



ADVANCING OUR COMMUNITY

Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. Testimony at the New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Human Services February 5th, 2026

Thank you Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Pretlow, Senator Persaud, and Assemblymember Davila for the opportunity to testify today. Founded in 1965, CPC is a social services organization that creates social change. Building on our historic legacy and ongoing dedication to the Chinese American community, CPC advances the social and economic progress of immigrant and low-income communities of New York through services, resources, and advocacy. Our services have expanded to include three key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 80,000 people per year in all five boroughs through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. With the firm belief that social service can incite social change, CPC strives to empower our constituents as agents of social justice, with the overarching goal of advancing and transforming communities.

To that end, we are grateful to testify about issues regarding the human service sector that greatly impact our communities. Over the past year, we have seen attacks to our social safety net and cuts to federal funding by the current administration. Our community members' needs have only continued to grow during this time and it is critical that the State steps in to fight back against these cuts. During a time when our Federal administration has directly targeted our marginalized communities, our State must invest in our social safety net to ensure that all New Yorkers can thrive through prioritizing the following:

Ensuring and achieving affordability for all New Yorkers:

Affordability remains one of the most pressing challenges facing New Yorkers, particularly when it comes to housing, food security, and childcare. New York is in the midst of a housing crisis, with rising rents, increasing evictions, and growing homelessness across the state.

CPC is part of the Housing Justice for All Coalition, which is leading the fight for housing equity and justice. According to the [Asian American Federation Data Center](#), 49.8 percent of Asian households in New York are rent-burdened, and 12.3 percent are overcrowded. AAPI immigrants also face significant language barriers when accessing public housing and assisted living, and when combined with long waiting lists for NYCHA and Section 8 housing, these barriers leave families with limited options for truly affordable housing.

To meaningfully address this crisis, we must expand the Housing Access Voucher Program to \$250 million and make the program permanent, pass the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act, expand rent stabilization across the state, and invest in social housing that is publicly backed, insulated from market forces, and allows residents to exert democratic control over their homes.

Food security is another critical pillar of affordability. Every New Yorker deserves access to healthy, affordable food, no exceptions. We have recently seen the catastrophic impacts on families and individuals when SNAP benefits are delayed or unavailable. With federal budget cuts exacerbating the shortcomings of the SNAP program, the State must implement

safeguards to ensure this does not happen again. Over 10,000 community members that CPC serves will be impacted by SNAP cuts and changes to eligibility, forcing organizations like CPC to hold emergency food distributions to meet growing needs. We urge the State to protect, invest in, and expand food assistance programs by passing the Protect, Invest, and Expand Food Security package which includes the following:

- Transition EBT cards to more modern chip card technology to decrease the likelihood of SNAP theft from occurring by passing A699 (González-Rojas). The Senate version of the bill sponsored by Senator Serrano passed during the 2025 legislative session.
- Pass the SNAP and Cash Assistance Victims Compensation Fund Myrie (S403) and Mitaynes (A3578) to be able to reimburse vulnerable New Yorkers who have been victims to SNAP theft.
- Increase funding for the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) to a total of \$8.5 million to enable community-based organizations to conduct outreach and increase participation in SNAP in all New York counties.
- Funding for Double Up Food Bucks New York (DUFBNY) at \$6 million
- Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance (HPNAP) at \$75 million
- Nourish NY at \$75 million
- Pass annual hunger reporting bills to ensure that data is collected on our communities to inform meaningful policy:
 - Department of Agriculture, Sponsored by AM Anderson (Awaiting Senate Sponsor)
 - Department of Health, Sponsored by Sen. Hinchey and AM Woerner (S8553/A9168)
- Raise the SNAP minimum benefit to \$100 (González-Rojas (A1318) & May (S665)) to help low-income and working families support themselves especially when the cost of living and cost of groceries are skyrocketing.
- Invest \$244 million to protect 41,000 newly excluded refugees, asylees, humanitarian parolees, and others who are newly ineligible for SNAP and to extend food assistance benefits for 65,000 noncitizen households with children as recommended by the NYS Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council.

In addition to passing the Protect, Invest, and Expand Food Security Package, we urge the State to also invest in WIC with an allocation of \$30 million in state supplemental funds which would enable local WIC agencies to serve all eligible families, fund modernizations at NYSDOH to make the program more accessible and efficient, and support statewide outreach to the 200K eligible but unenrolled New Yorkers.

