

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL
SERVICE AND LABOR

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Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Start: 10:10 AM

Recess: 11:23 AM

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - 8th Floor
Hearing Room 1

B E F O R E: Hon. Shirley Aldebol, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Tiffany L. Cabán
James F. Gennaro
Ty Hankerson
Crystal Hudson
Frank Morano
Mercedes Narcisse

A P P E A R A N C E S

Yume Kitasei,
Commissioner for the Department of Citywide
Administrative Services (DCAS)

Katrina Porter,
Deputy Commissioner of the Human Capital Division
for the Department of Citywide Administrative
Services (DCAS)

Daniel Pollak,
First Deputy Commissioner with the Office of
Labor Relations (OLR)

Henry Garrido,
Executive Director of District Council 37

Gloria Middleton,
President of CWA Local 1180

Robin Blair-Batte
Secretary-Treasurer of CWA Local 1180

Gregory J. Morris,
CEO of NYC Employment and Training Coalition
(NYCETC)

1 COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR 3

2 SERGEANT POLITE: Testing, one, two, one, two.

3 Today's date is April 14, 2026. Today's hearing is for
4 the Committee on Civil Service and Labor. Being
5 recorded in HR 1 by Keith Polite.

6 (REPEATING) Testing, one, two, one, two.

7 Today's date is April 14, 2026. Today's hearing is
8 for the Committee on Civil Service and Labor. Being
9 recorded in HR 1 by Keith Polite.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and
11 welcome to the New York City Council Committee on
12 Civil Service and Labor. Please place your phone on
13 silent or vibrating mode. Do not approach the dais at
14 any time during this hearing.

15 Chair, we are ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Good morning, and
17 welcome to today's hearing of the New York City
18 Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor. I am
19 Council Member Shirley Aldebol, Chair of this
20 committee. Today, we will be discussing: *Hiring*
21 *Strategies for the New Mayoral Administration*, and
Rebuilding the Municipal Workforce after several
years of continued vacancies in civil service.

As a city of over 8.5 million residents
and a primary global tourist destination, New York

City relies heavily on its dedicated municipal workforce to keep operations running smoothly. The civil service encompasses a vast range of careers, from sanitation workers to teachers to hospital workers to safety agents, all of whom dedicate their lives to contributing to the City. Yet despite the essential functions that municipal agencies are designated to perform, the City has been facing persistent vacancies in civil service for several years.

As of March 31st of this year, there were over 307,777 authorized positions across civil service titles, yet only 291,752 positions are currently filled, which leaves a vacancy rate of 5% or roughly 15,500 unfilled positions. In particular, the Department of Homeless Services, the Department of Correction, and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services face the highest rates of vacancies, with DHS exhibiting a vacancy rate of over 26%.

These vacancies are the product of several factors, including the two-for-one hiring policy implemented under then-Mayor Eric Adams, under

2 which only one person could be hired for every two
3 people who departed their position.

4 Other factors include the long wait times
5 between the administration of a civil service
6 examination and hiring, which disincentivize
7 candidates who cannot afford to wait for over a year
8 to receive a job offer.

9 As Mayor Mamdani has come into office, he
10 has announced several initiatives to improve staffing
11 and address bureaucratic delays that have discouraged
12 many highly qualified applicants from pursuing
13 careers with the civil service. We intend to address
14 those initiatives at our oversight hearing today, and
15 we hope to learn more about how this current
16 administration intends to improve the hiring process
17 and fill the existing vacancies to expedite and
18 improve the delivery of crucial city services to New
19 Yorkers.

20 I'd like to thank the committee staff,
21 Senior Policy Analyst Nina Rosenberg, and Senior
Legislative Counsel Rie Ogasawara for their hard work
preparing for this hearing. I'd also like to thank my
Chief of Staff, Sophia Brown, and my whole district
team for the work that you do.

2 At this point, we've been joined by
3 Council Member Frank Morano.

4 We will now hear testimony from
5 representatives from DCAS and OLR. I now turn to the
6 Committee Counsel to administer the oath for this
panel.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

8 We will now hear testimony from the
9 Administration. Before we begin, I will administer
10 the affirmation. Panelists, please raise your right
11 hand. I will read the affirmation once, then call on
each of you individually to respond.

12 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
13 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
14 committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
questions?

15 PANEL: Yes.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Thank you, Chair.

18 So I like to read an abridged version of
19 the testimony to spare you from listening to my
20 reading voice, but we'll submit for the record. I
21 think we've already submitted the record, a longer

2 version of it, which has more of the details, and
3 then we can get to questions.

4 Good morning, Chair and Members of the
5 City Council's Committee on Civil Service and Labor.
6 My name is Yume Kitasei, and I'm the Commissioner for
7 the Department of Citywide Administrative Services,
8 more commonly known as DCAS.

9 I'm joined today by my colleague Katrina
10 Porter, DCAS Deputy Commissioner of the Human Capital
11 Division. And Dan Pollak, the first Deputy
12 Commissioner with the Office of Labor Relations.

13 One of DCAS's primary missions is to
14 support employees' professional development. We're
15 proud to say that we are there for municipal staff on
16 the first day of work until the day that they retire.
17 We also understand the Council's interest in ensuring
18 the city's civil service system remains strong,
19 robust, and ever transformational, as it is a
20 critical component of government service delivery.

21 I believe in the importance of the civil
service system and the promise of a fairer hiring
system, one meant to cut out cronyism and abuse and
prioritize fairness, equity, and integrity. That
said, it is a system that is over 100 years old. And

we also believe it's an important time to work on modernizing the system for our workforce of today, something that we are looking forward to doing with our partners in labor and all of you.

Today, as we begin this discussion, I will speak to some of the key components of our efforts to promote city work, including our efforts to recruit top talent through the pipeline, civil service, and, of course, our role in administering the civil service exams.

More than 80% of city government positions require a civil service test, and it is the most critical pathway to service that we oversee. Specifically, our Human Capital team oversees the Civil Service examination administration, typically administering more than 200 exams annually.

Administering exams is one thing; making sure New Yorkers are aware of the process and sign up to attend exams is another. And we have been working to broaden the reach of our civil service exams. This includes making exams more accessible and streamlining the process. And we have also moved to fully computer-based testing, meaning no more pencil and paper.

2 Another innovation that we have
3 implemented is the New York City Bridge Exam. With
4 the New York City Bridge Exam, candidates pay one
5 fee, sit for one test, and become eligible for
6 multiple positions.

7 For recruitment, our Office of Citywide
8 Recruitment makes stops in all five boroughs,
9 participating in hiring halls, career fairs, and
10 meeting our neighbors looking for work right in their
11 communities. And I'm proud to say that we have
12 engaged tens of thousands of prospective candidates
13 across the five boroughs throughout these programs.

14 In addition, we also published the NYC
15 Jobs Newsletter, which is the hottest newsletter in
16 New York City, and we send out semi-monthly and
17 monthly E-blasts to get the word out to hundreds of
18 thousands of New Yorkers about career opportunities
19 in municipal government, in addition to efforts
20 undertaken at the agency level.

21 With the monthly NYC Jobs Newsletter
alone, we reached more than 200,000 New Yorkers
looking for work and beyond. We also manage and
maintain the NYC Jobs website. In 2025, the NYC Jobs
website received over 1.8 million applications.

In addition to our exams and our recruitment and promotion efforts surrounding them, we also successfully operate several pathway programs. These alternative pathways to municipal service, often geared towards younger New Yorkers, include the Civil Service Pathways Fellowship Program, Urban Fellows Program, Public Service Corps, and the NYC Summer Internship Program. These programs are an important tool for the city to create pipelines of job-ready talent for city jobs and public service.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention our 55-a program, which allows a qualified person with a certified mental or physical disability to be hired into competitive civil service positions without having to take an exam. While not specifically geared toward our city's youth, it is nonetheless a valuable asset in our recruiting portfolio. Through our 55-a program, eligible persons are evaluated for positions on the basis of their qualifications and interviews, and this program is intended as an equalizer for municipal hiring and promotes city work in an equitable manner for New Yorkers.

2 Beyond our civil service exams and our
3 efforts to expand pathways and recruit for municipal
4 work, we are also pursuing a variety of new
5 initiatives to improve the avenues for professional
6 development for city workers and, in turn, increase
the retention of city employees.

7 Professional development is a key tool
8 for us, and we have a variety of programs that look
9 to enhance staff skills, including our NYC Management
10 Academy, Leadership Institute, training expos, and
11 the DCAS course catalog and access to our
ever-expanding e-learning platform, NYCLearn.

12 We've also looked to expand more
13 traditional educational opportunities, including
14 through our recently rebranded Mayor's scholarship
15 program. I'm happy to share that just last month, we
16 announced the launch of undergraduate scholarships
17 for the first time ever, which now provides civil
18 servants with the opportunity to pursue undergraduate
19 bachelor's and associate's degrees and receive
20 financial assistance. As of the launch of the
21 program, 10 colleges and universities have agreed to
participate, with additional institutions in the

pipeline, and we are very excited for our staff because of the expansion.

Also coming later this year, we will be opening the city's first free on-site childcare pilot program for city workers. This opens the door, literally, to more than 2,000 employees across a dozen municipal agencies with the potential to put upwards of \$20,000 a year back in the pockets of working families.

Finally, when looking at the data, we see that the City of New York is competitive with the private sector when it comes to filling vacancies with talented New Yorkers, and our retention rate of 90% is similar to other large public sector employers like New York State, which is also at 90%.

Data indicates that citywide agency vacancies are at approximately 5%, which is down from a high of 8.4% in November 2021. And we continue to see very high rates for both retention and tenure. We raise these stats to highlight that even though we have more work to do, New York City government jobs are good jobs, and we are here to ensure that they remain so.

2 We're dedicated and passionate about
3 advancing municipal work, and we're committed to
4 keeping the City of New York as an employer of choice
5 for New Yorkers.

6 As Commissioner, hiring and retaining the
7 brightest and most talented New Yorkers is one of my
8 top priorities. Through our efforts to strengthen the
9 civil service system, amplify our recruitment
10 efforts, and ensure access to city jobs for all New
11 Yorkers and innovatively expand our retention
12 programs, New York City will continue to thrive.

13 I look forward to advancing these efforts
14 in partnership with the City Council, and I'm happy
15 to now answer any questions that you might have.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: (INAUDIBLE)

17 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: You don't have any?

18 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: We try to be
19 efficient, so we can get to questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Wow. So I do have a
21 few questions for you. Do you have any questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Sure, but I'll
follow your lead, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Okay.

2 On February 17th, 2026, Mayor Mamdani
3 held a press conference as he released the Fiscal
4 Year 2027 Preliminary Budget. During his press
5 conference, the Mayor said that the Administration
6 would significantly reduce current vacancies and
7 remove hiring constraints to promote effective agency
8 operations. Later, at the March 25th Finance
9 Preliminary Budget Hearing, OMB (Office of Management
10 and Budget) stated that they are undertaking a
11 vacancy alignment exercise and are working with the
12 agencies to establish their Correct Personnel
13 Services Budget.

14 Can you elaborate on this plan to
15 expedite hiring for 50% of current vacancies and
16 describe how the administration intends to reduce
17 current vacancies?

18 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Thank you, Council
19 Member.

20 I think that, as you noted in your
21 testimony, one of the things that we as city agencies
have been working under is the two-for-one. And as
the Mayor announced, as part of this budget, one of
the things that we're doing is that the two-for-one
is going to go away. And so we think that will have a

big impact on agencies' ability to hire and fill their vacancies.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Are you working with OMB now on this vacancy alignment exercise? What does that look like, and when do you think this process will...

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yes, we are absolutely... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: (INAUDIBLE) Will conclude because I feel like...

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: with City service is going to constantly be an evolving project.

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Absolutely. So we work closely with OMB all year round, and we are working closely with them in this process.

I think part of the conversation is making sure that as we sort of address the vacancies that we have, any sort of vacancy reductions we want to make sure don't impact the core of city services. And so that's something that we've had very fruitful conversations with them on.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Will there be any distinctions made between titles that are uniform,

2 civilian, or pedagogical? If so, how will those
3 categories of titles be treated differently?

4 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: I mean, I think
5 there's an agency-by-agency exercise. So each agency
6 is having different conversations about ensuring that
7 the operations aren't impacted. But we can get back
8 to you on other agencies that are not here today.

9 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Have there been any
10 amendments made to the civil service exam schedule
11 that was released last July to help meet the Mayor's
12 hiring goals?

13 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: We are constantly,
14 as part of our process, working with agencies to make
15 sure that the exams that we're offering are aligned
16 with what they actually need to fill position-wise.
17 But I'll hand it to the Deputy Commissioner, Katrina
18 Porter, to talk about what changes we've made.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: Thank you.

20 So, to address your question, yes, there
21 have been amendments to the current examination
22 schedule. And mostly these changes are made to
23 support agency recruitment efforts, and or staffing
24 constraints, right? So sometimes we may need to move
25 an exam to later in the schedule to support an

2 agency's ability to participate in the examination
3 process. But for the most part, the exam schedule has
4 moved forward, as published at the beginning of the
fiscal year.

5 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: As you mentioned in
6 your testimony today, the Bridge Exam is a key tool
7 used to improve recruitment by offering applicants
8 the opportunity to take one test and to be eligible
9 for several roles. This offers an opportunity to many
10 qualified New Yorkers who are struggling financially
11 and do not have the ability to pay for multiple exam
12 fees. However, there seems to have been only one
13 Bridge Exam administered in FY26. Do you anticipate
14 adding more Bridge Exams to the FY27 Exam Calendar?
And how do you assess what positions are eligible to
be grouped together for a Bridge Exam?

15 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: As you noted,
16 Chair, we did have one Bridge Exam that was offered
17 this fiscal year for up to 10 titles. You know,
18 they're complicated exams. So I think that's one
19 limitation, but I'll hand it to the Deputy
Commissioner to elaborate.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: Just by way
21 of background, DCAS and the City have been

administering Bridge Exams since 2022. So far, we've administered four Bridge Exams, and we've made over 1,300 appointments from those lists.

The goal is to offer one Bridge Exam each fiscal year, and we determine the titles to be included through what we call a job analysis. So we look at titles that may have similar qualifications and/or skills, and we talk to employees who serve in those titles to find commonalities across the titles so that we can build Bridge Exams.

So you're correct, we only offered one, but that was the goal to offer one each fiscal year.

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: I'll just note, you know, we are a big fan of this tool. We do think that it is helpful for people, because they can take one exam and end up being on multiple lists, which I think addresses some of the sort of pain points that were described earlier in your testimony. I am running a few minutes late; my previous meeting is running over.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: But, but you know, it sort of depends on which exams we need to offer

2 and how much they're sort of clustered together in
3 terms of skills.

4 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: And what have been,
5 if any, that you've been able to try and identify,
6 what have been barriers to entry to the civil service
7 exams? I mean, you testified, and we've heard others
8 testify in the past that, you know, it takes a long
9 time between taking an exam and being called off the
10 list. And even if they're called off a list, it
11 sometimes takes six months to actually get hired and
12 be in place.

13 So I have a couple of concerns. One,
14 what's happening here? Because if someone has to wait
15 a year and a half to get hired, they're going to go
16 find a job somewhere else.

17 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Right.

18 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: And so we're
19 potentially losing a lot of talent.

20 And my second concern is, if you're
21 technically hiring that person or making them an
offer of employment, does that change the-- is that
no longer considered a vacant position, and are the
numbers off in some way? So I just want to hear what

we can do to make that process faster or more efficient.

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yeah, so, I think it is going to sound superficial, but to me, actually, the number one issue is the complexity of the system itself and how much New Yorkers actually understand it. I think if you ask the normal New Yorker, they might not even know what a civil service test is. And that's a job that we have to tackle—really explaining to the public, not only that this is what civil service is, but also, this is how you get City jobs. And I do think that is a major barrier.

The other piece of that, you know, within that is also the fact that I think, understandably, people think, "If I take a test, and I get on a list, I am immediately now in line for a job." But it's a bifurcated system in the sense that we give you tests, and you end up on lists if you pass. So you're qualified, meaning you're qualified to do these jobs. Those jobs might not yet be hiring. So you're on a list that's ready to be hired, but it doesn't necessarily mean that those jobs are actually ready to be hired at this moment.

2 So our job is, to the extent possible,
3 coordinating with our agencies to make sure that
4 we're offering tests in line with the jobs that they
5 actually need to hire. But there will always be
6 people on the lists that, as you work your way down
7 the list, don't yet have job openings. And so that
8 creates that sort of disconnect, I think, where you
9 took a test, and now you're waiting for a year and a
10 half. And I understand that that can be quite
11 frustrating.

12 So I think one component of that is
13 public education and making sure people understand
14 when you take the test, what that actually means. And
15 also to know how and when to take the test in the
16 first place.

17 And then, you know, I think the second
18 component is the work that we're constantly doing
19 with our agencies to sort of align the tests that
20 we're offering with the jobs that they're trying to
21 fill.

18 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Do you have
19 questions?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Thank you,
21 Commissioner, for your testimony.

2 You mentioned 1.8 million applications to
3 NYC jobs. How many of those resulted in actual hires?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: Approximately
5 20,000.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: And at what stage,
7 from 1.8 million to 20,000, are we losing the most
8 people?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: So I don't
10 know that we're losing folks from that process. The
11 NYC job site is used for positions that do not
12 require the use of a civil service list. So it's an
13 interview process. So really the term is determined
14 by the candidates' education, their experience for
15 the position that they're applying for. So it's, you
16 know, more of an interview process and not based on
17 examinations.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: From the moment
19 someone applies to the day they start work, what's
20 the average timeline right now?

21 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So just to clarify,
are you talking about a civil service job or are you
talking about a provisional hire or a non-civil
service job?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: I mean, anybody
3 that would go into this 1.8 million application or
4 20,000 higher basket. So if they're in two different
5 categories, if you know the timeline in either or
6 both, I'll take both.

7 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Okay.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: So hiring is
9 tracked at the agency level. It's not a metric that
10 we track at DCAS. We do recognize that that is
11 important information for us to understand in order
12 to support agency hiring, and we're looking for ways
13 to do so. But currently, we do not track the time of
14 hire at the agency level.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Commissioner, you
16 mentioned modernizing a 100-year-old civil service
17 system, and I think that's a big part of what the
18 Committee's interested in. What specifically do you
19 think that means in the next 12 months? What's
20 slowing things down the most from your perspective?

21 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So I don't want to
get ahead of the conversations we're having with our
partners at the State and with our partners in Labor,
but there are certainly a number of things that we're
trying to get at. I think one of them is, you know,

2 sort of the public education component, which I think
3 is, like I said, one of actually the biggest
4 barriers— we're also thinking about technology and
5 how we can use technology to improve our system,
6 which the Deputy Commissioner can elaborate on. And
7 then, you know, from a legislative standpoint, I
8 think the question is sort of how do we improve our
9 examination system itself and what are the
10 legislative constraints around it? (INAUDIBLE)...
11 (CROSS-TALK)

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Is there any one
13 rule now, if you could?

14 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Again, I don't want
15 to get ahead of our conversation with our friends and
16 Labor sitting behind me, I assume.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Sure, sure,
18 sure...

19 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: But I will say that
20 I'm very excited about this. And that's actually one
21 of the reasons why I came to testify today instead of
just sending the Deputy Commissioner. And I will come
back to you as soon as we have a baked legislative
agenda because I would like to have your support for
it.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: You mentioned that
3 the exams can now be taken anytime and anywhere,
4 which is terrific. Why do you think we're still
5 constrained by slow hiring timelines? What's the
6 actual bottleneck today? Is it testing? Is it
7 certification? Is it hiring approval? Is it something
8 else?

9 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So I think, Council
10 Member, there-- First of all, I just want to say I
11 agree with their sentiments. I think our goal is to
12 really tackle this very problem that you've put your
13 finger on, which is that we want to make sure that
14 the City is able to hire quickly.

15 And I would say, you know, it's sort of a
16 multi-part answer to your question. I think in terms
17 of just straight-up hiring, you know, the two-for-one
18 going away will have a huge impact on the Agency's
19 ability to hire quickly, which is why we're very
20 grateful to OMB and the Administration for making
21 that change.

22 And you know, in terms of civil service,
23 I think there will-- when you have a testing system,
24 there will always be a little bit of process, but how
25 do we get that process as tight as possible?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: The Chair asked
3 you about the Bridge Exam, and you mentioned the
4 Bridge Exam in your testimony.

5 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Just so I'm clear,
7 and I'm sorry if you mentioned this already, how many
8 people have actually been hired through the Bridge
9 Exam?

10 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Do we have that set
11 here?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: The number is
13 approximately 1,300.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Thirteen-hundred.
15 And why aren't we scaling that aggressively if it
16 lowers barriers and lowers costs?

17 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: I think that the
18 short answer is that it makes the test itself more
19 complex because you're asking questions for 10
20 different jobs instead of one job. So it's both more
21 complicated to make that test and also, you know,
it's a more complex test for the test taker as well.
But I'll let the Deputy Commissioner elaborate.

COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Mm-hmm.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: What I would
3 add is that the creation of the annual examination
4 schedule (TIMER) is a collaborative effort with our
5 city agencies. So the exams that appear on the
6 schedule are those in which agencies may have an
immediate or future hiring need.

7 So the titles that we include may not be
8 a good fit for the Bridge Exam, but as a part of our
9 analysis, we do look for opportunities to consolidate
exams.

10 So one example I'll give you is that most
11 recently, we expanded our Bridge model to include
12 Public Safety titles. So we gave an example for
13 School Safety Agent, Traffic Enforcement Agent,
14 Sanitation Enforcement Agent, and Special
15 Officer—all in one exam. Just that's one example of
16 how we're always looking for ways to expand capacity
and to streamline our examination program.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Madam Chair, if I
18 could squeeze in one last question.

19 You mentioned a 90% retention rate, which
20 is extraordinary. If retention is that strong, why
21 are vacancy rates still so high in critical agencies?

2 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So, Council Member,
3 I will say, as an agency head, I am also thinking
4 about this deeply, because I want to make sure that
5 we fill our vacancies as well.

6 I would say that the simplest thing is
7 that we do think that with the two-for-one going
8 away, it'll make it much easier for agencies to hire.

