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Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council

FY 2024 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Aging
Council Member Crystal Hudson, Chair

Submitted by Tara Klein, Senior Policy Analyst
March 14, 2023

Thank you for convening today's Preliminary Budget hearing. United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is a policy and social change organization representing 46 neighborhood settlement houses, including 40 in New York City, that reach over 765,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life at 770 locations. A progressive leader for more than 100 years, UNH is stewarding a new era for New York's settlement house movement. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies and promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all New Yorkers. UNH leads advocacy and partners with our members on a broad range of issues including civic and community engagement, neighborhood affordability, healthy aging, early childhood education, adult literacy, and youth development. We also provide customized professional development and peer learning to build the skills and leadership capabilities of settlement house staff at all levels.

UNH members provide a wide variety of services to over 80,000 older New Yorkers each year by operating programs such as older adult centers (OACs), Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), home delivered meal (HDM) programs, Geriatric Mental Health, case management programs, and others, often funded and contracted by New York City Aging (NYC Aging or DFTA) and the City Council. UNH and its settlement house members employ the philosophy that older adults are valued members of our neighborhoods, whose wisdom and experience are important to the fabric of our communities.

UNH is concerned about budgetary matters that are quickly reaching crisis levels and will need intervention from the City. These include record-high levels of inflation without adequate contract amendments to match, growing challenges with recruitment and retention of staff due to low wages and competition from other industries, rising demand for service including from the growing number of older adults in New York City, growing capital and infrastructure needs, and the looming fiscal cliff we face in City programs when American Rescue Plan funds expire in a few short years. NYC Aging continues to receive one of the smallest agency budgets in the City despite growing needs, and the agency suffers from years of systemic underinvestment. We welcome the Council's advocacy in the FY 2024 Budget in alleviating these concerns, including with NYC Aging and the Administration.

Overview

In FY 2024, there are a number of funding needs to support older New Yorkers. UNH urges the City to take the following budget actions:

- Invest in the human services workforce:
    - Pass Intro 510 to establish a prevailing wage schedule
    - Invest in a 6.5% cost of living adjustment (COLA)
    - Support providers in hiring multilingual and immigrant staff
- Invest $64.8 million to combat older adult hunger, including:
    - Home Delivered Meals: $14 million for inflation costs, $567,000 to address the waitlist, and $4 million for weekend and holiday meals
    - Older Adult Centers: $46.3 million for inflation costs for OACs and congregate meals, and continuing grab and go meals
- Address unmet needs for older adults including:
    - $7.5 million for digital literacy and devices to facilitate virtual programming
    - $5 million for communications, marketing, and outreach for providers
    - Evaluate consultant pricing at OACs
    - $1.4 million to support continued growth in demand of the case management program
    - $15.4 million to support continued growth in demand of the home care program
    - Invest in capital needs
- Support Council Aging Initiatives, including:
    - Increase Support Our Seniors - $9.7 million
    - Restore NORCs - $6.4 million
    - Restore DOHMH Geriatric Mental Health Initiative - $3.4 million

Invest in the Human Services Workforce

While it is crucial to examine the needs of older adults and the supportive programs that allow them to age in place, we must ensure that the workers providing these services are supported. Low wages for aging services positions have contributed to a staffing crisis, and without increased budgets in government contracts to cover wage increases, nonprofits will be unable to recruit and train the next generation of aging services workers, setting future New Yorkers up for significant barriers to accessing services. Our society has devalued care work for far too long, and it is time that we invest in this workforce to ensure that they earn wages that properly compensate them for the skilled and important work they do.

More broadly, human service workers as a sector are grossly underpaid. A recent analysis by UNH found that human service workers face similar economic insecurity as the participants in their programs; in our report, *The Need to Strengthen the Economic Security of the Settlement House Workforce*, we note that government funding decisions and chronic underinvestment in human services have led to poverty-level wages for essential frontline workers at settlement houses.

