



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

November 4, 2008

Commissioner Edwin Méndez-Santiago, LCSW
New York City Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Mendez-Santiago:

On October 27, 2008 the Chair of Manhattan Community Board 4, Jean-Daniel Noland gave testimony at the public hearing regarding DFTA's Annual Plan Summary for 2009-2010. Below is summary of the concerns he presented:

- CB4 is a diverse district in terms of age, ethnicity and income.
- More than 11% of our population are seniors and more than 17% of all CB4 households have a senior in residence
- Senior concerns are highlighted in Community Board 4, as more than ½ the seniors living here live alone, almost double the citywide average.
- Seniors living alone are more in need of social services, have less disposable household income, need senior centers for regular contact.

While we are facing a tough economic times, we need to carefully balance cost efficiency with human needs; for example, the delivery of frozen meals in place of hot meals on wheels may be cost efficient, but seniors lose the daily contact and interaction, which may have been the only social contact in that day.

- Affordable and supportive housing for seniors is critical. The majority of seniors in our district live in rent controlled units, and have continuously occupied those units since 1971. As rent controlled units are deregulated when vacated, we will need to plan for this loss and the future of affordable housing for seniors, particularly as the percent of seniors is expected to grow to 1/5 of our population by 2030.
- Legal services to prevent evictions and rent subsidies such as Senior Citizen's Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE) are essential to keeping seniors in their homes, particularly in communities such as CB4 where housing costs are rising faster than the city average;. CB4, like most communities in NYC, receives very little funding to provide legal services to seniors.

- Many seniors rely on SCRIE to limit rent expenses. To be eligible for SCRIE, a senior must have an income less than \$28,000 and pay more than 1/3 of their income in rent. SCRIE is an essential program to allowing seniors to remain in their homes and communities. However, the \$28,000 limit is still well too low; SCRIE income limits should be increased to better reflect the actual costs of living in NYC. Furthermore, many seniors are unaware of SCRIE, and/or need assistance in completing the enrollment process.
- Senior centers are important social centers and gateway to other needed services, such as mental health counseling, financial management, home care services, and meals on wheels. In our district we rely on the Hudson Guild and Project Find Senior Centers. Their continued operations are essential to our significant senior population.

Because of the turmoil caused by the restructuring of case management and meals-on-wheels as well as the budget cuts, we ask you to delay the senior center RFP until services are stabilized.

Sincerely,

Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4