

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES
Of the
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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MARCH 11, 2021
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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING VIRTUAL ROOM 1

B E F O R E: CHAIR DEBORAH L. ROSE

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MARGARET CHIN
HELEN ROSENTHAL
MATHIEU EUGENE
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

ADMINISTRATION:

COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG
JAGDEEN PHANOR
PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE WILLIAMS
RONG CHANG
SUSAN HASKILL
DARYL RATTRAY
RANDOLF SCOTT
DAPHNE MONTANEZ
TRACY CALDRON
NEVITA BAILEY

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

SAMIR GHIMIRE
SHANNYA CAMPBELL
RYAN LABARRIE
MICHAEL RIVADENEYRA
JORGE MORALES
MARYAM CHOUDHURY
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RACHEL GAZDICK
BETH RIZMAN
SCOTT DALY
JONEE BILLY

1 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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2 SGT. MARTINEZ: Okay Sergeants, if you
3 would begin your recordings. PC recording is under
4 way.

5 SGT. POLITE: Recording to the Cloud all
6 set.

7 SGT. MARTINEZ: Mr. Kotowski.

8 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Good morning and welcome
9 to today's remote New York City Council hearing of
10 the Committee on Youth Services. At this time, would
11 Council staff please turn on their video. Please
12 place electronic devices on vibrate or silent. If
13 you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at
14 testimony@council.nyc.gov. That is
15 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you, Chair, we are
16 ready to begin. Chair, you are still muted.

17 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you for joining our
18 virtual hearing today on this very important issue.
19 I'd like to start by reading my opening statement.
20 Good morning everyone and welcome to the fiscal 2022
21 preliminary budget oversight hearing for the
22 Department of Youth and Community Development. I am
23 Council Member Debbie Rose, the Chair of the
24 Committee on Youth Services, and I am pleased to be
25 joined by my fellow Council Members, Margaret Chin.

2 I don't have the list in front of me. I think it's
3 Margaret Chin at this moment. We will hear today
4 from DYCD Commissioner Bill Chong, Chief Financial
5 Officer Jagdeen Phanor, along with the agencies team
6 of program specific deputy and assistant and
7 associate commissioners. Thank you all for joining
8 us. I want to also welcome Public Advocate Jumaane
9 Williams to today's hearing. First and foremost, we
10 are here to discuss DYCD's \$745.3 million dollar
11 budget for fiscal 2022. The preliminary budget
12 includes one new need for the Learning Bridges
13 program totaling \$57 million dollars in fiscal 2021.
14 Other budget changes total a reduction of 5.3 million
15 dollars in fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022 with
16 cuts reducing the budget by 10.3 million dollars in
17 fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022. Sadly, once
18 again, as the Chair of Youth Services Committee, I
19 have been served the preliminary budget that
20 eliminates services to a critical segment of our
21 youth population. This budget is notable for not
22 what it includes, but what it does not include. The
23 Administration's decision to cut 5.7 million dollars
24 in support for middle school summer programming under
25 the School's Out NYC program or SONYC, will leave

2 over 9000 children without services this coming
3 summer, leaving us once again, shaking our heads as
4 to why would the Administration choose to leave out
5 our most vulnerable population to fend for
6 themselves, especially after suffering from the
7 byproducts of the COVID-19 pandemic and being
8 socially isolated for a year. Did we not learn any
9 lessons from last year's uptake in teen suicide,
10 violence, and depression? Why would DYCD arbitrarily
11 choose to eliminate a baseline program that provided
12 educational, recreational, and job development
13 opportunities for youth who have suffered
14 disproportionately from historic socioeconomic
15 inequities? DYCD's mission is supposed to provide a
16 gateway out of poverty and to support youth and their
17 families through youth and community development
18 programs. Leaving me to question why COMPASS, and
19 the Beacon, and Cornerstone camps are fully funded,
20 but not SONYC? Why would we not provide our youth
21 this summer with programming that is meaningful,
22 structured, educational, and a place to go where they
23 are safe and supported? Last year was a historic
24 year on so many levels when the Council tirelessly
25 negotiated with the Administration to restore funds

2 back into the budget for SYEP and summer camps so
3 that the City's youth could have programming and jobs
4 over the summer. I thought we wouldn't have to go
5 through this again. We all learned what is needed
6 and what is unacceptable. So, to see the plan cut
7 5.7 million for one camp program seems pennywise, pow
8 foolish, vindictive, and punishing at this point.
9 Not only to us but punishing to the 9000 middle
10 school children that need this program. When this
11 Administration began its term, we heard about the
12 importance of protecting our 12- to 14-year-olds from
13 negative influences outside of their homes and
14 schools. Yet, year after year, we have to fight
15 tirelessly to provide them with the programs that
16 help combat these issues. The socioemotional
17 learning gaps that our students face have widen
18 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The summer months are
19 often an unstructured time for young people and a
20 strain on parents who need supervised childcare so
21 that they can work. The Administration has never
22 been a component of summer SONYC. Our city
23 leadership must see the real value of summer programs
24 for teens and acknowledge that it is disingenuous for
25 us, as a city, to continue to suggest that this is a

2 nonessential program and cut this baseline service.
3 The program will never achieve its full potential
4 when our service providers have less than three weeks
5 to plan a summer program. They are notified in June
6 of the SONYC restorations and quickly attempt to
7 secure buses for trips, programs base, and recruit
8 children and staff. This is essentially setting the
9 program up for failure. Our program providers need
10 the flexibility this summer as schools reopen. They
11 need adequate notice, and the Executive Budget must
12 include the full summer SONYC restoration. Last
13 night, we had a great rally with the teens who
14 participate and the teens who want the opportunity to
15 participate in our SONYC programs, and they very
16 articulately and clearly made their case for
17 restoration of SONYC funding summing it up by saying,
18 "Show us the money #FundyouthNYC". Last year, our
19 City and State recognized childcare as an essential
20 public service in the efforts to cope with the COVID
21 outbreak. DYCD launched the Learning Bridges program
22 to provide care and enrichment for children in grades
23 K thru 8 on remote learning days. The fiscal year
24 2021 budget included 57 million dollars for Learning
25 Bridges. The program is expected to run until the

2 end of the school year, June 30th with no plans
3 beyond that. As a Legislative body representing 8.5
4 million New Yorkers and growing, it is our
5 responsibility as a Council to ensure that the City's
6 budget is equitable, transparent, and accountable.
7 That is why this Committee continues to press for
8 Office of Management and Budget, DYCD, and the mayor
9 to add more services, not less, to add more SYEP
10 slots, to baseline Work, Learn, Grow, and to stop
11 cutting summer SONYC. The families across New York
12 City rely on these indispensable lifeline programs
13 and it is my duty to ensure that the funding is there
14 to execute these services. This Committee will also
15 review DYCD's performance for this year. As reported
16 in the fiscal 2021 preliminary Mayor's Management
17 Report, or the PMMR, hereto I believe we have just as
18 an interesting conversation about what is not
19 included as much as about what is. The PMMR needs to
20 be more transparent when contextualizing the data, it
21 provides as it is not inclusive of all programs and
22 their data sets, nor provides program budget data.
23 DYCD has been tasked with managing the preparation of
24 this City's next generation of leaders to fulfill
25 their potential. Programs like the Comprehensive

2 After School System or COMPASS and the Summer Youth
3 Employment Program, SYEP, are intended to help young
4 New Yorkers rise to the next level. I, myself am a
5 product of SYEP and my experiences from my first job
6 have helped to make me who I am today. It is the
7 goal of this Committee to ensure that these programs
8 are serving as many young people as possible; our
9 ultimate goal being universal SYEP. This is a
10 bittersweet moment for me as this my last preliminary
11 budget hearing. It has been an honor to serve as
12 Chair of the Youth Services Committee. I am grateful
13 for the work the Committee has done to support youth
14 in New York City. It is my hope that even in my
15 absence, the City will continue to do the right thing
16 by supporting our youth who are the most
17 underrepresented and one of our most vulnerable
18 populations in our city. It is our duty to enrich
19 the minds of our youth, support the emotional and
20 social wellbeing and continue to provide meaningful
21 work experiences that will support the many working
22 and struggling families in our city. I look forward
23 to a productive conversation today, but before we
24 begin, I would like to take a moment to thank Isa
25 Cortez, my Budget Director, Christine Johnson, my

2 Chief of Staff, Christian Revello, my Legislative
3 Aide, Michelle Peregrin, the Financial Analysis to
4 the Committee, Eisha Wright, the Unit Head, Emi
5 Briggs, our Counsel to the Committee, our new
6 Counsel, welcome, and Anastasia Zamina, our Policy
7 Analysis to the Committee, Elizabeth Arzt, our
8 Community Engagement Liaison, and I'd like to thank
9 Commissioner Chong and Associate Commissioner Phanor,
10 and the dedicated staff of DYCD, for your
11 longstanding commitment to the youth of New York
12 City, and now Commission Chong and Associate
13 Commissioner Phanor, our Counsel will swear you in.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
15 Chair Rose. Actually, I would like to invite Public
16 Advocate Jumaane Williams who is here with us to
17 today, he would like to provide his opening remarks
18 as well.

19 PA WILLIAMS: Thank you very much and
20 thank you to Chair Rose. I just want to your
21 presence here just continues to show your undeniable
22 dedication to the people of the City of New York, and
23 so, I'm happy to see you, and my prayers are still
24 with you.

25 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

2 PA WILLIAMS: My name is Jumaane Williams
3 and I'm Public Advocate for the City of New York. I
4 would like to again, thank Chair Debbie Rose and
5 Members of the Committee on Youth Services for
6 holding this very important preliminary budget
7 hearing, and for allowing me to say a few words.
8 Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic brought this City
9 into a budget crisis none of us could have
10 anticipated. Programs and services had severe
11 funding cuts, one in particular, being Youth
12 Services. In the adopted budget last year, the
13 Department of Youth and Community Development was
14 allocated nearly 539.3 million dollars. Fortunately,
15 the Administration will adhere to the calls of youth
16 advocates and put a plan in place operating programs
17 in a way that are adjusted to our new temporary
18 reality given the scope of the pandemic. At a
19 hearing held by the Committee on Youth Services in
20 January, representatives from DYCD explained that in
21 2020, the Summer Bridge Program admitted roughly
22 35,000 participants, less than half the amount of
23 young people enrolled in the program the year before.
24 Although the Mayor seeks to have the program reach
25 its pre-COVID number of participants this year, I

2 hope the number of participants will actually surpass
3 that amount. In addition to talking about the
4 budget, we have to talk about operations. Young
5 people need to be involved in the development process
6 and roll out this year's SYEP. Last year, over
7 100,000 of the young people who applied to the
8 program never received a response, and in early
9 August, many were uncertain as to rather or not the
10 program was even under way. We cannot let the backup
11 organization happen again this year. That number is
12 important because many people sometimes describe our
13 young people as lazy and not wanting services and
14 here, we have hundreds of thousands applying. I
15 expect DYCD to continue prioritizing the enrollment
16 of young people from communities hit hardest by the
17 Coronavirus, as well as homeless youth, especially
18 those who are members of the LGBTQ community. At the
19 same hearing in January, ADC representative said that
20 out of the 1843 homeless youth who applied to SYEP
21 last year, only 873 ended up being enrolled in the
22 program. We need to increase that number this summer
23 as they are some of the most vulnerable members of
24 our city's young population. The only way to ensure
25 that the program accommodates more participates is to

2 offer SYEP placements that are in compliance with
3 COVID-19 guidance, especially seeing as how we are on
4 the path to increase vaccine distribution in the
5 coming months. We need to make certain that there is
6 sufficient amount of career development opportunities
7 that allow with public health standards for our young
8 people. The Office of Management and Budget released
9 its financial plan early this year which shows the
10 city plan to allocate approximately 532.9 million
11 dollars to DYCD for fiscal year 2022. We need
12 clarification as to how DYCD will execute this
13 programming with this funding. The Summer Youth
14 Employment Program is expected to receive nearly 131
15 million in funding in fiscal year 2022 which is
16 supposed to provide for 70,000 spots in the program.
17 It's also important to know which forms of outreach
18 DYCD is implementing to reach communities most
19 affected by COVID-19, which efforts are being put
20 forth to increase admission into the Career First
21 NYCHA Program to expand access to career development
22 opportunities for youth residing in NYCHA buildings
23 and how much funding the agency will designate to the
24 purchases of devices for remote placement this
25 summer. Just going back to summer youth, we know

2 that that's not even how much it was at its peak. We
3 know that 100,000 will be much closer to universal
4 which is where we should be for summer youth
5 employment programming. Last year, DYCD was informed
6 by NYCHA partners that 50% of their households were
7 not connected to the internet or had WIFI signal.
8 Luckily, the agency managed to secure funding for
9 partners at Young Men's Initiative and from other
10 sources to purchase more than 2000 devices including
11 internet ready tablets. I'm calling on DYCD to set
12 aside funding to provide more devices this year.
13 Although services like SYEP and in-school youth
14 programs are expected to see a notable increase in
15 funding, there are other programs that are expected
16 to see a decrease, like the Runaway and Homeless
17 Youth Program, or RHY, and even the ones that are
18 increased like SYEP, are certainly not near where it
19 should be. As I said before, our homeless youth are
20 some of the most vulnerable members of city's
21 population. RHY has dropped its crisis service
22 programs, traditional independent living programs,
23 and street outreach and referral services. That
24 population, in particular, has a high prevalence of
25 young people from the LGBTQ community. The mayor

2 should not be reducing funding for these essential
3 services even if it's just by 3.3%, but rather
4 increasing funding, especially during a pandemic. I
5 want to say that term, "Defund the Police" bring a
6 lot of emotions out to the floor, and where ever you
7 are on that, there's one thing that should be clear.
8 The message that's being sent by decreasing or trying
9 to decrease the preliminary budget for DYCD by almost
10 10% while increasing the budget of the NYPD from a
11 starting point of 6.25% sends the wrong message. The
12 Administration needs to reconsider this budget
13 decision, designate more funding towards programs
14 like the ones being cut, not being funded enough like
15 in agency of DYCD. I look forward to hearing how
16 DYCD will support youth services, given
17 Administration proposed budget for fiscal year 22,
18 and I hope that the Commission this year, will be
19 advocating for additional funding for these programs.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you Public Advocate
22 Jumaane Williams for your remarks and for joining us
23 this morning, and I want to personally thank you for
24 your furoate advocacy on behalf of our young people.
25 They can have a more active and vocal advocate, and

2 now, I'd like to acknowledge my colleagues who have
3 joined us. We have been joined by Council Member
4 Chin, Council Member Rosenthal, and I will now turn
5 it over to the Committee's New Counsel, Emi Briggs,
6 who will review some procedural items related to
7 today's hearing and call on the first panel. Thank
8 you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
10 Chair Rose. I am Emi Briggs, Committee Counsel for
11 the Committee on Youth Services of the New York City
12 Council. I will be moderating today's hearing and
13 calling panelists to testify. Before we begin, I
14 would like to remind everyone that you will be on
15 mute until I call on you to testify. After you are
16 called, you will be unmuted by the host. Please
17 listen for your name. I will periodically announce
18 who the next panelists are. Council Member's
19 questions will be limited to five minutes, and
20 Council Members, please note that this includes both
21 your questions and the witness answers. Please also
22 note that time permitting, we will allow a second
23 round of questions at today's hearing. They will be
24 limited to two minutes, again, including both your
25 question and the witnesses' answers. For our public

2 testimony, I will call up individuals in panels.
3 Council Members who have questions for a particular
4 panelist should use the raise hand function in Zoom.
5 You will be called on after everyone on that panel
6 has completed their testimony. For public panelists,
7 once I call your name, a member of our staff will
8 unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will give you the
9 go ahead to begin speaking after setting the timer.
10 All public testimony will be limited to three
11 minutes. After I call your name, please wait a brief
12 moment for the Sergeant at Arms to announce that you
13 may begin. For today's hearing, we will begin with
14 testimony from the Administration, followed by
15 Council Member questions and then public testimony.
16 I will deliver oath to all of the Administration that
17 is present today, and after reading the oath, I will
18 call upon each of you individually by name to respond
19 to the oath one at a time. So, for the
20 Administration members we have online, please raise
21 your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth,
22 the whole truth and nothing but the truth before
23 these committees and to respond to honestly to
24 Council Member questions? Commissioner Bill Chong?
25 Answer I do or yes. Are you still muted?

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2 CHAIR ROSE: You have to unmute yourself.

3 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Okay. It

4 popped up. Yes, yes.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you.

6 Assistant Commissioner, Rong Chang?

7 RONG CHANG: Yes, I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you.

9 Jagdeen Phanor?

10 JAGDEEN PHANOR: I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Susan Haskell?

12 SUSAN HASKELL: I do.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you.

14 Daryl Rattray?

15 DARYL RATTRAY: I do.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you.

17 Randolph Scott?

18 RANDOLF SCOTT: I do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Daphne

20 Montanez?

21 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you.

23 Tracy Caldron?

24 TRACY CALDRON: I do.

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you.
3 All right, well thank you Commissioner Chong. You
4 may begin your testimony when ready.

5 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Good morning,
6 Chair Rose, Public Advocate Williams, and Members of
7 the Committee on Youth Services. I am Bill Chong,
8 Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community
9 Development. As Debbie Rose mentioned, this is a
10 bittersweet moment. This will be my last preliminary
11 budget hearing. I want to take this opportunity to
12 thank the City Council for being a great partner over
13 the last eight years in making sure that as many
14 resources are available to my agency. I'm joined by
15 Jagdeen Phanor, DYCD's Chief Financial Officer; Susan
16 Haskell, Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services;
17 Daryl Rattray, Associate Commissioner for Youth
18 Services and Partnerships; Tracy Caldron, the
19 Assistant Commissioner for the COMPASS program;
20 Daphne Montanez, the Assistant Commissioner for
21 Workforce Development; Randolph Scott, Assistant
22 Commissioner for Vulnerable Youth, Runaway and
23 Homeless and Vulnerable Youth; Assistant Dana
24 Cantelmi (SP?) our agency Chief Contracting Officer;
25 and Rong Chang, Assistant Commissioner for Literacy

2 and Immigrant Services. We are grateful to have this
3 opportunity to testify on DYCD's fiscal 2022
4 preliminary budget. I'm incredibly proud of DYC's
5 staff, our providers, young people and families
6 during the past challenging year. With COVID-19 and
7 the city's worst economic crisis in 45 years, this
8 was a year unlike any other. Going on pause due to
9 the pandemic meant meeting our core responsibilities
10 while teleworking. DYCD's IT team quickly had the
11 agency up and running remotely and our staff didn't
12 miss a beat. Services continued to be delivered in
13 new ways. Cordial opportunities, like DYCD at home,
14 making sure that providers had contracts and were
15 paid, and fresh approaches to internal and external
16 communications in terms of content, frequency, and
17 delivery. Our outstanding network of community-based
18 organizations answered the call by quickly
19 reinventing themselves to administer remote
20 programming and adapt to new initiatives such as
21 Learning Bridges so that the New Yorkers has had a
22 safe place to learn and receive services. DYCD was
23 able to serve 339,963 New Yorkers in the fiscal 2020,
24 an increase over the previous year. We continue to
25 address the needs of vulnerable and homeless youth,

2 primarily through in-person programming and more
3 available beds. Our COMPASS after school program
4 served 122,575 young people, and Beacon and
5 Cornerstone Community Centers became lifelines by
6 providing everything from remote activities to food
7 and person protective equipment. Tens of thousands
8 of New Yorkers received support through literacy,
9 immigrant services, and antipoverty programs. With
10 our partnership and in close collaboration with our
11 providers, we developed SYEP Summer Bridge, an
12 engaging virtual program that offered young people
13 opportunities to learn new skills, explore potential
14 careers and earn money. Online applications to most
15 programs are now available at Discover DYCD. NYC
16 Connect has been greatly enhanced to help
17 organization communicate and coordinate with the
18 communities that they serve. These accomplishments
19 are due in no small part to investments in
20 streamlining and modernizing our system. Last year,
21 as part of the city's ongoing efforts to address the
22 divide in underserved community, Mayor De Blasio
23 announced a new initiative to provide free high-speed
24 connectivity in public housing. DYCD and DOE,
25 working with the Information Technology Disaster

2 Resource Center, the Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom,
3 CIELO scholarship Foundation and Education Super
4 Highway, will deliver WIFI and broadband upgrades at
5 DYCD funded Cornerstone Community Centers. More than
6 12,000 young people and adults will benefit from the
7 enhancements during active programming at the centers
8 in addition to the thousands of community members who
9 can access the free WIFI hotspots provided by ITDRC
10 as a result of this partnership. We thank our
11 partners for their support. The preliminary budget
12 for DYCD is in a strong position to continue the
13 progress to prepare the city for a strong recovery.
14 Despite the city's fiscal challenges, the preliminary
15 budget preserves most baseline funding in
16 programming, a true testament of the De Blasio
17 Administration's commitment to the city's youngest
18 people and families. It stands at 745.4 million, 533
19 million or 71.5% city tax levy, 9% is Federal and 1%
20 State. We are pleased that the fiscal 2022
21 preliminary budget includes support and funding for
22 70,000 jobs with SYEP's Employment Program. Working
23 with our providers and health experts, our program
24 will provide services in person remotely or in a
25 hybrid environment. This model will balance the

2 needs of young people and their families and meet the
3 needs of worksites as we move towards reopening our
4 city. We anticipate applications to open in mid-
5 March. We thank the Council for your support and
6 advocacy for SYP over the many years. Our other
7 programs are also receiving baseline funding. Fiscal
8 2022 funding levels currently stand at 337 million
9 for COMPASS programs, 559.5 million for Beacons, and
10 53.4 for Cornerstone programs. The 44.5 million to
11 Runaway and Homeless Youth Services will support 813
12 beds, eight drop-in centers, and street outreach
13 programs. These and other programs are essential in
14 fostering a recovery for all of us. Thank you again
15 for the chance to testify and we are ready to answer
16 your questions.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
18 for your testimony. Before I turn to Chair Rose for
19 questions, I'd like to remind Council Members to use
20 the raise hand function in Zoom to indicate that they
21 have a question for the panel. Chair Rose.

22 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you. Thank you so
23 much Counsel and thank you Commissioner for your
24 testimony. NYC has a total proposed budget of 745.3
25 million dollars for fiscal year 2022. The fiscal

2 2022 preliminary budget for DYCD sees minimal
3 changes. This plan sees a one-time; however, it sees
4 a one-time cut to Summer SONYC in fiscal year 2022
5 totaling 5.7 million. What are the alternative plans
6 for middle school students this summer in the absence
7 of this program funding?

8 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: Well, let me say
9 I was very disappointed to that in the preliminary
10 budget, but I think, as the Budget Director said in
11 his testimony, when the budget was released in late
12 January, there was a lot of things we didn't know.
13 Most notably, the scope of support the city would
14 receive in the American Rescue Plan and as we're all
15 excited that the President will sign it tomorrow,
16 it's my hope that we can talk about restoration of
17 this reduction. The stimulus money that we will be
18 receiving will help tremendously in looking at, one
19 stability in the FY22 budget, and the flexibility to
20 consider cuts that were taken because this situation
21 looked pretty bleak in late January. If you remember
22 back then, the State was talking about billions and
23 billions of dollars of cuts, so the city took a very
24 cautious approach, but not, I think, I have a certain
25 level of optimism with Federal help on the way and

2 you know, hopefully, with the Council's support, we
3 can restore this cut.

4 CHAIR ROSE: I'm glad to hear that and it
5 is my hope with the increase aid form the Federal
6 Government that we might not only see a restoration
7 of the baseline amount, but we might be able to
8 enhance that number so that we can serve upwards of
9 more students that we served previously. We served
10 close to 30,000 students. Could you please the
11 Committee how much funding the plan includes for
12 summer camps for COMPASS, Beacon, and Cornerstone
13 programs and what are each budgeted slot allocations
14 for each of these programs?

15 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, I will, as
16 I said in my testimony, most of the baseline programs
17 maintain a level of going back to the earlier budget
18 here before the pandemic, so I'll turn to Susan
19 first, and if she needs help, Jagdeen can fill in the
20 budget numbers, but Susan probably knows these summer
21 camp numbers because she's been working on planning
22 for summer from day one. So, Susan?