Low wages, exacerbated by burnout from the COVID-19 pandemic, have led to chronically low staffing levels at human services organizations. Our settlement house members report more, longer vacancies, higher turnover, and significant challenges recruiting in a competitive labor market. Insufficient staffing has made it increasingly difficult for nonprofits to serve New Yorkers, leading to under-enrollment and program closures – such as the recent announcement of the closure of Sheltering Arms – which then leads to budget reductions and a vicious cycle that harms New Yorkers seeking services.

For years, the human services sector has warned of a staffing crisis citing low wage levels. Over the last two years, the City ignored a COLA request and instead issued a one-time bonus for our workforce that was equivalent to less than 1%, and a “contract enhancement” that led to contract-by-contract increases of between 1.5 and 2.5%. This investment is wholly insufficient to have a meaningful impact on the nonprofit workforce. Even with an annual 5% COLA, for most frontline workers starting at or around minimum wage, five years of raises would still mean an hourly wage of under $20. Coupled with

inflation and the City's tendency to extend contracts without any cost escalators or budget modifications, this salary problem will only be solved by a significant investment in the workforce.

Create a Prevailing Wage Schedule for Human Services Workers:
For these reasons, UNH supports Introduction 510 (Stevens), which would establish prevailing wage schedules for human service workers, require agencies to include sufficient funding to cover those wages in contracts, and track implementation of those wages by human service contractors; and we know that this legislation would need to pass through the budget process to be effective. While prevailing wage schedules are an imperfect tool to address the current conditions faced by human service workers, it is a significant improvement from the status quo. This process to design a true prevailing wage system is arduous and will require careful analysis, but we cannot afford to continue ignoring the need. For years, the government at every level has asked nonprofit partners to do "more with less." This dynamic has pushed our sector to a real breaking point, and our workforce has suffered the consequences.

Include a 6.5% COLA for Human Services Workers:
Given the gravity of the human services staffing crisis, we are also supportive of a 6.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for this workforce in FY 2024, in alignment with the JustPay campaign. We also ask the Council to ensure it is included in the budget as a "cost of living adjustment" and not some other named initiative so providers can rely on these funds being stable and recurring.

Support Providers in Hiring Multilingual and Immigrant Staff:
Providers report that their widespread hiring and retention challenges are especially difficult when they need to hire bilingual staff to meet a community's diverse language needs, especially social workers and case managers. With a narrow applicant pool, these staff are often even more difficult to find when salaries are so low. Some settlement houses report job postings of up to a year for these positions. On top of increasing salaries across the board to make aging programs competitive employers, the City should consider additional ways to support providers, especially for hiring bilingual staff, such as coordinating strategic marketing and outreach campaigns. For example, NYC Aging could join job fairs, visit social work schools, and/or run ad campaigns that share the value of working with older adults.

In addition, several settlement houses have expressed concerns that hiring staff who speak the necessary languages can be complicated by immigration and visa issues. Many job applicants are in the process of applying for work authorization in the U.S. and require an employer to sponsor them. This can be prohibitively costly, with costs falling on both the employer and the applicant. While there are certainly legal complications around visa issues, the Council should investigate whether the City could help cover these costs. This would remove a major barrier in the hiring process.

Address Older Adult Hunger

As was discussed in length at the Council's hearing on Food Insecurity and Older Adults on December 14, 2022, food insecurity remains very high among older New Yorkers, and the programs that support them are in urgent need of additional resources to meet the need. According to recently-released Census data from the Household Pulse Survey, between December 2022 and February 2023, 21 percent of older adults in the NYC metro area with less than $25,000 in household income reported that they did not have enough to eat in their household in the past seven days. In the FY 2024 Budget, the City needs to invest an additional $64.8 million to combat older adult hunger, focused on the home delivered meals program and congregate meals at older adult centers.

Home Delivered Meals: $14 million for inflation costs, $567,000 to address the waitlist, and $4 million for weekend and holiday meals:

Nonprofit home delivered meals (HDM) providers deliver a daily nutritious meal to homebound older adults who are unable to prepare their own food, while also providing case management and regular in-person wellness checks for those at risk of social isolation. HDM is a key service to support older adults, and has become even more crucial since the beginning of the pandemic. Nine UNH members currently provide home delivered meals, either as lead contractors or subcontractors.

