

# FY 2020 Borough Budget Consultations

## Manhattan - Human Resources Administration

Meeting Date 9/12/2018

### AGENDA ITEM 1 : General Agency Funding Discussion

The purpose of holding the Borough Budget Consultations is to provide Community Boards with important information to assist in drafting their statement of District Needs and Budget Priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. As you know, Community Board Members are volunteers who may not be familiar with the budget process and how agencies' programs are funded. At the same time, Community Board members are very knowledgeable about local service needs.

This year's Manhattan agendas have three sections:

I. Agencies begin the consultation with a presentation of their goals, funding decision process, and highlights of their funding needs.

II. Then, the agenda continues with Community Boards asking about specific program funding.

III. Lastly, the agendas include Boards' requests on district-specific budget questions. We request that the agency respond in writing, but have any further discussions on these items with the Community Boards outside of the consultation.

For the first section, please present on the four topics below for 10-15 minutes at the beginning of our Consultation. Also, please provide written responses or even a PowerPoint presentation that we can use to fully and accurately educate our Board Members.

1. What are your priorities and operational goals for FY19 and projected priorities and operational goals for FY20?
2. What are the current proposed FY19 and FY20 service and operational goals and proposed funding?
3. Which programs is the agency adding, dropping, or changing for FY19 and projected for FY20?
4. What are your benchmarks for new and existing programs and what are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success?

### AGENCY RESPONSE:

1. Some of the Department's priorities and goals are:

- Expanding anti-eviction and legal services for low-income New Yorkers in accordance with the universal access to counsel initiative
- Streamlining and implementing rental assistance programs
- Implementing the largest municipal commitment ever to build and expand supportive housing
- Expanding access to housing benefits and support for New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS in accordance with the HASA for All initiative
- Increasing access to public benefits and assistance through increased use of technology, such as the ACCESS HRA on-line portal

2. The Department's 2019 Adopted budget provides for operating expenses of \$10.07 billion for FY19 and \$9.97 billion for FY20. The agency helps three million New Yorkers annually.

3. New funding included in the 2019 Adopted budget:

- In 2019 and 2020, funding for tenant anti-eviction and anti-harassment legal services increased by \$15m in FY19 and \$37m in FY20, respectively.
- In FY19, and in the baseline, \$8.7 million was added to the budget for emergency food.

4. The agency produces key statistics and performance measures. Please see 2018 Mayor's Management Report -- [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2018/2018\\_pmmr.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2018/2018_pmmr.pdf)

## **MEETING NOTES:**

### **COMMENTS:**

HRA has an online portal that can be utilized to apply for food stamps

### **FOLLOW-UP:**

## **AGENDA ITEM 2 : Legal Services and Eviction Prevention**

Last year we asked about funding for eviction prevention legal services, We received answers about funding but not whether service providers able to hire enough lawyers as needed to use this funding. This would also speak to the level of pay for these legal services. Is the salary level commensurate with experienced non-profit lawyers? Are non-profits able to fill all vacancies for eviction lawyers?

### **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

Yes. Nonprofit legal services providers under contract with HRA to provide anti-eviction legal services offer compensation that is competitive with other nonprofit staff attorney positions, and at several providers, staff attorneys are members of a union and the compensation for staff is governed by a collective bargaining agreement. Legal services providers have been successful in attracting talented and dedicated legal and other professional staff to meet the growing legal services needs of New Yorkers facing eviction, but some have encountered challenges in hiring attorney supervisors to expand their workforce.

## **MEETING NOTES:**

### **COMMENTS:**

- Legal services was funded for roughly \$6M a year; funding has now grown to \$93M a year (FY '19)
- NYC: First city in the country to ensure that every tenant facing eviction in housing court will have legal representation
- Next year, funding for tenant services will be \$115M
- FY '19 (1st phase): focus on 15 zip codes (3 per borough); 2nd phase will be to focus on 15 more zip codes
- Focus: grow in every borough
- Issue: Legal service providers are having difficulty finding senior lawyers that can serve as supervisors over younger lawyers (there appears no shortage of young lawyers)
- As of FY '16 (3 years ago), HRA was funding tenant legal services at \$62M a year (there has been a ten-fold increase since we started)
- Concern: Savvy landlord lawyers take advantage of tenants who are unaware of their right to representation in housing court
- HRA: We put \$1M into outreach to spread awareness, including through the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit to inform tenants that they can get a lawyer;
- HRA: Oftentimes tenants who are low-income and in crisis do not have time or inclination to connect with counsel at the pre-stage e.g. with Legal Aid Society or other orgs.
- HRA will be live with ads in the neighborhoods they are targeting with message that universal access to counsel exists e.g. digital ads, ads in bodegas and barbershops
- 10025, 10026, 10027 are the current Manhattan zip codes of focus for HRA (1st phase)
- 10034, 10040 are amongst two HRA Manhattan zip codes of focus for next year (beginning July 2019)
- HRA: Difference between universal access to counsel & one of the current HRA zip codes of focus is: availability of capacity

**FOLLOW-UP:**

HRA will be providing 3 additional Manhattan zip codes of focus for 2nd phase in the coming weeks (as stated by Jordan Dressler, HRA - office of Civil Justice)

**AGENDA ITEM 3 : SNAP Benefits**

What percent of eligible people are registered for SNAP benefits? In the past there were outreach programs to reach unregistered eligible people--is outreach program funded and being implemented?

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

The estimated percent of eligible people enrolled in SNAP in 2016 (the latest year available) was 72.4%.

