



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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Contact: Sam Spokony [CM Chin] 845-536-4767, sspokony@council.nyc.gov
Lionel Morales [CM Vallone] 718-619-8611, lmorales@council.nyc.gov

COUNCIL MEMBERS CHIN & VALLONE CALL ON MAYOR DE BLASIO TO INCREASE SENIOR SERVICES FUNDING IN FY16 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Mayor Included No New Funding for Seniors in Preliminary Budget

Today, Council Member Margaret Chin, chair of the Council's Committee on Aging, and Council Member Paul Vallone, chair of the Council's Subcommittee on Senior Centers, called on Mayor Bill de Blasio to provide **an additional \$26.4 million for senior services** in his forthcoming Fiscal Year 2016 executive budget, which is expected to be released on May 7. Council Members Chin and Vallone were joined at today's event by representatives of AARP New York, LiveOn NY (formerly known as the Council of Senior Centers and Services), JASA, the Clearview Selfhelp Senior Center (located in Bayside), and other senior center representatives, along with dozens of New York City's senior citizens.

The Council members called for the following additions to the FY16 executive budget:

- **\$4.3 million to be baselined for the Department for the Aging (DFTA) for core senior center operational expenses.** This is funding that was provided by the City Council in last year's budget (Fiscal Year 2015) — but Council Members Chin and Vallone, along with the Council Speaker, believe that core senior center expenses should be the responsibility of the mayor's administration, since it is a vital part of DFTA's mission.
- **\$4.25 million in additional funding for DFTA's homecare program, to provide daily care and assistance to more than 500 low-income, frail seniors who are currently on a waitlist.** The \$18.3 million currently provided for this program in the mayor's preliminary budget would leave those waitlisted seniors without access to the care they desperately need.
- **\$3 million in additional baselined funding for DFTA to provide case management services to nearly 2,000 more homebound seniors who are currently on a waitlist.** The \$25.1 million currently provided for this program in the mayor's preliminary budget would leave those waitlisted seniors without home-delivered meals and other supportive programs.
- **\$3 million in additional funding to DFTA for Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities**, which provide vital services in specifically designated neighborhoods that have a high concentration of seniors.
- **\$11.88 million in additional funding to fully fund the 33 senior centers currently under NYCHA management.**

(The aforementioned elements were also part of the City Council's official budget response, and were crafted largely based on discussions between Council Member Chin and Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.)

Council Members Chin and Vallone are leading this call, with the support of Council Speaker Mark-Viverito, because Mayor de Blasio did not include any new funding for senior services in his Fiscal Year 2016 preliminary budget, even as seniors remain one of New York City's fastest growing populations. There are currently around 1.5 million seniors in New York City, and according to projections by senior advocacy groups, by the year 2030 around one in five New Yorkers will be a senior. **DFTA's Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget currently totals \$257.3 million — a decrease of \$23.4 million (or 8.4 percent) compared to DFTA's Fiscal Year 2015 Adopted Budget (\$280.7 million).** The Council allocated nearly \$20 million to DFTA in Fiscal Year 2015, the majority of which supported core services such as senior centers, elder abuse prevention and meals. Even if the Council were to fund DFTA at the same level this year, its budget will take a cut if Mayor de Blasio does not include additional DFTA funding in his executive budget.

“We’ve said it before, and we’ll say it again: An executive budget with no new funding for senior services would not be a responsible budget,” **said Council Member Margaret Chin, chair of the Council’s Committee on Aging.** “We need Mayor de Blasio to step up and provide the additional funding to serve and support our city’s rapidly growing senior population, without just relying on the Council to fill in the gaps. If we’re serious about making this city affordable and livable for all New Yorkers, the aging community must always be a part of that discussion.”

“With a rapidly growing senior population, how can we as a City be expected to provide them with the best care and services while faced with stagnant funding that does not reflect that growth? The answer, quite simply, is that we cannot,” **said Council Member Paul Vallone, chair of the Council's Subcommittee on Senior Centers.** "I am proud to stand with Council Member Chin and Speaker Mark-Viverito in urging the Mayor to provide additional funding for senior services and create a truly responsible executive budget that reflects our priority and commitment to our aging community."

“AARP fully supports Council Members Chin and Vallone, as well as Council Speaker Mark-Viverito, in what we believe is both a compassionate and cost-effective investment in two critical city populations: seniors and the more than one million family caregivers who help them remain in their own homes,” **said Leo Asen, state president of AARP New York.** “As our population ages, need will grow. But increasing funding for these programs and services should actually save taxpayers money by helping our older loved ones live where they want — at home — rather than in costly and mostly Medicaid-funded institutional settings.”

“Older New Yorkers are growing rapidly in numbers and diversity in every neighborhood of the city. They want to grow old with independence and dignity — as New Yorkers who still play a vital role in the fabric of community and family life,” **said Bobbie Sackman, director of public policy for LiveOn NY.** “Yet, 2,000 homebound elders languish on waitlists for case management services and more than 500 face the same waitlists for home care. Meals-on-wheels, at full utilization, is at the tipping point of bringing back waitlists for the first time in years. The hidden crisis of elder abuse must be brought into the light — no longer is it acceptable for the estimated 120,000 victims in New York City to suffer behind closed doors. Senior centers provide a peer community preventing isolation and, after years of cuts, still need additional funding. LiveOn NY calls upon the city to provide funding to support family caregivers who, under much stress, care for their elderly parents and loved ones. Access to affordable elder care and support for caregivers are the workforce issues of the 21st century, especially for women. A city that prides itself in taking on inequality needs to include older adults and their caregivers in that effort.”

"JASA is in full support of the budget revisions that Council Members Chin and Vallone are proposing alongside Council Speak Mark-Viverito,” **said Kathryn Haslanger, CEO of JASA.** “As one of the largest and most programmatically diverse agencies serving 43,000 older adults in the New York area, we see firsthand the urgent need for increased funding for services, including senior centers, home delivered meals, elder abuse prevention, home care, naturally occurring retirement communities, and many others. Funding for these essential and life sustaining programs allows JASA to provide a crucial safety net for one of the city's most vulnerable populations."

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