



CITY OF NEW YORK
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD
FOUR**

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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

June 28, 2023

Keith Howard
Commissioner
NYC Dept of Youth and Community Development
2 Lafayette Street
New York, New York 10007

Re: Support and Expansion of Adult ESOL Programs

Dear Commissioner Howard,

Manhattan Community Board 4(MCB4) at its regularly scheduled general meeting on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 voted, by a vote 38 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 present but not eligible, and 1 abstaining, to support the expansion of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs for recent immigrants being provided on-site at the Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers(HERCs) by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD).

At the monthly meeting of MCB4 Arts, Culture, Education & Street Life Committee (ACES) held on April 10, 2023, DYCD Associate Commissioner Rong Zhang described for us a pilot program to provide English language instruction for recent immigrants living in HERCs. Associate Commissioner Zhang said that DYCD was contacted in February, 2023 to explore whether English language courses could be offered on-site at each of the five HERCs facilities. Working collaboratively and quickly, the agencies were able to design a pilot program in which 100 recent immigrants at each HERC facility (for a total of 500 people) would receive English language instruction at their facility provided by one of the community based organizations (CBO's) that contract with DYCD. The classes were scheduled to begin within 10 days of Associate Commissioner Zhang's presentation.

DYCD was able to secure \$200,000 from FY2023 funding to pay for this pilot program. It was uncertain at the time of the presentation whether there would be additional funding to continue this on-site language program in FY2024 and beyond. MCB4 believes it is vital

that funding be made available to continue these on-site language classes in the HERC's but in addition to also expand these classes to the recent immigrants being housed in temporary hotels managed by DHS and DSS.

According to staff members working in the HERC's and temporary hotels, the most frequently requested service by recent immigrants is for English language classes. Such classes empower the participants in support of their children's attending school, getting jobs and enabling them to advocate for themselves. In addition, when classes are on-site, immigrants are more likely to attend, especially those with young children.

MCB4 requests that the city agencies work together to do the following:

1. Survey recent immigrants when they arrive at the HERC's and temporary hotels to determine their level of interest in English language instruction.
2. Fund the pilot program to continue at the HERC's facilities.
3. Expand the pilot program to provide English language classes at the temporary hotels managed by DHS and DSS if the surveys indicate such demand for instruction.

We are grateful for Associate Commissioner Zhang's very informative presentation regarding the on-site program at the HERC's and applaud DYCD's quick and supportive response in proactively helping to arrange these language classes. MCB4 also applauds NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation for initiating the request for these on-site language courses at each of the HERC's.

We look forward to inviting DYCD to return in the Fall to update the committee on the progress of this exciting and essential program.

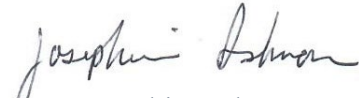
Sincerely,



Jeffery LeFrancois
Chair
Community Board 4



Allen Oster
Co-Chair
ACES Committee



Josephine Ishmon
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

CC: Rong Zhang, Associate Commissioner, NYC DYCD
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough Presidents office
Hon. Erik Bottcher, City Council