Thank you for supporting the great work that CIDNY does each year. As I complete my second year as CIDNY’s Executive Director, I am so proud of the tremendous hard work that the staff and Board have done.

During the year, we added over a million dollars of new grant-making revenue to use to provide critical services to our consumers. As you will see in this report we have so much to be proud of, from our many advocacy successes, to myriad supportive services to our consumers, to international visitors who came to learn from us. And along with all of these, we launched two new departments—Mental Health Services and Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation Services—to further provide one-stop-shop service for all consumers who need disability-related help.

In our post-COVID-19 climate, the need for mental health support is very high. Approximately 132 people commit suicide each day in the U.S. This year CIDNY continued to provide wellness calls to our consumers to connect them to community-based clinical resources to assist with their mental wellness. CIDNY knows the importance of finding a mental health provider that has the disability-related cultural competence to enable them to work and treat people with disabilities most effectively. Therefore, CIDNY procured funding this year for our new Mental Health Services Department to begin a multicultural disability competence (MDC) training for licensed mental health providers in New York State. We developed courses to provide to these practitioners and look forward to providing instruction to them in 2024.

CIDNY established the Department of Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation Services to assist consumers with procuring gainful employment. People with disabilities want to work, but often face societal barriers such as stigma, misperceptions of accommodations needed in the workplace, ignorance, and prejudice. The new Department’s aim is to help consumers reach their vocational goals and know their employment rights. It serves consumers aged 14 and up, with all disability types and includes competitive, supported, and customized work options.

We thank you again for your ongoing financial support to CIDNY. I promise you that each dollar given to CIDNY goes to the mission of improving the lives of people with disabilities living in New York City.
I am honored to have served on the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York’s (CIDNY) Board for the last 33 years. As Board President, I have personally witnessed this organization impact the lives of people with disabilities living throughout New York City. I have seen the organization grow from an annual budget of one million dollars to over nine million dollars. The financial support facilitated the mission for the staff to appropriately advocate for the removal of systemic barriers within the environment, social arena, and the political framework in New York City.

CIDNY was able to change policies, which in turn provided access for people with disabilities to needed resources. This has enabled them to partake in being able to vote, ride a bus or train, obtain accessible housing, obtain meaningful employment, access healthcare, education, and so much more. CIDNY made it possible for the disabled to be included in the landscape of New York City. One must remember that one’s disability status is fluid, and at any point in one’s life, a person can become disabled. Thus, it becomes imperative for all of us to live in a barrier-free society that enriches everyone’s talents and adopts universal design.

At the end of this fiscal year, I will step down as President, and give the reins to another Board member. I know that CIDNY will be in good hands. I will remain as the Board Treasurer. We can continue to do this good work only with the financing needed to hire the staff to execute the mission of CIDNY.

Please seriously consider making a substantial donation to CIDNY. Every penny goes to improving the lives of all of us!
WHO WE ARE

FIRST, A LITTLE HISTORY:
Founded in 1978, the Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY) works to ensure full integration, independence, and equal opportunity for all people with any kind of disability by removing barriers to the social, economic, cultural, and civic life of the community.

We are part of the Independent Living Movement, which began in 1972 and was rooted in the civil rights and social justice movements. At that time, people with disabilities were living in segregated settings; taught in segregated schools; had few, segregated work opportunities; and unequal access to communication, housing, transportation, health care, food, civic life, and social opportunities available to people without disabilities.

AND NOW:
While much has changed since CIDNY’s founding 45 years ago, many struggles for equality persist. So, we persist.

The majority of CIDNY’s dedicated staff and leadership team are people with disabilities. In addition, some of us are caregivers to a partner, parent, or child with disabilities. We speak 13 different languages other than English: American Sign Language, Arabic, Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Mandarin, Nepali, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tibetan, Urdu. We are part of, and reflect, the diverse identities of the disability community in NYC. We have various racial and ethnic identities, educational and work backgrounds, belong to different faith communities, and are LGBTQ inclusive. Seventy percent of our staff identify as female and 30% identify as male. Twenty-seven percent of our staff are Black, 36% are Hispanic, 29% are White, and 8% are Asian American.
WHAT WE DO

WE SUPPORT people with disabilities to overcome personal and societal obstacles. We help with the day-to-day things that improve the lives and protect the civil rights of people with disabilities of any age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or community of origin. These include connecting to, and helping to navigate the often complicated systems of supports for income, healthcare, transportation, education, employment, and food security and nutrition; understanding how to look for housing and using rental support programs; transitioning from institutions to living in the community; and access to voting.

WE PROVIDE a disability lens to new partners and the public.

WE ADVOCATE to remove barriers and change systems that limit the participation of people with disabilities.
WHAT WE DO

We often serve New Yorkers with disabilities who are poor and have less educational and employment attainment than people without disabilities. We reach newcomers to our area and people who have not historically been represented in our society, including people with mental health disabilities and multiple disabilities. We help people with the greatest struggles to achieve independence and their personal goals.

WE TEACH
- People with disabilities independent living skills, about their rights, about benefits programs, and how to advocate for themselves.
- Businesses, the courts, government agencies, and the public about disability literacy and disability rights.
- Policymakers, about the status of people with disabilities and the issues affecting them, by collaborating with university-based researchers to develop reports.
- The public, about the lives and experiences of people with disabilities through first-hand testimonials depicting daily life in both mainstream and digital media.

WE RESEARCH
- Conditions in the community for people with disabilities—poverty, access to voting, education, employment, income, health, transportation, food, and the built environment.
- Disability status compared to people without disabilities.

WE ORGANIZE
- Networks of advocates who can respond quickly to policy developments that affect them, speak out, demonstrate, educate policymakers, and share stories with the media to educate the public.
- With people with disabilities to tell their stories about barriers to health care, voting, emergency services, transportation, education, and any other issues, to advocate for their rights and fight for change.

WE ENGAGE
- With lawmakers, by providing relevant research and individual perspectives and sharing ideas on how proposed policies will affect people with disabilities.
- In coalitions, to bring together disparate groups to improve laws, regulations, and public policy. With the legal process when civil rights are violated.
OUR PROGRAMS

CIDNY provides benefits guidance, counseling, independent living skills development, housing assistance, healthcare access, peer counseling, nursing home transition and diversion, advocacy, legal guidance, and promotes recreational activities to New Yorkers with disabilities.

Our benefits counselor teams assist consumers with all manner of public benefits, including cash assistance and one-shot deals (e.g., rent arrears, utilities, and moving expenses), health care, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, heating assistance, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Income, tax benefits, veteran's benefits, housing subsidies, Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE), Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), waiver programs, prescription assistance, unemployment insurance, and subsidized transit. They provide information on these programs, help with applications, explain the appeals process, and make referrals to the appropriate agencies, when applicable.

This year we:
• Helped 815 NYC households apply for 1,120 benefits.
• Provided 1,338 New Yorkers with disabilities housing assistance, including 780 that we helped apply for housing subsidies.
• Helped 103 New Yorkers with disabilities transition from nursing homes and adult homes back into community living, and 21, who received diversion services that prevented them from ever entering an institution.
• Served 441 individuals through advocacy and legal services.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVOCATES
The New York State Department of Health contracts with CIDNY to provide New York City consumers with the information and knowledge they need to find and navigate health coverage, access low-cost or free care, solve billing issues, understand health care reform and health care rights, file appeals, and engage in mediation as needed.

This year we:
• Helped 759 consumers with 1,498 healthcare-related needs, and saved New York State $735,281.
OUR PROGRAMS

HOUSING SERVICES
Finding and maintaining appropriate, accessible, affordable homes is a major challenge for people with disabilities of various ages and needs. Various CIDNY programs help New York City residents with disabilities:

- Learn how to search for housing and eligibility criteria for housing subsidies
- Apply for housing, including waiting lists, lotteries, and subsidies.
- In nursing homes, to apply for housing subsidies to help them transition back to the community. Stretch their housing budgets and avoid eviction.
- Receive education and assistance on their rights to accommodations and modifications under the Fair Housing Act.

CIDNY also works to meet the housing needs of two specific populations through the Olmstead Housing Subsidy and Rapid Transitional Housing Program.

THE OLMESTAD HOUSING SUBSIDY is a rental subsidy for seniors and people with chronic disabilities. It enables them to leave long-term skilled nursing facilities, or prevent nursing home placement, by providing access to private housing in the community. Participants in the program also have access to supportive services to ensure that community-based services are in place, and that they know and understand their rights and responsibilities. Participants may choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects, such as senior housing.

This year we:
- Helped 85 consumers sign leases.

THE RAPID TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAM provides ongoing rental subsidies for high-need Medicaid beneficiaries. It ensures that seniors and homeless people with disabilities can afford accessible, safe, sanitary, and sustainable housing in the community. Each participant is assigned a Housing Specialist and an Independent Living Specialist. Community Transition Services are available to pay for furniture and other essential household goods. CIDNY’s Independent Living Specialist provides wraparound services to ensure participants are connected to community-based resources.

This year we:
- Helped 50 consumers sign leases.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON AGING
CIDNY is part of a network of 85 Benefit Enrollment Centers funded by the National Council on Aging nationwide. We help low-income seniors and younger adults with disabilities access programs that pay for healthcare and food.

This year we:
- Helped 813 households complete 1,120 applications.
OUR PROGRAMS

INDEPENDENT CONSUMER ADVOCACY NETWORK
The Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) is the New York State Department of Health’s Ombudsprogram for people with Medicaid who need long-term care services. CIDNY is part of the statewide ICAN network of 15 agencies, and the exclusive agency to serve people who are eligible for or enrolled in Fully Integrated Duals Advantage for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FIDA-IDD).

We help New Yorkers with disabilities and seniors to enroll in and use Medicaid managed care plans that cover long-term care services, such as home attendant services, medical equipment, and in some cases, nursing home care. We answer consumers’ questions about long-term care and provide information about health insurance plan options. We help consumers without plans to determine the best plan for them. We help consumers enrolled in managed care plans solve problems with their providers, and we help with negotiation and formal appeal processes when plans deny coverage of needed care.

This year we:
- Closed 554 cases resulting in a savings of $3,697,700.

LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM
The New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program strives to help residents of nursing homes and adult homes and their families understand and exercise residents’ rights to receive quality care and have optimal quality of life. New York City has over 200 nursing and adult homes, representing 53,000 residents spread across the five boroughs. CIDNY is the sole contractor for the program for the City.

We advocate for residents by receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of residents. The primary concerns reported by residents are staff shortages, being treated with indifference or insensitivity, and their facilities’ lack of response to the complaints they submit.

This year:
- Our staff and volunteers
  - Made over 900 visits to nursing homes and adult care facilities
  - Provided over 8,000 instances of information and assistance to residents, families and other stakeholders regarding resident rights, discharge planning and choosing a long-term care facility.
- The program received and investigated over 800 complaints and advocated for satisfactory resolutions.

NUTRITION OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM
We aim to reduce hunger and food insecurity in NYC by maximizing participation in, and support for, federally funded nutrition assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, Summer Food Service Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
OUR PROGRAMS

NUTRITION OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM, CONTINUED

Our coordinators make presentations and provide flyers and one-on-one guidance about the various benefits and eligibility requirements with New Yorkers at senior centers, farmers markets, colleges, high schools, and other community sites throughout the City. They also help people enroll in the appropriate programs for their needs.

OPEN DOORS TRANSITION CENTER

The Open Doors Transition Center (formally Money Follows the Person) is a Federal Demonstration project originated under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 and expanded by the Affordable Care Act. CIDNY implements the program as a regional lead in the New York City region.

Open Doors assists residents of long-term care facilities (nursing homes or intermediate care facilities) to transition back into the community. They may be:

- Individuals who have been in nursing home/hospital/intermediate care facilities for 60 days or more
- Any nursing home/intermediate care facility residents who wish to transition back into the community.
- Individuals willing to move to a qualified community setting (home, apartment, or small group home with four or fewer unrelated individuals)
- Individuals who have been enrolled in Medicaid at least one day prior to nursing home discharge.

Our Transition Specialists work with the individual residents and their family members or social supports on Community Preparedness Education, to ensure that they have the information and skills they need. We help individuals identify their unique barriers and the services they will need to make successful transitions. And we help them find affordable, accessible housing appropriate to their needs.

CIDNY’s Transition Specialists provide support before, during, and after nursing home discharge. Individuals and their family members have access to one-on-one peer services. Peers visit with individuals and their family members to share their experience and support their community living options. One-on-one coaching to provide consumers with skillsets to self-advocate after discharge is also available.

This year:
- With the assistance of our Open Doors Transition team, 137 consumers transitioned from nursing homes: 96 moved to apartments or homes and 41 moved to transitional homes or assisted living.
- Our Peer Advocate provided one-on-one service to 411 consumers.
- Our Education & Outreach Training and Coaching Specialist team completed one-on-one Person-Centered Planning Coaching sessions with 31 participants and provided in-service training to 286 staff members from 115 nursing homes and educated 28 community members about the program.
OUR PROGRAMS

RECREATION
CIDNY promotes recreation for New Yorkers with disabilities with referrals and advocacy.

We were there for It’s Our Park Day! at the Bloomingdale Inclusive Playground at Amsterdam Ave and 104th Street.

The playground’s universal design enables disabled kids to play alongside typically developing kids. It has basketball hoops at different heights, ramps, an ADA-compliant swing, and circular water sprays that spray low to the ground. There is also a fitness area for adults.

*Playground photos courtesy of New York City Department of Parks & Recreation

STATE OFFICE FOR THE AGING (SOFA)
We provide information and personalized counseling to Medicare beneficiaries, individuals dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, and participants of EPIC; as well as technical assistance and direct case assistance on issues pertaining to Medicare Part D, Medicare low-income programs, and EPIC to local Health Insurance Information Counseling Assistance Programs (HIICAPs).

This year we:
- Directly helped 169 individuals and reached 494 individuals through outreach.

NEW YORK CONNECTS
CIDNY is the Independent Living Center that holds the NY Connects contract from the New York State Office For the Aging for all five boroughs of NYC.

CIDNY’s NY Connects program is a free, trusted resource for information about services that support people with disabilities. We work with New Yorkers of all ages and with any type of disability who live at home, in nursing homes, or other residential settings. Our Counselors help people with disabilities make informed decisions about short-term and long-term services and support options. And we make sure that people are directly connected with the resources they need to achieve and maintain their independence.
OUR PROGRAMS

NEW YORK CONNECTS, CONTINUED

We serve older adults, adults with disabilities, children with disabilities, individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease or other dementias, caregivers, families, and friends of people with disabilities, and professionals, including discharge planners, who assist individuals who need long-term services and supports.

Our staff are based in each of New York City’s five boroughs and can provide person-centered benefits counseling including eligibility screening processes for benefits and services. We help consumers complete applications and enroll in:

- Public assistance benefits, like Medicaid and Medicare
- Housing applications, including supportive housing applications
- SNAP applications/food assistance
- Social Security benefits

Our Counselors also provide guidance on how to maintain benefits, set goals for long-term care and support, and access community resources.

Throughout the year, we held five Vaccine Days across NYC. We provided people the COVID-19 Bivalent Vaccine, and distributed KN95 masks and hand sanitizers. When the public health emergency ended in May and COVID-19 test kits were no longer free through health insurance, we began distributing COVID-19 test kits for free at our events. We also provided information about our services and connected people with our benefits counselors.

In January 2023, we began a partnership with Northwell Health’s Center for Young Adult, Adolescent, and Pediatric HIV. Once a month, its mobile van parks outside our Queens office to provide free HIV testing, as well as referring people to the NY Connects program.

Our longstanding partnership with NYC Housing, Preservation and Development’s (HPD) Mainstream Voucher Program provided us with 33 applications for rental assistance for families with an adult member who has a disability, and is homeless, living in an institution, or at risk of becoming homeless or institutionalized. Our Benefits Counselors then worked with clients who qualified for this voucher to help them put together all the documents needed for this application. Once the application was submitted and reviewed by HPD, if they met the qualifications, they received a housing voucher. Our Benefits Counselors then worked with them to secure housing.

This year:

- We served 4,096 individuals.
NEW YORK CONNECTS, CONTINUED

Below are examples of the life-changing successes CIDNY’s New York Connects program achieved this year:

Jacqueline Jones is a senior citizen with disabilities. Ms. Jones says that before she was connected to CIDNY’s NY Connects program, “I did not have a source of income and was suffering financially. I did not have the knowledge of how to apply for benefits from the Social Security Administration. I was confused about the paperwork process, and I was told that I may need a lawyer to help me apply. I did not have the finances to pay for a lawyer. I spoke to my doctor about my concerns and my doctor referred me to NY Connects. A few days later I received a call from Damon Anderson, a NY Connects Benefits Counselor at CIDNY.”

Damon helped Ms. Jones navigate through the dense Social Security Retirement Benefits application paperwork and provided her with a guide to prepare for the in-person appointment that would follow.

That appointment turned out to be scheduled long in the future and in a Social Security office in a distant part of a different borough than her home. Damon contacted the medical professionals he knew at that location and informed them of Ms. Jones’ challenges in going there for her appointment. Very soon, Ms. Jones was notified that the date was changed to one much sooner, and the office location was now one close to her home. Subsequently, Damon helped her gather additional documents that Social Security asked her to submit to complete her application.

Damon also assisted Mrs. Jones with completing a Social Security Disability Insurance application and a Fair Fares application that would provide her with reduced travel costs on public transportation.

Ms. Jones was approved for all the benefits for which she applied. She says, “I am grateful for the help I received from Damon Anderson at CIDNY, through the entire process of applying for benefits. He has been my angel and made my life stress free.”
NEW YORK CONNECTS, CONTINUED

Damon assisted Mr. Jami Brown in transitioning from living in single room occupancy (SRO) with a service pet to a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan.

Mr. Brown had received an offer for this available supportive housing apartment with a very short turnaround time. Unfortunately, his 2010 supportive housing status had expired, and he needed to quickly get the most important parts of the application done – his medical assessments – in order to submit the renewal to the Human Resources Administration and keep the offered apartment as a viable possibility. Mr. Brown actually had appropriate appointments scheduled, but they were too far in the future to be workable for him to still be eligible for the apartment.

Damon worked intensively with Mr. Brown’s social worker, and (somewhat miraculously) they were able to get Mr. Brown’s appointments re-scheduled, the application submitted, and Mr. Brown into the apartment in just under three and half weeks.

Damon also ensured that Mr. Brown’s personal belongings could be held at a storage facility in the SRO building where he had resided until he could have them moved to his new apartment.

A new, unfamiliar environment can sometimes be difficult for someone with Mr. Brown’s disabilities. But he has told Damon that he loves his new apartment and neighborhood.

Mr. Brown is now eagerly awaiting the arrival of his daughter, who will join him in his New York apartment, something that could not have happened if he were still living in an SRO.
CIDNY is a trusted go-to source and resource for journalists on a variety of issues, including health care, housing, employment, transportation, voting, and more. Reporters often reach out to CIDNY to seek insight and first-person perspectives on issues relating to the disability community. We have worked on media stories with local, regional, state-wide, national, and even international audiences. CIDNY also maintains working relationships with graduate student journalism majors from schools such as CUNY and Columbia University, ensuring the next generation of journalists is aware of our work and the disability viewpoint. Between July 2022 and June 2023, we achieved a reach of over approximately 1.96 billion impressions through 138 media placements and digital communications on a variety of issues. In the mainstream press we were featured by ABC News, Associated Press, CBS News, Crain’s, Forbes, FOX 5 News, Huffington Post, LA Times, NBC News, NPR, USA Today and more; amNY, City Limits, News 12, NY Daily News, Queens Chronicle, Staten Island Advance, The City, and more; and bilingual press including Telemundo, Impacto Latin, and Public New Service. CIDNY also authors a monthly column in the disability-focused Able Newspaper. CIDNY has consistently garnered media coverage across online, print, television, radio, and digital media.

CIDNY maintains a robust and ever-growing digital presence across social media platforms, including Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, and emerging social media platforms. We also have a dedicated email list through which we engage consumers, advocates, and decision makers, as well as a monthly newsletter. This year CIDNY also had an extensive out-of-home advertising campaign.
CIDNY’s community education programming aims to enable people with disabilities to live independently by developing problem solving skills through various enrichment opportunities that lead to personal growth and sustainable living conditions.

This year, people with disabilities joined CIDNY for educational workshops on budgeting, debt, personal finances, civil rights, housing, and using services like Access-a-Ride. They were offered online and also recorded, so participants could review the material presented in the workshops and learn at their own pace.

We also collaborated with two NYC partners for:

**THE PEOPLE’S MONEY - IDEA GENERATION SESSIONS (CYCLE 2)**
On behalf of the NYC Civic Engagement Commissions (CEC), CIDNY hosted “The People’s Money” a series of participatory budgeting idea sessions. New Yorkers ages 11 and up, regardless of citizenship or incarceration status, were invited to help directly decide how $5 million of mayoral expense funding is to be spent. Residents had the opportunity to submit creative ideas and vote for winning projects.

**NUTRITION WORKSHOP SERIES**
CIDNY partnered with Stellar Farmers Markets to offer a series of free virtual nutrition workshops. Each workshop included an interactive nutrition activity led by a nutrition educator with tips for healthy eating and a delicious seasonal recipe demonstration led by a culinary educator.
ADVOCACY AND POLICY

CIDNY promotes an environment where people with disabilities are recognized and respected members of the community, and are active in advocating on issues that affect all of us. CIDNY advises public officials on ways to make public services work better, monitors public and private initiatives that serve people with disabilities, and offers constructive solutions to problems.

CIDNY educates state and local elected officials and other policymakers on issues that matter to people with disabilities in NYC. We participate in legislative advocacy days with people with disabilities who are part of our advocacy network and staff, provide budget testimony, and organize groups into coalitions that advocate on common concerns. We draft recommendations and testify on behalf of our coalitions. People with disabilities with whom we work come to legislative appointments and lead the teams.

Our policy work ensures that legislation that protects the civil rights of people with disabilities, from the Americans with Disabilities Act to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to the Olmstead Act and more, are enforced in our community. When advocacy and negotiation do not resolve an issue, we provide comprehensive research, testimony, and story collection to support litigation, as well as act as plaintiffs in cases that affect the rights of people with disabilities.

CONSUMER ACTION NETWORK (CAN)

CIDNY’s CAN is made up of people with disabilities and their allies who care about justice and equality for people with disabilities. Each of us brings our experience, our strengths, and our energy to monthly meetings where we plan activities, learn about disability issues, and practice advocacy skills.
ADVOCACY AND POLICY

ADVOCACY OUTCOMES:
As a result of CIDNY’s advocacy and that of its partners, the following were achieved:

- A State constitutional amendment that creates new protections against discrimination based on a person’s ethnicity, national origin, disability, and sex—including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive health care and autonomy, will be on the ballot in 2024.
- Legislation that would prevent medical debt by limiting and providing notice of facility fees passed both houses of the NYS legislature and was signed by Governor Hochul in December 2022.
- The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program received increased funding to serve more residents in nursing and adult care facilities.
- Community Health Advocates received increased funding to educate consumers about healthcare options and accessing affordable healthcare coverage.

CIDNY and its partners continue to actively advocate for:

- Additional NYS legislation protections to prevent medical debt re: liens and wage garnishment.
- Raising the benefit cap for short-term disability benefits for workers from $170/week (where it has been since 1989) to match the paid family leave cap of 67% of the average weekly wage. (New York’s Paid Family Leave Campaign.)
- NYS to achieve Full Pay4HomeCare —150% of the applicable minimum wage. We thought we had won a $2 increase above the applicable minimum wage that went into effect in October 2022, followed by an additional $1 increase in October 2023 for homecare workers. Unfortunately, the Governor’s proposal to increase the minimum wage for all workers erases these increases, as homecare workers will revert to the minimum wage as the wage increases, rather than retain an increase of $3 above the minimum wage as it increases. The Assembly rejected this. The Senate increased wages by $1 per hour in 2024 and 2025 and directed the Comptroller to ensure that rates are adequate.
- Repeal of the restrictions on access to home care that threaten the ability of people with disabilities to live in the community that were adopted in 2020, but not implemented due to the Public Health Emergency. The NYS Senate approved this. The Assembly did not.
- The NYS legislature to consider a bill for an Ombudsman program for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Landlords to be required to inform tenants of their rights to reasonable accommodations and/or modifications.
- NYC Access-a-Ride to stop requiring people with disabilities to be seen at MTA Assessment Centers to receive a determination of their eligibility.
- Equal access to online voting and absentee voting, to ensure that people who cannot use a paper ballot because they use assistive technology have access to online options.
- The Queens Borough Library system to make the newest branch of the library accessible to people with disabilities.

Additionally, CIDNY’s Executive Director participates in curriculum development for a nationwide wellness initiative to reduce social isolation for people with disabilities, to be used by Centers for Independent Living throughout the United States.
WHAT’S NEW AT CIDNY

EMPLOYMENT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

In May 2023, CIDNY instituted a new department to assist people who live with new or chronic disabilities, to prepare for, find, and maintain employment; enroll in higher education; or pursue their vocational aspirations.

Much new and exciting planning for programming and collaborations took place as the new Director was hired and got down to work. Intended new services for adults with physical, medical, mental health, learning, and/or developmental disabilities include:

- Advocacy: Education for consumers who are unfamiliar with reasonable accommodations, or the laws that protect people with disabilities, and that have been a barrier to employment.
- One-on-One Counseling and Coaching
- Evaluations, Assessments, and Screenings

Our ongoing Youth Transition Program became part of the new department. Designed for high school and college students with disabilities who attend New York City schools, the program provides guidance with all steps in the vocational process.

Students gain a better understanding of themselves and their disabilities, beginning with strengthening their sense of self, by teaching them how to self-advocate in class and in preparation for their IEP meetings. As students move closer to high school graduation, the focus shifts to helping students understand their unique obstacles and strategies for overcoming their barriers. College students in the program learn about disability rights and disability disclosure in the workplace, as well as reasonable accommodations in their academic settings.

Our employment services consumers learn about us at our presentations to NYC high school and college students, at career fairs, through referrals from calls made to CIDNY’s benefits and mental health counselors, and from our wide network of service collaborators throughout the five boroughs.
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

In the wake of COVID-19, CIDNY’s Wellness Calls initiative has provided our consumers with regular check-in calls from staff, reducing their social isolation and improving mental well-being and quality of life. These follow-up calls have supported consumers in creating plans to gain support with any challenges they may have faced.

Over the last year Wellness Counselors made 2,269 calls to 1,357 consumers.

This program was originally targeted to outreach to seniors, but we expanded it to reach out to all consumers past and present. We have assisted people with disabilities in reconnecting with the services and supports they need to remain safely in their communities. As needed, consumers received comprehensive evaluations and connections to appropriate community resources.

Our Wellness calls offered consumers a safe place to share the difficulties they were facing on a day-to-day basis. Our Counselors provided empathy and compassion to consumers in their times of need.

Consumers have told us that the conversations they have had during the wellness calls have saved their lives and provided hope when it was previously hard to find. The calls have helped build their self-confidence and encouraged them to find happiness and additional support through the implementation of coping skills and connections to resources at CIDNY and the community. Other consumers have shared that the calls have connected them with finding employment and receiving SNAP benefits they did not know they were eligible for. These calls have reminded consumers that someone cares for them and will consistently check in on them to ensure their well-being and not give up. Consumers have shared their gratitude for having someone there, consistently, for support when they were feeling alone.

CIDNY recognizes the gaps in mental health services throughout the communities we serve. These gaps are increasingly evident through the shared experiences of consumers from the wellness calls as well as the recognized systemic barriers to mental health care. CIDNY recognizes our consumers are often displaying signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and verbalized reluctance to seek mental health support due to stigma and judgment. Therefore, CIDNY is beginning to pilot a multifaceted Mental Health Service program with hopes of developing accessible mental health services within CIDNY in the future.
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, CONTINUED

In May of 2023, CIDNY hosted our first Wellness Fair. The event drew attention to CIDNY’s entry into the mental health space and provided an opportunity for consumers to learn about many aspects of wellness and how to incorporate wellness into their daily lives. CIDNY staff and many outside vendors staffed 20 tables to provide information on quality-of-life services as well as to discuss mental health and begin to break down stigma with ongoing conversations. A vaccine bus out front provided vaccines and PPE to attendees. We intend to hold more mental health and wellness events in the future, as well as yearly events to commemorate Mental Health Month in May.

As CIDNY begins to roll out the Mental Health Services program we are building a continuing education credit program and establishing foundational requirements throughout the course curriculum to educate mental health professionals about the world of disability. Our goal is to ensure that providers understand the barriers people with disabilities face in seeking mental health services, as well as the impact of intersecting marginalized identities.
CIDNY’S GLOBAL REACH

INTERNATIONAL VISITS
CIDNY’s advocacy, information and referral, and training needs to have a presence both nationally and internationally. Disability is a human phenomenon, and borders and oceans do not stop disability from occurring. It is imperative for CIDNY’s model to be a leading example for independence, inclusion, and resiliency for all people living with disability. Disability advocates from around the world regularly learn about CIDNY from our website, and contact our Executive Director for information and with requests for visits.

This year, CIDNY had the privilege of hosting disability-related international visitors from Australia, Germany, Canada, and an African delegation that included representatives from Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, and Zimbabwe. All of these international disability activists requested visits to CIDNY as part of their government-sponsored trips to New York City. They came to learn about our one-stop-shop services and programs, something most other places do not have, and take information on what works back to their home countries to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities living there.

Twenty-five percent of the United States’ population has a documented disability covered under the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments of 2008. Globally, there are one billion people living with a disability—approximately 15% of the world’s population. Most countries only utilize the United Nations recommended policies and procedures for people with disabilities. CIDNY shared with our visitors our belief in the need for all countries to adopt disability-related legislative policies and procedures to help improve living conditions for people with disabilities.

The international visitors expressed their excitement about coming to New York City and learning from us because of CIDNY’s very strong advocacy presence here and our wide scope of consumer-based programming.
If you don’t already know her, we are delighted for you to meet Delva Somers, one of CIDNY’s Mental Health Benefit Counselors. Delva’s warmth, empathy, and dedication to the people she serves is exemplary.

Delva became a natural caretaker at an early age, growing up in a rural part of Jamaica, in a family with many much older relatives, many of whom had disabilities. As a young woman Delva worked in a church-based clinic that served the local poor residents. Children with disabilities were among the patients, and one three-year-old blind boy especially caught her attention.

In that place and at that time the child’s family could not conceive of the child becoming a full, contributing member of society. But the doctor told Delva he thought there was hope for the child. Delva used her own money to take the child to the city, to a specialist, who, unfortunately, diminished her hopes. But she didn’t stop. There was one school for the blind on the whole island, in Kingston, and she was determined that this little boy be able to go there. So she started raising funds by hosting bingo parties and tea parties to pay for it.

Delva continued to work in medical facilities in Jamaica for over 30 years. After emigrating to America she started her first job at a hospital in New York. But her tenure was cut short when she was hit by a car as she crossed a street in her first ever snowstorm. Her long recovery cost her the job. She wanted to work but wasn’t getting hired because she lacked the required credentials. A friend brought her to a CAN meeting at CIDNY. Delva has a disability, but she saw that someone else at the meeting needed help, and Delva fed the person dinner. CIDNY staff asked her to become a volunteer, which she readily accepted.

