

EXCERPTS FROM COMMUNITY BOARDS' "STATEMENTS ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET" FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Reactions to Agency Responses listed in the FY '16 Register of Community Board Budget Requests are collectively listed under Agency Subheading

Dept. for the Aging

BROOKLYN 1

Social Services – We urge that funding be increased and not cut for a variety of vital social services upon which various facets of our community depend. For example:

- **Senior Citizens** – Centers provide vital meals and social interplay. Funding should be provided to continue homecare services and homebound meals. The City should Increase funding to support lower subsidies for senior citizens for rent to reduce homelessness. Continued funding is sought to establish a senior center to serve south west area of Williamsburg, central to Division Avenue and Clymer Street. We oppose the closing of the Swinging Sixties Senior Citizen Center at 211 Ainslie and advocate for its retention at this important central location.

BROOKLYN 8

Just like our youth, our seniors need recreational activities to both keep them active and healthy. Innovative senior centers are ways our seniors can network, navigate problems, and seek assistance in dealing with personal issues. Funding is necessary to create and maintain these centers so that the senior population is taken care of as they age.

BROOKLYN 9

The senior citizen population is one of the most vulnerable segments of our community. This population is largely underserved in areas of transportation, meals on wheels and related services. Funding for these services is absolutely vital to addressing the inequities in service delivery to this segment of our population. We join with the agency in urging our elected officials to recognize the exigency of these needs and provide the resources so that our seniors are not penalized any further due to a reduction and/or complete elimination of these vital services.

BROOKLYN 10

Capital Priority #7 Capital funding for the relocation of Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults
The Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults is in dire need of a new ADA compliant senior center for the over 1,000 seniors who attend and obtain a multitude of services provided by the center. Its current location is not adequate for its service delivery needs.

BROOKLYN 14

Given the growth in the aging population there is a need to ensure adequate funding to combat elder abuse. Additional services, which include home attendants for non-Medicaid eligible seniors and the Meals-on-Wheels program as well as job training, legal assistance and transportation services, must be adequately funded through all levels of government. We are pleased that the agency will advocate for funding to continue these vital programs.

In addition, the open competition process must be supported by outreach to ensure inclusion of smaller organizations serving niche populations. Ensuring a state of good repair of all senior centers continues to be a priority.

BROOKLYN 17

After much discussion with the Department For the Aging (DFTA) regarding the installation of a kitchen at the Remsen Senior Center, located at 3304 Clarendon Road, Brooklyn, and a request for an increase in personnel, the Board once again received a response that DFTA has very limited or no funding for this purpose. With a long term lease at this location, we believe this project is worth review and consideration as noted under Tracking Code# 217201515C.

The Board also encourages the allocation of funding to hire additional personnel for the Senior centers in District 17 as requested under Tracking Code# 217201502E. Although, the agency responded “*Presently, there is no additional funding available to increase program budgets or commence new initiatives*” we look forward to being placed on the list when funds become available.

MANHATTAN 4

Ask:

- **Increase DFTA funding to maintain and expand existing programs.**

As previous stated, seniors in MCB4 are at risk of not being able to stay in the district as housing and retail have become increasing unaffordable. MCB4 was relieved that the Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) was increased, but for those seniors that remain in our district, they are at still at risk because core funding for senior programs have been disastrously neglected for many years. DFTA provides operating support to senior centers, meal programs, NORCs, elder abuse programs, case management, and more. Significant funding must be devoted to these programs, as well as to infrastructure improvements to make Manhattan and all of New York City more age-friendly. This means accessible transportation options, sidewalks, and entrances to buildings and stores. Community Boards have also highlighted programs such as adult daycare, meal delivery, visiting neighbor services, and eviction prevention as essential for prioritization in the budget.

There is an urgent need to stabilize and enhance funding for service models designed to address the needs and desires of seniors to age-in place with dignity and security in their own homes. We

would also urge that funding to address the mental health needs of seniors be base-lined into the city budget. In general, consistent with our desire to maintain the diversity of our district and ensure that it is "senior friendly", we believe a comprehensive range of services, including community centers, in-home supports, transportation, supportive housing, and preventive health and social services, are essential to assuring that they can live out their lives with dignity within their home communities.

