

FY 2021 Borough Budget Consultations

Manhattan - Human Resources Administration

Meeting Date 9/13/2019

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 FY20 and projected priorities and operational goals for FY21?
2. What are the current proposed FY20 and FY21 service and operational goals and proposed funding?
3. Which programs is the agency adding, dropping, or changing for FY20 and projected for FY21?
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
- Continued implementation of rental assistance programs
- Continued implementation of the largest municipal commitment ever of supportive housing
- Expanding access to housing benefits and support for New Yorkers with HIV
- Increasing access to public benefits and assistance through increased use of technology, such as ACCESS HRA

2) The Department's Adopted 2020 budget provides for operating expenses of \$10.20b for FY19 and \$10.26b for FY20.

3) New funding included in the 2020 Adopted budget:

- o Food Access and Benefits \$725K
- o City Council Enhancements \$19m
- o Increases in HRA and DHS IT that start in FY20 \$37m

New funding from Executive 2020 reflected in fiscal year 2020:

- o Implicit Bias Training: \$1 million was added for FY19, \$2.2 million for FY20, and \$1 million for FY21 to implement

implicit bias training for all 17,000 DSS, HRA, and DHS staff.

o Body-worn cameras: \$330,000 was added for FY19 and \$100,000 for FY20 to provide HRA Peace Officers with body-worn cameras. Last year, we conducted a pilot program in which 40 DHS Peace Officers were trained in and wore body cameras in their daily work serving, supporting, and protecting New Yorkers in need as they get back on their feet.

4) The agency produces key statistics and performance matrixes. Please see 2019 Mayor's Management Report. https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2019/2019_pmmr.pdf

MEETING NOTES:

COMMENTS:

HRA is changing the way clients have access to benefits like online and on mobile devices

Funding was added to the budget for Food Access

There is an RFP out for Implicit Bias Training and Body Worn Cameras

Jesse asked, "Are the peace officers the same ones that we keep trying to get more of?" HRA answered yes.

NOTES:

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.

1. Is the salary level commensurate with experienced non-profit lawyers?

2. Are non-profits able to fill all vacancies for eviction lawyers?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

- New York City continues to be a leader the country in fighting poverty, using every tool at our disposal and recognizing there is no one-size-fits-all solution for addressing the complicated nationwide challenge of rents outpacing incomes. An unprecedented 37% decline in evictions achieved in New York City marks a milestone in the Administration's efforts to combat homelessness and protect housing stability including its landmark Universal Access initiative to provide legal services for every New York City tenant facing eviction:
- As of June 2018, the City provided nearly a quarter million New Yorkers with legal representation, advice, or assistance in eviction and other housing-related matters through tenant legal services programs at the Human Resources Administration's Office of Civil Justice, including through the Universal Access program, the nation's first and largest initiative ensuring that every tenant facing eviction in Housing Court can access free legal services.
- As part of our prevention-first strategy for addressing housing instability and homelessness, helping individuals and families in need remain in their homes and neighborhoods, this Administration has:
 - o Aggressively expanded free legal assistance for New Yorkers facing eviction and displacement, increasing funding for free legal services for tenants more than 20-fold, from roughly \$6 million in FY13 to more than \$120 million in FY20.

? Legal representation up: Increases in legal services for tenants have led to substantially higher rates of legal representation citywide and specifically in areas targeted for assistance:

? In 2013, 1% of tenants in eviction cases in NYC Housing Court had legal representation, according to state court officials. As of June of 2018, 30% of tenants facing eviction cases in Housing Court had representation, and in the high-need neighborhoods targeted through the Universal Access initiative, the percentage was 56%.

? In other words, 1 in 100 tenants facing eviction in housing court had lawyers in 2013. Now that number is up to approximately 1 in 3 due to the Administration's efforts.

? Evictions down: In 2018, there were 37% fewer evictions than in 2013, with an estimated 100,000 New Yorkers who were able to stay in their homes in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018—and with 18,000 evictions, 2018 was the first

time in at least a decade that evictions dropped below 20,000.

? In Manhattan, evictions dropped by nearly half over this same period, with 47 percent fewer than 2013).

? Major milestone: In 2017, HRA formally launched the Universal Access initiative implementing New York City's first-in-the-nation "tenants' right to counsel" law, which was developed and overseen by the Office of Civil Justice (OCJ) at HRA. The first phase of Universal Access included increasing access to free legal representation in Housing Court to low-income New Yorkers in fifteen zip codes across New York City that were identified as having high levels of evictions, shelter entry, and rent regulated housing. During the second phase other high-risk zip codes were added, one in each borough, for a total of twenty zip codes across the city.

