

Impact Report 2024

Stronger Communities, Together



UNITED
NEIGHBORHOOD
HOUSES



Letter from **LEADERSHIP**

More than 100 years ago, the leaders of a burgeoning settlement house movement in New York realized that while they had developed strong influence in their respective communities, to make systemic change would require collective action. To expand their impact, New York's settlement houses came together at the turn of the century to form a coalition, incorporating in 1919 as United Neighborhood Houses (UNH). UNH and the settlement house movement have made and continue to make a lasting impact on New York, strengthening individuals, families, and communities, serving as a gathering place for those who believe in inclusivity and mutual respect, and paving the way for policies that expand the social safety net.

As settlement houses have grown, expanded, and shifted their work to meet the ever-changing needs of their communities, so too has UNH. Now, in addition to advocating for policies that support settlement houses and their communities, we bring settlement house staff together to discuss challenges and share effective practices, we create and offer extensive professional development and training opportunities for all levels of staff, and we support settlement houses to implement new and innovative programs.

The settlement house movement and UNH play an active role responding to all varieties of challenges, from political changes to natural disasters. With the country bracing for significant change in 2025, we find fortitude in the fact that New

York's settlement houses remain a gathering place for their local community to identify shared issues and develop solutions, and UNH continues to channel the collective knowledge of communities to coordinate collective action for systemic change.

After more than a century, UNH's core values remain the same as when we were founded by our members. UNH coordinates the settlement house movement's collective fights for policies that enable a sense of belonging, efficacy, and possibility for all New Yorkers. Our inaugural impact report explores the ways UNH's work is felt by individuals, by settlement houses, and by the communities they serve.

Thank you for joining us as we carry on the great legacy of New York's settlement houses movement.



Susan Stamler

SUSAN STAMLER
Executive Director



M. Bryna Sanger

M. BRYNA SANGER
Board President



UNH's
settlement
house members
reach more than
800,000
New Yorkers at
more than
800 sites.

A settlement house is a neighborhood-based organization that identifies and reinforces the strengths of individuals, families, and communities. Settlement house programs build bonds, create networks, promote advocacy and civic engagement, and develop connections both within organizations and throughout the wider community. Whatever issue a community member is facing, their local settlement house will work with them to address it.

Programs available at each settlement house vary according to the specific needs of their neighborhoods, and may include:

- After-school youth programs
- Arts education and performances
- Citizenship instruction and legal counseling for immigrants
- Early childhood education
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and literacy education
- Food and emergency assistance
- Homelessness prevention and transitional and permanent housing
- Job training and employment programs
- Mental health counseling
- Senior centers and home-delivered meals

Settlement houses engage their neighbors in the planning and design of programs, providing assistance and space to individuals and groups who are working to solve community problems, and encouraging community members to participate in civic life.

BRONX

- Bronx House
- BronxWorks
- East Side House Settlement
- Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC)
- Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC)
- New Settlement
- Riverdale Neighborhood House
- Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers (SEBNC)
- Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)

BROOKLYN

- Arab-American Family Support Center
- CAMBA
- Center for Family Life in Sunset Park
- Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation/ United Community Centers
- Red Hook Initiative
- St. Nicks Alliance
- School Settlement Association
- Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach

MANHATTAN

- Broadway Housing Communities
- Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)
- Educational Alliance
- Goddard Riverside
- Grand St. Settlement
- Greenwich House
- Hamilton-Madison House
- Hartley House
- Henry Street Settlement
- Hudson Guild
- Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
- Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC)
- SCAN-Harbor
- Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center
- Union Settlement
- University Settlement

QUEENS

- Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement
- Korean Community Services (KCS)
- Ocean Bay Community Development Corp.
- Queens Community House (QCH)
- Sunnyside Community Services

