Dear Friends,

CAMBA has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 response since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Our staff and programs have provided vital services to New Yorkers especially impacted by the health and economic consequences of the virus. Many of our clients needed extra care and support, including: seniors in our affordable and supportive housing; individuals and families in our 11 homeless shelters; clients living with HIV/AIDS and other immune-compromising diseases and pre-existing medical conditions; and low-income workers who were among those most likely to lose their jobs during the crisis.

By mid-March, we began adapting every facet of our operations to the capsizing effects of COVID-19. Once misnamed a great equalizer, this virus proved to underscore and exacerbate inequities in New York City unlike anything we have seen in our 44 years of service. As the days of our essential and 24/7 staff became increasingly arduous and challenging during the health crisis, and the rest of our agency was trying to adjust to the systems overhaul needed for remote program and administrative operations, the community demand for CAMBA services kept rising. Our programs designed to respond to urgent food and housing insecurities saw an almost 400% increase in demand. Meanwhile, our staff and clients whose loved ones contracted COVID-19 or who were themselves essential workers — especially healthcare workers — suffered immeasurable social and emotional trauma. Even in the wake of high COVID transmission rates, we continued dealing with the health crisis, unemployment, and hunger in our communities.

On May 25, the murder of George Floyd turned our nation upside down once more. The virus had already disproportionately impacted New Yorkers of color, and the killing of Mr. Floyd put an even more glaring light on systemic racism and social injustice. For our staff — particularly our youth development staff members as they continued to guide and support youth and teens reeling from these events — the challenge was immense. We also saw a spike in gun violence in the historically marginalized and low-income communities of color that has not been seen since the mid-90’s.

And yet, during some of the darkest moments of this year, CAMBA staff persevered. The extreme dedication of staff who showed up in-person every day without respite — at our shelters and residential facilities, our food pantry, and our violence prevention programs — are nothing short of heroic. With incredible resilience, commitment, and creativity, we delivered our necessary services to the more than 65,000 New Yorkers who rely on us every year.

We could not have met the challenges of COVID without the support of our individual and institutional funders. Thank you on behalf of the thousands of men, women, children and families you have helped through the emotional and economic turmoil of the past year.

Joanne M. Oplustil  
President/CEO  
CAMBA/CAMBA Housing Ventures

Katherine O’Neill  
Chairwoman  
CAMBA
EMERGENCY FOOD
As COVID Increased, So Did Hunger

CAMBA’s Beyond Hunger Emergency Food Pantry has provided extraordinary service to our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As a benchmark, in 2019, the Pantry distributed nutritionally balanced food to a monthly average of 4,600 people.

During the height of the pandemic, the average number served increased by 400%, reaching over 18,000 people, many of whom were seeking emergency food and support services for the first time in their lives.

CAMBA operates two food pantries, which were among the few Brooklyn food pantries that remained open throughout the pandemic, putting us at constant risk of exhausting our increased allocation from The Food Bank for New York City and other sources. When additional funding was exhausted, we became more reliant on donated food items and risked jeopardizing our ability to provide more robust food packages to our clients. Fortunately, both individual and institutional donors stepped up to close the gap. To fully stock the pantry, we spent approximately $20,000 each month to meet the increased need.

In addition to emergency food, we connected pantry clients to other services and resources. Through CAMBA’s 170 programs and more than 200 external partnerships, we connected clients to free legal services; rental and utility arrears assistance, as well as other forms of financial assistance; and connection to maternal, infant, and child health as well as mental health programs. By serving the full needs of community members who seek our support, we were able to help people move beyond their food insecurity and alleviate their multi-faceted and changing needs during this crisis. Today, we continue to serve approximately 14,000 individuals per month, which is triple the amount we served pre-pandemic.
In March 2020, with the executive orders of the Mayor and Governor, CAMBA’s essential workers remained on the front lines for the safety and care of our 762 single adults and 553 families living in shelter. With ever-changing protocols and requirements, the CAMBA team quickly adapted daily operations while simultaneously monitoring clients and staff for potential COVID-19 infections. We created an internal COVID response team to follow up with clients and staff who may have been in contact with the suspected or confirmed case, and used professional cleaning services to disinfect the relevant areas. CAMBA rapidly complied with the face covering and social distancing mandates within all facilities by supplying PPE and creating social distancing and room capacity signage at all sites.

CAMBA was amongst the first providers to ensure remote learning in family shelters.

