



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL SPEAKER
ADRIENNE E. ADAMS

EXPANDING HEALTH AND OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW YORKERS

#ExpandHealth

2022
State
OF THE
City

We are in the third year of a pandemic, which has exposed many of the fault-lines in our City and exacerbated historical inequity in investment for certain neighborhoods, especially in Black and Brown communities. Addressing these gaps is key to the health and safety of our entire City. Whether it is the current mental health crisis, the disparities in access to quality health care, the lack of affordable housing, educational and economic opportunity, or investments in our youth and older adults, if ignored, these issues can have a long-lasting impact on the City’s residents, businesses, and institutions. The strength and well-being of our City’s communities is intrinsically linked to our investments in key programs and services. By investing in New Yorkers as the engine of our City, with a focus on equity, we can ensure communities are strong and secure our recovery and safety in a holistic manner.

COVID-19 has taken the lives of over 40,000 New Yorkers. The last two years have illustrated how individual health is tied to the collective well-being of communities and our city. The lessons of this pandemic call for reimagining how we achieve safety for all New Yorkers through the lens of health, with an expanded definition that is holistic and represents the well-being of communities - access to affordable housing, medical and mental health care, food security, parks and recreational space, education, and opportunity. This recognizes that when a community is healthy and well, it is a powerful, resilient force to overcome challenges, prevent crime, and achieve safety. People are living in healthy conditions when they have access to the necessary resources, dignity, and opportunity to reach their full potential and thrive.

The following proposals focus on expanding health and well-being to promote a safer New York City and successful recovery from the pandemic:

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HOUSING

New York City is experiencing a housing crisis. The recently released Housing Vacancy Survey for 2021 indicated a rental vacancy rate of 4.53 percent, which permits the Council to designate a housing emergency that maintains rent stabilization. For housing units at the deepest level of affordability, the survey found a less than one percent vacancy rate, confirming the lack of adequate affordable housing available to New Yorkers. Yet, New Yorkers have expressed that housing is their top priority for creating safer neighborhoods in the largest public policy survey of New Yorkers in the City's history. Stability is out of reach when so many New Yorkers lack access to housing entirely, are severely rent-burdened, or are housing insecure. There are several immediate steps that need to be taken to address these issues.

1. Adding \$4 billion for Affordable Housing in Fiscal Year 2023 Budget

The Council calls for adding \$4 billion to the Fiscal Year 2023 capital budget in order to develop and preserve more affordable and supportive housing, including support for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments. This commitment would provide an additional \$2.5 billion to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and \$1.5 billion for NYCHA.

2. Prioritizing Supportive Housing

There is no path to address homelessness if the City doesn't increase affordable and supportive housing. Supportive housing should increasingly be the solution for those experiencing challenges with homelessness, mental health, and re-entry from the justice system. The housing-first model provides permanent, affordable housing with on-site services to help individuals and families access health and stability. Its proven effectiveness deserves support over continued spending on congregate shelters that the unhoused frequently reject. Supportive housing has been

shown to be more effective not only to solve homelessness, but to also increase surrounding property values, provide construction jobs, and decrease neighborhood crime. Despite its ability to help ensure successful re-entry from the justice system, these New Yorkers returning to communities have often been left out of eligibility. In addition to increased funding for HPD to develop supportive housing, the Council calls for the addition of \$28.4 million in the budget to provide one thousand units for justice-involved New Yorkers.