? These 20 ZIP codes include:

- o 11221 Bushwick/Bed-Stuy
- o 11216 Bed-Stuy/Crown Heights
- o 11225 Flatbush
- o 11226 Flatbush
- o 10027 Harlem
- o 10026 Harlem
- o 10025 Upper West Side
- o 10031 Washington Heights and Sugar Hill
- o 11433 Jamaica
- o 11434 Jamaica
- o 11373 Elmhurst
- o 11385 Ridgewood and Glendale
- o 10457 Tremont
- o 10462 Parkchester and Pelham Parkway
- o 10467 Williamsbridge
- o 10468 Fordham/Bronx Park
- o 10303 Mariners Harbor
- o 10302 Port Richmond
- o 10310 West Brighton
- o 10314 Mid-Island

? In these ZIP codes, the impact has been significant:

o For example, in 2015, 16 percent of tenants facing eviction in Housing Court in 10 zip codes first targeted for Universal Access services had legal representation. By 2017, that rate had tripled to 48 percent.

o And by the end of fiscal year 2018, in the fifteen UA zip codes targeted for legal services in the first phase of implementation, 56 percent of tenants – more than half of all tenants – who appeared in Housing Court to face eviction proceedings were represented by an attorney.

? 400,000 New Yorkers facing eviction are expected to receive legal assistance annually when the program is fully implemented in 2022, with annual funding for legal services for tenants increasing to \$166 million.

o Provided emergency rent arrears grants to 264,000 households since 2014, helping rent-burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction stay in their homes

Nonprofit legal services providers organizations contracted by OCJ 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. Public defenders and civil legal services providers are critical to our City and the people who they represent. Without them, we could not achieve our goal of making this City more just and fairer for low-income communities. While there have been unprecedented levels of investments to expand services for New Yorkers during this administration, we acknowledge, based on a preliminary analysis of turnovers and immediate serious recruitment and retention challenges, and the historic underfunding of contracts by prior administrations, that we must invest to create pay parity for our public defenders and civil legal services providers. We are committed to a process to analyze both the underfunding by prior administrations, high turnover rates and the significant recruitment and retention challenges and compare pay to appropriate and comparable positions within the New York City Law Department.

The City, and public defender and civil legal services providers will work together to build a four-year full implementation plan to reach parity with the New York City Law Department that will also take into consideration the changing dynamics as a result of criminal law reforms and programs and services that seek to increase fairness

for low income New Yorkers. The pay parity implementation joint process to address high turnover, and serious recruitment and retention challenges will be finalized by March of 2020, in time for the Executive Budget for FY2021.

MEETING NOTES:

COMMENTS:

By 2020, they hope to provide free legal services to anyone facing eviction in NYCHA

The Defenders are those who provide legal services for survivors of domestic violence, criminal court, housing court, etc.

HRA is trying to achieve pay parity for defenders and want to reach a resolution to address this issue in the current fiscal year.

HRA is not sure how much pay parity affects recruitment and retention of defenders.

Tenant legal services went from \$3 million in 2013 to over \$120 million this fiscal year.

Gaps in hiring may be because of attrition, the busyness of the public field, etc.

HRA wants to reach the goal of full implementation by fiscal year 2022

Training is key for new law graduates coming into the field

Mark Diller suggested some sort of mentoring to assist housing attorneys who are not aware of what they will experience in the courtroom

NOTES:

AGENDA ITEM 3 : SNAP Benefits

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

AGENCY RESPONSE:

1. What percent of eligible people are registered for SNAP benefits?

Our 2017 SNAP participation rate estimate is 70.9% (see <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/facts/snap/SNAPParticipationNYC.pdf>).

Although the number of near-poor New Yorkers declined in 2017, the number of SNAP-eligible New Yorkers grew due to an increase in the gross income limit for working New Yorkers. More specifically: On July 1, 2016, the gross income limit for working households was raised to 150% FPL (versus 130% FPL). This led to a substantial increase in the number of SNAP-eligible individuals, but only a small increase in recipients (benefit levels and take-up rates are low at that income level). The 2016 PR was calculated to reflect a half-year of this policy; 2017 is the first full year with this higher limit. As a result of this change, NYC's estimated SNAP participation rate declined.

2. In the past there were outreach programs to reach unregistered eligible people--is an outreach program funded and being implemented?

Community Outreach services include a dedicated SNAP outreach team that receives funding from USDA to promote

access to SNAP in the community in the form of pre-screening, SNAP training, and application assistance. 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.

Two additional outreach teams provide comprehensive benefits outreach for all of HRA's benefits and services, including a heavy focus on promoting awareness of and access to SNAP. Leveraging the availability of SNAP applications, recertifications, Periodic Reports, case changes, and case management online through ACCESS HRA, outreach teams provide training to community-based providers on using the online tools and supporting their clients who are applying for or in receipt of SNAP benefits.

Outreach staff frequently provide information tabling at resource fairs in partnership with schools, libraries, parks, places of worship, community centers, civic organizations, and community-based organizations. Staff are also onsite at NYCHA developments and community-based organizations to assist with applications or provide presentations to residents. Outreach staff also work in collaboration with other City agencies like DFTA, DOE, ACS, H+H, OEGBV, and others to ensure access to information and SNAP application support for residents across the City.

In addition, the agency has launched numerous media campaigns including Skip the Trip, LGBTQI SNAP campaign and other targeted outreach.

