



Donovan Richards
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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson
Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

December 8, 2025

Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Committee Member Attendees:

Lauren Springer, Chair
Amparo Abel-Bey, Vice Chair
Nellie Afshar
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos
Leticia Vasquez

Committee Member Absentees:

John Bahia
Warren Davis
Benjamin Lucas
Alyssa Sawicki
Phugelzen Sherpa

Community Board Member Attendees:

Amaurys Valdez

Health and Human Services Public Member Attendees:

Andrea Thomas

Health and Human Services Public Members Absentees:

Olivia Jackson Lewis
Robert Wohner
Judy Zangwill

Community Board 2 Staff:

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

Guests:

Louis Garcia, Principal of Queens Technical High School
Sandra Horne, Abbot House Community Partnership
Antoinette Grant, Abbot House Community Partnership
Simone Campbell, Abbot House Community Partnership
Yellitza Naranjo, Abbot House Community Partnership
Grant Ewing

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

Lauren Springer, Chair of the Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

Queens Technical High School

The Chair introduced Louis Garcia, Principal of Queens Technical High School. Mr. Garcia shared details about the school, including its programming, opportunities it provides for students, and its needs. He shared the following information:

- Queens Technical High School is located at 37-02 47th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101.
- The school is nearly 100 years old and is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) high school.
- The school was formerly known as Queens Vocational High School.
- The school offers seven majors, including entrepreneurship-based programs, cosmetology, computer-based programs, cloud networking, and graphic design. Build trades are also offered, including electrical installation, plumbing construction, and pre-engineering electronics.
- Queens Technical High School partners with industry professionals to prepare students for success.
- While students fulfill the same graduation requirements as other NYC public high school students, they may also earn industry credentials, including OSHA certifications.
- Graduates have gone on to join trade unions, become apprentices, and cosmetology students can graduate with their 1,000-hour certification.
- Students may apply directly to a specific program in 9th grade. Students who are unsure which program to pursue may participate in an exploratory program, allowing them to sample courses before applying to a program by the end of 9th grade.
- All students at Queens Technical High School are CTE students. Moreover, the school supports students through literacy and master board programs.
- The school offers 12 AP courses and partners with SUNY and CUNY through College Now, allowing many students to graduate with nearly one semester of college credits.
- Of the school's approximately 1,300 students, nearly 400 live in CB2; the majority live in other parts of Queens, and about 12 students live outside of Queens.
- As a community school, Queens Technical High School works to remove obstacles that students and families may face by partnering with community organizations.
- The school partners with Sunnyside Community Services to provide mental health support and mentorship opportunities.

- Most programs are ED OPT and do not screen students. Some programs, such as computer graphics, require an audition, while others, including cosmetology and pre-engineering, require two screenings.
- Students develop soft skills through work-based learning, which includes a minimum of 54 hours. They can fulfill that requirement by doing internships, job shadowing, and field visits.
- Following a question from Ms. Vasquez and Committee members regarding how CB2 could assist Queens Technical High School, Mr. Garcia stated that advocacy would be helpful as the school seeks to create programs, including an HVAC program, and pursue renovations and equipment. He added that maintaining funding is important, as students do not pay for equipment such as cosmetology kits and laptops.
- Ms. Springer noted that this information could be useful for future budget requests and asked Mr. Garcia to share a list of specific needs for Queens Technical High School that he would like the Committee to advocate for.

Abbot House Community Partnership

Representatives from Abbot House Community Partnership provided information about the agency, including its mission, programs, and how to become a foster parent through the agency. They shared the following information:

- Abbot House Community Partnership is a foster care agency founded in November 1963.
- The agency currently supports nearly 2,500 children in foster care, including unaccompanied migrant children, families experiencing challenges, and adults with developmental disabilities in the New York Metropolitan area and the Hudson Valley.
- The agency has several locations, including a site in the Bronx at 17-75 Grand Concourse.
- Abbot House Community Partnership works to reunite families and create new ones so those in the program feel a sense of belonging rooted in hope and community.
- The agency's philosophy and mission focus on providing children and adolescents with healing, safety, and opportunity to thrive in family-based settings. Services include counseling, health care, life skills development, academic support, foster parent support, employment training, and Fair Futures coaching.
- Abbot House Community Partnership partners with Culture for One, an organization that supports youth in developing their talents in arts, dance, and music.

- Representatives shared that there is an urgent need for foster parents, particularly for teens and sibling groups, as the agency seeks to avoid separating siblings.
- Representatives also outlined requirements to become a foster parent, which include:
 - Must be over the age of 21.
 - Must be in good physical and mental health.
 - Must have a source of income.
 - Live in a home (owned or rented) with enough space for children and free from health and safety hazards.
 - All adults in your household must pass a background check and clearance by the New York State Central Register for Child Abuse and Neglect (SCR).
- For those interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent, or about involvement in foster care without becoming a foster parent, representatives shared that individuals may contact Sandra Horne, Foster Parent Recruiter, at 17-75 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY, or by phone at (914) 786-0008.
- Abbot House Community Partnership also provides additional services beyond foster care, including:
 - Programs supporting adults with developmental disabilities and placing them in group homes.
 - A non-secure detention services program allows youth who have allegedly committed a crime to reside in a group home while participating in court-related requirements instead of being placed in detention.
 - Community school programs in the Bronx at PS 294 and PS 31 provide mental health support, parent advocacy, and family support to increase children's school attendance.
 - A post-permanency program that supports foster parents and legal guardians through parenting skills training, counseling, and respite services.
 - A community residence program that provides mental health support for children who are unable to remain at home, with stays lasting no longer than eight to nine months.
 - Shelter and foster care programs for children who entered the United States unaccompanied.

Committee Updates:

- Ms. Vasquez shared that near Sunnyside Middle School at Barnett Avenue and 48th Street, drivers are ignoring the school crossing guard and posing a safety concern. Ms. Abel-Bey noted that there are ongoing issues on Barnett Avenue and that vehicles frequently make reckless turns in the area.

- Ms. Afshar noted that, with the federal government dismantling the CDC, the institution is undergoing a reputational decline and is no longer regarded as a trusted source of public health recommendations. She added that the New York City Department of Health is the oldest and largest health agency after the CDC and is well-positioned to counter inaccurate information at the national level. She further stated that the Health Committee should elevate messaging from the New York City Department of Health.
- Committee members expressed continued interest in understanding whether New York City and New York State can create vaccine guidelines. The Committee is awaiting a response to this inquiry from a federal representative.
- Ms. Abel-Bey shared information about Know Your Rights initiatives. There will be a Queens Rapid Response Immigrant Justice training on December 11, 2025. There will also be a Queens training led by Hands Off NYC to prepare bystanders and upstanders on how to safely respond to ICE-related situations. She added that it is important to bring attention to these topics.

A motion was made by Amparo Abel-Bey to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava