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Office of the Nassau County Comptroller
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Comptroller's Non-Profit Steering Committee Holds First Meeting

Subject-matter-expert led group will provide feedback and suggest improvements on county/ non-profit partnerships

Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman yesterday kicked off the first meeting of the Comptroller's Office new Non-Profit Steering Committee, leading a discussion on how the county can improve how it does business with the non-profit organizations that deliver vital services to the community.

The formation of this committee is the latest effort put forward by the Office of the Nassau County Comptroller to support nonprofits in addressing the needs of the communities they serve. It has already begun the process of enacting critical streamlining efforts to cut back on red tape and appointed a dedicated non-profit liaison to ensure these organizations have a single point of contact within the Comptroller's Office. Schnirman also revamped the annual Comptroller's High School Challenge to focus more on civic innovation within the social entrepreneurship sector so that students can get experience developing ideas for this area of the economy.

"We have heard the frustrations from non-profit leaders that Nassau County's outdated methods of collecting information, executing contracts, and processing claims are hurting their ability to work efficiently and effectively," Schnirman said, noting that their issues matched findings his administration had uncovered during its first five months in office. "Our team at the Comptroller's Office is hard at work making improvements, and now this steering committee will provide detailed insight into how we can strengthen our partnerships with these organizations. We are taking the next smart step toward streamlining public-private partnerships and empowering organizations, going beyond just contracts and claims to address expansive issues."

The steering committee has begun with eight members, all of whom hold leadership positions in local non-profit organizations. The committee pledged to work with the Comptroller's Office on addressing issues that can be fixed in the short term while also setting priorities for the future.

"Non-profit organizations have the ability to make tremendous impacts at the community level, and it is crucial that we are able to work seamlessly with Nassau County to deliver vital services," Rebecca Sanin, CEO of the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island said. "We are pleased to partner with the Comptroller to ensure that the needs of the health and human services sector are prioritized as part of his bold reform efforts and look forward to sharing our point of view with stakeholders throughout Nassau County."

During the meeting, members of the committee described how the county's inefficient practices in the past have hurt their bottom line. Several members of the committee noted their organizations have had to pay tens of thousands of dollars in interest payments on loans as they wait for payment

from the county for the services they provide. They also noted contracts are processed differently across the county's different departments. The paperwork requirements are so strenuous that vouchers can take up to eight hours of staff time to complete, compared to just minutes for other municipalities.

“Organizations like ours are making a real difference for the youth community dealing with chemical dependency and substance abuse issues, and every bit of support we receive from the county whether it be financial or institutional pays dividends,” said Dr. Joe Smith, executive director of Long Beach Reach. “We want to be partners in the progress Nassau County is making, and this committee will help ensure those goals can be met.”

The steering committee will also be playing a leading role in planning the Comptroller's Office new Non-Profit Roundtable event, which is being held at Nassau Community College on June 5. At that event, dozens of Nassau County non-profit organizations will gather for a day-long series of targeted discussions on the state of the local non-profit sector. Organizations interested in participating in the roundtable event should contact the Office of the Nassau County Comptroller Non-Profit Liaison Erika Hill at ehill@nassaucountyny.gov.

The inaugural members of the Nassau County Non-Profit Steering Committee are:

1. Rebecca Sanin, Health & Welfare Council
2. Jeff Reynolds, Family and Children's Association
3. Theresa Regnante, United Way of Long Island
4. Cindy Scott, The Safe Center
5. Joe Smith, Long Beach Reach
6. Jacob Dixon, Choice For All
7. Colleen Merlo, Long Island Against Domestic Violence
8. Gladys Serrano, Hispanic Counseling Center