23 SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah, I will say, we're
24 really excited about summer. We're excited for now
25 that most of the baseline services are anticipated to

2 provide robust programming to welcome young people
3 back to programs for; I don't have the budget numbers
4 in front of me, but I know my colleague can help me
5 out. For the Beacon Community Centers, which is
6 about 91 school-based programs, will serve roughly
7 15,000 young people. The Cornerstone Community
8 Centers, we have 99 of those and those developments
9 will serve an estimated 5000 additional youth, in
10 addition to the adults that get services at those
11 centers, and the COMPASS Elementary programs, roughly
12 40,000 seats. So together, youth services are
13 planning for about 60,000 young people to be served
14 through the baseline services that are funded right
15 now.

16 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: And Jagdeen can
17 maybe give some budget specifics.

18 JAGDEEN PHANOR: Sure. So, Susan, you
19 got those numbers correct. All told for; just give
20 me one second here as I flip through my briefing
21 book. All told, we have over, for all programs
22 COMPASS, Beacon, Cornerstone for fiscal year 21, we
23 have 633.9 million devoted to youth services.

24 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you. Between the
25 November 2020 plan and the preliminary plan, DYCD has

2 a total cut of \$718,000 in fiscal 2021, and a
3 \$200,000 cut in fiscal year 2022 for hiring and
4 attrition savings. How will this hiring freeze
5 impact DYCD's ability to provide high quality summer
6 program, and does DYCD feel the agency has enough
7 staff employees to support this work?

8 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: So, you know,
9 obviously any Commissioner would want as many staff
10 as possible, but I think we are prepared to move
11 ahead with our summer service even through these
12 vacancies can't be filled. You know, a lot of it;
13 there are certain efficiencies that remotely have
14 helped us. We can reach more people now remotely
15 than we did before. It's interesting. We had this
16 conversation about how the world would change when we
17 got back in the office, and activities are actually a
18 way of reaching more people with fewer staff, so if I
19 was given a choice, I would love the authority to
20 hire these people, but I think we're in good shape as
21 far as making sure services are delivered. The very
22 fact that we weren't able to hire people, but still
23 get our contracts registered, our programs paid, is a
24 testimony to the dedication of our staff and the
25 strength of our data systems to be able to get things

2 done even though we weren't working in person, and
3 even though we didn't have all the staff we might
4 have wanted.

5 CHAIR ROSE: Okay, is DYCD securing a
6 reliable supply chain of PPE for its providers?

7 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: The answer is
8 yes. In fact, we've had monthly distributions and if
9 you walk through our offices, and I, you know, I come
10 here, you know, every so often, there are boxes of
11 PPEs on every single floor, and we have regular
12 distributions for different program areas and staff
13 from the different program areas have to come here and
14 assist our Administrative staff to make sure that the
15 PPEs, rather they be a mask, sanitizers, everything,
16 I believe, and we can update it, but the number that
17 ended last year, I think it was something 2 million
18 PPEs were distributed by us. I'm sure that number is
19 significantly increased.

20 CHAIR ROSE: So, none of our DYCD
21 programs are incurring costs for PPE or maintenance?

22 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: All this stuff
23 is being distributed for free.

24 CHAIR ROSE: Last summer, site placement
25 was very difficult given the timing of the pandemic

2 and that the DOE was closed. What does summer camp
3 look like this year in terms of rather or not these
4 sites are going to be available and the frequency of
5 their availability.

6 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: I'll start and
7 then Susan can add some more detail. It's our hope
8 that we'll be able to resume full in-person services
9 with whatever safety protocol the state puts in place
10 and we're still waiting for the State Health
11 Department as well as the Office of Children and
12 Family Services to give us guidance on this. The
13 more advanced guidance they give us, the better
14 prepared we can be and the better prepared our
15 program providers can be, but our intent is to keep
16 remote services to a minimum and offer as much in-
17 person services as possible. Susan, do you have
18 anything else to add?

19 SUSAN HASSELL: No, that's right, Bill.
20 We're working very closely with DOE on where to site
21 these schools. It's always our priority to keep as
22 many programs in their home school as possible, so we
23 work closely with DOE to look at which schools will
24 be opened and you know, trying to make the best
25 locations for young people and families.

2 CHAIR ROSE: Commissioner Haskell, what
3 has been the impact on programs when the schools are
4 closed because of an outbreak of, you know, COVID-19?

5 SUSAN HASKELL: Chair, you mean like
6 (crosstalk) I'm sorry, you mean, like during the
7 school year and after school?

8 CHAIR ROSE: Yes.

9 SUSAN HASKELL: Well, I just want to take
10 this opportunity to recognize like the value and
11 efforts of our community-based providers connecting
12 with young people in person when the school site is
13 open and available and pivoting sometimes at a
14 moments notice to remote because there have been, you
15 know, several cases of COVID in our school and there
16 is a closure for 10 days, so they have made herculean
17 efforts to stay connected. These relationships are
18 more important than ever for young people. The
19 ability to be engaged in recreational activities.
20 So, you know, it would be crazy for me to say
21 anything other than it's been a real challenge, but
22 they have risen very much so to the challenge to make
23 themselves available when the schools are open. You
24 know, there was delayed opening, there were closure
25 of elementary, there were closure of middle. We are

2 so pleased those schools are reopened now and
3 similarly possible for high schools in the future,
4 it's been a real challenge and they've done an
5 amazing job.

6 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: And I'd like to
7 add that I also want to thank our staff of, I think
8 it's something like 30 or 40 staff people who
9 volunteered to staff this situation room, which is
10 the nerve center to coordinate the opening and
11 closing of schools when COVID cases are detected.
12 You know, 30 or 40 people may not sound like a lot of
13 people, but we only have 500 people, and these are
14 people who are doing their regulars and at the same
15 time, volunteering at the situation room, and so, you
16 know, they're unsung heroes. They work behind the
17 scenes, but you know, cause of their hard work, we're
18 able to like, respond quickly to incidents and then,
19 close programs when necessary and then reopen them
20 when the situation is safe.

21 CHAIR ROSE: What does the agency
22 anticipate that summer camp enrollment will be?

23 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: I think Susan
24 can probably give you a sense of that.

2 SUSAN HASKELL: I think that, you know,
3 that is a question we don't have a firm answer for,
4 but I'll tell you, we feel it's our responsibility to
5 make sure that we're enforcing safety protocol, which
6 has been, you know, again, tremendous cooperation
7 from our providers and that our doors are wide open
8 to welcome families back this summer. We see this as
9 a real opportunity to re-engage. To help young
10 people get practiced in in-person activities and to
11 build confidence leading into the school year to get
12 them comfortable being back again in groups again
13 with safe social distancing. So, how, what the
14 uptake looks like, what the confidence level of
15 families is, I think, you know, TBD, we feel it's our
16 job just to be ready to welcome them with open arms
17 and figuratively speaking and, and give them, start
18 to rebuild those emotional skills in in-person
19 activities.

20 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: And I will add
21 that our goal is to have full enrollment and I think
22 a lot will be driven by the health and safety
23 situation, the vaccination rates, and you know, as
24 we've seen with schools, a lot of parents have
25 understandable concerns about the safety of sending

2 their children to in-person instruction and so, as we
3 begin to wrap up the vaccination of people, I'm
4 hoping that the confidence level the parents will
5 have about sending their children to in-person
6 services will increase.

7 CHAIR ROSE: What efforts are we taking
8 to ensure that the providers know what that's going
9 to look like so that they can maximize the
10 enrollment?

11 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, I'll start
12 and then Susan can add. Early on, the State
13 authorized vaccination priorities for staff people
14 who deal with young people. So, we aggressively
15 promoted that. We want to make sure as many staff of
16 youth programs that work directly with young people
17 get vaccinated cause that's key to providing in-
18 person services. As many youth workers vaccinated
19 and so that started, I want to say, a month or so ago
20 because hopefully, by the summer, every staff person
21 who is going being working in the summer camp will be
22 vaccinated. Susan may have other things that we're
23 working on, but you know, as I've said in the past,
24 to do a good summer program, you need months and
25 months of planning and so we started as early as

2 February getting the word out to our youth workers
3 about getting vaccination... (crosstalk).

4 CHAIR ROSE: I'm glad to hear that you
5 start planning months and months ahead of time
6 because the providers also need that time to prepare
7 to run effective programming. When will they know
8 that these programs are going to be in place so that
9 they can do the preparation that they need so they
10 can meet the enrollment targets?

11 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Susan, I think
12 we've already communicated to people.

13 SUSAN HASSELL: Yeah, yeah, and this is a
14 great opportunity to repeat that. I think there's
15 uncertainty because, you know, last year was such an
16 extraordinary experience where funding was, you know,
17 eliminated at the peak of the pandemic and then
18 partially restored, you know, as we got closer to the
19 summer. We have much more certainty this spring than
20 we had last spring and we are moving full steam ahead
21 with those baseline programs that we outlined, and
22 so, we are encouraging providers to do all the
23 planning and preparations that you know, are
24 typically done in addition to utilizing the things

2 they've learned last summer and over the school year
3 about how to operate safely.

4 CHAIR ROSE: And last year, due to the
5 pandemic, SYEP functioned 100 percent remotely. When
6 the Committee last spoke with DYCD, strategic
7 discussions were beginning to take place to plan this
8 summer's model. What has the process been with DYCD
9 and the providers to plan this summer's model?

10 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: So, let me start
11 and then Daphne can fill in more details. One of the
12 things that is an important principal at DYCD and
13 more so than ever during this pandemic is to have a
14 bottom-up process. So, in the earlier part of this
15 year, we surveyed our Summer Youth Employment Program
16 providers to get a sense of what challenges they
17 face, what's the likelihood of in-person internships,
18 what's the likelihood of virtual internships and so,
19 the key, and Daphne can give you more detail, is, and
20 they've been informed; I think there was meeting on
21 Monday of this week, is flexibility, that we're
22 committed to serving 70,000 young people, but we're
23 going to get maximum flexibilities to each program
24 because the situation on the ground is different.
25 Some communities were harder hit, and many more

2 businesses were closed and so, we want to give people
3 flexibility, but Daphne can give you a little bit
4 more detail.

5 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: (Crosstalk).

6 CHAIR ROSE: Sorry Daphne, go ahead.

7 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: I'm sorry. I was just
8 going to concur with the Commissioner on our
9 engagement efforts. We have been in discussion with
10 our providers since the start of the year and we have
11 actually been able work with our providers in
12 developing what we feel will be a model that
13 addresses their concerns and incorporates their
14 feedback, and we were able to share that model with
15 them this past Monday as a group and just at a high
16 level. Younger youth will continue to participate
17 and be engaged in project-based learning activities;
18 however, providers can continue to deliver these
19 activities normally should they choose to do so as
20 they did through Summer Bridge, and for older youth,
21 we're going to be offering two tracks. The first
22 track will be the traditional SYEP experience where a
23 young person is engaged in a work activity for the
24 full 150 hours. However, providers can assign those
25 experiences either in-person, remote, or a hybrid of

2 the two, and then the second option will have young
3 people participate a portion of their hours within a
4 skills-based training opportunity and then another
5 portion tied to a work experience, and again that can
6 be delivered either remotely, in-person, or hybrid.
7 The training would ideally be tied to their work
8 assignment or their industry, and we have had
9 conversations with provider. The model that we
10 proposed is informed by them. We look forward to
11 continuing conversations with them on how DYCD can
12 best support them in their efforts in delivering the
13 model successfully this summer.

14 CHAIR ROSE: If a hybrid model is chosen,
15 how many participants can the programming serve?

16 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: So, overall, we're
17 looking to serve based on the preliminary budget,
18 70,000 young people, and of course, a portion of the
19 70,000 will be older youth. It will depend on
20 worksite availability, employers may choose to have
21 more of a remote internship opportunity developed
22 versus in-person, but as we get closer into the
23 summer, we're hoping that some of the restrictions
24 may ease comfort of participants and parents and
25 allowing for in-person work experiences will take

2 place. So, I think we'll have a better sense of what
3 those placements will look like as we get closer to
4 the spring and summer.

5 CHAIR ROSE: There has been talk of an
6 option two, sort of a credentialing component. If
7 this programming becomes more robust with the
8 credentialing component, is the agency prepared to
9 cover the additional program cost that the providers
10 would have to incur, and now expect the providers to
11 pick up and cover these fees?

12 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: So, we are ...
13 (crosstalk).

14 CHAIR ROSE: Let's talk about, first
15 could you start by talking about the credentialing
16 component? What that program looks like and rather
17 or not the providers would have to incur any
18 additional fees.

19 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Yes, so the hybrid
20 model, again, was one of the ideas that many of the
21 providers had shared as an alternative to the
22 standard SYEP experience, given some of the concerns
23 around the lack of worksite availability. In putting
24 this hybrid model plan together, we feel that young
25 people will have the opportunity to work in

2 industries or in assignments where they can benefit
3 from additional skills-based training. For example,
4 a young person could take part in an Excel training
5 and also have a work experience doing data input and
6 data analysis or take part in early childhood
7 educational training and then placed at a childcare
8 site to round out their experience. Currently DYCD
9 is working with a number of platforms such Coursera,
10 LinkedIn Learning, Skills Share in developing
11 resources that could be available to providers free
12 of charge to them to deliver these services to their
13 participants should they choose the hybrid model.

14 CHAIR ROSE: Okay, when will, when will
15 that decision be made rather or not, you know,
16 participate in sort of the credentialing component of
17 these programs?

18 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Sure, so our providers
19 work very closely with our participants during the
20 enrollment process and placement process to ascertain
21 their interest and their needs and I think also a
22 determining factor will be the number of work sites
23 that are available to providers as well. So, I think
24 as the work site development starts in full force in
25 the coming weeks, provider will have a clearer sense

2 of which options they will have available, what
3 trainings they will offer, and the modes in terms of
4 how they will deliver uh, work experiences for young
5 people.

6 CHAIR ROSE: What will be the slot
7 allocation for SYEP in terms of community-based
8 slots, school-based, and special initiative slots?

9 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Sure, so ... (crosstalk).

10 CHAIR ROSE: (Crosstalk).

11 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Yes, so we're still
12 working with our providers now to ascertain their
13 capacity, so preliminarily, we are looking at
14 community-based slot surveying just under 45,000,
15 that's inclusive of the older youth, younger youth,
16 and Ladders for Leader slots. We're looking to scale
17 up our career ready option to service 14,000 young
18 people are our special initiatives will be
19 approximately 9700 slots this year.

20 CHAIR ROSE: Well, will you consider
21 setting aside slots of young people from the 27
22 neighborhoods that were most impact by COVID-19?

23 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Yes, every effort will
24 be made to ensure that we're serving high need youth
25 as we did with Summer Bridge, and so all of our

2 efforts around recruitment, particularly around the
3 special initiative options inclusive of our NYCHA and
4 Emerging Leaders Programs will really be targets to
5 reaching young people within those communities.

6 CHAIR ROSE: Do you know how many slots
7 that would accommodate?

8 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: So currently, we're
9 looking at an Emerging Leaders serving roughly 4300
10 young people and our NYCHA options, we're looking to
11 serve roughly 4600 between the Career First NYCHA
12 Program and our Map to Success Program.

13 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: And the only
14 thing I would is that of the 45,000 community seats
15 or jobs that many of them are located in the 33
16 neighborhoods that were most impacted. I mean, one
17 of the things that is unique about DYCD is that we
18 tend allocate the overwhelming majority of our money
19 in poor neighborhood so when the 33 neighborhoods
20 were identified, you could lay a map of all the DYCD
21 programs over those neighborhoods. So, as I said to
22 you on a phone call last week, DYCD is one of the few
23 agencies in the city whose mission is to fight
24 poverty. So, it's built into our DNA and certainly

2 we're very mindful of it in every program that we
3 roll out.

4 CHAIR ROSE: Currently, the NYCHA slot
5 are for a specific NYCHA developments. Is there any
6 move towards to including all of the NYCHAs in that
7 pot so that regardless of what NYCHA a young person
8 lives in, they can be considered for those slots?

9 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, let me
10 start and then Daphne can maybe add on. I think it's
11 a mistake to say that the only young person who gets
12 a summer job are those in the Map for Success
13 Program. A lot of young people who live in public
14 housing also get jobs through the community options.
15 I forgot the number from 2019, but it was a
16 significant number of young people in total of the
17 people who got jobs were either through to Map for
18 Success or through the community outreach.
19 Obviously, if we want to do more targeting, if
20 additional resources became available beyond the
21 70,000, we can certainly accommodate that, but I don't
22 know if you have anything more to add to that Daphne?

23 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Well ... (crosstalk).

24 CHAIR ROSE: (Crosstalk).

2 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: I'm sorry. I would
3 just add that last year through the Summer Bridge
4 program, we did allow our Career First providers to
5 work with developments outside of their contracted
6 developments and it's something that our providers
7 have asked for us to consider again this summer, and
8 we are prepared to provide that flexibility as well.

9 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you. That's the
10 flexibility that I was talking about, not increasing
11 that number, but giving more public development, you
12 know residents the opportunity to be in that special
13 targeted pot of jobs. Thank you, and when will SYEP
14 application go live?

15 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: In the next few
16 weeks. We don't have a final date, but you will be
17 the first to know.

18 CHAIR ROSE: Okay, yeah, I hope so.

19 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: And getting
20 applications, I must say, in my 16 years with DYCD,
21 it's amazing how consistent the number of
22 applications are. Part of it is, I think, in 2005,
23 we went away from carbon copy applications. I know,
24 it's hard to believe; from the carbon copy to an
25 online application, so, the very fact that it is an

2 online application has made it easier for young
3 people to apply. So, every year we get between
4 130,000 and 150,000 applications. It's a pretty
5 consistent number, so and this time we will have
6 enough time unlike last year, which as you know, was
7 a very chaotic process.

8 CHAIR ROSE: And before I give the floor
9 to our Public Advocate, Teens Take Charge made a
10 recommendation to DYCD that young people who apply
11 for SYEP, but whose names are not pulled from the
12 lottery are sent a list of compiled resources of free
13 programs like Coursera, CUNY classes, and other
14 online learning options for the summer, or other
15 programs that the city provides. Is DYCD willing to
16 work with youth advocates and Teens Take Charge to
17 compile existing opportunities like this to send to
18 any SYEP applicant who isn't selected this year?

19 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: I believe for
20 the last, I want to say, seven years, that DYCD has
21 always done a resource guide for alternative to
22 Summer Youth Employment Program. It's usually on our
23 website, and so operationally, I defer to Daphne to
24 see what is doable.

2 CHAIR ROSE: Okay, Commissioner, I would
3 like to ask if we could set up a meeting in the next
4 few weeks to discuss and review all of the details
5 that we've discussed today?

6 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Sure.

7 CHAIR ROSE: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: And I think the
9 program staff will probably be able to help a lot
10 more with the details, but I think, you know, our
11 commitment is always to make sure every young person
12 can access resources rather it's through the programs
13 we fund or through programs we don't fund because we
14 recognize that summer is an important time for a
15 young person and this summer, more than ever. We
16 want to do everything we can to normalize life for
17 young people as the city moves back to recovery.

18 CHAIR ROSE: Right. Thank you, and I
19 just want to acknowledge that Council Member Eugene
20 has also joined us, and I would now like to ask our
21 Public Advocate if he would like to ask a round of
22 questions?

23 PA WILLIAMS: Thank you so much, Chair
24 Rose. I very much appreciate the opportunity, and
25 once again, thank you for your leadership in all of

2 this, and especially on our summer youth jobs which
3 you helped us to increase to begin with. Chair
4 Chong, just a couple of question. Just first, with
5 NYCHA, Career First NYCHA served about 865 youth in
6 nine developments. Do you know how many young people
7 in NYCHA you plan to serve this year?

8 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Daphne could
9 give you the slot analysis. One thing I will say,
10 and Daphne can elaborate, the big challenge in
11 talking to our partners at the Housing Authority is
12 getting young people to apply. The feedback we got
13 two years ago was they thought he jobs, the
14 guaranteed jobs through Map for Success were some how
15 inferior to the other jobs and they would apply for
16 jobs in the lottery option as opposed to applying for
17 a guaranteed job. Part of that was branding. They
18 had bad experiences in the past, and so we did a
19 focus group and we kind of renamed it Map for
20 Success. So, that was part of us educating people,
21 and then there were other barriers, but I think part
22 of it was changing the perception of the program so
23 that it was not an inferior program, but it was a
24 high-quality program, and Daphne can talk about this
25 year and what we're doing.

2 PA WILLIAMS: Well, also if you have the
3 number of residents in NYCHA who received any job,
4 that's helpful.

5 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Oh, we may have
6 to get back to you, but we can tell you how many
7 young people who live in public housing got summer
8 jobs. Daphne?

9 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Yes, so to the first
10 questions regarding the slot allocation for this
11 year. We're looking at our Career First option to
12 service over 1400 young people and our Map to Success
13 option to serve over 3200, and I will have to get
14 back to you in terms of the total number of NYCHA
15 residents that were served back in last year and we
16 could also share from 2019 as well.

17 PA WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you, and now,
18 to the Summer Youth. Preliminary has it 70,000. You
19 yourself said that routinely 130,000 to 150,000 young
20 people apply. We've been trying to get it to
21 universal, and most people agree that 100,000 would
22 count as universal since everybody who applied would
23 not take the job. Do you support increasing the
24 number of slots, Commissioner?

2 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: If additional
3 money becomes available, I think the history DYCD is
4 that we never turn away money. I remember one
5 summer, I want to say five years ago; the years kind
6 of blend together, I think the Council, before the
7 money was baselined, I think the Council added 30,000
8 jobs, literally last minute and our staff and our
9 non-profit partners stepped up and made it happen.
10 So, if additional money becomes available, we
11 certainly will expand the program, and I think in the
12 history of the program, every year, as far back as I
13 can remember, the City Council has added additional
14 jobs, so we're ready to take on the additional
15 funding.

16 PA WILLIAMS: I will just say I was a
17 Council Member then, and the Council really led the
18 charge in increasing that. The frustration I
19 remember, you weren't particularly assisting us and
20 pushing for those changes. There seemed to be a
21 resistance for you to even ask for additional funds,
22 so I think it would be helpful, if here today ...
23 (crosstalk).

24

25

2 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Well, if I
3 could say, what I say in public and what I say is
4 private is noise, just saying.

5 PA WILLIAMS: Understood, but I think it
6 could be helpful if we can get even some more public
7 statements to push this up to 100,000.

8 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: Well, as I said,
9 if we get additional money, we can definitely support
10 more jobs, rather than city tax levy, rather than
11 stimulus money, you know certainly, as I've said in
12 the past, the sooner we know about funding, the
13 better. Last year, as you know, we didn't have any
14 program funds for summer programs until 15 minutes
15 before the start of the fiscal year, and our staff
16 and our non-profit partners stepped up and did the
17 Summer Bridge Program and 35,000 young people were
18 served. So, certainly, if there's additional money,
19 my only request that it happens sooner than later.
20 It's in the best interest of young people cause
21 they'll have more time to apply, and it's in the best
22 interest of our non-profit partners who can plan.
23 So, I certainly support more jobs if there was more
24 money.

2 PA WILLIAMS: Thank you, and it's
3 important, even now, being that we've done summer
4 remotely and hybrid in the past, part of the
5 hesitation has been getting providers. I think with
6 the new model, that might make things even a little
7 easier, so my hope is that the mayor is listening and
8 puts some more funds in there for these slots. Just
9 two more quick questions. One, I've asked this
10 before, and I (inaudible) but when these cuts are
11 happening, rather it was last year's cuts or this
12 year's cuts, is there any conversation with NYPD or
13 any other agencies about the impact that may have on
14 public safety or crime in the areas where these
15 programs are funded?

16 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, we've been
17 talking to the NYPD for the last three years, I would
18 say, because I think they; we've always recognized
19 the connection between safety and youth programming,
20 and I think they recognize it now, and so budget
21 issues aside, one of the things we've been doing;
22 this happened, I think, last fall, we did a training
23 for the youth coordination officers at the police
24 academy and show them how to use our app, the
25 Discover DYCD, cause we want to make sure young

2 people who are hanging out in the streets not
3 enrolled in our programs, know where their programs
4 are, and so, instead of an officer having a negative
5 interaction with the young person who might be
6 hanging out in the streets, they can have a tool to
7 encourage a positive interaction by connecting to
8 services where there's a community center, where
9 there's an after-school program, and last year, we
10 had a pretty efficient plan to help young people.
11 I'm not sure if we can do it this year. We had a
12 special code where a young person could scan on the
13 code and then get an application into the public
14 housing jobs. I know, Daphne, is that still in the
15 works or is that something we couldn't do this year?

