

June 2nd, 2020

Mayor Bill de Blasio  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

RE: Invest in Human Services, Not Over-policing Our Communities

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified what the community based organizations (CBOs) in the human services sector have always known about inequities that exist within the institutions that all New Yorkers rely on. The outrage that has been expressed in our city – and across the country – over the last few days is not solely representative of an isolated incident, it is a reflection of the anger and frustration that exists from inequity and injustice being born on the backs of communities of color, immigrants, and low-income New Yorkers over and over again.

A strong social safety net is the only way that our city survives a crisis. As we experience the unprecedented intersection of a health crisis, a social justice crisis, and an economic crisis that could devastate our city for years, even decades to come, not all City agencies are bearing the burden. We were dismayed to see that the FY2021 Executive Budget makes cuts to crucial programs and social services that serve the very communities who are being hardest hit by COVID-19 — communities of color, immigrants, and low-income New Yorkers — while maintaining funding for the NYPD, an institution that too often fails to protect and serve, and disproportionately harms, these exact communities.

Services like senior food programs, homeless services, youth development, employment programs, public health and others – proven tools that help us protect and serve communities – are experiencing more demand than ever before, but instead of enhancing funding to these programs, the City is proposing more cuts.

Our social services workforce has been designated as essential by the City, and our services will be more essential than ever as more New Yorkers rely on them as we move into recovery. Yet our (mostly women of color and immigrant) workforce is paid poverty wages, sent on the frontlines with inadequate supplies, and is being asked to meet growing community need with less City resources.

Echoing the letter from the City Council released on May 31st, the proposed budget cuts are not equitable. While our social services and discretionary funding (which is a key support for smaller CBOs and CBOs of color) is on the chopping block, funding for the NYPD has been largely maintained. Budgets are a statement of values. When we are facing a budget deficit where the City is emphasizing that difficult decisions must be made across the board, the decision to decrease funding for social services while maintaining funding for the NYPD is the opposite of what our values should be. Particularly in light of the actions of the NYPD over the last few days, it is clear that our city requires diametrically opposite approaches to repair what has been broken.

While this mayoral administration has been working on criminal justice reform, it has also expanded the role of NYPD into human and social services — including putting cops in schools instead of counselors, policing the homeless instead of providing adequate supportive services and housing, criminalizing poverty instead of investing in addressing root causes and uplifting

individuals out of poverty, and over-policing young people of color instead of providing summer programming. Cutting funding to social services while continuing to over-police our communities is the opposite of what the City should be doing right now.

As the human services sector is being impacted by budget cuts and as our vulnerable children and families are struggling, it is unjust that the NYPD can maintain its level of funding and not be required to change its harmful policing practices. Police reform must be a mandate for the NYPD in the next fiscal year.

We are proposing a different way, and a new way, to protect our communities – economically, socially, psychologically. Stop over-investing in policing our communities and start to make real investments that serve communities in need. This “new way” is cheaper, it’s proven, it’s just. As community based organizations, we know that it’s not the police that keeps communities safe. It’s the work that we do to support, enrich, and empower New Yorkers that keeps communities safe. Our communities are safe when residents have affordable and quality housing, transportation and food; seniors and people with disabilities are healthy and engaged; individuals have good jobs and worker protections; youth have summer programming and arts education; immigrants have language accessible services; and more.

It’s time to invest in supporting our communities instead of policing them. It’s time to be bold by making targeted cuts to the NYPD. We need to protect investments in human services, the social safety net, racial and economic justice, and the vision that all New Yorkers deserve to thrive.

CC:

Comptroller Scott Stringer  
Public Advocate Jumaane Williams  
City Council Speaker Corey Johnson  
First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan  
Deputy Mayor Raul Perea-Henze  
Deputy Mayor Vicki Been  
Deputy Mayor Phillip Thompson  
Commissioner Steve Banks  
Commissioner Marco Carrión  
Commissioner Bill Chong  
Commissioner Lorraine A. Cortés-Vázquez  
Commissioner David Hansell  
Budget Director Melanie Hartzog  
MOCS Director Dan Symon

