

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOINTLY  
WITH COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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2  
3 CITY COUNCIL  
4 CITY OF NEW YORK

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6 TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

7 Of the

8 COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
9 JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON SMALL  
10 BUSINESS

11 ----- X

12 December 9, 2020

13 Start: 10:14 a.m.

14 Recess: 1:29 p.m.

15 HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 4)

16 B E F O R E: Paul A. Vallone,  
17 Chairperson for Committee on  
18 Economic Development

19 Mark Gjonaj,  
20 Chairperson for Committee on Small  
21 Business

22 COUNCIL MEMBERS:

23 Inez D. Barron  
24 Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
25 Farah N. Louis  
Peter A. Koo  
Brad S. Lander  
Carlos Menchaca  
Keith Powers  
Bill Perkins  
Helen Rosenthal  
Ydanis Rodriguez  
Stephen T. Levin

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Jonnel Doris  
Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
Small Business Services

Jackie Mallon  
First Deputy Commissioner of the NYC Department  
of Small Business Services (SBS)

Justin Kreamer  
Senior Vice President New York City Economic  
Development Corporation

Amy Peterson  
Director of the Mayor's Office of Workforce  
Development

Chris Neale  
Director of the New York City Workforce  
Development Board in the NYC Mayor's Office of  
Workforce Development

Darly Corniel  
Consortium of Workers Education

Jose Ortiz, Jr.  
CEO of the New York City Employment and Training  
Coalition

Erik Antokal  
AVP of Programs at of Nontraditional Employment  
for Women, NEW

Thomas J. Grech  
President and CEO Of the Queens Chamber of  
Commerce

Caroline Iosso  
Director of Community and Government Affairs at  
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow OBT

Valerie Payne  
Executive Director of Rebuilding Together NYC

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

Irene Branche  
Chief Development and Evaluation Officer for the  
Hope program

Abe Mendez  
Representing Per Scholas

Sonam Choedon  
Outreach and Member Success Manager at Hot Bread  
Kitchen

Christine James McKenzie  
Associate of Communications Learning and Policy  
at Jobs First New York City [SPEAKING ON BEHALF  
OF JESSICA CONWAY-PIERCE]

Ken Small  
Development Director for BronxWorks

Janet Rodriguez  
Co-Founder and CEO of SoHarlem

Susan Scheer  
CEO of ICD Institute for Career Development

Andrea Bowen  
Principal of Bowen Public Affairs Consulting

Rebecca Lurie  
Founder of the Community and Worker Ownership  
Project at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban  
Studies

Sylvia Morse  
Assistant Director in the Cooperative Development  
Program at Center for Family Life

Saduf Syal  
New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives, NYC  
NOWC

Alisalda A. Coronado Hernandez  
Family Child Care provider from the Bronx

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

Megan Nilon  
Resident of Washington Heights and Current  
Graduate Student at CUNY

Dia Edmunds  
Student Researcher at the CUNY School of Public  
Help and Health Policy

Terrence Byerson  
Community Relations Manager at STRIVE

Anh-Thu Nguyen  
Director of Strategic Partnerships at Democracy  
at Work Institute

Kyana Beckles  
CEO and Founder of Leverage Assessments and the  
Co-Founder of the Black Government Contracting  
Club

Tarisha Fleurmond  
Master's Student at CUNY School of Public Health  
and a Qualified Nutritionist

Osman Mariano  
Graduate Student at CUNY School of Public Health

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1 SERGEANT HOPE: Computer recording started.

2 SERGEANT BIONDO: Thank you.

3 SERGEANT DAUTAJ: Cloud recording started.

4 SERGEANT BIONDO: Thank you.

5 SERGEANT PEREZ: Back up is started.

6 SERGEANT BIONDO: Thank you. Good morning and  
7 welcome to today's Remote New York City Council  
8 Hearing on the Committees of Economic Development  
9 jointly with the Committee on Small Business.  
10

11 At this time, would all panelists please turn on  
12 their video for verification. Once again, all  
13 panelists, please turn on your videos for  
14 verification.

15 To minimize disruption, please place all  
16 electronic devices on vibrate or silent mode. If you  
17 wish to submit testimony, you may do so at  
18 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Again, that is  
19 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Thank you for your  
20 cooperation. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Alright, thank you so much.  
22 We will start this hearing. [GAVEL] Good morning  
23 everyone. I know it is a very busy time of year and  
24 we are all focused on many of our priorities but  
25 thank you for spending some time today at our virtual

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1 hearing where we will be discussing Workforce  
2 Development and Combatting Unemployment.  
3

4 My name is Paul Vallone, I am Chair of the  
5 Committee on Economic Development and today we are  
6 honored to have my dear friend Co-Chair from Small  
7 Business Council Member Mark Gjonaj. We are joined  
8 by Council Members Barron, Louis, Perkins and  
9 Rosenthal and there will be new Council Members  
10 coming and going, so the folks that are watching, at  
11 times you will hear them speak on issues within their  
12 district or questions on today's topic. I will start  
13 us off with just a brief opening and turn it over to  
14 my Co-Chair for his opening.

15 Today, this hearing marks the third opportunity  
16 that we in the Council have had time and opportunity  
17 to hear testimony from the Mayor's Office of  
18 Workforce Development. An office that was created in  
19 2014 with the goal of transforming the City's  
20 workforce development strategies by coordinating and  
21 improving the city's many workforce development  
22 programs.

23 The focus of today's hearing will be to check on  
24 how these initiatives from the Mayor's Office of  
25 Workforce Development, the Economic Development

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1  
2 Corporation and the Department of Small Business have  
3 adapted to the challenging circumstances created by  
4 COVID-19 pandemic as well if the plans lay ahead for  
5 the city's various workforce development programs. A  
6 lot of today from my point of few will be getting  
7 everyone on board for the work that we've heard  
8 before pandemic. What has happened since we have  
9 been in this crisis since March and what the plan  
10 will be for the new year in 2021, which we all can't  
11 wait to get going.

12 But first for a little background. In 2014, the  
13 Office of Workforce Developments career pathway's  
14 plan how kind the shift and the City's Workforce  
15 Development strategy from so-called rapid attachment  
16 programs, which presented limited opportunities for  
17 upward mobility to a new type of system that would  
18 partner with industries to help job seekers build the  
19 skills employers seek and prove the quality of work  
20 and most importantly for today's hearing, increase  
21 accountability amongst city agencies that conduct job  
22 training programs to ensure people who emerge from  
23 these programs are able to find work.

24 In the first five years since I guess, since the  
25 original decree of pathways framework was created,

1  
2 the city's economy set records in both sheer numbers  
3 of jobs as well as the lowest unemployment level  
4 since the 2008 financial crisis.

5 In October 2019, the City unemployment rate was a  
6 healthy 3.6 percent. Then as we know when the  
7 pandemic hit in March, all that growth came to a  
8 screeching halt. According to the New York State  
9 Department of Labor, in the year from October 2019 to  
10 October 2020, the City has lost nearly 554,000 jobs.  
11 That's over a half a million New Yorkers that are now  
12 out of work.

13 And while the unemployment rate as we covered a  
14 bit, if we want to call it that, since it spiked in  
15 20.4 percent in June, the rate remains at a  
16 discouraging 13.2 percent and as Council Member  
17 Gjonaj will talk about is almost a 20 percent still  
18 in the Bronx. Nearly 10 percent higher than the year  
19 before. While job losses have spread out across all  
20 of our industries, the hardest hit sectors were the  
21 leisure and hospitality, which we have had hearings  
22 on before in this Committee. We saw over 200,000 job  
23 losses alone and growing to date.

24 Considering the nature of how COVID-19 has been  
25 transmitted, it comes as no surprise that these face



1  
2 to face industries have suffered the most during this  
3 crisis.

4 In its most recent update to the career pathways  
5 plan, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development  
6 outlined the impact of the pandemic upon the city's  
7 Workforce Development infrastructure and how the  
8 city's low-income communities have suffered the  
9 hardest, both from job losses and from the disease.  
10 In order to combat this dual impact upon the city's  
11 move vulnerable residents, the Administration has  
12 proposed state legislation to commit a community  
13 hiring program. Which would allow the city to  
14 require city contractors to hire locally from high  
15 poverty communities.

16 We look forward to hearing the results of that  
17 proposal at today's hearing and on other initiatives  
18 that will be heard. The Office of Workforce  
19 Development has also updated its work with the five  
20 industry partnerships contained in the career  
21 pathways plan. They are health care, technology,  
22 construction, food and beverage and industrial and  
23 manufacturing industries. Each of these partnerships  
24 work in groups, have developed their own plans to  
25

1  
2 combat unemployment during this pandemic and we would  
3 like to discuss those today as well.

4       Additionally, the Mayor's Office of Economic  
5 Opportunity developed a data portal in coordination  
6 with the Office of Workforce Development to serve as  
7 a workforce hub for city employment resources and  
8 programs. As we understand it, this data portal went  
9 live in August but the agencies are still working out  
10 the kinks. We would like to hear more about that  
11 today as well and hopefully that there aren't any  
12 more kinks since portals are what we are all using,  
13 just like today's virtual hearing.

14       Finally, the Economic Development Corporation and  
15 the Develop Department of Small Business Services  
16 have rolled out their own initiatives, both stand  
17 alone and in coordination with each other or with the  
18 Office of Workforce Development to try to bring our  
19 jobs back to this city.

20       This is our number one goal that we must  
21 accomplish. I will let my Co-Chair Mark Gjonaj  
22 discuss the SBS Initiatives but as we understand it,  
23 EBC has also watched several programs since the  
24 pandemic including watching a \$7.8 million cyber  
25 security boot camp awarding almost \$1 million in

1 micro-grants to support workforce training programs,  
2 expanding on Trump and ownership programs in Queens  
3 offering salary negotiation workshops specifically  
4 for women awarding manufacturing grants to local  
5 businesses in the fashion industry and as we heard in  
6 previous hearings, especially right at the pandemic  
7 on how EDC stepped up to help provide the necessary  
8 PPE and the grants for local manufacturing for  
9 everyone that kept our first line troops safe and  
10 sound.  
11

12 We in the Committee look forward to hearing the  
13 details and progress of these initiatives and  
14 whatever else EDC has outlined for us today. The  
15 Committees today hope to hear from the Administration  
16 about the progress that has been made in adapting the  
17 career pathways framework to help the city's economy  
18 emerge from this crippling pandemic. As to well, if  
19 anything, the Council can do in its legislative  
20 capacity to assist in those efforts because whatever  
21 it will be, we will get it done.

22 Before I turn it over to my Co-Chair, I would  
23 just like to take a moment to thank the staff on the  
24 Economic Development Committee. Legislative Counsel  
25 Alex Paulenoff, our Senior Policy Analyst Emily

1  
2 Forgione and Principal Financial Analyst Aliya Ali  
3 for all of their hard work in putting this hearing  
4 together. They are truly part of our family here.

5 With that said, I would like to turn the floor  
6 over to my Co-Chair, my distinguished friend and ally  
7 on all things. We are privileged to be joined with  
8 Small Business and the Council Members on both of  
9 these Committees, Council Member Mark Gjonaj for his  
10 opening remarks.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you Chair Vallone.  
12 Good morning to all. I am Council Member Mark  
13 Gjonaj, Chair of the Committee on Small Business and  
14 I would like to welcome you to our joint oversight  
15 hearing today on the city's workforce development  
16 programs to combat unemployment. I would like to  
17 start by thanking my colleague, friend and neighbor  
18 Chair Vallone for Co-Chairing this hearing with me  
19 today.

20 Small Business and Economic Development go  
21 together. They work together. The COVID-19 pandemic  
22 and resulting shutdowns across the country have  
23 impacted all aspects of our lives. As the Chair of  
24 the Committee on Small Business, I focused my healing  
25 over the past few months on the fight of small

1 business owners that have tragically closed in masses  
2 because they can no longer pay their bills. This is  
3 through no fault of their own or because of poor  
4 business models but mostly because of COVID and  
5 because of consumer behavior changes and ecommerce.  
6

7 The purpose of our hearing today is to focus on  
8 the other essential aspects of our economy, the  
9 workers and this Administrations plan to New Yorkers  
10 back to work. Since the start of the pandemic, over  
11 65 million Americans have filed for unemployment when  
12 compared with 82 other metropolitan areas, New York  
13 City endured one of the worst rates of job loss this  
14 past July in comparison to July of 2019.

15 This past October, the city's unemployment rate  
16 was higher than that of the rest of the state and the  
17 nation as a whole. Even within the City, there are  
18 drastic disparities in unemployment rates across  
19 certain communities. When the people depend on it,  
20 Black New Yorkers were experiencing an unemployment  
21 rate that was nearly 10 percent higher than that of  
22 White New Yorkers.

23 As of October 2020, unemployment rates of Black,  
24 Asian and Latino New Yorkers were all above 13  
25 percent while unemployment rates for White New

1  
2 Yorkers was around 10. There have been disparities  
3 in unemployment across the five boroughs. During the  
4 pandemic peak, unemployment in the Bronx was at 25  
5 percent while unemployment in Manhattan was at 16  
6 percent.

7 My borough of the Bronx has extreme economic  
8 devastation. In part, we have the largest percentage  
9 of working in face to face industries such as tourism  
10 and food service that were shut down during the most  
11 severe moments of the pandemic and have yet to  
12 rebound.

13 Bronx also has the lowest percentage of employees  
14 that can work remotely. The unemployment rates as of  
15 October 2020 by borough are Bronx at 17.5 percent,  
16 Brooklyn at 13.3, Queens at 13.1, Staten Island at  
17 10.8 and Manhattan at 10.3. With mass unemployment  
18 and devastation plaguing the city and in the borough  
19 of the Bronx, our residents are struggling just to  
20 survive.

21 I will also point out that the death rate of the  
22 Bronx residents was double that of the rest of the  
23 City. 20 percent of Bronx residents applied for SNAP  
24 benefits in October compared to 13 percent citywide.  
25 10 percent of Bronx residents visited a food pantry

1 or soup kitchen in October and 15 percent say that  
2 having enough food to eat is their main concern. And  
3 finally, 63 percent of Bronx residents are on  
4 Medicaid compared with 45 percent in Brooklyn and  
5 Queens, 33 percent in Staten Island and less than 30  
6 percent in Manhattan.  
7

8 These statistic are tragic. They are the result  
9 of failures at the federal, state and city levels  
10 while we participate in this Zoom hearing, there are  
11 parents in this city that are foregoing breakfast, so  
12 that their children can eat or are on food lines for  
13 hours waiting to get a food box to take home to feed  
14 their family.

15 I was glad to see this past progress when SBS  
16 Commissioner Jonnel Doris announced the creation of  
17 Career Discovery NYC. A centralized online resource  
18 to help New Yorkers with career discovery and  
19 training. I appreciate the Commissioner and thank  
20 him for his tireless work over the past months.  
21 Nonetheless, I wonder how New Yorkers without  
22 internet can access these resources or any workforce  
23 development based initiatives from other agencies.

24 I look forward to hearing from the  
25 Administrations testimony today on how they plan to

1  
2 get New Yorkers back to work and help ensure all  
3 communities can achieve a higher level of economic  
4 security as an outline the COVID pandemic has caused  
5 intense disparities in employment rates across the  
6 city. An equity based approach, the workforce  
7 development is obviously necessary and I look forward  
8 to hearing how the Administrations initiatives to  
9 combat unemployment have been targeted to New  
10 Yorkers in most need.

11 There is strong evidence that highlights the  
12 correlation between high COVID-19 rates, health,  
13 death rates, poverty and employment. With that said,  
14 I want to thank my Chief of Staff Reggie Johnson,  
15 Legislative Aide Austin Sacker, our Senior  
16 Legislative Counsel Kristoffer Sartori, our Policy  
17 Analyst Noah Meixler and Financial Analyst Aliya Ali  
18 for all their hard work preparing for this hearing.

19 I would like to turn it back to my dear friend  
20 Chair Vallone, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Chair Gjonaj. We  
22 have also been joined by Council Members Menchaca,  
23 Rodriguez, Powers and Koo. So, we have almost 10  
24 Council Members and about almost 40 people who have  
25 signed up with groups to speak. So, today's hearing



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1  
2 will have time limits because there is no way to get  
3 to everyone. As our Council Members know, Council  
4 Member Gjonaj and I will do the first round of some  
5 questions but we will quickly turn it over to our  
6 Council Members and then we will go back to the three  
7 agencies that are here.

8 I would like to now turn it over to our Moderator  
9 and our Committee Counsel, my dear friend and new dad  
10 who has not had a lot of sleep but he is looking good  
11 Alex Paulenoff to go over some of these procedural  
12 items that we were just talking about.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. As the  
14 Chair mentioned, I am Alex Paulenoff, Counsel to the  
15 Economic Development Committee of the New York City  
16 Council. Before we begin testimony, I would like to  
17 remind everyone that you will be on mute until you  
18 are called upon to testify. At which point, you will  
19 be unmuted by the host. Members of the  
20 Administration who are testifying will not be muted  
21 during the Q&A portion of the Administrations  
22 testimony. I will be calling upon panelists to  
23 testify individually, so please listen for your name  
24 to be called.

25

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1  
2 The first panelist to give testimony today will  
3 be the Commissioner of the Department of Small  
4 Business Services. The following member of the  
5 Administration will also be available for  
6 questioning. First Deputy Commissioner of Small  
7 Business Services Jackie Mallon, Senior Vice  
8 President of Partnerships at the Economic Development  
9 Corporation Justin Dreamer and from the Mayor's  
10 Office of Workforce Development Director Amy Peterson  
11 and Deputy Director Chris Neale.

12 I will call on you shortly for the oath and then  
13 again when it is time to begin your testimony.  
14 During the hearing, if Council Members would like to  
15 ask a question of the administration or of a specific  
16 panelist, please use the Zoom raise hand function and  
17 I will call on you in order.

18 We will be limiting Council Member questions to  
19 five minutes, which includes the time it takes to  
20 answer those questions. Please note, that for the  
21 ease of this virtual hearing, we will not be allowing  
22 a second round of questions for each panelist outside  
23 of the Committee Chairs.

24 All hearing participants should submit written  
25 testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov), if you have

1 not already done so. The deadline for that written  
2 testimony is 72 hours after this hearing. The  
3 Committee Chairs have also asked me today to note for  
4 the public that we have a large number of witnesses  
5 scheduled to testify and we expect this to be a long  
6 hearing. So, we will be reviewing written testimony,  
7 which is also part of the record, in case you need to  
8 leave before you are called upon to testify.  
9

10 Before we begin our testimony, I will administer  
11 the oath. To all members of the Administration who  
12 will be offering testimony or who will be available  
13 for questions, please raise your right hands. I will  
14 read the oath and then call on each of you  
15 individually for a response.

16 Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the  
17 whole and nothing but the truth before this Committee  
18 and to response honestly to Council Member questions?  
19 Commissioner Doris?

20 JONNEL DORIS: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: First Deputy Commissioner  
22 Mallon?

23 JACKIE MALLON: I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Senior Vice President  
25 Kreamer?

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JUSTIN KREAMER: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Director Peterson?

AMY PETERSON: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Director Neale?

CHRIS NEALE: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Commissioner  
Doris, you may begin your testimony.

JONNEL DORIS: Thank you. Good morning Chair  
Gjonaj, Chair Vallone and members of the Committee on  
Small Business and the Committee on Economic  
Development. As mentioned, my name is Jonnel Doris,  
I am the Commissioner of the New York City Department  
of Small Business Services. I am joined by SBS First  
Deputy Commissioner Jackie Mallon, Amy Peterson,  
Director for the Mayor's Office of Workforce  
Development, Deputy Director Chris Neale and Justin  
Kreamer, Senior Vice President of EDC.

I am grateful for the opportunity to testify on  
our Workforce centers and the evolving impacts of  
COVID-19 on the city's workforce. As the nation faces  
an uncertain economic future, New York City job  
seekers are facing unprecedented challenges. Our  
goal is to continue to reach New Yorkers across the  
city, connect them to the resources they need to

1 persevere through this crisis and emerge stronger.  
2  
3 Through our network of 18 Workforce1 Career Centers,  
4 SBS connects jobseekers with employment  
5 opportunities, industry-informed trainings, and a  
6 variety of candidate development services, such as  
7 resume development, interview preparation and job  
8 search workshops.

9 Annually, we serve over 100,000 New Yorkers and  
10 connect more than 25,000 New Yorkers to employment  
11 and nearly 3,000 New Yorkers with the training needed  
12 to advance their careers. Through our Industry  
13 Partnerships, SBS has worked collaboratively with  
14 industry to design training models that prepare local  
15 talent for careers in food service, industrial,  
16 construction, health and tech sectors. Despite the  
17 uncontrollable impact of COVID-19 on our City, SBS  
18 was able to quickly shift all 18 Workforce1 Career  
19 Centers to a virtual-service delivery model.

