



THE LEGISLATURE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

April 17, 2020

Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

As your partners in government, we were surprised to hear the announcement that New York City will eliminate the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) for Summer 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While we completely understand the health and public safety concerns posed by the traditional, in-person internship-based model of SYEP, we are deeply concerned with the cancellation of the program and with the lack of an alternative plan for the 75,000 young people and their families that benefit from it.

In 2019, State dollars paid for nearly 15% of the City's SYEP program at \$22.6 million. This funding, which is appropriated from New York's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, goes to support subsidized wages for the lowest-income SYEP participants. The State's budget, signed by Governor Cuomo on April 2, 2020, included \$45 million for SYEP statewide, meaning that New York City can anticipate receiving level-funding for SYEP activities for Summer 2020.

State legislators work every year to make SYEP a priority and ensure that these funds are included in the budget. Keeping SYEP funded at last year's level was particularly difficult during this budget as we were dealing with a rapidly growing deficit which left us unable to restore numerous programs to prior year levels. We are disappointed that the City, in making the decision to eliminate the program, would put those dollars in jeopardy, particularly when our lowest-income constituents rely on them to keep households afloat in regular years, let alone today due to the pandemic, when unemployment numbers are expected to reach 500,000 in New York City alone.

When the City's Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) initially gave nonprofit contractors only 24 hours to submit final program expenses, that meant that providers would be forced to lay off the very staff that would be critical in managing the distribution of the State dollars. Additionally, though DYCD cited health and safety concerns with the regular operation of the program, we have heard from the nonprofit contractors we represent that they had already been thinking of alternative program models that could safely take place remotely during Summer 2020. The very staff that were responsible for developing those program alternatives were the ones laid off last week as providers scrambled to comply with DYCD's decision.

We implore you to work swiftly, with input from your SYEP contractors and the young people that hope to participate in programming this summer, alongside the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), to ensure that New York City will find ways to move the \$22.6 million in State SYEP funding to the low-income families most impacted by COVID-19's spread. We are struck by the racial and economic disparities revealed in the recently released statistics on COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths, and are acutely aware of how the economic impact caused by the pandemic will be felt hardest in the low-income communities that most benefit from the State's SYEP investment.

We look forward to working with you to resolve this issue.

In partnership,



Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi
Chair, Social Services



Senator Roxanne J. Persaud
Chair, Social Services



Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee
Chair, Children and Families



Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Chair, Children and Families

Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubry, 35 th AD	Senator Jamaal T. Bailey, 36 th SD
Assemblyman Charles Barron, 60 th AD	Senator Leroy Comrie, 14 th SD
Assemblyman Michael Blake, 79 th AD	Senator Simcha Felder, 17 th SD
Assemblyman Robert Carroll, 44 th AD	Senator Andrew Gounardes, 22 nd SD
Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz, 39 th AD	Senator Brad Hoylman, 27 th SD
Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, 45 th AD	Senator Robert Jackson, 31 st SD
Assemblywoman Maritza Davila, 53 rd AD	Senator Zellnor Myrie, 20 th SD
Assemblywoman Carmen De La Rosa, 72 nd AD	Senator Jessica Ramos, 13 th SD
Assemblyman Harvey Epstein, 74 th AD	Senator Gustavo Rivera, 33 rd SD
Assemblywoman Pat Fahy, 109 th AD	Senator Julia Salazar, 18 th SD
Assemblyman Charles Fall, 61 st AD	Senator James Sanders, Jr., 10 th SD
Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez, 80 th AD	Senator Diane Savino, 23 rd SD
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Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman, 25 ^{9h} AD	
Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner, 77 th AD	
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Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis, 64 th AD	
Assemblywoman Yuh-Line Niou, 65 th AD	
Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, 37 th AD	
Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell, 69 th AD	

Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, 51st AD

Assemblyman N. Nick Perry, 58th AD

Assemblyman Victor Pichardo, 86th AD

Assemblyman Gary Pretlow, 89th AD

Assemblyman Dan Quart, 73rd AD

Assemblywoman Karines Reyes, 87th AD

Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, 67th AD

Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, 25th AD

Assemblywoman Rebecca Seawright, 76th AD

Assemblywoman Jo Ann Simon, 52nd AD

Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas, 36th AD

Assemblyman David Weprin, 24th AD