



## THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE\*\***

**JUNE 19, 2019**

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# **CM CHIN CELEBRATES HISTORIC INVESTMENTS IN SENIOR MEALS, SENIOR CENTER REPAIRS & NURSING SERVICES IN FY 2020 BUDGET**

*City budget includes unprecedented \$15 million in permanent funding for senior meals*

*Total senior enhancements grow DFTA budget by 13%, signaling strong move towards building a 'Fairer City for All Ages'*

**NEW YORK** - Today, the New York City Council voted to pass the Fiscal Year 2020 budget, which includes a historic across-the-board \$15 million investment in senior center meals funding and a total of \$4.4 million in City Council enhancements for existing senior initiatives.

“With the older population anticipated to boom within the next several years, our City cannot ignore the urgency of securing food justice for all New Yorkers, especially as more and more seniors rely on their local senior center for their only nutritious meal of the day. Our City budget will provide much-needed relief to the senior center providers and kitchen staffers working at the frontlines to ensure no senior goes hungry,” said **Council Member Chin, Chair of the Committee on Aging**. “Together with advocates, service providers and seniors, we built a dynamic broad-based coalition of New Yorkers who fought to make this goal a reality. I am grateful that Mayor De Blasio heard our call to make equitable investments in meals funding, and I thank Speaker Corey Johnson for his steadfast leadership at every step of the budget process to stand with our City’s seniors. With a total of \$28 million dedicated to seniors, the New York City Council is once again paving the way to securing a budget that serves New Yorkers who need our help the most.”

The fight to increase the meals reimbursement rate to meet the national average and provide underpaid kitchen staff with living wages has been a core budget priority for Council Member Chin and senior service providers across New York City. In February 2019, Council Member Chin held a Council oversight hearing on senior center food budgets, which revealed that the last increase in senior center meals funding was in 2014 – to the paltry tune of 25 cents for a regular meal and 50 cents for a kosher meal. Since then, providers have been struggling to balance the books to address the higher cost of food, disposables and maintenance in New York City when compared to the rest of the country.

The \$15 million in baselined funding in today’s adopted budget includes \$10 million to be released in FY20 and \$5 million to be released in FY21.

Other senior priorities secured in the FY20 budget include:

- **\$4 million in baselined funding for air conditioners and repairs at cooling centers and NYCHA senior centers:** Throughout the budget process, Council Member Chin highlighted the need to address air conditioner breakdowns at senior centers, especially those that have been publicly designated as cooling centers to provide relief for vulnerable New Yorkers during a heat wave. This new funding will cover air conditioners for all senior center designated as cooling centers, as well as roof leaks and other small repairs at NYCHA senior centers.
- **\$2.84 million for home-delivered meals:** In FY20, the Administration renewed its one-time investment for home-delivered meals. The New York City Council also allocated \$500,000 to support Citymeals on Wheels’ emergency supplemental food packages to be delivered to thousands of homebound seniors.
- **\$2.8 million to save nurse services at NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) and create new NORCs:** This total includes renewed NORC funding from the Administration and a \$1.75 million enhancement from New York City Council’s existing NORC initiative. \$1.3 million will preserve pro bono nurse services that were in danger of being cut in summer 2019, as well as recover nurse services that had already been cut. The funding will also help expand the NORC portfolio through the creation of new NORCs.
- **\$2.1 million to save NYCHA senior centers:** After Council Member Chin rallied against a plan by the Administration to shutter several NYCHA senior centers across the City, the Administration designated \$2.1 million to save ten senior centers slated for closure in Fiscal Year 2020.
- **\$1 million increase to the Support Our Seniors initiative:** This enhancement will give the 51 Council Members even more opportunities to support quality senior services and programs for their constituents.
- **\$450,000 increase to the Social Adult Day Cares initiative:** These facilities provide intensive care and services for higher-need seniors with cognitive or physical limitations, such as dementia or Alzheimer’s disease. The New York City Council’s funding increase will allow these programs to enhance their activities, transportation, outreach and participation rates to better serve this vulnerable population.
- **\$500,000 increase to the Elie Wiesel Holocaust Survivors Initiative:** With 40% of New York City’s 40,000 Holocaust survivors living in poverty, this New York City Council initiative will

support culturally-competent services, case management, transportation assistance and preventive health care to improve their quality of life.

The total \$4.4 million in enhancements secured by the New York City Council, combined with the investments made by the Administration, grew the Department for the Aging's budget by 13% from last year, now totaling to \$411 million.

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