



## HRA Restructures its Food Stamp Offices to Achieve New Possibilities

Food Stamps are an important tool in combating poverty and helping low-income New Yorkers remain self-sufficient. HRA has partnered with other City agencies to expand outreach to eligible families and individuals. Since the beginning of the Bloomberg Administration, the number of New Yorkers supported by food stamps to remain independent who do not receive welfare or SSI has increased by approximately 136 percent.

Now to achieve the means of improving the provision of food stamps to consumers, HRA is uniting its non-PA food stamp operations managed by FIA with its food stamp operations managed by MICSA. The new Food Stamp Office will focus solely on food stamp services and will adopt an administrative structure distinct from that of the job centers and MICSA offices.

"We want to reorganize the workflow to make it is easier for both clients and staff," Jean Coyle, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of the Food Stamp Office said. "We are bringing together staff with diverse backgrounds in HRA and we will use what we learned on different tracks to broaden horizons."

The Food Stamp Office will develop its service plan through a process of gathering input and inclusive discussion. Information on innovations to service can be expected in early fall.

Mrs. Coyle was previously FIA's Bronx Regional Manager for nine years and has had extensive food stamp experience. Brenda Hannah, who oversaw the design and implementation of the Food Stamp Paperless Office, has been appointed Executive Regional Manager. The Office will report through FIA to Executive Deputy Commissioner Seth Diamond.

## Medicaid Reception Model Office Opens by Shannen Fish

The appearance of administrative centers is not what makes HRA an example for other social service agencies around the nation: it is the hardworking staff and their continued success. But, a beautiful and well-designed workplace facilitates the employees' efforts, providing the environment and tools to offer the best possible customer service.

On July 11, HRA celebrated the opening of MICSA's Medicaid Reception model office with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Addressing MICSA staff and invited guests, Commissioner Doar stated that one day, he hopes all HRA offices will emulate the attractiveness of the model office. "I want the people who work in HRA to have facilities that are comfortable, professional, clean, and that are conducive to good work. We are going to work on it little by little, everyday, and hopefully make great progress," said Commissioner Doar.



Much to celebrate as the ribbon is cut.

Prior to the expansion, the former office was incapable of allocating the approximately 400 NYC residents that are served daily. Medicaid Reception is now equipped with 19 service windows, a state-of-the-art routing system, kiosks to assist clients, and high-tech televisions for those to watch while they are waiting for service. And most importantly, the staff now utilizes a revised work flow to deal with clients in the most efficient manner possible.

But beyond the freshly painted walls and comfortable waiting area, there is a group of workers who make the atmosphere as pleasant as it is. "We are so proud of our Medicaid staff, for the way they work, and for the way they have re-imagined their work," stated Medical Insurance and Community Services Administration Executive Deputy Commissioner Mary Harper. "And we are so happy that this facility so aptly reflects your efforts."

Patrons and staff are extremely pleased with the finished result. The Medicaid Reception model office is located at 340A West 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

## HRA Program Updates

### HRA Mobile Teams Outreach to Shelter Clients

In July, HRA mobile teams began visiting the homeless shelters to assist residents in self-sufficiency planning and employment activity on-site. The teams discuss FIA application, employment services, child support and eligibility. Barriers to employment or unemployment and homelessness must be overcome together to achieve self-sufficiency and sustainable results. HRA and the Department of Homeless Services are collaborating on initiatives to help shelter families meet these challenges.

### OCSE Presents Special Events for Child Support Month

August is National Child Support Month and starting this month, OCSE is preparing a calendar of upcoming events. Some of these are educational, designed to help parents with child support issues; others are special entertainment opportunity for low income parents and their children to enjoy together. On August 25, low-income families who meet their child support obligations will be treated to a day at Astroland, in Coney Island. A forum for community-based service providers is being scheduled, as well as child support workshops for parents. Contact OCSE outreach at (212) 487-5880 for dates and further information.

### 4,000 HRA Staff Volunteer for NYC Coastal Storm Response Team

NYC's Office of Emergency Management developed a citywide preparedness plan in the event of hurricane or storm emergencies and charged City agencies to recruit volunteers to staff 65 evacuation centers and over 500 shelters throughout the city. With the strong support of Commissioner Doar in raising awareness, 4,000 HRA staff have enrolled so far and are in the process of completing one of three levels of training. HRA's Crisis and Disaster Unit and Management Information Systems have coordinated the process. Everyone associated with the preparedness plan has recognized HRA for our great response and expressed their gratitude. One thousand volunteers are still needed. Please sign up on the homepage of HRA's Intranet or by calling 212-331-4521.

### HRA Perspective Monthly Bulletin

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## Work Advantage Job Fair for Shelter Residents Gives Homeless New Yorkers Special Support

### Event Calendar

#### 6TH ANNUAL COMMISSIONER'S FORUM

Commissioner Doar will hold HRA's annual staff forum on September 5, 6 and 7. Save the dates, prepare your questions and stay tuned for further details.