9 So I think that's part of it. I think we
10 at DCAS are also constantly thinking about
11 recruitment and how we can support agencies with
12 recruitment. There are many titles that I think, just
13 within the public sector, but across the private
14 sector and the private-public sector, are hard titles
15 to fill. And so that's also something that we're
16 thinking about when we do our recruitment support for
17 City agencies.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Thank you. I
19 actually have to run to another hearing across the
20 street, but I will be reviewing everyone's testimony
21 in depth and watching the rest of your answers later.
Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Thank you, Council
Member.

2 So I have a follow-up question. Do you
3 have data on turnover and retention rates for each
4 agency, because I imagine they're different depending
5 on the agencies?

6 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: DCAS is not the
7 agency that tracks that.

8 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Mm-hmm?

9 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: But we can talk to
10 the Mayor's Office and see if they have additional
11 details.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: And I would
13 also reference our Workforce Profile Report, which
14 has some of that data there. We are expecting to
15 release the FY25 report by the end of the month.

16 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So that's the
17 report where we gather data from other agencies.

18 But if you're looking for real-time data,
19 I guess that's what I mean.

20 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Are there particular
21 agencies or job titles where there has been
22 difficulty recruiting? And what are your plans to...
(CROSS-TALK)

23 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yes, the
24 hard-to-recruit titles, yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: We can follow up
4 after this hearing with some more detail on that if
5 that's helpful.

6 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Okay, yes.

7 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: But that is-- part
8 of the process that we work through with agencies, is
9 when they are, you know, if there are titles that are
10 hard to recruit for.

11 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Okay.

12 A couple more questions. We've heard that
13 some agencies have been using AI or automated
14 decision-making systems to assist in administrative
15 tasks. Does DCAS utilize any automated systems to
16 help in the scheduling or administration of exams,
17 placement on eligible lists, or any other functions?

18 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So I will just say
19 it's our position that we will-- we are not
20 interested in replacing human decision making with
21 AI.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Thank you. That's
helpful. No, that's helpful, to know.

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Also, I understand
3 that there are hiring halls. Is that correct?

4 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yes. So, SPS (CUNY
5 School of Professional Studies) is now running the
6 hiring halls, in part because some of the jobs that
7 they are offering are also non-city jobs.

8 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Mm-hmm.

9 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So they have taken
10 over that function.

11 But we've also started running hiring
12 pools again, which are slightly different, but we do
13 them with city agencies, where you can have people
14 come in and interview for jobs.

15 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: What are the metrics
16 like? You know, you have a hiring hall, like how are
17 you measuring the success of the hiring halls or this
18 other...

19 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So the hiring
20 pools, I just want to clarify, those are civil
21 service-based. So you would call in people who are on
a list to interview.

I don't know if you want to add, you know
what our stats are there?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: I would
3 reference an event that we hosted recently. We heard
4 from agencies that they had a hiring need for our
5 engineers. So we held a hiring event where we had all
6 of the agencies come into one room to expand capacity
7 and, you know, to help the candidates understand the
8 breadth of available vacancies across the city.

9 And overall, we saw several 100 folks
10 come through where we offered on-the-spot job
11 interviews and appointments.

12 I can get back to you on the actual
13 number of appointments made. But those are some of
14 the strategies that we're using to help agencies fill
15 immediate hiring needs.

16 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Just to answer your
17 question, I also think the two things that we are
18 always thinking about are—when we are thinking about
19 the hiring process and improving the hiring process,
20 is how do we make sure that agencies are able to hire
21 the talent that they need in an expeditious way? And
22 how do we make sure that job seekers are able to find
23 jobs that they're suited for? So we have to sort of
24 think of it always from those two different angles.

2 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: In terms of
3 recruitment for, you know, with any of these jobs,
4 including entry-level jobs, how do you work with CUNY
5 and some of the other colleges in New York City, New
6 York State, to familiarize students with civil
service, City service?

7 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Yes, I didn't even
8 plant this question, but we're very glad to have the
opportunity to answer it.

9 (LAUGHTER)

10 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: So, this is
11 actually a part that—not that I ever plan to ask
12 questions to be clear—so we actually had a chunk of
13 our testimony that was about these programs. So I
14 want to give it to the Deputy Commissioner to
highlight some of the programs that we have.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PORTER: Sure. One
16 that is directly tied to CUNY is our Civil Service
17 Pathway Fellowship. It's a two-year fellowship for
18 recent CUNY grads where they are able to come in and
19 work for the city government in one of 6 tracks. And
20 so, currently, we have approximately 178 participants
21 in our program across various agencies. And we're
actually about to start a new cohort in June for

approximately an additional 80 cohort-- I'm sorry, 80 participants.

In addition to the CUNY Fellowship, we also have the Public Service Corp, which is the city's longest-standing off-campus internship. The program is actually turning 60 years old this year. And we've been focusing on engaging more folks to participate in the civil service-- I'm sorry, the Public Service Corps. And we have many other pathway programs that we use to engage folks who are interested in joining city government.

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: And I just say that we're big fans of these programs. We have folks on our staff who are Fellows from these programs, and they're great.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: So, how do you measure the success of these programs? What are your goals for recruitment? Do you also engage with, you know, folks at the high school level for jobs that don't necessarily require a college degree? How is your engagement with the DOE and other city programs to help, particularly young people, you know, engage in city service?

2 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: I think one of the
3 things that we're thinking about when we think about
4 these programs is not just how we offer an
5 opportunity for young people to get work experience,
6 but also how we turn it into an actual city career.

7 So one of the things that we're looking
8 at is whether the young people who do these programs
9 stay in city service and go on to careers with other
10 city agencies.

11 We can have that number, and we can share
12 it with you after this if that's helpful.

13 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Great, that would be
14 great, thank you, I appreciate that.

15 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: But, it's high,
16 I'll say it's high.

17 (LAUGHTER)

18 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Okay. So thank you
19 so much for your testimony today... (CROSS-TALK)

20 COMMISSIONER KITASEI: Okay, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: And...

COMMISSIONER KITASEI: And we look forward
to coming back and having more conversations with you
about civil service.

2 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Oh, you know what? I
3 have one for you while you're here.

4 So on the OLR our website, there is a
5 list of collective bargaining agreements and
6 memoranda the City has entered into with municipal
7 labor unions, several of which are set to expire in
8 2026. In general, how far in advance of a collective
9 bargaining agreement and date do you begin
10 negotiation discussions for the next agreement?

11 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POLLAK: Thank
12 you for that question, Chair.

13 It's a timely question, obviously. DC 37,
14 our largest union, is expiring its contract in
15 November. And I would say it varies. I would say
16 historically, the City often bargains retroactively.
17 It's not ideal. I think, you know, in an ideal world,
18 we would have an agreement in place soon after,
19 before the agreement ends. But you know, it's just
20 kind of a fact of life in the city historically that
21 we've bargained retroactively.

When we actually start negotiations
depends on, you know, the ability of us, as well as
the unions, to be ready to engage in those
conversations. But I'm sure you're aware from your

1 history and Labor, there are also always
2 conversations happening. So we are always discussing
3 what things should look like going forward. And while
4 we haven't really sat down to engage in formal
5 bargaining for the new round yet, obviously, it's
6 something that we are very much considering as we see
7 those contract expiration dates coming.

8 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Mm-hmm. Has OLR seen
9 any data on how much it has cost the City to address
10 high attrition rates, including the time and
11 resources incurred to hire and train new employees?
12 Could those costs be redirected towards increasing
13 salaries for employees in hard-to-recruit titles or
14 titles where there's a high turnover?

15 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POLLAK: Thank
16 you for the question.

17 We do not keep that data. OLR doesn't
18 maintain that kind of data that would be kept at the
19 agency level.

20 To the extent that there are savings to
21 be achieved through bargaining, we're always willing
to look at them. I will say one of the challenges
with trying to improve retention, assuming savings
from improved recruitment retention is, as you know,

2 has been discussed, there are a lot of factors
3 related to recruitment and retention. It's not always
4 just salary. Obviously, salary plays a large role,
5 but there are often numerous factors. But it is
6 always something that we are willing to look at and
7 discuss.

8 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Thank you.

9 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POLLAK: Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: I now open the floor
12 for public testimony. Before we begin, I want to
13 remind members of the public that this is a formal
14 government proceeding and that decorum shall be
15 observed at all times. As such, members of the public
16 shall remain silent at all times.

17 The witness table is reserved for people
18 who wish to testify. No video recording or
19 photography is allowed from the witness table.

20 Further, members of the public may not
21 present audio or video recordings as testimony, but
may submit transcripts of such recordings to the
Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

If you wish to speak at today's hearing,
please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant

at Arms and wait for your name to be called. Once you have been recognized, you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic: *Rebuilding the Municipal Workforce - Hiring Strategies for the New Administration*.

If you have a written statement or additional testimony you wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms.

You may also email written testimony to Testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours after the close of this hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be accepted.

When you hear your name, please come up to the witness table. We invite: Henry Garrido from DC 37, Gloria Middleton from CWA 1180, and Robin Blair-Batte from CWA 1180.

HENRY GARRIDO: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Good morning. Always wonderful to see you. Whoever wants to start? Henry, do you want to start?

HENRY GARRIDO: Yes, good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, everyone.

2 My name is Henry Garrido; I'm the
3 Executive Director of District Council 37. We are the
4 largest municipal union representing 150,000 city
5 workers and about 90,000 retirees. I want to thank
6 you for the opportunity to speak today.

7 I have no written testimony, but I would
8 much rather speak from experience. I'm grateful for
9 the opportunity. I heard a partial testimony for
10 DCAS. I want to offer my perspective on how we can
11 begin the process of rebuilding our municipal
12 workforce.

13 As one of the largest city unions, we've
14 had some experience and recommended to the previous
15 administration how to move forward on the thousands
16 of vacancies that still exist within the city.

17 During the last administration, the Adams
18 Administration, we proposed, for instance, the idea
19 of hiring halls as an opportunity to give the
20 community access to jobs that are otherwise in the
21 civil service.

The concept was to demystify the process
of onboarding city workers. Civil service can be
complicated. It could be costly to some folks,
especially low-income members of the community. And

trying to take away the myriad of contract rules of civil service requirements, I think, is something that we need to address.

Unfortunately, that process was taking-- promoted only to see the Office of Management and Budget thwart the process, so that even when we coordinated with DCAS with then-Commissioner, Dawn Pinnock, to advertise it, most of those community hiring practices and hiring holes had well over 1,000 people attend each one of them. The concept was that the Agency could interview, offer the position, bypass some provisions if required, make an actual offer so that people can walk out with a letter offered, only to OMB stop the process altogether and insist on hiring people through a (INAUDIBLE) process. That was quite hurtful to what we were intended to do.

People were not going to wait months and months for a job, right? And especially, people who were qualified for jobs that required licenses—that was very disheartening.

So I'm encouraged to see the new administration trying to take a different approach, starting with the memo that was sent to the agencies,

1 allowing up to 50% of the hiring on those vacancies.
2 And so we'd like to see that process going forward.
3 But having said that, I think there are some
4 principles that I would like to maintain.

5 Obviously, we want to see the ranks of
6 city workers replenished. I think it is necessary to
7 maintain services to New Yorkers. But I think that we
8 are concerned about some of the ideas that have been
9 floated, statewide, that we have seen before. As my
daughter says, "We've seen this movie before."

10 And one of those is bypassing civil
11 service, like the NY HELPS program that was proposed
12 during the pandemic. Essentially, what it is you
13 waive the exam fee, which we think is a good thing,
14 and then you hire without having to take a test. You
15 appoint someone, and in two years, you can make them
16 permanent. The State is proposing a state civil
17 service provision to do this statewide. We are
18 opposing this. We have opposed that for a variety of
19 reasons. One of those is the fact that we have
20 thousands of workers already on the civil service
21 list who have taken the exams, who have gone through
the process of paying the fee, who have taken all the
necessary requirements to qualify, and they're

2 waiting on civil service lists. It's not fair to
3 those people who have done so.

4 Secondly, it opens the opportunity for
5 nepotism, and we saw that, and we still believe merit
6 and fitness are something that should be the basis by
7 which those positions are filled. And for that, it
8 requires examinations. It requires DCAS to have the
9 resources it needs.

10 And so we are very concerned about the
11 State approach. They're claiming that this is an
12 opportunity to get better representation of
13 minorities and people of color. I think that
14 situation is already in the City of New York. We're
15 quite different from the rest of the state. And for
16 that, we continue to oppose the bypassing of the
17 civil service test as a new approach for hiring.

18 We support Pathways, a program like the
19 fellowship that was mentioned, in order to allow
20 mentorship, but we think it should be expanded.

21 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: I have a question.
How do you feel about the Qualified Incumbent Exam?

HENRY GARRIDO: That's something that we
proposed. We not only proposed that at DC-37, but
also supported the legislation, and it's actually

1 kind of our idea. Because it makes no sense for us to
2 have people go through multiple layers of
3 examinations, even when they have not only been
4 sitting on the job, but also when they have licenses
5 already.

6 So I'll give you an example: Motor
7 vehicle operators, we've lost 50% of motor vehicle
8 operators in the city of New York. And we have
9 vacancies in New York. You are required to have a CDL
10 license. If you take a written exam to qualify, you
11 have to wait 18 months to take a CDL written exam for
12 the road test. Someone with a CDL is not going to
13 wait 18 months for that. They could get a job with
14 Amazon or any other private insurance company with a
15 CDL license.

16 So it makes no sense for the City to have
17 to wait this long. So what happens is that by the
18 time they issue the road test, no one can go and will
19 take the exam. Motor vehicle operators are critical
20 to moving folks in hospitals, in shelters, and in
21 other places.

IT workers have the same issue. You get a
certified cybersecurity position, for instance, and
those positions become ancient by the time the test

1 is certified. So, the qualified in-place exam was a
2 mechanism for not only incumbents who have been doing
3 the job for a long time, but also where Masons
4 certify folks to do the job with their licenses.

5 And there are multiple cases where
6 there's a state license requirement that the workers
7 already have, and not to be waiting months or months
8 to certify, just because there are thousands and
9 thousands of jobs to be had.

10 And so we are not only in support of it,
11 we proposed the idea, and we're looking to expand
12 that in the future.

13 I mentioned Pathways as another example.
14 Waiving the exam fee is really important. The last
15 thing I would suggest for recruiting young people is
16 specifically your point about high school. We did a
17 pilot program with the School Construction Authority
18 for those young students who have the aptitude
19 towards architecture, for instance. I am an architect
20 myself, and I found the process to be incredibly
21 cumbersome for you to work.

So what happens is it's not just an issue
of salary, which is a big issue, remaining
competitive, but also making it easier for those

2 students who go from high school to community
3 colleges to colleges to be able to be onboarded.

4 So we proposed back then, when Lorraine
5 Grillo was the Chair, to bring in high school
6 students to participate in a year-round full
7 internship program, like the college aid program,
8 train them, and if they have the aptitude, then when
9 they got to college, they could apply and be given
10 credit towards their civil service points in order to
11 take the test and when they are examed.

12 And I think that it's extremely valuable
13 and something that we should be expanding in the city
14 of New York.

15 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Thank you. I
16 appreciate that.

