representing
14 detained immigrants in removal proceedings starting
15 at Varick Court. We will speak fully about whats
16 been happening at Varick Street, but I'd like to
17 highlight now what has been as this Council has
18 recognized increased ICE enforcement across this city
19 and I would like to know where this is beginning and
20 where we've seen the largest growth is a 1,700
21 percent increase in ICE enforcement in courthouse
22 arrests. And what this does mean as was discussed
23 earlier today, is that immigrants in our city are
24
25

1
2 being picked up when they have open criminal cases.
3 Often times these are low-level offenses.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, define open, because
5 this is really important. An open criminal case.
6 What does that mean to someone that doesn't know
7 anything about courts?

8 ELLEN PACHNANDA: Yes, thank you Chair. What it
9 means is that there is no conviction. It means that
10 that individual has not had the opportunity to defend
11 their case. Has not had the opportunity with the due
12 process affords in a criminal court, and how it lends
13 over into immigration court is then that individual –
14 it's the catch 22 if you will Chair, is that
15 individual is then forced to try to exercise the due
16 process rights in criminal court and remain detained
17 because ICE is not using any of their discretion and
18 they are picking up individuals that just briefly, if
19 I could highlight. They are picking up individuals
20 such as one of our clients who was severely
21 cognitively impaired suffering from seizures, picked
22 up on the way to an open criminal case, and despite
23 all the efforts, to say come on just release this
24 individual, we had to go into federal court just to
25 get an immigration judge to give this individual a

1
2 bond hearing. He suffered prolonged detention
3 because of the decision to pick someone up in the
4 middle of a criminal case and then the decision to
5 detain that individual and the decision to detain
6 someone who was that severely ill. And this is
7 continuing, and the numbers alone suggest that it's
8 only going to grow, and it is only with the continued
9 support of this Council that we can continue to
10 represent immigrants who really are suffering.

11 Just yesterday, Chair, we had a client who is a
12 young mother, a mother of a five-year-old child, who
13 walking out of criminal court in Brooklyn, in
14 daylight, was taken, seized by ICE officers and if it
15 weren't for the presence of having unfortunately this
16 team that could respond and advocate for her, she
17 would be sitting in jail not able to pick up her
18 child from school. That's how important this is.
19 These are low-level offenses, these are immigrants
20 across this city and if we are going to stand up for
21 due process for all, we have to increase the funding
22 here, so that we can increase the representation and
23 so that no one is missed simply because we refuse to
24 provide this funding.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, thank you for
3 that and I think this is part of the story we need to
4 tell as we go through the budget process and the one
5 question I have and I'll have some questions as we go
6 through the panel is the new light of the new Judges
7 coming through Varick and essentially we can build
8 NYIFUP. This is a Council funded initiative, we
9 built it with that kind of original flow and a number
10 of people that could possibly get processed and so,
11 now with video conferencing and some other situations
12 like new judges that are appearing this year, this
13 week, that's going to increase. And so, I want to
14 hear that throughout, if you can point to that but
15 that's what's making the need for funding greater.
16 So, that we have more lawyers because there is going
17 to be more people in front of judges. Our New
18 Yorkers are getting picked up on the streets like you
19 said, the way that they are in broad daylight, with
20 open cases, not convictions and they're getting
21 funneled through this deportation machine.

22 And so, just thank you for laying that out.

23 ELLEN PACHNANDA: Yes.

24 ZOE LEVINE: Good afternoon Chair and to the
25 Committee. Thank you very much for convening this

1
2 hearing today and for the opportunity to speak on
3 behalf of the Bronx Defenders. My name is Zoe
4 Levine, I am the Legal Director of the Immigration
5 Practice at the Bronx Defenders and I am proud to
6 represent my colleagues and my clients who are
7 fighting the deportation machine every day and as we
8 speak.

9 I just want to follow up on some of the things
10 that Ellen has talked about with respect to the
11 NYIFUP program and that you Chair have raised about
12 our work we've seen at the Varick Court. As you've
13 said, we've seen dramatic changes in the way that the
14 immigration court at Varick is functioning and have
15 had serious consequences for our program and which
16 requires substantial commitment of resources from the
17 city to address.

18 There is three sort of main areas that I'll
19 address very briefly. We've seen an expansion in the
20 detained court, we've seen the change to video
21 technology for the respondents to appear and we've
22 seen sudden and dramatic shifts in the way that
23 initial appearances are occurring. So, starting with
24 the most sort of pressing and immediate concern is
25

1
2 the expansion of the immigration of court which is
3 starting this week.

4 As you mentioned, we for years had three judges
5 sitting at Varick Street Court and we have now gone
6 up to five judges who are hearing detained cases at
7 Varick Street. This change was ruled out in a
8 chaotic fashion without transparency to legal
9 providers. We've had a long-standing model of
10 staffing three intake shifts per week and we've had a
11 universal representation model where we able to
12 represent all of the respondents, all of the clients
13 that are coming through on those three intake shifts.
14 But now with the increase to five we are not able to
15 manage those additional intake shifts and as we speak
16 starting today there are people who are slipping
17 through the cracks. Someone mentioned earlier in one
18 of the panels that the constituent service line,
19 you'll start to hear it ringing because there
20 families are desperately concerned about their
21 detained relatives and they want to know, is the City
22 truly providing universal representation? Are they
23 going to get an attorney through NYIFUP? And right
24 now, we don't have an answer for all of those
25 families.

1
2 We've also seen as a result of this expansion,
3 that the court is rapidly changing court dates set
4 and established trial dates moving them up from
5 expected trial dates that are months away to ones
6 that are merely days or week away, which severely
7 impacts our ability to robustly defend these clients.

8 The second point was related to the change to
9 video conferencing. In June of last year, ICE had
10 suddenly and without warning changed its policy of
11 bringing clients to court and change to a video
12 technology system where our clients watch their
13 proceedings unfold from a jail cell by video. This
14 means that we cannot speak to our clients
15 confidentially before, during, or after their
16 hearings. We have confronted constant technical
17 problems due to limited phone lines, difficulty with
18 translation and failing technological systems as
19 extending proceedings my months in some cases.

20 Both of these changes have dramatically effected
21 our ability to maintain our intake model and manage
22 the huge influx in enforcement in cases that we see
23 at NYIFUP.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and I think
25 what's important here is I just looked at my opening

1 statement, and the way that I introduced the New
2 York, our incredible NYIFUP program, I called it a
3 Universal Representation Program. I can't call it
4 that anymore after Monday. It would be a lie for us
5 to say we're providing universal representation as of
6 Monday with all these new cases that you're
7 presenting to us. So, I think that's the point here
8 right now, and I'm taking that incredibly serious and
9 I'm going to take this back to our colleagues, the
10 Committee, the Speaker, the Finance Committee, the
11 BNT, that's the new line. We don't have a universal
12 representation model anymore and that's the funding
13 question and that's why we're having a budget
14 hearing. So, thank you so much for that analysis.
15 Hasan?

17 HASAN SHAFQULLAH: So, good afternoon. My name
18 is Hasan Shafqullah. I am the Attorney in Charge of
19 the Immigration Law Unit at the Legal Aid Society.
20 I'll be speaking about NYIFUP but a couple of other
21 projects as well. So, I'm not going to reiterate
22 what my colleagues have said, but I'll talk about the
23 federal work that we're doing, all three providers
24 are doing in NYIFUP where our clients who are subject
25 to mandatory detention or language and detention and

1
2 even though the statute says that they are not
3 entitled to bond under due process, we've all had
4 successes in getting people out. Even all three
5 providers have had U.S. citizens who had no business
6 even being in detention in the first place and if it
7 wasn't for NYIFUP and if it wasn't for going into
8 federal court in some instances to prove it, they
9 would have been deported.

10 Just last week, we had an incompetent client who
11 wasn't mentally competent to stand trial, who was in
12 detention. We managed to get him out only by going
13 into federal court and so, we're not only in
14 immigration court but also going into the federal
15 judiciary to seek relief for our clients.

16 So, the NYIFUP federal work is important but
17 there is also and I'm speaking here for Legal Aid, we
18 are doing a lot of work outside of NYIFUP and federal
19 courts. We just one a class action regarding on
20 special immigrant juvenile status on last week
21 Friday. We're preparing ICE in the courts litigation
22 challenging the abduction of our clients from the
23 court houses. We're preparing on public charge
24 litigation. Just various things that we're doing and
25 we're also going into federal court on individual

1 cases doing petitions for review outside of the
2 NYIFUP context and all of that we're seeking support
3 for as well and that's in the written testimony.
4

5 In the ICARE context, the providers are asking
6 for an increase up to \$3.9 million total as a
7 collaborative. For Legal Aid we're asking to be
8 fully funded going up to \$822,000 to fully fund our
9 current ICARE staff and then the last in my time is
10 about IOI which is not a Council Initiative but just
11 a flag for the Council that with the expansion of
12 IOI, the city has really increased its investment in
13 immigration legal services, which is great and they
14 did that without an RFP process and part of that was
15 through subcontracting. Legal Aid currently
16 subcontracts with 23 non-profits.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And let's just walk
18 through that because that's really important.
19 Essentially, they took IOI and then they expanded IOI
20 without the RFP. And what makes that important is
21 that they didn't go through a public process to
22 change the goals of the initiative, the goals of the
23 representation and so, that's really important for us
24 to hear about the step they took and what they can do
25 to kind of remediate that step.

1
2 HASAN SHAFQULLAH: Right, so I mean a couple of
3 things. So, the goal with IOI is to provide non-
4 detained immigration legal services. And so, the
5 city is doing that through this program, but the
6 process was not entirely transparent, in some groups
7 were able to come in and other not. Legal Aid right
8 now is — so, we were exposed to a lot of liability
9 for our subcontractors about \$3.5 million and so,
10 that's a really uncomfortable position for us to be
11 in, just institutionally, but in turn fiscally and in
12 terms of performance, so I'm just flagging that.

13 I don't have an ask around that but just making
14 sure that that's out there.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You mentioned ICARE as
16 well and essentially, we just keep doing what we are
17 doing on ICARE. IS there any need that has
18 increased?

19 HASAN SHAFQULLAH: Yeah, so right now from the
20 Council we're getting about \$2 million as a coalition
21 and we're asking for an increase of \$3.9 million.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: From the \$2 to \$3.9 or
23 \$3.9 on top of \$2?

24 HASAN SHAFQULLAH: \$2 to \$3.9 million, that's
25 increasing to that amount.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: He has testimony, if we can get that. I think you mentioned that, right.

HASAN SHAFQULLAH: Yeah, so that's in there.