As the NYC public schools turned to remote learning, the Department of Education ensured that there was a plan for students living in temporary housing. However, it became apparent that even with the internal boosting for Wi-Fi provided with the devices, the signals were not strong enough without a Wi-Fi network in our shelter buildings. This lack of technology widened existing inequities for our children. Private support from the New York Community Trust, Robin Hood Foundation and individual donors provided the funds to purchase hardware, complete wifi installation and cover monthly internet fees. All five existing CAMBA family shelters were ready to go with Wi-Fi for our families for the start of the September 2020 school year with the newly opened Bronx shelter online by December 2020. The NYC Department of Homeless Services has been working with all shelter providers to provide continuing support of these efforts.

Homelessness Prevention

CAMBA’s HomeBase and CAMBA Legal Services programs prevented 4,538 at-risk households from becoming homeless in 2020.

Since 2004, CAMBA has been working to prevent homelessness in Brooklyn and Staten Island through its NYC-funded HomeBase program. In 2020, 99% of high-risk households served by CAMBA HomeBase remained stably housed, representing thousands of diversions from the city shelter system.

We identify families and individuals who are most at risk of presenting themselves to the City’s shelter system and provide them with the solutions-oriented case management services needed to remain stably housed without entering or re-entering emergency shelter. We offer benefit advocacy on behalf of clients, tenant’s rights education, tender checks, and attend lease signings. HomeBase pivoted fully to remote operations in March 2020 including redesigning all client workshops and curricula to accommodate Zoom classrooms. At the height of the pandemic, we managed a 600% increase in phone referrals.

In addition to eviction prevention, CAMBA Legal Services provides free, high-quality legal representation and advice to New Yorkers facing eviction or foreclosure, people fighting high consumer debt, immigrants and refugees seeking U.S. residency and victims of domestic violence. CAMBA serves more than 4,500 low-income people each year, working to protect their rights and promote access to justice in the civil legal system and beyond. CAMBA’s attorneys also connect clients to our programs and services, meeting their needs beyond legal aid.
Joining the Vaccination Initiative
CAMBA’s thirteen Community Centers are typically hubs of activity and support for students and families throughout Brooklyn. When the City began re-opening, we launched a comprehensive PPE distribution campaign at our Cornerstone Centers. Over 10,000 masks were distributed in a single day. In mid-January, Governor Cuomo requested CAMBA’s Cornerstone Center located in the NYCHA Stuyvesant Gardens housing development be used as a vaccination site for seniors. Soon after we welcomed seniors to our Pink Houses, Boulevard and Sheepshead Bay Cornerstone Community Centers for vaccinations.

Overall, more than 1,000 seniors were vaccinated at CAMBA Community Centers in January/February 2021 as part of the first NYC vaccine initiatives.

Supportive Housing
On March 17, 2020, CAMBA’s Brooklyn and Staten Island Supportive Housing Social Services Department immediately ceased in-person and in-office services. Seventy-three staff affecting a total of 722 units of housing had to go remote. Within 24 hours, our Social Services staff had to gather emergency contact numbers for both staff and clients, and providers’ contact names and numbers; ensure a 30-day supply of medication was available and would be delivered to tenants; that the food and water supply was adequate, cleaning supplies were distributed, and security staff was alerted to all vulnerable clients needing additional wellness checks during this time.

Staff immediately went to a daily telephone check-in model for case management counseling, referrals, connection to telehealth services, wellness checks, and eventually moving on to virtual support and recreation groups, as well as reconnecting clients to Home and Community Based Services.

By May 2020, Social Services staff began conducting emergency wellness checks for those vulnerable clients that were not reachable on occasion throughout the week. All safety measures were adhered to and both clients and staff were provided with necessary PPE equipment and COVID Safety Instructions.
After the transition to online programming, CAMBA after-school staff created and posted 567 lessons in our virtual classrooms for our participants to engage in. Lesson topics included literacy, STEM, creative arts, recreation, and life skills. For literacy activities, our Education Specialist and Literacy Coordinators trained program staff to use Zoom software to facilitate interactive and pre-recorded read-alouds with K-3 students. All staff paused to ask reflection questions before, during, and after reading. In STEM, staff led experiments including making eggs and other objects sink or float. Creative arts included cooking, arts, crafts, and movement activities. For recreation, our instructors led yoga and dance activities. Our life skills activities included daily affirmations, mindfulness breathing exercises and community building games and activities.

Our participants logged 3,600 academic hours and engagements with our virtual content through the academic year ending in June.

**Transitioning from High School Graduation to College or Career**

During Spring 2020, at the height of the pandemic, we served 2,371 high school students in eleven schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan with 856 seniors graduating with their high school diploma.

To meet these students needs, we quickly transitioned to fully virtual services in March with a focus on ensuring that participants were set up for online learning, supporting students with finalizing summer enrichment opportunities, weekly college readiness information and maintaining strong relationships with each participant. We created a Google classroom that included lesson plans and activities to support career and college readiness. We also offered support on SAT Prep through Khan Academy and resources to prepare students for the college application process.