STATEN ISLAND

- Project Hospitality

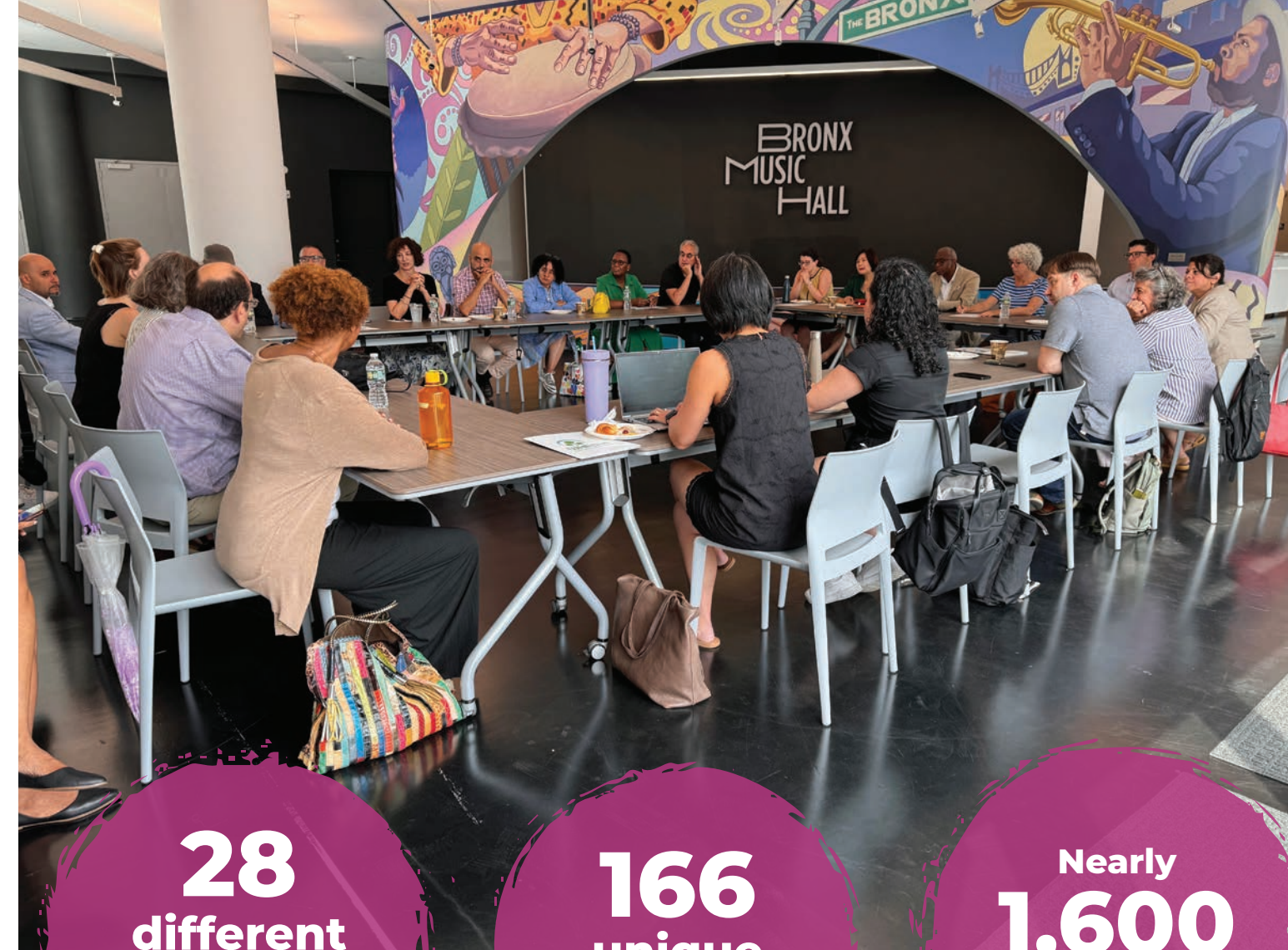
GREATER NEW YORK STATE

- Huntington Family Centers
- Martin Luther King Multipurpose Center
- Southwest Area Neighborhood Association Center (SWAN)
- Syracuse Northeast Community Center
- Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region
- Westcott Community Center

Our
MEMBERS

PEER GROUPS

UNH organizes meetings of settlement house staff by both job title and subject matter to learn from each other, share ideas, and collaborate on projects. Through these meetings, UNH strengthens the capacity of our members—which in turn strengthens their programs and services, their collective political advocacy, their civic engagement efforts, and their skills and knowledge.