Part of that is to make the various whole and part of it is to actually increase capacity for unaccompanied minor children.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that.

MARIO RUSSELL: Good afternoon Chair Menchaca.

Thank you very much for having me here today. My name is Mario Russell. I am the Director of Immigrant and Refugee Services for Catholic Charities. Work we have been doing for over four decades. We have of course spoken so much and so often with you and with this Council about our work for which we're grateful for your support of course.

I just want to speak briefly today about a few specific area of need that Catholic Charities has been working on recently and is really looking to this Council for some guidance and support. We have seen and we have heard immigrants and refugees lives so deeply changed and continuing to change be the long time residents, undocumented families seeking a way forward, bread winners who are being arrested and detained and deported, mixed status families who are

1
2 in crisis, refugees and asylees in need of support
3 and care, men and women and children unaccompanied or
4 accompanied who are seeking to take the first steps
5 towards a safe integration. Individuals in court
6 proceedings who have no representation, or simply
7 persons who find themselves in need of appellate and
8 federal representation. We try now to marshal the
9 support and response that they need and again,
10 thanking you in advance for your support going
11 forward and, in the past, as well. The need is
12 great, and we need a response that has your support.

13 I want for this reason just to highlight very
14 briefly four areas that complement the conversation
15 we have been having so far and, in some cases,
16 amplify it a little bit.

17 So, the four areas that I'd like to bring to your
18 attention. The first, is what we call the
19 Immigration Court Helpdesk. The Immigration Court
20 Helpdesk is a program that's relatively new and is an
21 important one for New York. It is a non-detained
22 deportation counterpart on a modest scale to the
23 screening process that exists with NYIFUP and needs in
24 our opinion expanded support and coverage. It was
25 created to assist immigrants in removal proceedings

1
2 in order for them to understand their rights and
3 teaching them to navigate the immigration system a
4 little bit more effectively. At the New York
5 Immigration Court today, Catholic Charities provide
6 the immigrants who are facing removal with a few
7 things; information about the immigration court
8 process, how to access and utilize available
9 resources, and of course, referrals to competent
10 representation.

11 The principle purpose of the Immigration Court
12 Helpdesk is to give immigrants support, information
13 and guidance. Since 2016, August when it was begun,
14 over 2,500 immigrants who are facing removal have
15 received this kind of assistance. Many also
16 importantly, we have given pro se assistance and
17 filing over 600 cases that would in this case, allow
18 them to meet a statutory deadline.

19 We currently offer ten days of this presence at
20 the immigration court and we think it's important to
21 be able to double that presence.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can I ask you a question
23 about that?

24 MARIO RUSSELL: Sure.
25

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You're asking for about \$200,000 from the Council or from somebody. It's probably going to have to be the Council. It's just the way things are going, and the current funding to the Immigration Court Helpdesk, where is that coming from?

MARIO RUSSELL: That's the Department of Justice.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Department of Justice.

MARIO RUSSELL: Right.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it, so this would be an addition to the Department of Justice funding to amplify from your current ten days across the board.

MARIO RUSSELL: That is correct. From ten to about sixteen or twenty days.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Sixteen to twenty days, got it. I see it here, okay, and then you're working in conjunction with NYIFUP and you're integrated in that?

MARIO RUSSELL: I mean it's connected; they are slightly different population because this is a non-detained.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Oh, this is non-detained, right, okay.

1
2 MARIO RUSSELL: But what's important about this
3 is that the judges like this program and therefore
4 still receive the support of the DOJ because it helps
5 them on an efficiency side.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right, but that's what
7 they say about NYIFUP to, which is great. Though,
8 I'm not sure if they say it now, I don't know. We
9 should ask them when we see them next.

10 MARIO RUSSELL: It changes with the month, but I
11 think we're still in the zone for the moment, but I
12 think it's a really important program particularly
13 because a lot of immigrants are referred there by the
14 judges. If that did not happen, they might also miss
15 the opportunity to enter the IOI support of the MOIA,
16 whatever other structure exist in the city networked,
17 including pro bono of course.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And so, walk me through
19 the other pieces really quick.

20 MARIO RUSSELL: Sure, I'll be very brief. What
21 we're also proposing is an Appellate and Federal
22 Litigation Representation Program. Really again, the
23 bottom line here is and again my colleagues here all
24 do it probably at hawk, right as needed but there is
25 needs to be systematic attention given to the need

1
2 for representation at the BIA levels and then what
3 happens after that? If is a reality we're facing
4 with 103,000 or more cases pending in the immigration
5 courts, those and many cases will end up before the
6 BIA. And I think presenting well structured, well
7 thought out, well-reasoned, dignified cases is going
8 to make the difference, perhaps in a short-term
9 strategy and more hopefully with a long-term strategy
10 where changes come. Especially given that the laws
11 or at least to the extent that the Attorney General
12 has attempted to write restrict interpretation of
13 domestic violence, eligibility or gang violence
14 eligibility or other areas where we really need to
15 maintain what those standards are under statutory law
16 and if not international law. And I think this is
17 where we bring that forwards.

18 A third area and in a sense it's a reiteration
19 also here is what we would call our emergency action
20 and enforcement response. I'll be blunt, about seven
21 or eight months ago, I got a call from Sister
22 Elizabeth in the Bronx, who said that the next day,
23 Natalio P. was going to check in on his own and he
24 wanted to do it because he didn't want ICE coming to
25 his house. He has seven U.S. citizen children under

1
2 the age of 15. One with Down Syndrome and another
3 with other medical disabilities and undocumented
4 wife. Classics case, what do we do? Of course, we
5 went within the next morning, but in a sense, it was
6 a losing battle. Right, there is a zero-tolerance
7 policy in effect with ICE. He was brought to New
8 Jersey and we've been honestly -

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, he was taken during
10 his check-in?

11 MARIO RUSSELL: That's exactly what happened.
12 The next morning at eight o'clock, you know, in
13 Bergen County, but again, the value of Sister
14 Elizabeth's call at least allowed us to enter the
15 scene. Now, ideally, what we propose is can we catch
16 so to speak, people who have ICE check-ins well
17 before. So, you can marshal arguments, you can
18 prepare, you can design a strategy. But even this
19 alone, yesterday, he was released. Right, why, we
20 well, we a did a habeas corpus there, we tried in the
21 southern district, bond hearing. So, one thing led
22 to the next, again, significant resources expended.
23 We're all to some extent having to learn this on the
24 fly but I would submit this is an incredibly deep and
25 important area and I would say that when we talk

1
2 about family separation and we all navigated the
3 summers family separation crisis. This is a hidden
4 family separation crisis of a much larger magnitude.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, it's well known to
6 us in New York and I think why we need to keep
7 hammering the conversation around. Family separation
8 isn't just happening on the boarder, it's happening
9 here in our own streets.

10 MARIO RUSSELL: And the strategy is Council
11 Member I would say, it's clear, detain the bread
12 winner and see if you can engage in a war of
13 attrition with the family. That's what it is.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, that's the battle.
15 That's the battle strategy of this Administration.

16 MARIO RUSSELL: So, I know my time is up. I will
17 respectfully end here but of course the last item I
18 would draw your attention to is really the need for
19 support in case management, job development
20 assistance of asylum seekers. It's an area we talked
21 about before. We have a plan that we can share and
22 bring forward, but the notion of bringing that
23 integrative support to people who are in this pending
24 status now for five, six years at this point, I think
25 is really critical to the health of those

1
2 individuals, their families, and to some extent of
3 course our own society.

4 Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that and I
6 think that the ultimate question here is if we want
7 universal representation on the detained in a
8 detained docket, detained population, and non-
9 detained but really worth looking at removals as a
10 whole for these two populations, the question I have
11 for all and really the whole room, is what is that
12 going to cost? What are we talking about here and
13 so, I'm hoping you can work with us to really develop
14 that as a whole. Because these are different
15 components of the larger strategy as we build our
16 machine against the deportation machine. Our machine
17 based out of love and compassion and family unity.
18 And so, I think that's the kind of thing you take
19 away right now is this is the real, it's happening
20 now. It's been happening for months already but now
21 its our turn as a city in this budget process to name
22 it and then fund it. Okay, thank you.

23 PANEL: Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Next, we have Howard Shih
25 Asian American Federation, Maya Gurung Adhikaar,

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2 Tsering Lama from Adhikaar, The Chinese Progressive
3 Association, Mae Lee, The Union Community Health
4 Center Coalition Against Smoking in Immigrant
5 Communities, Dr. Venessa Salcedo, and Naumi Feldman
6 the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center and
7 Coalition Against Smoking in Immigrant Communities.

8 I think we have another chair coming, there we
9 go. Everyone should have their chair. Okay, who
10 would like to start?

11 HOWARD SHIH: So, I would like to thank Chair
12 Menchaca and the Committee for Immigration for the
13 support of the immigrants across the city. We also
14 want to thank you for your support for our work.
15 Because of your support, we've been able to do a lot
16 of advocacy for immigrants. So, we've been able to
17 advocate for food delivery workers around the E-bike
18 issue with the Deliver Justice coalition. We've been
19 able to push through the language access, expand the
20 number of languages that uncovered a couple years
21 ago, and you know, we've been discussion about how we
22 can look for innovative ways to fully implement that
23 promise. And also, we were able to hold media
24 advisories and media briefings with — I thank media
25 about the public charge as well.

1
2 So, all of your support is really important in
3 making sure Asian Americans are part of the
4 conversation around immigration.

5 What I'd like to highlight and that's in our
6 written testimony is the fact that you know, there is
7 a lot of work that needs to be done. One of the
8 things I want to highlight is that one of the
9 challenges in the Asian community is connecting our
10 immigrant communities with the investments that the
11 city and state has made in immigrant legal services.
12 A lot of times there is a gap between where the
13 services are and where our communities are living and
14 so, through LDP we've been able to show how
15 connecting and funding community-based organizations,
16 they've been able to connect those people to the
17 resources that they need to the immigrant legal
18 services. So, we're able to through that program
19 meet and exceed all of the program deliverable goals
20 and it just demonstrates the tremendous demand for
21 those services and the need to be able to provide
22 those services through our member agencies and
23 through the CBO's.

24 So, one of the challenges is that the LDP is not
25 a baselined fund from the state and so, we're facing

1 challenges in sort of maintaining the capacity and
2 the gains that we've made in the community and so,
3 we're looking for opportunities for either the
4 Council or we are also pushing with the state to
5 continue funding our groups to do the work that
6 they've shown that they can do.