17 I may have more questions, but I'm going
18 to ask you to testify.

19 GLORIA MIDDLETON: I'm Gloria Middleton,
20 President of CWA 1180. I'm going to yield to my
21 Secretary-Treasurer, Robin Blair-Batte, to give the
testimony, and then I'm here to answer. We're both
here to answer any questions that you have.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Thank you.

2 ROBIN BLAIR-BATTE: Good morning, Madam
3 Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is Robin
4 Blair-Batte, Secretary-Treasurer of CWA Local 1180,
5 representing 9,000 public sector workers.

6 We are here to talk about rebuilding the
7 municipal workforce, but this is not just about
8 filling vacancies. It's about fixing a system that is
9 no longer working. It's about agencies being
10 understaffed.

11 Part of the problem is the breakdown in
12 the hiring process. Civil service exams are delayed,
13 and the growing reliance on education and experience
14 evaluations undermines fairness. When everyone scores
15 the same, there's no real ranking and no real
16 merit-based system. Even when lists exist, hiring
17 moves far too slowly. Qualified candidates are
18 waiting years to be called. By the time the City
19 reaches them, they've moved on. We have to move
20 people through it faster.

21 We also need stronger oversight. The
disbanding of the Department of Personnel weakened
accountability, and the system has not recovered. It
must be restored. We should introduce young people,
especially high school students, to public service

2 careers, creating clear pathways into civil service
3 and partnering with institutions that can connect
4 education to real job opportunities. If we want the
5 next generation to serve, we must show them the path.

6 We also have to make these jobs
7 sustainable. Too many city workers cannot afford to
8 live in the city they serve, while often being
9 required to do so. Affordable housing for city
10 workers—salaries are not keeping up with the cost of
11 living, and that is driving people away.

12 Furthermore, we cannot ignore workforce
13 expectations. (TIMER) Remote work is not a perk; it
14 is a reality. Where it is feasible, it must be
15 permanent if we want to compete for talent.

16 Rebuilding a workforce requires urgency,
17 faster hiring, real oversight, strong, clear career
18 pathways, affordability, and competitive pay. Because
19 when the system fails, it's not just workers who
20 suffer. The public does too. Thank you.

21 GLORIA MIDDLETON: I just wanted to add to
that, and talking about Henry getting to the younger
people.

The Council approved the \$2.5 million
budget for the Social Justice Training Corps for high

school students through the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies. And that program is going into effect in September.

The university is going to go into one high school in every borough, pick a certain number of students who will take courses for civic participation, get an understanding of what the civil service process is, and how good it is to serve the public in a civil service job.

They will get free college courses, get some credits for that, and then be able to move into the school of (INAUDIBLE) Urban Studies as a fulltime student.

Funding has come from the Council, as well as from the federal government, and we're asking the Council to expand that program as we try to make high school students understand the importance of moving into civil service. Because right now, schools don't even talk about labor, how important it is to be in a union, how important it is to serve your community, etcetera. And we thank the Council—it was approved by the former Speaker—where they had the insight of pushing this program forward, and we hope this new Council will do the same.

2 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: We must have had the
3 same thing for breakfast this morning.

4 (LAUGHTER)

5 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Because I, you know,
6 I have a great concern that we're not-- the City's
7 not doing enough in their recruitment efforts, but
8 they're also not connecting young people to the
9 possibility of civil service jobs. And most students
10 out there have no idea what-- they think elves come
11 and run the city at night. (LAUGHS) But I think that
12 there is a real issue with recruitment. And I feel
13 like we really need to start with our young people,
14 at least at the high school level, whether through
15 job fairs, or some kind of programs where students
16 start to learn that there are other opportunities in
17 New York City—that there are pathways for them to
18 enter civil service, be it through college or through
19 internship programs, or any kind of program that the
20 City will offer to our young folks.

21 HENRY GARRIDO: If I may, I also serve as
a member of the Workforce Investment Board, and we
receive millions of dollars from the federal
government for the WIB. So far, most of that has been
used to enforce welfare-to-work, former programs

1 leading people who come out of welfare into jobs, as
2 opposed to their partnerships and pre-apprenticeship
3 type models.

4 One of my biggest complaints about being
5 on the board, and I recently expressed this to SBS
6 and the other agencies, is this: We represent, in
7 government, 10% of the City's workforce, 10%, yet
8 \$0.00 go for workforce development through the WIB
9 Boards, the SBS fund, or the Workforce Centers to
encourage people to apply and to retain them.

10 The expectation for those 10% of the city
11 workers, like Gloria, me, and other city workers, is
12 that you're going to collectively bargain in the
13 training fund. And that training fund is going to
14 come from wages. So, for instance, when I became the
15 head of the DC 37, I found out we're spending \$2.38
16 to train engineers, bookkeepers, and accountants,
which seemed utterly ridiculous.

17 We have since negotiated a training fund
18 that makes sense, but we had to do it out of wages.
19 We had to take a portion of the raises that city
20 workers get to create a fund to train the city's
21 workforce, to supply the city workforce with its own
workforce. So, to certify an accountant, to get

(INAUDIBLE) workers signed, to get folks in the architecture and the engineering firms—social workers, a big piece of the city's component—we had no social worker training. And so we had to do that.

In the next round of bargaining that you mentioned, I think it's important that we recognize that the City must invest in its workers. And to do so, it needs to do so not just from the perspective of collective bargaining, but to do so in the matters (INAUDIBLE).

I'm baffled that all those contracts for workforce development are going to for-profit institutions from Texas, Michigan, and other places, and none of it is going to CUNY, or to workforce development areas or non-profits here in New York. And I've been pushing at the workforce, in my role as trustee, to be able to open up that process to allow for local training, workforce development, and pre-apprenticeship-like programs for city workers to come out of the community to be able to get access to CUNY and other programs, as Gloria had mentioned.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: One of the other issues that has come up time and time again, and you mentioned social workers, but EMT workers and

1 paraprofessionals in our schools, which you represent
2 a good number of them, and the paraprofessionals work
3 for the DOE, but they do work in, you know, in
4 homeless shelters and other places working with
5 students and children with special needs. That is an
6 area where they're paid very, very low, and the
7 turnover rate is very, very high. And with the
8 expansion of childcare programs, and in the case of
9 EMTs and social workers, expansion of programs like
10 B-HEARD, and community safety.

11 What do you-- and I keep hearing from OMB
12 and OLR that, well, that's a collective bargaining
13 issue. But my point to them is, well, if you don't
14 invest the money, then it's not going to be
15 collectively bargained. So...

16 HENRY GARRIDO: I think, look, the reality
17 is pattern bargaining has been the law of the land
18 here since the time of the fiscal crisis. But the
19 reality is, pattern bargaining doesn't address
20 low-wage workers in the way it should, and it doesn't
21 address recruitment and retention issues. So to do
22 that, we at DC 37 addressed it by creating an equity
23 fund that allows us to make adjustments in salaries,

in titles like nurses, psychiatrists, social workers, and case managers.

But again, that comes out of bargaining. And I think the problem is that the need is so great that even when you talk about raising the minimum wage, it becomes a very large effort for us.

So I think, you know, I couldn't agree with you more about the need for the City to recognize that it is high time to do something different in that process. And we believe part of that is to increase that equity fund to address recruitment and retention—to your point. Because we have paraprofessionals in the schools, the number of (INAUDIBLE) cases is exploding. We do attendance, we do school-based support, we do hearing and visually impaired kids. If you don't provide the services, a private contractor has to, and sometimes at a rate 10 times higher than what the City could do in-house.

So you're not just dealing with turnover, as you mentioned before, you're also paying for that turnover. You know, you are paying it through-- the same thing with B-HEARD and the private ambulances, right, on 911. And I think that's something we need to really address, the cost of the City of not having

the workers there and the retention costs associated with turnover.