16 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: So, we are in
17 discussions with the NYPD on how to best share
18 information on the application and also working very
19 closely with our NYCHA partners as well as we gear up
20 for the launch of the application.

21 PA WILLIAMS: I'm glad those
22 conversations are happening. It sounds like
23 particular starting last fall. I'd love to drill
24 down more on that. Hopefully, maybe, you know,
25 outside of this hearing, that's a very important

2 conversation. So, my last question is, you know,
3 healing-centered schools and trauma responsive
4 educational programs have been the center of
5 conversations around youth employment. Is the agency
6 working on adopting those models for your program?

7 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, let me
8 start and then Susan Haskell can add in. For the
9 last, I want to say, seven or eight years, we've had
10 a conference for our providers called Healing the
11 Hurt, and it was really to incorporate trauma
12 informed care in all our programs, rather they after-
13 school programs or programs serving homeless youth,
14 and so we've been working with our technical
15 assistance provider; they're called Vibrant. They
16 used to be called The Mental Health Association, but
17 they've rebranded themselves as Vibrant. So, Susan
18 can talk a little bit about that cause she's also our
19 lead on Thrive-related initiatives.

20 SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah, that's exactly
21 right, Bill. I think, leading, you know, leading up
22 to the pandemic, DYCD put in a tremendous amount of
23 focus on mental health resources and thrive really
24 helped, you know, coordinate some of those efforts.
25 So, training for providers who are working directly

2 with young people, training for DYCD staff to help
3 providers who reach out to us and say, "we've got
4 this situation, we're not sure what to do. This
5 young person is in crisis and his family is in
6 crisis". We've offered a more intense tips training,
7 we call it, which provider agencies have sent staff
8 that really digs deeper, and a one-time training goes
9 on for months, again through Vibrant as Bill
10 mentioned, and did I say mental health first aid, of
11 course, has been a priority with the agency and
12 getting those resources to community programs. We
13 recently updated a guide for mental health resources.
14 In other words, we're supporting our providers to
15 have those skills and resources, but there are
16 situations where, you know, a person needs further
17 support, clinical care, etc., and my colleague, Paula
18 and man of our colleagues have put together a
19 resource guide to share with providers so they can,
20 you know, at a glance, have those at their fingertips
21 when it is needed.

22 PA WILLIAMS: Thank you. I'd love to
23 follow up on that as well. Thank you so much
24 Commissioner and company, and thank you Chair Rose.

2 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you. Thank you so
3 much Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. I just want
4 to sort of ask a question about Teens Take Charge.
5 They asked about making available opportunities that
6 could be available to young people who didn't get
7 selected for Summer Youth Employment, and I'm really
8 glad to hear from Commissioner Haskell that we have a
9 resource guide for mental health services. Have you
10 increased your outreach budget so that young people
11 are aware of all of these services that are now
12 available that they could access in the absence of
13 not being able to participate in a structured
14 program? Do you have a budget for outreach or to
15 make these resources that you've developed available
16 to the public?

17 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, let me
18 start and Susan might have to add. This is what, I
19 guess, what I would say under the category of one of
20 the silver linings of the pandemic, that's it's
21 opened up a whole new way of reaching young people
22 through the virtual outreach and so one of the things
23 that I don't think we really talked about, after the
24 George Floyd murder and the protest, I asked my staff
25 to discuss what way can we engage young people to

2 play more of a leadership role in, what I saw, as an
3 emerging new civil rights movement, and so, we turn t
4 our youth leadership of My Brother and Sister's
5 Keeper, which are made of young people who are part
6 of the youth council network at our community centers
7 and they came up with the idea of having a virtual
8 townhall meeting with thousands of young people every
9 other month, and the first topic, I think, was in
10 August and it focused on systemic racism and I think
11 the second one was on mental health issues, and I
12 think that's for us to kind of look at, what kind of
13 resources we can develop. So, one of the main
14 vehicles that we didn't have before the pandemic was
15 the regular townhall meetings that are youth led. In
16 fact, the one that was done, I think this past month,
17 was on entrepreneurship. They pick the topics. We
18 get the speakers; we just help them set it up. So,
19 to answer you question. We've increased our budget
20 by getting more young people involved in doing
21 outreach. Susan, anything you want to add?

22 SUSAN HASKELL: No, Bill. I think you hit
23 it right on the head. It's a resource, in a way, we
24 take for granted, not necessarily, money you see in
25 our budget, but us developing like the skills through

2 technology and through our IT systems, Discover DYCD.
3 Our platform does make a difference.

4 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: And young
5 people, quite frankly, they're not going to read a
6 flier, but they will read a Tweet, or something sent
7 to them on their social media. So, we're trying to
8 reach young people where they're at.

9 CHAIR ROSE: Okay. Again, I'd like to
10 thank our Public Advocate for his questions, and I'd
11 like to acknowledge that we've been joined by Council
12 Members Louis, and Council Member Riley, and now,
13 Committee Counsel, if you would open the floor to our
14 Council Committee colleagues for questions.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
16 Chair Rose. We will now hear questions from Council
17 Member Chin, followed by Council Member Rosenthal.
18 Council Member Chin.

19 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

20 CM CHIN: Thank you, Chair, and thank you
21 for your leadership, Commissioner Chong. It's good
22 to see you. I know that in the, I've been on the
23 Youth Service Committee for the, all my years in the
24 City Council, starting in 2010, and I have seen the
25 progress, and especially in this last year with this

2 Administration. I mean, the first four years was
3 fighting again trying to restore all the cuts to all
4 the wonderful programs, and I'm glad that we are
5 making progress. My question, my questions, first
6 one is on the SYEP program. I know that, I truly
7 want to thank your staff and all the providers for
8 really stepping up during the pandemic to offer
9 programs to our youth, and we're very happy to see
10 that the program was restored so that we don't have
11 to start from zero like last year. So, with the
12 70,000 slots, we still want to fight for more, so I
13 think that, I mean, when you say you're optimistic,
14 we're optimistic and we want to make sure that the
15 providers are sort of prepared when the stimulus
16 money comes down, we will make sure we fight, you
17 know, for some of that money to go into the youth
18 program. So, within the SYEP program of 70,000 right
19 now, how many are allocated for the lottery and how
20 many are designated, you know, for special programs
21 that youth will have a guaranteed job? That is my
22 first question.

23 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Daphne, Daphne
24 can give you that number, but I think the lottery is

2 45,000 and the rest is targeted programs. Is that
3 correct, Daphne?

4 DAPHNE MONTANEZ: Yes, that's correct.

5 CM CHIN: Yes, I think, when we want more
6 slots, we really designate it because, you know,
7 lottery is like hit and miss for a lot of the youth,
8 and especially, you know, let's say every year, you
9 know, we're like 130,000 to 150,000 apply, and that's
10 why we want to make sure that we strive for
11 universal, that every kid who is interested in a
12 summer youth job or a summer youth program should be
13 able to get one, and I'm also happy to see that, you
14 know, summer camps, SONYC, COMPASS, they're restored.
15 I want to ask, the new need that you put in, the 57
16 million for Learning Bridge, what is that gonna,
17 that's that program and how many kids are going to be
18 served?

19 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Susan can give
20 you an answer to that.

21 SUSAN HASSELL: Yeah, I'll also rely on
22 my colleague Jagdeen to fill in some gaps on the
23 funding part. That is learning lab program that we
24 ramped up to provide childcare programming on the
25 alternate days of a student who is enrolled in hybrid

2 learning. So, those contracts were, you know, ramped
3 up as you know in the fall and we're pretty well set
4 at this time in terms of the established programs
5 that we have and I think, again, I defer Jagdeen,
6 we're still working out the revenue sources on that,
7 but we are ensuring that we haven't enough funding to
8 provide the reimbursement the provider need.

9 JAGDEEN PHANOR: That's correct, Susan.
10 No, you're 100 percent correct. The 57 million that
11 was added to the budget matches the 70 million that's
12 there for learning labs. So, all total, we have
13 about 127 million dollars devoted to learning labs.

14 CM CHIN: Okay, and then my final
15 question, what is the justification for cutting back
16 on, you know, the SONYC program, the middle school
17 kids? I mean, everybody talks about how important it
18 is for teenagers to be engaged and we have gotten so
19 much positive reaction from parents and kids to the
20 middle school after-school programs and summer
21 programs. So, what is the justification for cutting
22 that program?

23 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: I don't think
24 there was a justification. I think, as I said
25 earlier, in last January, when the preliminary budget

2 was coming out, things did not look good. The State
3 was taking about billions of dollars of cuts it was
4 going to pass on to local cities and municipalities.
5 The City's revenue situation was fluid, and we didn't
6 know what the American Rescue Plan would look like.
7 Now, that it's not, you know, it's in front of us now
8 and it's going to be signed into law tomorrow, I
9 think there's more confidence that there's
10 flexibility in looking at restorations as the budget
11 director said during his testimony last week.

12 CM CHIN: So, you're confident or
13 optimistic that we can restore this program back?

14 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: I'm confident.
15 It's my number one priority because as you know,
16 we're relatively ... (Crosstalk).

17 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

18 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: This year.

19 CM CHIN: That's good, I'm glad to hear
20 that because I think, you know, we have made a lot of
21 progress in this last eight years under Chair Rose
22 and we've continued to advocate more for our youth
23 and see a lot of them, you know, like Teens Take
24 Charge, they're getting more active and I'm really
25 happy to hear because of the virtual platform, that

2 we're able to reach more young people. I really want
3 to thank DYCD that your staff, you know, and the
4 providers have been so creative during the pandemic
5 to make sure that our kids are engaged, so thank you.

6 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: If you want to
7 know, learn more about the townhall meetings, I
8 believe we tape them or ... (crosstalk).

9 CM CHIN: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, I'm the
11 last person to talk about a tape, but I think there
12 is a Youtube page. So, they're very interesting
13 because its youth led. It's the young people talking.
14 There's no voice for adults, and it's interesting to
15 hear. I mean, they pick the topics. So, early on
16 when they pick the topic mental health resources, I
17 was surprised, but now, it's clear. They understood
18 what was happening to their peers and we see all
19 these stories about suicides, and it makes sense of
20 how isolation has affected young people. So, I
21 believe it's our Youtube channel, but you know,
22 someone will get back to you, Anthony Miller will get
23 back to you if that's the case. But I think that ...
24 (crosstalk).

2 CM CHIN: Yeah, please, please share with
3 the Council, I think, all my colleagues probably
4 would be interested in, you know, seeing it. Thank
5 you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
7 Council Member Chin. We will now turn to Council
8 Member Rosenthal for her questions.

9 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

10 CM ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much, and
11 welcome Committee Counsel to your first hearing.
12 You're doing a bang-up job. So, Chair Rose, it's
13 always great to see you. (Background talk). You know
14 what, this my computer on, hang one second. So, I
15 found the, sorry, I accidently clicked on.

16 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Listen to it
17 after the hearing.

18 CM ROSENTHAL: I will, I will.

19 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: I think there's
20 three or four of them.

21 CM ROSENTHAL: Just so you know, sir,
22 that they're all there and ... (crosstalk).

23 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Okay.

24 CM ROSENTHAL: And they look fabulous, so
25 I'm excited to find them. Chair Rose, it's great to

2 see you. Thank you as always during this incredible
3 hearing. Commissioner, I'm heartbroken to hear that
4 you will be leaving public; I hope you're not leaving
5 public service. I've admired your work for a really
6 long time.

7 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Thank you.

8 CM ROSENTHAL: And you know, I really
9 appreciate all your good service. I wanted to follow
10 up first on something Council Member Chin just said.
11 You know, you're hopeful that the SONYC will be added
12 back in, may I ask, would it be possible for there,
13 to decrease the amount of drama around it, could you
14 let us know when you know that it will be back in
15 rather than us finding out when exact comes out? You
16 know, as you say, they're signing it tomorrow and I'm
17 sure, we'll have a better sense of the numbers pretty
18 quickly, if you can, and you can share it with the
19 Committee, I think that would be awfully helpful
20 because it would help us figure out how to spend our
21 time for what we're advocating for.

22 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: No, I
23 understand, I mean, you know, I've always advocated
24 with OMB that the sooner the better because summer
25 programs take time. That's why with the summer job's

2 program, we convene people in January, that's why for
3 summer camps, we start the plan in April because we
4 know, to do a quality program, it takes time, and you
5 can't plan if you don't have money, and so last year
6 as short of a miracle thanks to the advocacy by the
7 Council, you know, I know 15 minutes before the start
8 of the fiscal year and people worked night and day,
9 our staff and our providers to get it off the ground.
10 I don't want to repeat that. I don't think anyone
11 wants to repeat that.

12 CM ROSENTHAL: And you've led me right
13 into my next question. I appreciate that. And that
14 is frankly about the treatment of the non-profits and
15 how we show our appreciation to them for doing all
16 this work, particular in this case at the absolute
17 last minute. Do you happen to know how your non-
18 profits are doing with the loss of the indirect rate
19 that was sort of pull out from underneath all of us,
20 the rug was pulled out, so, I know a lot of non-
21 profits that were counting on that money, and then
22 you know, lost it?

23 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: I think that
24 everyone who applied for it was eligible. Maybe

2 Jagdeen can give some sense of the timeline of who
3 got indirect and who didn't?

4 CM ROSENTHAL: Great.

5 JAGDEEN PHANOR: Sure. Hi, Council Member
6 Rosenthal. I'm going to ask that Nevita Bailey also
7 be unmuted because she has been leading the charge on
8 my team regarding the ICR. Nevita, are you live?

9 NEVITA BAILEY: Yes, I am. Thank you.
10 Hi, so good morning. So, DYCD in partnership with
11 MOX IT team has been working to ensure that providers
12 would be able to get access to it, and so, we were
13 not necessarily in charge of the outreach (inaudible)
14 done all the communication and partnership with MOX,
15 but providers have the opportunity to enroll in the
16 entry and so access the funding and so that entry
17 closed December 31, but, you know, there was a lot of
18 outreach repeatedly to non-profits to enter into it,
19 and so for those who have entered into it, DYCD is
20 moving forward with processing those who are
21 involved.

22 CM ROSENTHAL: All right. I'd love to
23 explore this a little bit more with you Ms. Bailey
24 because I do, I hear what you're saying, and I know

2 there was some level of increase or indirect rate
3 that providers ... (crosstalk).

4 STG. POLITE: Time expired.

5 CM ROSENTHAL: Chair, may I continue a
6 little? I think that was a yes.

7 CHAIR ROSE: Yes, yes. You can finish.

8 CM ROSENTHAL: Thank you. But the
9 increase they were allowed to get was tiny, and they
10 had been promised a much bigger increase and between
11 the Executive budget last year and adaption, all that
12 money was withdrawn from the budget, so the non-
13 profits had expected to get the money we thought they
14 were getting the money, but the Administration in the
15 11th hour just yanked it. So, I guess what I'm
16 asking is just that you, if you could, yes, they got
17 a small amount and that's great that you're helping
18 them apply, but you know, it might be helpful to
19 check in to see how they're doing because they lost a
20 lot of money they expected to get.

21 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: So, my
22 suggestion is to have the conversation more
23 productive, is to probably engage the Mayor's Office
24 of Contract Services ... (crosstalk).

25 CM ROSENTHAL: Oh yeah.

2 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Because they're
3 the decision makers on this. I know that the
4 indirect thing varies from agency to agency. Some
5 have a very high indirect rate. Some are already at
6 the 10 percent, so it's more a nuance conversation,
7 so we can certainly let MOX, and OMB know that you
8 want to have this conversation, but they're the ones
9 who made decisions about the deadline and all the
10 things that I know created confusion.

11 CM ROSENTHAL: Yeah, no, you're spot on
12 right about that. Absolutely, but I'm hopeful that
13 the echos at each of the agencies, the contract
14 people who interact with the non-profit have a firm
15 understanding of this really unfortunately thing that
16 happened so they can help guide their agencies, their
17 non-profits through this experience which is super
18 confusing, and all done at the last minute, you're
19 right.

20 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: In the middle
21 of a pandemic.

22 CM ROSENTHAL: Nice, yeah.

23 NEVITA BAILEY: So, we understand the
24 concern and the challenges and that some CBOs are
25 struggling to navigate through all of it and so, what

2 we do is we try to ensure that we inform our staff
3 internally with the policy so that they're best
4 informed so they can be able to provide assistance
5 where needed, but as the Commissioner mentioned,
6 regarding the funding of it, DYCD has no role.

7 CM ROSENTHAL: Yep, Chair Rose, may I
8 ask(crosstalk), thank you. Chair Rose, may I ask
9 just one more question? You can say no.

10 CHAIR ROSE? Yes, you can quickly.

11 CM ROSENTHAL: Okay, thank you, Chair.
12 I'm wandering about the learning labs program and
13 what experience you have had with serving children
14 with disabilities. We've heard from multiple sources
15 that that has been a real challenge for families of
16 children with disabilities, and one of the issues was
17 that the non-profits said look, we're just not
18 equipped to serve someone with these types of needs,
19 and supposedly, the Administration said they might
20 had funding so that non-profits could, you know, get
21 the resources they need or somehow they were working
22 in it, and I was just wandering what your experience
23 has been with that?

24 COMMISSION BILL CHONG: So, I'll start
25 and then Susan can give you the latest update. I

2 think the Learning Lab initiative as you know was
3 literally launched in a matter of weeks, so a lot of
4 things were rushed to get the program up and running.
5 We kind of did, on a similar scale, in two months,
6 what UPK did in 18 months in the middle of the
7 pandemic. So, certainly there were areas we could
8 have improved and helping young people with special
9 needs was one of them, but I think we've begun to
10 address this issue with the help of the Department of
11 Education. So, Susan, do you want to give an update?

12 SUSAN HASKELL: Absolutely, and my
13 colleague Tracy Caldron is with us today. She's been
14 really heroic in leading these efforts. I want to
15 say to start that we got applications from a roughly
16 proportionate number of students with IEPs and 504s,
17 and our providers are very experienced and
18 knowledgeable about working with young people with
19 special needs and many young people were served with
20 reasonable accommodations in those programs. You
21 know, when we initially ramped up those programs, we
22 did not have all the supports that the District 75
23 and other community schools have for young people and
24 so, I think, you there, there were roughly 50, you
25 know, Tracy can correct me if I am wrong, young

2 families who needed supports beyond, for example a
3 paraprofessional who could be one-on-one which wasn't
4 part of you know, the service model of learning lab
5 initially. Department of Education has been working
6 very closely with us on individual families to work
7 out those specific needs and for us to try to do what
8 I think has never been done before, which is transfer
9 some of those robust resources to Learning Lab where
10 those young people can't be provided five days in-
11 school, so I think the first effort was when it was
12 brought to our attention. We'll let's see what we
13 can do to get that young person back to the resources
14 they're comfortable and familiar with, and if not, my
15 colleague working closely with DOE has been doing
16 that on a case-by-case basis.

17 CM ROSENTHAL: Do you know if funding is
18 added for it?

19 SUSAN HASKELL: No, those resources are
20 coming from the Department of Education directly.

21 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: It's, it's
22 incline.

23 CM ROSENTHAL: But I mean, does DOE add
24 funding for the non-profit to have, for example, one-
25 on-one para?

2 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: It's inclined
3 services so they assign one of their people to a
4 learning lab. So, there is no exchange of money...
5 (crosstalk).

6 CM ROSENTHAL: I see. So, there's no ...
7 (crosstalk).

8 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: But it's
9 inclined services.

10 CM ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I got it. That's
11 rough. Look, it's all rough. Thank you for all your
12 work. Thank you, Chair Rose for your patience.

13 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you so much, Council
14 Member Rosenthal. Are there any other questions from
15 colleagues?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: It does
17 not appear that we have any other questions. So, if
18 you have additional questions, Chair Rose, feel free.

19 CHAIR ROSE: Okay, thank you. I want to
20 thank my colleagues for asking those insightful
21 questions, and I would like if the DYCD could let us
22 know in advance of the townhall meetings because some
23 of us would like to participate, not to talk.

24 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Listen, not
25 talk.

2 CHAIR ROSE: But we would love to listen.

3 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Okay.

4 CHAIR ROSE: You know, to our youth
5 leaders and get it, you know, fresh off the presses.
6 So, I want to circle back to Council Member Chin and
7 Council Member Rosenthal's questions about Learning
8 Bridges and now, can the agency confirm, can you
9 confirm that the Federal Stimulus CARES Act funds
10 applied for this program will cover the cost of
11 programming and be drawn down regardless of actually
12 enrollment outcomes?

13 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: That's a
14 question I think OMB is going to have to answer
15 because the devil is in the details and so we don't
16 know what the legislation says specifically. I'm
17 sure they will have to review it and determine what
18 stimulus money can be applied and what can't. You
19 know, in 2009, the last time there was a Federal
20 Stimulus plan, DYCD received money across the board
21 in stimulus funds and there were all kinds of strings
22 attached to it. So, I don't want to speak out of
23 turn. I think OMB needs to do an analysis to see
24 what is reimbursable and what isn't.

2 CHAIR ROSE: Will you advise them as to
3 what the need is so that ... (crosstalk).

4 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Well,
5 certainly... (crosstalk).

6 CHAIR ROSE: Apply the appropriate
7 amounts?

8 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Yeah, certainly
9 the need is clear. I mean, I think Learning Labs is
10 literally one of these programs that there was no
11 dedicated funding stream. We've kind of had to pull
12 it together from different places. So, I don't think
13 need is the issue. The issue is what will the
14 American Rescue Plan funding allow us to do, and that
15 I don't know the answer. I think OMB read through
16 the weeds to find out what we can do, but you know,
17 I'm hopeful, but again, OMB will have the final word
18 on that.

19 CHAIR ROSE: Do you have any plans of
20 expanding the programming and have you discussed
21 continuing the program into fiscal year 2022?

22 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: To my
23 knowledge, the Learning Labs program will end this
24 fiscal year as the mayor has announced that the goal
25 is to return to in-person instruction at schools, and

2 the whole premise of Learning Labs was predicated on
3 young people doing hybrid learning, and so since
4 hybrid learning will no longer be happening in the
5 new school year, I assume that Learning Bridges won't
6 be needed.

7 CHAIR ROSE: When will we know that? I
8 mean, that's not a definite. I know we're trying to
9 get children back to schools, but are we sure that
10 September we're going to see full enrollment, in-
11 person enrollment in school?

12 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: That's a
13 question that DOE can answer, but I know what the
14 mayor announced is the goal to get to in-person
15 learning back on line in the fall, so, but again the
16 Department of Education will be the final say on
17 that.

18 CHAIR ROSE: Okay, and I know our public
19 is really excited to testify, so I have one more
20 question, and then I'll submit to you some of the
21 other questions that we have for answers, just in the
22 interest of time, but I'd like to know about hazard
23 pay. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the
24 administration allowed providers to make contract
25 amendments after March 2020 when critical area was to

2 include more pay, effectively hazard pay for
3 providers working on the front line of the pandemic
4 response. These increases expired in July 2020 and
5 have not been renewed. Will the administration
6 include hazard pay or the ability to providers to
7 amend contract in fiscal year 2022?

8 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: This is
9 something we're going to have check OMB on because
10 they, as you know, they decide on the money, but I'm
11 not aware of any plan currently to renew the hazard
12 pay renewal. I don't know if Jagdeen has anything
13 more to add.

14 CHAIR ROSE: Okay, well, I want to Thank
15 the Administration for your testimony here today.
16 Commissioner Chong, you've had a long story and very
17 eventful, you know tenure with the Youth Services,
18 with DYCD and you know, it's been a pleasure to work
19 with you. I know it's been like a husband/wife
20 relationship. We had our fights and our arguments.
21 I am sure that you've been, I know that you've always
22 had the best intention for the youth in New York
23 City. I'm really glad to see that we're on the same
24 page. There's no need for a divorce, that we are
25 amicably leaving a city service at the same time, and

2 so I just want to thank you for all that you're doing
3 and to, one last, fight is to just make sure that you
4 get SONYC restored and Work, Learn, Grow so that all
5 of our young people can be serviced. I'm really
6 going to miss you. I hope that this isn't the last
7 Committee meeting hearing that we actually have a
8 chance to talk.