8 Secondly, I wanted to talk about Asian business
9 owners. They are really drivers of both economic
10 growth in the city. A report we did a couple of
11 years ago showed that have of net new jobs created
12 and have of net new economic activity were due to
13 Asian owned businesses in the city. Obviously, it
14 ties to all the workers in our community. They are
15 looking for jobs that they can have a foot hold in
16 working and emerging into our workplace. And so,
17 Asian owned businesses are providing that but what
18 we're seeing through our work in Flushing through an
19 EDC contract is that there is a gap again within the
20 services that the city offers and invests in small
21 businesses and the ability for the small business
22 owners in the Asian community to access those. For
23 example, there is a tremendous number of businesses
24 in Flushing, but the closest small business
25 assistance centers are in Jackson Heights and Astoria

1 and you know, given transit, it's a big challenge.
2 And so, we want to be able to create programs where
3 we can bring those services to the community modeled
4 on our experiences in Flushing and we're looking to
5 talk with you about expanding those to other
6 neighborhoods as well.

7 And finally, you know Census 2020 goes without
8 saying. I think there has been some work done at the
9 national level that show Asian Americans compared to
10 other groups were less likely to be trustful with a
11 Census largely because of the Census question on
12 immigration debate and we're really encouraged by the
13 requests that you're making for the city to provide
14 money for CBO's and I think it's really important
15 that trusted voices are sending out the same message.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: \$40 million.

17 HOWARD SHIH: Yeah, so.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: If we need more, let me
19 know but I think that's the number.

20 HOWARD SHIH: Yeah, it's a great start and we'd
21 love to be part of that conversation about how we
22 build the coalitions and get the agent CBO's and fall
23 to that as well.

24 So, thank you.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And the one thing I'm
3 going to say to that point because the New York
4 Immigration Coalition is doing a good job of pulling
5 it all together, but the message is pretty clear.
6 Build your plan for your capacity and how much you
7 can do, and I think that's where we start. We have
8 to start with you. We can't force this on you.
9 Really build a plan and then we can plug in that way
10 and that's going to change from organization to
11 organization as far as the capacity.

12 HOWARD SHIH: Right, I think a lot of Asian
13 organizations are part of that New York Counts 2020
14 and we've been contributing to that process where FPI
15 did that study and they requested information from
16 member agencies and so, it's kind of already in
17 there.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, and I'm hearing
19 great things about it to and our job is to bring the
20 money and we're going to do everything to make that
21 happen.

22 MAE LEE: My name is Mae Lee. I am the Executive
23 Director of the Chinese Progressive Association and I
24 wanted to thank you Chair Menchaca and the rest of
25 the Committee for always playing such a leadership

1
2 role in trying to get our communities more funding
3 but more importantly advocate on important issues.
4 The last time I was here I think I was at the meeting
5 about public charge. So, I'm from Chinatown in the
6 lower east side and it's a rapidly gentrifying
7 community but there is still a significant
8 undocumented population and a significant low-income
9 population. For us, our families live a little over
10 the poverty level, so for example, a family of three
11 might make \$25 to \$27,000 and I think that's 150
12 percent of federal poverty level. And also, the
13 other situation is that there are a lot of families
14 in doubled up housing and it could be in the regular
15 private housing like the tenements or the public
16 housing.

17 So, I know there is a lot talked about in terms
18 of legal services and we're part of the Asian
19 American Federation's Liberty Defense Fund Project
20 and there is also a need for legal services that are
21 located directly in the community and the CBO's and
22 even in a place like Chinatown. We recently have had
23 the experience of trying to – you know, we provide
24 some simple legal services but sometimes we have to
25 bring them to the non-profit providers and even

1
2 though the non-profit provider might be downtown as
3 well and maybe just in City Hall somewhere or down in
4 the financial district, it's not that far from
5 Chinatown but it was an ordeal to get them there. I
6 mean, it was a real ordeal and we're talking about
7 undocumented immigrants who are not that connected to
8 everything.

9 For us, you know some of our immigrants they work
10 in other places because they can't find jobs here, so
11 you know, they take the bus to the casinos or the
12 restaurants in Albany and they work, and they travel
13 back and forth like that. You know, so it's sort of
14 being like migrant worker but you work in the
15 restaurant or the casinos. So, that's the type of
16 population I'm talking about, the difficult to reach
17 population that we still take care of. So, the other
18 thing is about the Census. I wanted to let you know
19 that we also think the Census is really important and
20 it's important to our community that's rapidly
21 gentrifying because you know, the rising cost of
22 housing we have a wealthier population that's moving
23 in and it skews the numbers for our community.

24 So, we still have our low-income families in the
25 doubled-up housing who are less likely to answer

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2 Census and then we have this higher income
3 population. So, then even if your drill down to the
4 community district, it looks good when you average it
5 out but actually the community district that
6 Chinatown is in is the one with the second highest
7 income disparity in the whole city.

8 So, I'd like to say, our organization has in some
9 way participated in the last three Census's, so we
10 have some experience and we have a plan but in order
11 to do the outreach that we need to do this time
12 around, especially with the citizenship question and
13 the first time where the internet is the primary way
14 to answer the Census, we need also some resources and
15 funding. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that.

17 NAUMI FELDMAN: Thank you Chairman Menchaca for
18 this opportunity to present testimony today in front
19 of the Committee on Immigration. My name is Naomi
20 Feldman, I am the Director of Research and Evaluation
21 at the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center. We
22 are a federally qualified health center with sites
23 located in Manhattan and Queens and last year we
24 served over 60,000 unique patients for more than
25 300,000 patient encounters. 83 percent of our

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2 patients are at or below 200 percent of the federal
3 poverty level and 82 percent are actually best served
4 in a language other than English.

5 So, I first wanted to take this opportunity to
6 thank you and the Committee for your ongoing support
7 in funding of our health centers health education and
8 immigration related outreach activities with
9 communities located in Flushing Queens. We've had
10 great success with this program, and we hope to
11 expand our outreach in the future. This is through
12 the Immigrant Health Initiative.

13 But with all that said, I'm actually here today
14 to testify on behalf of the Coalition Against Smoking
15 in Immigrant Communities. This is a coalition that
16 comprised of community-based health and social
17 service organizations seeking discretionary funds to
18 support a citywide expansion of the Tobacco Use
19 Navigator Model Program.

20 So, we've all joined together in an effort to
21 reduce smoking disparities in foreign-born, Limited
22 English Proficient populations.

23 This model provides LEP community-based health
24 workers the skills to educate and connect smokers to
25 culturally competent smoking cessation resources.

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2 Recent data on immigrant smoking thus far highlights
3 tobacco use among certain subgroups and while we've
4 seen smoking rates go down for New York City as a
5 whole over the past 15 plus years, we've seen for
6 example, smoking among Asian American men has
7 actually increased from 19.6 percent to 23.5 percent
8 between 2002 and 2016. So, what we're actually
9 seeing is rates going in the opposite direction.

10 Furthermore, 28 percent of foreign-born non-
11 citizens in New York City do not have health
12 insurance to increasing their likelihood to be
13 connected to preventative care and education. So, as
14 an organization, we're requesting \$100,000 for our
15 tobacco use navigators to identify and connect
16 approximately 200 smokers to smoking cessation
17 treatment that will provide them with free long term
18 counseling and free nicotine replacement therapy and
19 you can sort of just appose that to the cost of
20 actually treating someone who might be diagnosed
21 let's say with lung cancer as a result of smoking.

22 A study done almost 15 years ago showed that it
23 cost \$45,000 for initial treatment for lung cancer
24 and over \$120,000 if that first level of treatment
25 actually fails. So, from a cost-effective basis,

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2 something like providing community-based smoking
3 cessation, navigation resources can be really, really
4 effective and I'm joined here by a bunch of our
5 colleagues today who will speak more to this issue.
6 So, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I have one question on the
8 DOHMH relationship. Do you get any funding for this
9 initiative from DOHMH?

10 NAUMI FELDMAN: We don't receive any funding for
11 this initiative.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: This is a new initiative
13 because there's Hepatitis work, there's a lot of
14 other things that we're doing. This is just that I'm
15 hearing it correctly, a new initiative built out of
16 this coalition.

17 NAUMI FELDMAN: We have one member in our
18 coalition who received funding through the Immigrant
19 Health Initiative that's supported by your committee
20 last year, that's Korean Community Services and they
21 will speak a little bit more about their work doing
22 that. For all of the other partners in the
23 coalition, this is unfunded work for us. So, some of
24 us are already trying to do this work but are hoping
25 for support from the city and others have sort of the

1
2 ground work or the foundation to be able to do it,
3 but in order to really ramp this up they would need
4 support.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

6 VENESSA SALCEDO: Hi, good afternoon. My name is
7 Venessa Salcedo and I am a Pediatrician and Director
8 of Health Promotion at Union Community Health Center
9 which is a Federally Qualified Health Center in the
10 Bronx and just to give you a little background.

11 UNION comprises of six sites and we have a mobile
12 medical unit that serves all of the Bronx. Last year
13 we served 40,000 unique patients generating over
14 180,000 patient visits and UNION is excited to join
15 the coalition of Against Smoking in Immigrant
16 Communities like Naumi was saying and this is the
17 first time that we're part of this coalition but as
18 she was mentioning that we have the ground work, we
19 have navigators but not specifically targeted at
20 tobacco use and smoking. So, UNION is asking for
21 discretionary funding to implement this tobacco use
22 navigator model that is effective. That is effective
23 in this Community Health Center and we're
24 specifically targeted foreign-born Spanish speaking
25 patients an we will train the navigator to educate

1
2 and provide these evidence based smoking sensation
3 resources.

4 As you may know Latino's are the second largest
5 immigrant group that smoke in New York City and
6 what's interesting is that Latino smokers are likely
7 to attempt to quit but less likely to receive
8 counseling and medication. So, that's why this is
9 very important work that we would like to do.

10 In addition to as a pediatrician, it really
11 important to also address the public health crisis of
12 E-cigarettes among teenagers particularly among our
13 immigrant youth. As you might know about this, this
14 crisis going on with vaping, adolescence in high
15 schools have increased by 78 percent and high
16 schoolers say that they have vaped in the last year
17 and there has been increase of 48 percent in middle
18 schoolers over the last year. So, this is alarming
19 rates and we're not doing anything about it. So, we
20 want to work with the schools that we have
21 partnerships in educating the students because it
22 does effect their brain development and they think
23 it's safe and cool. So, these are the things that we
24 would like to do, and we're excited to be part of the
25 coalition. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Dr. Salcedo. A young person came to our office and said he wanted to organized his young people in his school about vaping. He seen everybody caring these sticks that can be USB charged and it's just like this cool factor and anyway, we're trying to do something, so I'm excited that there is a lot of conversation and it's being led by young people. They are saying to themselves; this is not okay. We know this is not good but its infiltrated culture in our middle schools because – well, anyway, you just said everything, so thank you.

