THE CAMPAIGN FOR SUMMER JOBS

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**Testimony of the Campaign for Summer Jobs**

**Before the New York City Council Committees on Youth Services and Finance**

**Honorable Mathieu Eugene, Chair, Committee on Youth Services**

**Honorable Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Chair, Committee on Finance**

**At the FY 2018 Preliminary Budget Hearing**

**March 6, 2017**

Thank you, Chairs Eugene and Ferreras-Copeland, for the opportunity to testify. The Campaign for Summer Jobs (CSJ) is a 17-year-old coalition of nearly 100 community-based social service and advocacy organizations, convened by United Neighborhood Houses, which advocates for programmatic improvements and expanded capacity for New York’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).

CSJ asks that the City make the following investments:

* **SYEP** – support the Mayor’s investment of $78.02 million in City Tax Levy for 65,000 slots and add $16.2 million to cover minimum wage increases
* **Programs for youth who are out of school and out of work (OSOW)** – increase funding for programs that benefit OSOW 16 to 24-year-olds. A complete list of funding possibilities for this population is in formation, but one item includes maintaining and expanding the Young Adult Internship Program Plus (YAIP Plus) for $3 million.
* **Work, Learn, and Grow** – add 250 slots for OSOW youth, make the program truly year-round, and baseline, for $53.7 million in FY18.
* **Increase of 12% on all City human services contracts**

Four years ago, CSJ called upon the City to fund 100,000 Summer Youth Employment Program slots by FY19. We estimate that 100,000 jobs represents demand for the program based on both the number of young people who apply and the number of those accepted who actually participate in the program. We have long been supporters of building program capacity to meet demand. However, this can only happen if we build infrastructure to support providers in expanding the program, which requires multiple steps, including, but not limited to: ensuring that CBO providers are added to the system, greater government action in securing worksites for youth, increasing funding for administrative costs, and changing other program details.

Last year’s increase from 54,263 to 60,113 job slots strained the capacity of providers. Late additions to the number of youth served forces providers to work intensely long hours, sometimes turning to volunteer labor to enroll enough of the late-addition youth, sacrificing the well-being of Community-Based Organization (CBO) staff. Late budget season additions to SYEP also leave CBOs working with less funding than is sustainable in order to place youth in meaningful jobs.

While it has been heartening to see SYEP expand over the last several years with the City Council’s strong support, it is clear that the current SYEP system is reaching a limit on what it can fulfill.

The Preliminary Budget baselines funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program at 65,000 slots. UNH’s analysis is that 65,000 slots represent a maximum capacity of the current SYEP system without the aforementioned improvements to the program’s infrastructure.

This achievement presents an historic opportunity for the City to invest more deeply in OSOW youth. There are 140,302 OSOW youth between 16 and 24 in New York City, but in FY16, there were fewer than 7,000 slots in City-funded programs that specifically targeted these young people for connection to education and work opportunities.UNH proposes a package of programs that have proven impactful in serving these populations, and/or are evidence-based approaches for successfully working with OSOW youth. UNH is working to finalize a package of programs—larger than the list below—to benefit this population. As costs are calculated for that larger package, the items below represent a starting point for how to strengthen services for OSOW youth, a population which is difficult to serve and incredibly underserved.

Campaign for Summer Jobs urges the City to take the following actions:

**Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) – Maintain $78.02 million of baselined funds, provide for minimum wage increases in Executive Budget at $16.2 million**

60,113 youth took part in SYEP in the summer of 2016. While demand remains high for the program, with 139,916 applicants in summer 2016, the program has effectively hit a limit. Additions to SYEP made late in budget season, while vital to expanding SYEP in the past, also stretched provider capacity to levels of great stress. Until we can add more providers to the system, we should not add further funds to SYEP, beyond a minimum wage increase for currently baselined slots.

**Young Adult Internship Program Plus (YAIP Plus) – Maintain and expand services at $3 million**

YAIP is a well-evaluated program that offers 14 weeks of orientation to attainment of an internship and a paid internship, and then 9 months of follow-up services, including further job placement and educational opportunities. While YAIP is geared toward OSOW youth who are most job-ready, YAIP *Plus* is directed toward OSOW youth who are currently or previously in foster care or juvenile justice systems. Fourteen CBOs offer YAIP, and two offer YAIP Plus. The system can expand accordingly: continue YAIP Plus, which was funded by ACS in FY17 for one year, and add an extra provider to that system. YAIP Plus should also be extended to youth involved in Department of Probation services.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Action Out-of-School Youth (WIOA OSY) –** Funding for extra supportive services for existing contracts

WIOA OSY funds 14 CBOs to fund career development, including the attainment of a credential in a growing industry; industry-contextualized educational programming for youth lacking optimal academic skills (also known as bridge programming); job attachment services; mentoring; and supportive services, including transportation, childcare, dependent care, and housing. More funding can increase the quality of services, by allowing staff more funded time to work with program participants (e.g., instructional time for educational components, counseling, and other supportive services).

**Work, Learn, and Grow** **– Baseline and fund for FY18, with 250 slots for OSOW youth, at $52.7 million**

Work, Learn, and Grow (WLG) was piloted in FY16 with $16.2 million and allowed more than 6,000 youth who had taken part in the previous summer’s SYEP to engage in employment activities during the school year. Younger youth (14 and 15) engage in workforce preparation (workshops, job shadowing), while older youth (16-24) simply work at a private employer. Wages are paid by the City. The program was flat-funded in the FY17 Adopted Budget.

UNH urges the City to baseline the program at a funding level that would make it truly year-round (ensuring that youth can stay with an employer throughout the course of a year), while also creating an OSOW option with funding for wraparound services. This funding total would also increase the funding for providers’ administrative costs, as regards the younger youth program.

**Increase of 12% on all City human services contracts**

Underfunding of city contracts is a youth employment issue. In 2016, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) released RFPs for workforce programs, YouthPathways, CareerCompass, and CareerAdvance, that were funded at price points too low to be viable for settlement houses and other organizations with well-established credibility in their community. Accordingly, many of these organizations did not apply. The Campaign for Summer Jobs echoes human service providers and advocacy organizations in asking the Mayor to fund an increase of 12% on all City human services contracts.

We look forward to working with the City to build the strongest possible system of employment for young people, especially OSOW youth, who have long been underserved.

We thank you for your time, and encourage you to contact us for further questions: Andrea Bowen, United Neighborhood Houses, abowen@unhny.org, (212) 967-0322 ext 324.