



# Dignity, Community, and Power:

## Make the Road New York's 2022 New York City Policy Platform

As the largest community-based membership organization representing immigrants and working-class people of color in New York State, Make the Road New York (MRNY) is uniquely positioned to identify and address pressing community needs. In New York City, where the largest concentration of our 25,000 members reside, we operate community centers in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. We employ a multi-faceted approach to supporting immigrants, communities of color, and working-class New Yorkers, providing a full range of legal, educational, and survival services. The communities we serve have been utterly devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with staggering loss of life and calamitous economic consequences. With new leadership in NYC, our communities need bold action to reverse inequities and expand opportunities for all New Yorkers.

(Note: ➤ indicates budget-focused items.)

### INVEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES

■ **Build Housing for the Need. Provide More and Deeper Affordability Citywide:** Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) and HPD term sheets are not providing affordable housing for the neediest New Yorkers. The City must develop new and innovative strategies to meet New Yorkers' affordability needs citywide. It must also update its term sheets and programs to provide for much deeper affordability than currently required, and identify ways to implement these programs in affluent neighborhoods.

■ **Extend "Just Cause" Protections to All Low Wage Industries:** The City must extend protections from being ired without "just cause" to all workers in low-wage industries and invest in the enforcement of this critical protection. Under the current "at-will" employment scheme, employers enjoy free rein to ire a worker for any reason or no reason at all. With few safeguards from arbitrary dismissal, workers are hesitant to speak up about workplace violations.

■ **Police-Free Schools:** We are calling for a full divestment and complete dismantling of school policing infrastructure, culture, and practices in NYC schools and the reinvestment of those funds into support for youth. This includes, but is not limited to, removing all police personnel, metal detectors, and all forms of invasive surveillance equipment from school buildings, as well as eliminating zero tolerance policies that push students into the school to prison and deportation pipeline. The over \$450M spent on the NYPD's School Policing division should be redirected to fund the resources, staff and restorative practices that support every young person to learn and grow. (See below for more detail.)

- Redirect \$450M from school policing to opportunities for young people
- Do not hire 1,363 new school cops to replace current vacancies
- No funding for new or existing student surveillance and scanning equipment

➤ **Reallocate NYPD VICE Unit Funding:** The City should reallocate \$18M in funding from the NYPD vice unit to services for individuals involved in the sex trades. City funding should be used to support people in the sex trades before they are arrested, instead of being used to make arrests and mandate services post-arrest. The reallocated funds should go to the COIN Clinic housed in the Callen Lorde facilities; increasing access to health and wellness services, competent legal representation, and educational opportunities; and to non-profit organizations working with individuals involved in the sex trades.

### PROTECT IMMIGRANT NEW YORKERS AGAINST DEPORTATION

➤ **The Administration Must Baseline \$1M in Funding for the Rapid Response Legal Collaborative (RRLC):** the RRLC provides access to counsel to community members who are detained and on the verge of being deported, or who have orders of removal and are at risk of ICE detention. The RRLC also monitors ICE activity and trends, and works with organizers to provide real-time information to community members. This program must be funded long-term.

➤ **City Council Must Maintain at Least \$16.6M in Funding for the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP):** NYIFUP provides to ensure that vulnerable immigrants who are detained by ICE have access to expert counsel.

■ **The City Must Reform its Civil Immigration Detainer Laws:** The City must pass legislation granting individuals the right to take legal action against the City if they are wrongfully detained by the New York Police Department (NYPD), the Department of Corrections (DOC), or the Department of Probation (DOP), at the request of federal immigration authorities. The City must also pass legislation to ensure that DOC does not disclose to federal immigration authorities information about the individuals in their custody.

## **STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT OF WORKER PROTECTIONS**

➤ **The Administration Must Restore and Baseline \$4M for the Low Wage Worker Initiative (LWWI). City Council Must Increase its Funding of the Low Wage Worker Support (LWWS) Initiative to \$1M:** The LWWI funds CILEC, a coalition of legal services organizations, to represent hundreds of workers on wage theft and discrimination claims. The LWWS funds community-based organizations (CBOs) to conduct comprehensive worker outreach and education programs in multiple languages. Without renewal of both, CBO's across NYC will be forced to reduce our low wage worker services at a time when need is drastically rising.

➤ **Fully Fund the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) and the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR):** Proposed staffing cuts to DCWP and CCHR must be restored. These agencies enforce critical municipal laws such as protections for third-party food delivery service workers, the right to paid sick leave, scheduling and "just cause" protections for fast food workers, and the right to work free from discrimination and harassment. These agencies also prevent abuses from occurring in the first place, by distributing information about workers' rights to workers and businesses. The City must ensure that our worker protection agencies have the staff and resources they need.