Staff facilitated weekly icebreakers to check in with students, and weekly workshops consisted of game nights, healthy relationship workshops, social-emotional check-ins, virtual college tours, virtual museum tours, virtual trips, and a virtual overnight trip where the students boarded a virtual coach bus and visited two colleges and a historical museum. Participants were offered one-on-one tutoring in all subjects via Zoom to ensure they stayed on track with their academic goals.

Program staff engaged 268 students in a variety of highly-rated remote internship projects, with the majority of program graduates gaining employment or entering post-secondary education.
ADULT EDUCATION & SMALL BUSINESS SERVICE SUPPORT

CAMBA staff has been helping clients stabilize and prepare for a post-COVID world through Adult Education, Workforce Development and Small Business Services. CAMBA piloted the ‘English to Work’ Program to provide adult learners with free English language instruction and concurrent job training in partnership with Kingsborough Community College. We launched the program based on a student survey that showed 65% of our adult learners are unemployed and the majority survive on an income of less than $10,000 per year. Most lack a high school diploma and are not eligible for workforce development programs; those who do qualify often struggle to succeed because of insufficient English-language skills. Participants simultaneously improve their English skills and earn a New York City-issued Food Protection Certificate. In the past two years, we have helped almost 400 Adult Learners take the next step on their educational and career journey.

When COVID-19 hit, the Education Center fully transitioned to remote learning, and our entire adult education staff worked tirelessly to move our services online. Our classes are now offered at multiple time slots daily, five days a week. We created a full online platform accessible in multiple languages, and we worked with each individual student to connect them to the classes through a personal computer, smartphone, or tablet.

Since the program launch, 73% of enrolled “English to Work” students persisted in the program to course completion with 99% either advancing with an ‘Education Functioning Level’ or earning their training credential.
The City called on partners such as CAMBA’s BIVO team (Brownsville In Violence Out) to help keep communities calm, encourage social distancing at funerals, distribute PPE, and deter looting and destruction during the rallies and protests that erupted in the face of the George Floyd murder and subsequent killings.

As the City experienced the drop in COVID cases, infection rates and fatalities, and as NYC slowly loosened restrictions, there was a spasm of gun violence citywide in late June/early July. With many plausible explanations as to why this was happening – unemployment due to the pandemic, closure of community centers and other programs, released individuals settling old scores and the general fear—the bottom line was far too much death and injury.

At the close of 2020, in an effort to bring the community together and find solutions to reduce the violence, NYPD’s 73rd Precinct partnered with BIVO and other community groups to organize a ‘Block Takeover’ from December 8-12. Local organizations offered information on job opportunities, education, and housing, and the police withdrew from their usual posts within the two block-radius of the takeover. Building community relationships amongst neighbors and providing struggling families with needed resources is a proven method to reducing stress, discord, and violence. The pilot, known as The Brownsville Safety Alliance, was considered a success by all, including the community, the 73rd Precinct, and City Hall.

In March, CAMBA’s Team introduced the Cure Violence BIVO Mobile Unit, making the BIVO team more accessible. The team can now respond to incidents faster and provide conflict resolution and mediation services to residents that have suffered trauma caused by gun violence. BIVO’s program director, assistant director, violence interrupters, and outreach workers canvass the community in partnership with the 73rd Precinct in the BIVO mobile unit. Our goal is not only to respond to incidents when they occur, but also to provide preventive services, share information, and offer therapeutic support to help those dealing with stress and loss.

The BIVO Team is committed to expanding the positive impact of the Cure Violence program with the mobile unit and working together with the community to end gun violence.
THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

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NYS Office of Court Administration
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NYS Office of Victim Services
2020 FINANCIALS

Annual Revenue, Fiscal Year 2020

- Government Grants: 89%
- Developers’ Fees: 1%
- Contributions & Other Private Grants: 7%
- Program Reimbursement, Rental Income & Developer Fee: 3%
- Interest & Dividends: 0%
- Rental Income: 0%
- Net Realized & Unrealized Gain On Marketable Securities: 0%

Expenses by Program Area, Fiscal Year 2020

- Housing Services: 63%
- Health Services: 4%
- Family Support Services: 3%
- Legal Services: 4%
- Education & Youth Development: 11%
- Economic Development: 1%
- Management & General Operating: 13%
- Development: 1%
While 2020 was one of the most challenging years CAMBA has experienced, our culture of caring and persistence has helped thousands of New Yorkers through these difficult times.

We know it will be a slow journey back to normalcy and there are many more challenges ahead. We greatly appreciate the support of our partners.

On behalf of CAMBA’s Board of Directors and Leadership, thank you for all you have done to help communities in dire need of support.

You have both saved and stabilized lives.

To donate, please visit camba.org/donate