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**Testimony from Selfhelp Community Services**  
New York City Council  
September 30, 2022  
Resources and Services for Newly Arrived Asylum Seekers  
Submitted by: Katie Foley

Thank you to the NYC Council for holding a timely hearing on such an important topic.

Selfhelp Community Services is a non-profit serving 25,000 older and vulnerable adults each year through home health care, affordable housing, and skilled social services while remaining the largest provider of comprehensive services to Holocaust survivors in North America.

Our services are extensive and include: Citywide specialized programs for Holocaust Survivors; fifteen affordable senior housing residences; four Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) programs; three intensive case management programs; five senior centers including one of New York City's first Innovative Senior Centers; home health care; the Virtual Senior Center; court-appointed guardianship; the Selfhelp Alzheimer's Resource Program (SHARP); and New York Connects in Queens.

We urge the relevant government agencies to grant legal work authorization to all those coming to NYC trying to build a new life in NYC. Selfhelp is ready, willing, and able to provide free job training and placement to anyone legally able to work.

Since our founding, 85 years ago, Selfhelp has been providing job training and placement for refugees and immigrants coming to NYC. In 1936 it was for Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe. Today it is for immigrants from all over the world. During WWII, Selfhelp focused on helping European refugees find work, housing, and community. Selfhelp's caregiver job training programs in the 1930s and 1940s led to the formation of Selfhelp's Homemaker and Home Nursing programs, the precursors of today's home care aide training program.

Older and vulnerable New Yorkers rely on well-trained and caring home care aides and there is a shortage of home care aides in New York City. Becoming a home care aide is meaningful

work that is available in all boroughs and in many languages. Each home care case is unique which offers flexibility for people who want to build their own schedule with part-time or full-time hours.

In 8 days, someone can train to become a Personal Care Aide. With new Personal Care Aide and Home Health Aide classes offered every month, we want to be able to bring asylum seekers into our home care aide training classes (offered in English, Spanish, and Russian). Selfhelp provides financial support to cover the costs of the physical exam and transportation as well as support navigating the certification process. Jobs are available immediately upon successful completion of training and certification.

We urge the relevant government agencies to do their part in granting work authorization for all those who are ready to work. We are proud to be continuing a legacy of 85 years of job training and placement for those fleeing their home countries looking for a better life for their families.

**Testimony submitted by:**

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Selfhelp Community Services