VANESSA SALCEDO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Adhikaar.

MAYA GURUNG: Good afternoon. Thank you to Chair Menchaca and the Committee on Immigration for convening this hearing. My name is Maya Gurung.

TSERING LAMA: My name is Tsering.

MAYA GURUNG: And we are from Adhikaar. Adhikaar is the only women-led worker and community center serving and organizing the Nepali speaking community on workers' rights, immigrant rights, access to health care and language justice issues. The majority of members are low wage workers.

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2 In 2018, with limited resources for our service
3 work, we managed over 100 cases for members on
4 immigration and workers rights. We also organize 13
5 TPS re-registration clinics in New York alone. Legal
6 screening for adjustment of status as well as four
7 Know Your Rights training for nearly 2,000 Nepali TPS
8 holders and immigrants in the city in partnership
9 with legal service providers such as Legal Aid
10 Society Urban Justice Center and City Bar Justice
11 Center.

12 One challenge we face is that we do not have an
13 immigration attorney housed within the organization
14 to assist members with specific immigration related
15 inquiries and consultation. To give you an idea of
16 the need, we get anywhere between eight to ten calls
17 or walk-ins with immigration questions or needs a
18 day. Without an in-house attorney, we must depend on
19 other legal service providers for any kind of
20 immigration related support. We refer our members
21 out to city agencies such as ActionNYC; however, our
22 members have not been able to access the services due
23 to the initial language barrier and members get
24 discouraged to go to the agency and sometimes never
25 return to our office.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can I ask, is that
3 something that you've documented before to ActionNYC
4 providers, the language barrier? Is that something
5 that's documented in a letter or in some kind of
6 formal way?

7 MAYA GURUNG: Not a letter.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, lets work on doing
9 that, because I think that's really important and I
10 can help us shift, not just resources but attention
11 to this. This is really alarming but not surprising.
12 And so, we need to just put it all on paper. That's
13 how we do what we got to do. Put it on paper, and
14 then I want to help support that with my own letter
15 in saying, please respond ActionNYC, MOIA, to this
16 issue, fix it, on paper. Sorry, keep going, well,
17 tell me more about what else is part of your work
18 here that's associated with funding and requests for
19 funding.

20 MAYA GURUNG: So, the next thing is around like
21 lift classes, the adult literacy piece. We do five
22 English classes and a citizenship class every week.
23 We don't get any funding for it and we have around
24 like 200 plus members who attend the classes right
25 now. And I think the main point is like for a lot of

1
2 the work that we have to do, it is done based on the
3 needs of the community and it's not direct funding
4 that we get. So, what we are asking for is to expand
5 the capacity to kind of fund community organizations
6 like directly and not by funding like small 5,000 to
7 a 10,000 like discretionary funds that are available
8 but to fund like more by giving us like about like
9 \$100,000 a year. Grants that are committed to about
10 three years so that that can expand our capacity.
11 So, yeah, that's what we're asking for.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and I guess the
13 one question I have to you about the lawyer. You
14 don't have a lawyer and so you're really relying on
15 referrals.

16 MAYA GURUNG: Right.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I know you are trying to
18 get a lawyer, but how are the referrals working? Do
19 they work? Is that something that you felt like the
20 other — tell me how a referral system works because
21 this is really important in connecting you to the day
22 laborers worker initiative and those organizations,
23 they're doing that to and sometimes some of them,
24 some of them don't but they're referring and so, the
25 power of referrals is that you're sometimes seeing

1
2 people who the first time that they reach out to
3 anyone is you for services of some kind and then you
4 don't have the lawyer but then you refer them. And
5 does that work? Is that working for you?

6 MAYA GURUNG: Yeah, so the referral system works
7 but because, so the legal services with them to, they
8 are limited capacity as well. So, a lot of times,
9 they won't be able to take a lot of cases as well.
10 So, that's another issue. But even within the
11 referral system, we always have to be there as
12 interpreters as support for able to even navigate the
13 referral system. So, that's why there is as a staff,
14 there's just a lot of capacity wise, we're like
15 really stretched. I mean, it does work. We work
16 with Legal Aid; we work with Urban Justice Center.
17 We work with City Bar, so these are all the
18 organizations we work with but with two staff, like
19 we've done 100 last year, so there is not much we can
20 do in terms of referral sometimes.

21 CHAIRPERON MENCHACA: Thank you and that's an
22 important part about building capacity within our
23 organizations and if this funding for – not if, when
24 this funding comes out from the Census, like, we're
25 going to need you to be a part of this and you need

1
2 to be ready and the part of that is a capacity
3 component as well. So, that you can expand your
4 services and have all the stuff that you need on the
5 ground. So, thanks for sharing that with us. We're
6 going to have to figure out how to do that and help
7 you build that capacity even with a lawyer on board,
8 there is going to be a lot more stuff that you're
9 going to need and thank you for that. Thank you to
10 the panel. Thanks for coming today.

11 Next panel, I think we have three more panels to
12 go. From New York Lawyers for Public Interest, Laura
13 Redman, Safe Passage Project, Rich Leimsider, Jodi
14 Ziesemer from NYLAG, Heather Axford, Central American
15 Legal Assistance, Gregory Copeland, NSC Community
16 Legal Defense and Sarah Gillman from The NSC
17 Community Legal Defense.

18 It's a big panel but it's a big conversation.
19 Can we start here to my left. Can you start? Thank
20 you, make sure that the button is read and it's close
21 to you.

22 JODI ZIESEMER: Yes, hi. Oh, it's better. My
23 name is Jodi Ziesemer. I am the Director of the
24 Immigrant protection unit at the New York Legal
25 Assistance Group or NYLAG. I want to talk to you

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2 today about flexible funding for immigrant legal
3 services and advocacy to respond to changes in
4 policies and practice. So, over the past year, we've
5 seen quickly changing policies in increasing
6 enforcement and confusion as law suits halt or
7 temporarily roll back some of the harshest policies
8 and unlawful interpretations of the statute. For
9 example, and as you've heard today, we've witnessed
10 the enactment of the Zero Tolerance policy which
11 resulted in forced separation of parents and children
12 at the border, a 1,700 percent increase in ICE
13 apprehensions at New York Courts and a temporary
14 extension of both DACA and TPS stemming from lawsuits
15 filed against the Administrations attempt to end both
16 programs.

17 In addition, changes to the governments
18 interpretation of public charge, both intended and
19 executed have given rise to fears and questions in
20 the immigrant communities when it comes to the
21 receipt of public benefits and require the need for
22 education and counsel. Just this past week, federal
23 courts clarify that children over 18 are eligible to
24 apply for special immigrant juvenile status requiring
25 NYLAG and our partners to reach back out to

1
2 communities to ensure that children particularly
3 those who are close to 21 are aware of this change
4 and can apply for these benefits and we're also going
5 to be doing a lot of education in these both for the
6 communities and for providers regarding this really
7 favorable decision. There will be additional
8 unpredictable and urgent issues that will require
9 flexible emergency response.

10 NYLAG requests that the city expand its current
11 programs that provide flexible funding and provide
12 additional funding that is not tied to deliverables.
13 There certainly is a need for response and
14 representation for people in removal proceedings but
15 there is also a large number of people that already
16 have removal orders or are in some sort of limbo that
17 need a rapid response that doesn't necessarily fall
18 into the city's deliverables in terms of
19 representation and we would request flexible spending
20 in order to meet that need and to anticipate a lot of
21 the other changes that are likely to come in the next
22 year or two years. In addition to things like Know
23 Your Rights presentations and education and
24 cooperating with City Council Members and other
25 elected officials to really outreach into the

1
2 communities and make sure that they are aware of
3 their rights and that they are educated about the
4 changes in the law.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that and I
6 guess as we move through the panel, somebody had
7 provided us written testimony and we're going to go
8 through all of it and kind of comb through it. What
9 I want to hear is what I think has been the theme
10 here around prioritization of limited funding and
11 what I'm convinced more and more that removals are
12 where we need to be placing a lot of thought because
13 removals are connected to the separation of our
14 families on the ground. We heard from the economic
15 development, sorry, the economic panels, the economic
16 justice panels. Our immigrants are the backbone of
17 our city and so, we need to make the case and so, I'm
18 hoping you can help us make the case for us.

19 JODI ZIESEMER: I would just encourage you not to
20 lose sight of the people that already have removal
21 orders. There is literally thousands, hundreds of
22 thousands, probably of people in New York City that
23 have removal orders already and when those people are
24 picked up there is such an urgency both in the
25 community and for that particular individual to have

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2 a rapid legal response and that is currently not
3 funded through any program.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That's what I'm saying.
5 So, I guess you said what I was trying to say. Which
6 is, that's the scope that is not our current scope.
7 We don't have a universal representation; I'm just
8 realizing how we don't have universal representation
9 anymore because of the courts and how they are
10 shifting. And so, how do we move the scope to the
11 true cause and need of the crisis that we're in right
12 now. So, what you're talking about is what I'm
13 learning I think right now, post order removals and
14 so, that's not part of our NYIFUP program because
15 those are people who are in detention. When you're
16 talking about our folks that are enjoying their life
17 right now, working and maybe showing up to an ICE -
18 so, help us make that case. You're in the mix of it
19 and that's what we're going to need to be able to
20 talk to our Council Members, the Mayor, the Speaker,
21 everyone else. Thank you.

22 JODI ZIESEMER: Yes.

23 LAURA REDMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Laura
24 Redman. I am the Director of the Health Justice
25 Program at the New York Lawyers for the Public

1 Interest and I'm here in support of the Immigrant
2 Health Initiative. As you said, you have our written
3 testimony, so I guess I'll just kind of summarize
4 very quickly the work that we do that is related to
5 what you're talking about here in terms of the NYIFUP
6 program, in terms of people in detention and such.
7 We have a medical legal community partnership where
8 we provide advocacy, connection to medical providers,
9 litigation, lots of things in relation to focusing on
10 health care access and immigration. Getting people
11 better care, getting people out and helping in
12 underlying immigration cases and why I think it's
13 just an important thing to flag in the question that
14 you've asked is that health is really a catalyst and
15 a great way of demonstrating the horrors of our
16 immigration detention machine, as you called it
17 appropriately. The lack of health care, the healthy
18 people that go in and unhealthy people that go out
19 and we really hope that health can be both by using
20 the power of doctors, the powers of lawyers and the
21 powers of community together can really show how
22 health can be a catalyst to really on upend the system
23 but in order to do that we need the lawyers. We work
24 very closely with the NYIFUP program and with other
25

1
2 attorneys doing this work and we all rely on each
3 other to do this advocacy. So, everybody here has
4 stories to tell you of people that we've helped get
5 released, people who get better care in the community
6 then they ever do in detention.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And you're talking about
8 detention, so the stories that we'll see are people
9 who went into detention healthy, left unhealthy, and
10 for a long-extended period of time?