Thank you to the Council for helping secure the home delivered meals increase in last year's budget, bringing the per-meal reimbursement rate from $9.58 to $11.78 per meal. UNH has advocated for this rate increase for many years, and finally reaching this number was a major accomplishment for providers who have faced chronic underfunding. Given this, it is difficult to now ask for another increase, but the reality is that an increase is needed to keep HDM programs whole and functional.

UNH and our advocacy partners determined the $11.78 figure that was funded last year in two ways. First, it represents the average cost for a home delivered meal for urban areas in the United States in 2015, according to a report by Mathematica Policy Research[1] which is the most recently available national analysis done on this program. Second, in 2019 UNH and LiveOn NY, assisted by SeaChange Capital Partners, conducted an independent analysis of the true costs of home delivered meals programs in New York City and confirmed $11.78 as close to the actual true cost of a home delivered meal, though costs varied by provider.

These analyses confirm that $11.78 was an appropriate and much-needed increase at the time we began advocating for it. However, that was before the global pandemic, before the recent HDM RFP which added new programmatic requirements (like meal choice to meet diverse populations), and before the =exorbitant 2022-2023 inflation rates. Given these changes, it is time once again for the City to invest in increases for the HDM program.

Inflation and Rising Costs:
Record-high inflation is impacting older adults. According to the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, between December 2022 and February 2023, 94 percent of older adults aged 60 and older in the NYC metro area believe that prices have increased. The perception of higher prices has impacted older adults' spending decisions and tradeoffs. For example, among older adults who believe that prices have increased, 23 percent said that they are purchasing less produce or meat to cope with higher inflation, 20 percent are contributing less to savings and/or retirement accounts, and 18 percent have decreased their use of utilities such as heat and electricity. In that same time frame, 38% of older adults in NYC reported that they experienced difficulties with expenses such as food, rent or medical expenses, and two-thirds of older adults in the NYC metro area reported that they were moderately or very stressed about the increase in prices in the past two months.

Inflation rates are also exacerbating chronic underfunding issues for the HDM program. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics,[2] food costs in the New York City metro area, as of September 2022, increased by over 8 percent since the previous year, while the cost of gasoline has skyrocketed – in the spring of 2022 rates had jumped by nearly 50% over the previous year, while as of September they had stabilized somewhat and risen by "only" 14% over the previous year. In addition, Governor Kathy Hochul recently identified 13% as the appropriate number that costs have risen.

[1] https://www.mathematica.org/publications/older-americans-act-nutrition-programs-evaluation-meal-cost-analysis
[2] https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-york-new-jersey/cpi-summary/ro2xg01a.htm

HDM providers have been directly hit by these rising raw food and transportation costs, and these increases have been extreme and very detrimental to maintaining quality programs. Settlement house HDM providers also note that there are other increased costs that must be budgeted for, including new technology costs and meal bags for deliverers, as well as higher vehicle liability insurance rates and replacement catalytic converters for vehicles that had these parts stolen. All of these costs have had an impact on staff retention and recruitment: due to contract rates, salaries are forced to be kept low which makes it difficult for providers to hire competitively. One provider noted that "if we do not raise compensation in HDM [contracts], we will lose staff. The costs of gasoline, vehicle insurance, vehicle maintenance, food costs and health insurance limits our ability to raise hourly [wage] rates."

To reflect higher gas and raw food costs due to inflation and needs we are seeing on the ground, the City should include appropriate cost escalators for providers each year, which for FY24 entails a $14 million increase in the program, which would bring the per-meal rate up from $11.78 to $14.96 per meal.[3] This represents a 27% increase. Other increased costs that providers face must also be budgeted for, including technology costs for meal deliverers and higher vehicle liability insurance rates.