28
different
peer
groups

166
unique
sessions

Nearly
1,600
attendees

UNH hosts the following groups:

- Aging Issues
- CFOs
- Civic Engagement Group
- College Prep Group
- Communications Staff
- Data and Evaluation Staff
- Development Staff
- Early Childhood Education Group
- Executive Directors Council
- Facilities Staff
- Family Enrichment Centers Group
- Human Resources Leaders
- Immigrant Issues
- Information Technology Staff
- Intergenerational Programs Group
- Neighborhood Family Services (NFS) Roundtable
- NYCHA Issues
- Senior Leaders
- Settlement Houses Advancing Racial Equity (SHARE)
- Settlement House Board Chairs
- Strategic Thinkers Group
- Youth Worker Group



In addition, we bring together settlement house executive leadership in different configurations, including groups that share a particular geography like Bronx executive directors and upstate executive directors, and groups that share a particular experience, such as seasoned executive directors who have been in their roles for many years.

UNH's policy agenda includes recommendations to improve the lives of New Yorkers of all ages and circumstances. Our policy work emphasizes strong partnerships between government and settlement houses, including improvements to government contracts, paying liveable wages, and opportunities for policymakers to learn from settlement house expertise.

- > **Early Childhood:** We work to ensure that families can afford high-quality early childhood education and that childcare staff at settlement houses are paid well.
- > **Immigrants:** We advocate for local solutions to help immigrants as they start their lives in New York, creating opportunities for people from all backgrounds to learn English, find housing and good jobs, and access childcare.
- > **Older Adults:** We support a wide variety of services that enable New Yorkers to age in their communities such as senior centers, meal and nutrition programs, supportive services in NORCs, and in-home care.



- > **Literacy:** We support free, accessible literacy education including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and high school equivalency preparation.
- > **Non-Profit Contracting:** We partner with government to inform and streamline their procurement processes to ensure settlement houses receive funds on time and in full.
- > **Youth Development:** We support the expansion of youth development programs like after-school, summer camps, and summer youth employment.

POLICY *and* ADVOCACY

UNH advocates for funding and policies that directly address barriers to thriving communities. We publish research, testify in front of legislative bodies, lobby elected and appointed officials, organize rallies, and inform the media. Our goal is to ensure that all New Yorkers feel that their government represents them, and that they can play a role in shaping its growth.



Lobby Day in Albany

Each year, UNH coordinates a lobby day with our members in Albany. Settlement house executive leadership and UNH policy staff meet with elected officials and executive staff. In 2024, we focused on the importance of expanding the Settlement House Program.

50 settlement house staff participated

60 meetings with elected and appointed officials and their staff

We secured a 60% increase for the Settlement House Program



Budget Advocacy

New York City budget victories:

- > **\$25 million for Promise NYC**, a \$9 million increase to provide additional child care vouchers for undocumented immigrant families.
- > **A historic \$10 million investment by the City Council in Adult Literacy Education** for adult learner programs including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.
- > **\$4.78 million in new investments to increase the reimbursement rate for Home Delivered Meals** for older New Yorkers.
- > **New York City averted disastrous cuts to Early Childhood Education**, with the final budget including an additional \$25 million to convert 4,000 seats to better meet the needs of families by making them full-day and full-year, an additional \$30 million for new special education pre-K classes, and a \$20 million investment to support families that did not receive 3-K offers along with other funding for outreach and maintaining current program slots.

New York State budget victories:

- > **A 60% increase for the Settlement House Program**—the first major increase in over a decade bringing the program up to \$4 million. This unique funding stream for New York's settlement houses enhances existing programs by allowing settlement houses to hire translators, case managers, or counselors, or to make other investments needed to address the distinct needs of their local community.
- > **A 2.84% COLA for Human Service Workers** on New York State human services contracts.
- > **An additional \$15.3 million in funding for After-school programs**, bringing the total investment to \$103.3 million across the state.



Legislative Advocacy

Highlights from our legislative work:

UNH supported three pieces of legislation that passed both houses of the Legislature this year. These bills all relate to child care, and include:

Presumptive Eligibility Standard, which enacts a presumptive eligibility standard statewide, with child care assistance costs covered by federal and state funds so families do not need to wait for paperwork processing to begin receiving assistance.