Furthermore, childcare affordability is essential to the economic stability of families. CPC serves over 1,000 children and their families through our six day care centers, Child Care Resource and Referral programs, and Child Care Assistance Program. Our Childhood Development Services staff are instrumental in supporting the growth of children of color with disabilities.

Across New York City, [126,500 children](#) under the age of five rely on city-contracted early childhood programs or vouchers for subsidized care. For undocumented immigrants and recent asylum seekers, accessing childcare is often accompanied by fear, particularly when asked to provide a home address. These barriers discourage families from accessing care for their children. A universal childcare system would eliminate these fears and create an equitable system that ensures all children, regardless of immigration status, receive the support they deserve. The urgency of this issue is underscored by the childcare workforce crisis. A [survey by the Empire State Campaign for Child Care](#) found that 28,462 children cannot receive care due to workforce shortages, while 25,022 children remain on waiting lists.

Families cannot live dignified and empowered lives when they are forced to choose between earning a living and ensuring their children are safe and nurtured. We strongly urge passage of the Universal Childcare Act to transform New York's childcare system for the better.

Investing in the human service sector through fully funding programs and wages:

The human service sector has been filling in the gaps for decades of failed governmental policies and inaction. New York City's 40,000 contracted human services workers have been essential workers throughout this crisis, providing critical services on the frontline as well as remotely. Our sector has been historically undervalued despite the grueling and exhaustive work that our workers have had to endure to ensure that our communities are protected and uplifted. They have been doing this lifesaving work since before the pandemic and this health crisis has merely magnified the importance of these services.

We are proud members of the #JustPay campaign, which is a racial equity and gender justice campaign committed to ending the government exploitation of human services workers by demanding sector employees under contract with the New York City and State be paid fair wages for their labor. Each year you hear from providers who are struggling due to the crisis of compounding underfunding of the human services sector as City budgets are balanced on the backs of low-income neighborhoods and BIPOC communities. This practice has resulted in poverty-level wages for human services workers, who are predominantly women (66%) and people of color (68%). In fact, according to a [report from HSC](#), nonprofit human service workers have been historically underpaid, making about 71% of what government employees make and 82% of what private sector workers make for the same role.

Alongside the organizations on the #Just Pay campaign, we are fighting for the 2.7% targeted inflationary increase (TII) for all human services workers and the passage of the [wage board bill](#).

Empowering and investing in our immigrant communities through legal services

New York must rise to the moment and ensure that immigrant New Yorkers can access sustainable and comprehensive legal help so they can stay with their families, work, go to school, and remain in their communities. Representation can mean the difference between staying at home or permanent family separation, and in some cases, the difference between life and death. Strengthening and expanding immigration legal services is critical to protecting families, supporting unaccompanied children who are being fast-tracked through court, and safeguarding the state's economic future.

As a member organization of the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), CPC supports the CARE4IF package, which includes investing \$175 million in immigration legal services through the Office of New Americans, passing the Access to Representation Act, and passing the Building Up Immigrant Legal Defense Act.

In addition to investing in legal services, we need to ensure that the holistic and wraparound care for our communities are also meaningfully resourced. Protecting our immigrant communities means increasing funding for community-based organizations that are seeing a rise in demand for services that are both linguistically and culturally appropriate. Organizations like CPC have built trust and strong relationships with the communities we serve over several decades, continuing to be a critical line of defense from potential dangerous policies passed by the current federal administration. To address the growing needs of the AAPI immigrant community, it is essential to increase funding for the State's AAPI Equity Budget in FY27 to \$54.35 million. The \$30 million

allocated over the past three years for AAPI organizations across NYS was crucial in expanding vital programs, such as legal services, workforce development, adult literacy, afterschool programs, senior services, childcare, and so much more. These are essential services that our community members depend on to thrive, feel empowered, and safe to live in New York.

The scale of these challenges highlights both the gaps in our social safety net and the urgency of addressing them. By investing in affordability, ensuring living wages for human services workers, and protecting immigrant families, New York can build a more just, inclusive, and resilient future for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we urge you to take bold action to meet this moment. We look forward to working with the State Legislature and the Governor to achieve these goals in the upcoming budget.

If there are any questions, please reach out to Ashley Chen, Policy & Research Manager at achsen9@cpc-nyc.org.