Waitlists:
The COVID-19 pandemic drew renewed attention to the HDM program, showing just how valuable it is for homebound older New Yorkers. A side effect of the pandemic has been new demand for HDM – both early in the pandemic when older people were fearful to leave their homes and at the end of the GetFood/DFTA Recovery Meals programs in June 2022, when people still enrolled in that program had to begin to receive their meals elsewhere and many turned to HDM. In the first four months of FY 2023, NYC Aging reported that 1.4 million home delivered meals were delivered to nearly 23,000 homebound older New Yorkers, an increase of 12 percent from the same period in FY 2022.[4] This new influx of meal recipients has naturally added new costs for HDM providers. The City took some steps to address this in the FY23 budget, but moving forward the Council should urge NYC Aging to conduct an updated analysis of HDM demand by neighborhood and adjust contracts and funding accordingly. The most recent numbers suggest a waitlist that will require $567,000 to address.

Weekend and holiday meals:
The City must also invest $4 million to support weekend and holiday home-delivered meals that are not provided through NYC Aging. Citymeals on Wheels contracts for these meals under a public-private partnership, but has not received an increase in many years.

Older Adult Centers: $46.3 million for inflation costs for OACs and congregate meals, and continuing grab and go meals:

Older adult centers (OACs) are crucial supports for older New Yorkers. OACs continue to offer both in-person and virtual activities, provide in-person congregate meals and grab and go meals when available, and serve as essential partners with the City in meeting public health goals. Settlement houses in UNH's network operate 42 standalone OACs and two network OACs, serving tens of thousands of older adults in these centers.

Food Costs and Inflation:
As described in-depth in the home delivered meals section above, the last year has seen very high inflation rates across the board. OACs have been significantly impacted, especially for food costs for congregate meals, gas prices for OACs with transportation components, utilities, and other areas. The City must ensure inflation costs are included annually in future budgets. This year, the City should

[3] Per the Mayor's Management Report, the number of meals served in FY24 is estimated to be on par with FY23 at 4,390,494. This number multiplied by the new proposed rate to come to the total funding request..
[4] https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2023/dfta.pdf

include $46.3 million to address inflation costs. This number applies a 23% inflation rate number to relevant OAC categories and matches need we are seeing on the ground.

Continuing grab and go meals:
Grab and go meals were a tremendous innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic, initially serving as an interim solution before the Get Food program was set up and later serving as an option for older adults who were ready to go outside but not to spend time eating indoors in a crowd. We were disappointed to hear DFTA was ending the grab and go option this past summer, unless providers had included grab and go meals in their recent OAC contracts. Over the summer, centers still reported grab and go as a very popular option, with many older adults still hesitant to be unmasked and eating congregate meals indoors. Behaviors have not significantly changed since then: providers report that older adults are still concerned about COVID and this is affecting their utilization numbers for congregate meals. At the same time, food insecurity remains high among older adults, and anything the City can do to address these needs should be embraced. Moving forward, DFTA must ensure grab and go meals continue to be a viable option at all older adult centers that want to offer them – and not only those that had the foresight to include grab and go in their contracts.

Address Unmet Needs for Older Adults

In addition to addressing issues with older adult hunger and the workforce, the City should make the following targeted investments to address unmet needs for older adult programs:

$7.5 million for technology enhancements: The pandemic changed the way older adults access services in New York City. Nonprofit providers offered virtual programming and services while buildings were closed to in-person activities, and given their success many continue to provide hybrid services and leverage technology as an important component of running a successful older adult program. Along with the benefits of this innovation, hybrid programming comes with some unique needs. First, older adults face a digital divide with a steep learning curve and accessibility issues. There are many technology needs, including at OACs and in older adults' homes. Technology training continues to be a high need, as well. Providers also report an ongoing staffing and cost challenge of running in-person and hybrid programs concurrently. A $7.5 million investment would address many of these challenges. It would help to expand NYC Aging's virtual programming accessibility through an online database, provide devices, and connectivity, and offer technology literacy support provided by community-based organizations.