9 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Well, I want to
10 thank the Council for the support over the years.
11 You know, the advocacy from the outside has always
12 been helpful to making sure funding got added to our
13 budget. You know, DYCD is one of those agencies, the
14 programs we support are very popular and they're
15 needed, but we're not legally mandated in anything we
16 do, so the advocacy is always important, and we're
17 always subject to what the economy looks like and
18 what the priorities of any Mayor might be. You know,
19 this Mayor has put a priority on youth services and
20 that's why our budget has more than doubled during
21 this last eight years, but who knows what the next
22 Mayor, what his/her priorities might be, and as I
23 said to you last week, you know, the next Mayor,
24 whoever he/she may be will inherit a city that will
25 face greater poverty and greater inequity, and DYCD

2 is one of the few agencies whose mission to fight
3 poverty and it's my hope, as we mark the 25th
4 anniversary of this agency, we're be doing something
5 in the fall, probably a video. I'm not sure if we'll
6 be doing anything in-person to mark the 25th
7 anniversary of this agency which no one thought we
8 would do the things we do now. I idea of putting all
9 these different programs under one roof was in some
10 ways, an accident. I read the New York Times story
11 back in 1996, it was budget saving move to merge the
12 community development agency and the Department of
13 Youth Services to save money in the back-office
14 operations. That was how we were born, and so I
15 think we've taken it to a new level to focus on
16 really fighting poverty and to have a collective
17 impact approach so that the programs that operate in
18 the same neighborhood work together to help lift the
19 quality of life for that community so that they don't
20 operate in silos, so that's hopefully the last big
21 thing on my bucket list before I sign off, but thank
22 you again for all of your support.

23 CHAIR ROSE: Yes and thank you and all of
24 the staff for their commitment to youth in New York
25 City, and now, I'm going to turn it back over to the

2 moderator to gain some control and to call on the
3 next panel.

4 COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG: Thank you.

5 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you all, bye.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
7 Chair Rose. Thank you for the Administration for
8 testifying. We will now begin the public testimony
9 portion of this hearing. First, I would like to
10 remind everyone that I will call people up in
11 individuals in panels. Once your name is called, a
12 member of our staff will unmute you and you'll begin
13 your testimony once the Sergeant of Arms sets the
14 clock and gives you the queue. All testimony will be
15 limited to three minutes. Remember that there is a
16 few second delay when you are unmuted before we can
17 hear you. Please wait for the Segreant at Arms to
18 announce that you may begin before starting your
19 testimony, and the first panel of public testimony in
20 the order of speaking will be Samir Ghimire, Shannaya
21 Campbell, Ryan LaBarrie, and Michael Rivadeneyra.
22 So, I will now call on Samir Ghimire to speak.

23 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

24 SAMIR GHIMIRE: Thank you. First and
25 foremost, I will thank all of you for giving me this

2 platform to share my experiences with all of you. My
3 name is Samir Ghimire and I'm a 16-year-old from
4 Flushing YMCA. Let me first say that when people ask
5 me what are some things that make me the person I am
6 today, it's very hard to pick one, but if I had to
7 choose, I would say 75% YMCA and 25% is because of my
8 personality. The Y has given me so many experiences
9 like climbing a 50-foot giant ladder to being able to
10 go to city hall, and even going to Washington D.C. to
11 talk to our local Congress people. All these
12 experiences I've had is because of the teen programs,
13 like Teen Take the City, Leader's Club, and World
14 Scholars. Because of these opportunities, I was able
15 to realize how important my voice really is and
16 speaking about things you're passionate about is not
17 a luxury, but rather a necessity. I think we can all
18 agree that we miss our lives pre-COVID, rather that
19 was not wearing a mask, to having family dinners with
20 our loved ones, but most important, just living our
21 normal lives. For me personally, when the pandemic
22 hit, the main thing I missed was going to the Y to
23 see my friends and counselors. When I was meeting
24 with them on a daily basis, I never realized how
25 important it was for me, but like all things, when

2 something is taken away from us, we finally
3 understand true value. For me personally, the Y is
4 essentially my second home, and, in a sense, I get to
5 truly be myself, make mistakes, and also have a place
6 where I can try new things so I wouldn't be afraid to
7 go outside my comfort zone so I can be ready for the
8 real world. My dad even sometimes jokingly tells me
9 when I come home from the Y, that I should just take
10 a sleeping bag over there and ask them if I can stay
11 there just to limit the travel. Now, before the
12 pandemic, I thought in order for me to do these
13 things, it would have to be in-person. Don't get me
14 wrong when I say it doesn't feel the same, but
15 nothing does anymore, so you just have to adapt to
16 your surroundings. At first, it was a challenge
17 because we were looking at our screens all day for
18 school, and then have to do the same thing for the Y,
19 but the solution is after school ends, let's take a
20 small break, rather than meditating or going out
21 for a walk so you can feel refreshed and ready to go.
22 There are also some perks to remote programming like
23 not having to travel at all, being able to see so
24 many more people, and also having a new experience,
25 so God-forbid, if we were to have to deal with

2 something like this again, we, as teens and the Y
3 will be ready to tackle any obstacles in our way so
4 all students can have a safe space that they can go
5 to be themselves and get other resources that they
6 need. At the end of the day, what I want all of you
7 to take away from my speech is that without the Y, I
8 wouldn't have been able to discover myself as a
9 person and the Y also gave me a platform to share my
10 voice with all of you. It is vital for us to
11 understand that the YMCA experience should not be
12 taken for granted, and we should do as much as
13 possible to give students resources like the Y, so
14 instead of just going home from school to play video
15 games, they can go to a safe space with their peers
16 and they can share ideas and perspectives on so many
17 things like homework to sports, to may be even
18 politics. For me, personally, without the YMCA, I
19 would feel like I wouldn't be the person I am today..
20 (crosstalk).

21 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

22 SAMIR GHIMIRE: Is incomplete, but I
23 wouldn't know how much of an impact my voice can have
24 on others, but also understand how people's voices

2 will have such a big impact on myself and how I see
3 things in society. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
5 for your testimony. I'll now call on Shannya
6 Campbell.

7 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

8 SHANNYA CAMPBELL: Good morning everyone.
9 My name is Shannya Campbell. I am 15 years old and a
10 student at the Fieldston School. I'm here to talk
11 about my experience with the YMCA. I'd like to start
12 off by saying thank you for this opportunity. In the
13 words of Tony Robins, "Communication is power".
14 Those who have mastered its effect use can change
15 their own experience of world as the world pertains
16 to them. However, to effectively communicate, we
17 must understand that there's a difference in how each
18 person perceives this role. So, I ask as you listen
19 to this testimony, keep an open mind and heart.
20 I've been enrolled in the YMCA since first grade, but
21 extremely active in teen programming since the 6th
22 grade. I can confidently say I would not be the
23 person you see here today without it. I started
24 debate in 5th grade due to a push from my YMCA
25 supervisor. I found a passion of mine that enables

2 me to be who I am, a transparent, strong-willed,
3 confident leader all thanks to the YMCA. Over time,
4 it's become my home away from home, and when given
5 the opportunity to shed light on the impact it's had
6 on me, I couldn't decline. Now, let's get into
7 programming itself. The YMCA typically has many
8 options to engage, education, structure, and
9 strengthen the youth. My personal favorite is being
10 Leader's Club and Teens Take the City. The Leader's
11 Club is exactly what it sounds like. It's a club
12 that meets weekly, heavily focused on the discussion
13 with the aims to bring out the qualities of a leader
14 and its participants. Teens Take the City also known
15 as TTC, is a program focused on engagement and youth
16 empowerment. Programs like these are crucial to
17 students now more than ever. Everyone here knows
18 that the circumstances we are experiencing are
19 anything but normal, but if there's anything that is
20 great, is normalcy. The YMCA is that for a lot of
21 teens, but it could do so much more if it was able to
22 run similar to how it did pre-COVID-19 with a higher
23 budget. Currently, there are some programs run
24 remotely via Zoom, but it's not the same. Not all
25 have the ability to host remote meeting and not all

2 students have the ability to join them. At the
3 beginning of the school year, I, myself, didn't know
4 what to expect from programming. After all, just one
5 day after I attended by Y, it shut down and has yet
6 to reopen for things other than Learning Labs. Yet,
7 I was relieved and filled with hope when I found out
8 I would at least have TTC, and it not only values my
9 voice, but keeps me critically thinking and involved.
10 Outside all of this, the experiences gain from non-
11 profits like the Y are unlike any other. It has
12 become essential. How many teens can say they have
13 traveled to D.C. to speak with Senators, meet with
14 Council Members, and have weekend out of the year to
15 retreat and join nature and grow like mindful teens,
16 not enough. Programs like these will never not be
17 needed, so I urge that you recognize their importance
18 and help to provide more. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
20 for your testimony. I'll now be calling on Ryan
21 LaBarrie to testify.

22 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

23 RYAN LABARRIE: Good morning. My name is
24 Ryan LaBarrie, and I am a 16-year-old from Flatbush,
25 Brooklyn, New York. First, I can start by saying how

2 thankful I am that we have organizations such as the
3 YMCA of Greater New York. I began going to the YMCA
4 in the 6th grade. I began to attend the YMCA in the
5 9th grade. Well, I actually began to participate in
6 the YMCA in the 10th grade. During my time at the Y,
7 I've had the opportunity to participate in teen
8 programs such as Teens Take the City, a program based
9 around city government, but in a mock format.
10 Leader's Club, a program that empowers teens to
11 understand the role as a future leader, and Scholars,
12 a program geared around participants for the
13 contemporary work that's ahead of us and future
14 preparations. Through all these programs, I found
15 myself gaining something that I never thought would
16 gain as a result of participating. This being a new
17 mindset. I've been able to strengthen myself as a
18 person and being able to express myself in areas of
19 public speaking and building long lasting bonds with
20 people that I may have never met if it weren't for
21 the YMCA. I've also been blessed to have the
22 opportunity to visit my Congressman in D.C., travel
23 to Washington State to study life in the water and to
24 sadly witness the YMCA experience financial hardships
25 during the pandemic. Normally, I would attend the

2 Flatbush YMCA since it's closer to me; however, due
3 to hardship with the branch, I've been forced, well
4 not forced, but I had to relocate to the north
5 Brooklyn branch which is a bit further. I
6 occasionally attend remote but find myself taking a
7 job more often since being remote does not provide
8 that same atmosphere that I was in need of. I think
9 many teens can understand the idea that virtual
10 programs in education in itself, does not always
11 provide that same benefit we seek for personal
12 happiness. The YMCA is safe haven for many. Not
13 being able to access it, can be a threat to one's
14 personal stability. I just wanted to let you know
15 that a Harvard study reported that young people were
16 heaviest hit during the pandemic with mental impacts.
17 They reported the highest incidence of loneliness,
18 anxiety, and depression. Personally, not being in
19 school doesn't always bring happiness especially when
20 you child of (inaudible) parents have had it way
21 harder than you have, and you have tried to push
22 yourself onto doing more rigorous activities and
23 rigorous workloads. Finally, (inaudible) was hard
24 for me and I know that if not for the YMCA, I would
25 not be able to always stay calm and productive or

2 doing all I can to achieve all I was. With full
3 transparency, I'd still be stressing to (inaudible)
4 and studying for the SATs if not for all the
5 resources that were given to me through the YMCA.
6 Not only has the YMCA been able to grow upon my
7 impact as a person, as a student, but also has
8 allowed me to find my way towards a future path. As
9 you've heard today, and will continue to hear, this
10 is not only a testament of how a non-profit such as
11 the YMCA have helped me around the barriers, how it's
12 helped teens and young people all across the five
13 boroughs. The YMCA is not only a gym, it..
14 (crosstalk).

15 STG. POLITE: Time expired.

16 RYAN LABARRIE: For all teens across NYC,
17 and all people across NYC. With this being said,
18 (inaudible) should have wanted to continue their
19 impact and hope with that with the YMCA being one of
20 such spheres, we are able to overcome. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
22 for your testimony. I will now call on Michael
23 Rivadeneyra to testify.

24 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

2 MICHAEL RIVADENEYRA: Thank you, Chair
3 Rose and Members of the Youth Services Committee for
4 the opportunity to testify today. My name is Michael
5 Rivadeneyra, Senior Director of Government Relations
6 for the YMCA of Greater New York. I am glad you had
7 the opportunity to hear Shannya, Ryan, and Samir,
8 three inspirational youth who have participated in
9 several Y after school programs funded by DYCD,
10 indirectly by the Council like Teens Take the City.
11 Hearing the voices those directly impacted by these
12 decisions should be the ones heard and listened to.
13 So, I will not take much time, and I'll summarize my
14 testimony. I want to recognize that 2020 brought us
15 two pandemics. One that we have lived with for a
16 long time, racial injustice, and COVID-19 which has
17 taken many friends and family from us. Throughout
18 these pandemics, our youth have shown us how
19 resilient they are; however, we should not take for
20 granted the resiliency, which is what the FY22
21 preliminary budget does. The mayor speaks of a
22 recovery for all, but the FY22 preliminary budget
23 neglects our reviews in the recovery mandate he has
24 instituted by completely eliminating summer SONYC. A
25 recovery for all must include all our youth from zero

2 to young adult. Our youth need stability and
3 consistency like the rest of us. We need fully
4 funded and more investments in age-appropriate youth
5 programming to keep our youth engaged, to re-engage
6 them after a traumatic year, and to give them
7 opportunities to grow and succeed in life. COVID-19
8 response initiatives such as Learning Lab and
9 Learning Bridges should be extended through the
10 summer and into the next school year to support DOE's
11 effort to address student learning loss as well as
12 their operational needs for space to safely
13 accommodate learning. In order to successfully serve
14 our youth and families this summer, and the next
15 school year, providers need to know that programs are
16 fully funded by April, and we need to know as soon as
17 possible, DYCD's and DOE's expectation of providers
18 along with guidance on how to deliver these services
19 safely as we transition into more in-person
20 programming. Chair Rose, thank you for being an
21 outstanding advocate for our youth.

22 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you, Michael. Thank
23 you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
25 for your testimony. The second panel of public

2 testimony in order of speaking with be Jorge Morales,
3 Maryam Choudhury, Carmen Lopez Villamil, Tatiana
4 Aguello, and Sara Silverman. I will now call on
5 Jorge Morales.

6 STG. PEREZ: Before we begin, I think
7 Council Member Rosenthal is trying to get our
8 attention.

9 CM ROSENTHAL: My apologies.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Go ahead.

11 CM ROSENTHAL: No worries at all. I just
12 wanted to say hello Michael and all the students.
13 Teen Take Charge and Teens Take the City are some of
14 my favorite groups. When we were in-person, I always
15 loved welcoming the Teens Take the City class to the
16 chambers of the city hall and enjoyed seeing you all
17 debate resolutions that you had prepared and then
18 seeing how the votes have turned out. They surprised
19 me, and I just want to share with you one that
20 surprised me that solely stuck with me which is
21 rather or not we should have the screens in schools
22 that security things that you walk through...
23 (crosstalk).

24 CHAIR ROSE: Metal detectors.

2 CM ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Chair Rose.

3 So, and I was sure this was going to be slam dunk
4 that we should eliminate them, and I heard both sides
5 talk about it and then the vote was pretty
6 dispositive that we should keep the metal detectors,
7 that students did not feel safe. Now, that really
8 has put, that has really made me think, and think
9 twice about what I believe should happen compared to
10 what those who have lived experience think should
11 happen, and it's a great reminder for people to be,
12 for adults to be a little bit humble and step back
13 and listen more. It's helped me serve better as a
14 Council Member what I've learned from you. So, I
15 really want to congratulate you for participating in
16 the program to all the students, and hope that, you
17 know, you continue to participate in civic ways as
18 things move forward, and I'm excited, and well,
19 actually, I won't be there, but I hope you're back in
20 the chambers next spring debating on the floor again.
21 Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair Rose for the
22 minute to say that.

23 CHAIR ROSE: Yeah, that's fine, and I
24 too, want to add that I am so proud. I listen to the
25 young people last night at the rally, and they were

2 articulate, they were passionate, they know what they
3 want, they know what they need, and I want to thank
4 you, you know, for being the impotence behind the
5 fight, you know, and I want to thank all of the adult
6 leaders and the Committee for change, for all of the
7 groups, all of the participants, and Michael, I
8 didn't make the CCRV meeting last night because I
9 just was so enamored with our young people that I
10 thought that was the place I needed to be. So, thank
11 you all. Thank you and thank all of the young people
12 in advance of their testimony, thank you for being
13 here, and waiting so long to testify. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
15 thank you, Chair Rose as well. We will now continue
16 with this second panel, and I will call on Jorge
17 Morales.

18 STG. PEREZ: Time starts now.

19 JORGE MORALES: Good afternoon to the
20 Council's Youth Service Committee and to all of those
21 watching this hearing. My name is Jorge Morales. I
22 am a Junior at the University of Rochester, and I am
23 also a Teen Take Charge alum and have been one of the
24 leaders working on our SYEP advocacy. Today, I am
25 here, once again, to testify in regards to the summer

2 youth employment program and to other crucial youth
3 programming. Over the past couple of weeks, Teen
4 Take Charge and other stake holders have been meeting
5 to discuss the road to universal SYEP. Now, more
6 than ever, it seems like New York City is getting
7 close to providing universal SYEP. Last week, Teens
8 Take Charge had Mayoral candidates committed to
9 universal SYEP within the first year of their
10 Administration, that being 2022. This is all really
11 exciting and long overdue, but we look forward to
12 incorporating more youth in the planning process of
13 this program. With that being said, Teens Take
14 Charge has a responsibility to advocate for the
15 youth. I do not have to remind you all of how bad
16 the COVID-19 has devastated New York City's youth.
17 Many have been extremely disconnected and it is
18 because of this, that we expect an overwhelming
19 demand for paid-skilled building opportunities. Now,
20 more than ever, we need a robust plan that provides
21 youth with paid opportunities to advance academically
22 and professionally. I want to echo Public Advocate
23 Williams call for more than 70,000 slots. We believe
24 that with a little creativity, we can serve can
25 serve, at least, 100,000 youth this year. How do we

2 do it? We believe that there is a lot of untapped
3 capacity in our high school and colleges which will
4 already be offering summer classes to record numbers
5 of youth. Let's give our schools who know their
6 students best the chance to provide enriching paid
7 school-site internship and career readiness
8 programming. In addition to DOE and CUNY, youth non-
9 profit and providers who do not currently host SYEP
10 could help add the needed capacity for these
11 additional spots. We appreciate the Council's
12 commitment for universal SYEP, but the commitment has
13 to go beyond words. We need to make tangible
14 progress towards that goal this year. We hope that
15 you all are responsive to what the youth wants,
16 deserves, and most importantly needs. Young people
17 just experienced the worst year of their lives. In
18 times like this, we must be creative and pull all of
19 our resources to meet the youth's extenuating needs.
20 Investing in our youth is not a cost, rather an
21 investment. An investment not just to our youth, but
22 to the future of our city. Thank you so much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
24 Jorge. I will now call on Maryam Choudhury.

2 MARYAM CHOUDHURY: Good morning. I'm
3 Maryam Choudhury. I'm a Sophomore at the Young
4 Woman's Leadership School of the Bronx and a Teens
5 Take Charge Organizer, also a member for Project
6 1424. I testified in January when DYCD and a lot of
7 youth Council Members said you'd reach out to young
8 people in the SYEP planning process. We haven't
9 heard anything from you in the last two months. I'm
10 here to remind you that our voices matter in this
11 process. We have needs and ideas. The most
12 important and most basic is that we need jobs.
13 70,000 slots is not enough for this essential
14 program. We have big dreams, and we expect you to
15 help us achieve them. I have big dreams that I will
16 make into a big plan. I plan on attending college
17 and working towards becoming a pediatric
18 psychiatrist. Honestly, I'm not sure how I might do
19 this though. I don't even know how to file my taxes,
20 and I have a long journey ahead of me. As a
21 Sophomore, I know there is so much ahead of me, but
22 I'm not being taught how to conquer this. I have
23 been turned down for jobs because I lack experience
24 and SYEP could have helped me with that. SYEP could
25 have helped me because it would have given me a

2 chance to see and feel how it is to be employed, the
3 pros and cons of working. SYEP must be expanded
4 because every student who wants to gain experience
5 from SYEP should be provided that opportunity. SYEP
6 would be so significant during this pandemic because
7 there are so many families struggling as we speak,
8 and students can be helping their family out with the
9 employment they are provided through SYEP. As a
10 person a part of a family with someone disabled in
11 it, SYEP can help me earn money so I can help and
12 support my family. To reach my goal of becoming a
13 pediatric psychiatrist, I need relevant work
14 experience. SYEP can help me by providing this. I
15 lack experience in the work field. It's always nice
16 to have some experience in the field you want to go
17 in, and in a hospital or just being able to get the
18 experience of working with kids will help me grow as
19 a person. Every day, we are in school being taught
20 so many things, but I have no knowledge or experience
21 in what I have to do in order to become a pediatric
22 psychiatrist. Internships and SYEP can help me fill
23 in that gap. Although there are many people helping
24 to SYEP this summer, you are far from guaranteeing
25 that every teenager will be employed. I have yet to

2 see any outreach within DYCD. It just gives off that
3 the future of New York City is not important to you.
4 As people who are supposed to guide youth towards the
5 right path, it is not evidently happening. If we
6 don't start for change now, when will it start? We
7 can't start when it's too late, then it will never
8 happen. I hope everyone gains a better understanding
9 of why SYEP and employment matters to me. It is
10 important for you to listen to us because we are the
11 future of New York City. We are fighting to make
12 this city better for everyone and expanding SYEP is a
13 start.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
15 Maryam. I will now call on Carmen Lopez Villamil.

16 STG PEREZ: Time starts now.

17 CARMEN LOPEZ VILLAMIL: Thank you. Hi
18 everyone. I'm Carmen. Quick heads up. I'm in
19 History, so if I get cold call, I'm out, but I just
20 wanted to start by saying that Chair Rose and Council
21 Member Chin, I really appreciate that you name
22 universal SYEP as your primary goal, and I'm excited
23 for it to happen next year. I look forward to
24 meeting with you guys and your colleagues about it in
25 the next few weeks, and until then, we'll continue to

2 fight for universal jobs. For me, a job means
3 security and support. It means money for college
4 tuition and something exciting to look forward to.
5 It means connecting with my peers in a way that I
6 haven't been able to for the last year of remote
7 learning. For me and all of my peers, SYEP is an
8 essential program. We've heard from providers that
9 they do not have the capacity to reach universal this
10 year, but that doesn't mean that our needs go away.
11 We're going to apply for SYEP in record numbers this
12 year because we need something meaningful to do. If
13 you're going to turn away youth because of capacity
14 restrictions, youth who have gone out of their way to
15 weave through lengthy applications, just because they
16 really want a job. You need to give us a backup.
17 So, here's my challenge to DYCD. This year, every
18 young person who applies will receive support and
19 opportunities from DYCD, even if it's not a paid job.
20 This is what we're calling SYEP unbound. Every young
21 person who is not offered a paid slot, should be
22 automatically enrolled in SYEP unbound, a suite of
23 career exploration and development resources,
24 expanded access to existing programs like Health
25 Matter and DYCD's Youth Townhalls, resume writing and

2 financial literacy workshops, but we also need real
3 credentialing options like the CUNY upscale model.
4 We're talking about free access to Coursera or Master
5 Classes. Give us a summer-long opportunity to learn
6 professional skills. I've seen the Commissioner's
7 outdated resource guides and emails with links is not
8 enough for us. We need support for every youth who
9 wants a job this summer. We need peer-to-peer
10 conversations, panels with professionals and
11 credentialing options. Like we've said many times
12 before, youth, not just providers, should be involved
13 at every stage of designing these experiences. I've
14 loved watching DYCD Youth Townhalls, but let's do
15 more. We will not let you leave any young person
16 behind. We demand SYEP unbound for every single kid
17 who applies. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you,
19 Carmen. I will now call on Tatiana Aguello.