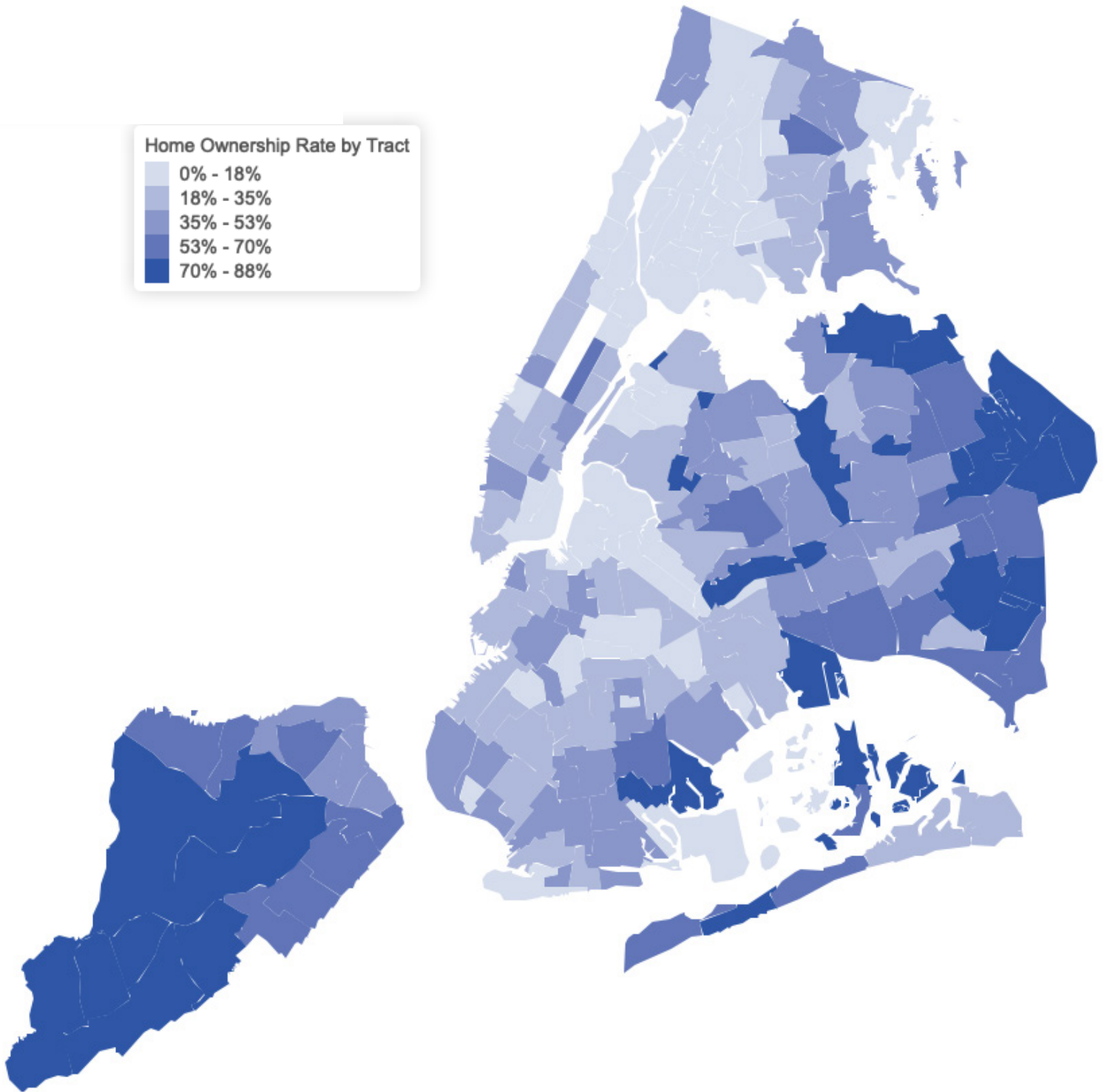
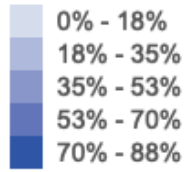
3. Including Affordable Homeownership in Housing Plan

Affordable homeownership must be an essential component of the City's housing plan. Speaker Adams helped finance the first new construction of affordable homes through a transfer of distressed property to the Interboro Community Land Trust. The project will provide long-term, affordable homeownership opportunities to sixteen low-to-middle income households. The City needs to expand these opportunities, using HDFCs and land trusts. A newly enacted state law doubles the subsidies available for these projects and should be leveraged.

Existing homeownership also needs to be preserved for diverse communities. The income and racial diversity among the City's homeowners is an asset to neighborhoods, but rising costs pose a serious threat to small homeowners. The Council allowed authorization of the City's tax lien sale, which hurt small homeowners facing increased tax and water costs, to expire. It has also called on the Administration to protect small homeowners by providing a \$90 million property tax rebate. The Council will continue its long-term prioritization of homeowner protection initiatives against foreclosure and other threats. The City's legislature realizes that affordable homeownership builds equity and limits speculation in neighborhoods, which benefits all New Yorkers, whether they rent or own their homes.

HOME OWNERSHIP BY NEIGHBORHOOD CENSUS TRACT

Home Ownership Rate by Tract



PHYSICAL + MENTAL HEALTH

Too many New Yorkers lack access to health, especially amongst Black communities, immigrant New Yorkers, and low-income and working-class communities. Those who suffered the worst outcomes of COVID-19 had higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death, largely due to having more pre-existing health conditions. In order to ensure safer neighborhoods, the City has to deepen its investments in expanding access to physical and mental health.

1. Tackling Medical Care Disparities

Neighborhood Health and Ambulatory Care Centers – The lack of infrastructure to manage physical health in many communities is an inequity that cost lives during the pandemic, and still does. The Council calls upon the Administration to commit \$250 million towards establishing five new Health + Hospitals (H+H) neighborhood health and ambulatory care centers in communities with poor health outcomes that lack sufficient access to healthcare facilities. Building upon recently opened centers in East Tremont, Jackson Heights, and Bushwick, the new centers would provide pediatric and adult primary care, women’s health, behavioral health, dental, screening exam, radiology, and optometry services. The Council has proposed these centers for Jamaica/St. Albans, Hunts Point/Soundview, Brownsville/East New York, Canarsie, and Staten Island.