MEETING NOTES:

COMMENTS:

HRA stated that they have done a great deal to increase access to SNAP benefits e.g. training with CBO partners, not requiring people have to come in-person to an office, the agency has pursued waivers from the state and federal gov, etc.

September 23 - USDA is changing "Broad Based Categorical Eligibility," it could kick 18% of seniors off of SNAP, a lot of potential negative externalities to this proposed rule, HRA encouraged CBs to write in opposition to this proposed rule

NOTES:

Susan asked for more details about the proposed rule so we can submit it to committees and boards; Mark Diller asked for a copy of HRA's comment, will set up a phone call with boards to review

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.

1. 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.

2. Please discuss planned funding for this

AGENCY RESPONSE:

1. Has there been additional staff increase and is increase projected for FY 20 to continue to meet the increase of people eligible for services?

There has not been additional staff added. In partnership with Housing Works, we have implemented a series of pilots to evaluate models of service delivery in light of changing caseload dynamics.

Providers report need both for capital (cost of acquisition and construction) and expense for operating/services.

This does not come through AOTPS or capital budget.

2. Please discuss planned funding for this

- \$40 million in City funds in FY19 and \$35 million total and \$75 million City funds in FY20 and out was added to support increased expenses in Cash Assistance.
- While the CA caseload declined by 22,000 people since 2018, expenses are projected to increase as a result of the HASA Ending the Epidemic Initiative, which provides enhanced HASA benefits for people with asymptomatic HIV; increased rent levels in the State FHEPS program; fewer sanctioned cases and costs for rental assistance.

MEETING NOTES:

COMMENTS:

Right now, there is adequate funding in the budget to meet the needs.

NOTES:

AGENDA ITEM 5 : Eviction Vulnerable Tenants and Buildings

Please give an update on the success of universal right to legal representation for tenants below poverty line facing eviction.

1. How is this being measured?

2. What is the FY 20 and projected FY 21 funding for nonprofits to provide ground level organizing education with tenants?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

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MEETING NOTES:

COMMENTS:

Covered a majority of questions on Agenda Item #2

What proportion of tenants are appearing in housing court and have counsel? Before, it was 1%. As of Spring 2018, the number was 33% in Manhattan. HRA is targeting specific zip codes to increase counsel in these areas.

59% of those in the zip codes had counsel.

HRA hopes to increase the number of zip codes by 2020

To measure quality, in 93% of cases, the counsels were able to help tenants remain in their homes

In Manhattan, the # of evictions has decreased by 47% btw 2013 and 2018.

Richard Lewis asked if HRA is monitoring the number of individuals that are turned away from legal services? HRA

responded that the best tool will be Full Implementation.

NOTES:

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.

1. Has the HUD funding continued?
2. After combining of rent supplement programs, will the same number of clients being served?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

The Administration streamlined its rental assistance programs, consolidating seven different initiatives into one, to make it easier for New Yorkers in need to get back on their feet or remain in their homes and simpler for landlords to participate in the programs, opening doors of opportunity. The new CityFHEPS program replaced all of the Living in Communities (LINC I, II, III, IV and V) programs, along with the Special Exit and Prevention Supplement (SEPS), and City Family Eviction Prevention and Exit Plan Supplements (CityFEPS) with a single unified rental assistance program to simplify the process of identifying and securing permanent housing opportunities that enable New Yorkers experiencing housing instability to exit shelter or avoid entering shelter altogether. The Administration's programs have helped more than 120,000 children and adults move out of shelter or avert shelter altogether since 2014, with the majority exiting shelter into housing.

More information can be found here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/cityfheps-documents/dss-7r-e.pdf>

1. Has the HUD funding continued?

CityFHEPS does not have a HUD funding source.

2. After combining of rent supplement programs, will the same number of clients being served?

The Administration continues to offer vouchers to thousands of eligible households.

MEETING NOTES:

COMMENTS:

Susan asked, "Have you found since this consolidations that a higher percentage of landlords is using this program?"

NOTES:

HRA will have to get back to the CBs and Susan about whether or not this consolidation has led to the increase of landlords using the program.

Do many people come back to HRA with rental discrimination complaints? HRA will have to get back to the CBs.

AGENDA ITEM 7 : Domestic Violence Programs

1. Has there been an increase in the demand for DV shelters?
2. What percentage of the demand for DV shelters is currently being met?
3. What funding would be required to meet all perceived DV shelter needs?

4. How is the success of services evaluated?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

1. Has there been an increase in the demand for DV shelters?

In 2018 7,522 DV shelter requests were made, and 9,981 individuals received DV shelter services.

2. What percentage of the demand for DV shelters is currently being met?

The average percentage of clients linked to DV shelter from the DV Hotline (regardless of family size) in calendar year 2018 was 54%.

3. What funding would be required to meet all perceived DV shelter needs?

There are no additional funding requests at this time as HRA continues to implement a funded expansion of DV shelter beds.

4. How is the success of services evaluated?

OCFS and OTDA oversight with Inspections and CAPs.

MEETING NOTES:

COMMENTS:

HRA will be testifying before City Council on September 24th about its DV programs.

NOTES: