CCC appreciates the actions taken by the Administration and City Council to adopt a balanced budget that addresses a $9 billion loss in tax revenue while protecting investments in health, food, child care, shelter, and social supports in communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no question the pandemic has placed an unprecedented strain on the City’s economy. It has also exacerbated inequities in income, health, housing, education, and community safety, and disproportionately impacted the lives of New Yorkers in Black, Latinx, and immigrant communities. Our collective responsibility to address these inequities must continue long after this budget deal so that we can ensure all children, families and communities have access to the infrastructure, supports and services needed to recover from this pandemic.

Specifically, we are thankful to New York City’s leaders for recognizing the important role that youth programs play in the lives of young people and their families, and for restoring $115.8 million in summer youth programs in the FY’21 Adopted Budget. This will enable over 100,000 children and youth to be served this summer through COMPASS, SONYC, Beacon and Cornerstone programs as well as the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). We are also encouraged by the $100 million restoration in Fair Student Funding and the saving of the Single Shepherd counseling program and social workers. It must be recognized, however, that the budget process disrupted the City’s youth services sector, resulting in a significant loss of service capacity and the workforce. The loss of these programs comes at a time when they are needed more than ever to help parents return to work and help young people through long periods of social isolation, school disruption and to prepare for school.

The Adopted Budget makes a critical first step in redirecting funds from the NYPD to community-based youth and social service programs, but the City must commit to a long-term strategy to meaningfully shift resources away from policing and into Black and brown communities. We remain concerned about the role and funding level of School Safety Agents in schools, now under the jurisdiction of the DOE, and urge City leaders to continue working toward an end to the policing of its students.

It will take a concerted effort at every level of government to build a fairer, more equitable city while rebuilding the economy and addressing risk factors exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While reductions to City Council initiatives were anticipated, given the magnitude of this health and economic crisis, these actions will also negatively impact communities that are struggling the most.
The sober reality of this budget underscores the pressing need to seek authority for City borrowing from the State of New York and to secure greater federal stimulus relief. We stand ready to work with the Administration and City Council to secure the resources needed to tackle the inequities exacerbated by COVID-19, and build a better future for our city, its children, families and communities.

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