➤ **City Council Must Renew Funding for the Job Training and Placement Initiative:** This funding includes \$5.255M for the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) "Jobs to Build On" program and \$2.2M for the Worker Service Centers. Funding supports classes that serve members of unions, community groups, and providers that serve immigrants.

## **ENSURE ALL NEW YORKERS HAVE A RIGHT TO A ROOF**

■ **Ensure All New Yorkers Have Safe and Healthy Housing:** A chaotic enforcement system and lack of interagency coordination means too many landlords are still getting away with harassment and neglected repairs. Black and Latinx New Yorkers are more than twice as likely to report deferred maintenance in their homes, yet the City's enforcement regime fails to collect civil penalties when landlords refuse to make repairs. The City must ensure that no tenant is permanently displaced due to poor housing conditions or harassment, secure our communities by ensuring the long-term viability of the City's affordable housing stock, and guarantee that every New Yorker has a safe, healthy and stable home.

➤ **Expand City FHEPS Eligibility to Households at Risk of Eviction:** With the end of the eviction moratorium, ERAP funding exhausted, unemployment high in NYC, and an avalanche of eviction cases filed, low-income New Yorkers face increased risk of eviction and homelessness from apartments that are relatively affordable but currently beyond their means. City FHEPS, a city funded Section 8 type voucher program, could help except that City FHEPS is limited to a very small number of people in the community (rent controlled, veterans and clients of adult protective services). Expansion of City FHEPS to households at risk of eviction would preserve these apartments for low-income New Yorkers and save the City the enormous amount it spends to keep people in shelters.

(Visit our full list of affordable housing recommendations at [www.righttoaroom.org](http://www.righttoaroom.org))

## **END THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE**

➤ **Redeining School Safety and Support:** The City must fully remove police from schools (see above) and adopt a DOE budget that reallocates these resources and selects the best policies and practices for building safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. The City must include \$118.5M to expand restorative practices citywide. Additionally, the City must chart a path toward the recommended ratios of one social worker and one guidance counselor for every 150 students in most schools, and one for every 50 students in high need schools, in the next five years. To reach the recommended ratios, the City must invest \$150M to hire 500 new counselors and social workers this year. Additionally \$75M must be invested to hire 500 community members into supportive positions based on need. Lastly, to meet the serious need for mental health support for young people as we recover from the pandemic, the City needs to baseline \$5M in funding for the mental health continuum in schools.

## **ENSURE TRUE EDUCATION EQUITY BY INVESTING IN ADULT LITERACY**

➤ **The Administration Must Restore \$1.6M to its Adult Literacy Case Manager Services Pilot Project funding** and fund it for a second year.

➤ **The Administration Must Baseline an Additional \$13.5M in Adult Literacy Funding** in the upcoming DYCD RFP for a total of \$27M. This funding will double the rates for adult literacy programming to bring programs closer to the actual costs of service per student.

➤ **City Council Must Double Funding for its Adult Literacy Pilot Project to \$5M:** This additional funding for pilot year two will double capacity, from 20 programs to 40 programs, and address growing needs for additional services, adequate teacher salaries, and increased program sustainability.

➤ **City Council Must Renew \$4M in Funding for the Adult Literacy Initiative:** This funding will help address the immense, inequitable gap in English literacy, digital literacy, systems navigation skills and access to information.

## **EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE**

➤ **City Council Must Continue its Commitment to Addressing Healthcare Disparities:** Council must expand funding for the Access Health Initiative to \$4M and allocate \$2.3M in funding for the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program (MCCAP). Additionally, Council must maintain funding for Ending the Epidemic at \$7.7M and the Immigrant Health Initiative at \$2M. These programs enable CBO's to provide

immigrant families with information about their rights and available health resources.

➤ **The Administration Must Fully Fund the NYC Care Program:** NYC Care is a health access program, operated by NYC Health + Hospitals that guarantees low-cost and no-cost services to New Yorkers who do not qualify for, or cannot afford, health insurance. NYC Care must receive funding of at least \$100M per year, including funding for CBOs to conduct outreach, education and direct enrollment.

## **END THE RISING TIDE OF HATE VIOLENCE**

➤ **City Council Must Renew at Least \$1M in Funding for the Hate Crime Prevention Initiative:** This initiative supports a coalition of CBO's working across identities to make New York safer for communities targeted by hate crimes.