11 LAURA REDMAN: Yes, the majority of people we see
12 are there from six months to a year and that's
13 increasing. But I do want to just also flag the
14 other piece of work that we do that's funded under
15 the immigrant health initiative which is focused on
16 connecting undocumented and uninsured immigrants with
17 serious health conditions to state funded Medicaid.
18 So, we do outreach education, immigration
19 representation, health care advocacy for people with
20 serious life-threatening illnesses to connect them to
21 state funded Medicaid and lifesaving care and
22 although we are encouraged and happy about the city
23 and the Mayor's new program, we still have questions
24 about whether it covers the extreme specialist care
25 that our clients need, and that Medicaid provides.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, thank you. That's caring for the whole person and thank you.

RICH LEIMSIDER: Thank you Chairperson Menchaca. I'm going to read a selection of our submitted testimony and we can talk about lots more. So, thank you for convening this hearing, for inviting the public to speak. My name is Rich Leimsider, I am the Executive Director of Safe Passage Project. A non-profit legal services organization that provides free lawyers as of this afternoon, to 873 child refugees who are currently being deported. We serve children who live in the five boroughs of New York City and in the two counties of Long Island.

Safe Passage receives vital support from the City Council through the Unaccompanied Minor Initiative as a part of the ICARE Coalition and this year we are also requesting \$65,000 in Speaker Discretionary Funds to address legal needs that arose particularly from the recent government shutdown.

No immigrant, not even a child, is appointed a lawyer in immigration court, this is what we all know. If a child cannot afford to hire an attorney, they are forced to defend themselves alone, against a trained government prosecutor and as we also have

1
2 spoken about children without a lawyer win their
3 cases, only 17 percent of the time but with a lawyer,
4 they win 85 percent of the time. And that's part of
5 15-year ongoing study from TRACK.

6 The recent 35-day government shutdown created new
7 challenges for our work. Cases will now take even
8 longer to resolve. For example, cases that were set
9 for a final asylum trial at immigration court during
10 the shutdown will be rescheduled perhaps as late as
11 2022, we are not quite sure yet. Documents that were
12 required to be filed during the shutdown are now in a
13 black hole. In total, Safe Passage Project had over
14 a dozen hearings that were postponed in asylum trial
15 that didn't go forward. Delays are dangerous for our
16 clients, work intensive for our staff. While we
17 wait, we have to maintain contact with the client,
18 file work permit renewals, help them enroll in health
19 insurance, file paperwork every time they move. The
20 list goes on. To say nothing of the emotional trauma
21 that this period of waiting causes for a young child
22 who should already be on the path to citizenship.
23 And if the delay puts their case at risk and it
24 forces deportation, then their life maybe in danger.

1
2 Safe Passage is also a proud member of ICARE,
3 which as you know was created hand and hand with the
4 Council as part of a public/private partnership and
5 we are proud to be a part of the group including The
6 Door, Legal Aid, CALA, Catholic Charities, KIND, many
7 of the incredible folks that are sitting at this
8 table with me. And the City Council as a national
9 leader in access to Council work for immigrants and
10 you have been, and we appreciate that. Committed to
11 funding our coalition with matching funding from the
12 Robin Hood Foundation and I do want to say that Robin
13 Hood has already committed a million dollars of its
14 own private funding toward our overall ICARE budget
15 for FY 2020. And so, to date, ICARE has represented
16 almost 2,000 children and we are, as you've heard
17 before, requesting \$3.9 million to fully fund the
18 coalition, not only the cases that we have already
19 taken and are supporting but to add 400 new ICARE
20 clients over the course of FY 2020.

21 One additional challenge I want to mention, is
22 that the present structure of some city funding
23 doesn't match the reality of these childrens cases
24 and to echo what Jodi and others have said, so
25 current contracts limit both the amount of legal work

1
2 that we are allowed to get reimbursed for any
3 particular child as well as the number of kids that
4 we can re-enroll in any subsequent Fiscal Year and we
5 would love to work together with the Council to help
6 our partners at HRA and the Office of Civil Justice
7 to make sure those contracts are flexible to allow
8 for that work.

9 We are very concerned about the effects of these
10 challenges especially on children, but I am deeply
11 encouraged by the City Council's continue support and
12 I look forward to the day when we can all live up to
13 our shared vision that no child should face the
14 immigration process alone. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, I want to help Rich.
16 The work with the RHA and the Office of Civil
17 Justice, let's figure out how we can. It just sounds
18 like the right people need to sit in a room and
19 figure it out. So, you have our support, let's
20 follow up immediately on that. And the only other
21 thing on just the budget, the budget requests. The
22 \$65,000 for discretionary funds that arose from the
23 shutdown, that you are kind of calculating on a
24 separate track, separate from the increase to the
25 \$3.9 million?

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RICH LEIMSIDER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, and then Robin Hood has pledged again for another million?

RICH LEIMSIDER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can we get them up a little bit more to match our \$3.9?

RICH LEIMSIDER: Not only can they not go further but they have indicated that this may be their last year. That they see things as pilot programs. They are very excited of the role they played in Housing Right to Council and they are ready to think about other priorities and they are hoping that this would be baselined sooner than later.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I agree, I agree. Okay, thank you for that.

HEATHER AXFORD: Hi, Heather Axford from Central American Legal Assistance. We've been representing asylum seekers in removal proceeding since 1986. Last year, we were in immigration court over 500 times. We represent folks from the trial level up to federal court when necessary. Over the past few years, we have found managing our caseload and deploying staff to become really difficult. On one hand, cases have become much more labor intensive.

1
2 There is a lot of publicity around the Attorney
3 General's decision getting asylum protections for
4 victims of domestic violence. Less publicized but
5 equally insidious was his decision to end immigration
6 courts authority to administratively close cases.
7 Basically, prosecutorial discretion doesn't exist in
8 immigration court anymore and we have to fully
9 litigate every single case on our docket.

10 In November we had a man who was detained at his
11 home days after his hearing in which the immigration
12 judge had indicated her intention to grant asylum.
13 He was detained for no reason, we had to go into
14 federal court to get him out. He was granted asylum
15 last week, they continued to hold his employment
16 authorization document. Every case is just a battle.

17 On the other hand, docket scheduling has become
18 really chaotic. On one hand we have cases where the
19 immigration judge retired or was transferred in 2017
20 and they still haven't been reassigned, but they
21 won't tell us until the week of the hearing that the
22 hearing is not going forward.

23 So, we're fully preparing hearings only to have
24 them not go forward which is a waste of resources for
25 us and it's traumatizing for our clients.

1
2 On the other hand, we are getting cases advanced
3 with no notice to us, maybe a weeks' notice to month
4 notice, and you know, in the fall, EOIR prioritize
5 what they called Family Unity Cases, basically
6 expediting cases of families who had been caught at
7 the southern border and the instructed immigration
8 judges that they had to adjudicate these cases within
9 a year of arrival but CALA going into 2019, we
10 already had 185 asylum trials scheduled. Cases that
11 had been scheduled since 2016, so our capacity to
12 take on these new merits hearings in 2019 is really
13 limited and the judges are just not given the
14 flexibility that they need to work with us. So, this
15 has all been really difficult for us. We continue to
16 show up for our clients for due process. Since the
17 court reopened at that end of January, we've had 25
18 asylum trials go forward. We've won permanent
19 protection for 34 people. Our youngest client is
20 three years old. We actually co-counseled with our
21 ICARE partners Safe Passage. She was four months
22 when she fled with her mother. Her mom was a
23 cooperating witness against members of the Mara
24 Salvatrucha that had murdered her uncle. She has two
25 older brother eight and ten who are now going to be

1
2 coming up on a plane with VISA's because their mom
3 won asylum and a right to unify. So, we're really
4 grateful to you guys. We get support through ICARE,
5 which provides the targeted funding for these
6 families.

7 Also, IOI funding which is more general and
8 allows us to for instance, we've seen a huge uptick
9 in Venezuela asylum seekers, which are usually single
10 adults. IOI funding has helped us pivot to assist
11 this new population. We are really grateful to you
12 guys in kind of helping us to help them because they
13 deserve it.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: The only think I want to
15 point to here is, you are describing the machine, the
16 deportation machine and how savvy it's become to
17 destabilize the support that we've been focused on as
18 a city through partnerships with all of you and the
19 funding from tax payer funding and so, this is whats
20 at stake here. So, thank you for just giving us more
21 context and texture about whats happening in real
22 time. So, thank you. Gregory?

23 GREGORY COPELAND: Thank you to the Committee and
24 thank you Chairman Menchaca for allowing us to be
25 here today. Sarah Gillman and I are part of a new

1 organization, NSC Community Legal Defense. We were
2 previously at the Legal Aid Society and we started
3 this new organization in partnership with the New
4 Sanctuary Coalition seeking to meet a gap that we
5 thought we saw within the universal representation
6 model. You know, as you have identified, the changes
7 that we've seen this week in the immigration courts
8 sort of decimate the ability to call the model a
9 universal representation model, but even before that,
10 the number of people with post orders or that are
11 ineligible for NYIFUP services whether it's because
12 they desperately paid a private attorney that they
13 can no longer afford to pay to fully litigate their
14 case or for whatever reason, there's an enormous
15 population of New Yorkers that are not served by the
16 legal service scheme that's in place.

18 Our model is primarily a rapid response model
19 that we developed at the Legal Aid Society, somewhat
20 successfully to get into federal court, prevent
21 deportations that were imminent. We filed a case on
22 February 25th at 5pm for somebody that was to be
23 deported at 8:20 and argued it at 7:30 and got a stay
24 at 7:50. So, these are very emergent situations that
25 given the experience that we've now developed over

1
2 the course of about 18 months trying these cases. We
3 are in a position to stop that deportation and then
4 actually partner with other organizations and build
5 capacity and fight these cases.

