

**TESTIMONY FROM NYCHA SIDEYA SHERMAN,
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COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & DEVELOPMENT, NYCHA
*INT. NUMBER 1206***

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING
THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2016 10 AM – 1:00 PM 16th Floor Committee
Room, CITY HALL, NEW YORK, NY**

Chair Ritchie Torres and members of the Committees on Public Housing and other distinguished members of the City Council: good morning. I am Sideya Sherman, Acting Executive Vice President for Community Programs & Development, New York City Housing Authority. With me today is David Farber, General Counsel and Acting Chief of Staff. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about Int. Number 1206.

First, I'd like to thank you, Chair Torres, for your recent interview in *Gotham Gazette* regarding two of the bills and touting the work of the Jobs-Plus program. I know I speak for our Jobs-Plus partners and residents, when I say thank you for being a vocal advocate and a supporter of programs that seek to provide NYCHA residents with more economic opportunities.

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Int. Number 1206 is a proposed local law that would amend the administrative code of the City of New York to require NYCHA to report on job creation and employment programs. I want to thank Council Member Laurie Cumbo, who has sponsored the bill, for your enduring interest in the welfare of NYCHA residents and your advocacy for innovative policies and programming to support their needs.

Int. Number 1206 would require NYCHA to make publicly available online and submit to the Council an annual report on its compliance with the requirements

of Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. It would also require NYCHA to make publicly available online and submit to the Council an annual report on its employment programs.

NYCHA agrees with the spirit and goals of Int. Number 1206. Transparency is a key value of NextGeneration NYCHA, our ten year strategic plan. We have made it a priority to keep our various constituencies as informed as possible about all aspects of our work through new publications like our quarterly reports and our *Sustainability Agenda*; monthly resident job placement reporting which is publicly available through the Citywide Performance Report (CPR); dramatically expanded resident engagement efforts; our stakeholder engagement committees for the NextGen Neighborhood projects; and increased collaboration with advocates. However, we have legal concerns regarding the reporting requirements that would be imposed by Int. Number 1206, which we are happy to sit down and discuss further with you after this hearing

We are happy to work with Council members to voluntarily report the metrics this legislation is designed to capture to the extent possible and useful.

I'd like to take this opportunity to also tell you a bit about the Jobs-Plus program, one of the strategic ways in which NYCHA works collaboratively to increase economic opportunities for residents.

Jobs-Plus

NYCHA serves a diverse community who share the same dreams and ambitions as their fellow New Yorkers and all Americans – to be successful, to better themselves, to earn a decent living and provide for themselves and their families.

But nearly half of NYCHA households live below the federal poverty line, and a large number of residents are unemployed. The majority of residents who work make less than \$30,000 a year, and the average household income for NYCHA residents is about \$23,000.

NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES) was created to expand NYCHA's economic opportunity efforts beyond Section 3 employment, by increasing external partnerships and attracting proven-models, like Jobs-Plus, to public housing communities. REES is committed to supporting our residents in increasing their income and assets. REES works with more than 50 formal partners throughout the five boroughs to connect residents to workforce development, financial counseling, business development, adult education, and vocational training services.

While NYCHA does not administer Jobs-Plus, Jobs-Plus does exclusively serve NYCHA residents. The New York City Jobs-Plus collaborative, led by the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), includes NYCHA REES, the Human Resources Administration, and the Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of Financial Empowerment and is one of our most successful workforce development collaborations. The nine Jobs-Plus Centers serve 24 housing developments and offer residents quality services from providers such as Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, BronxWorks, East Side House, ResCare, and Urban Upbound, formerly known as East River Development Alliance.

The Jobs-Plus model is exclusive to public housing residents and is designed to raise the level of employment and earnings among residents, helping them to achieve their dreams. Targeted developments or clusters of developments are saturated with employment services, financial counseling, and community-

building activities that leverage social ties to increase employment. Jobs-Plus serves adults of all ages, but has been particularly successful in serving young men 18 to 24, who make up a significant portion of NYCHA's population.

Since launching Jobs-Plus in 2009, the program has grown from one to nine centers. During this period, over 3,500 residents have been placed into jobs and more than 5,900 residents have achieved at least one financial or educational outcome— including the Earned Income Disallowance (EID) rent-based incentive.

Strategic partnerships are crucial to NYCHA's efforts to expand opportunity for residents. We are happy to share that NYCHA, in partnership with the collaborative, recently submitted a federal application to HUD to expand Jobs-Plus in East New York. We expect to hear from HUD in about three months.

We thank the Council for this opportunity to testify and we appreciate the Council's support to strengthen NYCHA's ongoing efforts to provide economic opportunities to our residents. We are happy to answer any questions that you may have.