20 As a result, Our Workforce1 Centers were fully  
21 operational by March 23rd. This allowed us to  
22 provide critical support to nursing homes, community  
23 hospitals and other essential service providers in  
24 filling their urgent staff needs at the height of the  
25 pandemic. Our Workforce1 career center staff

1 continue to be focused on identifying job  
2 opportunities. Since the onset of the pandemic, we  
3 have assisted more than 63,000 individuals, referred  
4 over 32,000 people to jobs, worked with over 900  
5 businesses on over 19,000 job opportunities.  
6

7 To date, we have connected more than 7,500 New  
8 Yorkers to jobs with an average wage of \$17.36. New  
9 York City industries have been devastated by the  
10 pandemic, job losses have been extensive, SBS is here  
11 to help job seekers connect to new jobs and adapt in  
12 the face of this crisis to upgrade their skills and  
13 help them pivot to new careers.

14 As a response to the increased demand for home  
15 health aides during the COVID crisis, we launched the  
16 Home Health Aide Training Program to support the  
17 City's long-term care sector during the COVID-19  
18 crisis and beyond. We introduced Career Discovery  
19 NYC, a centralized resource to help New Yorkers with  
20 career discovery and training. From mid-March  
21 through the end of October, 1,053 participants  
22 enrolled in our training programs to prepare for  
23 careers in tech, industrial and healthcare. New York  
24 City recovered 312,000 jobs from May to October and  
25

1 our unemployment rate dropped 7.1 percentage points  
2 since June.

3  
4 Both the private and government sectors continue  
5 to slowly see an increase. SBS is dedicated to our  
6 core outreach, collaborating with a network of 300  
7 community-based organizations throughout the five  
8 boroughs to source candidates and address barriers  
9 faced by job seekers. Through our Workforce1 system,  
10 SBS works on addressing specific communities'  
11 critical needs by providing and tailoring services to  
12 veterans, out-of-work youth, foreign-born New Yorkers  
13 and New Yorkers formerly involved with the justice  
14 system.

15 SBS is committed to doing everything we can to  
16 support New Yorkers through this pandemic. I look  
17 forward to our continued collaboration with the City  
18 Council on this effort.

19 Thank you for providing me with the opportunity  
20 to update you on SBS's workforce services. I am  
21 happy to answer your questions. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Commissioner. I  
23 will now turn to questions from the Chair. Chair  
24 Vallone, you may begin your questions.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Always dangerous when you  
3 have me on the unmute ability for myself. As my wife  
4 will testify, that is not a good idea.

5 So, thank you Commissioner, thank you. If you  
6 just look at the esteemed crew of staff and workers  
7 that are on this virtual panel, we couldn't be in a  
8 better set of hands to deal with today's topic and  
9 this crisis. So much of what the Commissioner spoke  
10 about and what we have talked about in the past is  
11 almost now we living with a giant asterisks, right  
12 everyone. I mean that plans that we had pre-March of  
13 2019 and the plans we have now strike in contrast  
14 with each other.

15 So, what we have been doing through our committee  
16 and working in partnership James Patchett and EDC is  
17 going step by step each month how the crisis has  
18 transformed the city to crisis management mode and  
19 how we have been dealing with that management mode to  
20 get through the crisis and then bring us to 2021 to  
21 hopefully see the light within spring to get us back.

22 So, today's hearing is another extension of that  
23 and this is a little history to for everyone. This  
24 always used to be a joint hearing and it was always a  
25 great - it was the best hearing of the year because



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1  
2 there is this synchronicity between EDC and Small  
3 Business and the Mayor's team on all things but  
4 because that hearing has really become such a  
5 massive, massive hearing and lots of the details got  
6 lost in the general size of the topics, we have split  
7 that up now. Now we have our great Chair, Council  
8 Member Mark Gjonaj handling that topic in their  
9 committee and then within our community in EDC in our  
10 world.

11 So, for those who are wondering, that's how this  
12 topic has been handled in the past. Today, we are  
13 rejoining that vision once again to hear on some  
14 updates with how the two have been working together  
15 as pre and now in the pandemic and the 2021 coming  
16 up.

17 So, with that, just for a little general  
18 background, if I could ask EDC to just give a little  
19 bit of that history on the relationship EDC has with  
20 small business and so we could start with that  
21 premise and then going forward.

22 JUSTIN KREAMER: Thank you Council Member, just a  
23 quick clarification question. When you are saying  
24 small business I assume you mean Small Business  
25 Services?

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Yes, between the acronyms  
3 and the shortened amount of time, that's what we are  
4 talking about.

5 JUSTIN KREAMER: I just want to make sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thanks Justin.

7 JUSTIN KREAMER: Yes, so thank you again for the  
8 question and for having us here today. I would say  
9 taking a step back EDC sees ourselves as an important  
10 player in the overall city's Economic Development or  
11 excuse me, Workforce Development equation. We see  
12 Economic Development and Workforce Development as two  
13 sides to the same coin.

14 Through the work that we do as you know, really  
15 our goal is to create sectors that will create the  
16 middle class jobs now and going into the future but  
17 we can't be creating these jobs for these industries  
18 without ensuring that these jobs are accessible for  
19 New Yorkers.

20 We also set at an interesting position because  
21 through the work that we do or often at the  
22 intersection of discussions between industry academia  
23 and also of course government. So, we can bring a  
24 lot of resources and insights to the table.

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1  
2       So, we are in regular contact with our colleagues  
3 at both SBS but also with Amy's team at the Mayor's  
4 Office for Workforce Development. There are monthly  
5 meetings that take place where we discuss the latest  
6 activities that each agency is working on and find  
7 ways to collaborate and coordinate.

8       In addition to that, specifically with SBS, there  
9 are weekly check in meetings between staff and at the  
10 Commissioner level to ensure there is alignment. We  
11 also meet on a monthly basis with Amy's team to  
12 ensure that there is a one to one dialogue that is  
13 taking place and where it blocks up with the rest of  
14 the Administration.

15       And then, so that's a bit high level but when it  
16 comes to brass task and specifically at projects, we  
17 make sure that we try to find ways to work with SBS  
18 and other agencies on our projects. So, some  
19 examples that I am sure we are aware of is our  
20 Brooklyn Army terminal; has a workforcel center  
21 that's based within it. The work that we do for Hire  
22 NYC. We work very closely with SBS to source  
23 candidates. We also work with DYCD to source  
24 candidates as well along with other community based  
25 organizations outside of the city family. We work

1  
2 with SBS on our Women. NYC initiative as Caroline was  
3 there with the We NYC program.

4 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So, Justin, that pretty  
5 much covers what most of our past topics and  
6 committee hearings have been. So, for those again, I  
7 always like to teach or use each hearing independent  
8 for a lot of new folks that are listening in and then  
9 as a continuation to the past. But how is EDC's role  
10 in, I guess, let's go specifically with Workforce  
11 Development with SBS. So, is there a coordination in  
12 use of resources, distribution of resources? How is  
13 that partnership directly with SBS and EDC in dealing  
14 with workforce redevelopment resources?

15 JUSTIN KREAMER: Yeah, so as you mentioned before  
16 with your introductory remarks. COVID is an ongoing  
17 evolving situation and so, you know, early on you  
18 know, we worked with SBS to develop supply chains  
19 locally for PPE and we worked with SBS to identify  
20 talent with some of those initiatives.

21 As we are moving forward and you know, looking to  
22 you know, post-pandemic future we continue to invest  
23 in sectors that we think are going to grow like tech  
24 and life sciences as examples of two sectors. We  
25 work with SBS to make sure that the investments that

1  
2 we are making in tech are tied to SBS's programs like  
3 Techcom pipeline as one example. Another example  
4 would be, I think more directly answer your question,  
5 as we think about things, how does the City leverage  
6 a lot of the hard earned lessons learned from the  
7 pandemic and make the city a hub for public health  
8 that will both be a job creator but will also make  
9 sure the city is safe before future pandemics and  
10 health emergencies. We are going to be organizing  
11 sessions to develop the topic and those outreach  
12 lists are co-created with SBS and done jointly.

13 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: You mentioned in working  
14 with those programs that you would invest or finance  
15 in. Can you expand or what is the level of that  
16 commitment? How has that changed I guess pre and  
17 post pandemic. So, how is EDC funding these type of  
18 initiatives with SBS and how has that changed and how  
19 are those priorities determined?

20 JUSTIN KREAMER: Yeah, so, in terms of funding,  
21 it is of course a fluid situation with you know the  
22 budget deficits that the city is facing. I don't  
23 have any specific numbers to share with you at this  
24 point. I can get back to you with that information.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Yeah, I think that's  
3 critical because it also highlights for everyone how  
4 the crisis is such a challenging force for all of  
5 these. You know, we had focus on how we were going  
6 to deal with this pre-March and it was, then there  
7 programs that we were talking about had a definitive  
8 outcome. Now, that's all changed. So, yeah, we  
9 would like to get an update on that.

10 Here is, I guess, a simple one but here is an  
11 example of a direct amount of money. So, the New  
12 York City Neighborhood Capital Cooperation was  
13 recently awarded \$50 million from the Federal New  
14 Markets Tax Credit Program. These tax credits will  
15 go to providing lost cost financing to develop  
16 projects in low-income New York City communities  
17 including development schools, healthcare centers,  
18 grocery stores and community.

19 Could you give us some details on those awards?  
20 You know, how is that being handled and who will get  
21 and what projects will get prioritized first from a  
22 grant like that?

23 JUSTIN KREAMER: Yeah, absolutely, I am sure it  
24 is in background but as you just mentioned, this is a  
25 federal program and EDC has been awarded funding

1 three of the past four years to the tune of about  
2 \$116 million. We were required through the program  
3 to use the resources that come with it to invest in  
4 projects that provide social services to low-income  
5 communities. There are four areas that we look at  
6 when making these investments, broadly speaking.  
7 First is community facilities. Second, is healthcare  
8 clinics. Third, is super markets. Fourth is  
9 industrial centers.  
10

11 While none of these explicitly are workforce  
12 development programs perse, they all are required to  
13 participate in Hire NYC which of course as I  
14 mentioned before, we work with SBS on to source  
15 candidates. To give one example where a recent  
16 investment does have a workforce development overlay  
17 is the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club in Harlem.  
18 That's a project that has about 50,000 square feet  
19 located within it. And you know, pre-COVID times  
20 about 450 youths go through the door on a daily  
21 basis. There are workforce or academic training  
22 programs and college courses that are offered within  
23 there.

24 We do have a RFEI that is currently out right now  
25 where we are looking for healthcare providers across

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1  
2 the five boroughs. We have projects in mind that  
3 would be eligible for the new market tax credits  
4 program. So, we would certainly welcome the  
5 Council's support in getting the word out on that  
6 project, so we can get the best applicants possible  
7 and hopefully be able to fund once they come in.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, you mentioned the  
9 four or five factors that determine this. Is it  
10 borough by borough? Is that even distribution? How  
11 is that allocation I mean, because when Council  
12 Member Gjonaj highlighted the unemployment numbers,  
13 they are staggering right and when you see yes, it is  
14 has changed a little since June but I am not -  
15 everyone knows my stance with keeping small  
16 businesses open and restaurants and every one as best  
17 we can, especially this month. If we continue to  
18 hear the threats from the state above us on closing  
19 anything during this month when there is only two to  
20 three weeks left during the holiday season for all of  
21 these businesses to recuperate anything they can is  
22 insanity. January is a different story but we have  
23 to do what we can to keep everyone alive. How does  
24 that look on a five borough basis and is there any

25



1  
2 difference, any allocation of the awards for each  
3 borough?

4 JUSTIN KREAMER: Yeah, first of all, we can  
5 follow up with you how those allocations have been  
6 done in the past from a borough distribution  
7 perspective but broadly speaking, you know, we do  
8 have a five borough strategy and so we have an eye  
9 out for equity. All projects that come in, we  
10 evaluate those on a case by case basis to make sure  
11 that they align with our values. You know, if a  
12 project is based in one borough you know, our hopes  
13 is that a project, excuse me, the project itself  
14 would be something that would be accessible to  
15 residents in other boroughs as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So, what we will do is we  
17 will come back Justin. There is other Council  
18 Members that have joined in. We are now joined by  
19 Council Members Powers, Cornegy, Lander and Levin.  
20 So, we have quite a few and there is three separate  
21 groups basically on this first panel for everyone who  
22 is watching.

23 So, just before I turn over to Council Member  
24 Gjonaj, my Co-Chair for Small SBS. For the Mayor's  
25 team, just can we quickly take a peek at and talk

1  
2 about the work you are doing with the Economic  
3 Opportunity Program and the citywide data platform  
4 that you recently created. The portal went back I  
5 think to December 2019 and I like that you have I  
6 guess the first five city agencies report data. If  
7 you can give us an update on the working.nyc.gov  
8 program and how the portal has been launched and  
9 where we see how we can get additional information  
10 from the many agencies, that would be great.

11 AMY PETERSON: Yeah, hi, this is Amy Peterson.  
12 Thank you so much for having me here today to talk  
13 about this incredibly important issue. For us, we  
14 are really focused on the things that systematically  
15 will improve opportunities for workers and connect  
16 the vast system that we have and you raised one of  
17 them in what you were talking about.

18 So, for a long time, we all know that there is  
19 multiple workforce programs across a lot of different  
20 agencies and it is really critical that they talk to  
21 each other and that we can share data about a workers  
22 progress or a New Yorkers progress through the  
23 multiple system right. Someone who goes through the  
24 Summer Youth Employment program might then take

25

1  
2 advantage of an SBS program and might also be  
3 participating in API program.

4       So, the Mayor's office of Economic Opportunity  
5 has been working with our office and all of the city  
6 agencies to create an integrative workforce data  
7 platform that collects what are called common  
8 metrics. So, similar data at an individual basis  
9 across all of the workforce programs and then brings  
10 that into a system and is able to look at that data  
11 and also, if we have the right data and we have an  
12 opportunity, we can actually compare that to the  
13 state DOL wage reporting data. Which gives you  
14 information about jobs that people have and wages and  
15 things like that.

16       It is not the cleanest system but we get that  
17 information. So, they have integrated about 50  
18 percent of the programs and most of the really big  
19 ones; SBS, DYCD, and a few others and it is pretty  
20 interesting to be able to see how it maps. The idea  
21 is that this will be made available to the public in  
22 2021. I think that that got delayed a bit because of  
23 COVID and we are looking forward to be able to do  
24 that and we also intend to start reporting our data  
25 that way, which will ensure that other programs that

1 aren't getting in, get in and I think everyone will  
2 see a real benefit.  
3

4 Also on information that I know is important to  
5 you about where these people live and how people  
6 across different neighborhoods -

7 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So, you did the right thing  
8 well, in bringing us back. I appreciate that. It is  
9 the beginning point.

10 So, you said, they are putting in the information  
11 or you have about 50 percent of the data. Can we  
12 just clarify what data do you have today through this  
13 new system, the collection of the inter pooling of  
14 the different workforce plans and what is still  
15 missing that we can get to?

16 AMY PETERSON: Yeah, so I think the last major  
17 bit of data aside from a lot of smaller agencies  
18 that's currently being uploaded is the HRA data,  
19 which will be really hopeful in coordinating this.  
20 And we can actually share with you a list of the  
21 programs that are already included and the number of  
22 people through those programs.

23 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So, is that portal we are  
24 talking about is something that is internal now and  
25 is not yet a public portal?

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1  
2       AMY PETERSON: It is internal now but the intent  
3 is to make it available publicly and so the team has  
4 really been working on making sure it is something  
5 that works for the workforce programs themselves and  
6 for the people like us and you who are interested in  
7 the kind of bigger picture.

8       CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I think it would be  
9 instrumental in helping right now in the crisis, even  
10 if it is a pilot portal of some type, just to get – I  
11 don't think anyone would be upset even if it is not  
12 completely 100 percent of the data at this point just  
13 to get some. There is so much interagency  
14 coordination on this topic and it really needs to get  
15 to you as soon as possible, so we can distribute  
16 because each one of the Council Members in their  
17 Committee can have the same exact topic as a  
18 Committee hearing delve into their Committee on what  
19 the workforce development plan is in their Committee.

20       So, it's such a broad topic that we are totally  
21 relying on you to get this type of portal going.  
22 With beyond the portal, how has your resources  
23 changed since the pandemic or what your focus is now  
24 on trying to get us back to the recovery through this  
25 workforce development.

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AMY PETERSON: Yeah, through our office, separate from the portal, you know, I think and I wasn't here in 2014 on the workforce development world and wasn't directly involved in kind of graphing the group half ways report but I think it really provides a good structure for how we should be focused on workforce development then but clearly now in what is really important. And so, we have been really trying to advance and highlight a number of things that will make our system work better as we rebuild our economy and I think the keepings that we want to focus on are the jobs and making sure they are good jobs and good paying jobs and that's something that is incredibly important.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Can you like just on the good paying jobs and equitable distribution, is there a direct plan that you can say that you work with SBS and/or the EDC on that specific topic on how the coordination is between these just three of you today?

AMY PETERSON: Yeah, so that's, so I think it is important to talk first about the project labor agreement that the city negotiated with the building trades and was announced in August. And I was just

1 on another workforce call hearing about you know, our  
2 hopes right overall nationally for infrastructure and  
3 the ability to create lots of jobs through  
4 infrastructure. And the decade old question of how  
5 do you make sure that those jobs go to people in the  
6 communities that we are focusing on.  
7

8 So, in partnership with SBS and with the building  
9 trades and with EDC who is doing a number of  
10 projects, we have negotiated a project labor  
11 agreement with the building trades that has workforce  
12 components that are new and have not existed in a  
13 citywide project labor agreement to this date and are  
14 incredibly important from someone who has spent a lot  
15 of time working with programs, trying to get people  
16 into building trades myself. It is just amazing to  
17 see the city's and the building trades commitment.

18 So, there is two components to that. One is how  
19 you get people from the communities into the trades  
20 and the building trades partnered with my office and  
21 housing recovery but more importantly with  
22 Workforce1, SBS, doing the built it back project  
23 labor agreement and really trying to get people  
24 involved in the Sandy recovery and really felt like  
25 that was a good match for connecting the pre-

1  
2 apprenticeship programs that have direct  
3 relationships with unions and can get people into the  
4 unions with people on the ground in the communities.

5 And so, as part of the new Project Labor  
6 Agreement, there is a new initiative Hire NYC  
7 Construction Careers, which is really focused on  
8 ensuring that people from communities and the  
9 Workforce1 and SBS does that with their community  
10 partners right. So, they are on the ground with  
11 community partners talking to them about recruitment  
12 and I really want to grow that more and more and more  
13 right. The more that we can be working with the  
14 people who are organizing on the ground in connection  
15 with New Yorkers to get them into this Workforce1  
16 process, then they get connected to pre-  
17 apprenticeship programs and we launched Hire NYC  
18 Construction Careers in November and have three  
19 training classes that we recruited for. Two that are  
20 going on right now. Now, one, I think hasn't quite  
21 started yet and are really focused on ensuring that  
22 people get into the trades but not that that's not  
23 incredibly exciting by the new part -

24 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Oh, it is.



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1  
2       AMY PETERSON: The new part of the Project Labor  
3 Agreement is there is now commitment within the  
4 project were two things. One, is that and this was  
5 with the Building Trades in partnership, that 30  
6 percent of trades hours will go to residents of zip  
7 codes with a poverty level over 15 percent or NYCHA  
8 housing. There is about 50,000 NYCHA – people in  
9 NYCHA developments outside of those zip codes. Now  
10 these are pre-COVID, so we I believe already had that  
11 conversation but 15 percent poverty. And that 30  
12 percent of the 30 percent, so 9 percent will go to  
13 apprentices.

14       So, this is the first time that the City's  
15 actually requiring apprentices on city projects,  
16 which will ensure that those entry level jobs that  
17 are the opportunities that we just said were going to  
18 be through the Workforce1 system come in. And we  
19 have been talking, just bringing it back to EDC, we  
20 have been talking a lot to EDC about how that same  
21 model work with conversations they are having about  
22 with their partners. And Justin can talk to this  
23 more than I can, where they might be you know,  
24 encouraging climate groups in New York City or  
25

1 businesses and things and try to figure out how that  
2 works.

3  
4 So, that's in place and what that does is, if we  
5 award a lot of projects from infrastructure funding  
6 right, you know, we get some money, stimulus money  
7 and those are subject to the project labor agreement,  
8 we will have this commitment and as we you know, work  
9 hard I think to get more funding for trading  
10 programs, as also a start of stimulus funding. We  
11 really want to invest more and more in those pre-  
12 apprenticeship trainings and the Workforce1 system to  
13 make sure we can make that connection.