20 SGT PEREZ: Time starts now.

21 TATIANA AGUELLO: Good morning. I first
22 want to thank, Chair Rose and City Council at Large
23 for trampling and enjoying the baseline of SYEP for
24 this fiscal year. My name is Tatiana Aguello. I am
25 the Director of Workforce Development at United

2 Activities Unlimited. We're one of the largest SYEP
3 providers in New York City. I just want to use my
4 time to highlight the situation on the grounds. Long
5 before COVID-19, young adult poverty was on a rise
6 with young people facing crippling college debt, high
7 unemployment rates, stagnant wages, and increased
8 high cost of living. It is no secret that young
9 people will feel the impact of this pandemic induced
10 recession for decades to come and will be at the
11 brunt of its economic consequences. Young people
12 have been disproportionately impacted, facing
13 extremely limited opportunities to find work as many
14 young traditionally work in retail and hospitality;
15 industries that have been severely impacted by COVID-
16 19, just as it was true during the 2000 recessions
17 for millennials. Members of Generation Z are
18 experiencing elevated unemployment rates, lower
19 earnings, reduced networks, decreased rates of
20 savings, high levels of student loan debts, lower
21 rates of home ownership, loss of learning, and higher
22 rates of co-residence with parents. I'm sure
23 economist and other experts were right about the
24 lasting effects of these generations and their
25 trajectory. There will be some that never recover

2 from this loss. In many ways, our youth are also
3 missing out on the human connection, as we genuinely
4 understand and seek it, and are dealing with mental
5 health. All of this is not even to touch on the
6 troubling statistics reflecting more severely,
7 negatively impacting, and great uphill climb for
8 people in households of color in all aspects of this
9 crisis; employment, income, housing, security, food
10 and security, health and mortality. Programs like
11 SYEP and Work, Learn and Grow helped to tackle these
12 issues. As we know, young people are the future of
13 American, of New York City's workforce and economy.
14 We need to continue to fight for youth and workforce
15 programming including this coming year to avoid
16 further damage that can cripple this generation. The
17 acts are simple; an increase of PPP, Price Per
18 Participant, for providers to cover the true cost of
19 OY programming, especially with this new proposed
20 model so that we can actually see impact. A
21 restoration and expansion of Work, Learn and Grow to
22 include all service models and a restoration of SONYC
23 Summer. In light of this pandemic, we cannot
24 overlook the employment and economic conditions of
25 young people. We need to ease the pessimism about

2 their futures, not with false optimism or superficial
3 sentiments, but by changing the trajectory. We need
4 to understand that there are new opportunities on the
5 horizon, and it is our responsibility as a city to
6 seize them, to bring them to light and to prepare our
7 young people to be prepared to make the most of the
8 opportunities yet to come.

9 STG. PEREZ: Time.

10 TATIANA AGUELLO: Thank you for the
11 opportunity to testify.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you.
13 I'll now call on Sara Silverman.

14 SGT. PEREZ: Time starts now.

15 SARA SILVERMAN: I want to thank
16 Chairwoman Rose and the Committee on Youth Services
17 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Sara
18 Silverman, and I've been a participant in the
19 Wildlife Conservation Society Discovery Guide Program
20 since 2020. Each year, this program engages more
21 than 500 young people. The Wildlife Conservation
22 Society, WCS, has been able to adapt and maintain a
23 diverse young offerings during a global pandemic.
24 Our career program provides WCS youth, ages 14 to 24
25 with paid leadership opportunities that scaffold

2 their profession experience and prepare them to
3 transition into paid positions in WCS and in their
4 local communities. This program combines education,
5 workforce development, networking, and outreach to
6 increase opportunities for over 1400 youth who work
7 and learn at our five facilities, and now virtually,
8 due to COVID-19. With renewed support from the
9 Speaker and City Council, WCS will be able to
10 continue to provide a growing group of diverse young
11 New Yorkers with the experience to build meaningful
12 careers at our five parks and scale us to begin
13 lifelong careers in stem. Despite our parks closing
14 to the public for five months due to the COVID-19
15 pandemic, WCS, as an organization, never stopped
16 serving the public and our youth. WCS education
17 continues to provide its members with health and
18 emotional support, access to staff members, and an
19 array of resources and more. We also continue
20 operate robust and engaging virtual programs and
21 provide support for the over 600 parttime employees
22 we will hire in 2021. Before the COVID-19 pandemic
23 hit, I had planned my whole summer around joining the
24 Discovery Guide Program at the Central Park Zoo.
25 Even though I wasn't able to be there in person, I

2 was so grateful the program transitioned into a
3 virtual experience or else I would have had
4 absolutely nothing to do. I developed
5 professionalism and communication skills and met an
6 amazing group of peers. This program showed me how
7 science and conservation can be intertwined in
8 incredible ways and opened my eyes to careers I never
9 knew were possible. Opportunities like the Discovery
10 Guide Program and other youth opportunities at WCS
11 are critical for NYCU's and families that rely on
12 them not only for income, but for first job
13 experiences that teaches about the world, ourselves
14 and expands our network. I love this experience and
15 can't wait to continue developing my career with
16 additional opportunities from WCS. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
18 for your testimony. The next panel of public
19 testimony in order of speaking will be Luis Fuentes,
20 Daryl Hornick Becker and Nora Moran. I'll now call
21 on Luis Fuentes to testify.

22 SGT. PEREZ: Time starts now.

23 LUIS FUENTES: Hello everybody. My name
24 is Luis Fuentes, and I'm the Senior Program Director
25 for the Monterey Cornerstone. I have worked for Good

2 Shepherd Services for 13 years and during that time,
3 I've been a Group Leader, Teen Service Coordinator,
4 and now a Director. Thank you Chair Rose and the
5 Members of the Committee on Youth Services for the
6 opportunity to testify on after school during today's
7 preliminary budget hearings. Last year, when the
8 pandemic hit, I went from Director to First
9 Responder. We supported the city in opening the
10 regional enrichment centers, the (inaudible) centers,
11 the Learning Labs, provided social and emotional
12 support to children and families and supported
13 education of students with remote learning, and all
14 the while, while keeping children safe. This was all
15 happening as Good Shepherd Services had to lay over
16 300 individuals as a result of the cuts that Youth
17 Services experienced last year when the mayor
18 eliminated all Youth Service programs. Those of us
19 that remained had the impossible job of continuing to
20 support families in the midst of a pandemic while
21 mourning the loss of our colleagues and taking the
22 precautions of social distancing and wearing masks to
23 keep both ourselves and the children and families we
24 interact with daily safe. Last year, I participated
25 in 16 Youth NYC rallies to fight back the cuts and

2 just yesterday, I co-hosted the first round of Youth
3 NYC rallies to denounce the mayor's proposal to cut
4 SONYC slots this summer in his preliminary budget. I
5 am here today to ask the Council to negotiate a
6 budget that includes SONYC slots for over 45,000
7 children who depend on supports and engagement now
8 more than ever. Because there is still uncertainty,
9 we are planning for both remote and in-person. We
10 are considering new ways to have youth connect with
11 each other. Last year, summer programs included a
12 community engagement and (inaudible) Congress.
13 During the school year, we have over a hundred
14 children grades 8 through 12 participate in Speak Up
15 initiatives where kids gave back to the community.
16 We provided virtual activities that help kids work on
17 leadership skills, expose them to what civic
18 engagement looks like in the communities, and created
19 social and emotional connections among participants.
20 The youth also learned about how to make their
21 communities better during COVID. These experiences,
22 these meaningful interactions is what is at stake if
23 the mayor is allowed to eliminate SONYC. I ask the
24 Council to help us restore these slots so that we can
25 plan accordingly. We need to stop the budget dance

2 and the last-minute negotiations that yield slots
3 which providers have to scramble to fill. Our
4 parents deserve better, our communities deserve the
5 respect to plan ahead and not last minute. They have
6 to schedule work and life and the budget dance makes
7 it very difficult for them. We need a decision to be
8 made now, and by the Executive budget next month so
9 that we can plan and do not do the budget dance until
10 June 30. Thank you for the opportunity, and thank
11 you again, Chair Rose. She was with us out there in
12 the rally, she's a champion and I know she's going to
13 continue to be a champion.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
15 for your testimony, Luis. I will now call on Daryl
16 Hornick Becker.

17 SGT. PEREZ: Time starts now.

18 DARYL HORNICK BECKER: Good afternoon.
19 My name is Daryl Hornick Becker, and I am a Policy
20 Associate at the Citizen's Committee for Children of
21 New York. I'd like to thank Chair Rose and all the
22 Members of the Youth Services Committee for holding
23 today's hearing. In the past year, youth-serving
24 CBOs have helped bridge the digital divide, supported
25 working families, and addressed children's trauma and

2 behavioral health needs. Summer camps and SYEP last
3 year and after school and the Learning Bridges sites
4 this year have played a significant role in keeping
5 our schools, communities, and economy running during
6 the pandemic, and they will be vital to an equitable
7 and lasting recovery, and yet, once again, youth
8 programs are one of the first areas to be cut in the
9 budget. It is shameful to ask CBOs to step up to the
10 plate only to continually slash their budget,
11 handicap their programming, and for the youth and
12 communities they serve and to disarray with last
13 minute and partial restorations. It is well-past
14 time that the city removes children and families from
15 the annual budget dance. First, the Administration
16 must restore Summer SONYC funding for middle school
17 students and add baseline funding for additional
18 slots. The preliminary budget includes a 5.7 million
19 dollar cut to Summer SONYC programs for middle school
20 students on top of the exclusion of one-time funding
21 for the vast majority of spots. These means, as it
22 currently stands, the budget includes zero funding
23 for Summer SONYC. Up until later February, middle
24 school students were learning entirely remotely.
25 These students will require the academic engagement

2 and learning loss prevention that summer programs
3 offer. It is imperative that the Administration
4 restores and baselines all funds for Summer SONYC, a
5 total restoration of 25.7 million to fund 43,500
6 slots, and that DYCD not be caught flat-footed and
7 issue guidance now on how summer programs can be
8 operated safely before restorations are in the
9 budget. Second, the city should invest in SYEP to
10 build towards universal access. It's important to
11 note that in summer 2019, over 150,000 youth applied
12 for spots, and less than half received placement. To
13 truly support employment opportunities for young
14 people, DYCD should work with youth advocates to
15 advance opportunities for applicants not selected in
16 the lottery this summer, and the Administration and
17 City Council should begin to significant invest and
18 add spots to SYEP following this summer with the goal
19 of universal access next summer. Third, the
20 Administration must continue to support Learning
21 Bridges and expedite background clearances for staff.
22 Access to the Learning Bridges site should expand to
23 include students who attend charter school, and if
24 the sites will be operational either during the
25 summer or next fall. The earlier these plans can be

2 announced, and funds made available, the better
3 equipped providers can be. Lastly, it has always
4 been an arduous process to have new staff cleared to
5 work in youth programs, putting providers at a
6 disability in their ability to scale up, and this has
7 remained true throughout the pandemic. The
8 Administration, DYCD, and DOHMH must collaborate
9 better on the clearance process and allow providers
10 to onboard new staff in a timely manner. Thank you
11 for this opportunity to testify.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
13 for your testimony. I will now be calling on Nora
14 Moran.

15 STG. PEREZ: Time starts now.

16 NORA MORAN: Thank you so much for the
17 opportunity to testify this morning. My name is Nora
18 Moran. I'm the Director of Policy and Advocacy at
19 United Neighborhood Houses. We are a policy
20 organization representing New York City's 40
21 settlement houses located in all five boroughs, and
22 these organizations really are leaders in the youth
23 development field working with young people in after
24 school, SYEP, Cornerstones, and Beacons. My written
25 testimony has a lot more detail, but I'm going to

2 focus on just a couple issues here. You know, we all
3 know how challenging COVID-19 has been, both for
4 young people and for the staff who are working with
5 them and supporting them. Community based
6 organizations have stepped up in amazing ways over
7 the past year to provide emergency childcare, to run
8 learning labs when this program didn't exist months
9 before, and you know, really went above and beyond to
10 work with young people to make sure that they and
11 their families were supported during COVID. We are
12 in a much better place in this FY22 preliminary
13 budget than we were last year. It's very promising
14 that, you know, funding was restored for summer
15 Beacons, Cornerstones, that there is money SYEP and
16 for COMPASS, but there is one glaring exception, and
17 that is Summer SONYC funding. We have done this
18 budget dance year over year. We've heard providers
19 talk about it. Right now in the preliminary budget,
20 there is no funding for those one-time slots that we
21 always come through, and to add insult to injury,
22 this year, there was also a new cut to the baseline
23 that we had never seen before, and as of right now,
24 there is no summer SONYC funding available for this
25 summer when middle school students have been learning

2 remotely throughout much of this year, and when we
3 know that everybody is going to need support to
4 recover from the effects of the COVID pandemic, but
5 especially middle school students. So, really urge
6 the Mayor and the City Council to settle summer SONYC
7 funding as soon as possible. It cannot go until the
8 last minute. Providers need time to prepare, to find
9 locations, we need, you know, the DOE to be
10 coordinating in all of this to make sure that they're
11 sites are available, and, you know, we're calling for
12 two things specifically, but that 5.7 million dollar
13 cut to the baseline be restored, and that there be an
14 additional 20 million invested for the 34,000 one
15 time slots that come through for Summer SONYC each
16 year. On the Summer Youth Employment Program, we are
17 very glad that we're not repeating last year's
18 mistakes and that there is funding in prelim for
19 70,000 slots. U&H is thrilled that we are on a path
20 to universal SYEP and look forward to working with
21 everybody to get there next year, and we are, you
22 know, definitely very supportive of the SYEP unbound
23 idea. We think it's a great way to make sure that
24 more youth are served this summer, and, you know, in
25 different and in new ways, and finally, I want to

2 echo my colleague, Daryl's comments about
3 comprehensive background checks. This continues to
4 be an issue, and we really need to make sure that if
5 and when Summer SONYC is restored, that DOHMH has the
6 capacity to clear people quickly and make sure that,
7 you know, background checks are done quickly so that
8 staff can be hired for summer camp. Thank you.

9 SGT. PEREZ: Time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
11 for your testimony. The fourth panel of public
12 testimony in order of speaking will be Alicia
13 Guevara, Mam Fatou Dukuray, Abraham Velazquez, and
14 Nicole Hamilton. I will now call on Alicia Guevara
15 to testify.

16 SGT. PEREZ: Time starts now.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Alicia,
18 are you available?

19 ALICIA GUEVARA: I'm unmuted now. Thank
20 you, Committee Chair Rose, and to the Members of the
21 New York City Council for holding this very important
22 hearing on Youth Service. My name is Alicia Guevara
23 and I'm the Chief Executive Officer at Big Brothers,
24 Big Sisters of New York City, the nation's first and
25 New York City's largest youth mentoring organization,

2 and today I come before you to advocate on behalf of
3 the thousands of children and youth that Big
4 Brothers, Big Sisters serve each year across the five
5 boroughs of New York City youth who continue to
6 experience disruptions to supports and services due
7 to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. And while Big
8 Brother, Big Sisters of New York City has been able
9 to pivot during this time to continue meeting the
10 needs of our youth, their families, and our volunteer
11 mentors, we know that this would not have been
12 possible without the generous support of the New York
13 City Council and our broader community of
14 stakeholders. So many programs have been
15 discontinued or defunded and as the city's
16 conversations turn to recovery, it's critically
17 important that we center young people, focusing our
18 attention on showing of the resources and supports
19 that enable them to realize their biggest possible
20 futures. It certainly has been an unimaginable year
21 and we know the little in our community are
22 experiencing the impacts of the pandemic in an even
23 more pronounced way. A quarter of the young people
24 we serve live in neighborhood most heavily impacted
25 by COVID-19. Close to 89% of our youth identifies

2 black and Latin X to communities that continue to
3 bare the brunt of learning loss, personal loss,
4 economic strife, health disparities, and the digital
5 divide. These realities reinforce the urgency of
6 mentoring as an essential support for young people
7 across the five boroughs. Since moving to a remote
8 environment last March, I'm proud to share that over
9 85% of our mentor matches that were together before
10 the onset of COVID-19 remained matched today. That
11 even in the face of tremendous personal changes
12 experienced since last March, so many of our mentors
13 opted in when it would have been much easier and
14 convenient for them to opt out of mentorship, and
15 this is what a commitment to building a better, more
16 equitable, more connected city means. It means
17 ensuring that the needs of our youth, their voices,
18 their talents, and their potential are amplified and
19 uplifted, not pushed to the side or deferred. In the
20 case of Big Brothers, Big Sisters in New York City,
21 we center youth by matching them with compassionate,
22 caring adult mentors who stand for them, and for
23 igniting their potential. It's imperative that the
24 New York City Council restores not just the full
25 funding our organization, but all other programs that

2 provide essential services to young people in our
3 city. These essential supports including mentoring
4 will not only mitigate the immediate impacts of the
5 pandemic, but also ensure our young people are set up
6 for long term success... (crosstalk).

7 STG PEREZ: Time.

8 ALICIA GUEVARA: And therefore ensure New
9 York City's future. Thank you so much for the
10 opportunity to testify on behalf of Big Brothers, Big
11 Sisters and the children and young people across the
12 city of New York.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
14 for your testimony. I'll now be calling on Mam Fatou
15 Dukuray.

16 SGT. PEREZ: Time starts now.

17 MAM FATOU DUKURAY: My name is Mam Fatou
18 Dukuray, and I am a Youth Organizer at the
19 Brotherhood and Sister Sol. It's upsetting me that
20 we have to attend hearing to demand police-free
21 school, fully fund school only to see that our city
22 budget continues to fund the criminalization of NYC
23 students. We, who, care about the remnants of
24 marginalized students in New York City do not believe
25 the super special transfer of school safety agents

2 from the NYPD to the DOE. We do not believe that the
3 city budget should continue to underfund our school
4 and community to address issues affected by COVID-19.
5 We have to find money to create meaningful things in
6 our education system and instead of creating a bad
7 way to students' success. This will require police-
8 free school, failure to divest from schools, invest
9 in students such that our city continues to fail us
10 youth. Our city does not do enough to ensure that
11 our schools are fully funded and fully resourced as
12 so as to meet the need of all students. We need to
13 remove all police present rather under the DOE or
14 NYPD and save those funds to actually offer mental
15 health support and overall support for all young
16 people, including SYEP. None of the schools I have
17 attended have the resources for mental health
18 support. In my school, every teacher has the role of
19 (inaudible), but we have no guidance counselor or
20 therapy, and I have not had any support to prepare
21 for college either. In school, not only do I feel
22 like I'm being spit on, but I feel criminalized as if
23 the SSAs are just waiting for me to make one mistake
24 to get us in big trouble. Additionally, a lot of
25 peers and I have other negative interaction with the

2 SSAs. The presence of police in our schools comes at
3 cost of having actual student support. This paired
4 with the disproportionate and the negative impact
5 police has on school students who are low income
6 black and Latin X, means that we are more likely to
7 be the subject of... (crosstalk).

8 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

9 MAM FATOU DUKURAY: Discipline, and the
10 police that forms at the school, at school that there
11 are white peers, continue to fund police and police
12 in our school will make it clear that this is an
13 issue of lack of policy and political will. We,
14 young people, are closest to the problems, and
15 therefore, you need to hear us when we offer a
16 solution. You all have to have the power to
17 meaningful shift from the police, and invest in our
18 community, but this requires radical action beginning
19 with the budget. To meet the demands of the people
20 who took the street and organizers now in the room,
21 you have to end the criminalization of youth and
22 students of colors while discussing the school to
23 present its pipeline and you must do it now. Join us
24 or be part of the problem. Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
3 for your testimony. I will now be calling on Abraham
4 Velazquez.

5 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

6 ABRAHAM VELAZQUEZ: Good afternoon Chair
7 Rose and City Council Members. My name is Abraham
8 Velazquez and I'm educator and organizer of the
9 Brotherhood Sister Sol. For more than 25 years, the
10 Brotherhood Sister Sol grosses has been at the
11 forefront of social justice, educating, organizing,
12 and training to challenge an equity and create
13 opportunity for all with the focus on black and Latin
14 X, youth grosses is where young people claim the
15 power of their history, identity, and community to
16 build the future they want to see. Grosses youth
17 have vision for education in New York City that
18 includes safe, restorative, healing environments
19 where all students have the opportunity to learn and
20 grow. To meet this goal, the City Council must
21 pursue Legislation that values and respects the
22 dignity of student, caregivers, and their
23 communities. This requires funding SYEP, which we're
24 grateful for, providing school equitable resources,
25 adopting a culturally responsive curriculum,

2 preventing trauma, repairing harm, and promoting
3 restorative practices. The budget passed this year
4 has to reflect this vision. Today New York City is
5 far from where it needs to be to ensure student
6 success as our schools face troubling realities.
7 School segregation leads to chronic underfunding of
8 schools in New York State which has negative and
9 despairing impacts for black, Latin X, and low-income
10 students giving subsequent resource disparity. Only
11 77.3% of the 1.1 million children in the DOE system
12 will graduate on time, and only 55% of New York City
13 high school graduate will graduate college ready.
14 One in 10 NYC public school students is homeless,
15 houseless. Additionally, in a nation in which 14
16 million students are in schools with police, but no
17 counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers,
18 New York City has more school safety agency, SSAs,
19 than any other District in the United States. The
20 presence of police in our schools has
21 disproportionately impacted students who are low
22 income, black and Latin X who are more likely to be
23 the subject of exclusionary discipline and police
24 presence at school than their white peers. Everyone
25 in the City Council, however, has the power to shift

2 this beginning with meaningfully shifting funds from
3 the police, reforming the responsibilities and
4 reinvesting in our communities. We must reconstruct
5 the schools to prison pipeline, end broken windows,
6 policing, and truly decriminalize low level offenses
7 that lead to our youth having negative contact with
8 the State carceral systems, and we must do this
9 now. Thank you for your time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
11 for your testimony. I will now call on Nicole
12 Hamilton.

13 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

14 NICOLE HAMILTON: Thank you. Thank you,
15 Chair Rose and Members and staff of the Committee of
16 the Youth Services for the opportunity to testify.
17 My name is Nicole Hamilton, and I am currently the
18 Director of Community Partnerships at Girls for
19 Gender Equity, or GGE. I previously served as the
20 Director of Urban Leaders Academy, GGE's social
21 justice-based after school programs for almost 10
22 years. I am testifying today in strong support of
23 returning full funding to the Department of Youth and
24 Community Development and to speak specifically to
25 concerning trends of outsourcing youth work to NYPD.

2 Almost exactly one year ago today, GGE convened a
3 Zoom call of over 100 youth service providers,
4 educators, city agency employees, mental health
5 professionals, social workers and other out of a
6 necessity and rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic
7 and the upheaval that it cost. Here we are, almost a
8 year later, still holding that space to support this
9 dynamic group of people who love, serve, and support
10 young people day in and day out. DYCD is facing
11 continued and disproportional divestment. We thank
12 Council for your leadership in preserving SYEP in
13 some form after the mayor proposed its cancellation
14 in FY21, and we thank the Council it's stated
15 commitment to returning SYEP slots for the summer of
16 2021. However, we are concerned that funding for
17 SYEP falls short of sustaining SYEP in entirety. As
18 funding for FY22 is just 75% of what it was in FY20.
19 Further funding for DYCD in FY22 is 200 million
20 dollars less than what it was in FY20, 200 million
21 dollars less. Young people are severely impacted by
22 these cuts because they take vital resources that
23 they need as you have heard testimony after testimony
24 today while continuing to siphon these funds into the
25 budget of the NYPD, and people are watching and

2 listening, and they will not forget of their cries
3 for the city stop criminalizing, dehumanizing and
4 traumatizing them day in and day out of the ever
5 looming presence of police that have been
6 consistently ignored. They will not forget that the
7 city sends officer who willed the power to enact
8 deadly force into their school and onto their
9 playgrounds and into the train stations and their
10 bodegas, and their youth programs and into the very
11 buildings where they live. Despite their outrage
12 and pleas, the city doubles down and finds even more
13 ways to give the NYPD access and portals into the
14 lives of the young people. We know that quality
15 programs are a protective factor in the lives of many
16 young people, yet it seems as if the city is willing
17 to forfeit their protection in order to bolster the
18 budget of the NYPD who are ironically called to serve
19 and protect, and they often do the opposite. We call
20 on the Council to invest in programs that build
21 skills, cultivate communities, heal past harms, spark
22 inquisitiveness, value individuals for what they
23 bring, validate, affirm, connect, uplift, and
24 support. In addition, the public needs full

2 transparency about the current relationships with
3 their budgetary... (crosstalk).

