

January 25, 2023

Speaker Adrienne E. Adams
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

NYC Council Members
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

CC:

Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams
1 Centre St # 15N
New York, NY 10007

Comptroller Brad Lander
1 Centre St #530
New York, NY 10007

Dear New York City Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams & NYC Council Members:

The signers of this letter are writing to express our **alarm at the Mayor's budget approach which proposes deep cuts to the City's crucial programs, services & infrastructure for both FY23 and FY24, all while protecting the NYPD's bloated \$11.2 billion dollar budget.** Since Mayor Adams took office he has been steadily cutting personnel, positions and funding from our public schools, homeless and housing services, police oversight, libraries, mental health services, services for the aging, and other critical programs. Concurrently, he has continued to expand the NYPD's resources to advance discriminatory policing practices that fail to meaningfully and systemically address safety concerns of New Yorkers, while working to increase the role of the NYPD in providing social and health services that are best handled by care workers and other expert professionals. New Yorkers need more direct access to economic, health and care resources -- not more police. The Mayor's approach to budgeting is hurting New Yorkers, especially Black, Latinx, LGBTQ folks, immigrants and other impacted New Yorkers that are struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mayor claims that he is preparing New Yorkers for economic headwinds, but he is failing to protect housing services while we are in the middle of a housing crisis, or mental health services in the middle of a mental health crisis. The Mayor is also doing little to address the slowdown in services and supports that are related to the city's high job vacancy rate and staff attrition which is impacting the availability of supportive housing units, NYCHA operations, New Yorkers being approved for public benefits such as SNAP, enforcement of tenant protections, and a slew of other public services. Instead, he is leveraging vacancies to make permanent cuts to the budgets and staff of city agencies, making less resources available to New Yorkers who

are already struggling. This will contribute to a growing number of people who are without stable housing, food and other basic needs, causing further harm to New Yorkers and further strain on our city's service providers.

We commend Speaker Adams recent comments stating that she will work to protect critical services in the FY24 Preliminary Budget as well as recent Council Members who have spoken out about the deep cuts in the FY23 budget. **We are calling on Speaker Adrienne Adams and the City Council to end the Mayor's approach of unilaterally shrinking critical agencies while expanding the role of the NYPD and preserving NYPD budget bloat.** The Mayor's approach to budgeting is hurting New Yorkers, especially Black, Latinx, and other New Yorkers of color that are struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As the city faces economic headwinds, we cannot cut critical services and safety net programs New Yorkers rely on, while continuing to fund NYPD overspending and enable NYPD impunity by decreasing police oversight and accountability. We need the Speaker and City Council to pass a FY24 Budget that restores and protects critical services and programs that our communities rely on and that are essential for the full recovery of our city.

Some of the **most concerning budget cuts** in FY23 and FY24 include:

- **Cuts to Homelessness and Housing Services**
 - FY23 Cuts: Over \$2.2 million in cuts to supportive housing and NYCHA personnel, cutting 131 positions from the Department of Homeless Services, and cutting funding and positions for anti-eviction legal support.
 - FY24 Proposed Cuts: Over \$4.5 Million in cuts, including 107 additional positions cut from the Department of Homeless Services, cutting Homeless Prevention services by over 50%, and cutting rental assistance and housing placement by 32%
- **Cuts to Libraries**
 - FY23 Cuts: \$13.6 million cuts to the City's libraries, which are crucial safe public spaces for neighborhoods across the city.
 - FY24 Proposed Cuts: The Mayor is proposing an additional \$20.5 million in cuts to *baseline funding* for libraries, which could be accompanied by the potential loss of \$15.7 million dollars in Council funds, bringing the total potential loss to libraries to \$36.2 million. This could impact hours, staffing, and the ability of libraries to continue to offer critical services and programs to neighborhoods.
- **Cuts to Mental Health Services**
 - FY24 Proposed Cuts: Over \$55 million in cuts to mental health services and programs, including behavioral health and early childhood intervention, and HIV/AIDS programming. Cutting 369 positions from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- **Cuts to Education & Youth Services**
 - FY23 Cuts: Over \$500 million cut from education and youth programming including pedagogical and civilian positions, including \$469 million from the Department of Education in FY23 and \$27 million from CUNY.

- FY24 Proposed Cuts: Over \$783 million cut including rolling back universal UPK-3, cutting adult-literacy programs by over 60%, cutting the Summer Youth Employment Program and cutting afterschool programs for elementary students.
- **Cuts to Police Oversight**
 - FY23 Cuts: \$1.36 million in cuts to the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), a key police oversight and accountability agency tasked with investigating complaints made by New Yorkers against the NYPD for excessive or unnecessary force, bias-based policing, profiling, abuse of authority, discourtesy, or the use of offensive language.
- **Cuts to Other Critical Social Services & Public Infrastructure.**
 - FY23 Cuts: Over \$211 million cut from other social services, including cuts to services for the elderly and domestic violence programs and 773 positions from the Department of Social Services.
 - FY24 Proposed Cuts: Over \$60 million in cuts to social services including legal services, homecare, child-support enforcement services, and several other critical city services, including cutting 155 positions from the Department of Transportation.