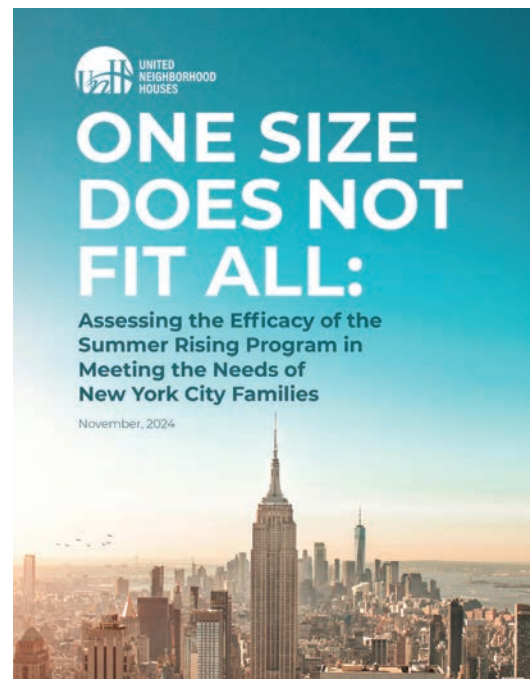
End Work and Wage Requirements, that prohibits requiring parents or caretakers to earn a minimum wage or work a minimum number of hours to be eligible for child care assistance.

Decoupling Update, which provides a technical update to legislation that was intended to decouple the hours a parent works from the hours child care is available to them, thus expanding access to care for many of New York's most vulnerable, low-income families.



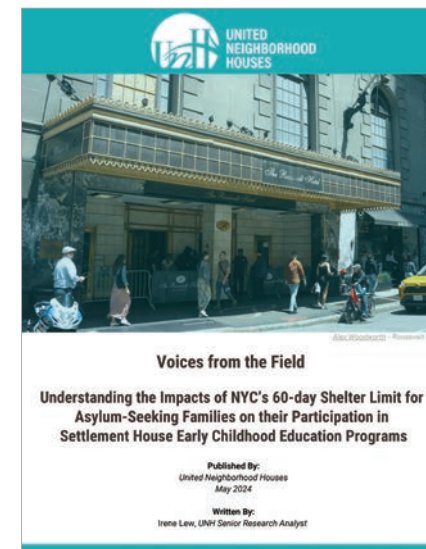
Our REPORTS

We call attention to important issues that impact settlement houses and their communities by collecting, analyzing, and sharing data from our members. Our reports, policy briefs, and testimonies inform City and State decision-makers on local trends and bring actionable solutions to the table. We have intentionally developed this work as a key pillar of our current five-year strategic plan, which called for UNH to increase our analytic capabilities.



One Size Does Not Fit All: Assessing the Efficacy of the Summer Rising Program in Meeting the Needs of New York City Families

Four years ago during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York City made major adjustments to summer programs for school-aged youth, mandating that all summer camp participants also enroll in summer school. Despite loud calls from UNH and our partners to evaluate the impact of this change, no data was ever released. In response, this summer we conducted a mixed-methods study of Summer Rising. Our analysis included a survey of 700 parents of Summer Rising participants and settlement house Summer Rising staff, a focus group with settlement house staff, and focus groups with 52 middle school students participating in the program at UNH settlement house member sites. One Size Does Not Fit All highlights key findings from this study and offers recommendations to improve summer programming so that it meets the diverse needs of New York City's families.



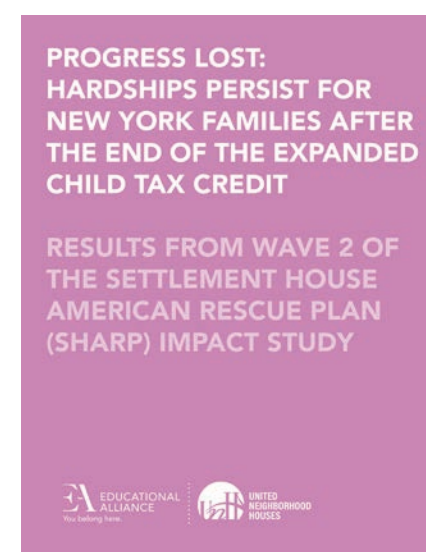
Voices from the Field: Understanding the Impacts of NYC's 60-day Shelter Limit for Asylum-Seeking Families on their Participation in Settlement House Early Childhood Education Programs

When New York City's Mayor set a new policy that asylum-seeking families in the shelter system had to reapply for shelter every 60 days, we turned to settlement houses to learn how communities were impacted. This Voices from the Field brief summarizes key findings on provider experiences working with asylum-seeking families with children under the age of five, including: an overview of the need for child care among newly arrived families; the challenges facing newly arrived families with young children; and the impact of the 60-day shelter limit rule on their participation and retention in these programs. The brief also highlights the destabilizing impact of the 60-day shelter limit on providers themselves.