H+H Capital Plan – While every city agency is responsible for developing and maintaining a capital plan, the public corporation that manages the City’s public hospitals and health centers has avoided this requirement. The Council will push H+H to maintain a capital plan that focuses on expanding health care access as a matter of policy and practice. Its capital plan will provide transparent criteria towards addressing continued health inequities faced by New Yorkers.

Targeting Disparities and Expanding Reproductive Care

– The continued healthcare disparities for women of color, especially Black women, as well as LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming New Yorkers remains a major issue across the City. The Supreme Court appears ready to undermine abortion and reproductive healthcare rights at a time when too many already face challenges to accessing care. In the coming weeks, the Council will release a comprehensive package of bills to protect and expand access to abortion and reproductive health care, with accompanying budgetary support.

2. Improving Mental Health

One of the greatest health impacts of the pandemic has been on the mental health of New Yorkers. The diversity of needs includes individuals experiencing severe mental health crises in the public transit system or on our streets, older adults suffering from isolation, or New Yorkers harmed by the trauma of the pandemic. Each requires a different model of care and delivery, but the City has an obligation to reach those who are in greatest need. The Council is focusing on ensuring care is accessible to communities, which too often has not been a priority of mental health efforts in the city.

Alternative Mental Health Responses

– The Council successfully pushed for the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-HEARD) program that responds to mental health emergencies with emergency medical technicians and social workers instead of police to receive \$55 million additional funds in the Executive Budget. The program has been operated by H+H and the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) since June 2021, as a pilot program in North Manhattan, with expansions from five precincts to 11 in November 2021 and March 2022, including areas of North Manhattan and the South Bronx. The program’s expansion will provide additional coverage areas, and the Council will engage in stringent oversight to improve the program and require shifts in focus

and funding to the most effective mental health programs, as needed.

New York State has continued to allocate funding toward important models of mental healthcare that the Council will focus the City's attention on expanding. These include the creation of crisis call centers for a federal government-initiated 988 number that would replace 911 for mental health emergencies. Crisis intervention and mobile crisis teams are other models the State has supported and should receive the City's focus.

The Administration should also perform an analysis to show the impact the program is having on the precincts where it currently operates, including comparisons to other jurisdictions and areas for improvement, and the cost to continue expansion around the City.

Mental Health for Communities Hardest Hit by COVID – COVID negatively impacted our most vulnerable communities, and they experienced disproportionate deaths, and an increase in economic and social stressors. This has created new and expanded barriers to recovery efforts. The Council has called for the Administration to include \$3 million to expand direct mental health services within the 33 communities hardest hit by COVID-19 in the City budget. To ensure services effectively reach these communities, the Council recommends that programs be available in trusted neighborhood institutions and public spaces, including places of worship and community centers.

Support for Older Adults – The mental well-being of older adults has also been adversely affected by the isolation and losses of the pandemic. The Council calls for adding \$8.7 million in funding so that all 108 senior centers that are able to support mental health clinicians are able to add available practitioners and double available hours so more older adults can access counseling. This support for the Department for the Aging's Geriatric Mental Health Program would also help Asian-American elders, who have suffered

due to the rise in hate crimes, and BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ elders access care for their needs.

Counseling and Mental Health for Students – The emotional and social health of public school students has suffered in various ways over the past two years of the pandemic. The Council has demonstrated its commitment to ensure all students have access to social and emotional support programs, including social workers and guidance counselors. Research shows that taking a holistic approach for students not only improves their health and well-being, but also has a positive impact on academic success. The Council calls on the Administration to invest \$14.1 million to hire social workers and guidance counselors at 100 schools in Fiscal 2023, with a plan to reach all District 79 schools by Fiscal 2026. The Council also demands a long-term commitment to expand these resources, ensuring every school and student can access the support necessary to advance their academic, social, and emotional success.

Restorative Justice for Safer and Stronger Schools – In addition, restorative justice practices have demonstrated success in schools across New York City and around the country. Research shows improvement of academic outcomes, a shift in school climate, and overall positive impact on school staff. The Council calls for prioritizing a \$59 million commitment towards expanding the restorative justice practicum in 250 schools in Fiscal 2023, as well as funding restorative justice training for all staff and school community members. The Council will push to grow restorative justice to 500 schools by Fiscal 2024.

Supporting Unhoused Students – In the 2020-2021 school year, more than 101,000 city students experienced homelessness, of which 28,000 spent time in shelters. Of these students, only 52 percent graduated on time, and 60 percent were chronically absent. The Council calls on the Administration to add \$12 million to the Executive Budget to hire 100 shelter-based DOE Community Coordinators to help students

who are unhoused get to school every day and receive educational support, while hiring 10 regional managers and two regional support directors to oversee this coordination. The hiring of community coordinators, as dedicated staff to work with this student population and their families in shelters, is necessary to connect them to essential resources, provide guidance in navigating the school system, address attendance barriers, and provide holistic support.

