

HRA Clients to Find Work as MTA Electrician Helpers

HRA's Employment Services program recently began an effort to find qualified HRA clients and train them to work as MTA electrician helpers. Cash assistance and food stamp clients with the right qualifications will be referred to the program, along with unemployed noncustodial parents referred by the Office of Child Support Enforcement. The MTA plans to fill over 200 electrician helper positions through HRA, and will hire clients as soon as they complete the training. Electrician helpers, who inspect, maintain and repair electric and diesel/electric trains, make a much higher wage than most entry-level positions available to clients, and receive good benefits. "This would give our clients stability and a path to self-sufficiency," said Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Employment Services Ray Singleton.

The first training courses began October 5 at Berk Trade and Hostos Community College. Employment Services looked for clients who had some basic experience with electrical work, as custodians or construction workers, for example. "We looked for people who had skills that would make them successful as electrician helpers," said Mr. Singleton. There are plans to train clients for more than just the MTA positions, as well – customized electrical training will allow clients to compete for jobs at Con Edison and other places as well. "This is an exciting program," said Mr. Singleton. "The MTA is glad to work with government and local colleges to fill these jobs."