When she became a paid employee at CIDNY, she worked first as a Peer Specialist, then worked her way to Reassurance Wellness Counselor, and is now a Mental Health Benefits Counselor. She works for her consumers at CIDNY with the same perseverance she has shown since her earliest days in Jamaica. Delva’s direct supervisor, Ann DeAngelis, says that “Delva’s continuous efforts to push through the hardest of cases is a testament to the heart she puts into her work every day.” Executive Director Dr. Sharon McLennon Wier agrees. “No consumer case is too arduous for Delva to address. She works with unwavering patience and grace.”

Delva believes that CIDNY is unique in the way we work with consumers. “We want to serve. We treat people as people. We see a person through the eyes of love. A lot of us have a disability, so we understand consumers’ needs.” Delva adds that while she is very appreciative and proud to highlighted for this report, she believes that every benefit counselor at CIDNY is special. “We all strive for excellence.”
OUR SUPPORTERS

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Funding from the following government agencies supports CIDNY’S projects:

United States Administration for Community Living
United States Department of Health and Human Services
United States Department of Justice

New York State Department of Education
New York State Department of Health
New York State Office for the Aging
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

New York City Civic Engagement Commission

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Donations from the following institutions help support CIDNY’S projects:

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Adam Stracher
DavidStrauss
Jordan Stumph
Isaac Syrop
Nikki Thomas
Joan Toglia
Kenan Turnacioglu
Sydell Tyson
Seth D Ullman
Phoebe Uman
David Vincent
Christopher Visco
Matthew Vitale
Mark Vogel
Cynthia Volack
Emily and Steven Wagalsh
Lindsay Wallace
Kasiem Walters
Kevin Warsh
Cathleen Waters
Sheila Weigert
Gary Wier
Britney Wilson
Shannon Winer
Avra Wing
Sid Wolinsky
Brandon Young
Derek Zasky
Erica Zelmanowicz
## CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THE DISABLED IN NEW YORK, INC.

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</th>
<th>TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2023</th>
<th>TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Contracts</td>
<td>$8,506,662</td>
<td>$8,016,402</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation and Institutional Grants</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$59,905</td>
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<td>Individual Contributions</td>
<td>$510,785</td>
<td>$707,894</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fee Income</td>
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<td>$225,894</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
<td>$35,768</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Kind Support</td>
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<td>$79,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrealized Loss on Investments</td>
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<td>($9,404)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets Released from Restrictions</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of Program Restrictions</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$9,265,079</td>
<td>$9,086,693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2023</th>
<th>TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>$7,670,839</td>
<td>$7,087,382</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORTING SERVICES:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
<td>$1,172,079</td>
<td>$1,179,856</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$95,037</td>
<td>$104,018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Supporting Services</td>
<td>$1,267,116</td>
<td>$1,283,874</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>$8,937,955</td>
<td>$8,371,256</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change In Net Assets</td>
<td>$327,123</td>
<td>$715,437</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets - Beginning of Year - As Reported</td>
<td>$4,162,713</td>
<td>$3,447,276</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior Period Adjustment</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$9,265,079</td>
<td>$9,086,693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For the year ended June 30, 2022 (with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2021). Audited financial statements are available upon request.*
# Financial Statement

## Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York, Inc.

### Statement of Financial Position

#### ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total AS of June 30, 2023</th>
<th>Total AS of June 30, 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents</td>
<td>$878,192</td>
<td>$1,264,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>$1,752,501</td>
<td>$1,120,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconditional Promises to Give</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Grants Receivable</td>
<td>$2,116,073</td>
<td>$2,148,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets</td>
<td>$24,680</td>
<td>$23,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term Operating Lease Right-Of-Use Assets</td>
<td>$498,929</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,274,125</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,561,633</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LONG-TERM ASSETS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Deposit</td>
<td>$162,265</td>
<td>$162,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets, Net</td>
<td>$552,018</td>
<td>$457,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Non-Current Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$714,283</strong></td>
<td><strong>$620,135</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,275,916</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,117,672</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total AS of June 30, 2023</th>
<th>Total AS of June 30, 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT LIABILITIES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses</td>
<td>$496,994</td>
<td>$414,004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Grant Advances</td>
<td>$311,275</td>
<td>$92,991</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paycheck Protection Program Loan</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$511,103</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short-Term Lease Liabilities</td>
<td>$457,065</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,265,334</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,018,098</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred rent</td>
<td>$95,105</td>
<td>$95,105</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-current liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,874,408</strong></td>
<td><strong>$95,105</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>$4,350,533</td>
<td>$4,027,880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily Restricted</td>
<td>$139,304</td>
<td>$134,833</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,489,837</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,162,713</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,629,579</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,275,916</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For the year ended June 30, 2022 (with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2021). Audited financial statements are available upon request.*
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