$5 million for OAC outreach and marketing: Utilization rates at older adult centers are currently inconsistent, with some at full or above capacity and others struggling to maintain pre-pandemic participation levels. This is understandable, given the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on older adults and their ongoing hesitancy to spend time in crowded indoor spaces. Providers also report that concerns around perceived crime in New York City – especially anti-Asian hate crimes – has caused many older adults to be hesitant to go outside and engage in their communities. We understand NYC Aging is very concerned about getting older adults back into OACs, and as part of this effort they have begun a public awareness campaign including subway and bus ads. We propose a $5 million fund for outreach and marketing that would go directly to OAC providers, to enable them to do hyper-local outreach such as flyering, additional phone calls, and other activities to help bolster participation levels.

Evaluate consultant pricing at OACs: Settlement houses report that rates for consultants who offer programs and activities at OACs have skyrocketed in recent months; in some cases hourly prices have doubled. Consultant pricing also varies widely across the board. For example, according to providers an arts instructor can cost anywhere from $50 to $125 an hour, with the average around $60-75 per hour. Despite these increases, OAC budgets remain tight and have not accommodated this fluctuation. The

City should address this situation either by providing funds to cover these higher consultant rates, or looking into coordinating a pool of trusted consultants with standard rates and connecting OACs with those trusted consultants.

$1.4 million for Case Management Agencies: Case Management Agencies refer older adults to benefits and services, including to the home delivered meals program. This program is overburdened and maintains lengthy waiting lists, which are a major systemic barrier to accessing services. We were pleased that the FY23 budget included additional funds for Case Management, in part to address the end of the DFTA Recovery Meals program and the resulting added capacity for case management referrals to the home delivered meals program. We were subsequently deeply troubled to see the $4.3 million PEG reduction in the FY23 November budget modification. For FY24, we urge the City to ensure Case Management Agencies are able to effectively clear waitlists and connect older adults with the services they need. A new $1.4 million investment will address current wait lists for this program and ensure all individuals can be screened and referred appropriately.

$15.4 million for non-Medicaid home care: While most home care in New York is offered by State-licensed home care services agencies (LHCSAs), there is also DFTA home care that supports qualifying individuals who are not on Medicaid. A $15.4 million investment would support continued growth in demand in the NYC Aging home care program, including addressing waiting lists and expanding the hours of home care service available to older adults requiring additional support. In addition, to support the overall home care workforce we must pass the State's full Fair Pay for Home Care bill (S.3189 (May) / A.TBD (Paulin)), which would ensure all home care workers are paid uniform and fair wages across the State.

Invest in capital needs: Aging services programs have a number of long-standing capital needs that continued to grow during the pandemic. Needs vary by provider and include building repairs, kitchen equipment, HVAC units, storage space, new home delivered meals vans, and van repairs. Funding for many of these needs has been slow to be approved by the City. Van replacements in particular are an urgent need, and we are glad the City recently announced over $3 million to purchase 44 new vehicles for HDM providers. However, more is needed: some lead contractors report that they are not receiving as many vehicles as they need, while subcontractors are not eligible for these vehicles and report the same urgent issues as lead contractors. In addition, we are disappointed that these funds were secured from Council Initiative funding this year, which could otherwise have gone to funding programmatic needs and enhancements at OACs and other programs. Moving forward, the Council should advocate with DFTA and OMB to invest more in capital funds for aging services providers to make key infrastructure upgrades and repairs in their programs, including providing more HDM vans for lead contractors and subcontractors.

Support Council Aging Initiatives

UNH greatly appreciates the Council's long-standing support for aging through funding invested in Citywide Initiatives, which provide enormous support for older adults and the programs that support them. Aging in particular benefits from a large share of Council funding that the network relies on to carry out essential services, with initiatives such as Support Our Seniors, NORCs, Senior Centers for Immigrant Populations, and Senior Centers, Programs & Enhancements. Some Council funds support entire programs that do not have other state or city contracts, and others pay for entire staff lines, or give programs the flexibility to hire consultants and fill programmatic gaps.