4 STG. POLITE: Time expired.

5 NICOLE HAMILTON: DYCD and NYPD. We
6 heard this morning that DYCD collaborated with the
7 NYPD at Police Academy to start up a new youth
8 coordination officer program, endorsing the use of
9 police as DYCD outreach strategy. This is
10 outrageous. Young people must be able to be outside,
11 play and have joyful every day youthful experiences
12 without police intervention. The Mayor's March 5
13 police reform and reinvention proposal expands on
14 what we have seen in our communities, the tangling
15 together of youth programming and policing. With
16 SYEP, for example, we understand that NYPD is one of
17 the largest SYEP work sites where youth are placed in
18 local precincts, one Police Plaza, and other NYPD
19 units and commands. The city has created devious and
20 secretive partnerships between the NYPD and DYCD,
21 forcing young people to interact with police at
22 Beacon and Cornerstone centers and DYCD contracting
23 youth serving organizations. What's worst, the
24 patrol belt guide is continuously and outrageously
25 adapted so that police are instructed to perform a

2 myriad of tasks with the intent of insidiously
3 infiltrating youth spaces just so that they can stay
4 within close proximity to young people even when
5 young people themselves have stated that they are not
6 welcomed, and let's face it, those jobs rightfully
7 belong to other people. People without the legal
8 authority to use physical and deadly force to carry
9 with them the threat of imminent criminalization.
10 Those jobs belong to food servers, workers,
11 restorative, justice practitioners, counselors,
12 school nurses, parent coordinators, and a long list
13 of other positions that are severely understaffed and
14 also require specific skills sets and levels of
15 expertise and experience in youth development. The
16 NYPD's intelligence driven policing.. (crosstalk).

17 CHAIR ROSE: Can you wrap up? Can you
18 begin to ... (crosstalk).

19 NICOLE HAMILTON: Okay, last sentence.
20 Absolutely, thank you so much for the extension. The
21 NYPD intelligence driven policing model is
22 information sharing practices across city agencies,
23 its omnipresence, and surveillance infrastructure
24 make it clear and apparent and imperative that DYCD

2 must be free from the NYPD. Thank you so much for
3 the opportunity to testify. End of time.

4 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

5 NICOLE HAMILTON: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
7 for your testimony. I will now be calling on the
8 next panel for public testimony. Our speakers in
9 order will be Shuk Cheng, a representative of Reach
10 Out and Read of Greater New York, Emily Gertz, Kaveri
11 Sengupta, Shamar Watson, and Judy Ling. I will now
12 call on Shuk Cheng to testify.

13 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

14 SHUK CHENG: Good morning. Thank you,
15 Chair Rose and Members of the City Council for the
16 opportunity to testify today. My name is Shuk Cheng,
17 and I over see one of the many after school programs
18 CPC provides across the city. CPC stands for Chinese
19 American Planning Counsel Inc. Briefly, our mission
20 is to promote social and economic empowerment of
21 Chinese Americans, immigrants in low-income
22 communities. My program is called Learn and Earn.
23 It is a three-year program for high school juniors,
24 seniors, and college freshmen. Our youth are from
25 low-income families with income thresh holds that

2 fall within the US Federal poverty guidelines. Many
3 will be the first in the family to go to college, and
4 the majority Asian. We provide enrichment workshops
5 which most schools do not offer, including, but not
6 limited to literacy, cooking, arts and crafts, mental
7 health and wellbeing, college and work readiness,
8 professional etiquette, and mentorship opportunities.
9 COVID-19 exacerbated the income disparity and
10 education gap of our youth and their families. Our
11 after-school program turned into essential services
12 due to a high demand for assistance in unemployment
13 benefits, rent relief applications, scheduling
14 vaccination appointments, and translations services.
15 With limited staff, we scrambled to also help youth
16 coping with Sinophobia or technology frustration,
17 Zoom burn out, and an increase in anxiety, panic
18 attacks and depression. As COVID subsides, mental
19 health among our youth will take precedence.
20 Although mental health cannot be seen. Trauma is not
21 to be taken lightly. With anti-Asian crimes
22 increased 150% in 2020, most in New York and Los
23 Angeles, we will have an even longer than ever impact
24 than the education disparity and learning loss we are
25 experiencing if not addressed immediately. Asians is

2 the fastest growing population in the county and in
3 the State of New York. I am not sure if it weren't
4 for after-school programs like Learn and Earn and the
5 Largest Asian social service like CBC, where and who
6 our communities turn to. Please help our community
7 members by continuing to support the essential work
8 we do day in and day out. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
10 for your testimony. I will now call on the
11 Representative from Reach out, Teach out.

12 STG. POLITE: Time starts now.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Yeah and
14 Read Out.

15 REPRESENTATIVE OF REACH OUT AND READ:

16 Hi. Do you mean Reach out and Read, so sorry?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: I'm sorry,
18 I do.

19 REPRESENTATIVE OF REACH OUT AND READ:

20 No, no worries. I just want to make sure. I was
21 just asked to unmute. Thank you so much for the
22 opportunity to testify here today. I am here
23 representing Reach out and Read of Greater New York
24 as the Program Director, and we want to take this
25 moment to testify on behalf of supporting the city's

2 first reader, the early literacy initiative. Thank
3 you so much to the Speaker and the City Council
4 Members for their ongoing commitment to ensuring that
5 New York City children who participate in our program
6 will begin school with the literacy skills that will
7 enable them to succeed. As many of people know here,
8 more than half of New York City public school third
9 graders read below grade level, and this problem is
10 even bigger in the communities of concentrated
11 poverty, but we know that it starts before they enter
12 school, and that's really where City's First Readers
13 comes in. We want to prevent that from happening to
14 begin with. It's also important to note that the
15 return on investment for high-quality early childhood
16 education programs is cited as 13%. So, that is a
17 significant gain there. So, Reach out and Read of
18 Greater New York for 20 years, has partnered with
19 healthcare providers which has been even more
20 imperative during these times of COVID-19 to put
21 books and literacy resources in the hands of children
22 and their caregivers. During regular pediatric
23 checkups, our pediatricians and other pediatric
24 providers provide new developmentally appropriate
25 books for children ages birth to five and guidance to

2 their parents and caregivers about the importance of
3 reading aloud and literacy. Many of the resources
4 that we provide to families at these visits are
5 connections with our City's First Readers partners,
6 organizations who we know will continue to further
7 the early childhood education support that we give
8 at these pediatric checkups. We partner with 170 of
9 these hospitals, clinics, and care sites in New York
10 City and in 2020 we served over 255,000 children.
11 Another piece that came out in the last year of our
12 work with schools and libraries being closed, we, for
13 a period of time, we knew that the majority of kids
14 were not having access to books, but our program at
15 Reach Out and Read never stopped, and that's largely
16 due to the funding that we received from City
17 Council. The COVID-19 pandemic provided us with an
18 opportunity to partner with New York City Health and
19 Hospitals Test and Trace where we trained their
20 resource navigators to deliver early literacy
21 guidance as they were getting tested for COVID as
22 well as provide with new books for children, and then
23 additionally as a team with City's First Readers, we
24 came together to provide books, crayons, art
25 supplies, activities sheets, and more for the test

2 and trace take care kits for families who test
3 positive for COVID. So, in addition to getting the
4 PPE that they need, they were also receiving
5 educational materials for their children ...
6 (crosstalk).

7 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

8 CHAIR ROSE: You can finish your
9 sentence.

10 SHUK CHENG: Okay, that was it. So,
11 thank you so much. We really appreciate the
12 opportunity and feel honored to be member of City's
13 First Readers, and we hope that it continues to be
14 funded. It's such a vital resource for our littlest
15 New Yorkers. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

16 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
18 for your testimony. I will now be calling on Emily
19 Gertz.

20 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

21 EMILY GERTZ: Thank you very much. I had
22 a little trouble unmuting. Thank you, Chair Rose and
23 Committee Members for the opportunity to speak today.
24 My name is Emily Gertz, and I'm Director of Strategic
25 Initiatives at Literacy Inc. We are a program

2 partner and the managing organization for the New
3 York State Council Early Literacy Initiative, City's
4 First Readers. City's First Readers includes 15
5 active partners that work in all 51 Council Districts
6 to create equity of opportunity for children under
7 five who are affected by systemic poverty. Annually
8 at the coalition, we support one million families
9 providing them with critical early learning
10 programming that ensures all New York City children
11 have a solid foundation to start school successful,
12 thrive academically, and succeed beyond their school
13 years. Continued funding for City's First Readers in
14 fiscal year 22 is essential because equity results
15 from access and opportunity. For far too long,
16 investments are made in communities after problems
17 are endemic that change feels impossible. Early
18 literacy is a preventative measure and prevention
19 beats intervention every time. City's First Readers
20 helps families engage in critical pre-literacy
21 activities like singing, talking, playing, and
22 reading together that allow children to enter school
23 prepared to succeed. Instead of starting behind and
24 trying to catch up to their wealthier cohorts, with
25 support from City's First Readers, children are on

2 par for academic success from the start. The impact
3 of City's First Readers does not end there. Early
4 literacy has a multiplying effect because literacy
5 skills are strong predictors of improved health
6 outcomes, civic engagement, economic self-
7 sufficiency. Literacy increased graduation rates and
8 decreases the school to prison pipeline. In essence,
9 investment in early literacy today, results in a
10 strong society years down the road. As we all know,
11 the COVID pandemic has impacted communities across
12 the globe, and there's been considerable attention to
13 the tumultuous year of learning for school aged
14 children and teens. What has not been in the
15 forefront is COVID's impact on the learning needs of
16 infants, toddlers, and young children. City's First
17 Readers partners know that children birth to five
18 have been greatly impacted by the stress their
19 families feel and by the isolation and limited access
20 to community programming. We actually saw an
21 increase in family's appetite for early literacy
22 support over the last year as parents needed even
23 more guidance on how to keep their littlest learners
24 stimulated and thriving. Our families didn't have
25 the luxury to pause or slow down in the face of the

2 health crisis and neither did we. Despite the
3 challenge, we still exceeded and met our deliverables
4 for the year with 270,000 books distributed, training
5 a 1000 early literacy professional, and delivering
6 more than 355,000 remote learning opportunities. The
7 City Council took decisive action in 2014 to address
8 the literacy crisis facing New York, and we request
9 continued funding for the fiscal year 22. Early
10 literacy is not just important, it is the key to
11 unlocking equity because early literacy is a ...
12 (crosstalk).

13 STG. POLITE: Time expired.

14 EMILY GERTZ: and anti-poverty issue, an
15 education issue, and health issue, and a social
16 justice issue. Thank you.

17 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
19 for your testimony. I will now call on Kaveri
20 Sengupta.

21 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

22 KAVERI SENGUPTA: Good afternoon. My
23 name is Kaveri Sengupta, and I am the Education
24 Policy Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian
25 American Children and Families or CACF. Thank you so

2 much to Chair Rose and Members of the Committee on
3 Youth Services for giving us this opportunity to
4 testify. CACF is the nation's only pan-Asian
5 children and families advocate organization and leads
6 the fight for improved and equitable policies,
7 systems, fundings, and services to support those in
8 need. CACF also leads the 15% and Growing campaign
9 which is a group of over 45 Asian serving
10 organizations that work together to fight for a fair,
11 inclusive, equitable New York City budget that
12 protects the most vulnerable Asian-Pacific American
13 New Yorkers. Two of our campaign members include the
14 Chinese American Planning Council and Immigrant
15 Social Services who are testifying today. Currently,
16 the APA community is by percentage, the fastest
17 growing group in New York City, nearing doubling
18 every decade since 1970, and making up 15% of the
19 population. Unfortunately, currently levels of
20 public funding for the APA community remained
21 disproportionate to our community's needs. In fiscal
22 year 2021, Asian serving organizations received only
23 4.65% of City Council discretionary dollars, and less
24 than 1.5% of social service contract dollars. 15%
25 and Growing campaign members employed thousands of

2 New Yorkers and served hundred of thousands of New
3 Yorkers. Many provide essential youth services
4 around college and career readiness, mental health,
5 social emotional learning, and other areas to the
6 27.9% of all APAs in New York City who are under the
7 age of 18. They need fair and equitable funding to
8 continue to provide language accessible and
9 culturally responsive services for our youth. While
10 APAs have a high school graduation rate at 80%, the
11 percentage of college and career-ready students is
12 significantly lower, about 50%. Other important
13 statistics to note particularly as part of DYCD's
14 mission is to alleviate the effect of poverty.
15 Nearly a quarter of APA's in New York City live in
16 poverty, which is actually the highest poverty rate
17 across all racial and ethnic groups. APAs in New
18 York City also the highest poverty gap or intensity
19 of poverty. Our organizations and young people need
20 investments in culturally responsive and language
21 accessible youth services, without which many
22 immigrant young people in particular can find
23 themselves isolated and marginalized, facing
24 continued barriers to navigating systems and
25 accessing critical services that would provide them

2 on the path to being a competent and responsible
3 adult. These needs have only intensified as a result
4 of the pandemic which has further isolated so many of
5 our APA young people who have contended with an
6 enormous disruption to their education, heightened
7 mental health challenges, and ongoing fears regarding
8 racism. They deserve a budget that prioritizes them.
9 This means investing in them by funding programs we
10 know provide them comprehensive supports and
11 opportunities. Our priorities include baseline SONYC
12 and SYEP and restorations and baselines lines to
13 Work, Learn Grow. We're happy to see funding
14 allocated for many of these necessary programs;
15 however as discussed, it is incredibly worrying to
16 see that the mayor's budget, a moral document has
17 deemed that SONYC programming is unnecessary during a
18 pandemic that has done so much harm to our young
19 people. We recommend a baseline 20 million dollar in
20 funding for SONYC ... (crosstalk).

21 STG POLITE: Time expired.

22 KAVERI SENGUPTA: These initiatives are
23 critical to the wellbeing of APA young people to
24 provide them with safe and supportive environments to
25 explore their interests and passions and to ensure

2 that their families are able to re-enter the
3 workforce. This is especially important for Asian
4 Americans who, during the height of the pandemic,
5 have experienced the largest increase in joblessness
6 of all major racial groups in New York City, with an
7 unemployment rate of 25.6% as of May 2020. Our
8 communities are consistently overlooked in the
9 distribution of resources which is harmful to us as
10 well as to other communities of color who are denied
11 the same resources due to the perceived success of
12 APAs. This pandemic has highlighted a myriad of
13 holes in our city's safety net systems, and the
14 city's response must address root problems in
15 addition to immediate needs. Thank you so much.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
17 for your testimony. I'll now call on Shamar Watson.

18 STG. POLITE: Time starts now.

19 SHAMAR WATSON: Thank you, Chair Rose and
20 the Members of the Committee on Youth Services for
21 the opportunity to present testimony today. My name
22 is Shamar Watson, and I'm the Director of Youth
23 Services for the Committee for Hispanic Children and
24 Families; better known by its acronym CHCF. At the
25 onset of the pandemic and the State shutdown,

2 community-based organizations like CHCF rapidly
3 adjusted its services to ensure continuity and the
4 delivery of their central support that we offer to
5 our students, families, and communities. During the
6 typical school year, our school-based programs are
7 funded through both State and City dollars to reach
8 nearly 800 students and their families in the Bronx.
9 Our Community Empowerment Department expands our
10 general reach of support in those communities through
11 additional workshops that are open to all, beyond
12 those involved in our school-based programs on a
13 number of issues reflective of this shipping and
14 holistic needs. With our pandemic, our school-based
15 program staff have worked closely with our school
16 leaders to meet the needs of students and families
17 even beyond those we are funded for, offering
18 language access support, supporting accessing DOE
19 devices and technical assistance and offering the
20 opportunity to join virtual activities to combat the
21 effects of quarantine on physical and mental health.
22 An additional city program that CHCF has continued to
23 proudly participate in while adjusting to the
24 realities of the pandemic is City's First Readers.
25 City's First Readers, better known as CFR, is a

2 collaboration of non-profit organizations fostering
3 the literacy development of New York City children
4 ages zero to five. Families living in poverty have
5 been devastated by COVID-19, ensuring that even more
6 low-income children are finding it difficult to reach
7 proficiency by third grade. The need for City's
8 First Readers programming has never been greater.
9 Children and families have been isolated for more
10 than one year with limited access to pre-literacy
11 support. Only City's First Readers has the capacity
12 to engage these families to reverse this deprivation
13 and prevent the long-term consequences from hobbling
14 a generation of learners. We join our CFR partners
15 in calling on the City Council to acknowledge the
16 severity of this crisis and a commitment to
17 addressing it by supporting the City's First Readers
18 and investing 4.6 million dollars to extend reach and
19 impact of this valuable program. We call on this
20 Committee to continue supporting and growing the
21 programs that we know work. With the anticipated
22 long terms effects of the pandemic on social,
23 emotional, well-being and educational growth for our
24 most vulnerable young children and school-age
25 learner, it is essential that programs like City

2 First Readers and extended learning time programming,
3 and the culturally and linguistically responsive CBOs
4 who deliver them are funded to thrive and grow and
5 reach. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
8 for your testimony. I will now call on Judy Ling.

9 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

10 JUDY LING: Thank you, thank you Chair
11 Rose and Committee on Youth Services for giving us a
12 chance to testify today. My name is Judy Ling, and I
13 am a certified school counselor currently working at
14 Immigrant Social Services, ISS. Since 1972, ISS is
15 dedicated to improving the conditions and promoting
16 the welfare of our community in the China Town and
17 lower eastside area of New York City. ISS has worked
18 extensively with immigrant children and their
19 families. Many of whom are from low-income
20 households with limited English proficiency. We
21 partner with schools to provide enrichment, academic
22 support, and prevention through Oasis, but it has
23 been extremely difficult, especially during the
24 pandemic because there is just so much we can do
25 without adequate support from the City. Nearly 50%

2 of our pan-Asian population in New York City lives in
3 the hardest hit area during the pandemic, but for
4 fiscal year 2021, Asian, Latin serving organizations
5 only received 4.65% of City Councils discretionary
6 funding, when we make up 15% of the population in New
7 York City. The purpose of the 15% and Growing
8 campaign was so we could receive 15% of the
9 discretionary dollars which correlates to the
10 population size. So, the first citywide initiative
11 that the city should expand on is mental health
12 services for our young people. To do that, the DOE
13 needs to lift the current hiring freezes. Schools
14 are already understaffed, especially when it comes to
15 the people personnel services. COVID-19 is a
16 traumatic experience, so now, more than ever,
17 students and families need social, emotional support.
18 I choose to be a school counselor so I can give back
19 to my community but was appalled that I wasn't even
20 given a chance for a job interview, now because I
21 didn't have the skillset, but because I was born too
22 late to be in the field. Just simply applying SEL
23 and schools has not been enough. You need PPS to
24 help adjust crises. Teachers are not trained like we
25 are, and they are already burned out and overworked.

2 Also, adequate language access needs to be in place
3 to provide mental health resources related to COVID-
4 19, since a lot of our APA population have limited
5 English proficiency. COVID-19 is a traumatic
6 experience, and it is crucial for our young people to
7 have support to process it and work through it.
8 Adults have some skillsets to cope with the pandemic,
9 but still struggle, so imagine how much worse it is
10 for our youth who speaks English and the ones who
11 don't. Mental health resources are great for our
12 youth but doesn't mean anything if it is not
13 linguistically or culturally appropriate. It also
14 doesn't have that there are anti-Asian crimes in the
15 midst of the pandemic. Youth need us to support
16 them, but we cannot support them without adequate
17 funding. ISS is at limited capacity, scrambling to
18 help and going above and beyond, but there is just so
19 much we can do with all these budget cuts. Thank
20 you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
22 for your testimony. For our sixth panel of public
23 testimony, the order of speaking will be Jane R.
24 Bigelson, Polina Ostrenkova, Amy Wilkerson, a

2 Representative from Safe Horizon, and Damion Samuels.

3 I will now call on Jane Bigelson to testify.

4 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

5 JANE R. BIGELSON: Hello. My name is
6 Jane Bigelson and I'm the Vice President of Advocacy
7 at Covenant House New York where we serve young
8 adults experiencing homelessness and human
9 trafficking. Thank you so much Council Chair Rose,
10 as well as the Committee for the opportunity to
11 testify today. We're obviously aware that we're in
12 the midst of a global pandemic and that funding is
13 tight. However, we also know that most vulnerable
14 among us are fearing the worst. At Covenant House
15 New York and the other RHY programs across the city,
16 the most vulnerable among us are exactly who we
17 serve. Young people without homes, and little to no
18 safety net before they reach our doors. We beg you
19 not to forget our youth and staff in the New York
20 City budget process. First and foremost, we are
21 asking that our frontline staff be paid a living
22 wage. Unfortunately, cost of living increases for
23 RHY staff under city contracts have been few and far
24 between. It is simply unacceptable for essential
25 workers who have been risking their own lives every

2 day in this pandemic to serve others, to be needing
3 to juggle multiple jobs just to survive. We
4 therefore asking for a minimum of 3% cola on all RHY
5 contracts across the city as well as an increase to
6 right size contracts to better reflect the true cost
7 of PED. Additionally, the mental health needs of our
8 young people have skyrocketed during this pandemic.
9 We have had to make mental health care more readily
10 available and we're doing everything in our power and
11 asking our private donors for more in a time when
12 everyone has less to give, but we simply can't do it
13 without the city's support. Additionally, a large
14 number of people have lost jobs during COVID, and
15 many of their job and educational programs have
16 shifted online and some have been closed. Our
17 workforce development team has done a great job in
18 shifting focus to helping our young people find jobs
19 where they can be safe in this pandemic, but all of
20 that has come at an increased cost. Finally, onto
21 human trafficking. Recent research has demonstrated
22 that one in five of our young people have had
23 experiences that fit the Federal definition of human
24 trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation, and
25 these young people have also struggled during this

2 pandemic with many losing jobs, which makes it more
3 likely that they'll return to the lift of
4 prostitution. To end on a positive note though, we
5 are in the midst of relocating our safe house which
6 is currently in Long Island to the Bronx and we're
7 all very excited about that, but that is also going
8 to come with increased costs. So, we're grateful to
9 the New York City Council, especially to Chair Rose
10 whose has been an active support of our young people,
11 and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
13 for your testimony. I will now call on Polina
14 Ostrenkova.

15 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

16 POLINA OSTRENKOVA: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Polina Ostrenkova, and I am going to speak on
18 behalf of Covenant House New York as a client and
19 survivor of commercial sexual exploitation. I'd like
20 to share my story and opinion to show the importance
21 of runaway homes and youth programs and others like
22 for where young people like me. I'm grateful for the
23 opportunity to testify today as the voice of
24 trafficked youth. I'll begin my story. I left home
25 and family due to tension that made it impossible to

2 continue to live there. Once in the US, I met a
3 young man who I thought was boyfriend and who I
4 believed wanted the best for me. Unfortunately, I
5 was involved in commercial sex and had to commit non-
6 prostitution crimes, as a result, I ended up in jail
7 and my trafficker did not. This experience
8 traumatized me a lot, but I'm so grateful for the
9 help of the Legal Aid Society. They did a great job
10 defending me so I was released from jail, but I had
11 no idea rather I would be able to live a normal life
12 until my case was closed. After I was released, my
13 first connection became Restoring my seat with help
14 of victims of human trafficking. Restore did
15 wonderful job, and later referred me to the Covenant
16 House New York. I'm now at the Aspire Program and
17 this is a safe house program for trafficked girls
18 where they are able to recover from their trauma, and
19 now I wanted to speak shortly about services that
20 Covenant House provides and why do we need them.
21 First is a workforce development. Worker development
22 programs for client of Covenant House are especially
23 important because we get to learn more and apply for
24 schools and colleges. Mental health is also a huge
25 concern as young adults may feel anxious, desperate,

2 and triggered by their trauma. Without mental health
3 care, desperate youth will continue to be plagued by
4 depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Legal assistance.
5 Free legal services helped me to get on my feet and
6 Covenant House New York has only one attorney and
7 needs more. Speaking about anti-trafficking
8 programs, since trafficking is a hard thing to stop,
9 and exploiters have great skills manipulating people
10 and recruiting vulnerable people as well as LGBTQ,
11 black youths and with the year of the pandemic, the
12 situation has become even worse. Covenant House has
13 been fighting trafficking and homelessness for
14 decades and for the past year, I haven't had to worry
15 about a place to stay, food and etc. I also have
16 been getting assistance to cover my own needs and to
17 learn how to budget my money. I was able to leave my
18 bad experience behind and focus on the future. I ask
19 City Council to make sure that New York City ...
20 (crosstalk).