Protecting NYPD Budget Bloat

While cutting critical services and destabilizing New Yorkers' health and lives, the FY23 budget cuts and proposed FY24 budget protects and preserves the NYPD's bloated budget from financial and personnel cuts. The mayor's persistent reliance on policing and criminalization as the primary response to the most critical issues facing New Yorkers is not only misguided and ineffective, it further perpetuates harm in communities most directly impacted by discriminatory and abusive policing; many of the same communities who will bear the brunt of the cuts to health services and social programs.

- NYPD Expense, Fringe, and Pension costs are budgeted at upwards of \$11 Billion for FY24, making up a significant portion of the city's resources.
- NYPD is predicted to spend over \$820 million on overtime in FY23, close to double its original overtime budget. NYPD is also retaining its 34 member public relations department, as well as notoriously abusive units such as SRG and VICE.
- NYPD's School Policing Division is budgeted to grow from projected spending levels to \$370 million and the Mayor continues to prioritize positions for Cops in Schools instead of critical positions for restorative justice initiatives, counselors and peer advocates that we know will make our schools safer.
- NYPD Uniform Headcount accounts for over 10% of all city employees, yet remains exempt from vacancy reductions, while over 8,000 positions are being cut from other critical agencies across the city.
- NYPD \$5.3 billion dollar expense budget was cut by just 1.2% in FY23 and 2% in FY24 which is far less when compared to other critical social service agencies that were cut by 3-5%.

- A new multimillion-dollar investment of \$47.5M to bring "enhanced security measures" into schools, with no mention of the vital resources, staff, or restorative practices that make schools safer and more equitable.

Communities United for Police Reform and **78** organizations signed on to this letter are calling on the Speaker and the City Council to do the following:

- **End the mayor's approach of unilaterally shrinking critical agencies while preserving NYPD budget bloat and expanding police power.** This approach will not bring about the community health and safety New Yorkers so desperately want and need. It will only exacerbate inequality and poverty, which are root causes of the very safety concerns the mayor supposedly wants to address.
- **Pave a clear pathway to both recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future economic headwinds by ensuring that critical city agencies and nonprofit organizations contracted to provide essential services can continue to serve New Yorker's neediest.** This includes protecting funding for organizations that provide mental health, housing, education, immigration, violence prevention, and legal services that support New Yorkers. It also includes addressing the vacancy and staff attrition crisis through thoughtful staffing decisions and policies that restore service to New Yorkers and protecting agencies and contracted service providers that support short-term and long-term recovery from the COVID19 pandemic. This approach has the best chance of ensuring a safe and prosperous future for Black, Latinx, and other communities of color.
- **Stop NYPD Budget Exceptionalism & redirect funds from the NYPD into the resources and supports that make safe communities.** The safest communities have the most resources, not the most police. The city must take a public health based approach to safety and redirect money from the NYPD into services that ensure that New Yorkers have their basic needs met and communities have robust public services that we know are the root pathways of decreasing violence and harm.

We need the Speaker and the City Council to shape a FY24 budget that addresses the needs of New Yorkers through a holistic community centered budget that prioritizes critical services that buoy all New Yorkers and will make our city safer.

Signed,

Communities United for Police Reform
Allan Feliz Foundation
Alliance for Quality Education
Anthony Baez Memorial Fund
Arab American Association of New York
Audre Lorde Project
Brooklyn Movement Center
Center for Community Alternatives

Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, at The City University of New York
Center for NuLeadership on Human Justice and Healing
Center for Popular Democracy
Churches United for Fair Housing
Citizen Action of New York
College Access: Research & Action
Color of Change
Common Justice
Community Access
Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team
Defending Rights & Dissent
Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY
Drug Policy Alliance
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
Equality for Flatbush
ESU Andrew Romany New Immigrant Center
Faith in New York
For the Many
Freedom Agenda
Girls for Gender Equity
Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee
Housing Works
Immigrant Defense Project
Jews for Racial and Economic Justice
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
Justice and Beyond
Justice Committee
Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Literacy Assistance Center
Make the Road New York
Malcolm X Grassroots Movement
Mercy Center
MPower Change
National Panhellenic Council of NYC
Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY
Neighbors Together
New Economy Project
New Kings Democrats
New York City Anti-Violence Project
New York Civil Liberties Union
New York Communities for Change
New York Immigration Coalition

Nodutdol for Korean Community Development
North Star Fund
Nurses for Social Justice
NYC Democratic Socialists of America
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives
Peoples Climate Movement NY
Policing and Social Justice Project
Ramarley's Call
Red Hook Initiative
Release Aging People in Prison Campaign
Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center
SoBro
Soho Rep
Street Vendor Project
SURJ NYC
Surveillance Resistance Lab
TakeRoot Justice
Teachers Unite
The People's Plan
Transgender Law Center
Trinity Lutheran Church, Sunset Park
Urban Librarians United
Urban Youth Collaborative
VOCAL NY
Working Families Party
Youth Represent