GLORIA MIDDLETON: For us, we have what we call Administrative Managers, principals, and associates that work in the city, who supervise some of their people. When it comes to pay, that's equal to the work that they've done; we actually had to file a lawsuit for a title that we obtained some years ago. And EEO had found that the minimum wage had been suppressed for years once women and minorities obtained the title. Surprise, surprise.

And as a result of that, we won--we settled the lawsuit, you know, during the de Blasio administration. And we now have Administrative Managers earning a decent salary, with steps--If they make the minimum, when they come in, they have steps to make that salary increase.

But now what we're finding is they're not using that title. When people say that they're working out a title, they find another title to put them in so that they don't have to increase them to the salaries that we have for the Administrative Managers. That's something else we're looking at, and we hope we don't have to sue the City again. But it's

being done, and it's obvious—certain agencies, not all of them—that's why we're suggesting there be a certain part of DCAS that says Department of Personnel is to hold agencies accountable to the civil service system to make sure that agencies are following the rules to make sure that discrimination is not happening. Because there is a group in DCAS that is supposed to look at the EEO practices of agencies, they look at it, they get statistics, and they sit there. What good is that?

So that's one of the reasons we are suggesting that DCAS speak Spanish—to have the personnel who can be accountable to the agencies to make sure that they follow the civil service rules.

And, as he talked about OMB, I know there's a new Commissioner, we are grateful for that, because once an agency--in the olden days when DCAS approved, or the Department of Personnel, approved an agency to call a list. Once they had a pool or a hiring pool, whatever they did, the person was called that pool, they got the job, and they were sent to the new location, and paid immediately.

What we have found over and over again, especially in the title of Administrative Manager, is

1 that the agency will call the pool; the person gets
2 appointed, and it takes them six months, a year, a
3 year and a half to get paid or get assigned. And
4 that's because it had to go back to OMB.

5 Why are we doing this double time at OMB?
6 It makes no sense. Back in the day, that did not
7 happen. I don't know where the change happened, but
8 yes, we do. But we need the Council to look at that.

9 HENRY GARRIDO: I think one of the ideas
10 that we need to really explore is the idea that
11 people who take exams, the civil service exam, pay a
12 fee, and that fee goes into the general fund. It
13 doesn't go to enforce examinations. It doesn't help
14 promote more exams.

15 Gloria and I have been dealing with this
16 issue, PSAC II, in the Bronx, I believe in your
17 district, where 911 operators, the high turnover rate
18 is incredible. And as a result, more overtime,
19 mandatory overtime, higher turnover, and higher
20 response time for 911 operators. She represents the
21 supervisors, and I represent the call takers and the
number of dispatchers. And recruitment and retention
are just terrible. So, the idea is that every time
you have a phone bill, whether it is a landline,

voice over the internet, or a cellphone, there is a 911 surcharge that goes in there, that the city and the state collect. But none of that is used for the 911 folks for recruitment, retention, or training. It goes into the general fund—in the same manner that the fee is collected for DCAS, going into the general fund—then there's no money for this, and there's no money for that.

I think one of the concepts that the Council should consider is redirecting those funds to where they should be going. If people pay to take civil service exams, those fees should be used to enforce civil service, to shorten the appeal rule, to shorten the time that people have to certify a list, as Gloria said, and not that OMB will have to make that decision separately and apart—similar to the 911 concept that I mentioned before. And that's how you address some of this recruitment and retention in the civil service exam, by identifying a source of funding that will go to the purpose that is intended to do it, not just to a general fund that becomes subject to all and everything, and (INAUDIBLE). We need to invest in our workers. That's how you mean, right?

2 GLORIA MIDDLETON: Mm-hmm

3 HENRY GARRIDO: A budget is a statement of
4 value. So if you value the workers that you want to
5 train, you want to recruit the best and the
6 brightest, and you invest in them. And you should
7 recognize that that's the need.

8 GLORIA MIDDLETON: Going into training, we
9 have people working in the SNAP centers. They work
10 everywhere. But especially those in the social
11 service areas. Back in the day, they used to have a
12 training center where they would invest in the
13 workers to make sure that they understood what their
14 job was. If you have people coming off the street to
15 learn how to give social services, you can't give
16 them two weeks of training and think they know the
17 job. Okay? It used to be a six-week training course.
18 Actually, it used to be eight weeks of training, and
19 they had to pass a test in order to go back into the
20 centers because they knew the job, and they were
21 comfortable doing it. There's so much retention, and
that's because they don't understand the job, and
then when they get there, it's a whole other world.

The supervisors need supervisory
training. You can't give them two or three days of

2 training and say, "Okay, you are a supervisor." And
3 then that causes people not to be able to properly
4 manage their people. And then it causes people to
5 say, "Okay, I'm out of here."

6 Managers used to have training on how to
7 manage. Because there's a difference between a
8 supervisor and a manager, and that's not being done.
9 We offer, in our Local, that sort of training. But it
10 shouldn't be on us; it should be on the City to make
11 sure that their workers are trained properly to do
12 the job that they need them to do, especially in
13 high, volatile, and high-pressure positions.

14 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: If I'm hearing you
15 correctly, the City has basically pushed the
16 training and the workforce development onto the
17 Union?

18 GLORIA MIDDLETON: Most of it, yes.

19 HENRY GARRIDO: Most of it, yes. There's a
20 parallel system of pre-apprenticeship programs that
21 they get for prevailing wage titles that represent
the-- are covered by the 220 Law. There's funding
that comes from the state that gets funded through
the state or federal funding for city workers, who

2 are primarily covered by our collective bargaining
3 agreement, which is pushed onto us.

4 We are supposed to come up with the
5 funding through collective bargaining, but usually,
6 where it comes from is wages.

7 So, the value of 1% for the City is \$468
8 million. You take a portion of that 1% for your wages
9 and put it into training, or 1% and put it into
10 healthcare or whatever.

11 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Right.

12 HENRY GARRIDO: So, that's what's been
13 happening traditionally, for Gloria, and for all 102
14 municipal units in the city of New York. Training
15 comes out of the funding.

16 GLORIA MIDDLETON: We have an education
17 fund where we actually give college credits; we pay
18 for college credits. We have an education fund where
19 we do workplace literacy; we are developing it now
20 online, so that people will be able to access it
21 without coming into the union. DCAS has some programs
that they offer workers. But people have to know
about it. A lot of workers don't even know what
programs they offer. And then you have to get

2 permission from your supervisor director to be able
3 to attend them, because they're on the City's time.

4 The City needs a plan on how to train
5 their workers and make sure that they are viable to
6 do the jobs that they are assigned to do.

7 HENRY GARRIDO: And we believe one way to
8 do that is to open up the funding for the WIOA and
9 the small business services to CUNY, to train those
10 workers. That has not happened. We have been pushing
11 really hard for this because, to your point about
12 paraprofessionals, we need teachers. Right now, I
13 have 168 uncertified teachers that I represent. They
14 will likely lose their job if they don't pay. They
15 pay out of pocket. Right? You need them, so why not
16 train paraprofessionals to become teachers? That was
17 a program that existed before; it doesn't exist
18 anymore, because there is an expectation that you
19 have to pay out of your collective bargaining.

20 So, for me to train my paras to become
21 teachers, this career program, I have to pay for it.
And to say to paras that you're going to pay them
less to get trained in order to get certified as a
teacher, where you are going to go out to-- You know
what I'm saying? It is really hard, because they have

2 a choice between getting a better salary and paying
3 for their education. That's not a choice. That's a
4 really hard decision to make.

5 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: And
6 paraprofessionals make, what, \$33,000 a year?

