

For Immediate Release May 27, 2020

**Cuts to Summer Programs Will Make Recovery Harder for NYC Youth and Families**

New York, NY – Nearly 175,000 young people served by city-funded programs would be left with no options this summer if proposed cuts by the City Administration are not restored. The Fiscal Year 2021 Executive Budget proposed \$175 million in cuts to youth services that include the elimination of programs that are currently providing crucial supports to young people and their families.

Advocates, providers, youth, and parents are calling on the City to ensure its publicly funded programs can continue to provide year-round activities and assistance to support New Yorkers in their recovery from COVID-19. These programs will be crucial in ensuring children in the communities hardest hit by the pandemic are prepared for the new school year while also ensuring that parents maintain access to programs that remain essential as they continue to, or return to, work.

New York City’s Youth Service providers adapted quickly when school became remote this spring ensuring access to devices, engaging students after school hours, and supplementing the virtual learning provided by the Department of Education with academic activities, music, recreation, and skill-building. These programs have been vital to student educational progress, connecting students to adults and peers outside their households, and supporting student social-emotional health during these challenging times.

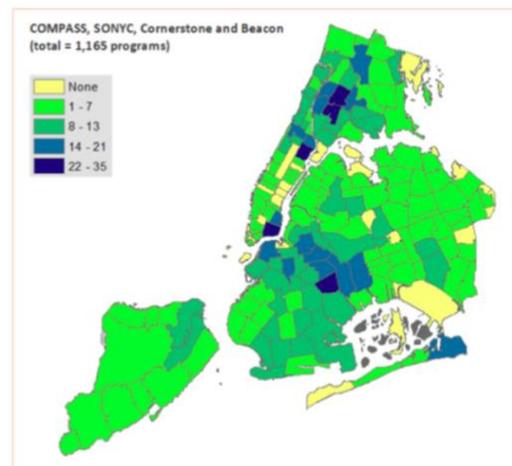
Youth programs are also supporting entire families in the communities they serve, providing families with groceries and connecting them to food and cash assistance, providing online counseling and support, and more. These community-based organizations have also offered experienced staff from their school-based programs to support the NYC Regional Enrichment Centers that have been established throughout the city to provide child care and educational supervision to the children of first responders, health care and other essential workers.

Just as the COVID-19 crisis has disproportionately affected low-income communities and communities of color, eliminating these programs hits some areas much harder than others.

**Top 10 Community Districts with After School Locations**

<i>Community District</i>	<i>Count</i>
East Harlem (M11)	49
Lower East Side (M03)	43
Washington Heights (M12)	40
East New York (K05)	39
Brownsville (K16)	37
Bedford Stuyvesant (K03)	35
Jamaica/St. Albans (Q12)	34
Concourse/Highbridge (B04)	33
Fort Greene/Brooklyn Heights (K02)	31
Morrisania (B03)	30

**COMPASS, SONYC, Cornerstone and Beacon Locations by Zip Code**



Source: CCC Analysis of Department of Youth and Community Development (June 2019) DYCD Program Sites.

The services impacted by these cuts include summer programs provided through the city's *Comprehensive Afterschool System* (COMPASS) and Schools Out NYC (SONYC) as well as summer programs operated through Beacons and Cornerstones. [There were approximately 70,000 youth who participated in COMPASS & SONYC summer programs in 2019. While summer-only enrollment data is not available for programs at Cornerstone and Beacon sites, estimates indicate there are at least 30,000 young people enrolled in summer programs across approximately 200 sites.](#)

While the Executive Budget also included the elimination of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) this year, Mayor de Blasio's Administration has indicated a willingness to develop an alternative to SYEP this summer and restorations of SYEP must be secured. Sadly, the City has made no commitment to sustain services being provided by COMPASS, SONYC, Beacons, and Cornerstones.

With the Mayor's announcement that [178,000 students](#) from the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades will be taking remote classes this summer, it is vital that summer youth programs continue to provide continuity in afterschool programming during these months, as well as give students not engaged in summer classes opportunities to remain connected to peers and adults outside the home and participate in academic activities, arts, recreation and skill-building.

Cuts to youth programs not only eliminate the option of summer camps this year but threaten to decimate community-based organizations and the communities they serve. In addition to cutting off a lifeline for children and families, thousands of staff have been and will be laid off - staff who are often members of the community themselves. Providers who run these crucial programs will struggle to keep staff on board year-round with 10-month budgets, not to mention the struggle of developing programs and recruiting participants for the school year when they have no summer funding. These cuts threaten the stability and long-term survival of the youth service sector.

