



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

424 West West 33 Street, Suite #580
New York, NY 10001
tel: 212-736-4536
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

October 31, 2022

Hon. Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
780 Third Avenue, #2301
New York, NY 10017

Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
780 Third Avenue, #2601
New York, NY 10017

Hon. Jerry Nadler
United States Congress
201 Varick Street, #669
New York, NY 10014

Hon. Carolyn Maloney
United States Congress
1651 3rd Avenue, # 311
New York, NY 10128

Hon. Kathy Hochul
Governor
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough
President
1 Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Brad Hoylman
NYS Senate
322 8th Avenue, #1700
New York, NY 10001

Hon. Robert Jackson
NYS Senate
728 West 181st Street
New York, NY 10033

Hon. Richard N. Gottfried
NYS Assembly
214 West 29th Street,
#1002
New York, NY 10001

Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal
NYS Assembly
230 West 72nd Street #2F
New York, NY 10023

Hon. Erik Bottcher
NYC Council
224 West 30th St, #1206
New York, NY 10001

Re: Emergency funding for Resource Navigation Center on West 49th Street

Dear Elected Officials:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) was recently made aware of the Asylum Seeker Resource Navigation Center in our district at the Red Cross facility on West 49th Street. It is our understanding that hundreds of asylum seekers are arriving each day in New York City, bussed here by the states of Texas and Florida. That human beings are being used as political pawns by Governors Abbott and DeSantis is a humanitarian atrocity and a type of behavior only the most repugnant among us would execute.

At its Executive Committee meeting on Wednesday, September 28, 2022, MCB4 heard from representatives from the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Mayor’s Office

of Community Affairs, and the City's Health + Hospitals Corporation (HHC). The Committee was taken through the process asylum seekers go through to find their way to shelter and resources. While the meeting was informative, it was also alarming.¹

MCB4 applauds the efforts of the city to help those arriving by connecting them with healthcare, education, legal services, work papers, and housing. And we are grateful to the nonprofit and religious organizations who have also stepped up to provide services and support. But the City cannot do this alone and needs significant support from the State and Federal governments.

We are asking you all, our elected leaders, to advocate at your respective levels of government to secure as much funding as possible to help New York City better manage the settlement of those seeking refuge. While monies are available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, New York should specifically look at the funding southern border states receive for resettlement support and have that redirected here. And while we understand the city is seeking specific assistance through FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program, other resources should be explored at the federal level. And while the State's Office of Emergency Management does have grant programs, it does not appear that any would be eligible to support this unfolding crisis. The State should find other agencies through which it can fund resources, including the Department of Health, the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Coordination and communication at all levels of government is essential.

Local resources are severely strained by the increase in demand for seats in schools and at healthcare clinics. We have heard from the Ryan Health Center on Tenth Avenue that they are inundated with those seeking care after they arrive. While HHC is a first stop for those in need of medical care, as more people settle locally, other healthcare needs will arise, in addition to ongoing care. And PS111, an elementary school on West 53rd Street, has had its enrollment soar yet it has not received an increase in funding for supplies and meals, nor additional multi-lingual teachers to help new students assimilate and grow.

Given the installation of the Red Cross Resource Center and the number of existing homeless and asylum shelters in Hell's Kitchen, we ask for an increase of resources to better support existing providers in healthcare, education, and social services.

The asylum influx is happening while a homeless crisis is already playing out on our streets and has been for several years. The city's lack of affordable housing has heightened this crisis, and the asylum seekers need for shelter is worsening an already existing problem. State and Federal funds should be immediately allocated to create new housing for these families.

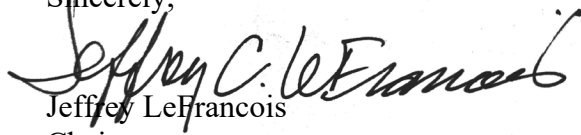
¹ At its regularly scheduled meeting on October 2022, MCB4 voted, by a vote of 33 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 4 present but not eligible to vote, to recommend approval of this letter.

New York is a right to shelter state, and we affirm that right. However, we are acutely aware of the ongoing issues facing our community aside from the daily arrivals of those seeking safety and opportunity here. MCB4 is home to numerous existing shelter and mental health facilities, and while proximity is important, consideration must be given to how much a community can manage.

While we wish people would no longer feel the need to seek asylum, and leaders in Texas and Florida would stop playing politics with human beings, we were told arrivals are not expected to reduce anytime soon. That is why we are asking the Mayor's Office and the relevant agencies to engage in a consistent cadence of communication with MCB4. It was unfortunate to learn about the Resource Center in the press as opposed to a briefing, given its location and importance in the city right now.

MCB4 looks forward to working together to address and better manage the ongoing issues related to those arriving seeking asylum. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois

Chair

Manhattan Community Board 4

CC: Tony Simone, Assemblymember District 75 Elect
Clinton\Chelsea Ryan Health Center
PS 111
Community District 4 Block Associations
Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Coalition
Mayor's Community Affairs Unit