In FY 2024, the Council must restore funding for all of its Citywide Initiatives for aging to at least FY 2023 levels, representing a total of $31.4 million. Last year, several of the programs that were fully supported by the Council for many years received baselined contracts through the NYC Aging

OAC/NORC procurement. As a result, some of the awards shifted around, but as we noted last year we hope the total investment will once again not be reduced given the enormous value of these funds to the aging network. In particular, we know the Council directed about $3 million in Council funds to pay for 44 new hotshot vans for home delivered meals contractors, which were urgently needed. These funds could once again be used for additional vans for contractors and subcontractors, or for other one-time capital or infrastructure needs. We also urge a targeted increased investment to Support Our Seniors, a small increase for NORC nursing, and restoring and rebranding the DOHMH Geriatric Mental Health Initiative. Finally, we strongly urge the Council to work with the Administration to address payment delays for discretionary awards, which are chronically slow and lead to enormous difficulty for providers to budget for and spend this money.

- **Increase Support Our Seniors - $9.7 million:** Support Our Seniors provides flexible funding to each Council District to support local aging services. Anecdotal evidence highlighted earlier suggests there are growing costs and unmet needs in NYC Aging-contracted programs. An additional $50,000 per Council District, amounting to $2.6 million and a total initiative value of $9.7 million, would allow Council Members to respond to those local needs and continue to support efforts that address transportation issues, social isolation, technology needs, and more.

- **Increase Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) Initiative - $6.4 million:** NORCs help thousands of older adults remain healthy, stable, and able to age in place by offering health care, social services, and socialization opportunities right at home. For the last several years, the City Council has included funding to support the City's NORCs. Because of the Council's enthusiasm for this program, we have been able to bring resources and attention to the needs of a large and rapidly growing older adult population. Last year's NORC funding was $6.1 million, representing a decrease from previous years' level of $6.4 million. This year, we urge the Council to once again include $6.4 million to account for rising nursing costs.

  For the last four years, this funding has included support for nursing services in NYC Aging-contracted NORCs, which in FY 2023 was about $2.1 million. This funding fills a gap left by the reduction of pro-bono nursing services that are required by NORC contracts. Despite hopes that the new NORC contracts would eliminate the need for this funding, NORCs report there is still a need. In addition, the standard hourly rate to hire nurses has risen over the last year, with the largest provider, VNS Health, raising their hourly rate from $85 to $95 per hour since last year. To account for this increase, the nursing money should account for this increase of approximately 11.5%, bringing the total pot back up to about $6.4 million. Council funding also goes to some state-contracted Neighborhood NORCs, and serves as a required matching fund grant for these contracts that providers rely on. Finally, Council funding has periodically gone toward building new NORCs, some of which were awarded multi-year contracts in the recent NYC Aging procurement and now receive baselined funding.We urge the Council to once again support NORCs with $6.4 million this year.

- **Restore and Rebrand DOHMH Geriatric Mental Health Initiative (GMHI) - $3.4 million:** UNH is a long-time supporter of the Geriatric Mental Health Initiative (GMHI), a Council Initiative funded under DOHMH. GMHI funds mental health services in community spaces where older adults gather, such as senior centers, NORCs, and food pantries. GMHI increases the capacity of community-based organizations serving older adults to identify mental health needs, provide immediate mental health interventions, and refer clients for further psychiatric treatment when necessary.

It is important to note that this program is different from the DFTA/NYC Aging Geriatric Mental Health Program. Due to frequent confusion between these two similar but distinct programs, we urge the Council to rename GMHI to Older Adults Mental Health or a similar variation this year.

Even before the pandemic hit, the aging services network expressed an overwhelming demand to expand mental health services for older adults, especially at older adult centers and NORCs and in multiple languages. Given patterns of increased demand since the start of the pandemic, we are thrilled that the Council funded a significant expansion to this program in FY22, allowing the program to reach 13 new sites and supporting long-needed increases for existing providers. GMHI currently supports 35 organizations total, 18 which are UNH members.