14 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, that is what we want  
15 to hear. Those are the perfect examples of how we  
16 can get through this by highlighting our apprentice  
17 programs. Working with our trades with the POA  
18 agreement. So, thank you for that and I am sure our  
19 Council Members will come back Amy to you on that but  
20 I would like to turn over to my Co-Chair Council  
21 Member Mark Gjonaj for Small Business for his  
22 questions. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you Chair Vallone and  
24 I must say having the SBS, EDC and Workforce  
25 alongside of Economic Development, Small Business is

1  
2 the approach to this tremendous hurdle that we have  
3 ahead of us. I know that we are all striving to have  
4 our unemployment numbers back to what they were pre-  
5 COVID but I can't help but mentioning, you heard me  
6 allude to my opening comments, the correlation  
7 between COVID-19 rates, health, death, poverty and  
8 unemployment are the evidence that's there speak to  
9 itself. In addition, the unemployment in the City  
10 that's caused by the pandemic is not equally impacted  
11 in all of the five boroughs the same. The Bronx has  
12 the highest levels of unemployment in the city as I  
13 noted. It is almost at 18 percent which is 4 to 7  
14 percent higher than the other 4 boroughs in the city.

15 But it is also at a high level of impact on  
16 residents of color and foreign borne city residents  
17 that are disproportionately impacted by unemployment.  
18 And I am going to ask the question to each of you,  
19 can you outline an equity based approach to combating  
20 unemployment? And maybe you Commissioner first  
21 Jonnel and then we can go onto Economic Development  
22 and Workforce.

23 JONNEL DORIS: Thank you Mr. Chair for that  
24 question. As you know at SBS our work is based and  
25 targeted on equity and making sure that everyone who

1 needs an opportunity, who needs be it a job, be it  
2 start a business, a community needs a corridor, that  
3 needs to get representation with us, we are there  
4 working with them.  
5

6 For us, you know we continue to have our  
7 Workforce1 centers across the city that specifically  
8 targets and speak to those communities that are  
9 hurting the most. You know, over 70 percent of those  
10 who come into our Workforce1 centers are people of  
11 color. Certainly those, 80 percent or so without an  
12 associate degree or of the sort. So, we are targeted  
13 into the right audience. We are going after with our  
14 300 community partners, the targeted groups that we  
15 think that need of course the resources the most.  
16 And then, on top of that, at the end of it all when  
17 we do provide the service, we are seeing that we are  
18 averaging over minimum wage for all of the jobs that  
19 we do connect New Yorkers to.

20 So, there is a five borough strategy in the sense  
21 that we have 18 workforce centers. All over the  
22 City, we have specific targeted training for those  
23 who need it the most. Those who literally are our  
24 clients who come into our Workforce1 centers now  
25 virtually as we have been doing and those resources

1  
2 that they need. Be it connect to them to career  
3 advancement opportunities, such as how do they move  
4 up. So, they need different trainings for that or  
5 resume preparation, interview skills preparation.  
6 These are the basic things, nuts and bolts that they  
7 need.

8 That's what we do. We are there to provide those  
9 services with our 18 Workforce1 centers and then  
10 again, targeted on an equity basis, making sure that  
11 the people who actually need this support, they get  
12 it and that's what we have been doing at our 18  
13 Workforce1 centers across the city.

14 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you for that answer  
15 Commissioner and you know that I appreciate you and  
16 what you are doing and the tremendous job and how you  
17 have met these challenges and we are working together  
18 closely. But with that being said Commissioner,  
19 Workforce1 is currently closed and it is being done  
20 virtually. What are we doing for those that don't  
21 have access to the internet? The most neediest  
22 remember and in particular the Borough of the Bronx,  
23 the poorest. Those that have been impacted the  
24 hardest.

1  
2 So, we have 18 Workforce centers. How many are  
3 located in the Bronx? How many employees do you have  
4 at these work centers and how many are each work  
5 center. So, if we are going to talk about equity,  
6 let's talk about equity. What good is a Workforce  
7 Center that Bronx sites for city residents can't  
8 access because the lack of technology and access to  
9 the internet?

10 JONNEL DORIS: Yeah, so thank you. We have four  
11 centers in the Bronx. We have also provided you  
12 know, significant resources in the Bronx with 15,000  
13 residents we have served, over 15,300 residents we  
14 have served in the Bronx specifically since the  
15 pandemic ensued.

16 We also you know, understand the digital divide  
17 and disconnect and we did you know, survey. We  
18 reached out to those who were serving and those  
19 through our community partners have also surveyed and  
20 understood that you know, 92 percent of those we are  
21 serving, the residents we are serving there have you  
22 know access to a device to upload a resume. 96  
23 percent have reliable internet access as we have  
24 service between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. And then, because  
25 we wanted to go further, we want to understand you

1 know, how many of them can you know, get an  
2 attachment off of an email etc.

3 So, 94 percent of them we surveyed said that.

4 So, you know, we have taken much, much care in  
5 ensuring that even during this virtual reality that  
6 we are in right now, that everything is virtual, we  
7 did pivot just one week into the closures. You know,  
8 March, I believe 23<sup>rd</sup> or so, we were fully  
9 operational and we were helping 63,000 New Yorkers  
10 across you know, across the city. And so, while I  
11 hear the concern around access, we believe through  
12 our community partners, 300 of them are for workforce  
13 centers, particularly in the Bronx, as we are  
14 speaking of the Bronx. And our surveys that we have  
15 conducted with the customers, that we are really  
16 reaching those that we need to reach and those who  
17 need help the most.

18 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Commissioner, thank you  
19 again. The 250,000 approximately 250,000 Bronx sites  
20 that are currently unemployed, don't even take into  
21 consideration the independent contracting that are  
22 self-employed, so that number is much, much higher  
23 and we don't have the statistics for it. Some of the  
24 numbers that I have heard are way over 30 percent as  
25

1 an estimate. Again, I go back to even the partners  
2 that you have that are out there producing surveys,  
3 residents are sheltering in place. The same partners  
4 that you are relying on to get the word out are  
5 social distancing and not allowed to have large  
6 gatherings.  
7

8 The same group that has no access to internet is  
9 not being invited to meet, to hear about the services  
10 that you have and what you are able to offer them.  
11 They are not doing enough short of text messaging,  
12 emailing, door knocking, regular mail, to get the  
13 word out. If we know who are the unemployed are and  
14 we have those numbers, why aren't we mailing them  
15 something? Commissioner?

16 JONNEL DORIS: Yes, no, I am sorry, I wasn't sure  
17 you finished. So, just for the record also, you  
18 know, we do serve our residents by phone. So, if you  
19 have a phone, you can also call and you can call a  
20 number and you are serviced. There is a hotline;  
21 there is a number there for you to call based on the  
22 borough.

23 So, you know look, we have significant staff in  
24 the Bronx you know working with you know the local  
25 partners and there has got to be a combination of



1  
2 things of which we are doing, right. There is the  
3 virtual Workforce Centers. We have surveyed folks,  
4 they said, you know the majority of them overwhelming  
5 can sort of navigate that process. We have phones  
6 that they can call. They can call the phone. They  
7 can call the number; somebody can assist you there.  
8 We do have then our partners who some of them are on  
9 the ground and out in the community and continue to  
10 work.

11 It is a complex situation, right. We do  
12 understand that but there is not a Bronx site who  
13 would come for service or seek service from SBS and  
14 wouldn't get it. That is not the case and again  
15 because you know, we have a significant number of  
16 partners across the city, 300 and we are not doing  
17 this in isolation and without our workforce centers  
18 and with the resources that we have set up, we  
19 believe how you know, there is more of course there  
20 is always more to be done, we will continue to do  
21 that. Folks can also call 311 and they can get  
22 services directly and so, look we understand the  
23 challenges of this time. I think you know and as we  
24 have traveled across the city, we know that these is

1 a challenging time and we want to be flexible as  
2 possible.  
3

4 You know, folks can call you know, any of our  
5 hotlines. 311 is the easiest obviously because you  
6 know, they can direct you right through. We have  
7 been servicing again, you know, 63,000 New Yorkers.  
8 15 plus thousand in the Bronx and you know, we want  
9 to make sure we continue to do that and certainly  
10 with your support and others we can continue to reach  
11 as many, many residents as we can.

12 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you. I was hoping to  
13 move on but now we are stuck on Workforcel. Well, if  
14 that's the case, then can you explain to me why your  
15 numbers are flat from those that are participating  
16 through Workforcel? From the year 2020 to 2019, we  
17 had a 4 percent unemployment rate and we had as high  
18 as 25 percent. Your numbers on those that give  
19 services has not increased. It is pretty much flat  
20 if not going down. And if you want, I think you have  
21 the numbers, if you look at the last five years. I  
22 don't know if you have that in front of you. 2016  
23 Workforcel career centers offered services through  
24 104,000 summer in '14. In '17 104,239, in '18 102,

1  
2 in '19 120,093. Unemployment is five times what it  
3 was and yet we are servicing less.

4 JONNEL DORIS: Well, a few things I will say on  
5 that. Certainly, you know, we have – you know, with  
6 the constituency and our support of our community  
7 partners, we continue to see obviously that we are  
8 meeting the need that is coming to us. So, that's  
9 the first thing.

10 The second thing is, you know in November alone,  
11 we saw year over year of I believe it was over 20  
12 percent activity at our Workforce1 center. So, look,  
13 I think what you saw in the beginning of this process  
14 is all the stay at home mandates that we heard the  
15 concern about the virus and we heard that from folks.  
16 We heard about you know the concern about jobs and  
17 where are jobs? Are jobs actually here? That was a  
18 concern in the market place. And then, we of course  
19 in our pivot, as I mentioned, as we went virtually,  
20 we were able to help still even with the pause. And  
21 all of the businesses that had to pause, as you know  
22 and I know, with small businesses who were unable to  
23 open and as we began to reopen we saw some uptick in  
24 employment in various industries as we began to see  
25 businesses come back.

1  
2 So, you see that activity coming from there. We  
3 did see you know; the unemployment rate continue to  
4 go down month over month last month too, it keeps  
5 going down. We have a 21 percent increase year over  
6 year in November and those were servicing. And so, I  
7 think that's going to continue, right as the economy  
8 opens you will see more activity as we get closer to  
9 a vaccine. As we get closer to getting this virus  
10 under control, more folks are going to want to engage  
11 again in the market.

12 So, I think the main thing is, do we have the  
13 capacity of the service? Yes. Have we been doing  
14 the outreach to service them? Yes. Do we have ways  
15 for folks to access this that have not used an  
16 internet? Yes. And we also, I have seen an uptick  
17 again, 21 or so percent from last year to this year.  
18 As things open up, I think we are going to continue  
19 to see the increase.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you Commissioner. My  
21 last question to you is, do you think the  
22 Administration has done a good job in targeting  
23 workforce developments resources in communities that  
24 need it the most?

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1  
2 JONNEL DORIS: I believe we are meeting the needs  
3 of the communities that are there. Again, we have a  
4 vast system. The largest in the country and I want  
5 to really put that in perspective. Our Workforce1  
6 Center with programs largest in the country, 18  
7 Workforce1 Centers. Every community across the city,  
8 300 partners. Can we do more? We are always  
9 striving to do more. We are always being creative.  
10 We run training programs and other things we are  
11 looking to do as my colleagues mentioned before which  
12 certainly, there is not a New Yorker who can call 311  
13 and won't get help from us and I think that's the  
14 first and foremost most important thing. If you need  
15 help, you can get help and we are there to service  
16 them and we are doing that even during this pandemic.

17 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: So Commissioner, don't tell  
18 me how much love and appreciate me, show me. And  
19 that question is then - I am going to ask a direct  
20 question. I am sure you in the upcoming days and  
21 weeks, you are going to show me a tremendous amount  
22 of resources that will be coming into the Borough of  
23 the Bronx compared to the rest of the City. And you  
24 are going to show me the resources that went into  
25 communities of color and those most vulnerable

1 compared to the rest of the City. And I am going to  
2 hold you to it because those vulnerable people  
3 deserve it. The Borough of the Bronx deserves it.  
4 The numbers are there. The facts are there and now  
5 it's about resources and that has to be tangible.  
6

7 I hope I can rely on you and that in the near  
8 future you will be able to show me how much you have  
9 been able to give struggling community in the Borough  
10 of the Bronx, which in my case I am making argument  
11 for, the entire borough should be an economic  
12 development opportunity zone.

13 This has been going on for decades, nothing has  
14 changed. We always had the worst of the worst. We  
15 have been at the bottom. We have been at the top of  
16 what's bad and at the bottom of what's good. I don't  
17 know how much more evidence we need that the Borough  
18 of the Bronx needs and deserves more resources.

19 Say yes Commissioner.

20 JONNEL DORIS: Sorry, yes sir, absolutely sir and  
21 in our other work with small businesses, you know  
22 what we are doing there with you and our commitment  
23 to the Bronx. We are going where it is needed the  
24 most, absolutely.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you. I am going to  
3 ask the same question about how this proportionately  
4 impacted communities of color and borough and I will  
5 ask that of NYC EDC first to see how we are going to  
6 assure that your projects are going into these  
7 vulnerable communities and to the borough. And I  
8 will use that as the target at this hearing.

9 JUSTIN KREAMER: Thank you Council Member for the  
10 question and of course, a very important topic pre-  
11 COVID and obviously where we are now.

12 I will start by saying that when the pandemic  
13 first hit, EDC mobilized its resources, the networks  
14 that we have, the facilities that we have to ensure  
15 that the City had an adequate amount of PPE that was  
16 desperately needed for our frontline workers. This  
17 lead to lives being protected but also, jobs being  
18 created.

19 As time has gone on, you know, a critical piece  
20 of this of course we all know is the ability to keep  
21 the economy open. If we can't keep the economy open,  
22 then it is harder to keep people employed, so we have  
23 recently opened up the Pandemic Response Lab, which  
24 gives the City a dedicated location to process  
25

1  
2 upwards of 30,000 tests in a single day. This would  
3 be a critical part for us to keep our economy open.

4 Bigger picture thinking about how do we create  
5 jobs more widely across all five boroughs including  
6 the Bronx is, you know, we continue to make  
7 investments in sectors that we believe are going to  
8 grow. Tech being one of them to drill down to that  
9 slightly, Cyber security is an area that we have made  
10 investments as we talked a little bit earlier about.  
11 We have a Cyber Security Boot Camp that we do in  
12 partnership with Fullstack Academy that's open to  
13 residents across all five boroughs.

14 The Boot Class only started back in late 2019  
15 where five cohorts have gone through roughly about  
16 105 students in total. Out of that first class, I  
17 believe about 90 percent of the students were able to  
18 get jobs, so early indicators are positive for that  
19 program.

20 Another sector we are making a lots of  
21 investments in is life sciences. One program that we  
22 are particularly proud of is our life sciences  
23 internship program. For that, our target is local  
24 college students who come from lower income families.  
25 So, this program has been running for a few years



1  
2 now. When we look back at the numbers, a lot of  
3 positive things to report there through our  
4 partnership to CUNY.

5 So, roughly 41 percent of all events in the  
6 program have been CUNY students. Roughly, actually  
7 over two-thirds have been non-White. 54 percent have  
8 been Tap or Pell grants eligible students and 33  
9 percent of the participants have been first  
10 generation college students.

11 We also work on any project that EDC has that  
12 requires a real estate transaction or incentive or a  
13 new tenant in one of our facilities, they have to go  
14 through the Hire NYC program, which you have heard my  
15 colleagues talk about. The efforts that are being  
16 made to ensure that those pipelines that were  
17 connected to find candidates come from communities  
18 that are in most need.

19 And just to close, my answer to your question  
20 here. We will also just mention that the Pandemic  
21 Response Institute, which was announced last week,  
22 still forthcoming, is meant to long term ensure that  
23 we are better prepared for future health emergencies  
24 and will be taking a community based approach with  
25 that on identifying what are the infrastructures that

1  
2 communities need to make sure that they better  
3 protected, have better outcomes in the future.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you for that answer  
5 Mr. Creamer. Do you have those numbers by borough or  
6 by zip codes as the number that you are referring to?

7 JUSTIN KREAMER: For the programs that I  
8 mentioned. I don't have them off hand but I can get  
9 back to you when we talk to the team.

10 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I would like to see them by  
11 borough if possible and if we could really break them  
12 down into by zip code, then we really know if we are  
13 targeting the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

14 JUSTIN KREAMER: Of course.

15 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And I am going to ask you,  
16 what commitment that in your projects that you focus  
17 on the communities that are hardest hit. The Borough  
18 of the Bronx to the most vulnerable and the  
19 communities of color and you said 58 percent I  
20 believe, if I remember that you referred to of people  
21 of minorities that from the schools that  
22 participated.

23 JUSTIN KREAMER: Yeah, you are referring to the  
24 Life Science Internship Program where roughly two-  
25 thirds of the participants have been non-White and

1 then the 54 percent was of students who were Tap or  
2 Pel grants eligible.  
3

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Statistics like that are  
5 important. Then we know that the resources are  
6 really going into those communities that really need  
7 it anything that you can give me that will help us  
8 determine how many more resources you need and that  
9 we laser precision target that you are offering. I  
10 am grateful to you but I am going to ask for that  
11 commitment that you start focusing on the Borough of  
12 the Bronx and those communities in the city that most  
13 need it.

14 Thank you Mr. Kreamer and I will ask that same  
15 question to Workforce Development, Ms. Peterson.

16 AMY PETERSON: Hi, yeah, so I think the two  
17 questions right was like kind of equity focused and  
18 then a little bit specifically on the neighborhoods  
19 that need it most including the Bronx.

20 So, the three things that I think about most in  
21 everything that we are trying to do in recovery is  
22 figuring out, is there a way, and this is the hardest  
23 one right. To raise the wages of workers who are  
24 underpaid for the work that they do and I think that  
25 that's a big piece that we all need to kind of

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1  
2 collectively work on together because that would lift  
3 up a lot of people in ways that we should figure out  
4 how to do that with this opportunity that we have  
5 right now and rebuilding our economy from this.

6       The other is kind of making sure you know, New  
7 York City, both kind of the city agencies but the  
8 larger city itself has such a vast, rich workforce  
9 infrastructure from our adult education programs to  
10 our industry based training programs and all of the  
11 community based organizations and community colleges.  
12 It is just incredible but I think we all know and  
13 have all struggled with how you make it work best and  
14 how do you set up those networks and systems that  
15 connect people from the communities that you are  
16 talking about to the programs and to the jobs.

17       And so, really focused on connecting that system  
18 and reaching down into the community, into the - and  
19 I met with an organization from Northwest Bronx last  
20 week and they were just talking about the organizing  
21 they do and you know, I haven't thought about it as  
22 much as I should just like organizing workers to get  
23 into Workforce Development. And so that's I think  
24 the big piece of what we want to do and maybe that's  
25 how we talk about the component of part of community

1 outreach in a different way and so, that's really  
2 important.  
3

4 But then it's about the jobs right. And so, how  
5 do we connect – how do we make the jobs better and  
6 how do we connect this system to the jobs and the  
7 best way that the City can be a part of that is by  
8 the jobs that we create when we spend money. And so  
9 I talked about the project labor agreement and how  
10 that will help and just to go more into specifics on  
11 the Bronx for that one, you know, when you look at  
12 neighborhoods that have poverty over 15 percent, you  
13 look at the Bronx right.

14 And when you look at neighborhoods that have been  
15 impacted by COVID, you look at the Bronx and other  
16 neighborhoods across the City but we are clearly  
17 focused on the communities with the highest level of  
18 poverty but the PLA and the construction projects is  
19 just one piece of how the City spends money and for  
20 decades, we have been talking about local hire and  
21 community hiring and how do you actually use the  
22 money the City spends to create jobs. And so, we  
23 have worked really hard to think about how you get  
24 past the legal barriers and to be clear, the barriers  
25 are legal and for many us – many people who are new

1  
2 to thinking about Workforce and jobs and COVID have  
3 sent emails or raised the idea of how do you connect  
4 people in communities like you are talking about to  
5 the jobs that the City creates and there is no way to  
6 do it directly with the money the city spends because  
7 of state law. Federal Municipal Law does not allow  
8 us to take into consideration who gets the jobs that  
9 were spending. They care about cost, which we all  
10 care about and they care about integrity, which we  
11 all care about but they are not thinking about who  
12 are getting the jobs for the money we spend.

13 So, we have legislation that would look at  
14 exactly what you are looking at. We would prioritize  
15 for jobs in construction and building services.  
16 People who live in zip codes at high levels of  
17 poverty and for all other jobs, we would prioritize  
18 people who are themselves in poverty and I think that  
19 the changes we could make in how we spend money on  
20 tech and connecting the people who are going through  
21 all the great tech programs to those jobs and the  
22 money we spend on food and the money we spend on  
23 healthcare and the money we spend on building  
24 services and all of the things. It is incredibly  
25 important and if we think we are going to get more

1 money as part of stimulus to work on climate and  
2 healthcare and food and opportunities, we should make  
3 sure that we have the workforce system in place, the  
4 connection to the New Yorkers on the ground but also  
5 this legislation to allow us to actually spend our  
6 money on jobs for New Yorkers.  
7

8 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you Ms. Peterson. I  
9 am looking forward to working with you and alongside  
10 of you in every capacity and manner to achieve what  
11 you just outlined and we have a lot of work ahead of  
12 us and I am going to ask the same commitment, that we  
13 continue to focus on the most neediest of New  
14 Yorkers. So, thank you.