**Organizational Sign-ons (171):**

Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)  
Greenwich House  
Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center  
82nd Street Academics  
Acacia Network  
Academy of Medical & Public Health  
Services  
ACQC  
African Communities Together  
Ali Forney Center  
Apicha Community Health Center  
Asian Americans for Equality  
Bannon Consulting Services  
Barrier Free Living Inc.  
Beachwold Residential LLC  
Black LGBTQ Migrant Project  
Boys & Girls Club of Harlem  
BRC (Bowery Residents Committee)  
Bridge Builders  
Broadway Housing Communities  
Bronx House  
BronxWorks  
Brooklyn Community Services  
CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities  
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC  
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center  
Capitol Hall  
Carroll Gardens Association  
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York  
Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens  
Catholic Migration Services  
Center for Family Life  
Center for Independence of the Disabled,  
NY  
Center for the Integration and Advancement  
of New Americans, Inc. (CIANA).  
Chinese Methodist Center Corporation  
Chinese Progressive Association  
Citizen Action of New York-NYC Chapter  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New  
York  
Citymeals on Wheels  
Coalition for Asian American Children and  
Families (CACF)  
Coalition for Homeless Youth  
Community Access  
Community League of the Heights. Inc  
Community Resource Exchange  
Comunilife, Inc.  
Covenant House New York

Cypress Hills Local Development  
Corporation  
Day One  
East Coast Asian American Student Union  
(ECAASU)  
Educational Alliance  
Elmcor Youth & Adult Activities  
Emerald Isle Immigration Center  
Empire State Indivisible  
Empire State Progressives  
Exponents  
F.Y. Eye  
Faith in New York  
Fifth Avenue Committee  
FPWA  
Girl Vow  
Girls for Gender Equity (GGE)  
GMHC  
Goddard Riverside  
Goodwill Industries of Greater NY and  
Northern NJ, Inc.  
Graham Windham  
Grand Street Settlement  
Hamilton-Madison House  
HANAC Inc.  
Hartley House  
Heights and Hills  
HELP USA  
Henry Street Settlement  
Here to Here  
Hetrick-Martin Institute  
Hudson Guild  
Human Services Council  
India Home  
Indochina Sino-American Community  
Center  
Iris House, Inc.  
Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement  
JCC Staten Island  
JCCA  
JGM Consulting  
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center  
Korean Community Services of Metropolitan  
New York, Inc.  
Laal NYC  
Lantern Community Services  
Literacy Assistance Center  
LiveOn NY  
Lower East Side Family Union  
Lutheran Social Services of New York

Make the Road New York  
Martin De Porres Youth and Family  
Services  
Mekong NYC  
Mercy Home for Children  
MinKwon Center for Community Action  
Mixteca Organization, Inc.  
MMCC (Mosholu Montefiore Community  
Center)  
Morningside Heights Resistance  
Nazareth Housing Inc.  
Neighbors Helping Neighbors  
Neighbors Together  
Neighborhood Care Team, Inc  
New Settlement Apartments  
New York City Anti-Violence Project  
New York Immigration Coalition  
Nonprofit Finance Fund  
Nontraditional Employment for Women  
(NEW)  
New York City Employment and Training  
Coalition (NYCETC)  
NYS Harm Reduction Association  
OCA New York Chapter  
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow  
Options Center  
OutRight Action International  
Partnership for After School Education  
Partnership with Children  
Phipps Neighborhoods  
PHNP- NY Metro  
Project Hospitality  
Providence House, Inc  
PSS  
Queens Community House  
Red Hook Initiative  
Riseboro Community Partnership Inc.  
Rising Ground, Inc.  
S.T.O.P. - The Surveillance Technology  
Oversight Project  
Sadie Nash Leadership Project  
Safe Horizon  
SAGE  
Sakhi for South Asian Women  
Samaritan Daytop Village  
Sanctuary for Families  
Sapna NYC, Inc.  
SCAN-Harbor, Inc.  
SCO Family of Services  
Service Program for Older People, INC  
Sheltering Arms

Solstice  
South Asian Youth Action  
St. Francis Friends of the Poor  
Sunnyside Community Services  
Supportive Housing Network of NY  
The Brotherhood/Sister Sol  
The Center for Anti-Violence Education  
The Children's Village  
The Coalition for Behavioral Health  
The Data Union  
The Door  
The Fortune Society  
The Jewish Board of Family & Children's  
Services  
The Korean American Family Service  
Center  
UJA Federation of New York  
Unique People Services  
United Chinese Association of Brooklyn  
United Community Centers  
United Neighborhood Houses  
University Settlement  
Urban Justice Center  
Violence Intervention Program  
Vision Urbana, Inc.  
Voces Latinas  
Welllife Network  
WiN NYC  
Wingo NYC  
Womankind  
Women Creating Change  
Women's Center for Education and Career  
Advancement  
You Gotta Believe  
Youth Action Programs and Homes, Inc.  
Youth Action YouthBuild  
Youth Communication  
YWCA Brooklyn