Increasing Cultural Competence - One of the greatest barriers to mental health care for many communities is the lack of culturally competent practitioners and services. There are too few mental health professionals of color and those equipped to support immigrant and LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers. This remains a major obstacle to overcoming issues of stigma that leaves too many communities without access to care. The Council will convene a working group of stakeholders, leveraging CUNY and civil service system leaders, to expand a more diverse pool of mental health professionals that increase access to care.

3. Reducing Violence through Community-Based Public Safety

New York City has experienced increased violence during the pandemic, similar to many other cities across the nation. While the number of homicides is still lower than the deadliest years of the past, the impact for any New Yorker, family, or community harmed by violence is greater than numbers can reflect. Yet, the same communities that historically suffered from health disparities and underinvestment, and most harmed by COVID-19, are those experiencing the greatest impacts of the violence. These communities have long faced these conditions, even when the City was considered at its safest, but they received little attention or support. The City continues to focus too little attention and effort on helping these communities most harmed by violence.

Violence is a public health crisis. It must be a top priority to advance health-based

approaches proven to be effective solutions at reducing violence.

Trauma Recovery Centers - New York City has to prioritize addressing the trauma that violence inflicts on victims and families in communities that experience it most. The trauma left behind by violence creates worse outcomes for an individual's overall health when it remains unaddressed, and only perpetuates cycles of violence in communities. Too often, these victims of violence and communities are not substantially supported in their recovery. Many victims in communities of color are blamed for their own victimization or just simply disregarded. Access to victim services is often out-of-reach, ill-equipped, or unable to provide trauma-informed care that best serves the victims who need it.

The Council plans to establish New York State's first trauma recovery centers (TRCs) in our city to address this public safety priority. By allocating more than \$8 million in the budget, the Council will create at least one TRC in each borough. TRCs are a national model for investing in the recovery of underserved victims of violence from communities most harmed by violence. They ensure access to a range of wrap-around victim services that increase the likelihood of regaining health and stability, while stopping cycles of violence in neighborhoods. They have been expanding around the country over the last decade in diverse states, from California to Ohio, New Jersey and Florida. New York has fallen behind in serving crime victims to stop cycles of violence, but the Council will pioneer a new approach for New York in our city.

Focused Planning to Scale-Up Crisis Management System - The City has been beset by tragedies stemming from increased violence. Violence prevention and intervention programs that follow best practices have been shown by studies to make neighborhoods safer by reducing violence. The Council helped pioneer the City's establishment and expansion of the Crisis Management System

(CMS), which has made great strides. Such critical programs need to be brought to scale across the city if we want to achieve the necessary impact to reduce violence. That will require intentional capacity-building and planning investments. The Council will establish a working group of national experts on violence prevention, including many of our local leaders, along with other stakeholders from government to develop a roadmap to reduce violence. With the endorsement of city government, it will develop a workplan for our city to ensure the successful expansion of the Crisis Management System as an equal pillar of our public safety that effectively reduces violence.

Community-Based Public Safety

Programs – Programs that work with Crisis Management System organizations and local precincts are essential to make neighborhoods safer. They successfully work with local organizations and precinct leaders to facilitate non-policing interventions with young people most at-risk of violence. The Council will invest in these innovative approaches in the budget. It will also be important to support local NYPD precinct leaders committed to these efforts that proactively intervene with young people and don't rely on over-criminalization. These are models for how we can most effectively advance safety in our communities and the city through partnership.

Reducing Hate Violence – Hate violence has risen nationally and in New York City. Whether it was the white supremacist violence that killed nearly a dozen members of Buffalo's Black community or the increased attacks against New York City's Asian, Jewish, Sikh, Muslim and LGBTQIA+ communities, hate violence is leaving too many communities unsafe. The Council has consistently invested in community-based programs to prevent and respond to hate crimes. The Council urges additional action to enhance these efforts in the face of a continuing crisis, calling for at least \$5 million in additional resources within the budget to support the work of community organizations.

4. Food Security and Nutrition

Food insecurity remains a serious problem in New York City, just as it was at the peak of the pandemic when there were extremely long lines at food pantries. One-third of New Yorkers, including those with children in public schools, skip a meal daily because of a lack of money or resources. Nearly two-thirds of New Yorkers find it harder now to afford groceries than before the pandemic. Food security is fundamental to the health and safety of New Yorkers.

Increase HRA's EFAP Baseline Budget

- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) has historically provided shelf-stable and limited frozen food items to emergency food providers across the City. The Council's call for the Administration to expand funding for EFAP led to a commitment of \$30 million within the budget, with expanded food offerings that include fresh foods.

Continue Recovery Meals for Older Adults

- Supporting older adults with nutritious meals has been critical during the pandemic. The Recovery Meals program, which serves approximately 10,000 older adults, expires at the end of June 2022. DFTA estimates that about 3,000 older adults currently receiving these meals could transition to its Home-Delivered Meals (HDM) program, leaving 7,000 older adults at risk of losing meal services. The Council is urging the Administration to add \$30 million in funding to ensure every older adult who needs a meal next year has one.