6 You know, the first of our rapid response cases
7 was brought by Sarah in March of 2018 and yesterday
8 we were in immigration court and the judge made a
9 point of having the DHS Attorney recognize that this
10 person was a U.S. Citizen. She was about to be put
11 on a plane with incredibly complexed medical issues
12 and whether or not she would survive being sent to
13 her home country, you know, was an enormous concern
14 for us. So, we're unfunded at point. We are trying
15 to build partnerships with pro bono law firms, law
16 schools, you know to meet these needs that we're
17 seeing increasingly just based off of the referrals
18 we're getting. We are getting referrals from the
19 Mayor's Office, we are getting referrals from Legal
20 Aid Society, we have worked with Catholic Charities
21 to do an emergency case where instead of having a
22 child detained for six months, we found out that they
23 were going to be detained on their 18th birthday, the
24 case was assigned to a fairly favorable judge and the
25 child was released that day.

1
2 So, these efforts of getting into federal court
3 and getting into federal court in a timely manner is
4 primarily what we're focused on but then also we're
5 seeking with our community partners to not have to
6 respond to these emergencies. So, developing
7 practices for going into check-ins because we're
8 seeing an enormous number of people that are being
9 detained. We know when they are going in for check-
10 ins because they are on a final order and have an
11 order of supervision.

12 So, that's the model that we're trying to build,
13 and you know, to make this sustainable, we obviously
14 need to get funded.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and this is the
16 question mark, the multi-million-dollar question at
17 the end of the day. Sarah do you want to say -

18 SARAH GILLMAN: Yeah, thank you again for having
19 us here today and thank you to all of our community
20 partners for all of the great work that everybody is
21 doing. I don't have much to add to what Gregory has
22 already spoken about. I will say that you know, we
23 are a new project and I think the City Council has
24 been quite visionary in recognizing the need for
25 funding new projects that can meet the needs of the

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2 community and I think that our organization and the
3 work that we have done since we began our
4 organization and that we did previously while we were
5 at the Legal Aid Society is a project that can really
6 meet the needs of the community and it's very
7 encouraging and exciting to hear all of our community
8 partners talking about how the community needs to be
9 represented and as Gregory said, we look forward to
10 working with all of our community partners.

11 Our particular project is necessary in order to
12 be able to effectively use the federal courts in
13 order to holt the unlawful practices of this current
14 Administration.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That's the key word there.
16 Unlawful, and they are, and we just got to use the
17 courts and the justice system to call them out and we
18 will. And that's our history in the city and that's
19 where we're going to keep committed to.

20 Thank you all for your service and work today.

21 Okay, last two panels. This next panel, the
22 Chinese American Planning Council Carlyn Cowen, Kelly
23 Sabatino Coalition Against Smoking in Immigrant
24 Communities, Yoojin Kim, Korean Community Services,
25 Danny Salim, Arab-American Family Support Center,

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2 Tasfia Rahman from the Coalition for Asian American
3 Children and Families and then, Chisato Horikawa,
4 JASSI, the Japanese American Social Services.

5 Okay, this is a full panel. Yeah, this is great.
6 Okay, thank you so much for your patience. Every
7 voice will be heard and I'm thankful that you're
8 here. Who wants to start? Okay, thank you.

9 CHISATO HORIKAWA: Hi, thank you for your time
10 today. My name is Chisato Horikawa, I am the
11 Director at the JASSI, Japanese American Social
12 Services INC. So, I want to briefly talk about the
13 health among our Japanese clients. So, a lot of our
14 clients don't have English proficiency and have low
15 or moderate income and they came from Japan where
16 they have access to national health care. So, when
17 they came here, it's really confusing for them to
18 figure out how to access their health insurance or
19 health care system here and we do our best to
20 navigate them through a health insurance system or a
21 hospital system here, but we want to ask for more
22 support for us to better serve the community.
23 Especially now, with the current Administration
24 trying to expand the public charge definition a lot
25 of community members are offered or have access to

1 health care or health insurance. We actually had a
2 few clients who came back to us after enrolling in
3 health insurance saying that they want to disenroll
4 from health insurance because they heard that they
5 cannot apply for a green card. So, there are a lot
6 of misinformation around that issue and we want to
7 make sure that our community members have accurate
8 information so that they can access to the necessary
9 care. I believe that no one should chose the right
10 to stay in this country or health care needs.

12 So, I would like to ask for your support for the
13 funding for health care related issues such as access
14 health or immigrant health. So, that community-based
15 organizations like us can provide better services to
16 the community members.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Do you get funding from
18 the City Council or the Mayor's Office for any of
19 their initiatives on the health side?

20 CHISATO HORIKAWA: Yes. So, for this year, we
21 have received the Access Health Initiative.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. Thank you, that's
23 going to be helpful for us. Okay, thank you and I
24 think it just underscores the need for community-
25 based organizations that have started in communities

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2 with the question, what do we need as a community and
3 you build infrastructure around that and that's where
4 we plug in. That's how we can support our immigrant
5 communities is to support you. So, thank you for
6 your work.

7 CHISATO HORIKAWA: Thank you.

8 YOOJIN KIM: Hi, my name is Yoojin Kim from the
9 Korean Community Services. Thank you so much today
10 for your time Chair Menchaca and the Members of the
11 Committee. So, as you know KCS has been around for
12 almost more than 40 years and we serve primarily the
13 Korean American population in New York City, but we
14 also serve other immigrant populations.

15 Today, I wanted to speak to you and ask for your
16 support in reducing tobacco use rates in New York
17 City and in New York City's immigrant populations. I
18 had two of my colleague, Dr. Feldman and Dr. Salcedo
19 speak about the coalition and KCS was funded last
20 year in Fiscal Year 2019 for this initiative. So, I
21 wanted to speak to you about that and our experience.
22 So, we were funded \$30,000, our initial ask was
23 \$85,000; however, with \$30,000 we were able to
24 conduct community outreach and education to raise
25 awareness about the dangers of smoking in our

1
2 community as well as produce materials and distribute
3 them so that they know where to come or where to go
4 for help for example for us, so that we can link them
5 to care. For us, because there is for example, in
6 New York State, smokers quit line does not offer
7 Korean services in their tobacco cessation services
8 be linked to ASQ, the Asian Smokers Quit Line, which
9 provides cessation services over the phone in four
10 Asian languages, that's Cantonese, Mandarin,
11 Vietnamese and Korean.

12 So, to give you a little bit of a background
13 about tobacco use in the Korean community. So, we're
14 very heavily immigrant, right. 70 percent of Korean
15 population in New York City is foreign-born. Half of
16 Korean's living in New York City have limited English
17 proficiency and we have one of the lowest insurance
18 rates. So, one in four Koreans –

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You have one of the lowest
20 what?

21 YOOJIN KIM: Insurance rates.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Insurance rates.

23 YOOJIN KIM: Yes, so only one in four Koreans
24 living in New York City do not have health insurance.
25 So, that exacerbates the problem for us.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Do you have a sense of the eligibility of that population as well?

YOOJIN KIM: What kind of eligibility?

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, any kind of eligibility for that population that you studied with the four percent.

YOOJIN KIM: The health insurance?

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, for health insurance and the reason I reason I ask is that's part of what we're trying to figure out to, is how we can support you to build the connection to legal services to take eligible members of the community and give them access. Do you have a sense of the eligibility of the Korean population here in the City? How many of them who are uninsured, eligible for some kind of insurance, but they don't know about it, they don't have a lawyer to help them navigate it?

YOOJIN KIM: We do have funding, we do have access health and KCS has you know, ASA navigation program. So, we do help, and we do outreach to let people know that they can sign up for insurance on the market place. So, we are working on that as well.

1
2 So, to finish, I want to talk to you about one of
3 the clients that I speak to and have helped. He has
4 told me and this a recurring theme, but immigration
5 trauma is something that a lot of immigrant
6 communities deal with. But tobacco use is a symptom
7 and an illness of the immigrant experience.

8 Particularly for Koreans because they come here, they
9 experience immigration trauma and they don't know how
10 to deal with stress and there is also taboo around
11 mental health, so a lot of them rely on tobacco use
12 as an outlet or as a way to relieve stress and it's
13 a vicious cycle. They also are not getting the
14 important information about tobacco cessation or
15 tobacco use from the city. So, there's a lot of
16 different barriers that we're able to identify and
17 it's really important not the Korean community but
18 all immigrant communities in New York City are given
19 that information, the services, so that we work
20 towards health equity and would reduce tobacco use
21 disparity in New York City.

22 So, we thank you for your time.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, and that's an
24 important thing to say to is essentially we are
25 saying that there is essentially toxic stress in our

immigrant communities that causing our connection to increase in smoking.

YOOJIN KIM: Yes, it is both the cause and it also manifests as a symptom.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that's an important thing to say and understand as well. Thank you.

YOOJIN KIM: Thank you.

KELLY SABATINO: Good afternoon. Thank you Chairperson Menchaca and the Members of the Committee for this opportunity to speak today. My name is Kelly Sabatino, I am the Public Policy Manager at Community Healthcare Network. We are a network of 14 federally-qualified health centers, including two school-based health centers, and a fleet of medical mobile vans. We provide affordable, integrated primary care, behavioral health, dental, and supportive services to 85,000 New Yorkers annually throughout Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

CHN is also a member of the Coalition Against Smoking in Immigrant Communities and this year we are expand our tobacco and e-cigarette cessation services to address growing rates of tobacco use throughout the city, particularly among immigrant and limited

1 English proficient populations. Currently, we do
2 screen all of our patients for tobacco use and refer
3 them to smoking cessation resources but for a host of
4 reasons that have been cited by our colleagues
5 actually connecting to and maintaining with these
6 resources is difficult. So, with City support,
7 hopefully in the coming year we plan to hire a
8 tobacco use navigator to educate patients about the
9 dangers of tobacco use and link individuals to
10 linguistically and culturally appropriate cessation
11 resources. The navigator will also conduct outreach
12 among tobacco users and their family members during
13 community events and workshops to connect patients to
14 those appropriate resources.

16 The Tobacco Use Navigator Model aims to bridge
17 the gap in access to and awareness of smoking
18 cessation resources throughout the city. In 2016 our
19 colleagues at Charles B. Wang Community Health Center
20 and NYU Langone conducted an intercept study
21 surveying 250 self-identified Asian American New York
22 City residents. The study found that only one in
23 four smokers were aware of either the New York State
24 Smokers Quitline, or Asian Smokers' Quitline as
25 smoking cessation resources. However, those who did

1 know about these resources were more likely to have
2 attempted quitting smoking than those who did not.
3 63 percent of smokers who were aware of the quit
4 lines had attempted to quit tobacco in the last year,
5 compared with 42 percent of smokers who did not know
6 about those services. These data support the need
7 for greater promotion of existing resources as well
8 as increased funding for programs that empower peers
9 to help patients navigate culturally and
10 linguistically competent community-based support.