#### HRA BLOOD DRIVES

NYC's blood supply is once again at a critical shortage level. Please donate blood through HRA in August.

#### DONATE BLOOD AT THESE HRA LOCATIONS IN JULY:

**Friday, August 24, 2007**, Investigation Revenue & Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Eligibility Verification, Busmobile, 320 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM. To make an appointment, call Tracey Bruno at (718) 473-8234.

#### SUMMER FUN

*The New York City Guide to Summer Fun 2007* is your day-by-day guide to exciting and enriching activities for children and families that are taking place in all the boroughs and are free or low-cost. Published by the Department of Youth and Community Services, *NYC Summer Fun* can be viewed on their website: [nyc.gov/dydc](http://nyc.gov/dydc)

#### SUGGESTED READINGS:

##### Selected reading on marriage, fatherhood and family issues:

*The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*, by Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox.



*Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*, by Kathryn Edin.

*Just Living Together: Implications of Cohabitation on Families, Children, and Social Policy*, edited by Alan Booth, Ann C. Crouter.

Visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website for information on the Healthy Marriage Initiative:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage>

and Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Initiative

<http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml>

Search the McMillan Library from your desktop: <http://hrawebbackup.hra.nycnet/hralib/default.asp>



HRA held the Work Advantage Job Fair focusing on bringing job opportunities to homeless New Yorkers at the Park Sheraton Hotel on July 31 in collaboration with the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). The event involved many long months of work and planning on the part of HRA Employment Services and its partners to prepare participants to get the maximum benefit from this opportunity and simultaneously to expand the pool of participating employers in the private and public sectors.

As the job fair opened, Commissioner Doar, Department of Homeless Services Commissioner Robert Hess and FIA's Executive

Deputy Commissioner Seth Diamond welcomed the participating employers. In speaking, Commissioner Doar praised FIA staff under Executive Deputy Commissioner Diamond and its partners for their effective policy of "not only helping people get jobs but staying with them once they have them, so that they remain independent and move forward." He expressed his gratitude to employers for investing in HRA participants. "Over one million people have left public assistance. This group who is now coming in will do it again. I thank you for having faith in them," he said.

The Work Advantage Job Fair was one of HRA's largest job fairs. Over 2,000 job applicants attended. They were able to connect with 66 employers from the private and public sectors, as well as with recruiters. The range of employment opportunities was inclusive. One of several new employment programs that drew job applicants was the Non-traditional Employment Initiative for Women, which prepares candidates for employment in the construction trades.

"Job seekers were gratified with the attention they received from employers and recruiters," Mark Glickson, Regional Manager of FIA's Housing and Homeless Services said, "It also filled staff with a sense of pride to see everyone dressed and eager to get work."

With the fair now over, employment counselors will work further with participants, incorporating their feedback from the job fair and connecting their job search with the opportunity to secure permanent housing through the Work Advantage program.

Read more about the Work Advantage job fair in next month's *Perspective* and about the partnerships and new initiatives HRA has been developing to assist clients in entering and moving forward in the workforce.

## CJPP Helps Work Advantage Job Seekers Gain Professional Edge by Mara Adelman

In preparation for the Work Advantage Job Fair, HRA's Employment Services Central Job Preparation Program (CJPP) held unique professional workshops for shelter residents looking to enter today's competitive work force. In addition to providing guidance and support, the Department of Homeless Services offered transportation for participants to Employment Services headquarters at 109 E. 16<sup>th</sup> Street, where the informational workshops were held.

Focusing on matters concerning professionalism in speech, attire, and appearance, the CJPP helps job seekers prepare not only for the job fair, but also for the competitive professional arena. Here, participants have the opportunity to speak with CJPP staff, as well as their peers, regarding the various hurdles they must overcome in choosing a career path, obtaining a job, and balancing family and professional life. The workshops also include mock interview activities that showcase appropriate behavior when interviewing with a potential employer.

Employment Services has also teamed up with community-based organizations to provide participants with a strong support system. One agency, NY Cares, conducts weekly clinics centered upon one's entry into today's workforce. Services range from writing a resume to mock interviews, allowing individuals to leave the two-hour workshop with an increased understanding concerning the job search process.

To complement one's resume, practiced interview skills, and enhanced professional demeanor, Employment Services makes appointments for participants in need of professional attire with another of its partners, The Bottomless Closet, where participants can find the right apparel to wear "on their big day."

Workshop participants have the ability to exercise their newfound skills at the Work Advantage Job Fair, applying the guidance of CJPP as they look to make an impact on today's workforce.



Personalized job fair preparation with CJPP director Marcia Wilson