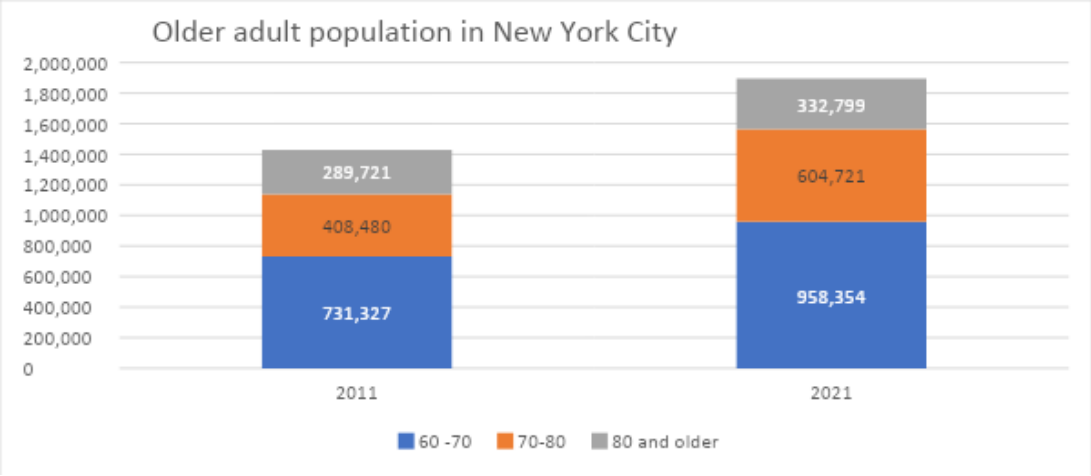
While contract registration and payment have been delayed – a systemic problem across human services contracts across the City that must be addressed – providers report very positive results from their GMHI funding. One newer GMHI recipient uses the funding across their aging services programs to screen, identify, and refer seniors to mental health services. Another newer recipient notes that they used the funds to bring on a bilingual worker, and trained case workers across their senior centers to conduct mental health and substance abuse screenings. A long-time GMHI recipient is using their funding increase to strengthen individual and group mental health programming, and to expand training opportunities for staff and clients. Given the vast success of this program, we urge the Council to restore full funding to GMHI of $3,405,540 in FY 2024.

The Growing Older Adult Population and Changing Demographics

The Census recently released data on older adults in New York City as part of the 2021 American Community Survey, and the findings show there is a steadily growing older adult population in NYC, the City's older adult population has become more racially diverse over the past decade, there is an increase in the number of older adults living alone, and there is an increasing number of older adults who are reliant on SNAP benefits. This data provides further evidence about the need for additional investments in City aging services in FY24.

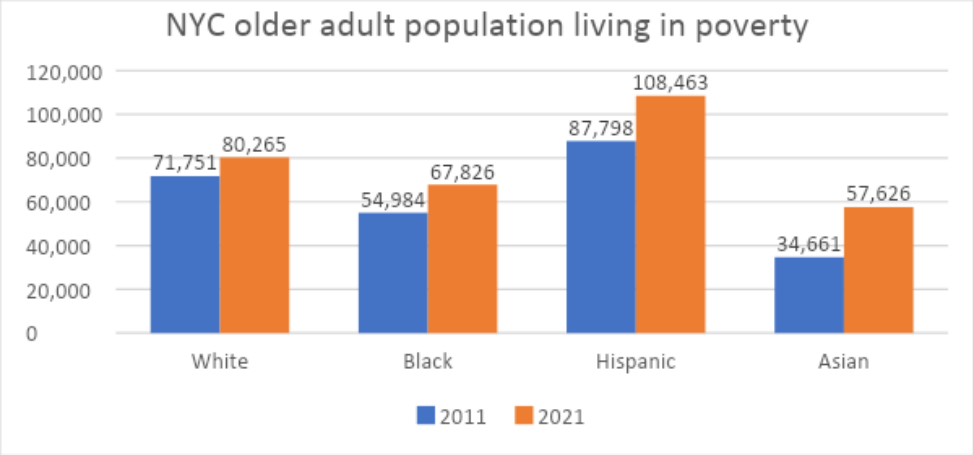
Steadily growing older adult population in NYC

- As of 2021, there are now roughly 1.9 million older adults aged 60 and over living in New York City, up from 1.4 million a decade ago (in 2011).
- As of 2021, older adults now make up 22 percent of all New York City residents, up from 17 percent a decade ago (2011).