15 My last question to the Commissioner because that  
16 was a warm up to you Commissioner about the final  
17 pictures here. We have learned a lot; we made a lot  
18 of mistakes over the last eight months on how we  
19 dealt with COVID. Obviously, there was no history  
20 here, there was no track record that we could follow.  
21 We learned along the way. Inevitably, we are looking  
22 at a second shutdown on the horizon. What are you  
23 going to do, what is this administration going to do  
24 to prevent a replay of the devastation and the  
25 disasters?

1  
2 JONNEL DORIS: Yeah, thank you for that question.  
3 You know, I think from a Workforce1 perspective and  
4 Workforce general perspective, we have the  
5 infrastructure and I think this is something that you  
6 know, we were able to pivot earlier on in the process  
7 to help New Yorkers but right now, we have an  
8 understanding of who the clients are. We have an  
9 understanding of where we need to focus attention  
10 even more so.

11 We also understand better even our partners and  
12 their capacity. Understanding them you know, in what  
13 they can do or can't do or the resources that they  
14 need in addition to what we already have and so, I  
15 think that knowledge certainly is going to be  
16 critical as we go forward into what maybe a potential  
17 second wave. And then we also understand you know,  
18 again how outreach works in an environment where you  
19 can't you know, you can't be in a room together  
20 right. And so, some of our resources, the way we  
21 train, the way that we communicate, the way that we  
22 get the word out, the way that we work with even  
23 businesses. Over 900 businesses came to us to ask  
24 for help to source jobs through there.



1  
2 So, the infrastructure I think right now is in  
3 place, which is I think the most important thing. We  
4 know what is to expect. We know how to address those  
5 concerns and we have that core infrastructure in  
6 place that we can be ready and we are ready for a  
7 potential next wave. Again, because we have been  
8 through it and we have those systems in place.

9 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Commissioner, thank you.

10 So, now we have the knowledge and we have the  
11 experience. You just outlined that we have the  
12 infrastructure in place. How much in the form of  
13 actual resources are you going to put into this  
14 before it happens in a full active approach and not  
15 reactive. So, the number of unemployment doesn't get  
16 to 25 percent again in the Borough of the Bronx.  
17 What dollar amounts have you allocated, has this  
18 Administration allocated to that support structure  
19 that we just outlined ahead of the second wave?

20 JONNEL DORIS: Yeah, I think, it's important to  
21 note and we work from our budget and we have a budget  
22 that sort of manages the work of the Workforce1  
23 centers. The budget itself and for – particularly,  
24 we are talking about the Bronx. Those are in the  
25 Bronx and the partnership that we develop on training

1 etc., all these things, we have it right. It is just  
2 the change in the way that we go about doing the work  
3 is what we are talking about really. I mean the  
4 resource isn't there.  
5

6 And so, you know, we -

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You don't need extra  
8 funding?

9 JONNEL DORIS: Oh, look, we will take on any  
10 additional dollars we can. I mean, certainly we  
11 expect and we hope again to get some additional  
12 funding from the federal government because that's  
13 generally what happens in a down time.

14 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: The default answer.

15 JONNEL DORIS: That's what generally happens in a  
16 down time where we do get additional dollars and we  
17 are ready to deploy them with additional training,  
18 with additional resources through outreach with  
19 additional you know, assistance with interview prep  
20 and also, you know, going after businesses who maybe  
21 looking for workers.

22 And so, look, I think what you are getting at and  
23 I think it is important to note that the largest  
24 workforce program in the country, what we run, we do  
25 have the resources in every borough. So, there is a

1  
2 five borough strategy and we have the allocation of  
3 dollars to go ahead and do that.

4 And if more money comes in, which yes, that is  
5 the default right now in the sense that the city is  
6 facing its budget deficit as you know. You know, we  
7 have money that we are working with but we would  
8 gladly take on more from the city, from the state and  
9 from the federal government. And as it comes in, we  
10 will deploy them accordingly.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you Commissioner. I  
12 agree with you that the federal government must do  
13 more, should do more but in a time that that does  
14 happen and we hope that it does happen sooner than  
15 later. We can't rely on a state. What more is this  
16 Administration willing to do? Understanding that  
17 every dollar that you invest in getting people back  
18 to work, every dollar that you invest in small  
19 business to make sure that they don't close. That  
20 they do reopen, that they do survive is one that what  
21 more can you do? What more can the City do, this  
22 Administration do to invest every dollar wisely? And  
23 that is about economy and jobs. The jobs and the  
24 economy. Getting people back to work. Making sure  
25 that they can provide for themselves and their

1 families and helping these businesses survive. This  
2 is the emphasis and the default answer, federal  
3 government, state government is great, we expected  
4 it, we want it, it should be there but what are you,  
5 what is this Administration going to do more than  
6 they have already?  
7

8 And I can't help but point out that our budget  
9 was in June. The budget for Workforce1 was allocated  
10 back in June of Small Business Services. We had no  
11 idea how much worse this was going to get. How much  
12 more of this Administration has allocated to your  
13 agency to address the unemployment rates and  
14 secondly, why is this Administration still doing pet  
15 projects? Like finding \$900 million to buy a school  
16 bus company. This is not the time to invest in a  
17 school bus company but actually put it into the  
18 economy, put it into those small businesses and  
19 making sure that New Yorker can get back to work.  
20 That they have a job to return to.

21 You may not have to answer that but I vented.  
22 Let me pass it back to the Chair and I want to thank  
23 you all for answering the questions directly and the  
24 tone and the passion is not directed toward you.  
25 This is what is out there everyday on the street,

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1  
2 what I hear from struggling families. What I hear  
3 small businesses cry to me but their lives work is in  
4 shambles but come the end of this year, their  
5 businesses will not be open. They are hoping to get  
6 through the retail to bring whatever revenue they can  
7 because come January and February, they are shutting  
8 down permanently and we failed them.

9 The greatest city in New York, in the country, in  
10 the world, the wealthiest city in the world, has  
11 failed our small businesses and all New Yorkers.

12 Thank you.

13 Chair let me pass it back to you.

14 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I am going to pass off to  
15 our Counsel Alex Paulenoff for any other Council  
16 Members for questions and for the Committee's and the  
17 folks that have signed up, once the Council Members  
18 are done, Council Member Gjonaj and I will wrap up  
19 any last questions to the three panels that are and  
20 then it will be your turn and you will hear your name  
21 called and the Council Staff Alex Paulenoff will lead  
22 you through that. So, I turn it over to him.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. I will now  
24 call on Council Members in the order that they have  
25 used the Zoom raise hand function. If you would like

1  
2 to ask a question and you have not yet used the Zoom  
3 raised hand function, please do so now.

4 Council Members, you will have a total of five  
5 minutes to ask your questions and receive an answer  
6 from the panelists. The Sergeant at Arms will keep a  
7 timer and will let you know when your time is up.  
8 Once I have called on you, please wait until the  
9 Sergeant has announced that you may begin before  
10 asking your questions.

11 First, we will hear from Council Member Cornegy.  
12 As a reminder, any other members who wish to answer a  
13 question, ask a question excuse me, please raise your  
14 hands. Council Member Cornegy, you may begin when  
15 the Sergeants call time.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Good morning. Thank you  
18 so much Chairs for having this hearing. It is  
19 tremendous to see so many stakeholders on the call at  
20 one time on behalf of our small businesses.

21 I want to start by giving a little bit of a  
22 historical context. Pre-COVID, if my numbers serve  
23 me correctly, 67 percent of employment in the City of  
24 New York was in small business. 13 percent was in  
25 nonprofits and the budget, which I am a member of the

1 budget negotiation team to date, has not reflected  
2 the need and desire to undergird our small businesses  
3 in the past.

4  
5 I fought every year to make sure that the budget  
6 was reflective of real, real, real, true support for  
7 our small businesses and have been mandated through  
8 the budget dance process to choose between funding  
9 senior centers and supporting small businesses, which  
10 is a ridiculous proposition. They are not mutually  
11 exclusive.

12 So, every time I put forward the idea that the  
13 budget should be reflective of true support for small  
14 businesses, we have to vote as members in the budget  
15 negotiation committee and prioritize our vote, and  
16 certainly, no one is going to not vote for having our  
17 small businesses, I mean, for not having seniors and  
18 youth services and programs that are available.

19 The idea that every year we do this ridiculous  
20 budget dance and our task at choosing between the two  
21 is a tremendous travesty. The budget in the past has  
22 reflected the support for Workforce Development which  
23 is incredibly important but really truly no line  
24 items that support an undergird by building capacity

1 with access to capital and/or technical assistance  
2 for our small businesses.

3  
4 So, too, the SBS Commissioner, will you support  
5 me in demanding that the budget be reflective this  
6 year? My last budget, my legacy budget will be  
7 reflective of the needs of small businesses and will  
8 not be torn apart or members from the Administration,  
9 heir portion of the budget. Because the budget dance  
10 generally boils down to you know, the budget  
11 negotiation and then budget adoption and so many  
12 things happen in between. We have to this year  
13 prioritize the budget around supporting small  
14 businesses. Workforce Development is important but  
15 there is no workforce development without small  
16 business.

17 So, where are we going to tell people to go to  
18 work if we are not truly supporting our small  
19 businesses and for EDC, prior to the pandemic, we  
20 were already facing this overage of vacant commercial  
21 spaces. We know that because of the pandemic, which  
22 has exacerbated the number of businesses that will  
23 not return, we are going to have a super duper  
24 overage of vacancy and the vacancy rates are going to  
25 be incredibly high based on us already beginning to



1  
2 move to a platform of online shopping and all those  
3 kinds of things. We know the impact that it has had  
4 on our small commercial mom and pop businesses.

5       What is EDC going to do to ensure that going  
6 forward whether it is doubling up businesses, whether  
7 it is doing whatever, our commercial corridor serve  
8 two purposes. One, is they say that the City is open  
9 for business, so those vacancies hurt us tremendously  
10 with tourism and with generating revenue. What is  
11 EDC's plan on the commercial vacancy rates. Kind of  
12 reducing them or plan to have businesses come  
13 together and share the space. What are we going to  
14 do from that perspective because in addition to  
15 moving to an online platform of shopping, businesses  
16 just aren't coming back.

17       Like, just because of the pandemic and  
18 exacerbating the inability for businesses to survive,  
19 what we were already seeing is going to be quadrupled  
20 in 2021.

21       So, those are my questions. I hope I asked them  
22 under time and then, lastly, in Bed Stuy, we have  
23 developed a plan to partner with app based  
24 transportation companies and married them to brick  
25 and mortar business and we do a shared economy

1  
2 weekend and now a month long event where we allow for  
3 discounted rates into bars, lounges and restaurants  
4 on Friday's which obviously you can't do now because  
5 of COVID. On Saturday, the retail outlets, on a  
6 Sunday, the cultural institutions and I have noticed  
7 an uptick in business and it has caused a higher, at  
8 least of one or two more staff to meet the need and  
9 the demand of that partnership between the app based  
10 transportation companies and our brick and mortar  
11 businesses.

12 And lastly, there is a statistic that shares that  
13 if we support and undergird our businesses to the  
14 tune that they can hire one more person, every single  
15 business in the City of New York, if they can hire  
16 one more person, we will reduce the rate of  
17 unemployment by 50 percent in ten years. Why aren't  
18 we doing that?

19 I have seven seconds remaining, so.

20 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Good job Council Member  
21 Cornegy and I think we can do the answer in seven  
22 seconds for Council Member Cornegy. As you can see  
23 he was previous Chair so he has got a lot a of the  
24 knowledge that we all built on. Thank you Robbie.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you Chair.

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1  
2 JONNEL DORIS: So, I will just say to the Council  
3 Member which it has been certainly a pleasure to work  
4 with, both as Chair and now as a Committee Member.

5 And in out of the communities as well with you to see  
6 the devastation that is happening to our small  
7 businesses. And so, I think you certainly have an  
8 ally here concerning the need for the additional  
9 resources within the budget process. We certainly  
10 will take it. We will take as much resources as we  
11 possibly can and you know, some things that we have  
12 been doing is connected a private sector and creating  
13 private partnerships around creating capital products  
14 but also helping small businesses from everything  
15 from dealing with the digital divide to the specific  
16 challenges of communities of color, particularly  
17 Black businesses and women, businesses in the city.

18 So, certainly, we have a considerable amount of  
19 investment there but certainly looking forward to  
20 additional investment so we can continue to keep the  
21 small business community strong. Build it further so  
22 that they can hire additional workers. That's the  
23 whole point you know. For our small businesses we  
24 understand 3.4 million employed people in the city  
25 before this pandemic were for small businesses. 65

1  
2 percent of our small businesses are five persons or  
3 less. I mean, we are talking microbusiness that need  
4 real support and we are giving it to them but the  
5 more we get the more we can do. So, thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will turn it  
7 back to the Chairs for additional questions.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I didn't hear from EDC  
9 on the commercial vacancy rates and how we intend to  
10 address that from an EDC prospective because part of  
11 your portfolio is commercial real estate.

12 JUSTIN KEAMER: Yeah, absolutely, I was just  
13 trying to keep behind the clock there but happy to  
14 answer the question Council Member.

15 So, yes, you are hitting on a very important  
16 topic. Our retail shops are one of the critical  
17 things that bring people to New York City. Keep  
18 people in New York City in the first place from a  
19 business traction standpoint, businesses want to be  
20 in New York City because their employees want to be  
21 able to access all the great retail that the city has  
22 to offer.

23 So, the things that we have done to date you know  
24 as I have discussed earlier today is ensuring that  
25 the City had PPE in place to lower the curve. We

1  
2 can't keep our economy open unless we are able to  
3 test people and make sure that we are keeping the  
4 numbers down. So, we have our micro response lab in  
5 place and you know we are focusing on how do we bring  
6 new sectors into the city and remind the world that  
7 New York City is open for business and get you know  
8 the corporate tenants back in the office when it is  
9 safe to do so. Because they are ultimately the  
10 shoppers of these places that allow them to stay in  
11 business.

12 You know this is a topic that we are looking at  
13 very closely. We are happy to follow up with you and  
14 have more discussions on it but we certainly agree,  
15 this is an important issue.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, thank you so much  
17 and then you mentioned tech, we touched on tech. We  
18 know that looking away from tech is a recipe for  
19 disaster but embracing it and using it in a way that  
20 it undergirds our brick and mortar businesses. They  
21 are not mutually exclusive. I will give you the  
22 model that we use here in Bed Stuy and I hope they  
23 use in Brooklyn overall about marrying at least the  
24 app based transportation companies to our brick and  
25 mortar businesses.

1  
2 I think it is a replicable model. The Chamber in  
3 Brooklyn believes it is a replicable model and I  
4 think it's a model for us to be able to pivot and  
5 shift to recovery and resiliency by using both of  
6 those platforms to be able to generate revenue for  
7 both. That's transportation as well as brick and  
8 mortar's.

9 JUSTIN KREAMER: Yeah, would agree with you there  
10 and we do have an initiative out that tries to sort  
11 of find challenges that small businesses that are  
12 facing that can be solved by tech, so we would be  
13 happy to follow up with you on that particular piece.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Council Member  
16 Cornegy, our previous SBS Chair. You have given us a  
17 lot of the tools that we are using today. So, thank  
18 you for your hard work.

19 What I would like to do is just you know,  
20 Director Peterson, Amy, you had touched on really  
21 just some of the tools that we are working on and I  
22 know that some of the portal I guess is still not  
23 ready for public reuse and interaction but in the  
24 meantime, you know, I am not one to hope for federal  
25 stimulus or state legislation because I know that it

1 is just going to not be things that we can count on  
2 during a city as a pandemic.

3  
4 So, with what we can deal with today and what we  
5 are facing. How can we use the information that you  
6 have for the workforce with this interagency plan  
7 that you have? Interjecting and using the POA new  
8 agreement and getting that plan moving more quickly.  
9 What can we expect from I guess, for your vision to  
10 get that plan to move even more quickly and how we  
11 can spread that across, not always a big advocate of  
12 everything we do, the students are our future.

13 So, in working with that model for getting them  
14 into the schools, especially with colleges as blurry  
15 as they are now for folks scaling to getting our high  
16 school students to letting them know that their  
17 career is in a path right now, in the city in these  
18 various partners. We went from industry to fashion,  
19 from construction to workforce, all of them. How can  
20 we deal with that without waiting for federal  
21 stimulus and waiting for state legislation?

22 AMY PETERSON: Yeah, and I think it is not  
23 waiting but it is also being ready, right. Like the  
24 place we don't want to be in is stimulus funding or  
25 state legislation and not being ready to use it

1 immediately. So, I think it is building the systems  
2 now so that they can grow as the stimulus comes in  
3 and we can make them legally required when the state  
4 legislation comes in. So, I want to talk about a  
5 couple things.  
6

7 So, in addition to the common metrics, which is  
8 the system that's now retracted, who is going to the  
9 system and how they are connecting across different  
10 programs in addition to the system that Commissioner  
11 mentioned about career discovery. We have also  
12 launched another system and it is not too many. It is  
13 all good and I think important and a good step  
14 towards doing exactly what you just said.

15 So, the City launched a website [working.nyc.gov](http://working.nyc.gov)  
16 that actually has a direct relationship with career  
17 discover in that, career discovery is taking you  
18 through different industries and learning about  
19 potential jobs, exploring them. You know kind of  
20 discovering what the cases are and actually getting  
21 connected training. With that, one of the things  
22 that I have heard when I took this job, I imagined I  
23 would know every single workforce program that the  
24 city has and realized that there are just so many  
25 amazing people working on programs across agencies



1 from the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities  
2 to veterans to the DCAS actually thinking about the  
3 green jobs that are coming from the building  
4 retrofits to the agencies we all think about. DYCD  
5 and scales to jobs, the MOCJ program and SBS and HRA.

6 So, the Working NYC database and system is meant  
7 to be and has been launched, kind of a soft launch.  
8 We are really trying to make it work for the  
9 programs. A place where all of the programs that the  
10 city has exists in one place and again, we are  
11 building it slowly. We just trained all the agencies  
12 in the City that have workforce programs to add their  
13 workforce programs to the system. And we built it  
14 with the people who try to guide people through the  
15 workforce system in mind.  
16

17 So, we have spent a lot of time with providers  
18 and with the agencies that are doing this work to get  
19 a sense, and we did this in partnership with the  
20 Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity to get a sense  
21 of how to access jobs.

22 So, there is a programs piece, which what I would  
23 like to see happen in the future is and quickly  
24 right, is to build that in a way that people who are  
25 organizing on the ground could connect people from

1  
2 the hardest hit communities can understand what  
3 opportunities are out there and how to point people  
4 to the training that is best suited for them. Like,  
5 what does the worker want to do and best connected to  
6 jobs like the construction jobs we talked about.  
7 Just like tech jobs that were just brought up.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Okay, thank you and if I  
9 can jump in right there for a second.

10 AMY PETERSON: Yeah, of course.

11 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I mean, that's the critical  
12 piece and I think there is always interagency  
13 involved in everything we do and from my humble  
14 perspective, it's also what hinders us because  
15 sometimes we just don't get that cooperation.

16 So, I would almost rather see us launch what we  
17 can launch, especially during a COVID pandemic. How  
18 there are new opportunities because of the pandemic.  
19 Because there are new job opportunities and what the  
20 world and the City is focusing on now in the recovery  
21 with so many of the jobs that are lost in the  
22 traditional model.

23 There is even more confusion for folks on how to  
24 transition from unemployment back to employment in  
25 these new areas that have been focused. So, my

1  
2 request and I guess with everyone else that is part  
3 of this, is let's get something in that world that's  
4 tangible and useable now as we grow the portal in the  
5 workforce plan, which is as wonderful as it is but I  
6 am afraid to hold back on a larger more perfect  
7 launch, as opposed to what since we are in what we  
8 are in now, I would almost want to say, look, this is  
9 what we are working on. This is what we can do. It  
10 is a work in progress. It is a pilot launch. It is  
11 not the final but it may, even if it helps one person  
12 that unemployed is still better than waiting for a  
13 perfect plan. That would be my suggestion.

14 AMY PETERSON: Agreed completely and that's  
15 exactly what we are doing. The intent is to build  
16 the system and to really think about how you connect  
17 people. What are the things from organizing on the  
18 ground to Workforce1 to a pre-apprenticeship program  
19 to apprenticeship program to getting a construction  
20 job. How is that half way in tech, how is it in  
21 healthcare and how do we make that work? And I think  
22 the tools we have in place are helping us to do that  
23 and we are just going to build on them to make sure  
24 we are ready.

25

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1  
2       CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, there is a lot there  
3 and I just spoke with Council Member Gjonaj and I  
4 think it is a perfect topic for us to reconvene and  
5 relook at early next year. I think this exact  
6 meeting, we can look at right coming out of the  
7 winter months, as we look for spring and reopening of  
8 hopefully everything. That we can have this  
9 conversation with EDC and Justin and with  
10 Commissioner Jonnel and with yourself to kind of  
11 bring us to the next phase and I think that would be  
12 my hope and I want to thank all of you for that. We  
13 have quite a few people signed up.

