

**NONPROFIT
NEW YORK** | Policy

HEARING TESTIMONY TEMPLATE



APRIL 2021

Hearing Testimony Template

New legislation always has the potential to affect the nonprofit sector and its subsectors. Nonprofits are experts in their fields and testifying at hearings is an important method of offering that expertise to affect pending legislation. This template was designed to provide guidance on the basics around creating effective testimony for legislative hearings.

Content

1. [Template Hearing Testimony](#) (page 2)
2. [Sample Hearing Testimony](#) (page 3)

How to Use This Template

1. Download this file (as Microsoft Word)
2. Insert your own content in the template section, starting on page 2
 - a. If you have a website, share your testimony there for those who didn't attend the hearing!
 - b. If you are testifying for a New York City Council hearing, be sure to register your testimony [here](#).
 - c. If the hearing has a time limit for testimonies then practice reading your testimony to check if it falls in that time limit!
3. Use the sample testimony section as a reference, starting on page 3

Template Hearing Testimony: Insert your own content here

[INSERT LOGO]

[INSERT COMMITTEE NAME]
[INSERT PUBLIC HEARING NAME]
Support/Opposition for [INSERT RELEVANT LEGISLATION, CAUSE, OR REGULATION]

TO: [INSERT ADDRESSEE, USUALLY COMMITTEE CHAIR]

FROM: [INSERT YOUR NAME], [INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME]

DATE: [INSERT DATE]

Dear [INSERT NAME OF COMMITTEE CHAIR],

Paragraph 1: Introduction to your organization and the pertinent issue

- Explain how this affects your organization, your clients, or communities you serve.
- Clearly state the issue and your suggestions. Avoid jargon, use plain language.
- Personalize your testimony if possible; try to find people who have been personally affected by the issue to speak on it.

Paragraph 2: Provide solutions, recommendations, or critiques.

- When developing your recommendations, consider how this issue is currently addressed by law.

Paragraph 3: Provide supporting evidence

- This can also be a place to address points made by the opposition
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Paragraph 4: Provide closing statements

- Use this time to summarize your suggestions
- Thank the committee members for hearing your testimony

Sample Testimony: Use this section as reference

**NONPROFIT
NEW YORK**

**A relentless,
collective
force for good.**

**New York City Council Committee on Oversight and Investigations Meeting April 30, 2020
Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on Communities of Color**

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Ritchie Torres
From: Chai Jindasurat, Policy Director, Nonprofit New York
Date: April 30, 2020

Dear Councilmember Torres,

We appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Committee on Oversight on behalf of Nonprofit New York and our 1,500 nonprofit members. Thank you for your leadership to address the disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color in New York City. While we defer to public health experts on the social determinants of health and environmental drivers contributing to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color, we join in our city's concern and call for resources and attention to the fact that Black New Yorkers are twice as likely to die from COVID, and fatalities among Latinx New Yorkers are the second highest in the city.

One issue of concern fully in the power of the City Council to address is Council discretionary funding. We know the city is in a challenging financial position. We are advocating as strongly as we can with the New York Congressional Delegation for federal relief for New York's budget deficits. Even with federal aid, the City will have to find efficiencies in the budget. However **any cuts to City Council discretionary funding are an equity issue and will have a damaging impact on smaller organizations serving communities of color.** The nonprofit sector has a racial leadership gap, and minority-led organizations often struggle to compete for resources.¹ Grassroots organizations led by and serving communities of color often do not have the organizational capacity to engage in the onerous City agency RFP process.

¹ For a fuller discussion on the sector's diversity challenges, please see the appendix.

We stand with our partners in the nonprofit sector advocating against any cuts to discretionary funding. While the most recent guidance from the City Council to city agencies on April 24th is closer to the reassurance nonprofits seek, the requirements and guidance for **reimbursement for work done after March 22** have us concerned as most of the organizations receiving discretionary contracts are deep rooted in communities and have shifted their services to continue to serve community members and should not experience retroactive cuts.

But the communities most impacted by COVID-19 are the communities heavily reliant on discretionary funding, which only accounts for **0.42%** of the city budget. **Discretionary funding is how small organizations closest to New Yorkers and organizations led by people of color get access to public funding.** Instead of cutting discretionary funding, we call on the city to find more impactful efficiencies, while maintaining a low-cost budget line with huge impact for under-served communities. We also support what other nonprofits are calling for: restricted funding to be made general operating support, eliminating the hearings requirement for FY20 contract registration, no retroactive cuts, and at least two weeks planning time if a program must end. These concrete actions the Council can take will support community based organizations led by and serving those most impacted by COVID-19.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chai Jindasurat". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chai" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Jindasurat".

Chai Jindasurat
Policy Director