7 GLORIA MIDDLETON: Something like that.
8 It's ridiculous.

9 HENRY GARRIDO: Between \$38,000 and \$60,
10 000. In my case, like a school-based support
11 assistant, the paras in the shelters, we took it out
12 of equity to give them the difference, because of
13 some of the violence that was taking place and the
14 difficulties in getting to those shelters.

15 But we have programs with pregnant teens
16 that the paras are doing to provide services; they're
17 harder to recruit, because they require more work.

18 And, let's not talk about special ed.
19 That's even worse. Our workers who are dealing with
20 the special ed children population, hard-of-hearing,
21 or vision-impaired. We both represent UFT (United
Federation of Teachers), and I also represent paras.
It is becoming a really tough time keeping those
workers. They leave. Our turnover ratio is about 38%.

CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Wow.

2 HENRY GARRIDO: For those paras now.

3 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: And teachers are
4 leaving, too, because they are having to do the work
5 that the paras are doing.

6 HENRY GARRIDO: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Okay, thank you so
8 much. I really appreciate it.

9 PANEL: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: I just want to
11 remind anyone, if you want to testify, please fill
12 out the card with the Sergeant at Arms in the back.

13 I will now call up Gregory Morris.

14 GREGORY MORRIS: Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Yes, we have it.

16 GREGORY MORRIS: Thanks so much for making
17 this time. My name is Greg Morris, the CEO of the New
18 York City Employment Training Coalition. It's great
19 to see you again.

20 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Nice to see you
21 again.

I submitted testimony online. I'm not
going to get too caught up in that right now because
you can read that separately.

I just want to double down on some things that I think are important to follow up on, some of the earlier content that you heard. You know, the City is not short on good ideas, the City is not short on good workforce development, and the City is not short on dynamic, skilled, positive, and powerful municipal workers. The City is short on how to put the pieces together to build the pipeline to maximize the supports that the existing workforce, uh, the existing workforce needs, and to build, as you pointed out, the on ramps for the next generation of folks who are going to fulfill the needs and interests of the municipal workforce. The reason for that, and again, I want to credit the earlier panel, the reason for that is because we don't think about how to connect what Labor is doing with what city colleges are doing, with what the workforce development providers that I represent are doing. And I think there's a particular opportunity and an urgency in this moment for you, Chair, and your Committee to hold this city, its Workforce Development Board, which Henry Garrido mentioned earlier, to hold our Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development, to hold all of the city

agencies with a hand in workforce development—to hold DCAS accountable for taking a very hard look at how it is that we create the intersections that will support training. Whether you are part of the particular municipal workforce or you are seeking to be part of it, whether you're thinking about advancement and retention, the reality is that no one entity can solve this on its own. And the City Council's interest and investment in trying to make sure that the City is held accountable for stitching together providers like the 220 that I represent, who are in this space in terms of training, the city colleges, CUNY in particular, as well as Labor coming together to figure out how it is that we hold each other accountable for supporting the pipelines, the advancement, and the retention is absolutely key in this moment, because no one entity can solve this on their own. And you and this council may be the only ones that are elevating this topic at this particular moment in our city's history, when, as you know, my last point, our municipal workforce is smaller than it has ever been, and it is the one true pathway to the middle class. I'll pause there.

2 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Thank you. I
3 appreciate that. I've heard, in the past, and I heard
4 it today from folks on the Labor panel, OMB's role in
5 hiring.

6 GREGORY MORRIS: You mean OMB's role in
7 stifling hiring? Is that what you meant? (CROSS-TALK)

8 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: In stifling hiring,
9 well, yeah.

10 I'm not sure why they have that role, but
11 what are your thoughts on it? What are your thoughts
12 about streamlining the hiring process, making it
13 easier to, you know, to have a real pipeline that's
14 not clogged in the middle by OMB?

15 GREGORY MORRIS: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: And you know, how
17 can we build more effective recruitment, hiring, and
18 retention? For example...

19 GREGORY MORRIS: The hardest part of this
20 is that you have to do about four or five things at
21 exactly the same time. And what I mean by that, what
I mean is, you first have to have the metrics and
accountability resource. You have to have the data to
ask, "What agencies are actually staffing up
effectively?" "Where are folks in the pipeline?"

"Where is it that I have folks waiting for the testing?" "How long does it take for placement?"

I would suggest right now we don't have crystal clarity about that. So the first part is, I would say to you, we have to think about what our benchmark is, where are we right now? And then we need to establish indicators that can demonstrate how it is that agencies can move up or down from there. That's a starting point. I think at exactly the same time, there needs to be an investment, as was noted by the earlier panel, in talking to young people about all of the different jobs that exist within the municipal workforce that you probably don't hear about, don't know, and don't get exposed to. Why is that hard to do? Because there are a lot of schools and a lot of kids. So we have to do those two things at the same time. At exactly the same time, as Henry pointed out earlier, we've got to think about how we're training and supporting the existing workforce, because the reality is you can't create new pipelines unless folks are able to demonstrate their skill sets and excel. And so in doing that, I think the investment between CUNY, Labor, and the workforce providers that I work with, who possibly can do the

1 additional wrap-around supports and the retention
2 supports, in a way that would be valuable, impactful,
3 culturally sensitive, and effective, would be
4 beneficial.

5 In other words, you have to look at the
6 numbers at the same time, you should tell people
7 there's a possibility, at the same time, as you say,
8 "Here it is, we're going to work together to solve
9 this particular problem, and that we see the value in
that."

10 And by the way, we don't have to boil the
11 ocean here. Start with the simple fact that we need
12 drivers. How do we get to the CDL licenses? How do we
13 do that faster and more thoughtfully? Let's focus on
14 that. We can start with pinpointing more
15 laser-focused accuracy on a thing, as opposed to
16 everything. And that, I would suggest, might be
17 particularly helpful as we navigate what is going to
18 be an essential challenge. And, not for nothing, the
19 reality of the shortage that we have in the Early
20 Childcare space right now is going to completely
21 undermine any of this city's ability to ensure that
childcare is accessible and high-quality.

So again, if we're thinking about pinpointing, okay, let's focus on CDL licenses because that's how we address the driving issues. Let's focus on childcare. How do we think about it in relation to construction as well? If we're going to build 200,000 more units of housing, we're going to have to have more apprentices than we have right now. We're going to have to have a stronger workforce than we have right now. All that to say, it seems to me we've got to do a bunch of different things at the same time, and in this city, that gets really hard to do, unless someone says, "It's my priority. And there's going to be a benefit if you do it, and there's going to be a consequence if you don't."

I would love for you, Chair, to be sitting in this room looking at me, Henry, and other folks, Lauren Anderson, and CUNY, and others, and saying, "How are we doing?" "Are we doing better?" And have DCAS at the end of the table looking at the numbers with you to say, "We're doing great here, but it's not great here. How do we fix that?" As opposed to what this is, which is saying to you, we have to do a lot of things at the same time.

2 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: Mm-hmm. Thank you. I
3 appreciate your testimony.

4 GREGORY MORRIS: More to come, thanks.

5 CHAIRPERSON ALDEBOL: We are going to
6 make a final call for Zoom registrants who have not
7 yet spoken. If there is anyone on Zoom. Okay,
8 confirmed that there is no one on Zoom.

9 Seeing no one else wanting to speak, I
10 would like to note that everyone can submit written
11 testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72
12 hours after the close of this hearing.

13 We thank the Administration and the
14 public for attending this hearing to share their
15 thoughts on the legislation and this oversight. We
16 look forward to following up on these issues.

17 And, with that, this hearing is now
18 adjourned. [GAVEL]
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21

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date May 28, 2026