MANHATTAN 6

Manhattan Community Board Six would like to see more funding, overall, for senior services. Our District hosts the highest mean age of any in the City and, as the population continues to age, our commitments to these residents require more attention than ever. We have endured the recent loss of one senior center. Now, there is a major need for a new activity based senior facility, as the Stein Center is strained under the increased membership. Neither the budget nor the Department's response addresses any possibility of funding a new center, a request we have made since 1999. Therefore, we ask that your office and the Department for the Aging continue to lobby for state and federal funds in order to make such a facility a reality for the many that need it. Without those funds, the budget projection shows these programs flat-lining in coming years.

The Department dismisses requests for programs related to home assistance, respite care and errand services by saying that funds are lacking and refers, instead, to the affordable housing plan. While affordable housing is important to seniors, these particular services tend to cost in excess of a typical person's ability to pay. Government entities should offer relief. These programs tend to save the City money, where long-term care facilities are more expensive than providing means for a person to continue to live at home with care provided by a nurse or family member.

Should funds become available during the budget process or from state and federal entities, we ask that the Department work with Manhattan Community Board Six prior to requesting RFPs to discuss the area's needs.

C-02: 306199904C – New senior life long learning center
E-09: 306200102E – Home Assistance Programs
E-17: 306200104E – Additional funding for respite care
E-18: 306200703E – Shopping and companion service
E-23: 306201501E – Restore funds for intergenerational programs at senior centers

MANHATTAN 7

Tracking Code: 307201505E

Request: Fund Senior Services.

Agency Response: DFTA is aware of the growing aging population and continues to fund programs in this CD, as well as advocate for increased Federal, State, and City funding to enable seniors to remain independent, and to support homebound frail seniors and their caregivers. When funding is available, we are required to conduct an open competition. In FY15 and/or FY16 funding for case management, home care, and elder abuse services will be increased. DFTA is also working closely with the Mayor's office and housing agencies to ensure that the Affordable Housing Plan includes senior housing.

Reply: CB7 appreciates DFTA's on-going efforts throughout our City, and particularly in our District. CB7 is particularly grateful for DFTA's advocacy and support of these programs, which take on a heightened importance in our graying communities.

CB7 looks forward to continuing to partner with DFTA to ensure the funds available reach the greatest possible need.

QUEENS 5

We have so many senior citizens in Ridgewood and neighboring communities, but far too many are just getting by, at best, financially and have increased prescription and medical needs after age 80. Services for frail and low income seniors must be provided at the highest levels possible. Senior Centers throughout the City have been a great investment, a bargain, and the least we can do to bring together those who strived to build their community.

Senior Services Programs that have Funding Imperatives:

Greater Assistance for Meals on Wheels Deliveries - The City Government should ensure increased funding for meals-on-wheels programs and not be almost totally dependent on private funding for assuring that seniors do not go hungry.

Senior Centers - These oases in our City provide social opportunities and allow the elderly to come together all week long. Budget reductions in covering rent, food, staff and other basic costs of operating senior centers are foolish. Unless wasteful, which is seldom the case, congregate meal and other vital senior center work, including social work, should be guaranteed funding, with needed budgetary increases for any reasonable inflation.

Home Care for Seniors - Home care funding that is well spent and adequate for a growing frail and elderly population is critical and a wise investment.

Policing Our Streets - Seniors, more than any of us, fear walking on the street at night or even during parts of the day. Crime can hit the elderly by a phony utility worker entering the home, or an abusive relative, and getting mugged near or on the way to where one has to go is a great fear of too many senior citizens.

Need for Senior Housing – There is a desperate need for more affordable housing for senior citizens throughout New York City. In District 5 Queens, we have a growing senior citizen population who cannot afford basic rent costs, and are being pushed out of their apartments. This is especially the case in residences with fewer than 6 units where seniors have no rent laws protecting them.

QUEENS 7

While the agency continues to support our requests, and will continue to advocate for increased funding for the agency, we are concerned since a third of our population, approximately 90,000 are seniors. We look forward to working with the agency to either expand or create senior centers, and we will work with them in anticipation of Board #7 being one of the communities that may be selected since not only are we dealing with the needful seniors, but, a more vibrant and active group of people whose needs must be addressed. We are happy with the agency's response "In FY 2016, funding for case management, home care, and elder abuse services will be increased."