Fund Home-Delivered Meals for Older Adults

- Additional funding is needed in DFTA's budget to combat hunger for older adults. The Council calls for a \$12.7 million investment that would address the continued demand for the home-delivered meal (HDM) program for older adults, and ensure weekend and holiday meals.

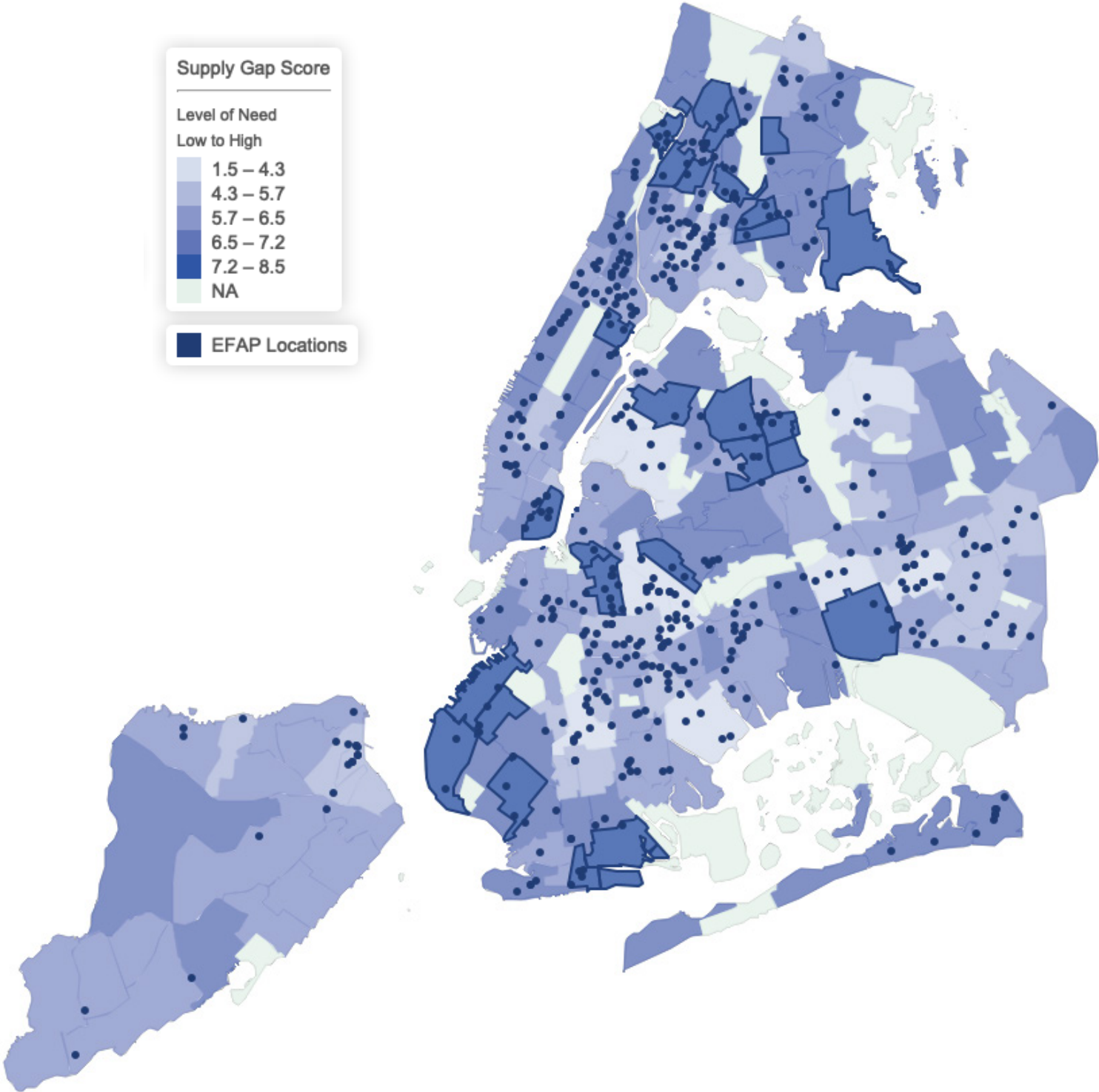
School-Based Food Programs – USDA's child nutrition waivers allowed the New York City Department of Education to innovate and

creatively approach the logistical challenges of serving meals to students across the five boroughs throughout the pandemic. Last summer, children could pick up multiple days' worth of meals to take home and parents could pick up meals for their children at times that worked with their schedules. Without the flexibility allowed by the USDA waivers, children will need to resume eating at meal sites, which would place a staffing burden on the City's schools and result in less participation by eligible families. As New York City begins planning to feed children over this coming summer and the next school year, the reassurance of renewed USDA child nutrition waivers to enable us to plan amid ongoing uncertainty and difficulty with staffing and procurement is necessary. The Summer Meals program is a vital service to ensure that children have access to food that allows them to thrive, and the waivers will ensure that no child goes hungry this summer. The Council

calls on the Federal government to prioritize renewal of the USDA's authority to issue waivers for the child nutrition programs.