NORCs: An Antidote to Social Isolation

Loneliness and social isolation have emerged as public health concerns—particularly for older adult populations—contributing to numerous health conditions including those associated with cognitive decline. This report analyzes the surge in the older adult population in New York State, their needs, and the challenges they face, and highlights the essential role that supportive service programs in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) play in combating social isolation, enabling older New Yorkers to safely remain in their communities. Settlement houses across New York State run NORC programs, which offer on-site social services in buildings and neighborhoods that, although initially were not planned retirement communities, house a higher concentration of older people.



Progress Lost: Hardships Persist for New York Families After the End of the Expanded Child Tax Credit

To better understand the existing needs facing New York's families and the importance of the community-based organizations that support them, UNH worked with the settlement house, Educational Alliance, and researchers to document their experiences after the implementation of the American Rescue Plan. Progress Lost follows-up on the Settlement House American Rescue Plan Impact Study (SHARP), summarizing findings from a second wave of SHARP surveys of more than 1,000 families taken during the winter of 2022-23. The report offers a grim look at New York parents' experiences providing for their families since the expiration of the expanded federal Child Tax Credit and distills these experiences into concrete policy recommendations to strengthen economic security for families.

SETTLEMENT HOUSE DAY



Nearly 400 settlement house workers attended Settlement House Day 2024, including a few international guests representing the International Federation of Settlements. Settlement House Day is a day of learning and networking of, by, and for settlement house staff. With support from UNH, settlement house workers conceived of, created, and conducted workshops on topics that included budgeting, giving constructive feedback, intergenerational programming, serving asylum seekers, strategic planning, and so much more. In addition to 20 workshops, we convened a panel on civic engagement, a racial equity conversation, and were treated to a keynote speech from our guest, the amazing **Whoopi Goldberg**, an alum of Hudson Guild and a passionate supporter of settlement houses.

Settlement House Day is about bringing people together. Christina Tesoriero, the Chief of Staff at Project Hospitality, played a key role in planning the conference as part of the Settlement House Day Planning Committee. The committee, made up of 15 settlement house workers as well as UNH staff, helped shape all aspects of programming to ensure the agenda had something for everyone. Christina shared that working at a settlement house can be demanding, and that someone, "can forget about their connection to the overall agency, let alone the bigger network and all the resources." Christina noted that Settlement House Day was an opportunity to share and build solidarity with her fellow settlement house workers while breaking down silos for her colleagues at Project Hospitality.



Professional DEVELOPMENT

A key component of UNH's work is supporting settlement house staff by creating and customizing professional development and training to enhance skills, knowledge, and expertise. We provide three tiers of leadership development training to help settlement house staff grow in their careers. These courses are: Supervisory Essentials for New Managers, Leading for Impact, and Leadership for the Future of Work.



Supervisory Essentials

Supervisory Essentials is a customized, virtual training for new managers working for the first time as a supervisor. Through discussions, case studies and interactive activities, participants learn skills and techniques to promote success, handle difficult situations, and build a team culture of collaboration, empowerment, trust, equity, and inclusion.

68 PARTICIPANTS

Leading for Impact

Leading for Impact is a professional development series that UNH designed and hosts each year. Full-time settlement house staff who are nominated by their executive team and whose role advances their settlement house's mission are invited to apply. Over eleven weeks, these emerging leaders come together for weekly sessions to learn from settlement house executive staff about topics ranging from budgeting and financial management, how to build and empower teams, effective storytelling and public speaking, fundraising, creating change, and more.

25 GRADUATES

Leadership for the Future of Work

Leadership for the Future of Work is a professional development program for department, division, and program directors, and other seasoned managers working in settlement houses. Over six sessions, participants learn key leadership and management skills from Denise Patrick, a PhD candidate in Business Leadership with more than 25 years of experience teaching and consulting.

23 GRADUATES



Carolina Espinosa, Program Director of SNAP-Ed from BronxWorks, attended the Leading for Impact course this year. Carolina was able to bring what she learned in the course back to her team, learning new ways to be empathetic and authentic in the workplace. Carolina also shared that, "Leading for Impact allowed me to connect with colleagues at other settlement houses... which brings the settlement house network closer together."