21 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

22 POLINA OSTRENKOVA: Shelters that
23 Covenant House as well as the other non-profits
24 because if there were no places like Covenant House,
25 there wouldn't be me. Thank you so much.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
3 so much for your testimony, Polina. I will now call
4 on Amy Wilkerson to testify.

5 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

6 AMY WILKERSON: Good afternoon. My name
7 is Amy Wilkerson. I'm the Vice President of School
8 and Youth Programs at Sheltering Arms Children and
9 Family Services. Thank you, Chair Rose and Members
10 of the Committee on Youth Service for the opportunity
11 to testify before you today. Sheltering Arms is one
12 of the largest providers of education, youth, and
13 community and family well-being programs for Bronx,
14 Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. We serve nearly
15 15,000 children, youth, and families each year and we
16 employ more than 1100 staff. We are a leading
17 provider on after-school programming as well as
18 runaway and homeless youth services. I would like to
19 first start by thanking the Council for their long
20 support in restoring funding for summer programs each
21 year, and after the stress of what we experienced
22 last year and what families and providers
23 experienced, we were hopeful that this summer funding
24 for youth would be prioritized, especially as the
25 city continues to move forward towards recovery and

2 reopening schools; however, unfortunately, we are
3 here again where we have zero funding for SONYC
4 middle school programs. We know it's a tough budget
5 year for the Council and for the mayor, but these
6 programs are vital to the success of children in
7 youth in New York City and providers like Sheltering
8 Arms have been able to provide safely in-person SONYC
9 programming and COMPASS programming throughout the
10 pandemic. We've been able to do so with more than
11 120 children at five elementary school just this
12 semester, and we're hopeful that Council will restore
13 funding for SONYC middle schoolers in this budget.
14 Next, I would like to talk about our runaway and
15 homeless youth programming. As my colleague from
16 Covenant stated, it is very important that we right-
17 size the funding for runaway and homeless youth
18 contracts. The current budget amount that we are
19 allocated does not fully fund the services that we
20 provide and we're asking for Council to take a look
21 at how runaway and homeless youth programs are funded
22 and to come up with a better metric to right-size the
23 funding. Next, I want to talk about our homeless
24 youth between the ages of 21 and 24. As a provider
25 of two drop-in centers, as well as crisis shelter and

2 two transitional independent living programs, we are
3 very aware that 21- to 24-year-olds are using drop-in
4 services because they are afraid to go into adult
5 homeless shelters. So, we're asking to add
6 additional beds to the 21- to 24-year-olds, and we're
7 also asking for mental health supports to be added to
8 our programming. We're seeing an increase in mental
9 health needs in the participants that we serve, and
10 we need more funding to be able to better meet their
11 needs, and next, we're asking if we can hold harmless
12 providers for the ... (crosstalk).

13 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

14 AMY WILKERSON: underutilization that
15 took place as a result of the pandemic. We were
16 forced to make changes to our services, to our in-
17 person services with limited amount of participants
18 we can serve and were acts that will be held harmless
19 to that, and I am out of time. I just want to fast
20 forward and ask that we look at the restoration of
21 the Indirect Rate. This is critical to the survival
22 of non-profit organizations, and we ask that Indirect
23 Rate is completely restored in this budget. Thank
24 you for your time.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
3 for your testimony. I will now call on the
4 Representative from Safe Horizon.

5 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

6 REPRESENTATIVE FROM SAFE HORIZON: Good
7 afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to
8 testify before you today regarding the youth services
9 portion of the fiscal year 2022 preliminary budget.
10 My name is Joe Westincott (SP?) and I'm the Assistant
11 Director of Housing and Benefit Resources at Safe
12 Horizons StreetWork Project. Safe Horizon is the
13 nation's largest non-profit victim services
14 organization. Safe Horizon offers a client-center,
15 trauma and first response to 250,000 New Yorkers each
16 year who have experience violence or abuse and we are
17 increasing using an anti-racist mode to guide our
18 work with clients, with each other, and developing
19 the public positions that we hold. Rather we are
20 called on to provide expert testimony at an oversight
21 hearing or to assist a constituent in crisis and in
22 need of emergency services. We are pleased to
23 partner with the City Council in a collective effort
24 to make our city safer for all. We look forward to
25 helping you and staff learn how to best support

2 survivors and connect them to the resources available
3 in your borough and community. Over the many years,
4 the City Council has been a key supporter of our
5 programs, helping adults, adolescents, and child
6 victims of violence and abuse. City Council fills in
7 gaps where no other financial support exists and
8 allows us to jar down the critical dollars from other
9 sources. Moreover, this funding demonstrates the
10 value that you and your colleagues place in helping
11 young people access desperately needed shelters,
12 support services, legal assistance, and counseling.
13 My testimony today will provide an update to the
14 Youth Service Committee on one key initiative this is
15 funded by the City Council and contracted through the
16 Department of Youth and Community Development. This
17 initiative, this support for persons involved in the
18 sex trades provides critical funding to StreetWork
19 Project. StreetWork provides shelter, showers, hot
20 meals, therapy, service linkage, safer sex supports,
21 case management, and more, and therapeutic
22 (inaudible) communities serving homeless youth ages
23 13 to 25. We work with homeless and street-involved
24 young people to help them find safety and stability.
25 Many homeless young people face a day-to-day struggle

2 to survive which could lead to physical and emotional
3 harm. Homeless youth may have experienced family
4 abuse, violence, rejection, and instability that led
5 to their homelessness. We welcome these young people
6 and help them to navigate complex systems and provide
7 essential resources at our drop-in centers, at our
8 open ranch shelter, and through our street outreach
9 team. This work can be incredibly challenging, but
10 also very rewarding. Our work at StreetWork did not
11 pause during this pandemic. Rather, our dedicated
12 team continued to respond to homeless and at-risk
13 young people with New York Shelters, Services and
14 understanding. Safe Horizon StreetWork Project has
15 been doing this community-based work since 1984, and
16 we will continue to do so for as long as our services
17 are needed. Beginning in fiscal year 2020, the City
18 Council designated \$456,697.00 through the support
19 for persons involving the sex trade initiative to
20 bolster StreetWork's ability to provide services and
21 access to housing to young people engaged in the sex
22 trade. With this funding, we've been able to
23 increase our engage and response to the number of
24 young people both in the drop-in center and on the
25 street who are in crisis and involved in the sex

2 trade and connect to supportive counseling, access to
3 benefits and housing, and primary and mental health
4 care. Therefore, we are seeking full restoration of
5 the ... (crosstalk).

6 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

7 REPRESENTATIVE FROM SAFE HORIZON:

8 \$458,697.00 to continue to bolster our response and
9 offer critical services to this wonderful population,
10 navigating a pandemic, homelessness, violence,
11 racism, and so many other traumas. Thank you again
12 for the opportunity to testify today. I'm happy to
13 answer any questions you may have.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
15 for your testimony. I will now call on Damion
16 Samuels.

17 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

18 DAMION SAMUELS: Good afternoon and thank
19 you to the Committee on Youth Services and to Chair
20 Rose for allowing us the opportunity to speak. My
21 name is Damion Samuels. I'm the Senior Director for
22 Youth Services and Community Engagement at the
23 Stanley Issacs Neighborhood Center. I'm here to talk
24 to you a little bit about the real challenges that
25 are facing young people, particularly young people of

2 color. As you know, this pandemic has exposed the
3 fault line in society. Many folks who were also
4 already struggling, this pandemic has exacerbated
5 those challenges. A recent study, the strain of
6 inequality, the economic impact of COVID-19 in New
7 York City described how 68% of those who experienced
8 job loss are persons of color and one-third of young
9 adults, age 18 to 24 have lost jobs during this
10 pandemic. One of the things that we often note is
11 that people often mention that it's critical that we
12 get to normal. It's important for us to mention that
13 normal wasn't working for many black and brown
14 residents of this city before the pandemic and so
15 restoring us to a time when things didn't work
16 exactly well, isn't exactly a hopeful outlook, and so
17 what we need from City Council and the city is to
18 prioritize innovative strategies to begin to be able
19 to meet people's needs. Our young, as you might
20 imagine, have been really affected by the downturn in
21 jobs in the hospitality industry and the retail
22 industry to industry sectors that have traditionally
23 been very supportive of hiring young people. One of
24 the things that the Isaac Center, we run a culinary
25 training program and so, faced with the prospects of

2 having frankly a hostile of job sectors, we began to
3 employ our young people in service of the food
4 insecurity needs of our community, and so over the
5 past six months, the Isaac Center has produced 18,000
6 meals for food insecure New Yorkers. Much of this
7 work was driven by the graduates of our culinary
8 training program, and so our pivot to finding
9 position in health and wellness as opposed to
10 strictly culinary hospitality has been really vital,
11 but as you know, much of this work in ramping up our
12 community kitchen was driven by one-time emergency
13 philanthropic gift gifts and while we certainly
14 appreciate them, we know that the food insecurity
15 needs of New Yorkers are not going away any time
16 soon, and so we need the City Council to step up
17 along with the city to advocate for us to be able to
18 provide increased funding to support community
19 kitchen operations combating food insecurity. One of
20 the other things that we found, there was a recent
21 study by Burning Glass, it spoke about the importance
22 of finding lifeboat jobs. Lifeboat jobs are jobs
23 that provide short term opportunities that connect
24 people to industries that do have some long-term

2 rope, so through innovated partnerships with New York
3 Presbyterian, through our pivot ... (crosstalk)

4 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

5 DAMION SAMUELS: We've been able to
6 create this kind of lifeboat jobs, but it is
7 critically essential that moving forward, that we are
8 thinking about how can we create greater
9 opportunities for young people who we know, if we
10 don't deal with them now, will deal with the effects
11 of our ignoring of them later, and so, the final
12 thing that I just want to add and thank you to Amy
13 Wilkerson and also to Council Member Rosenthal for
14 bringing up the Indirect Rate, we also were approved
15 for a greater Indirect Rate and obviously given the
16 challenges of the pandemic, that program has been
17 suspended. Again, it is critically important to be
18 able to restore this funding so that we can do the
19 work that is so desperately needed. Thank you for
20 the opportunity to testify.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
22 for your testimony. Our next panel of public
23 testimony in order of speaking will be Nargis Asghar,
24 Christine James McKenzie, David Calvert, and Chrissy
25 Odalen. I will now call on Nargis Asghar to testify.

2 STG. POLITE: Time starts now.

3 NARGIS ASGHAR: Hello. My name is Nargis
4 Asghar. I'm a student at the James (inaudible)
5 program. I'm glad I have this opportunity with you
6 all to share my experience with the youth program.
7 (inaudible) is an alternative school and vocational
8 training program that helps students aged 17 to 24
9 attempting high school equivalency diplomas, jobs
10 skills, and helps them to go on to college. The
11 reason I joined the program was because I had to
12 finish high school, so I have my diploma. It was
13 very hard for me to find somewhere to help me, to
14 give a second chance to start over and succeed this
15 time. The program gave me a second chance to prepare
16 me for taking the exam and getting my high school
17 equivalency diploma. The staff members, the
18 teachers, the directors were all helpful. They
19 helped me to start on a path of great success and a
20 good future. Because of this program, I got my HSC.
21 The program not only prepared me for getting my HSC,
22 it helped me to improve my future, set my goals, and
23 start on the path of achieving my dreams, on a path
24 of making a difference. They also helped me get onto
25 college. I'm grateful for the contribution of the

2 programs towards not only the student's education,
3 but towards the student's wellbeing, success and
4 goals. I believe the City Council should continue to
5 fund the youth program because the program is first
6 and second chance. How many times have we had a
7 second chance in life? I believe everyone deserves a
8 second chance. This program was my second chance.
9 It was what I needed to look forward to a bright and
10 successful future. I want others just like me to be
11 brought there, to welcome them and give them a second
12 chance. That's what I believe it should be funded.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
16 for your testimony. I will now call on Christine
17 James McKenzie.

18 STG. POLITE: Time starts now.

19 CHRISTINE JAMES MCKENZIE: Good morning
20 to the distinguished members of the City Council
21 Committee on Youth Services. My name is Christine
22 James McKenzie, and I'm the Associate of
23 Communications, Learning, and Policy at Jobs First
24 NYC, which is non-profit intermediary that creates an
25 advance to solutions, separate down barriers, and

2 transforms systems supporting young adults and their
3 communities in the pursuit of economic opportunities.
4 Before I continue, I just want to say that I am
5 continually impressed by how the young people are
6 articulated their case for funding here today. New
7 York City is facing one of the worst financial crisis
8 in its history and young people are most vulnerable,
9 bearing the bunt of the multi-faceted displacement.
10 Jobs First NYC intends to use all of the resources at
11 its disposal to ensure that young adults are not
12 disproportionately impacted by the recession and
13 assist our partners across the city but realize that
14 none of us can go this road alone. It will require
15 sustained focus and collective attention from all
16 sides including the city government to give all young
17 people starts that ensure success. Before COVID-19
18 gripped the country, the number of out-of-work 16- to
19 24-year-olds was 117,000. Many of the same group
20 were also likely to be employed in low-wage jobs with
21 limited opportunities for advancement. The black and
22 Latin X population were disproportionately likely to
23 be disconnected and make up 56% of out-of-school,
24 out-of-work young people. Early data on the impact
25 of COVID on the out-of-school, out-of-work rates on

2 New York City estimate 259,000 to 324,000 or 27% to
3 34% of all young adults that are not in school and
4 are not working. To further evaluate the needs of
5 out-of-school, and out-of-work young people and the
6 pandemic's early effects on workforce development,
7 Jobs First NYC hosted a series of convening in
8 conjunction with youth and employment intermediaries
9 to (inaudible) institutions, workforce training
10 providers and community college. The result is being
11 catalogued in a working paper and the recommendations
12 we have are such. First one, design youth and form
13 solutions that center young adults, their experiences
14 and goals, invest resources to decrease the number of
15 out-of-school, out-of-work young adults.

16 Recommendation two, create a seemly continuum of
17 integrated supports across education and youth
18 developmental stages and institutions. By that, we
19 mean, funding a mentorship program and mental health
20 services as a standard part of youth workforce
21 development programs. Recommendation three, build
22 the capacity of workforce providers to deliver high
23 quality culturally competent market aligned services
24 to young adults, address job quality issues in the
25 workforce development field through profession

2 development and higher pay. Recommendation four,
3 eliminates silos by encouraging and rewarding
4 collaboration across youth workforce programs and
5 providers, and number five ... (crosstalk).

6 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

7 CHRISTINE JAMES MCKENZIE: Reinvigorate
8 and expand partnerships with employers and industry
9 groups to create employment and new career pathway
10 opportunities and the last, prioritize economic
11 mobility and pathways to prosperity for historically
12 marginalized and disproportionately harmed
13 communities. We do appreciate the opportunity to
14 testify and would like to continue to encourage our
15 young people.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
17 for your testimony. I will now call on David Calvert.

18 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

19 DAVID CALVERT: Hello, Chairwoman Rose.

20 Hi Debbie, and Members of the Youth Services
21 Committee. I am David Calvert. A moment ago, you
22 heard from Nargis Asghar, a student from Dreams
23 Program in Brooklyn. I'm speaking for the Youth
24 Build NYC collaborative on behalf eight Youth Build
25 programs located in all five boroughs and operated by

2 some of the finest community service institutions in
3 the city: Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation,
4 Due Settlement, Sobro, and (inaudible) Community
5 Service, Youth Action, Youth Build, Central Family
6 Life Center, the Hope Program and Queens Community
7 House. Each of these institutions has taken up the
8 awesome challenge of turning around the lives of
9 young people that really need that second chance
10 through a methodology that includes training,
11 education, counseling, community service, follow up
12 services, respect, inclusion, and yes, love. 10% of
13 our population, 18 to 24 are in that slot and one of
14 six of that 10% are out-of-school and out-of-work.
15 That's the population we address directly. They are
16 often labeled opportunities because the upside of
17 their transformation is to success is sole beneficial
18 to our society, and so observed, and because with
19 their vision and energy, so much good can be
20 accomplished. With Youth Build over the past decades
21 and across the country, over 200,000 opportunity
22 youth have transformed their lives. They have
23 constructed or rehabbed 40,000 units of low-income
24 housing. They have contributed many millions of
25 hours of service to their communities and have taken

1 so many leadership positions in their cities and
2 towns. New York City is the center for Youth Build
3 and its birthplace 40 years ago, but our message and
4 impact has in effect, gone viral. This is an
5 historic moment for the Council, a chance to reverse
6 last year's (inaudible) and help ease the lingering
7 shocks caused by the crushing pandemic. To build on
8 a new spirit in Washington DC, made evident this week
9 in the passage of the huge American Relief Act, that
10 will inject welcome fuel into our economy and expand
11 the city budget directly by about 6 billion dollars
12 to enlist youth who have been relegated to the
13 margins into the rebuilding of their own lives, and
14 also of our city, both today and in the future. We
15 request full and adequate funding for Youth Build in
16 fiscal 22. Since 2014, the Council has allocated 2.1
17 million of discretionary funds annually through a
18 citywide speaker initiative ensuring that no youthful
19 opportunities are lost for lack of funds. Last year
20 the pandemic budget crisis caused a decrease, so a
21 return this year to continuity funding would be 2.1
22 million citywide, but to ensure excellent Youth Build
23 Services for a minimum of 530 opportunity youth in
24

2 all five boroughs, we respectfully request 3.2
3 million in the Speaker's citywide initiative.

4 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

5 DAVID CALVERT: We accept the challenges
6 ahead, we're on it, and we need the Council to join
7 us for that. I will submit the full version of my
8 testimony along with the written testimony of Augren
9 Green (SP?), the Youth Build graduate who went on to
10 college at returned to join the staff as counselor
11 for Youth Build Dreams of Brooklyn. Thank you for
12 your attention and support.

13 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
15 for your testimony. I will now call on Chrissy
16 Odalen.

17 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

18 CHRISSY ODALEN: Good afternoon, Chair
19 Rose and everyone on the call this afternoon. My
20 name is Chrissy Odalen and I serve as Senior Director
21 of Youth Program at New York Road Runners. Thank you
22 for this opportunity to testify before the Committee
23 on Youth Services today. New York Road Runner's
24 mission is to help and inspire people through
25 running. While we are best known for organizing the

2 TCS New York City Marathon, our organization is one
3 of the largest non-profit providers of free youth
4 fitness programs in New York City. Rising New York
5 Road Runners is the flagship youth program of NYRR,
6 and helps kids develop the ability, confidence, and
7 desire to be physically active for life. The program
8 takes a developmental approach to physical education,
9 blending running and social emotional learning with a
10 mix of fitness activities and games. Offered for
11 free to New York City school after-school programs
12 and community centers, we train teachers, counselors,
13 and coaches to implement our youth program as well as
14 provide resources for virtual and blended teaching
15 and reward kids to keep them moving and improving.

16 We are asking the New York City Council to once
17 again, generously fund our crucial services for youth
18 under its physical education fitness initiative which
19 will greatly help offset the expenses necessary in
20 bringing our program at no cost to roughly 800 New
21 York City educators and 100,000 students in every
22 single City Council District annually. In light of
23 the COVID-19 crisis, New York City youth need more
24 than ever, an active life style and resources that
25 promote social, emotional learning. Low levels of

2 time spent being active has a wide range of negative,
3 physical, social and emotional health effects among
4 youths. A lack of access of equipment, facilities,
5 and spaces, unfortunately compounded by the COVID-19
6 crisis, and lack of support from peers and parents
7 further compound these problems. To address the
8 unique needs in the 2020-2021, we've enhanced our
9 youth program's offering to provide activities that
10 fit a range of settings. Rather students are
11 learning in-person, remotely, or a mix of both and
12 guide the inclusion of physical activity into
13 student's days. The program also includes no barrier
14 instructional videos, including Spanish language
15 videos that can be follow independently at home. As
16 a testament to our youth program's importance of New
17 York City educators, in 2021, we were chosen as one
18 of four providers to help New York City schools offer
19 high-quality physical activities that focus on fun,
20 movement, socially distance games, running, and
21 sports conditioning through the Chance program. We
22 are also constantly working in partnership with the
23 DOE and the Officer of School Programs to adjust our
24 curriculum to accommodate at-home learning and
25 support educators transitioning to new teaching

2 styles. The COVID-19 crisis has made NYRR's work to
3 support New York City schools, educators, parents,
4 and kids more important than ever. Our youth
5 programs are ready to serve every member of our
6 community regardless of the unique impacts COVID has
7 had on our lives. I respectfully ask the City
8 Council to reenforce the importance of keeping kids
9 active by renewing and increasing funding under its
10 physical education and fitness initiative, so that
11 NYRR may continue at no cost to help youth across the
12 five boroughs stay healthy. Thank you for allowing
13 me to testify today.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
15 for your testimony. Our next panel of public
16 testimony in order of speaking will be James Horton,
17 Caroline Iosso, Adam Jacobs, Kenneth Jones, and Debra
18 Sue Lorenzen. I will now call on James Horton.

19 SGT POLITE: Time starts now.

20 JAMES HORTON: Good afternoon, Chair Rose
21 and Members of the Committee and my fellow New
22 Yorkers. Thank you so much for the opportunity to
23 testify. I'm James C. Horton, Vice President of
24 Education and Engagement at the Museum of the City of
25 New York. The museum is one of 34 organizations with

2 the CIG, Cultural Institutions Group, that are
3 located on city-owned land or in city-owned
4 buildings. Last year, CIGs welcomed nearly 24
5 million individuals through their doors. We work in
6 concert with many community partners to provide
7 cultural, educational, and community services in a
8 wide variety of ways. Our work has always been seen
9 as vital to fostering a healthy, vibrant equitable and
10 inclusive community. During the past year, we have
11 found our work to be even that more vital and
12 necessary than ever as we deal with the challenges
13 imposed by the pandemic, civil unrest, and economic
14 challenges that so many New Yorkers are still facing.
15 We work with all ages and all demographics, all over
16 the city, and now because of forced technological
17 evolution, we can make our programs more available to
18 New York City, more available to people all over the
19 world. We continue to be grateful for the Council's
20 support for culturing the arts in New York throughout
21 the year that yields a monumental return on
22 investment for all New Yorkers and in this moment,
23 this investment is more necessary than ever. I'm
24 here today to provide information about some of the
25 work that we've done with New York City's youth and

2 advocating for funding for the FY22 budget. During
3 this past year, which was unlike any other in New
4 York City's history, the Museum of the City of New
5 York still presented seven exhibitions that were
6 offered in person and in many cases had virtual
7 components, and in that virtual space, we managed to
8 make the digital pivot, reimagining and expanding our
9 work to serve thousands of adults, families,
10 students, and educators through virtual field trips,
11 adult learning initiatives, as well as youth and
12 adult centered workshops and expanding on exhibits
13 such as activist New York which has a component that
14 focuses on the movement for Black Lives, and New York
15 Responds, the first six months of the pandemic which
16 was a crowd source exhibition documenting how New
17 York City responded to the events of 2020. In our
18 upcoming citywide initiative Project 846, will be
19 short crowd source documentary centering the voices
20 and reflections of New York City youth on the murder
21 of George Floyd. This summer, we are looking forward
22 to possibly being an SYEP site and supporting the
23 expanded vision for SYEP by employing young people to
24 support many of the Museum's summer programs. While
25 we've had significant amount of programming still

2 happening both on site and in the virtual space and
3 plan to continue doing this to serve New York City
4 through this hybrid model, we've also had a chance to
5 take a different look at ourselves as a cultural
6 institution, turning the mirror on ... (crosstalk).