12 We thank the Chairman and the Committee on
13 Immigration for their time today and look forward to
14 continuing our work alongside the City Council to
15 decrease tobacco rates among immigrant populations
16 throughout New York City. We also look forward to
17 collaborating with the City Council to develop a
18 comprehensive platform for bring better integrated
19 health care to uninsured and undocumented New
20 Yorkers. As discussed in our testimony to the
21 Committee on Health earlier this week, we believe the
22 heightened coordination between New York City Health
23 and Hospitals and community health centers such as
24 QHC's would make a material improvement to the city's
25 care for underserved New Yorkers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and this is your map?

KELLY SABATINO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Awesome. So, you're really in every borough.

KELLY SABATINO: Minus Staten Island.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Except for Staten Island.

KELLY SABATINO: Hopefully extending there soon.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, we got to get you to Staten Island.

KELLY SABATINO: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It's the suburb of Brooklyn, and so, we care about Staten Island for that reason. There is no Staten Islanders here on this side, oh, yes, that's right. I'm sorry. Okay, I forget that sometimes. This is great, thank you for sharing the map and just kind of providing the sense of access in communities. Thank you.

DANNY SALIM: My name is Danny Salim and a Senior Director of the Anti-Violence Program at the Arab-American Family Support Center. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you Committee for the opportunity to meet with you today and to present the Arab-American

1
2 Family Support Center and the Immigrant and Refugee
3 communities in New York City.

4 So, the Arab-American Family Support Center
5 founded in 1994 is there to serve the outer most
6 limits as Asian communities and all immigrant
7 communities that come to us. We promote wellbeing,
8 prevent violence, prepare families to learn, work,
9 and succeed and amplify the voices of the
10 marginalized populations.

11 Our center has grown over the past three years
12 from four offices into eight offices citywide, so we
13 are in Staten Island as well. So, we are in all five
14 boroughs. Our staff speaks also grown from 50 staff
15 to 76 staff and they speak over 18 languages and over
16 30 dialects and the growing number for the immigrant
17 communities and their needs. According to the
18 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, New York City is
19 home to over \$3.1 million immigrants, the largest
20 number in the city's history and the Asian community
21 are growing approximately 49 percent of the immigrant
22 speak English less than very well and Arabic and
23 Bengali are among the top 10 languages spoken by
24 foreign-born, New York City Residents who do not use
25 English at home. The New York City State Education

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2 Department lists Arabic as the third most common
3 language after Spanish and Chinese among English
4 language learners in public schools, with a steady
5 increase in this demographic since 2011.

6 Current estimate of New York City Arab population
7 range, there was an increase upward of 100,00, mainly
8 over 40,000 in Brooklyn and 20,000 in Queens and the
9 U.S. Census Department continues to reject the
10 requests of the Arab community to be identified as
11 middle eastern or north African and they have always
12 been identified as White, which is inaccurate in the
13 presentation of the community and that would deprive
14 them for a lot of resources and be identified as what
15 they want to be identified as.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can I ask you to jump over
17 to the requests because these are interesting, and I
18 want to kind of ask you some questions about the
19 requests for the city and the budget.

20 DANNY SALIM: Yeah, definitely. So, as part of
21 the request, we are requesting the expanding of
22 funding of the adult literacy program to \$6 million
23 for the culturally specific programs. And also, the
24 restoring the \$6.375 million to Cultural Immigrant
25 Initiative that support the Arab, Mille Eastern,

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2 Muslim, and South Asian community and also, we
3 consider all organizations, despite their size, for
4 Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Do you receive that fund,
6 the funding for the stabilization grant?

7 DANNY SALIM: Do, I don't think we do currently.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: But you are asking us to
9 re -

10 DANNY SALIM: To consider all of in including our
11 organization, and also most importantly to really
12 partner an advocate for funding for Census because,
13 Census came up in this issue today a lot. There is a
14 lot of fear in the community. There is going to be a
15 lot of effort and resources to really engage the
16 community and encourage them to participate in the
17 Census and that required a lot effort and time and
18 energy and resources.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank You for that and
20 really across the board, all the work, there it be
21 access to health care, anti-smoking campaigns. The
22 message of Census becomes an opportunity for coupling
23 all these things that we're doing, and I say that in
24 the same breath of, we have to fund you Census
25 component to. It's not, your already talking to them

1
2 about cigarettes, let's talk about what are those
3 things called? The vapes, jewel, right? Is that a
4 brand, I shouldn't say the brand right, okay, the
5 vapes. That's something that's imbedded into the
6 larger expansion of funding as we think about next
7 year. And so, thank you for mentioning Census and
8 everyone's thinking about it and everyone is talking
9 about it which is exactly what we're supposed to be
10 doing now, especially as we get to April 1st which is
11 the one year lead up to next year.

12 Thank you.

13 TASFIA RAHMAN: Good evening. I had good
14 afternoon on here but now its evening. My name is
15 Tasfia Rahman and I am a Policy Coordinator at the
16 Coalition for Asian American Children and Families.
17 Thank you, Chair Menchaca and the members of the
18 Committee on Immigration and Committee Council for
19 holding this important hearing.

20 CACF is the nation's only pan-Asian children and
21 family advocacy organization and leads the fight for
22 improved and equitable policies, systems, funding and
23 services to support those in need.

24 We also lead the 15 percent in Growing Campaign,
25 a group of over 45 Asian led and serving

1 organizations that work together to ensure that New
2 York City's budget protects the most vulnerable Asian
3 Pacific American New Yorkers. Campaign members
4 employ thousands of New Yorkers and serve hundreds of
5 thousands of APA immigrants and our organizations are
6 in the best place to provide the most quality
7 language accessible and culturally competent
8 services. So, investment in our organizations are in
9 the long-term cost effective. So, I have a number of
10 asks but for the sake of time, I will add into what
11 Chisato and Danny had added about access health and
12 NSF. Access health is really important to make sure
13 that communities that are the margins of our society
14 are reaching the education and outreach they need to
15 get access to health insurance and health care.
16

17 NSF has been integral to the development and the
18 growth of our organizations that often have a hard
19 time surviving in itself to provide services to our
20 communities. That goes to providing basic capacity
21 building resources and also even financial services
22 as well.

23 So, the other item I'd like to highlight is we
24 ask to increase funding and provide oversight on the
25 \$60 million in annual bridge program funding promised

1
2 by Mayor de Blasio in his 2014 Career Pathways plan.
3 We've been.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That's the one that Jesse
5 was talking about?

6 TASFIA RAHMAN: Yes, we had connected with NYCETC
7 to talk more about and so, well current city
8 investment and bridge program focuses on skills
9 building and career development. It doesn't consider
10 the population base in these particular OVP
11 immigrants and our community is heavily immigrant
12 with 78 percent of them being foreign-born.
13 Immigrants also comprise 47 percent of the workforce
14 in New York City and an estimated \$1.7 million New
15 Yorkers are limited English proficient. Job seekers
16 with limited or no English proficiency who do not
17 meet the requirements for intermediate or advanced
18 proficiency are often included from current bridge
19 programming. Therefore, we urge that a significant
20 portion of the \$60 million be used to fund and
21 innovative pilot immigrant workforce development
22 initiative with a focus on integrating preliteracy
23 and basic ESOL classes with vocational ESOL, digital
24 literacy, skills training and student support
25 services.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

CARLYN COWEN: Good evening. My name is Carlyn Cowen and I am the Chief Policy and Public Affairs Officer of the Chines-American Planning Council. My apologizes for my lateness, I was testifying at the Education Committee hearing as well. Thank you for still taking me.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Every voice will be heard.

CARLYN COWEN: CPC is the nation's largest social services agency for Asian Americans serving over 60,000 Asian American immigrant and low-income New Yorkers each year. I would like to support all of the asks of Tasfia and CACF which CPC is a proud member of and then I would like to discuss a couple more things which I will start with a story of one of our community members. You may or may not know that Chinese Americans have the highest rate of asylum applications in New York City and one of our community members was trying to apply for asylum and came across a broker similar to **[Inaudible 5:37:15]** that offered a speedy asylum process and then took her information, took her story, took her photos and copied it over to many, many other asylum

1 applications and even though hers was real and true
2 and was excepted, the fact that it was then falsified
3 on other applications meant that her case was called
4 into question and we are fighting to keep her in the
5 country now. This is a story that is just one of
6 many, but it highlights the need for many different
7 services impacting immigrants that have been talked
8 about already today, adult literacy, funding for the
9 Census, and legal services which is the one that I'm
10 going to talk a little bit more about in my remaining
11 time. If you saw the Comptrollers recent report on
12 immigration court cases, you'll know that Asian
13 Americans were the largest group represented in all
14 active immigration court cases and the Chinese
15 Americans represented a full 20 percent of them. Yet
16 despite the fact of this and despite the fact that
17 CPC serves community members from 40 different
18 countries speaking over 25 different languages, there
19 is not a legal services provider for Asian Americans
20 in New York City or specifically dedicated to them.

22 This is a huge gap and community-based
23 organizations such as CPC and many others you have
24 seen today are struggling to connect our community
25 members to these services and provide wrap around

1
2 supports. This is an urgent issue that becomes more
3 urgent by the day and we hope that this is something
4 that the city will put effort and attention and
5 funding into addressing, so that stories like the one
6 that I shared do not continue to be as common place
7 as they are. Thanks.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that and as
9 you present the issue, the gap of service and really
10 thinking about a legal service provider that's
11 dedicated to the API community or any other community
12 - I'm going to look at you all to help develop that
13 solution, so that we can take it to the city process
14 to fund it, because I think we're not good at rightly
15 so developing solutions without you at the table. Or
16 at least that's my point of view and so, that rang is
17 a very important to stop and acknowledge. And so,
18 how do we think about building the apparatus for the
19 Asian community in the city. And so, lets work on
20 that together.

21 And the last thing I want to say about Census is
22 we call our last panel, is a better Census response
23 gets us more funding for all the things we're talking
24 about and that's what's at stake here which is why
25 I'm going to say it at every panel and hope that you

1
2 can commit to that work as we advocate for the \$40
3 million but also once the \$40 million is out there
4 that we do it and we do it well so, we can get out
5 there. Immigration question or not. Cool, thank
6 you.