UNH supports settlement house staff pursuing education that furthers their work through two scholarship programs.

\$41,500
in scholarships to
43 settlement house staff

The Ernie Rubenstein Memorial Fund, created by UNH in partnership with the Guttman Foundation, honors the legacy of Ernie Rubenstein. Rubenstein had close ties to New York's settlement houses in his 40 years as a member of the Board of the Educational Alliance including almost ten as the President. He championed the Guttman Foundation's many years of support for UNH's skills-building training for early childhood education staff and parents of young children throughout New York City. This scholarship encourages early childhood care and education staff to pursue higher education while they continue their work at their settlement houses. It is UNH's first multi-year scholarship, with \$1,000 provided to recipients each year for two years. In conjunction with this award, winners are given the opportunity to participate in one of UNH's leadership development courses.

The Emily Menlo Marks Scholarship honors the legacy of Emily Menlo Marks. Marks led UNH as Executive Director from 1988 until her retirement in 2002. A fierce advocate for New York's settlement houses, she influenced good government policy and developed programs to benefit our settlement house network. With her guidance, the Emily Menlo Marks Scholarship Fund was created to support settlement house staff seeking continued education. Scholarship funds can be used for staff pursuing two- or four-year college degrees, or for technical education or certifications that apply to their role at their settlement house.


In addition, through the support of our partners at the New York Power Authority and Paramount, UNH offers two scholarships for college-bound settlement house participants.

\$66,500
in scholarships to
16 settlement house participants

The UNH Paramount College Scholarship Award for graduating High School Seniors provides scholarships of \$1,500 to college-bound program participants of our member organizations in New York City. By providing financial assistance for higher education, our partnership with Paramount seeks to encourage and support the growth of future leaders who promote tolerance and positive community change.

 **This year, eleven college-bound settlement house participants who promote tolerance and positive community change received the Paramount Scholarship.**

The New York Power Authority Future Energy Leaders Scholarship is a \$10,000 scholarship for high school seniors of color who have expressed an intention to pursue a career in the energy field. The winners are all program participants in a settlement house program and are heading to four-year colleges in the fall.

 **This year, 5 college-bound settlement house participants received the Future Energy Leaders Scholarship to pursue degrees that enable them to pursue their energy goals.**

SCHOLARSHIPS

Supporting our Members by SECURING FUNDS

UNH takes pride in maintaining a close relationship with our settlement house members. Our many points of connection give us particular insight into the reach of settlement houses and the needs of their communities. On occasion, foundations and generous individuals familiar with our network turn to us when they seek to expand their impact across New York City. We serve as a good steward of funds, and settlement houses are effective in addressing community needs.

In 2024, UNH granted more than \$4 million to settlement houses for a variety of programs that advance the settlement house movement.

In 2024, we launched **The Center for the Wellbeing of New York's Children and Families**, that supports settlement houses as they pilot or expand program models that meet the social and emotional needs of children in a family setting; enhance the educational skills and economic health of parents and families; and/or promote community health and wellness for children and families. The inaugural cohort of 10 settlement houses each received \$100,000 as the first installment of a two-year grant.

Thanks to generous support from Gerstner Philanthropies, UNH administered **the Helping Hands emergency cash grants program** for the sixth year, making \$1,466,250 available to 29 settlement houses to assist community members facing an immediate threat to their housing stability. In 2024, UNH also secured a generous contribution from an anonymous donor that will allow us to leverage our emergency cash grants infrastructure to provide an additional \$517,500, expanding the reach of this program and helping more community members. Settlement houses made more than 600 emergency cash grants in 2024, helping community members avert eviction and remain stably housed.

With support from the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, we distributed grants totaling \$350,000 to 14 settlement houses through **the Settlement House Sustainability Fund**, which enabled our network to expand programs and address infrastructure needs that allow them to efficiently and effectively serve their communities. In turn, they provided New Yorkers with emergency food, job training, case management, technology coaching for older people, and mental health counseling.

In addition, UNH provided \$3,000 mini-grants to the 15 settlement houses that were selected to participate in our **Get Out the Vote** cohort, and three \$50,000 grants to settlement houses engaged in our multi-year **Intergen Community Center Initiative**.