7 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

8 JAMES HORTON: And continuing to explore
9 how we can be a more equitable place and continue to
10 uplift and amplify the voices of New Yorkers. Chair
11 Rose, I leave you with one question today, and a
12 challenge to all of my esteemed CIG colleagues, if
13 all CIGs were mandated to be host sites for SYEP
14 youth, increase the budget and we'll make space for
15 NYC's young people to work within New York City's
16 cultural institutions, we ask that our budget remain
17 harmless. Thank you.

18 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
20 for your testimony. I will now call on Caroline
21 Iosso.

22 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

23 CAROLINE IOSSO: Good afternoon. My name
24 is Caroline Iosso, and I am the Director of Advocacy
25 and Strategic Communication at Opportunities for a

2 Better Tomorrow, OBT. Thank you so much to Chair
3 Rose and the Members of the Council for the
4 opportunity to speak today. I am here to discuss the
5 importance of centering young adults in the city's
6 recovery efforts and for DYCD's budget to remain
7 intact to facilitate this recovery. Founded in 1983,
8 OBT is one of New York City's largest provider of
9 workforce development and education services for
10 opportunity youth, ages 17 and 24, and adults who are
11 disconnected from education and/or employment. We
12 exist to break the cycle of poverty and inequity
13 through education, job training and employment. We
14 focus on meeting individuals where they are, and work
15 with them to meet their goals. As we know, COVID has
16 taken a particularly devastating toll on New York
17 City's young adults. I've really, really appreciated,
18 and I'm sure you all have as well, hearing from them
19 today. That's really awesome. The pandemic has had
20 a disproportionately negative impact on this
21 population, and we must prioritize their needs and
22 challenges in the years to come and in this coming
23 budget. According to a February 2021 report from the
24 Center of New York City Affairs, young adults were
25 34% more likely to have lost work and workers with a

2 high school education or less were 16% more likely to
3 have lost their jobs due to the pandemic, and in
4 addition to bearing the brunt of the economic
5 downturn, young adults also face an especially steep
6 climb back to financial stability. This is due to
7 increased competition for jobs, a need for enhanced
8 skills, and the continued challenges and inevitable
9 permanent changes faced by the service sectors.

10 DYCD's programs must continue to be able to address
11 this crisis and support young people in accessing
12 living wage work. We advocate that their budgets
13 stays whole so that young adults of all ages can
14 access enrichment and personal and professional
15 growth throughout the year. After a stressful and
16 difficult year for the city's young people, we must
17 support them in building skills, connections and
18 community and it would be cruel to cut funding to
19 programs that engage one of the city's most
20 vulnerable and most valuable populations. In
21 particular, we at OBT advocate for program like the
22 following: Strengthening career pathways through
23 expanding industry certified training programs. For
24 high school graduates or graduates of OBT's high
25 school equivalency programs, we offer these advanced

2 trainings in healthcare, construction, and
3 technology, and these programs create a bridge into
4 growing sectors in the city. We also advocate for
5 supporting those seeking their high school
6 equivalency diplomas with increased digital
7 education. A high school diploma is still the
8 gatekeeper for living wage employment, and those
9 without a diploma are relegated to lower paid and
10 more vulnerable positions that lack opportunities for
11 growth. Furthermore, we know that digital literacy
12 and basic technological skills are essential for all
13 workers. The pandemic has ... (crosstalk).

14 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

15 CAROLINE IOSSO: As we determine the best
16 path forward, it would be devastating to leave young
17 people, the next generation of doers, thinkers, and
18 builders behind. Thank you so much for the
19 opportunity to speak, and Chair Rose, thank you for
20 your incredible advocacy.

21 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
23 for your testimony. I will now call on Adam Jacobs.

24 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

25

2 ADAM JACOBS: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Adam Jacobs, and I am representing the Youth
4 Development Institute at Ramapo for Children. I'm
5 here to share testimony from youth on the importance
6 on youth leadership councils. They are our
7 participants in our two youth leadership councils,
8 one which was already mentioned earlier today, My
9 Brother and Sister's Keeper Youth Council, and we
10 facilitate with DYCD and other from the Youth Council
11 of the DOE Office of Community Schools. We think it's
12 essential to have youth voice represent the needs of
13 young people, but the council participants are not
14 able to attend this hearing because they have
15 obligations for school and work, and in the future,
16 we ask that this Committee consider moving the
17 hearing to the afternoon hours to enable more young
18 people to testify without missing school. We also
19 believe in compensating the young leaders for their
20 contributions, for this reason, the Youth Institute
21 at Ramapo has submitted discretionary requests to the
22 City Council to support our leader internship program
23 which would allow us to compensate youth leadership
24 council alumni for the continued engagement and
25 leadership after they have completed the one-year

2 council program. The Councils explore important
3 topics in New York City such as policing, healthcare,
4 equity, and education and more and then make policy
5 recommendations. As DYCD Commissioner Cheng
6 mentioned earlier, My Brother and Sister's Keeper
7 Youth Council is lifting up youth voices through
8 townhalls which are on YouTube and we will share, and
9 we were just tasked with becoming peer hosts of
10 circles for young people to discuss some of the
11 stigmas associated with mental health challenges.
12 The Office of Community School's young people are
13 looking at the implications of student attendance and
14 students living in temporary housing. Their
15 testimonies are as follows. Adonna, 16 from Brooklyn
16 say, "I believe that being on a youth council is
17 important. I'm the source that can be used to promote
18 change, especially on the issues that directly affect
19 me". Monica, 15, from Queens, "I'm passionate about
20 my voice and this councils gives me an opportunity to
21 speak freely and confidently about the things that
22 matter most to me". Chloe, 16, from Brooklyn, "I'm
23 an advocate for change and inclusion. I want to
24 address the issues in my school and my community that
25 others just walk by". Ryanne, 16, from Staten Island

2 says, "In my opinion, youth councils bring our youth
3 community together, teach valuable life lessons, and
4 encourage the youth community to get along while
5 voicing their opinion". Curvins, 21, from Brooklyn,
6 "The importance of having a youth council is that it
7 gives young people the power to invest in themselves
8 and improve their peers. It helps young people
9 develop their leadership skills and also take on new
10 skills along the way. It helps forge better adults
11 for tomorrow because they are already in align where
12 they know how to be responsible and act according to
13 a certain situation". Finally, Eva, 17 from the
14 Bronx says, "The council makes me feel heard in a way
15 that no other place does". Thank you on behalf of
16 these youth leaders and everyone at the Youth
17 Development Institute at Ramapo for Children. We
18 look forward to working with you ... (crosstalk).

19 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

20 ADAM JACOBS: Councils through renewed
21 funding and to lift up the voices of young people in
22 New York City. Thank you very much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
24 for your testimony. I will now call on Kenneth
25 Jones.

2 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

3 KENNETH JONES: Thank you. (Inaudible).

4 CHAIR ROSE: Can we adjust the sound so
5 we can hear him?

6 KENNETH JONES: Oh, sorry.

7 CHAIR ROSE: Let's start his time again.
8 Thank you.

9 KENNETH JONES: Can you hear me better
10 now?

11 CHAIR ROSE: Yes.

12 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: So sorry,
14 you've gone out. We can't hear you again.

15 KENNETH JONES: I don't know what'
16 happening. Let me see.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Maybe the
18 paper ... (crosstalk).

19 KENNETH JONES: It might be the paper.
20 Let me try. Can you hear me now?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Yes.

22 KENNETH JONES: Okay. I'm sorry. I
23 probably won't use all three minutes, so thank you
24 Chair Rose again, and the Committee for taking time
25 to listen to us. While we're here to advocate for

2 restoration of fall funding, I'm not actually here to
3 ask you for anything specific to the Salvatore
4 Center, but I am here to share some research that
5 we've done on the valuable impact that after-school
6 programs have on our city's youth. For those of you
7 that don't know about the Salvatore Center, we've
8 been working in the city for over, just about 50
9 years, providing both programs for in-school,
10 kindergarten through 12th grade as well as after-
11 school programs. We've partnered with DYCD over the
12 years and in the last two years have worked with SYEP
13 on the Career Clue program. Before COVID, we were in
14 the classrooms and delivering direct services to
15 students, but last summer, we did the entire Career
16 Clue program online. All of Salvatore's programs are
17 stem programs that are tied to the Built environment
18 and that's the buildings, the bridges, the parks, the
19 playground, the real world that the students live in,
20 and all of our programs are K through 12, grade
21 specific programs, but the best part about the after-
22 school program is it really helps to close the
23 achievement gap and the stem gap for students from
24 our city's most underserved communities. We have
25 eight years of research that shows when you do

2 programs that are project based where children build
3 the programs with their hands, their experiments,
4 they work collaboratively to solve problems, they
5 learn how to communicate, they get an increased sense
6 that they can succeed at stem. They can see
7 themselves as the city's future architects,
8 engineers, builders, designers, developers, and they
9 can see themselves as being successful in the school
10 Math and Science that's relevant to their grade, and
11 perhaps even more importantly, younger kids as early
12 as 5th grade and kindergarten start to form their
13 self-perception of their ability to be successful in
14 Math and Science, as early as kindergarten, and so,
15 when we have programs in the after-school environment
16 for our most underserved communities, and especially
17 programs that are accessible to them, hands on a
18 collaborative, where any student can succeed, they
19 start to see themselves as part of the future of
20 stem, part of the future of the city, and breaking
21 the cycle of oppression that has faced our
22 communities for far too long. So, programs like
23 Salvatore are here to help. If you get money at the
24 last minute, we have our own educators, our own
25 curriculum, we can push into the programs and we can

2 deliver those programs with two-weeks notices, so we
3 are here to applaud you, to thank you, and to
4 advocate with you for more funding for after-school
5 programs. Thank you very much Chair Rose and the
6 Committee, and sorry about the technical problems in
7 the beginning.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Not a
9 problem. Thank you for your testimony. I will now
10 call on Deborah Sue Lorenzen.

11 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

12 DEBORAH SUE LORENZEN: Good afternoon.
13 My name is Deborah Sue Lorenzen, Director of Youth
14 and Education at St. Nick's Alliance in North
15 Brooklyn. We serve more than 6000 youths and 3000
16 adults through comprehensive youth services for ages
17 2 to 24. I wanted to give my testimony by thanking
18 City Council who, with Chair Rose's stellar
19 leadership continues to fight with us for the
20 critical youth services needed to help out children,
21 teens, and families recover from this awful year.
22 New York City's recovery will not happen without
23 community-based organizations and our provision of
24 comprehensive youth services. We are critical to
25 helping turn around children's learning loss,

2 providing the childcare that allows parents,
3 especially single mothers of color, to get back to
4 work, and addressing social emotional needs of kids.
5 For our youngest children, we need the (inaudible) to
6 be made whole and include the full scope of services
7 requested by community-based organizations. St.
8 Nick's Alliance did not receive a single extended
9 day, extended year slot for income-eligible families,
10 leaving low-income families with three- and four-
11 year-olds to fend for themselves after 3:00 p.m.
12 Further, we need our daily contract to cover the real
13 costs of providing early child care education as well
14 as remove the 25% capped fringed benefits which will
15 not cover union pension. For our elementary and
16 middle school children, we do universal in-person
17 after school and summer camp that allows for every
18 child to have the enrichment and wellness supports
19 essential to getting back on track in school. The
20 annual fight for SONYC summer camp must end this year
21 and the DOH clearance process must be unclogged as
22 this obstacle is seriously compromising our ability
23 to put people back to work and serve children and it
24 has for over a year and a half. Summer camp cannot
25 happen without DOE opening its buildings this summer.

2 Last summer, not a single school was open in District
3 14 for summer camp. In order to plan effectively and
4 meet the needs of our District 14 families, we need
5 these decisions to be made now. For teens and young
6 adults, we need the 25% cut to Learning to Work to be
7 restored. Our LTW students are among the most
8 vulnerable in the Department of Education. We cannot
9 abandon them and leave them to join the ranks of one
10 in five New York City student who drop out each year,
11 and one of the largest SYEP providers in New York
12 City, St. Nick's Alliance is extremely grateful to
13 Commissioner Cheng and Assistant Commissioner
14 Montanez's partnership as we each do our part to
15 reach 70,000 youth this year, but the demand for SYEP
16 is much greater and we need universal SYEP even if
17 implements gradually. Process changes are also
18 essential beginning with 12-month contracts because
19 the three-month, nine-month contract ...

20 SGT. POLITE: Time expired.

21 DEBORAH SUE LORENZEN: Is absurdly
22 burdensome and inefficient for providers and DYCD. I
23 thank you for your kind attention and again, thank
24 you Chair Rose for all you've done for so many years.

25 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you so much.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
3 for your testimony. The final panel of public
4 testimony in order of speaking will be Rachel
5 Gazdick, Scott Daly, and Jonee Billy. I will now
6 call on Rachel Gazdick.

7 SGT. POLITE: Time starts now.

8 CHAIR ROSE: Rachel?

9 BETH RIZMAN: Hi, sorry, thank you. My
10 name is Beth, actually I'm Beth Rizman, I'm on the
11 Executive team at New York Edge. Thank you Madame
12 Chair for your leadership on behalf of our city's
13 youth and for the Council's longstanding support of
14 New York Edge. I'm here today on behalf of our
15 fiscal year 22 city funding request of one million
16 dollars under the Council's after-school enrichment
17 initiative. Twenty-nine years ago, New York Edge was
18 created at the suggestion of New York City Council to
19 prevent free wrap around summer camps for youngsters
20 attending summer school. From these beginnings, we
21 have grown into the largest provider of after-school
22 and summer programming in New York City,
23 traditionally serving over 40,000 students a year at
24 134 locations throughout the five boroughs. Our
25 mission is to help bridge the opportunity gap faced

2 by students in underinvested communities by providing
3 programs designed to improved academic performance,
4 health and wellness, self-confidence, and leadership
5 skills for success in life. It is the believe of our
6 Board and staff that every child is gifted and
7 talented of only given the necessary tools.
8 Resources and supports and as our name implies, we
9 strive to provide every student in our programs with
10 the edge that they need to succeed in the classroom
11 and in their lives. Any percent of principals attest
12 to the power of New York Edge and supporting academic
13 improvement in their schools and 86% of parents
14 believe that our programs are helping their children
15 succeed in school. With your support, we received
16 \$850,000 in the FY21 budget. This funding allowed us
17 to provide 3000 youth from across the city with a mix
18 of virtual and in-person summer camp activities last
19 summer. Fiscal year 21 Council citywide funding is
20 also supporting our current after-school programing.
21 Currently we're running 107 programs including seven
22 learning labs throughout the five boroughs, and as
23 the public school system resumes in-person
24 instruction, more and more of our staff will return
25 to the classroom. This year has brought us new

2 collaborators and partners including Teach Rock,
3 founded by legendary guitarist Steven Van Zandt, Nets
4 on the Move, the US Olympic Handball Team, the New
5 York Nicks, and actor and author (inaudible). New
6 York Edge, its students, and families are
7 extraordinarily grateful for the support provided by
8 New York City Council these past 29 years. We are
9 now looking to you to meet the needs of next
10 generation of young people by supporting our fiscal
11 year of 22 citywide funding request of one million
12 dollars which will bring us back to our fiscal year
13 20 level of funding. Thank you so much.

14 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
16 for your testimony. I will now call on Scott Daly.

17 SGT MARTINEZ: Time begins.

18 SCOTT DALY: Okay, good afternoon Chair
19 Rose and Members of the Committee. My name is Scott
20 Daly and I'm the Senior Director of NYJTL, The New
21 York Junior Tennis and Learning. You know us as New
22 York Junior Tennis League. We have been in business
23 for over 50 years. This year is our 50th year.
24 Every year, because of the Council's support, we're
25 able to provide free tennis and traditionally reach

2 over 85,000 kids citywide. We are in every borough,
3 we are in every Council District, and it all as a
4 result of the support that we get as we get funded
5 under the physical education and fitness initiative.
6 We been partners for many, many years. Let me tell
7 you a little bit about how many kids we hit. 70% of
8 our kids are 10 years of age and younger. We have an
9 equal distribution of 25% between African Americans,
10 Asian and Latino, we reach across all low-income
11 family brackets. That's where we have our thrust.
12 Last year, it was right about this time when I was
13 down there testifying on Friday the 13th at a hearing
14 that really everything closed down. We run with the
15 initiative money, 1.2 million dollars we ask for, and
16 we received \$800,000.00. Cost have increased. We
17 have been reduced to that number for the past 12 or
18 13 years. Primarily, we hope to at least maintain
19 and hold the \$800,000.00. What do we do with it? We
20 provide tennis free to over four seasons of the year,
21 in the winter, spring outdoor, summer and fall. In
22 the winter, we have 20 weeks of indoor tennis
23 throughout the city at eight different locations.
24 That's where we are now. We've extended our
25 programming this year to the end of March. Right in

2 the middle of April, we're going to begin our outdoor
3 season. The community tennis is open to everybody.
4 Unlike other programs that the city may have funded
5 where people get involved. I'm most particularly
6 amazed to hear that we're not an application. We are
7 a registration, that they can come anytime. They are
8 fearful that they're not going to get their children
9 to be able to participate and take everybody in the
10 community tennis. Let's talk about the winter indoor
11 program. We also provide school-time tennis. We've
12 been on suspension in this program which, as most of
13 you already know, we teach gym teachers, anybody from
14 the school how to bring tennis into the school during
15 the daytime hours. We provide curriculum, we provide
16 lesson plans for the teachers, we provide the
17 equipment, we provide the training and extra staff
18 members to go there...

19 SGT. MARTINEZ: Time.

20 SCOTT DALY: To implement to bring the
21 tennis in. We have intensive training. As I said,
22 we have strict protocols. We added and we're going
23 to continue to add extra staff members. We need the
24 continued support of the City Council. Again, we are
25 asking for 1.2. Tennis transforms lives as

2 (inaudible) said, and that's what we do. We can't do
3 it without your continued support. I am very
4 grateful for all you do for the kids of the city.
5 Thank you very much.

6 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
8 for your testimony. I will now call on ...
9 (crosstalk).

10 SCOTT DALY: Thank you.

11 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you again.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: I will now
13 call on Jonee Billy.

14 JONEE BILLY: Hi. My name is Jonee
15 Billy... (crosstalk).

16 SGT. MARTINEZ: Time begins.

17 JONEE BILLY: Hi. My name is Jonee
18 Billy, and I serve as Director of Strategic
19 Partnerships and External Affairs for Power Play.
20 I'll also be advocating on behalf of the Sports
21 Training and Role Model for Success citywide girl's
22 initiative for which Power Play serves as the lead
23 agency. I'd like to begin by thanking Chair Rose and
24 the Committee Members for taking the time today to
25 hear our testimony and for their crucial leadership

2 and support for our work and youth development.

3 Power Play's mission is to advance the lives of girls
4 through sports, helping them grow physically,
5 emotionally, and academically stronger. Through our
6 structured sports and social emotional learning-based
7 curriculums, we build girl's confidence and
8 resilience and create safe spaces where girls learn
9 from each other and from strong female role models.

10 Power Play offers opportunities for girls where they
11 would not otherwise exist, partnering with schools
12 and community-based organizations to conduct after-
13 school and summer programs emphasizing physical
14 literacy, health and wellness and leadership. Our
15 work focuses on young women of color living in
16 poverty here among New York City's most vulnerable
17 populations. Prior to the pandemic, there was
18 already a call to action for increased funding for
19 girls and women's causes and the disparities exposed
20 by COVID-19 has only reinforced the need for programs
21 like Power Play because we know that when the virus
22 restrictions lift, we will see an even greater demand
23 for our programs and services. Furthermore, Power
24 Play serves as the lead agency for the coalition of
25 10 New York City non-profits known as the Sports

2 Training and Role Model for Success citywide girls
3 initiatives, star CGI. As a collective, we support
4 the healthy development of over 6000 girls and GNC
5 youth of color overcome barriers to success and
6 develop as leaders in their communities. Our
7 partners are 10 partners, Power Play Girls Right Now,
8 Groundswell Community Mural Project, The Lower
9 Eastside Girl's Club, Row New York, Sadie Nash
10 Leadership Project, the Armory Foundation, Figure
11 Skating in Harlem, Girls for Gender Equity, and the
12 Bella Leadership Institute continue to create
13 thousands of programs slots and deepen programming
14 for girls in all five boroughs. We all shared a
15 collective anxiety brought on by social unrest,
16 racial injustice, the aftermath of a troubling
17 election, and a global pandemic, but we also felt
18 inspired by the many possibilities. In the midst of
19 all the chaos, emerged young people that are
20 politically aware that are activist for their
21 communities and extremely vocal about the issues that
22 are important to them. Star CGI remains steadfast in
23 our mission to support and hold safe spaces for young
24 women and GNC youth to amplify their voices while
25 engaging in important conversations with New York

2 City Council Members and other stake holders on how
3 to best to become an ally and champion for young
4 people. The mental health needs of our young people
5 have exploded during these tumultuous times. Star
6 CGI has made it our mission to fill this gap
7 launching our #selfcareSaturdayseries which includes
8 engagements for youth to discover best practices to
9 refill their own social emotional cups while
10 elevating ... (crosstalk).

11 SGT. MARTINEZ: Time expired.

12 JONEE BILLY: We thank you, we need your
13 advocacy to ensure our programs remain available by
14 restoring our City Council funding at 1.4 million
15 dollars in FY22. Once again on behalf of Girls and
16 Gender Nonconforming Youth of New York City, we thank
17 you for you time, and for the opportunity to testify
18 today. Thank you.

19 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: Thank you
21 for your testimony. Before I turn to Chair Rose for
22 questions, I'd like to remind Council Member to use
23 the raise hand function in Zoom to indicate if they
24 have a question for all of our panels that have gone
25 so far. Chair Rose.

2 CHAIR ROSE: Thank you. I have no
3 questions. Just two statements. When Nicole
4 Hamilton testified, she said there was deficit in
5 terms of funding for SYEP. SYEP was fully funded.
6 All funding was restored, and I wanted Amy and
7 Damion, and others who spoke about the Indirect Rate
8 that we are speaking with OMB in regard to the
9 Indirect Rate. So, I want people to know that we're
10 fighting for all elements of this budget, and I have
11 no other questions. Do my colleagues have any
12 questions?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL EMI BRIGGS: It does
14 not appear that we have any questions, or any hands
15 raised from other Council Members, so thank you Chair
16 Rose. We have now heard from everyone that has
17 signed up to testify. We appreciate everyone's time
18 and presence. If we inadvertently missed anyone that
19 would like to testify, please use the raise hand
20 function in Zoom and I will call on you in the order
21 of hand raised. I'll just give everybody a moment to
22 see if we have any hands raised. Alright, seeing no
23 one else, I would like to note that written testimony
24 which will be reviewed in full by Committee staff may
25 be submitted to the record up to 72-hours after the

2 close of this hearing by emailing it to
3 testimony@council.nyc.gov, once again, that's
4 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Chair Rose, we have
5 concluded public testimony for this hearing.

6 CHAIR ROSE: So, I would like to thank
7 you very much Committee Counsel Emi Briggs. You did
8 a great job for the first time. You were phenomenal,
9 flawless, and I want to thank all of you who
10 testified. Your testimony was important and
11 informative, and I want you to know that we heard
12 you, and that we're going to be fighting for all of
13 these issues that were brought forward today, and I
14 want thank Council Chin for hanging in for the full
15 range of this hearing, along with Council Member
16 Riley. You're both phenomenal, and I want to
17 conclude with the fact that we heard from our youth
18 today. We heard of the needs of the services that
19 are available, but we also heard of the value of
20 these programs, and I think that came across loud and
21 clear that the services and the service providers
22 provide great value to the youth of New York City, so
23 I just want you to know that we must continue to
24 fight until all, all, all youth in New York City have
25 the same opportunity to achieve their goals by

2 insuring equal access to resources and only after we
3 have achieved universal participation in youth
4 services will we be able to eliminate economic and
5 educational disparities in New York City. I want to
6 thank all of you again for your efforts on behalf of
7 our youth and on behalf of our future, and with that,
8 this hearing is now adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date May 29, 2021