14       So, Council Member Gjonaj, if you have anything  
15 for closing before we turn over to the panels, I will  
16 turn over to you my brother.

17       CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you Paul. No, I  
18 don't. I just want to thank everyone for their time,  
19 their input and obviously the challenges are ahead of  
20 us and I am a big fan of being more proactive than we  
21 are. The writing is on the wall. We have some  
22 history now and knowledge and experience on how to  
23 deal with COVID and the devastation. We know that  
24 the more money we throw at this problem, the lesser  
25 the devastation will be. Although, I also refer to

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1  
2 my colleagues comment about I won't hold my breath  
3 for state and federal money. We are holding upon  
4 this city to do more and the focus must be targeted  
5 focuses on communities that need the help most and  
6 historically have needed the help most. We have, the  
7 facts are there and I am looking forward to meeting  
8 these challenges with you, as a partner. There is no  
9 one agency department that can do this on their own.

10 Thank you so much.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs. We will  
12 now turn to public testimony. I would like to remind  
13 everyone that unlike in our typical Council hearings,  
14 we will be calling individuals one by one to testify.

15 Due to the number of people signed up to testify  
16 today, each panelist will be given only two minutes  
17 to speak. Please begin your testimony once the  
18 Sergeant has started the timer. Council Members who  
19 have questions for a particular panelist should use  
20 the Zoom raise hand function and I will call on you  
21 in the order you raised your hand after the panelist  
22 has completed their testimony.

23 For panelists, once your name is called, a member  
24 of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms

25

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1  
2 will set the timer and then give you the go ahead to  
3 begin.

4 Please wait for the Sergeant to announce that you  
5 may begin before delivering your testimony. The  
6 first panelist to testify today will be Darly Corniel  
7 followed by Jose Ortiz, Jr. and then Erik Antokal.  
8 Ms. Corniel, you may begin when the Sergeants call  
9 time.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Will the muter please unmute  
12 Darly Corniel?

13 DARLY CORNIEL: Thank you. Good morning  
14 Committee Chairs Gjonaj and Vallone, Council Members  
15 and Committee Staff. Thank you for the opportunity  
16 to testify on how the Consortium for Worker Education  
17 and our network of workforce development community-  
18 based organizations and union work to ameliorate the  
19 increasing numbers of unemployed New Yorkers.

20 CWE actively engages with the City Council and  
21 State agencies to deliver workforce education and  
22 training to underserved New York City communities'  
23 residents. CWE's Jobs to Build On program JtBO and  
24 Worker Service Center Program were launched by the  
25

1  
2 City Council as its own Workforce Development  
3 initiatives.

4       CWE is unique in its structure, demonstrating  
5 collaborative relations between organized labor and  
6 community groups on behalf of workers. While such a  
7 mutually benefiting relationship is often  
8 recommended, nationally, it only exists in New York  
9 City. Several months into the ongoing public health  
10 crisis, we know that the economic impacts of this  
11 pandemic will not be short-lived. These rising  
12 unemployment levels are impacting communities of  
13 color the most, the same communities that have  
14 suffered in the highest numbers from COVID-19.

15       We need action, at a local, state and federal  
16 level, to help working families survive the crisis  
17 and re-enter the workforce. At CWE, that means  
18 uplifting the integral community organizations and  
19 unions that New York City workers know, trust and  
20 depend on. Those groups are uniquely equipped to  
21 support our city's unemployed and underemployed, not  
22 simply with their workforce development offerings but  
23 their holistic approaches to supporting the  
24 individual worker. They understand that it is  
25

1  
2 difficult to find and keep a job if a person's basic  
3 needs are not met first.

4 This organization quickly transitioned to host  
5 other classes and services online once we hit pause  
6 in March. Throughout 2020, these groups have  
7 continued with their education programs, reorganized  
8 their classes and guaranteed that their students  
9 received both educational -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 DARLY CORNIEL: Continuity and institutional  
12 material. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. As a reminder to  
14 the Council Members, if you have any questions or to  
15 the Chair, please raise your hand.

16 Seeing no questions from the members or the  
17 Chairs, I will call our next panelist. Next is Jose  
18 Ortiz, Jr. followed by Erik Antokal and then Thomas  
19 Grech.

20 Mr. Oriz, you may begin when the Sergeants call  
21 time.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 JOSE ORTIZ, JR: Good afternoon and thank you to  
24 the Chairs and the Committee for the opportunity to  
25



1 testify before you today. My name is Jose Ortiz, Jr.  
2 and I am the CEO of the New York City Employment and  
3 Training Coalition.  
4

5 NYC ETC is the voice of New York City's Workforce  
6 Development community and we work to ensure that  
7 every New Yorker has access to the skills, training  
8 and education needed to thrive in the local economy  
9 and that every business is able to maintain the  
10 highly skilled workforce.

11 Simply put, our over 180 members and partners  
12 create jobs and connect underserved New Yorkers in  
13 all 51 City Council Districts to opportunists so they  
14 can support their families. The jobs loss we have  
15 sustained this year have been indicative of a larger  
16 trend. That is automation of businesses at large.

17 According to the Rural Economic Forum, more than  
18 80 percent of business executives globally say they  
19 are accelerating at plans to digitize processes. The  
20 workers and service industries including retail,  
21 hospitality, building maintenance and transportation,  
22 the automation taking place isn't just putting people  
23 out of work, it is eradicating with transforming  
24 entire careers.  
25

1  
2 Combined with other long term shifts we have seen  
3 across the labor market; we can expect to see a  
4 trickle down effect with permanent ramifications. To  
5 combat this, I have highlighted a few recommendations  
6 from our July 2020 Recovery for All Report.

7 One, we need to provide more resources to  
8 Workforce Development program. New York City is  
9 already home to a multitude of programs that have  
10 been studied and tested with proven efficacy and not  
11 just scaling workers at scale but placing them in  
12 permanent career trajectory positions with middle  
13 class salaries.

14 We know that thousands of workers will need new  
15 skills to reenter and remain in the workforce but the  
16 Human Services Sector is in danger of budget cuts at  
17 all government levels and they won't be able to do  
18 the increased work of aiding the economic recovery  
19 without resources.

20 Two, we need to expand broadband access.  
21 According to a new survey from the U.S. Census  
22 Bureau, there is a clear digital divide. 60 percent  
23 of households making over \$75,000 a year can tell  
24 they work permanently but that dropped to 21 percent  
25 of households making less than \$75,000. One reason

1 is the lack of access to reliable internet. In  
2 April, the Mayor reported that 1.5 million New  
3 Yorkers lack access at home.  
4

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 JOSE ORTIZ, JR. There is an effort to expand the  
7 digital divide by 40 percent over the next 18 months.  
8 This is a step in the right direction but not enough.

9 And three, we need to support small businesses.

10 Our workforce system overwhelmingly serves New  
11 Yorkers of color and the unemployment crisis created  
12 by COVID-19 follows a similar pattern of  
13 disproportionate effects on persons of color. 68  
14 percent of jobs loss are among persons of color with  
15 Latinx workers bearing particularly high burden,  
16 experiencing 30 percent of jobs lost compared to 26  
17 percent shared from New York City private sector  
18 jobs.

19 Looking to the future and the financial  
20 investment needed to help the sector thrive,  
21 workforce organizations have long partnered with the  
22 city and state and federal governments to support New  
23 York City residents.

24 In fact, 35 percent of workforce organizations  
25 have more than 50 percent of their budget come from

1  
2 the city and state and many of them only have two to  
3 three months of reserved funding to use to fill in  
4 the gaps.

5 I am happy to stay here and answer any questions.  
6 Obviously, there is much more to say, so provided the  
7 opportunity, I am happy to share more. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Jose, let me just jump in  
9 Mr. Ortiz. Thank you. I know you have been waiting.  
10 I have seen you on the panel from the minute we  
11 started this, so thank you for all the panels who  
12 have been waiting and when you have recommendations  
13 like that, we truly do appreciate, especially when  
14 they are outlined one, two, three. That is how  
15 future hearing topics are created and legislation is  
16 created. If anyone sat on my committees, your  
17 comments go directly to legislation, to budget  
18 proposals and to ideas.

19 So, for anyone, because of the short time  
20 constraints that's coming in after Mr. Ortiz, make  
21 sure you follow up with an email with your testimony,  
22 with your recommendations and we will get back to you  
23 because that is how we grow. So, thank you very  
24 much.

25 JOSE ORTIZ, JR.: Thank you Chair Vallone.

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1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That's right Chair and just  
3 for everybody it is [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). That  
4 is where you should send that email.

5 Next up, we have Erik Antokal followed by Thomas  
6 Grech and then Caroline Iosso. Mr. Antokal, you may  
7 begin when the Sergeant calls time.

8 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And before Antokal begins, I  
9 just wanted to respond to Mr. Ortiz. Please email it  
10 directly to the Council as well myself and Chair  
11 Vallone and I am sure you have that information.

12 JOSE ORTIZ, JR.: Will do.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Apologies Chair. We will now  
14 turn to Mr. Antokal.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 ERIK ANTOKAL: Good morning or good afternoon.  
17 Thank you all for having us. My name is Erik  
18 Antokal, I am the AVP of Programs at of  
19 Nontraditional Employment for Women, or NEW. We are  
20 a nonprofit with a 42-year track record of  
21 transforming the economic prospects for women through  
22 careers in the skilled trades.

23 The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been  
24 pervasive in our community and the crisis continues  
25 to be disproportionately devastating for women. In

1  
2 March 2020, women made up 46 percent of workers in  
3 the United States and research suggested that women  
4 would make up just 43 percent of job losses as a  
5 result of the pandemic but instead, women made up 54  
6 percent of the individuals who lost their jobs. And  
7 in September 2020 alone, four times as many women  
8 dropped out of the labor force as compared to men,  
9 that is 865,000 women compared to 216,000 men. And  
10 of course, Black and Brown women as always, face more  
11 dire crises of joblessness.

12       And in the context of this enormous economic  
13 need, there is no near-term end to the pandemic in  
14 sight and there is no clear plans for federal  
15 support. So, as a City, we have to act quickly to  
16 combat the unemployment crisis where we can and I  
17 thank all the other panelists for their comments thus  
18 far. Especially noting workforce development  
19 organizations which are readily available and offer  
20 nimble approaches to training over impacted  
21 communities and rapidly securing safe, gainful  
22 employment.

23       Our programs in particular, like those of so many  
24 other workforce development programs, have the  
25 ability to connect with employers rapidly, train

1  
2 people for careers that result in jobs with \$20 an  
3 hour nearly on average, comprehensive benefits and an  
4 upward mobility that's second to none.

5 And especially, you know, during these chaotic  
6 times, most organizations including ourselves offer  
7 social workers who are able to connect directly with  
8 clients and make sure they get the support they need.

9 And finally, with the last 5 seconds, I will just  
10 say that not only is it moral imperative, it is also  
11 an economically sound judgement. Many research  
12 sources note that for every \$1 invested in workforce  
13 development programs, tax payers gain back \$4 in  
14 revenue. So, not only does it work for New Yorkers  
15 to pivot their careers into much stronger career  
16 paths.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 ERIK ANTOKAL: It also works for the City and its  
19 relatively grim bottom line as these times progress.  
20 And thank you all for the time.

21 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Erik.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Antokal.

23 Seeing no hands raised from the Committee members, we  
24 will turn to the next panelist. Next up we have

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1  
2 Thomas Grech followed by Caroline Iosso and then  
3 Valarie Payne.

4 Mr. Grech, you may begin when the Sergeants call  
5 time.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 THOMAS GRECH: Thank you very much for this  
8 opportunity. Even though we have waited a long time  
9 to do this today, it is worth every moment of our  
10 time to try to save our small businesses and I truly  
11 and wholly mean that.

12 Good morning Chair Vallone and Chair Gjonaj and  
13 members of the Committee. My name is Tom Grech, I am  
14 the President and CEO Of the Queens Chamber of  
15 Commerce. The oldest and largest business  
16 association in Queens County. We currently represent  
17 more than 1,300 businesses, the vast majority of  
18 which are small businesses with more than 10  
19 employees with more than 125,000 Queens-based  
20 employees. At least we had that many employees before  
21 the pandemic.

22 Queens was the epicenter of the epicenter of this  
23 pandemic. In addition to the tremendous human toll,  
24 COVID has truly devastated our local economy. Like  
25 many organizations, we were forced to pivot to meet



1 the new needs of our members. Today, out of duty to  
2 our community, we serve non-members as well, all who  
3 need our help regardless of their membership.  
4

5 Throughout the pandemic, we have leveraged strong  
6 relationships with organizations in every  
7 neighborhood of the borough and further pivoted to  
8 provide support to businesses in underserved  
9 communities.

10 From working to save New York City's oldest bar,  
11 Neirs Tavern, with the support of SBS, to  
12 participating on the Mayors Small Business Advisory  
13 Council, the Queens Chamber has partnered with a  
14 number of organizations including SBS to make every  
15 dollar count. We partner with SBS to distribute PPE  
16 to businesses so they can keep their employees and  
17 customers safe. In fact, we set up our own command  
18 center here in Queens and thanks to SBS's supply,  
19 handed out over 1 million facemasks.

20 As Queens is the most diverse county in America,  
21 we have urgently focused on supporting MWBEs,  
22 businesses in Black & immigrant communities and other  
23 underserved business areas. These businesses are  
24 less likely to have received federal funding through  
25

1 the PPP program or be able to access quality, low-  
2 interest loans.  
3

4 Further, we have partnered with the New York City  
5 Employment and Training Coalition to support their  
6 work in workforce development.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Okay Tom, you can finish  
9 up.

10 THOMAS GRECH: I just wanted to say, thanks to a  
11 grant from the Peter Peterson Foundation and the New  
12 York City partnership, all five boroughwide Chambers  
13 of Commerce have partnered to launch the New York  
14 City Small Business Resource Network. This program  
15 will see a newly established team of dedicated  
16 specialists embedded within each Chamber, working  
17 directly with local entrepreneurs in the hardest-hit  
18 communities.

19 I have much more to say but that's okay, I  
20 understand my time is limited. I just wanted to  
21 stress the importance of workforce development as we  
22 reskill and retrain tens of thousands of people.  
23 Tens of thousands of humans in our city that  
24 desperately need to learn new skills and be  
25 retrained. Thank you very much.

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1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thomas, if I may, I just  
3 wanted to say on a personal note, how important it is  
4 the work you do at the Chamber of Commerce of Queens  
5 and you mentioned the Five Borough Coalition. So,  
6 for everyone that is listening, especially the  
7 Commissioners in the three Committee's, these are the  
8 voices that will guide us through this calamity  
9 because they are in touch with every small business  
10 and every community group. And I wanted to say a  
11 personal thank you to Thomas Grech for our Queens  
12 Chamber of Commerce.

13 You have taken it to the highest heights it has  
14 ever been and we really do listen to you. So, I just  
15 wanted to ask or give you a chance to summarize  
16 because of what we are facing now with COVID. If  
17 there was the top priority that you would think that  
18 the Queens small businesses that are - and all small  
19 business that are on the verge of possibly closing,  
20 that we could do right now with the teammates with  
21 us. What is that asking? What do you think should  
22 be that first direction?

23 THOMAS GRECH: Thanks for the opportunity. So,  
24 there is 6,000 restaurants in Queens County. We have  
25 estimated since end of April up to half of them.

1 3,000 restaurants may never open again and see the  
2 light of day.  
3

4 If you think about the folks that are in those  
5 places that work there, they come here from other  
6 countries. If they are Peruvian, they go to work for  
7 a Peruvian restaurant. If they are from the coast of  
8 Africa, they come work in an African restaurant.  
9 They go to where the birds of a feather so called,  
10 flock together.

11 You don't need English. You don't need a GED.  
12 You need very limited skills to come here and boil  
13 rice, peel potatoes or wash dishes. There is an  
14 entire infrastructure within our community and not  
15 just in Queens but especially in Queens as the  
16 borough with the most diverse population. Where  
17 those jobs and those opportunities are stricken away  
18 and gone.

19 I believe the speaker of a foreman who I don't  
20 know but I want to meet sometime uses the same words  
21 that I say, we as a City, as an educational system,  
22 as a business community, as elected officials, we  
23 have a moral imperative to restore those people. It  
24 isn't even job training and it isn't a thought of  
25 taking somebody that might wash dishes in March to be

1 a computer a computer programmer or a coder in six  
2 months or a year. It isn't about that. It is about  
3 the basic skill set of English as second language, of  
4 getting a GED, of more opportunities.

5  
6 You talk to any restaurant in the City of New  
7 York, in fact, in most places in our country, they  
8 started off doing what is said, boiling rice, peeling  
9 potatoes or washing dishes. That's the American  
10 dream personified. We are going to do everything we  
11 can to support folks like New York City ETC and Joey  
12 Ortiz's group and others at the Workforce Development  
13 to get these folks back to work to start paying  
14 taxes, paying into the system, using the bus and  
15 subway and getting out there. A rising tide in this  
16 case, truly, truly will lift all boats.

17 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Tom and I just  
18 want to add, the Open Streets Program for the  
19 restaurants, probably saved our commercial district,  
20 especially on Bell Boulevard with all the restaurants  
21 that are still open. We only had one closure there.

22 So, those are quick, immediate relief help steps  
23 that we don't have to wait for the federal, don't  
24 have to wait for the state. That we can do and get  
25 the agencies on board to assist. Stop the city and

1  
2 state fighting with different inspectors that are  
3 going and get the businesses to remain open. And  
4 those are the type of things that we can do.

5 So, thank you very much.

6 THOMAS GRECH: May I comment on that? On your  
7 last comment?

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I am sorry Tom; I think we  
9 got like 38 more people. So, we will turn it back  
10 over to Alex Paulenoff. Thank you very much.

11 THOMAS GRECH: Thanks for all you do, all of you,  
12 thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Chair, I just want to echo  
14 some of the comments that Chair Vallone made toward  
15 you Tom. I am grateful to you for what you are  
16 doing. We need to do more than say the right things,  
17 we need to show our small business that we are there  
18 for them right now. They are the engine of New York  
19 City's economy and we need to invest in them at this  
20 time of their need to ensure that they can survive.  
21 We will thrive later, now it is about surviving.  
22 Thank you for what you are doing and focusing on  
23 small business, microbusiness.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs. Next up we  
25 will hear from Caroline Iosso followed by Valerie

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1 Payne and then Irene Branche. Ms. Iosso, you may  
2 begin when the Sergeants call time.  
3

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 CAROLINE IOSSO: Good afternoon, my name is  
6 Caroline Iosso and I am the Director of Community and  
7 Government Affairs at Opportunities for a Better  
8 Tomorrow OBT. Thank you so much for the opportunity  
9 to speak.

10 I am here to discuss the impact of COVID on the  
11 communities that OBT serves and the ways our  
12 organization and sector have responded to the  
13 increased and urgent needs. What is clear to  
14 organizations like OBT is that training, education  
15 and connections to jobs are lifelines right now and  
16 we need to be doing so much more.

17 Founded in 1983, OBT exists to break the cycle of  
18 poverty and inequity through education, job training  
19 and employment. Our programs serve as a bridge to  
20 economic opportunity for youth, individuals and  
21 families and across New York City with programming  
22 that ranges from high school equivalency to ESOL  
23 courses to industry certified training programs. We  
24 meet individuals where they are and work with them to  
25 meet their goals.

1  
2 We all know that COVID has taken an incredible  
3 toll on our city and has hit young people, immigrant  
4 communities and communities of color especially hard.  
5 These are the communities that OBT has served for  
6 decades and that we are already facing barriers to  
7 employment. This crisis has only exacerbated those  
8 needs.

9 When COVID hit, we shifted immediately to remote  
10 programming and our first priority was to ensure that  
11 our students and staff had basic needs met. We fund  
12 raised for emergency cash for food, medicine and  
13 childcare and doubled down on our holistic approach  
14 to programming. We of course navigated the technical  
15 challenges, giving students laptops, mobile hot  
16 spots, etc. And in response to the overwhelming  
17 numbers of newly unemployed, we set up weekly  
18 resource webinars with the aim of getting people into  
19 jobs. We innovated pilot programs focusing on  
20 customer service, contact tracing and coding.

21 There are key issues that we must address as a  
22 City. First, universal broadband access is non-  
23 negotiable. We are totally out of step with the  
24 necessary infrastructure to support people in  
25 accessing these opportunities. Bridge programming



1  
2 has long been a priority for New York City's  
3 workforce organizations and right now, it is so  
4 critical that we connect every single person to  
5 training.

6 Digital literacy and basic technological skills  
7 are essential for all workers and this transition has  
8 made that extremely clear. So, we ask that there be  
9 greater investment in digital literacy initiatives  
10 particularly for those communities that continue to  
11 be left out due to language access.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

13 CAROLINE IOSSO: And I just urge you to  
14 prioritize these solutions as you work towards a  
15 recovery plan and I will submit our written  
16 testimony. Thank you so much for your partnership  
17 and your time and attention.

