

June 16, 2021

To Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson & Members of the City Council,

Thanks to a one-time infusion of \$6 billion in flexible federal aid, New York City has the resources to achieve a rapid and equitable recovery from the ravages of COVID-19. We write out of deep concern that current plans for these funds do not strategically support those sectors and communities that have suffered the greatest losses. Failure to allocate these funds wisely will delay recovery and create unnecessary fiscal stress in the future.

Our organizations have been on the front lines of business relief, recovery, and service delivery efforts throughout the pandemic. We believe that the proposed \$98 billion Executive Budget must be amended during the next three weeks before being approved by the City Council. Federal relief monies should not be used to expand the city payroll and long-term program commitments; city priorities such as Universal Pre-K and appropriate reimbursement for human services agency contracts should be part of the baseline budget funded by sustainable city tax revenues not by temporary federal grants.

Federal aid from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) should be concentrated on strategic interventions designed in partnership with industry and nonprofit groups with a focus on restoring 500,000 lost private sector jobs, preparing workers and students for re-employment, sustaining cultural organizations and small businesses through a period of prolonged recovery, and addressing the health, mental health, homelessness, and public safety challenges that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The city's current approach to distribution of ARP funds is scatter shot and fails to lay a foundation for long term economic and fiscal stability. The incoming mayor will be confronted with more entrenched unemployment, a tenuous tax base, and chronic housing, education, and health disparities that have substantially worsened during the pandemic. With a few weeks remaining before the budget must be adopted on July 1, we urge the administration and City Council to reconsider federal funding allocations and adopt a process for greater transparency and consultation with affected industries on how ARP funds are invested to leverage the strongest and fastest recovery.

Sincerely,

Linda Baran, President & CEO, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce

Louis J. Coletti, Chairman & CEO, The Building Trades Employers Association

Vijay Dandapani, President & CEO, The Hotel Association of New York City, Inc.

Rachel Fee, Executive Director, New York Housing Conference

Thomas J. Grech, President & CEO, Queens Chamber of Commerce

Michelle Jackson, Executive Director, Human Services Council

Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO & Executive Director, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Jose Ortiz, Jr., Chief Executive Officer, New York City Employment & Training Coalition (NYCETC)

Randy Peers, President & CEO, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Andrew Rein, President, Citizens Budget Commission

Arva Rice, President, New York Urban League

Andrew Rigie, Executive Director, NYC Hospitality Alliance

Steven Rubenstein, Chairman, Association for a Better New York

Julie Samuels, Executive Director, Tech:NYC

Carlo A. Scissura, President & CEO, New York Building Congress

Lucy Sexton, Executive Director, New Yorkers for Culture & Arts

Lisa Sorin, President, Bronx Chamber of Commerce

Charlotte St. Martin, President, The Broadway League Inc.

Pavan Thimmaiah, Dance Studio Alliance NYC

Jessica Walker, President & CEO, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce

James Whelan, President, The Real Estate Board of New York

Kathryn S. Wylde, President & CEO, Partnership for New York City