Increase over past decade in the number of older adults living poverty

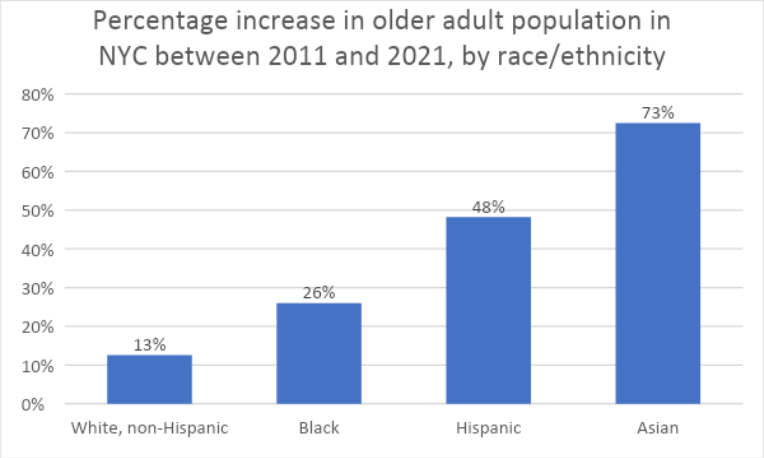
- Citywide, more than a third of older adults aged 60 and over live in poverty.
- Asian and Latinx older adults are twice as likely as White older adults to live in poverty.
- The number of the City's older adults living in poverty has increased by 28 percent over the past decade, from 243,000 in 2011 to 325,000 in 2021. Increase has been notable among the City's Asian older population – the number of Asian older adults living in poverty has increased by 66 percent since 2011.



- Older adult poverty rates are highest in the Bronx and Brooklyn (as of 2021)
    - Nearly 1 out of every 4 older adults in the Bronx live in poverty (24 percent)
    - 1 out of every 5 older adults in Brooklyn live in poverty (20 percent)

NYC's older adult population has become more racially diverse over the past decade

- In 2011, White New Yorkers made up 40 percent of the City's older adult population; by 2021, this share had declined to 33 percent.
- Hispanic share of the City's older adult population edged up from 23 percent in 2011 to 25 percent in 2021.
- Asian share of the City's older adult population increased from 12 percent of older New Yorkers in 2011 to 15 percent by 2021; overall, the Asian older adult population in NYC has increased by a staggering 73 percent between 2011 and 2021, while the White older adult population rose by just 13 percent over the same time period. In Queens, Asians now make up a quarter of the borough's older adult population, up from 19 percent a decade ago.



- Over the past decade, the number of foreign-born New Yorkers increased by 45 percent, from about 684,000 in 2011 to nearly a million by 2021 (994,000). Immigrant New Yorkers now comprise more than half (52 percent) of NYC's older adult population, up from 48 percent a decade ago.

Increase in number of older adults living alone

- As of 2021, there are now more than 500,000 single-person older adult households in NYC, a 23-percent increase from a decade ago (in 2011). Single-person households make up 44 percent of older adult households in NYC

Increasing number of older adults are reliant on SNAP benefits

- The number of older adults receiving SNAP benefits has increased by 39 percent over the past decade, from about 331,000 in 2011 to about 459,000 in 2021.
- Since 2019, the number of older adults with SNAP benefits has increased by 10 percent.
- Overall, 24 percent of older adults receive SNAP benefits, as of 2021.
- Usage of SNAP benefits is higher among foreign-born older adults: Nearly half of foreign-born older adults reported receiving SNAP benefits in 2021, compared to 40 percent of US-born older adults.

Thank you. To follow up, please contact me at tklein@unhny.org.