HRA continues to implement outreach programs that are externally funded. The Agency's SNAP Support Services Unit receives funding from USDA to provide outreach services in the form of pre-screening, SNAP training, application assistance and management of over 100 community-based organizations. These services are provided throughout NYC at community sites that include schools, hospitals and clinics, libraries, parks (at health fairs), senior centers, and WIC offices.

Since 2014, HRA has partnered with Benefits Data Trust (BDT) and the Robin Hood Foundation to increase access to SNAP benefits for potentially eligible New Yorkers. Initially, the target population was seniors receiving Medicaid, who were thought to be potentially eligible for SNAP. Since 2017, the effort has been expanded to include likely Medicaid recipients of all ages. Service models include: assisting eligible households to apply for SNAP through Access HRA; and instructing households with existing cases on the best way to submit documents and complete their interviews and providing general information on how to get and keep SNAP benefits. In addition to direct mail, targeted outreach is done through telephone calls and, more recently, text messaging.

**MEETING NOTES:****COMMENTS:**

- Concern: Current administration considering public charging
- HRA: We refer folks to MOIA and State Office of New Americans; We want to avoid any 'chilling' effect
- Lots of work has been done re Access HRA (online tool that allows individuals to monitor their case and submit documents for their case); Video has also been created
- Snap On-Demand: Clients can be certified by telephone (will not need to go in-person to renew benefits)
- Clients can also submit their application online and have their interview on-demand over-the-phone

**FOLLOW-UP:****AGENDA ITEM 4 : HASA**

HASA- all NYC residents with HIV or AIDS who meet financial need requirements are now eligible for HASA services. Last year you reported an increase in staffing of 18 people for this area. Has there been additional staff increase and is increase projected for FY 20 to continue to meet the increase of people eligible for services? Providers report need both for capital (cost of acquisition and construction) and expense for operating/services. Please discuss planned funding for this

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

The FY19 Adopted Budget for HASA, including case management for all eligible clients, is \$192 million.

**MEETING NOTES:****COMMENTS:**

- HASA has reduced the qualifications for eligibility

**FOLLOW-UP:**

**AGENDA ITEM 5 : Eviction Vulnerable Tenants and Buildings**

Please give an update on success of universal right to legal representation for tenants below poverty line facing eviction. How is this being measured? What is the FY 19 and projected FY 20 funding for nonprofits to provide ground level organizing education with tenants.

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

Fiscal Year 2018 marked the first year of HRA’s implementation of Universal Access to Counsel in the City’s Housing Courts. Preliminary results suggest that legal services for tenants facing eviction are more widely available than ever before. In the ten zip codes across the city that were first selected for targeted legal resources through Universal Access, the legal representation rate for tenants facing eviction in Housing Court tripled, increasing from 16% in 2015 to 48% in 2017. HRA’s tenant legal services programs served more than three times the number of households in need in Fiscal Year 2017 — over 23,000 households, including over 70,000 New Yorkers — as these programs did in Fiscal Year 2014. In all, over 200,000 New Yorkers have received legal assistance through HRA’s tenant legal services programs since 2014. As access to legal services for New York City tenants has increased, evictions across the city have decreased. In 2017, residential evictions by city marshals declined by approximately 5% compared to 2016 and are down approximately 27% since 2013 — a period during which New York City substantially increased funding for legal services for low-income tenants. Over the four-year period of 2014 through 2017, an estimated 70,000 New Yorkers remained in their homes as a result of the decreased evictions.

**MEETING NOTES:**

**COMMENTS:**

- There is no money in HRA budget to ground-level organizing
- Many of our legal providers see themselves as organizers

**FOLLOW-UP:**

**AGENDA ITEM 6 : CITYFEPS Rent Supplement (Referred to HRA by DHS)**

Please update information. Last year you said rent supplement programs would change and be streamlined and there would be new program requirements/eligibility requirements. Has the HUD funding continued? After combining of rent supplement programs, will same number of clients be served?

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

After the City and State cut the Advantage rental assistance program in 2011, which led to a 38 percent increase in homelessness in just three years, this Administration jumped in aggressively to fill the gap by rebuilding rental assistance and rehousing programs from scratch, which have so far provided nearly 95,000 New Yorkers with the vital support needed to remain housed or secure housing. By streamlining our initiatives into one unified program, we’re taking those efforts further, making it easier for New Yorkers in need and landlords with the keys to housing options to open and access more doors of opportunity citywide. This common-sense step is another example of our City’s commitment to using every tool at our disposal to address the nationwide challenge of homelessness that has been decades in the making.

Streamlining the City’s rental assistance programs will:

- provide greater clarity, consistency, and efficiency for all participants in the programs, including New Yorkers experiencing housing instability and/or homelessness, City social-service and shelter staff, not-for-profit providers, as well as landlords, making it easier to open doors to more housing options
- align City programs with the State Family Homelessness Eviction Prevention Supplement (State FHEPS) program,

including implementing similar rent levels and time frames for rental assistance eligibility

The majority of the programs utilized by New Yorkers are funded by City and State dollars. HUD does fund the HOME TBRA program, and it has been funded at a steady level.

## **MEETING NOTES:**

### **COMMENTS:**

- July 21, 2018: City solicited comments from the public to help inform streamlining process
- Streamlining will be implemented by early fall and will combine a variety of resources into one
- DSS has robust anti-discrimination unit
- People who currently have vouchers will be rolled over into new program
- Public Concern: Clients have difficult time with landlords accepting vouchers

Q: What programs should community advocate for?

A: Given our current budgeting and programs, we are adequately funded

### **FOLLOW-UP:**