18 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Caroline.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Iosso. Not  
20 seeing any other members of the Committee with their  
21 hands raised, we will move on to the next panelist.  
22 Next, we have Valerie Payne followed by Irene Branche  
23 and then Abe Mendez. Ms. Payne, you may begin when  
24 the Sergeants call time.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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1  
2 VALERIE PAYNE: Good afternoon Commissioners and  
3 Council Members. Thank you for the opportunity to  
4 speak today. My name is Valerie Payne, I am  
5 Executive Director of Rebuilding Together NYC as well  
6 as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board  
7 of the New York City Employment and Training  
8 Coalition led by Jose Ortiz, whose testimony you  
9 heard earlier and whose recommendations of course I  
10 also support.

11 Rebuilding Together is a nonprofit whose mission  
12 is to repair homes, revitalize communities and  
13 reskill individuals. We perform critical home repair  
14 and accessibility modifications for low-income, most  
15 often elderly home owners, employing over a dozen  
16 general contractors small businesses in the process.

17 We also convene corporate volunteer groups to  
18 make repairs and refurbish nonprofit and community  
19 centers. And lastly, we operate a workforce  
20 development program to prepare unemployed individuals  
21 for careers and construction in the skill trades.

22 This year, as we all know well, the pandemic has  
23 had tragic consequences for unemployed and  
24 underemployed as well as low wage workers. The  
25 individuals rebuilding together serves are from all

1 five boroughs and upwards of 60 percent are residents  
2 of NYCHA housing. They have incomes at or below 70  
3 percent of the average median income. Over 70  
4 percent identify as Black or African American. 20  
5 percent as Latinx. In other words, they are also  
6 those hardest hit and most impacted by the pandemic.  
7

8 If the City does not take action to support New  
9 Yorkers in short term hiring and relief actions as  
10 well as long term training and career development,  
11 the racial and economic inequity across the city will  
12 be worse in 2025 than it was in 2015.

13 Now is the time to deeply invest in strengthening  
14 our communities and economic future by building a  
15 system that is data informed as Director Peterson  
16 discussed to ensure that services are easy to access  
17 and responsive to labor market needs as well as the  
18 needs of New Yorkers.

19 Workforce Development providers are and will be  
20 called on to do more but aren't able to do so without  
21 increased resources. And in fact, diminishing  
22 resources.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 VALERIE PAYNE: Can I have just a couple more  
25 seconds?

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1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Sure Val, you can finish  
3 up.

4 VALERIE PAYNE: Thank you. The good news is that  
5 the construction industry pivoted to introduce many  
6 safety measures and construction in the city's  
7 continuing.

8 After a pause, all construction that was  
9 permitted to resume in June doubled from the month  
10 prior and continues to rise in July according to the  
11 Building Congress. Good paying jobs still exist.  
12 So, my fingers are crossed for the City and  
13 subsequently workforce providers to obtain  
14 infrastructure funds and for the city to invest in  
15 community based organizations and workforce  
16 development organizations across the city that help  
17 prepare individuals for not just jobs in construction  
18 in the skilled trades but all of the sectors where  
19 there are jobs and there is growth opportunities.

20 Thanks again for your time today and I will  
21 submit my full testimony as well.

22 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Valerie.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Payne. Next up  
24 we have Irene Branche followed by Abe Mendez and then  
25

1  
2 Sonam Choedon. Ms. Branche, you may begin when the  
3 Sergeants call time.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 IRENE BRANCHE: Good afternoon. I am Irene  
6 Branche, the Chief Development and Evaluation Officer  
7 for the Hope program. We build sustainable futures  
8 through comprehensive training, job placements,  
9 advancement and life long career support, much like  
10 my colleagues who just shared their testimony as  
11 well. Our focus is on New Yorkers with significant  
12 barriers to employment. Individuals coming out of  
13 the criminal legal system. Individuals who have  
14 faced homelessness, substance abuse and other  
15 challenges. And our result are strong in non-  
16 pandemic times. On average we place 75 to 80 percent  
17 of our graduates in jobs and 80 percent sustained  
18 attachment to the workforce for a year or more.

19 As a result of our targeted focus on green jobs,  
20 these placements are often in solar installation,  
21 energy auditing, landscaping and horticulture, green  
22 construction, building support and more. So, not  
23 only are we supporting people in getting jobs but  
24 also contributing to the city's sustainability goals.

1  
2 While everybody is talking about the heightened  
3 importance of workforce development system in this  
4 time, I also want to emphasize how the system has  
5 come to meet the urgent needs of the clients that we  
6 serve in the pandemic.

7 You know, our services go far beyond industry  
8 recognized credentials, sharper resumes and more  
9 compelling interviews. In fact, we have put over  
10 \$250,000 in cash assistance into the pockets of New  
11 Yorkers to address food insecurity, rent and other  
12 basic needs. We have provided an additional \$250,000  
13 in earned wages for transitional jobs. Doing work  
14 such as Census outreach, voter registration and  
15 community greetings, so also supporting the city in  
16 many ways.

17 We have provided 450 laptops and Wi-Fi hot spots  
18 to New Yorkers helping to address the digital divide  
19 and we are providing direct mental health support,  
20 case management and referrals. Which is you know,  
21 certainly at heightened need this year of course.

22 Our workforce community is essential to the  
23 sustainability of our city as we support New Yorkers  
24 who are often at the end of the line to secure jobs  
25 and support their families. We are also making up

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1 the social safety net, which we know is being tested

2 —

3  
4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 IRENE BRANCHE: Just a quick thank you to the  
6 Council Members on here who have been our supporters  
7 and partners and thanks to everybody.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thanks Irene.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Branche. Next  
10 up we have Abe Mendez followed by Sonam Choedon and  
11 then Jessica Conway-Pierce. Mr. Mendez, you may  
12 begin when the Sergeants call time.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 ABE MENDEZ: Good afternoon and thank you for  
15 hosting this hearing today. My name is Abe Mendez  
16 and I am here representing Per Scholas. At Per  
17 Scholas we advance economic equity through rigorous  
18 training for careers in tech while connecting our  
19 graduates to leading businesses in need of talents.

20 Over the past 25 years, we have trained over  
21 8,000 New Yorkers and partnered with over 500  
22 businesses. I wish I could deliver this testimony in  
23 person but I am participating today via Zoom like the  
24 400 New Yorkers who have enrolled at Per Scholas this  
25 year. In order to ensure they could access our

1 training Per Scholas mobilized its resources and  
2 provided technology including laptops and internet  
3 access to those in need.  
4

5 However the digital divide remains with nearly 40  
6 percent of Bronx residents lacking access to the  
7 internet. More needs to be done to ensure that all  
8 adults who are seeking employment can access training  
9 programs remotely.

10 Despite the turbulent market, demand for tech  
11 skills remained high. Over 330 of our graduates have  
12 obtained employment during the pandemic, earning a  
13 starting salary of \$21 an hour, equating to a 4x  
14 increase in their average pre-training wages.

15 However, there is more work to be done. The Bronx  
16 has a 17.5 percent unemployment rate, the highest in  
17 New York State.

18 New Yorkers need programs like Per Scholas now  
19 more than ever. Over the past few years we have  
20 developed multiple pathways into our programs  
21 including bridge training, which has seen hundreds of  
22 young adults enrolled in our training who otherwise  
23 would not have qualified. These pathways are crucial  
24 as we have seen demand skyrocket for our programs by  
25 over 200 percent. Per Scholas is a proud member of



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1 the New York City employment and training coalition  
2 and I encourage the Council to adopt the coalitions  
3 recommendations, including increasing investment in  
4 adult education, job training and bridge programs.  
5

6 Workforce organizations are vital to the economic  
7 recovery of the city and together, we can put New  
8 Yorkers back to work. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Mendez. Next,  
10 we will hear from Sonam Choedon followed by Jessica  
11 Conway-Pierce and then Ken Small. Ms. Choedon, you  
12 may begin when the Sergeants call time.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 SONAM CHOEDON: Good afternoon Chair Gjonaj,  
15 Chair Vallone and Committee Members. My name is  
16 Sonam Choedon and I am the Outreach and Member  
17 Success Manager at Hot Bread Kitchen. Thank you for  
18 the opportunity to testify today.

19 Hot Bread Kitchen works with women events and  
20 women of color in the five boroughs. I work directly  
21 with the women we serve through our workforce program  
22 and I can best illustrate the value of our services  
23 through a story about one of our members.

24 Nafissatou came to the US from Burkina-Faso in  
25 2016. She came alone to East Harlem, leaving her

1 husband behind, to find economic opportunity and  
2 advancement in our city. Nafi joined our workforce  
3 program in 2017 and shared with us after a long and  
4 unfruitful job search that she felt she was being  
5 overlooked because she wears a headscarf.  
6

7 At Hot Bread Kitchen, she found a community of  
8 women who shared similar backgrounds and the same  
9 goal, gainful employment. Through our skills  
10 training, job placement and well-established network  
11 of employers, Nafi landed a job through her hard work  
12 and our connections. Fast forward to the present  
13 day, Nafi is still a part of our community. She is  
14 one of over 200 of our program members to receive  
15 cash assistance, social service supports, technical  
16 assistance to access public benefits like  
17 Unemployment, ongoing training and job placement  
18 services since the pandemic started.

19 Nafi was laid off in March and with our support,  
20 went back to work in June. Our current work with  
21 Nafi is connecting her to reliable childcare through  
22 our partnerships and to another workforce program  
23 member who offered help. Nafi is representative of  
24 all of the women we serve, they are immigrants,  
25 primarily. They are working mothers. They are often

1  
2 single parents. They share an ambition to grow a  
3 career and become, as we like to say, breadwinners in  
4 their families. What they don't have is what so many  
5 of us take for granted, networks, opportunities,  
6 education and connections. Our workforce program,  
7 like many in the city, provides so much more than  
8 just training and job placement. We provide a house  
9 of services to meet our members' needs and we provide  
10 a home where they can come back to reach their goals.

11 While we serve New Yorkers like Nafi, we also  
12 serve the city's employers. We connect them to  
13 candidates they wouldn't otherwise meet. We  
14 customize training and education to meet their  
15 specific needs and demands. We provide support  
16 services to their workers so that they can stay at  
17 work and succeed. Because of this we have served 48  
18 employers with 111 hires in 2019. Time and time  
19 again we have heard, -

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 SONAM CHOEDON: Whenever we need a new team  
22 member, our supervisors raise their hand to as for a  
23 proper Kitchen program graduate. Through our  
24 continued market research, we are able to remain  
25 flexible and adaptive. We sit at the intersection of

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1  
2 employer partnerships and effective development of  
3 workers. Our work doesn't end at job placement,  
4 rather when our members and our employer partners  
5 meet their full potential and this is the critical  
6 work that needs continued support and investment.  
7 Thank you for your time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Choedon. Next  
9 we will hear from Jessica Conway-Pierce followed by  
10 Ken Small and then Lowell Herschberger. Ms. Conway-  
11 Pierce, you may begin when the Sergeants call time.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 CHRISTINE JAMES MCKENZIE: Good morning, I am  
14 sitting in for Jessica Conway Pierce. Good morning  
15 to the distinguished members of the Committees on  
16 Economic Development and Small Business. My name is  
17 Christine James McKenzie and I am the Associate of  
18 Communications Learning and Policy at Jobs First New  
19 York City. A nonprofit intermediary that creates and  
20 advances solutions that breaks down barriers and  
21 transforms the systems supporting young adults in  
22 their communities in the pursuit of economic  
23 opportunities.

24 The pandemic has drastically increased the number  
25 of young adults who are out of work and out of

1 school. Which has now estimated at 27 percent and 34  
2 percent and that's between 259,000 and 324,000 young  
3 people. Any workforce and economic recovery strategy  
4 needs to take into account this population and the  
5 organizations that serve them.  
6

7 Jobs First New York recommends the following: I  
8 submitted a long version online. Our first  
9 recommendation is map in demand skills and partner  
10 with employers to develop new strategies to improve  
11 educational and training programs for young adults.  
12 It is imperative that young adults receive relevant  
13 training to meet the evolving job market, bridge the  
14 digital divide. We need substantial investment in  
15 providing digital tools, training and support to our  
16 young people and their communities. Provide funding  
17 for mental health counseling and support.

18 We work with a network of community programs and  
19 advocates be given access to funds to support the  
20 health and wellbeing of young adults and their  
21 families. Expand funding for critical programs and  
22 conferred current funding to general operating  
23 support for at least the next year. Food assistance  
24 programs, academic support and childcare assistance  
25 must be supplemented, so that people can focus on

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1 upscaling and return to work. Stimulate  
2 entrepreneurship via local incubators and micro-  
3 agents, SBS and the NYC EBC must not simply support  
4 training out of the work New Yorkers. They must also  
5 support -

6  
7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 CHRISTINE JAMES MCKENZIE: Businesses so that  
9 there enterprises are able to remain open. The  
10 challenges we recommend must be pliable and be rooted  
11 in the needs of the communities we serve and a  
12 recovery strategy on City Council on SBS or NYC EBC  
13 should take into account these evolving needs of the  
14 communities. Thank you for listening to us today.

15 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Christine and for  
16 your patience to for waiting.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks Ms. McKenzie. Next we  
18 will hear from Ken Small followed by Lowell  
19 Hershberger and then Janet Rodriguez. Mr. Small, you  
20 may begin when the Sergeants call time.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 KEN SMALL: Committee Chairs and members, thank  
23 you for convening this hearing. My name is Ken  
24 Small, I am the Development Director for BronxWorks,  
25 a New York City Employment and Training Coalition

1 member and one of several settlement houses that  
2 serve the 1.5 million people who call the Bronx home.  
3 The coronavirus has hit the Bronx economy like a  
4 nuclear blast, vaporizing jobs and wiping out scores  
5 of local businesses. The unemployment rate for the  
6 Bronx since April has averaged about 21 percent. The  
7 rates over the last seven months are only matched by  
8 numbers witnessed during the Great Depression years  
9 in the 1930's.

11 The pandemic has hit the Bronx economy hard  
12 because many Bronx residents held jobs in the  
13 hospitality, food service, arts and entertainment and  
14 in-person retail sectors. These are sectors that  
15 were completely shut down for much of the spring and  
16 summer, with food service facing the possibility of  
17 another shutdown in a matter of days.

18 The pandemic and subsequent economic free fall  
19 has forced BronxWorks in general and our workforce  
20 developments in particular to adapt. Overall, our  
21 organization has seen a four-fold increase in the  
22 number of persons seeking food pantry help. In  
23 addition to providing food and SNAP enrollment  
24 assistance, our pantries now provide referrals for  
25

1  
2 mental health services, unemployment benefits, health  
3 insurance and skills training.

4 Our Workforce Development Department, which has  
5 long provided job readiness training, employment  
6 placement assistance, financial literacy counseling  
7 and post-secondary education referrals, now finds  
8 itself providing food assistance as well. And I see  
9 that my time is running short but I would like to say  
10 that -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 KEN SMALL: Many Bronx residents have lost their  
13 jobs during the pandemic and have many stressors that  
14 they have to deal with. There is a need for these  
15 stressors to be addressed and without relief, our new  
16 normal will look less like 2019 and more like 1933,  
17 the worst year of the Great Depression.

18 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Ken.

19 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Ken, thank you because the  
20 BronxWorks does is God's work. I am so familiar with  
21 you and I am not sure the other boroughs know exactly  
22 what you do day in and day out and you have been  
23 doing this for years. We are so fortunate to have  
24 you and the Borough of the Bronx is fortunate to have  
25



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1 you. Thank you for being such a strong advocate.

2 Thank you.

3 KEN SMALL: Thank you Council Member.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Please feel free to reach  
5 out to me on any of the issues that you are going  
6 through. Chair Vallone was the same way, it is not  
7 about the economic development force that you have,  
8 the workforce but the other services that you  
9 provide. God Bless you.

10 KEN SMALL: Thank you and we look forward to  
11 continuing to work with you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs. Thank you  
13 Mr. Small. Next, we will hear from Lowell  
14 Herschberger followed by Janet Rodriguez and then  
15 Susan Scheer. Mr. Herschberger, you may begin when  
16 the Sergeants call time.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 LOWELL HERSCHBERGER: Thank you for this  
19 opportunity. I am an East New York resident, leader  
20 at the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation  
21 and member of the New York City Employment and  
22 Training Coalition and Jobs First NYC, which you have  
23 already heard from today.

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1  
2 Our neighborhood was one of the hardest hit in  
3 the current COVID- 19 pandemic. Many businesses are  
4 closed and unemployment is hitting record levels as  
5 we have heard today across the city. But typically,  
6 in our unemployment is 5-10% higher than the city  
7 average and the current crisis has only exacerbated  
8 this unjust disparity with an unemployment rate  
9 nearing 25%.

10 I am here to endorse the New York City Employment  
11 and Training Coalitions platform which has been  
12 articulated today, as well as to highlight a local  
13 concern of neighborhood advocates who have organized  
14 the Coalition for Community Advancement. The group  
15 was first formed when the neighborhood was facing a  
16 massive rezone back in 2016. I am here to say that  
17 the agreements made in that rezone process have not  
18 been kept. Developers are experiencing the benefits  
19 of the increased density but the community has not  
20 received the benefit of jobs promised.

21 We were promised by EDC that 3,900 jobs as part  
22 of a \$16.7 Million dollar investment in the local IBZ  
23 would happen. I am here to ask, where are the 3,900  
24 jobs? We need EDC and the Council to answer for the  
25 promises they made to our community.

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In July of 2020 The Coalition created a Platform for a Just Transition that called on City, State and Federal government to achieve legislation that compensates and reparates for the decades-long disinvestment by government and private interests, which contributed to the diminished lack of health care opportunities, healthy food options, safe and affordable housing, accessible lending and economic opportunities that made East New York more vulnerable to the pandemic.

This platform lays out priorities for both housing and economic justice for East New York. In Economic Justice it calls for the preserving and strengthening our small businesses, access to a growing and changing economy and preserving and strengthening our industrial sector. Our first priority is what I just mentioned, to demand accountability from the City and the Economic Development -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

LOWELL HERSCHBERGER: Corporation on their commitment to invest the \$16.7 Million. This is a time when we desperately need training to help our young people and our residents get back to work. It

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1  
2 is a hard working community that wants to be part of  
3 the reconstruction of the City. Thank you so much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Herschberger.  
5 Next we will hear from Janet Rodriguez followed by  
6 Susan Scheer and then Andrea Bowen. Ms. Rodriguez,  
7 you may begin when the Sergeants call time.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 JANET RODRIGUEZ: Hi, I am Janet Rodriguez, Co-  
10 Founder of SoHarlem and CEO. We are based in West  
11 Harlem and SoHarlem's mission is to create equitable  
12 opportunities through cultural industries workforce  
13 development. Not simply because it is right but  
14 because equity is essential to successful economic  
15 development in historically disenfranchised  
16 communities like ours where unemployment rate is  
17 nearly double the national average.

18 To achieve our mission, we incubate creative  
19 entrepreneurs while they launch their  
20 microenterprises in Harlem and we train under an  
21 unemployed residents and jobs needed to sustain them.  
22 In West Harlem, 21 percent of our neighbors in one  
23 and five mostly women and children, still live below  
24 the poverty line. Our community has a  
25 disproportionate number of folks that were formerly

1  
2 incarcerated whose employment options are bleak and  
3 according to NYU's Firm and Center, the median  
4 household income in West Harlem is about \$23,000  
5 which is significantly lower than the US average of  
6 \$56,000.

7 SoHarlem provides work space and training and  
8 basic sewing skills for under and unemployed  
9 residents. We aim to support the New York Fashion  
10 and Design Ecosystem by providing a pool of workers  
11 to fill jobs left empty by the retirement of so many  
12 ageing skill workers. Trainees develop sewing  
13 skills, gain exposure from industry professionals and  
14 practical experience in our environment.

15 SoHarlem and Janice Properties are primary  
16 partners, share the desire of the community to  
17 address high unemployment in Manhattanville and to  
18 ensure that home grown businesses and creative  
19 industry enterprises owned and staffed by local  
20 people are an essential component of the  
21 redevelopment of the -

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 JANET RODRIGUEZ: District. Last spring we were  
24 able to - okay, if I don't have a lot of time left, I  
25 will tell the most important thing. Due to SoHarlem,

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1 due to COVID-19 spiking in our zip code, we will be  
2 closing today despite that this is the month of the  
3 holidays, which is the best time for our designers  
4 and microenterprises to sell their wares. So we are  
5 pivoting to doing everything online. We are using  
6 this time to prepare and plan for opportunities to  
7 ensure our workforce is ready and able and expanding  
8 in 2021 and we implore the City to do the right  
9 thing. Thank you.  
10

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Janet. That's  
13 not news we want to hear. If there is anything that  
14 Council Member Gjonaj and I can do to make sure your  
15 doors stay open, please, reach out to us.

