



877 Madison Ave.
Albany, New York 12208
www.jfsneny.org

**Testimony of Jewish Family Services of NENY
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 Judith Avner, Interim President and CEO
February 16, 2017**

**Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS) and Neighborhood Naturally
Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORCS)**

I am pleased to submit this statement on behalf of Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York (JFS) in support of the Naturally Occurring Retirement Community and Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community program. (together as N/NORC)

JFS has been administering the Albany NNORC since the addition of Neighborhood NORCS to the program. During these past ten years, we have seen the positive impact that the services and supports offered by the NNORC have had on the lives of our seniors. Improved physical, psychological and emotional health translate into higher quality of life and delays in more expensive health- related services.

As New Yorkers age, a growing number of residents will require the special health and social services facilitated by the N/NORCs . These vital programs and resources help enable

low and middle income New Yorkers age in place, thrive in their communities and delay hospitalization or nursing home placement.

N/NORCs provide programs and services that support a group that might otherwise fall through the cracks. N/NORCs provide case management, social and recreational programs, health care monitoring and assistance, education programs, transportation and shopping assistance, as well as basic health and social services that allow seniors to remain in their homes, as they age.

In the FY 2016-2017 Enacted Budget, significant legislative changes were made to the N/NORC program, including expanding definitions and expanding financial resources to support the programs. The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) has released a Request for Applications (RFA) for the program beginning in 2018 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. **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.

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

Restoring \$700,000 from FY16-17 and investing an additional \$5.25 million in the 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 new N/NORCs across the State.

We encourage the Legislature to act on behalf of New York's seniors by increasing the allocation to \$10 million. These would be funds well spent.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information.