7 PANEL: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, our last panel. I
9 don't see the number of people here, so we'll see but
10 I think I see Jessica, come on over. Chelsea
11 Goldinger, Greg Waltman, Kerry Brodie, and Shirley
12 Solomon. Thank you so much for being part of our
13 panel, our most special panel and to close it out.

14 You want to testify as well? Do you want to read
15 you read your testimony, yeah, I won't ask any
16 questions of you but lets get you to fill out a form.
17 The Sergeant of Arms will get that to you. Okay, and
18 lets start with Jessica.

19 JESSICA FRANCO: So, good afternoon everyone. My
20 name is Jessica Franco and I am here representing the
21 Mexican community more so, an organization of Mexican
22 professionals under the name of We are United and
23 we're coming here with two concerns. One is we are
24 asking that the immigration committee looks into
25 allowing immigrants who are eligible to work,

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2 immigrants who have a work permit to join the civil
3 workforce such as the NYPD, the FDNY, and
4 Corrections. New York City takes pride in being a
5 sanctuary city but it's not really that way. We
6 don't really support the immigrant community when it
7 comes to the workforce, when it comes to education
8 and housing. There are other cities in the U.S. who
9 are actually really leading the way such as Chicago,
10 Los Angeles, Hawaii, Vermont, Nashville, and so on
11 and so forth.

12 So, we're asking the New York City Council to
13 really look into this matter. You know, I know that
14 with DNYPD there is the question of the firearm, but
15 maybe we can start with the Fire Departments, right,
16 they don't carry a firearm. It really impacts the
17 immigrant community especially the Mexican community
18 which is the third largest nationality growing in New
19 York City. Unfortunately we have the highest high
20 school drop out rates and one of the reasons is
21 because the Mexican youth don't really connect to -
22 they don't see any role models that they can identify
23 themselves with or connect to right, and clearly when
24 we look at the civil workforce and the representation
25 of the Mexican community, NYNDP is made up of 35,000

1
2 members but less than 60 are Mexican. In DFDNY, we
3 only have one Mexican fire fighter. So, clearly,
4 it's almost like you know, a lost way for the Mexican
5 community, for the immigrant community. So, we're
6 asking immigration committee to look into it. As
7 well as with the workforce and education, the summer
8 youth program is not open for students who don't have
9 legal status. So, currently middle school and high
10 school students who don't have a social security
11 number or work permit are not able to participate in
12 the summer youth program.

13 We are asking again, the Immigration Committee to
14 please run an investigation and really come up with a
15 plan to make the summer youth program accessible to
16 all New York City students regardless of their
17 immigration status. It is very difficult and it's
18 unfortunate to put this burden on a young kid who
19 doesn't have any control over their legal status.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for all of those
21 recommendations and I think some of these pieces can
22 get addressed through more funding to do the kind of
23 outreach and connection and many of these are
24 structural issues that we need to figure out and how
25 to change policies that we remove barriers,

1
2 especially for our young people and when we thing
3 about our services and I want to say thank you for
4 being here and representing the Mexican community but
5 also the Service Community of NYPD and FDNY and
6 Corrections. And so, I hear you, thank you.

7 GREG WALTMAN: Thank you Council Menchaca for
8 your time. Last but not least, my name is Greg
9 Waltman G1 Quantum. We specialize in different types
10 of proprietary innovation. I am also one of a lesser
11 known candidate for Governor of New York, still
12 pending litigation but I'm not here to talk about
13 that. But I wanted to try to use types of innovation
14 to try to unpack some of these issues and before I
15 begin, I'd like to say what my last MOIA friend here
16 asked us **[speaking in Spanish]**. So, we are all kind
17 of the same people and as I switch back to English
18 because I don't know that much of Spanish, but there
19 is a little-known solution to a majority of these
20 issues. If you put solar panels on the border wall
21 of 2,000 miles of 10 feet on the southern side, you
22 can create some 242 trillion kilowatt hours of energy
23 which is some \$291 billion of energy per year and if
24 you are able to export energy to Latin America for
25 cheaper, where on average Latin American citizens

1
2 spend on average 20 or 25 percent more in energy
3 prices, you are able to reduce the barrier to entry
4 to participate in the global economy and thus resolve
5 chain migratory issues and the build up that homeland
6 security Christian Neilson has taken quite a bit of
7 hit for because the scope of her latest hearing is
8 limited to the value based protectionism of the
9 available solutions.

10 So, what I mean by that is that these solutions
11 exist, solar walls solutions, quantum tracks, other
12 types of solutions but do the media merger type of
13 Cuomo contortionism, they are not being readily
14 addressed in the type of way that can create the type
15 of **[inaudible 5:50:23]** with the City Councils office
16 where you're articulating that you have \$3 billion
17 surplus this year, but you still have \$20 billion in
18 value based legacy state debt in New York. So, when
19 you're looking to tax more people on different types
20 of MTA, other types of things, you know, these
21 solutions do exist and reallocating resources,
22 revenues that are generated from the solar wall
23 application back to New York is of little or no – you
24 know, it wouldn't be very difficult to do and I'm
25 just here today just to expand the value based kind

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2 of protection as conversation around these issues
3 because you know, people are getting hurt and people
4 resort to types of primitive types of ways when they
5 are contracting immigrants and other types of things
6 and when you have the resources available, you know
7 is there a need for that type of animosity? No. So,
8 I'm just here to try to expand the conversation. Let
9 you know that there is more that meets the eye and
10 understand and breakdown some of these complex issues
11 with NDC as it relates to these solutions.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that and for
13 just bringing a context of a national conversation
14 about things that are happening right now. The last
15 thing I heard, I don't think that there has been
16 solar panels being proposed on Trump's wall but I
17 think what it makes me think about is what we're
18 doing here in renewable energy infrastructure and
19 thinking about how we bring wind farms to the coasts
20 of New York and that's happening in my district and
21 those are job opportunities that we are going to
22 connect and part of what we have been talking about
23 today is how we make sure that immigrant communities
24 who are not connected to those kind of job markets
25 traditionally and because of barriers like language,

1
2 all those things get removed and as a City Council we
3 look at city as a way. But thank you for expanding
4 the view here and thinking about other things at the
5 same time. So, thank you.

6 GREG WALTMAN: Thank you for you time.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Absolutely. Finish us off
8 here with your testimony.

9 ZACH MALLICK: Thank You. Good afternoon Chair
10 Menchaca and Members Staff of the Committee on
11 Immigration. Thank you for all of the important work
12 you've been doing this afternoon and your time in
13 office and all of your work.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

15 ZACH MALLICK: And for allowing me to share a bit
16 more about our work this afternoon. My name is Zach
17 Mallick but I'm testifying on behalf of Kerry Brodie.
18 So, if the language is a little off, this is her
19 testimony.

20 I am the founder of Emma's Torch. Emma's Torch
21 is a non-profit social enterprise that provides
22 culinary training and job placement services to
23 refugees, asylees, and survivors of human
24 trafficking. We aim to reimagine how refugees are
25 integrated into society. Through our hands-on

1
2 culinary apprenticeship, tailored mentorship, and job
3 placement services, we prepare our students for
4 sustainable employment in an industry where their
5 culinary heritages can be celebrated.

6 On behalf of the refugees, asylees, and survivors
7 of human trafficking in our program, as well as our
8 community partners, and the employers who we work
9 with, I urge you to consider supporting our
10 continuing effort to ensure that the newest members
11 of our community are empowered to begin new careers
12 with upward mobility.

13 Our program offers 600 hours of paid on the job
14 culinary training, job readiness classes, and English
15 as a new language, to our students. They learn on
16 the job skills at our restaurants. We currently have
17 a restaurant in Carroll Gardens Brooklyn, and we
18 operate the café at the Brooklyn Public Library
19 Central location. We work with over 35 non-profits,
20 refugee resettlement agencies, and homeless shelters
21 who refer clients into our program. Upon graduating
22 from Emma's Torch, we help our students find jobs in
23 a wide range of restaurants.

24 We see our work as empowering our students to
25 provide a vital service to New Yorkers. At our

1
2 restaurant we offer delicious, nutritious food to our
3 community. But more than that, we help to ensure
4 that there is a strong and diverse workforce to
5 support the culinary sector. Restaurant owners of
6 varying sizes struggle to fill their kitchen with
7 dedicated and talented staff. We assist them with
8 this. Our students are therefore not employed
9 through a sense of charity, but through a real
10 appreciation of the value that they bring to the
11 table. Often when refugees come to the United States
12 they struggle to survive. With your help, we can
13 ensure that they thrive.

14 I started this organization two years ago. In
15 that time, we have scaled up significantly.
16 Currently, we are set to enroll 70 students in our
17 program this year. To date 96 percent of our job
18 seeking graduates have begun career in the culinary
19 industry upon graduation. With your consideration of
20 our funding request, we could further invest in our
21 students, and help to ensure their success.

22 Thank you for your consideration.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for the final
24 testimony and I just want to say thank you to the
25 staff, I think MOIA is here to as well. Thank you so

1 much for being here and taking back the notes, the
2 strong will of the people's voices were heard today.
3 I want to thank the staff here who have been
4 incredible in helping prepare for this hearing. It's
5 not easy to do this because of the incredible need
6 and how we want to think about how we make decisions.
7 I think that's all I want to say about that, because
8 we have to make some decisions soon and you have
9 really helped us expand the view but also commit to
10 the things that we're trying to commit to, to support
11 some of the more vulnerable people that live in the
12 city who are truly the backbone of our neighborhoods
13 and whether communities that are just coming to New
14 York as immigrants or long standing immigrant
15 communities that have been here for a long time and
16 all of them deserve and opportunity but what had
17 struck me the most about today's hearing was really
18 thinking about, we have to make decision about where
19 we put funding and it is our prerogative as a
20 government that's for the people to support the most
21 vulnerable people and I think that's how we have to
22 make decisions and that's what I want to be taking
23 back to the Council Members and the Speaker, and the
24 Mayor. That that's how we make decisions because we

1
2 don't have an infinite amount of money of funding,
3 but we do have integrity to that goal and if we all
4 believe that then we can make some decision and part
5 of what we discussed today is that. Some of the most
6 vulnerable communities experiencing some of the most
7 high-risk family separation and everything that comes
8 with it.

9 And the final thing I want to say is Jin Lee here
10 is leaving us to move on to bigger and better things
11 and so, we want to make sure that we say thank you.
12 We are going to miss you. You prepared an incredible
13 hearing and with that you can gavel us out and do our
14 final gavel. Oh, wait and we're going to take a
15 picture of this. This is a special moment. We're
16 going to lose a very important person here. Okay,
17 and the meeting is now adjourned. [GAVEL]

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 1, 2018