The Campaign for Children is calling on Mayor de Blasio and City Council Speaker Corey Johnson to work with providers to develop a [comprehensive youth recovery plan](#) to help students maintain positive relationships with their peers and adults, provide opportunities for physical activity and support parents in supporting the learning and development of children while social isolation and uncertainty remain a reality this summer and potentially into the fall for households throughout the city. [To support these efforts, the Campaign for Children have submitted a detailed plan on how remote programs are operating now and could continue to serve children over the summer.](#)

"New York City's Youth Services providers have offered a lifeline for children and families reeling from the impact that this pandemic has had on student learning and social emotional wellbeing, as well as household economic security and stability," said **Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC)**. "We stand ready to work with our City leaders to ensure that young people do not suffer further loss by being disconnected from the very programs that are providing critical academic and social emotional supports during these unprecedented times."

"Settlement houses serve over 34,000 young people in afterschool and summer programs. We're hearing widely across our network: Eliminating summer youth programs will devastate families who rely on them for enrichment, education, and a network of caring adults they know and trust," said **Susan Stamler, Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses**. We should be supporting our young people, especially those in low-income communities of color where COVID-19 has disproportionately caused higher rates of death and illness. With providers by its side, the City must develop an effective recovery strategy that addresses these needs and restores critical funding for program staff and summer engagement initiatives."

“New York City’s young people rely on enriching summer programs to support their learning, development, and well-being while they’re out of school,” said **Michelle Yanche, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Services**.

“Eliminating these programs without an alternative should not be the answer to the challenges our city is facing – especially, when community-based youth and family services are vital to the City’s public health response and recovery. We urge the Mayor and City Council to work closely with nonprofit service providers like us who are on the front lines working with youth and families. Together, we can develop an alternative strategy to provide New York City students with educational, developmental, and recreational resources and activities this summer.”

“These proposed cuts will undermine the educational progress and healthy development of our young people, compounding the impact of this pandemic on students from the City’s poorest communities,” said **Phoebe C. Boyer, President and CEO, Children's Aid**. “We have an opportunity in partnership with the city, community-based organizations and our families to develop and implement a summer of recovery that can help mitigate the disproportionate learning loss and trauma experienced by our most vulnerable students and prepare them for a successful re-entry to the school year.”

“The city should not balance the budget at the expense of children and working families struggling throughout the city. These devastating cuts to youth summer programs will disproportionately impact the communities that have suffered the most during the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to exacerbate existing inequities,” said **Sharon Greenberger, President & CEO of the YMCA of Greater New York**. “Youth service providers have the expertise, experience, cultural competency, and community trust to deliver safe, socially distant services to our youth this summer that will allow families to begin to recover from the pandemic. The city must restore funding as soon as possible.”

“The elimination of all youth programs this summer is a shortsighted decision that will lead to tragic consequences for vulnerable children and families struggling with the worst consequences of this pandemic, said **Ben Thomases, Executive Director at Queens Community House**. “These families rely on our support and need us more than ever.”

“The Mayor’s decision to defund our camps, Beacons and Cornerstone programs this summer is short-sighted in so many ways, pushing back our communities’ recovery and leaving many more people in a deeper crisis,” said **Melissa Aase, Executive Director of University Settlement**. Since the pandemic and stay-at-home order started, University Settlement has increased our mental health outreach and contacts, keeping in touch with thousands of people each week, providing remote programming and emergency assistance, delivering food, and keeping the arts flowing. By cutting every dollar from these programs, the City is cutting this lifeline for basic supports, life-saving information, resources & referrals, emotional support, and community connectedness.”

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## **About the Campaign for Children**

The [Campaign for Children](#) is a coalition of 150 early childhood education and after-school advocacy and provider organizations, including Citizens’ Committee for Children, Children’s Aid, United Neighborhood Houses, Good Shepherd Services, FPWA, the Day Care Council of New York, UJA-Federation of New York, and the YMCA of Greater New York. The Campaign’s successful advocacy saved child care and after-school programs for more than 47,000 children by securing more than \$120 million of one-year City Council discretionary funds for two consecutive years, which then were successfully baselined. The Campaign also advocated for the expansion of Universal Pre-K and middle school after-school programs in NYC and saved summer programs for over 34,000 children.