

**Testimony of NORC WOW/SAMUEL FIELD Y
Before the Joint Fiscal Committees of the New York State Legislature**

Human Services Budget Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2017-18

Honorable Catharine M. Young, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chair, Assembly Ways & Means Committee

Honorable Sue Serino, Chair Senate Committee on Aging
Honorable Donna Lupardo, Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging

Honorable Tony Avella, Chair, Senate Committee on Children & Families
Honorable Ellen Jaffee, Chair, Assembly Committee on Children & Families

Honorable James Tedisco, Chair, Senate Committee on Social Services
Honorable Andrew Hevesi, Chair, Assembly Committee on Social Services

**Submitted by Darlene Brennan
February 10, 2017**

NORCs and Neighborhood NORCS

As New Yorkers age, an increasing number of residents will require the special health and social services facilitated by Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Neighborhood NORCs (NNORCs). These vital programs and resources help enable low-middle income New Yorkers age in place, thrive in their communities and delay hospitalization or nursing home placement.

N/NORCs¹ provide programs and services that support a group that might otherwise fall through the cracks. N/NORCs provide case management, socialization programs, transportation and shopping assistance, as well as basic health services that allow seniors to remain in their homes, greatly improving their quality of life.

In the FY 2016-2017 Enacted Budget, significant legislative changes were made to the NORC program, including expanding NORC definitions to include rural NORCs and allowing NORCs to receive up to \$200,000 and neighborhood NORCs to receive no less than \$60,000 to support programming. The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) has released a Request for Applications (RFA) for N/NORCS that reflect the statutory changes, but only plans to fund 12 classic NORCs and 12 neighborhood NORCs. There are currently 16 classic NORCs and 13 neighborhood NORCs supported by NYSOFA.

¹ N/NORC indicates both NORC and NNORC programs

Without any changes, five existing NORC programs will be forced to close. Governor Cuomo's FY 2017-2018 Executive Budget allocates \$2,027,500 for NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) and \$2,027,500 for Neighborhood NORCs (NNORCs). This eliminates the additional \$350,000 for NORCs and \$350,000 for Neighborhood NORCs that was included in the FY 2016-2017 Enacted Budget.

Furthermore, the RFA and the current budget allocation do not allow for expansion of the program, despite the fact that the legislation was updated last year with expansion in mind. Additional funding is vital to ensure that current NORCs can continue to provide services, particularly health care management services, and to grow the program to underserved areas with increasing aging populations.

NORC WOW (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community With Out Walls), an NNORC program of the Samuel Field Y, serves hundreds of seniors residing in parts of New Hyde Park, Bellerose and Floral Park in Queens. Currently, 75% of our seniors are over the age of 85 and have become more frail and isolated. As these seniors age in place, the need for NNORC services is more critical than ever.

Restoring \$700,000 from FY16-17 and investing an additional \$5.25 million in the N/NORC program (split evenly between the classic NORC and neighborhood NORC programs) will preserve the existing 29 NYSOFA-funded NORCs, and will allow for the creation of about 21 new NORCs across the State.

Thank you for your consideration of these critical N/NORC funding issues.