16 JANET RODRIGUEZ: We will.

17 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Ms. Rodriguez, I have been  
18 speaking to SBS and this Administration on  
19 advertising, educating and promoting the importance  
20 of shopping locally. We know that every dollar you  
21 spend in a local community, \$0.67 of that dollar  
22 stays within that community. I hope we will have  
23 something soon, the SBS but I will help industries  
24 like yours and communities like yours that educate  
25 everyone. You are a commercial corridor. That you

1  
2 enjoy shopping at your local eatery or retailer,  
3 patronize them because they won't be there next year.  
4 Unfortunately, we are not doing enough of this. This  
5 is beholding and it should be the responsibility of  
6 New York City to do more.

7 So, if you love New York City, shop New York City  
8 is the local and that should be the saying.

9 JANET RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs. Thank you  
11 Ms. Rodriguez. Next, we will hear from Susan Scheer  
12 followed by Andrea Bowen and then Rebecca Lurie. Ms.  
13 Scheer, you may begin when the Sergeants call time.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 SUSAN SCHEER: Good afternoon and thank you for  
16 the opportunity to testify. My name is Susan Scheer  
17 and I am the CEO of ICD Institute for Career  
18 Development and a member of the New York City  
19 Employment and Training Coalition. Founded over 100  
20 years ago to rehabilitate wounded World War I  
21 soldiers, ICD is a New York City-based non-profit  
22 that provides vocational assessment, training and job  
23 placement free of charge to individuals with a broad  
24 ray of disabilities, ages 14 and up.

1  
2 Even before COVID, unemployment rates for  
3 individuals with disabilities were unacceptably high.  
4 During the longest economic expansion on record, 70  
5 percent of individuals with disabilities were not in  
6 the workforce and the unemployment rate was 2.5 times  
7 that of individuals without a disability.

8 Often among the last hired and in entry-level  
9 service roles, individuals with disabilities were  
10 among the first to lose their jobs in this downturn.  
11 Others were forced to give up employment because the  
12 nature of their disability placed them at higher risk  
13 for COVID-related complications should they contract  
14 the virus. To be clear, as a person with a  
15 disability myself, I can tell you that individuals  
16 with disabilities want to work. They come to our  
17 organization for services even now to advance and get  
18 themselves ready for the uptick.

19 One in five individuals has a disability. Post-  
20 COVID, that number will surely rise, as many of our  
21 fellow New Yorkers experience lasting health impacts  
22 from the virus. These so-called long haulers will  
23 need organizations like ICD who can help them get  
24 back to work.



1           Despite the extreme level of need, assessment and  
2 training services accessible to individuals with  
3 disabilities are largely missing from the City's  
4 current workforce development programs funded by  
5 agencies such as SBS and EDC. State and federally-  
6 funded vocational rehabilitation programs, while  
7 vital to the workforce development ecosystem, do not  
8 meet the needs of all New Yorkers with disabilities.

9           SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10           SUSAN SCHEER: The status quo needs to change and  
11 it needs to change now. When you are already  
12 considered "not normal," back to normal is definitely  
13 not good enough. We can start by welcoming  
14 individuals with disabilities and community-based  
15 providers that have expertise in preparing  
16 individuals with disabilities for employment to the  
17 planning table as we look towards recovery. Can I  
18 finish?  
19

20           CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Sure thing.

21           SUSAN SCHEER: Alright. To borrow from the show  
22 Hamilton, we want to be in the room where it happens.  
23 At this historic moment, the disability community, my  
24 community, is eager to be part of rebuilding New York  
25 City's economy. We look to the Council to ensure

1  
2 that the new normal is one that embraces disability,  
3 equity and full inclusion. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thanks Susan. Yes, we are  
5 going to have to change that to the virtual room  
6 where it happens. One of my favorite lines. Thank  
7 you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Scheer. Next,  
9 we will hear from Andrea Bowen followed by Rebecca  
10 Lurie and then Sylvia Morse. Ms. Bowen, you may  
11 begin when the Sergeants call time.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 ANDREA BOWEN: Thank you. My name is Andrea  
14 Bowen, Principal of Bowen Public Affairs Consulting.  
15 Thank you Chair Vallone, Chair Gjonaj, Council  
16 Members and Committee staff for the opportunity to  
17 speak. I am speaking today on behalf of the New York  
18 City Network of Cooperatives (NYC NOWC), and am also  
19 informed by my experience with other clients and  
20 advocacy work.

21 Worker cooperatives provide a unique opportunity  
22 to simultaneously provide New Yorkers with not just  
23 jobs but ownership and accordingly, management of the  
24 very place they work. Several of my colleagues  
25 including Rebecca Lurie testifying after me and Saduf

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1  
2 Syal of NYC NOWC will speak more to this when they  
3 testify.

4 I come at work with NYC NOWC from a vantage point  
5 informed by working with worker co-ops, also being a  
6 transgender woman and activist and also advocating in  
7 codesigning workforce programs. I helped design  
8 Unity Works, a workforce program for LGBTQ, runaway  
9 and homeless youth, which is a partnership between  
10 the Unity Project to DYCD and the Center for Youth  
11 Employment.

12 And in helping develop this program, I spoke with  
13 youth and advocates alike, about what they would want  
14 to get out of it and one the things that they wanted  
15 as career goals was learning about entrepreneurship.  
16 Workers Cooperatives provide this. NYC NOWC and its  
17 partners have created programs to train people across  
18 the age span young adults as well as folks older than  
19 25, to create and run their own business and Worker  
20 Cooperatives and especially successful model for  
21 building ownership among folks in Black indigenous  
22 and people of color communities and the appeal of  
23 worker cooperatives for LGBTQ people is not hard to  
24 fathom. You know, LGBTQ people, including  
25 transgender folks face disproportionate unemployment

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1 rates as we generally know. The one issue here is  
2 that a lot of funding streams, especially federal  
3 streams limit what workforce programs can do, which  
4 is why City Tax Levy should be used –

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 ANDREA BOWEN: To help integrate workforce  
7 programs and worker cooperative training programs.  
8 And I will reserve the rest of my time for my  
9 colleagues.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Andrea, thank you so much  
12 and love the decorations. As you can see by my house  
13 decorations.

14 ANDREA BOWEN: Thank you Council Member.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Bowen. Next,  
16 we will hear from Rebecca Lurie and then Sylvia Morse  
17 followed by Saduf Syal. Ms. Lurie, you may begin  
18 when the Sergeants call time.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 REBECCA LURIE: Good morning or afternoon and  
21 thank you Chairs Vallone and Gjonaj. My name is  
22 Rebecca Lurie, I am the Founder of the Community and  
23 Worker Ownership Project at the CUNY School of Labor  
24 and Urban Studies.  
25

1  
2 Last spring I was invited to join the Mayor's  
3 COVID Recovery Advisory Council for Labor and  
4 Workforce Development. We now convene a working  
5 group on cooperative solutions and can explore  
6 innovative solutions with these industry  
7 representatives and partners. In partnership with  
8 the Cooperative Industry Business Association, New  
9 York City Network of Worker Co-ops, we overtime have  
10 designed instruction for workers to be become  
11 cooperative owners from workforce education to  
12 college.

13 We have learned where there are barriers to  
14 deliver cooperative business education. When  
15 workforce development funding is used for job  
16 training and placement, there is a misfit for worker  
17 owners of small firms who will not hit the  
18 traditional milestones used for workforce development  
19 of a pay stub in 90-days.

20 Collaborating on an endeavor to run and operate  
21 companies offers people a pathway to personal  
22 fulfillment in agency that cannot be measured by a  
23 pay check alone. This cannot be underestimated.  
24 When genuinely considering DEI initiatives,  
25 initiatives that are aimed for diversity, equity and

1 inclusion. When occurring in communities of color,  
2 we lay the groundwork that can untether them from the  
3 economy that for too long has come with exploitation  
4 and exclusion.

5  
6 COVID has made challenges to the business, small  
7 business huge. The dignification of work in too many  
8 sectors has risen as a business solution that is  
9 intended only to extract food labor for investors.  
10 Keeping talent and profit in the company and the  
11 community serves as a multiplier effect for community  
12 development and community wellbeing. Our EDC needs  
13 to look at real estate as an asset to unleash towards  
14 that multiplier.

15 By many accounts, the largest barrier to equity  
16 in our city is real estate. We need to unleash  
17 property to support cooperative businesses knowing  
18 that a stated purpose of these businesses is to serve  
19 local economies and the people who work there.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 REBECCA LURIE: Our Mayor just announced owners  
22 to owners – thank you. And this will support  
23 business owners to sell to their workers. There  
24 needs to be training in place that will support that  
25 endeavor. Finally, I would like to say we need to

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1 tie economic development and workforce training  
2 together with property uses and access to training  
3 and education that support the type of small  
4 businesses that cooperatives represent. For the  
5 people, by the people, with democratic control at its  
6 core that stay in place. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Rebecca.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Lurie. Next we  
10 will hear from Sylvia Morse followed by Saduf Syal  
11 and then Alisalda Coronado Hernandez. Ms. Morse, you  
12 may begin when the Sergeants call time.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 SYLVIA MORSE: Good afternoon Chairpersons Gjonaj  
15 and Vallone and distinguished members of New York  
16 City Council Committees on Small Business and  
17 Economic Development. My name is Sylvia Morse and I  
18 am Assistant Director in the Cooperative Development  
19 Program at Center for Family Life. A 42-year-old  
20 social services organization in Sunset Park Brooklyn.

21 CFL has been part of the Council supported Worker  
22 Cooperative Business Development Initiative since its  
23 start in 2014. Through which we provide tailored and  
24 long term technical assistance and training to  
25 immigrant and women workers to run their own

1 cooperative businesses and service sectors such  
2 cleaning and childcare.

3  
4 Our workforce development services also include  
5 job readiness and placement assistance through our  
6 adult employment program. CFL supported cooperatives  
7 have generated over \$15 million and helped stabilize  
8 families of more than 500 workers. Worker owners in  
9 the cooperative businesses we support are primarily  
10 immigrant women who are English language learners and  
11 parents.

12 As small business owners, these workers create  
13 better jobs, typically seeing their hourly wages  
14 double and establish a path their families economic  
15 stability and build knowledge and skills to take on  
16 leadership positions in their businesses and  
17 communities.

18 The pandemic and economic crisis, however, has  
19 presented significant challenges. The cleaning  
20 cooperatives we support saw an approximately 40  
21 percent drop in the number of jobs in March 2020  
22 compared to previous months and then 100 percent loss  
23 of income in April through June due to the state  
24 homeowners and safety precautions. But during that  
25 time, CFO worked quickly to adapt our technical



1 assistance and training to remote work, including  
2 additional tech coaching to workers and new COVID-19  
3 work safety trainings by OSHA Certified Trainers.  
4

5 The Cooperatives developed new safety procedures,  
6 added new lines of business and even recruited and  
7 trained more workers. As a result Cooperatives and  
8 their worker owners are seeing monthly job volume at  
9 about 60 percent of that before the pandemic and year  
10 to date sales are around 80 percent of what they were  
11 this time last year. These numbers reflect  
12 Cooperatives resiliency but also the need for ongoing  
13 support as these workers in their communities weather  
14 this economic crisis.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 SYLVIA MORSE: Just to – if I could briefly  
17 finish, just to say that Cooperatives are an  
18 essential workforce development strategy at CFO our  
19 adult employment program and cooperative development  
20 programs work together. We have done joint industry  
21 specific training and ESL courses and we think there  
22 is tremendous opportunity for this kind of  
23 collaboration and we also urge continued support for  
24 WCBDI in Fiscal Year '22. Thank you.

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1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Morse. Next,  
3 we will hear from Saduf Syal followed by Alisalda  
4 Coronado Hernandez and a note to the Sergeants, Ms.  
5 Coronado Hernandez will have a translator and so, we  
6 will give her four minutes so she can the translator  
7 can complete their testimony together but first, we  
8 will hear from Saduf Syal. Mr. Syal, you may begin  
9 when the Sergeants call time.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 SADUF SYAL: Thank you. Good afternoon, my name  
12 is Saduf Syal and I am with the New York City Network  
13 of Worker Cooperatives also known as NYC NOWC. We  
14 are a trade association that represents worker co-op  
15 businesses across New York City, which are  
16 overwhelmingly owned and controlled by women,  
17 immigrants and people of color. I am also here today  
18 on behalf of the 13 organizations that comprise the  
19 Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative or  
20 WCBDI. Which as you may know is funded through City  
21 Council discretionary funds.

22 We would like to urge the City to support Worker  
23 Cooperatives, to continue to support WCBDI through  
24 FY22 and really to see Worker Coops as a critical  
25

1 solution for workforce development as well as  
2 economic development.  
3

4 Prior to joining NYC NOWC, I had worked for a  
5 community based organization where I spent seven  
6 years building a workforce program to meet the needs  
7 of Latinx communities across Queens, Brooklyn and  
8 Staten Island. It didn't take much time to  
9 understand how broken the workforce system and  
10 overall economic system were, how disconnected it was  
11 from immigrant communities and how it failed  
12 fundamentally to value workers.

13 We, like some other programs, eventually turned  
14 to Worker Coops as a solution for better jobs for  
15 people in our communities. Worker Coops really  
16 address issues of inequity and injustice that many  
17 workers face from low wages to wage theft and  
18 discrimination and really, they create jobs that tend  
19 to be longer term, offer extensive skills trainings  
20 and provide better wages. Worker Coops can and do  
21 exist in any industry from food to fashion, cleaning  
22 and childcare to manufacturing and they are inclusive  
23 to all.

24 The ongoing pandemic has further exposed and  
25 exacerbated the issues of inequity in our economy and

1  
2 has lead more people to think about alternative  
3 solutions like coops. In this time, Worker Coops can  
4 also help save these misses and jobs by converting  
5 traditional business to worker ownership.

6 So the new Owner to Owner conversion hotline  
7 created by the Mayor alongside supportive WCBDI are  
8 really good first steps.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 SADUF SYAL: To supporting worker coops. Just a  
11 couple of really quick points. That in addition as  
12 also mentioned, that we believe that workforce  
13 development resources are extremely important and  
14 that those should include training and skills  
15 building around worker ownership and education for  
16 workers to become worker owners. And to think even  
17 bigger, we believe that space should be made  
18 available for these models to exist and thrive for  
19 everyone. And you know, that in addition to  
20 Workforce1 stop centers that there is community led  
21 worker cooperative training at education centers.

22 So, with all of that, we hope to continue to work  
23 with the City to support this model for worker  
24 ownership. Thank you.

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1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Syal. Next up  
3 will be Alisalda Coronado Hernandez and her  
4 interpreter. So, again, they will be on a four  
5 minute timer. After them will be Megan Nilon and  
6 then Dia Edmunds followed by Terrence Byerson.

7 Ms. Coronado Hernandez, you may begin when the  
8 Sergeants call time.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: [SPEAKING IN  
11 SPANISH] [2:42:36-2:43:08]

12 INTERPERTER: Okay, I am sorry to interrupt you  
13 but you got to speak in shorter sentences, so I can  
14 translate. SPEAKING IN SPANISH [2:43:13-2:43:23]

15 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: Perfecto. SPEAKING  
16 IN SPANISH 2:43:25-2:43:28]

17 INTERPRETER: Okay, I am a provider for children  
18 care in the Bronx.

19 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
20 2:43:35-2:43:41.

21 INTERPRETER: I invite you to listen to a list of important  
22 words related to my job.

23 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
24 2:43:49-2:43:50.

25 INTERPRETER: Community.

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1 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

2 2:43:52.

3 INTERPRETER: Essential.

4 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

5 [2:43:55-2:43:57]

6 INTERPRETER: Essential Workers.

7 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

8 [2:44:00-2:44:01].

9 INTERPRETER: Parent and tutors.

10 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

11 [2:44:05-2:44:07].

12 INTERPRETER: Educator of the birth to infancy.

13 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

14 2:44:12].

15 INTERPRETER: Day care age.

16 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

17 2:44:17.

18 INTERPRETER: Children, babies.

19 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

20 2:44:22.

21 INTERPRETER: And little children.

22 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

23 2:44:25]

24 INTERPRETER: Hard work.

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1 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

2 2:44:30.

3 INTERPRETER: Distance remote learning.

4 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

5 2:44:37.

6 INTERPRETER: The force of work.

7 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

8 2:44:42.

9 INTERPRETER: All of them [INAUDIBLE 2:44:47]

10 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

11 2:44:50-2:44:54].

12 INTERPRETER: Okay, all this work show how a  
13 community thrive.

14 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

15 2:45:01-2:45:04]

16 INTERPRETER: Our work supports itself  
17 financially.

18 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

19 2:45:10-2:45:14.

20 INTERPRETER: I am here today to ask you to get  
21 it together and united for the common good.

22 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH

23 2:45:24-2:45:28.

24  
25

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOINTLY  
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1  
2 INTERPRETER: The good of the children, the  
3 families and the community.

4 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
5 2:45:34-2:45:41.

6 INTERPRETER: I am here to give as a voice of  
7 alarm as taking care of children.

8 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
9 2:45:54-2:45:59.

10 INTERPRETER: Okay, uhm, my colleagues and myself  
11 are offering enrichment.

12 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
13 2:46:09-2:46:14.

14 INTERPRETER: Okay, and motivational for the  
15 children that are more vulnerable of the city.

16 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
17 2:46:22-2:46:25.

18 INTERPRETER: Including the small children.

19 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
20 2:46:29-2:46:32.

21 INTERPRETER: The children with the special  
22 needs, the homeless children.

23 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
24 2:46:41-2:46:44.

25



1 INTERPRETER: Okay, did I just my time or can I  
2 go on?

3 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Alisalda, if you  
4 could kind of wrap up a little bit, we have some more  
5 time.

6 INTERPRETER: SPEAKING IN SPANISH 2:46:58-  
7 2:47:01.

8 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
9 2:47:01-2:47:06.

10 INTERPRETER: I am going straight to the point.

11 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
12 2:47:12-2:47:16.

13 INTERPRETER: Especially the individual providers  
14 are experiencing -

15 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
16 2:47:25-2:47:29.

17 INTERPRETER: Okay, lack of communication, lack  
18 of clear communication with the public agencies.

19 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
20 2:47:34-2:47:40.

21 INTERPRETER: Including the lack of guidance due  
22 to last spring.

23 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
24 2:47:49-2:47:53.

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1  
2 INTERPRETER: Okay, the lack of coordination  
3 along the relating agencies.

4 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
5 2:48:01-2:48:10.

6 INTERPRETER: Okay, less income because we got  
7 the kids at social distance but more cost related to  
8 operations.

9 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
10 2:48:20-2:48:29.

11 INTERPRETER: Okay, you know, lack of financing  
12 and increase in expenses because of the pandemic.

13 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
14 2:48:42.

15 INTERPRETER: We recommend the following.

16 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
17 2:48:46-2:48:55.

18 INTERPRETER: Okay, the effort to keep the – can  
19 you repeat again, I am sorry two words.

20 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
21 2:49:03-2:49:09.

22 INTERPRETER: Okay, to improve the health, the  
23 safety and making it sustainable.

24 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
25 2:49:21-2:49:28.

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1  
2 INTERPRETER: Okay, more communication with the  
3 agency caring for children and being clear and  
4 communicating in the right language.

5 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
6 2:49:42-2:49:51.

7 INTERPRETER: Okay, she said, that you know  
8 provide this information in all the languages that  
9 are in the city.

10 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
11 2:50:04-2:50:13.

12 INTERPRETER: Okay, to provide subsidies for all  
13 these organizations that take care of children and  
14 other businesses.

15 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
16 2:50:25-2:50:36.

17 INTERPRETER: Okay, allow maximum flexibility so  
18 in order for us to pay what we owe, our debt.

19 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
20 2:50:46-2:50:49.

21 INTERPRETER: And to make the funds available in  
22 advance.

23 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
24 2:50:53-2:51:00.

25

1 INTERPRETER: Okay, the majority of my colleagues  
2 don't have access to those funds to pay for what they  
3 owe.

4 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
5 2:51:12-2:51:20.

6 INTERPRETER: Okay, finally we ask you please  
7 don't turn your back on the parents because they are  
8 the major force, the major labor force in the  
9 community.

10 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
11 2:51:31-2:51:39.

12 INTERPRETER: Okay, to doing that you are going  
13 to benefit more children and ask that they take care  
14 of their children while they work.

15 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
16 2:51:48.

17 INTERPRETER: Thank you for your time.

18 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

19 INTERPRETER: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Before you jump  
21 off, I would just like to request that the  
22 interpreter, could you please ask Ms. Coronado  
23 Hernandez to email her written testimony to  
24 [testimony@council.nyc.gov?](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov)  
25

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1  
2 INTERPRETER: Okay, SPEAKING IN SPANISH 2:52:07-  
3 2:52:19. And what is that again council?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It is testimony.