Innovative Food Programs and Capital Investments – The Council will also advance pilot programs to establish food pantries and provide fresh food boxes through schools or shelters in high-need areas. The lessons from neighborhood-based mutual aid networks that admirably delivered crucial packages of food to many families during the pandemic can be leveraged to better reach all communities. The Council will also call on the State to create a program to provide food benefits for those not eligible for existing food benefit programs – including anyone over 55 meeting income eligibility. We will also pursue capital budget increases in this year's budget for school kitchen capital projects including kitchen equipment, structural alterations to kitchen spaces, and the addition of air conditioning.

LEVEL OF UNMET FOOD NEEDS BY NEIGHBORHOOD AND EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM LOCATIONS



5. Expanding Access to Parks and Recreational Space for Underserved Communities

Parks and recreational spaces were a lifeline for the health of New Yorkers and communities during the pandemic. Yet, there are significant inequities that limit the ability of many New Yorkers to benefit, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. The Council's Parks and Recreation Committee recently highlighted these disparities' impact on the health of New Yorkers. Areas with less access to parks had higher rates of death from COVID-19 and other negative health and safety outcomes. The City must expand access to parks and recreational spaces for neighborhoods that lack them.

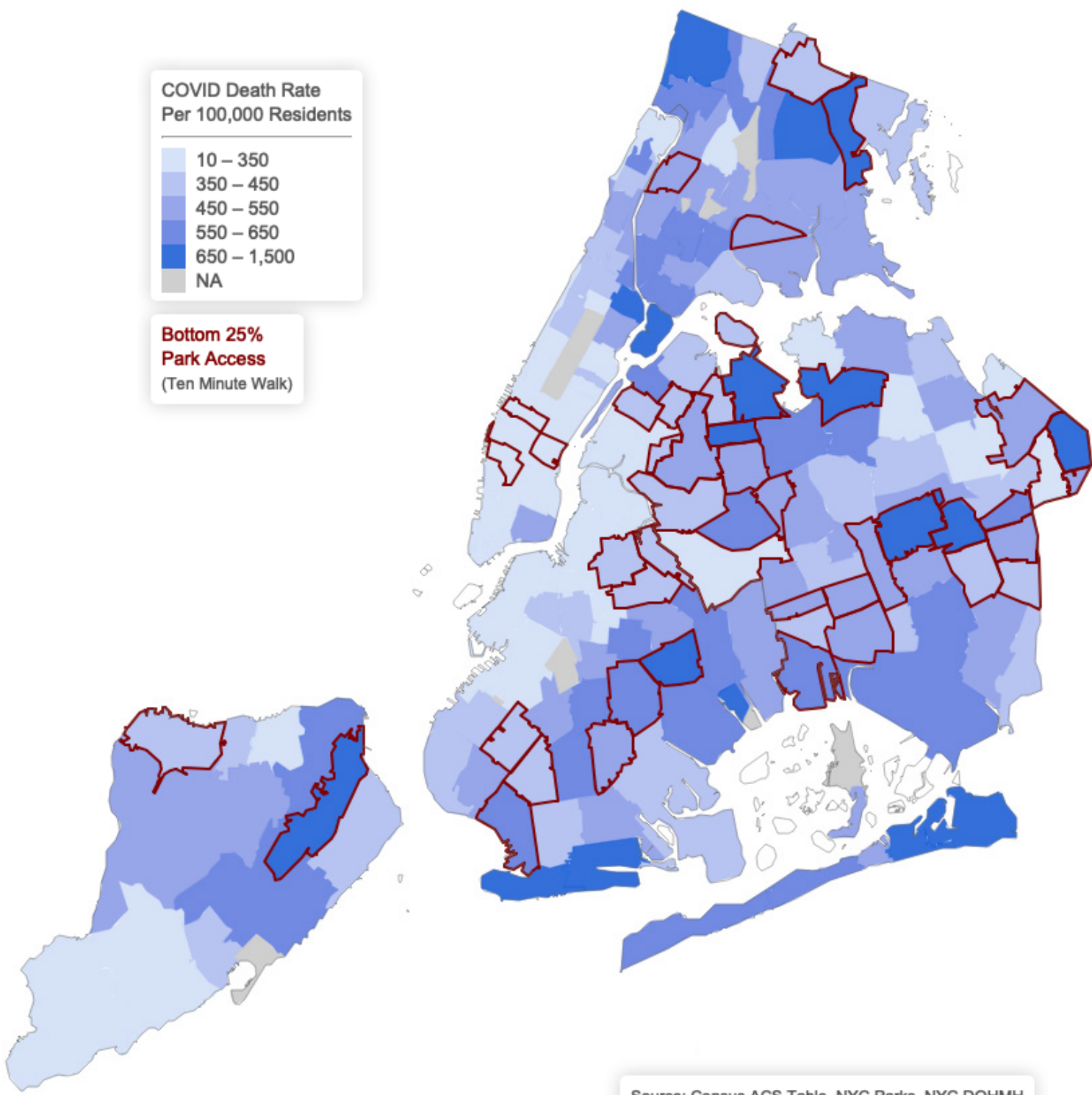
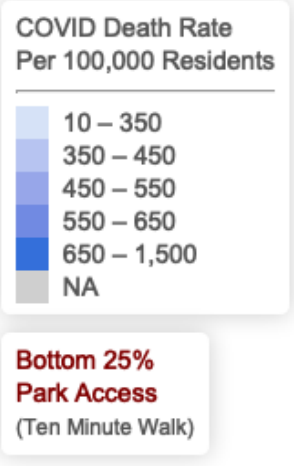
Safe Streets Open Spaces – The Council will continue to push the City towards the \$3.1 billion budget investment in the Safe Streets program that was intended to expand open pedestrian spaces in neighborhoods. These can provide critical recreational spaces for neighborhoods with some of the worst health outcomes in Central and Southeast Brooklyn,

