



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Linnea Mumma, linnea@anatgerstein.com, 347-861-4167

Statement from Cal Hedigan (she/her), CEO of [Community Access](#), in response to Mayor Adams' 2023 State of the City address

I applaud Mayor Adams for prioritizing working New Yorkers in his 'Working People's Agenda,' — for increasing its support of minority- and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs), for piloting free broadband access for households with section 8 vouchers and, most significant to the work I do, for committing to connect 2,500 workers with disabilities to the job support and resources they need to thrive.

I wholeheartedly support Mayor Adams' commitment to jobs with good pay and good benefits. Let us begin with workers in the human service sector.

Community Access is a proud supporter of the JustPay campaign to end poverty wages for human services workers in New York City and New York State. This sector employs over 80,000 people - predominantly workers of color (75 %) and women (70 %). New York City contracts have resulted in the essential human services workforce being some of the lowest paid workers in New York City. The JustPay campaign rightly names this as a **gender and racial equity** issue. These are the same workers who left their homes every day during lockdown to provide essential services to vulnerable New Yorkers across our city, and it is long past time that they be fairly paid for their labor.

It is essential that the Mayor created a sustainable funding structure for the human services sector. At Community Access, our staff vacancy rates have been close to 30% for over a year, due to depressed wages. This creates even more burden on staff that stay. NYC must institute an automatic annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) across all city contracts so that we can begin to address the human service sector workforce crisis and compensate workers at a level commensurate with their valuable work. The time to take action is now.

About Community Access

Community Access expands opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy, and healing-focused services. We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives. www.communityaccess.org

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