Launch of Our INTERGEN TOOLKIT

The United States is in the midst of a loneliness epidemic. Both older and younger people are particularly impacted by a growing sense of isolation. In response, UNH has deepened its focus on intergenerational programming, which has been shown to reverse the negative mental and physical health effects that stem from loneliness and social isolation.

INTERGENERATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

Seven Guideposts to Impactful
Intergenerational Work at Settlement Houses



In a multi-year partnership with three settlement houses piloting intergenerational programs, we developed tools, resources, and a new professional development curriculum to build the capacity of staff at settlement houses interested in making intergenerational programming a core program element in their work. This year we completed the Generations Connect toolkit and, to complement the toolkit, we launched an intensive training process for a new cohort of five settlement houses who will participate in trainings over fourteen months as they learn and apply the tools to their work.



Members of the UNH community involved in the Intergen Community Center Initiative, Donald, Kerly, and Shyvonne of Sunnyside Community Services, discussed the work as being about respect and dignity. Kerly noted,

“It’s just people getting to know each other at a different level, a different type of engagement...the relationship that starts building and then it builds community, too.”

MEDIA COVERAGE

In 2024, UNH deepened our work with local media and with communications staff at settlement houses. We had three goals: To advance our policy agenda by shining a spotlight on important issues to settlement houses; to raise the profile of UNH; and to raise the profile of the settlement house movement by ensuring settlement houses were quoted more often as sources in stories relating to their work.

We influenced, were quoted in, or connected reporters to settlement house sources for

36 distinct stories

across 21 outlets

UNH staff were
quoted in 20 of those stories

UNH connected reporters to a settlement house source for
11 stories

UNH targeted key local outlets for our media relations work to ensure that our work was where policymakers, civically-engaged people, reporters from larger publications, and possible funders read regularly.

CRAIN'S NEW YORK BUSINESS

POLITICO



The New York Times

DAILY NEWS



CHALKBEAT NEW YORK

Gothamist

Brooklyn Daily Eagle



BRONX Times

BRONXNET

EL DIARIO



CITY LIMITS

OUR VOICES COUNT *and* LOOKING FORWARD

In 2024, UNH launched a new six-year, non-partisan civic engagement campaign, Our Voices Count. Our Voices Count will help New York settlement houses to activate their communities in the lead up to—and increase their response rate for—the 2030 Census. Due to an undercount in the 2020 census, New York lost a congressional seat, and recent projections assume up to three additional losses after the next census without interventions in hard-to-count communities.

We have spent the last seven years building out our annual Get Out the Vote (GOTV) training sessions for settlement houses, helping them to embed civic engagement in their programs and increase voter turnout for elections. Our Voices Count will include capacity-building, community organizing, and evaluation components. For the next five election cycles, UNH intends to scale up our nonpartisan civic engagement work each year to reach more settlement house staff, building our network's capacity to run outreach programs.

With Our Voices Count, UNH is leaning into important lessons we learned through our GOTV work about the value of trusted messengers to heighten civic engagement in communities that are generally less likely to vote or complete