Southeast Queens, and the Bronx that lack open streets and parks. The city knows how to develop innovative open-street recreational spaces, as evidenced by its proposal to transform the open street on 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens into a permanent linear park. The Administration's \$900 million commitment to the Safe Streets program addressed bike and bus lanes, but largely omitted an expansion of open pedestrian spaces.

New Micro-Parks and Green Spaces – The Council will advance the development of new micro-parks and green spaces in underserved neighborhoods through legislation that requires the City to identify vacant city-owned lots and underutilized spaces. This will focus on turning dead ends and underutilized city lots into places of refuge that can also have environmental benefits to protect communities from extreme climate events.

Senior Programing in Parks – The Council will pursue budget initiatives to ensure increased funding to providers that offer recreational programs for older adults in city parks.

COVID DEATH RATES AND NEIGHBORHOODS WITH LEAST PARK ACCESS



Source: Census ACS Table, NYC Parks, NYC DOHMH

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY

1. Investing in our Youth

Year-Round Youth Employment and Development Programs – Ensuring year-round youth employment is critical for youth to become independent, successful adults, and the Council calls for more than \$57 million for these programs. Over the past few years, the Council has been a strong advocate for youth opportunity, securing additional slots for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and making the program the largest it has ever been. The Council urges the Administration to invest an additional \$43.2 million to expand core youth employment programs such as Work Learn Grow (WLG) and Advance & Learn to more closely match SYEP slots. WLG helps participants build work skills and aptitude by launching them into the diverse work opportunities available through direct exposure and access to paid workforce programs. WLG should be funded to cover an additional 9,800 slots for Fiscal 2023 above the baseline of 2,200 slots, and going forward, WLG should be ultimately funded to support approximately 30 percent of SYEP participants. Additional funding of \$13.9 million for Advance & Earn will assist approximately 1,000 disconnected young adults who are currently not working nor in school to find year-round jobs. Investing in these services now will have long-term benefits not only for individuals, but for the City as a whole.

Weekend Recreational Programs – The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) in partnership with multiple City agencies and community-based organizations provide free, recreational programming to youth in communities that are disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system. Programming includes organized sports, dancing, music, and special guest lectures that typically occur during out-of-school hours to keep youth engaged in

constructive activities. Services are provided in all five boroughs on Saturday nights for youth ages 11-18. The goal of the program is to offer engaging activities in safe spaces during the hours when risk of youth-involved violence is at its highest. The Council urges the administration to further the investment with additional funding of \$5 million annually to support the program.

Support for English Language Learners

– English Language Learners mirror the rich diversity of New York City, and it remains a Council priority to provide ELLs with the appropriate support they need to succeed academically. In 2019, only nine percent of ELLs were proficient in reading and 19 percent of ELLs were proficient in math. The Council urges the Administration to invest \$12 million to support the hiring of 120 ELL Instructional Specialists at DOE schools with high ELL populations.

2. Supporting Economic Opportunity and Mobility

CUNY Reconnect – The pursuit of a higher education is one of many possible paths to economic equity and mobility, but the road to acquiring a degree for working New Yorkers is a challenge. The Council is developing a Citywide program to re-engage the 700,000 working-age New Yorkers with some college credits to return to CUNY so they can continue earning a degree that helps them advance their careers. It can reach thousands of New Yorkers of color, particularly Black and Latina young women who disproportionately fall into this category, to increase their earning potential and boost their incomes. This will power the City's economic recovery from the pandemic and increase equity. The City must recognize the unique challenges that returning adult students face, and invest in reforms such as financial aid, scholarships, childcare services, pre-enrollment counseling and flexible scheduling options that make returning to college more convenient.

