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FY26 Aging Preliminary Budget Hearing Testimony to the New York City Council

FY 2027 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Aging Council Member Susan Zhuang, Chair

March 12, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Council,

My name is Lydia Ortiz Weiss, and I am here to share the importance of programs that provide case management services and EISEP.

A few years ago, I had knee replacement surgery on both knees. My recovery was difficult. For nearly two years, I was homebound and mostly confined to my bed. Simple daily tasks, like getting dressed, preparing meals, and even moving around my home, became overwhelming. I felt isolated, vulnerable, and unsure if I would ever be able to gain some of my mobility back.

EISEP became my lifeline. Their support allowed me to meet my daily needs and remain safely in my home while I regained some of my mobility. Without it, I don't know if I could have stayed in my home at all.

Even more vital was the support of my case management service. My case manager became my advocate, guiding me to resources I desperately needed:

- An air conditioner during extreme heat
- Legal help to protect my home when threatened with foreclosure
- Assistive devices to ensure my safety in and out of my home
- Therapy to cope with grief after losing multiple loved ones during the global pandemic
- Companionship services that reminded me I was not alone

These services didn't just meet my needs; they gave me hope, stability, and the reassurance that someone cared.

Programs like EISEP and case management are not just services; they are lifelines. They help people endure the hardest times with dignity, safety, and support.

As our community grows, the need for these programs will only increase.

I am deeply grateful for the care that continue to receive, and I urge the city to continue investing in these programs so that others can experience the same life-changing support that made all the difference for me. Because of the support I received I am now able to stand here today and give this public testimony.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story.