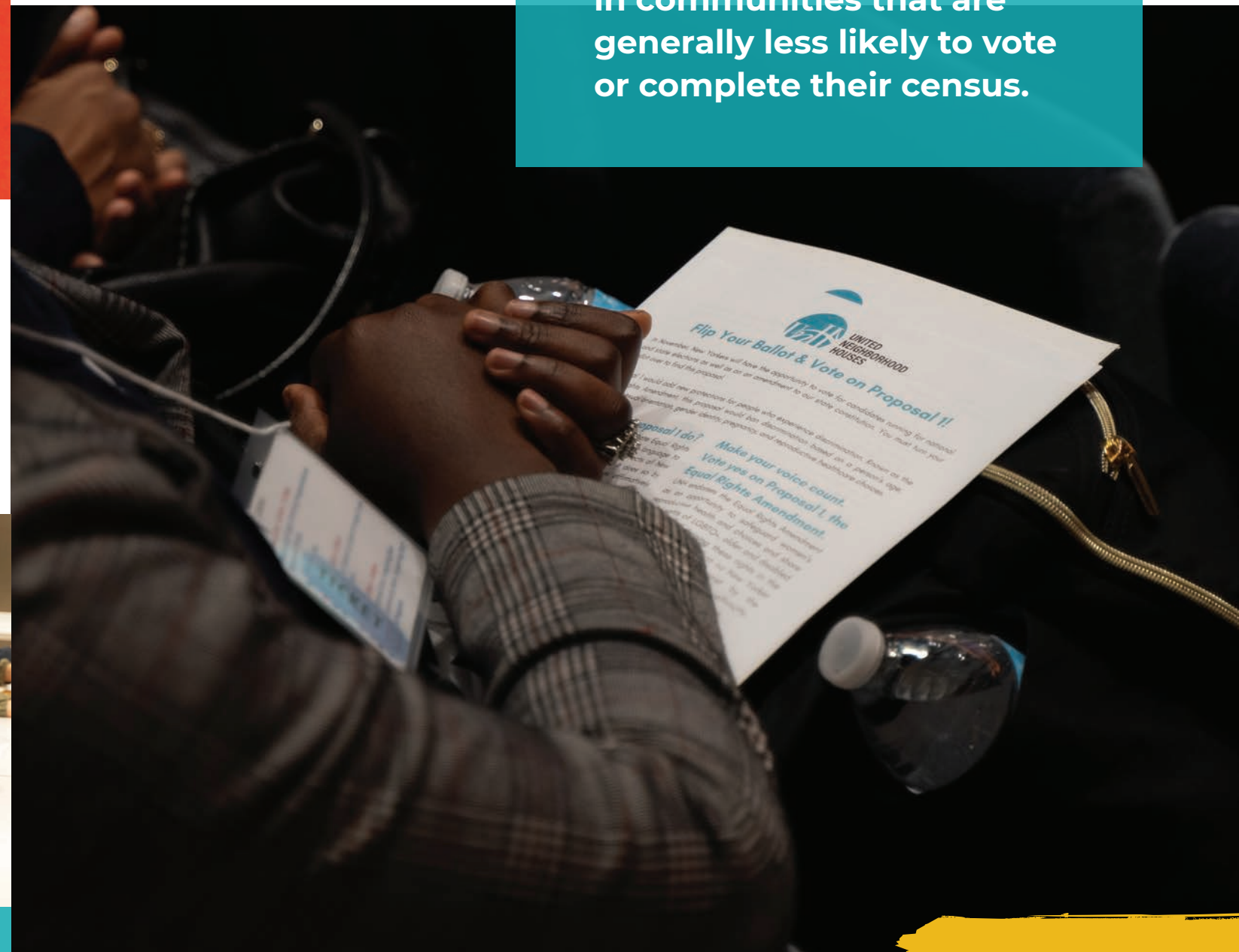
their census. We analyzed voter data from 2021 and found that voters contacted by settlement houses involved in our GOTV cohort were 41% more likely to cast a ballot. Furthermore, during the 2020 census, when we compared hard-to-count districts with our settlement house membership, we learned that 47.4% of our network sites were in those zip codes where a complete count was challenging.

Our Voices Count builds on UNH's strong relationship with our settlement house members, their geographic positioning in hard-to-reach communities, and their enthusiasm for civic engagement to ensure that New York will not once again miss out on the important opportunities that come from a complete census count. Through ballot initiatives, participatory budgeting, community organizing, and

the work on the census, UNH believes in values such as openness and fairness. In partnership with settlement houses working on the ground in communities, Our Voices Count will educate New Yorkers, working to foster a sense of civic engagement in settlement house communities.



With Our Voices Count, UNH is leaning into important lessons we learned through our GOTV work about the value of trusted messengers to heighten civic engagement in communities that are generally less likely to vote or complete their census.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to our dedicated staff and Board of Directors, our generous donors and funders, and our committed settlement house members, we want to acknowledge the following people and institutions that made a significant contribution to our work this past year. Thank you to:

- Citi for hosting Settlement House Day
- Deep Tech Inc. for all they did to make UNH's benefit a success
- Matthew Chun, our 2024 New Yorker Who Makes a Difference and his wife, Chetna Khemka, for all you both did to make UNH's benefit a success
- Miles McEnergy Gallery for opening your doors to host a reception for our community
- ONEHOPE Winery for ensuring our community had something to drink at our reception
- Willkie Farr & Gallagher for always opening your doors to UNH

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