Civil Service Career Opportunities – Access to civil service careers has long been a pathway to economic stability for New Yorkers. Therefore, improving access can provide opportunities for economic stability and mobility to New Yorkers who traditionally face obstacles.

The Council will pursue legislation to require the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to offer civil service exams at the Department of Correction (DOC) and Administration for Children Services (ACS) facilities. This legislation will also require DCAS to work with providers to implement programming at facilities for Civil Service exam preparation, including at ACS juvenile justice facilities, and to require DCAS and the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice to work with reentry groups to provide information about upcoming civil service exam opportunities. The legislation will also call on the State to provide civil service exam assistance to those in New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision facilities.

In addition, the Council will pursue legislation to require DCAS to develop a Civil Service Ambassador program whereby current civil servants travel to schools, ACS foster and juvenile justice facilities, Department of Homeless Services facilities and supportive housing sites to give presentations on the benefits and pathways to joining the civil service. These presentations should also provide comprehensive information on steps involved in taking the test and how subsequent employment offers work. This would also include awareness of mental health and social work programs at CUNY schools and social work civil service pathways to match the increasing need for mental health counselors across the city.

The Council efforts will likewise extend to requiring that DCAS do more recruitment for their Public Service Corps program and track the demographic information of applicants and graduates of the program.

3. Expanding Accessibility for New Yorkers Facing Barriers

Closing the Digital Divide – The pandemic’s shift to a reliance on technology was not an easy transition for many, including those with disabilities, public school students, and older adults, who lacked access to devices and broadband. Nearly a third of New York City households lack broadband access at home. The Council will focus its efforts to break down these barriers, working with relevant agencies and non-governmental partners – whether through donated device programs, expanded use of assistive technology, affordable broadband access, or digital literacy programs.

The Council will pursue legislation to require the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), in partnership with relevant agencies, including DFTA, and organizations, to establish a telehealth pilot for seniors. This would include providing seniors with health tracking equipment, an iPad or laptop, internet and telehealth access. This would also require DFTA to provide necessary training and technical support.

The Council will also require DoITT to establish a digital literacy program targeted at older New Yorkers (50+). Included in this training should be information on how to use telehealth, Senior Planet, social media, calendars, ACCESS NYC and benefit applications, online frauds/scams, job/career assistance and other programs and apps. The Council would also ensure that this program is available in at least the ten recognized City languages.

Accessibility for New Yorkers with Disabilities – When compared to other New Yorkers, the nearly one million New Yorkers with disabilities have higher rates of unemployment and underemployment. They have to be a priority, and we must leverage shifts in the employment landscape to support their access

to opportunity to ensure an inclusive recovery. COVID-19 demonstrated the possibilities for remote work and other creative work environments that could be of immense value to these efforts. The Council will explore local laws and programs to advance employment for individuals with disabilities, including those that encourage businesses to create more accessible workplaces.

Specifically, the Council will pursue legislation to require the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and individual agencies to develop and submit a five-year accessibility plan, focused on making New York City accessible in a comprehensive and holistic way. Accessibility plans would include budgetary allocations, prioritization, and timelines for implementation by each agency. Such legislation would also include a council of stakeholders that meet on a regular basis to ensure accountability and success in implementation.

The Council will also pursue legislation to require MOPD and Small Business Services (SBS) to conduct a large-scale employment campaign for individuals with disabilities. Such a campaign would be directed at private and city employers, and would posit MOPD and SBS as resources to meet the needs of both employees and employers in building a more equitable and inclusive workforce.

Language Access for New Yorkers -

Language access remains another fundamental barrier for 1.8 million New Yorkers with limited English proficiency. Despite our city having the greatest language diversity in the world, we have insufficient translation services. It blocks access to key city services and opportunities. And it hurts small businesses that are penalized for being out-of-compliance with City rules that aren't in their languages.

The Council calls on the Administration to include \$5 million in the upcoming budget to expand language access in three ways: increasing access to language services in city agencies; improving the quality of translation by creating a Community Interpreter Bank; and providing employment and business opportunities for immigrant communities by developing worker-owned translation cooperatives. This would ensure that mental health outreach campaigns are conducted in other languages and are culturally competent, and small business aren't needlessly penalized because of language barriers.

The Council will also pursue legislation to require the City to produce more translated materials that help businesses comply with the City's rules, and legislation to enhance language access for regulatory inspections, including increased utilization of interpretation technologies or the acquisition of more bilingual staff.

PROPORTION OF RESIDENTS SPEAKING LANGUAGES OTHER THAN NYC'S 13 MOST COMMON BY NEIGHBORHOOD

Percent of NYC Residents Speaking Language Outside of Top 13 at Home

