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Statement of Susan Stamler Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses of New York On New York State FY 2018- 2019 Enacted Budget

April 2, 2018– United Neighborhood Houses of New York (UNH) – the association of 39 settlement houses and community centers serving over 750,000 New Yorkers every year, applauds Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature on adopting a budget for FY2019 that provides increased support to New Yorkers and the nonprofits that support them. At over 650 locations across all corners of the City, our member organizations rely on State investments to promote the health and wellbeing of their community members ranging from children and youth, to immigrants and older adults, to families of all kinds. We are pleased that the State FY2018-19 Enacted Budget contains critical new investments in the following areas:

- *Adult Literacy Education*- A \$500k increase to allow hundreds of immigrants and other adult learners enroll in English for Speakers of Other Languages and High School Equivalency classes,
- *After-School Programs*- \$10m in new funding for the Empire State After-School program, and a \$5m restoration for Advantage After-School to provide a safe and enriching environment for children after the school day,
- *Child Care Subsidies*- A \$7m increase in State support to expand access to quality early childhood education programs,
- *Minimum Wage*- \$15m in funding to support nonprofit human services contract adjustments needed to keep pace with increases in the State minimum wage,
- *Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities*- A \$4m investment to help older adults receive the supports they need to continue living independently in their homes, and
- *Summer Youth Employment Program*- \$4m in funding to maintain job opportunities for youth as the State minimum wage increases.

With these investments, New York’s settlement houses will be able to weave together holistic programming for community members so that any individual or family walking through their front door can access services where they live. To that end, we are grateful to the Legislature for the restoration of the *Settlement House Program* at \$2.45m, which allows settlement houses in cities like Albany, New York City, Rochester and Syracuse to implement creative solutions to the challenges in their specific communities. In addition, updates to the *State and Municipal Facilities Program* which designate nonprofit organizations as eligible entities will potentially allow settlement houses and other community based organizations to better meet their capital funding needs.

UNH also applauds the State for beginning to tackle issues of neighborhood affordability with a new \$15m *Rental Subsidy Pilot Program*, \$250m in support for the *New York City Housing Authority*, and a \$175m *Workforce Initiative* to help individuals gain the skills they need to succeed in the labor market. UNH looks forward to working with the State on implementing additional policies and investments like these that will help New Yorkers resist economic pressures that would otherwise force them out of their communities.

Finally, despite the significant progress made in this year's budget agreement, UNH notes several policy areas will require further work, including the establishment of an *Early Voting* program designed to afford New Yorkers better access to the ballot, the restoration of the *Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program*, protections for nonprofit, community-based *Home Care* providers, and a collaborative City-State approach to the provision of *Homelessness Services* funding and policies in New York City.

As the federal government continues to seek to divide New Yorkers along economic and demographic lines it is essential that we stand together to articulate the values that animate our State—and to put the funding behind them. The State FY2018-19 budget is a step in the right direction and we look forward to working with the Governor and Legislature continue to defend and uplift all New Yorkers.

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