5 INTERPRETER: Testimony.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: @council.nyc.gov.

7 INTERPRETER: Okay, SPEAKING IN SPANISH 2:52:28-  
8 2:52:36.

9 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
10 2:52:37-2:52:43.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council.nyc.gov.

12 INTERPRETER: SPEAKING IN SPANISH 2:52:47-2:54,  
13 okay.

14 ALISALDA CORONADO HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH  
15 2:52:55-2:53:01.

16 INTERPRETER: I can translate it to English. So,  
17 in order for you to understand.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Great, thank you so much.

19 INTERPRETER: Okay, SPEAKING IN ENGLISH 2:53:07.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear from Megan  
21 Nilon followed by Dia Edmunds and then Terrence  
22 Byerson. Ms. Nilon, you may begin when the Sergeants  
23 call time.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

25

1  
2 MEGAN NILON: Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank  
3 you to the Chairs, City Council and fellow panelists  
4 for everything you are doing to help unemployed New  
5 Yorkers.

6 My name is Megan Nilon, resident of Washington  
7 Heights and current graduate student at CUNY. I am  
8 also an avid gardener and here to speak about the  
9 5,000 acres of unused land in New York City that can  
10 be used for urban agriculture and farm economies.  
11 Earlier this year, the City Council passed Local Law  
12 40, a ten year food policy plan that includes  
13 developing and improving food and farm economies.

14 Urban agriculture can generate revenue and  
15 provide long term employment for our communities. In  
16 addition to plenty of part-time employment for  
17 students and youth and working opportunities for  
18 disabled New Yorkers.

19 Urban farming also provides a COVID friendly  
20 working environment as employees can easily socially  
21 distance outside while performing their tasks. In  
22 2018, Intro. 1058 called for the development of a  
23 comprehensive urban agriculture plan. In order to  
24 generate more jobs through urban agriculture, the  
25 City should establish a committee on urban

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1  
2 agriculture to catalog available land and provide  
3 resources and materials to community members to start  
4 their own farming businesses.

5 New York City should also make it easier for  
6 those already gardening to retain income earned on  
7 city owned land. Many community gardeners are  
8 immigrants, communities of color and NYCHA residents  
9 and they deserve to earn income from their labor.

10 I urge the City Council to consider urban  
11 agriculture development as one way to support  
12 economic growth and equity in our communities and  
13 thank you for your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Nilon. Next,  
15 we will hear from Dia Edmunds followed by Terrence  
16 Byerson followed by Anti-Thu Nguyen. Ms. Edmunds,  
17 you may begin when the Sergeants call time.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 DIA EDMUNDS: Council Members and Committee  
20 Staff, thank you for your time today. My name is  
21 Lydia Edmunds, I have a degree in Labor Studies and I  
22 am currently a student researcher at the CUNY school  
23 of Public Help and Health Policy.

24 I am here today to discuss issues of workforce  
25 equity that are being overlooked by Resolution 1320

1  
2 2020, which calls on the USDA to expand the kind of  
3 retailers permitted in the SNAP online purchasing  
4 program. The objective is to ensure vulnerable  
5 communities in New York City can safely access  
6 healthy food by ordering online for delivery. This  
7 program itself depends on a vulnerable often  
8 marginalized workforce as the crucial link in  
9 delivering groceries to New York City's elderly,  
10 disabled other SNAP participants.

11 The primary online retailers in this program  
12 currently are not small businesses. They are Amazon  
13 and Walmart, global corporations not required to  
14 disclose how much of their revenue is from their very  
15 own employees needing to use SNAP benefits.

16 Qualified retailers along the supply chain  
17 including warehouses and delivery service providers  
18 and platforms must be held accountable to meet  
19 standards of fair pay in order to receive SNAP  
20 dollars. This is essential during the COVID-19  
21 pandemic and beyond. Otherwise, we are feeding SNAP  
22 recipients off the backs of marginalized and  
23 exploited workers who themselves end up requiring  
24 SNAP benefits if they dare apply.

25



1 Today, as you consider the implications for small  
2 business economic development, workforce development  
3 and unemployment, please consider the labor of  
4 delivery workers and why this is not being addressed  
5 by the USDA. This Resolution must be amended to hold  
6 the USDA accountable. The pilots current design will  
7 only exacerbate the very issue, like low wages, that  
8 make food inaccessible in the first place.

9 I urge the Co-Sponsors present to amend  
10 Resolution 1320 2020, bring it out of Committee and  
11 to the floor for a vote. This Resolution must  
12 require retailer transparency and fair labor  
13 practices to be consistent. The track record in  
14 values, the New York City Council –

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 DIA EDMUNDS: Worked so hard for. New York City  
17 can lead the way in ensuring local, state and federal  
18 policies do not continue to perpetuate poverty.  
19 Thank you for your time and solidarity.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will  
21 hear from Terrence Byerson followed by Anh-Thu Nguyen  
22 followed by MJ Okma. Mr. Byerson, you may begin when  
23 the Sergeants call time.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.  
25

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1  
2           TERRENCE BYERSON: Good afternoon Chair Vallone,  
3 Chair Gjonaj and member of the Council and thank you  
4 for holding today's important hearing on Workforce  
5 Development.

6           My name is Terrence Byerson and I am the  
7 Community Relations Manager at STRIVE. One of New  
8 York's leading workforce providers for those that  
9 have encountered barriers to employment. Our model  
10 has propelled thousands of New Yorkers onto upward  
11 mobility and economic stability by empowering our  
12 students to employment that leads to careers and not  
13 just jobs, while providing the essential social  
14 supports necessary to sustain employment.

15           Since 1984, thousands of New Yorkers have come to  
16 STRIVE in order to improve their way of life. 98  
17 percent of these individuals are from underserved  
18 Black and Brown communities throughout the city and  
19 have experienced food and housing insecurity,  
20 criminal justice involvement and little or no job and  
21 education skills. These present major challenges as  
22 it pertains to job opportunities. In 2019 we  
23 achieved a 91 percent graduation rate and maintained  
24 a 70 percent placement and retention rate.

25

1  
2 During the pandemic, programs never stopped at  
3 STRIVE as we immediately realized that we had pivot  
4 in our approach to our service delivery and we did  
5 that within a week. The Black and Brown communities  
6 that we serve have been devastated by the pandemic  
7 and we felt obligated to continue our services to  
8 assist our STRIVE family. We provided laptops and  
9 Wi-Fi hot spots to our participants. We conducted  
10 clothes drives, distributed hot meals to the  
11 community and also had a turkey drive. On top of  
12 that, we contacted over 4,000 alumni to assess their  
13 needs and help navigate unemployment. While placing  
14 over 360 alumni in employment and sent over 900  
15 individuals on interviews.

16 In 2021, STRIVE is not slowing down on providing  
17 much needed resources and exemplary service to our  
18 community and our students. As the world changes,  
19 STRIVE will move with it, helping our graduates come  
20 out of this pandemic –

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 TERRENCE BYERSON: Even better than they were in  
23 early 2020. However, as my colleagues have stated  
24 today, we need the City Council's continued and  
25 expanded partnership to help the communities we

1 serve. The Council has proven that they believe in  
2 our work and we are grateful to that partnership and  
3 we would like to build on that strong relationship in  
4 order to support our communities. Such services are  
5 even more vital during this time of uncertainty.

6 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

7 TERRENCE BYERSON: Thank you for your time  
8 everyone.

9 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you Terrence.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Byerson. Next  
11 we will hear from Anh-Thu Nguyen followed by MJ Okma  
12 and then Kyana Beckles. Ms. Nguyen, you may begin  
13 when the Sergeants call time.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15  
16  
17 ANH-THU NGUYEN: Good afternoon, Chairs, Council  
18 Members and staff. My name is Anh-Thu Nguyen and I  
19 am Director of Strategic Partnerships at Democracy at  
20 Work Institute which was created to expand access to  
21 worker ownership for communities effected by economic  
22 and social injustice.

23 On behalf of the 13 organizations making up the  
24 New York City Council funded Worker Cooperative  
25 Business Development Initiative WCBDI, thank you for

1 the opportunity to speak to our achievements and  
2 empathize how ownership can ensure good jobs and good  
3 work and resiliency in this time.

4  
5 The South Bronx has for 35 years been home to a  
6 national model for high road workforce development  
7 and the largest worker cooperative in the country,  
8 Cooperative Homecare Associates. CHCA has  
9 transformed a traditionally low wage, high turn over  
10 yet crucially important sector, home healthcare for  
11 the better. Raising job quality and industry  
12 standards through worker ownership and with  
13 continuous investment in on the job training and  
14 skills development from recruitment to training to  
15 placement employment.

16 Now with over 2,000 staff, the vast majority of  
17 women and friends of color, all essential workers  
18 working during the COVID-19 pandemic, CHCA has  
19 produced incredible workforce development results as  
20 a worker owned business.

21 Of the 630 job seekers enrolled annually, 94  
22 percent of them graduate with a portable credential  
23 and 85 percent are employed as home health aides. Of  
24 those 68 percent remain employed after one year. All  
25 of those who graduate from the embedded training

1 program are guaranteed a job and eventually a part of  
2 a stake with CHCA as a worker owner.  
3

4 In comparison, according to the National  
5 Benchmarking Project, similar low-income training  
6 programs on average secure employment for only 29  
7 percent of enrollees. And of those, just 38 percent  
8 remain employed after one year. New York City  
9 Council's investment in worker ownership is a  
10 national model for creating stable economic  
11 development, good jobs and good work. With city's  
12 including Boston, Philadelphia and following our  
13 lead.

14 We believe that it is critical to continue this  
15 work that we are doing to support small businesses  
16 and create good jobs, primarily in immigrant  
17 communities and communities of color -

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 ANH-THU NGUYEN: Create new opportunities for  
20 high road work, offer a means to build and root  
21 wealth in neighborhood and communities in sustaining  
22 for the diversity of small businesses and good jobs  
23 in New York City.

24 I thank the City Council for the opportunity to  
25 testify. We ask the City Council to further support

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1  
2 for WCBDI co-ops as a critical part of workforce  
3 development and the essential long term economic  
4 recovery work that will be needed in the year to  
5 come. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Nguyen. Next,  
8 we will hear from MJ Okma and then Kyana Beckles  
9 followed by Tarisha Fleurmond. MJ Okma, you may  
10 begin when the Sergeants call time.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 MJ OKMA: Hi, good afternoon. My name is MJ OKMA  
13 with the Human Services Council. A membership  
14 organization representing over 170 human services  
15 providers in New York City. We are here today to  
16 discuss combating unemployment. It must be stressed  
17 that New York City's essential human services  
18 workforce has suffered a net loss of over 44,000 jobs  
19 since February. This net loss is the highest of any  
20 essential industry and it is the direct result of  
21 cuts to Human Services at the city and state level,  
22 including the dangerous city cuts to the indirect  
23 cost initiative and the lack of support from the  
24 Federal government.

25

1  
2 This massive job loss is not only devastating to  
3 the effecting human services workers and their  
4 colleagues but also to the City as a whole. Not  
5 having a strong and fully funded human services  
6 sector undermines the scope and impact of essential  
7 services during a time of growing need and sets our  
8 City's recovery back.

9 City human service contracts were underfunded by  
10 20 percent pre-COVID-19 and that gap is only growing.  
11 The city is not getting a deal by chronically  
12 underfunding these essential services. It is being  
13 dependent on low-wage workers to fill the gaps.  
14 These workers are 82 percent women and 80 percent  
15 people of color. And pay is so low that that 60  
16 percent of the human services workforce qualified for  
17 public assistance before our city even saw their  
18 first case of COVID. It is in the financial in  
19 distress of New York City to reverse course and  
20 invest in the sector. Programs like supportive  
21 housing, job training, food assistance and childcare  
22 help the communities most impacted by the pandemic  
23 regain their footing.

24 This includes vital workforce development  
25 providers we have heard from today who are running



1 education and training programs for displaced  
2 workforces and communities hardest hit by COVID-19.  
3 New York City cannot address our workforce  
4 development needs in high unemployment numbers in the  
5 wake of COVID-19 without fully funding human  
6 services.  
7

8 In order to support recovery in communities of  
9 color that have been most impacted by this pandemic,  
10 funding for essential human services jobs in programs  
11 must be restored and bolstered. As we emerge from  
12 this crisis, one of our city's top priorities must be  
13 to invest in the human service workforce and without  
14 action, it will only be more difficult for our city  
15 to recover.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 MJ OKMA: Thank you so much for this opportunity  
18 to testify.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Okma. Next, we  
20 will hear from Kyana Beckles followed by Tarisha  
21 Fleurmond and then Cynthia Trevor. Ms. Beckles, you  
22 may begin when the Sergeants call time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Will the muter please unmute  
24 Ms. Beckles.

25 KYANA BECKLES: Hey, did you call my name?

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1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

3 KYANA BECKLES: Okay, sorry, I am trying to  
4 multitask. Okay, my name is Kyana Beckles, I am the  
5 CEO and Founder of Leverage Assessments, also the Co-  
6 Founder of the Black Government Contracting Club.  
7 Also the Chair for the Blacks in IO Law Enforcement  
8 Task Force.

9 What I am going to speak to you about today is my  
10 work in testing candidates. So, in my company  
11 Leverage Assessments, we are an MWBE city certified  
12 and state certified locally located business. We are  
13 located in the Bronx. We test candidates out of the  
14 Bronx and we have utilized in the past the city's  
15 workforce development programs including Summer Youth  
16 as well as the interns from CUNY Central. Those  
17 programs disappeared this summer which was definitely  
18 a blow but we are prepared to host interns whenever  
19 they come back remotely. We have transitioned  
20 everything so that we everything remotely and as a  
21 professional services company, we are prepared to  
22 test candidates remotely and to host interns remotely  
23 and I think that there is a program coming back that  
24 is designed to link interns with MWBE's and that sort  
25

1 of thing and that is great. I have signed up for  
2 that.  
3

4 DCAS stopped testing for city jobs in March. We  
5 have to continue testing people for jobs because we  
6 can do it remotely. Although one of the biggest  
7 challenges to testing candidates for jobs remotely is  
8 internet accessibility, particularly for candidates  
9 that are in those low income neighborhoods.

10 Candidates who are testing for city jobs are  
11 generally in the lower socioeconomic category. They  
12 come from all areas of the city. They are sometimes  
13 immigrants. They are sometimes new to the US but  
14 they are a super strong part of our economy and once  
15 they test for those jobs they generally are on a  
16 waiting list for about two years.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 KYANA BECKLES: Before they get hired. So, I  
19 will say that my primary recommendation is really  
20 about shortening the time from testing to hire for  
21 city jobs. I think that that's one of the most  
22 critical things about making our city programs more  
23 effective. For people who are in that lower income  
24 category, they cannot wait for two years to get a  
25 job. You cannot wait for two years for a program to

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1  
2 come out. By the time that program comes out, it is  
3 irrelevant.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Beckles. Next  
5 we will hear from Tarisha Fleurmond followed by  
6 Cynthia Trevor and then Osman Mariano.

7 As a reminder to anybody who remains who would  
8 like to testify, if you have not heard your name  
9 called, please raise your hand using the Zoom raise  
10 hand function.

11 Ms. Fleurmond, you may begin when the Sergeants  
12 call time.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 TARISHA FLEURMOND: Council Members, thank you  
15 for this opportunity. My name is Tarisha Fleurmond,  
16 I am a master's student at CUNY School of Public  
17 Health and a Qualified Nutritionist.

18 Vulnerable communities in New York City are  
19 combating more than just the immediate impact of the  
20 COVID-19 pandemic. Data from the CDC suggests that  
21 serious illness resulting from the COVID-19  
22 disproportionately effects people and communities of  
23 color due to the underlying health and economic  
24 challenges that they face. Res. 1320 2020 is calling  
25 for the USDA to expend a number of retailers that are

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1 permitted in the SNAP online purchasing program to  
2 ensure vulnerable communities in New York City can  
3 safely access healthy food.  
4

5 The SNAP program helps combat food insecurity by  
6 offering nutrition assistance to millions of eligible  
7 low-income individuals and families and by providing  
8 economic benefits to communities. Currently, SNAP  
9 payments online is only allowed for Amazon, Shop Rite  
10 and Walmart in New York. Pushing for this Resolution  
11 will help control the spread by reducing physical  
12 contact and will help stimulate the economy and those  
13 neighborhoods by creating jobs for safe, healthy food  
14 delivery.

15 The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted small  
16 businesses in profound and unprecedented ways.  
17 Economic development was difficult to achieve this  
18 year and with the talks of second wave, small  
19 businesses have more concerns. With most people  
20 staying home, the foot traffic they rely on is almost  
21 nonexistent. This Resolution will impact  
22 sustainability and improve livelihood and those  
23 communities that are at a greater risk, while also  
24 preparing for more wide range and resilient food  
25 system.

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1  
2 I ask that you support Resolution 1320 2020 by  
3 calling on the USDA to revise the SNAP online pilot  
4 program to preferentially support local food  
5 businesses. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Fleurmond. It  
7 looks like Cynthia Treavor has jumped off, so we will  
8 move on to our final panelist Osman Mariano, you may  
9 begin when the Sergeants call time.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 OSMAN MARIANO: Hi, I would like to first start  
12 by thanking this Committee and all your City Council  
13 colleagues and staff for your truly heroic work to  
14 ensure the continued survival of our city.

15 While I do appreciate and I am thankful for the  
16 City's response to COVID-19 pandemic, other city  
17 business must continue. Small businesses are  
18 uniquely positioned to develop and quickly innovate,  
19 quickly implement innovative recovery solutions.  
20 They need your support.

21 Hello, my name is Osman Mariano, I am a graduate  
22 student at CUNY School of Public Health. I am here  
23 to give support and bring attention to City Council  
24 Resolution 007-2018, that urges the state legislature  
25 and the government to pass and sign and to allow the

1 creation of the definition of honey and create  
2 uniform standards for its sale.

3  
4 Using an equity lens regulations and markets can  
5 be bridged. In 2010, New York City legalized bee  
6 keeping. As of 2016, there were 300 bee keepers.  
7 This small yet vibrant community needs your support.  
8 Bolstering New York's broadly supported hundred  
9 million dollar honey industry is an innovative  
10 approach that can add to New York's economic  
11 recovery. With a global market of \$2.3 billion,  
12 honey is the third most fake food in the world.  
13 Every year 600 pounds of honey are consumed in the  
14 US. That's about \$1 billion. US honey consumption  
15 has increased 30 percent in the past decade.

16 Last, per capita, New York is the largest honey  
17 producer in the North East, the 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation  
18 and yet there is no precise definition, nor  
19 regulatory standards for honey. Better regulations  
20 increase consumer protection and confidence and  
21 facilitate the creation of new jobs and additional  
22 resources for municipal income. This market also  
23 adds to the much needed infrastructure for New York.  
24 New York City Council Resolution 0071-201 is a first  
25 good step. Thank you.

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1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Mariano. One  
3 last reminder, if there is anybody who would like to  
4 testify who has not had the opportunity to do so,  
5 please raise your hand using the Zoom raise hand  
6 function.

7 Seeing no additional hands raised, we will now  
8 turn to the Chair for closing remarks. Chair  
9 Vallone, you may start.

10 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: There we go. Well, thank  
11 you for the many, many participants for today's  
12 hearing, to my Co-Chair Council Member Mark Gjonaj  
13 and to everyone who stayed till the end. This is a  
14 topic that is much larger than the four hours we  
15 delve into it. In the EDC realm and the hearings, we  
16 have been going on over the COVID pandemic since  
17 March and every hearing we have held – has been to  
18 redirect the city agencies, forces, funding and  
19 attention into the pandemic we are in now and that we  
20 so desperately want to get out of. We are doing  
21 that. We are meeting on a daily basis to do that and  
22 I would like to thank again my amazing staff that put  
23 this together and my own district staff, my Chief of  
24 Staff Jonathan Szott, my new legislative Council  
25 Kevin, Matt, Suzie, Kate and everyone, Christine at



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1 the office, that makes this run so smoothly for me  
2 and our entire team. Wishing everyone a blessed and  
3 happy New Year. Happy Holidays and the spirit of the  
4 man of upstairs to guide over us, heal us and make us  
5 the great city that we once were once again. God  
6 Bless everyone. Thank you.  
7

8 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Chair, I just chimed back  
9 in. I apologize I am Zooming and I wanted to just  
10 follow up and say thank you as a Co-Chair Economic  
11 Development and Small Business, we work closely hand  
12 and hand. The economic turmoil that is ahead of us  
13 is going to require all hands on deck. I am so proud  
14 to be working alongside of you.

15 I want to thank all of those that testified and  
16 so patient to wait. Thank you because what you say  
17 is important and it resonates. This information is  
18 gathered and then we start looking for solutions and  
19 actual legislation that could help address the issues  
20 that have been brought up.

21 I will just end by wishing you all a happy  
22 holidays and a peaceful and safe New York. God Bless  
23 you and thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: With that, we will bring  
25 the meeting to a close. [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 January 9, 2021