



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 2, 2016

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR DE BLASIO: CITY RELEASES RFPs FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR
PEOPLE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

Part of Career Pathways approach to building long-term careers

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today the City is building a new employment program that will assess public assistance applicants and recipients' skills, interests and employment barriers to connect them with the jobs, training, education or services most likely to help each of them build a career and permanently transition from public assistance. To implement the new program, the New York City Human Resources Administration issued three Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for employment contracts.

HRA's approach is closely aligned with the recommendations of the Mayor's Career *Pathways: One City Working Together* report, and is a part of the overall conversion of the City's workforce development programs into a "career pathways" model that emphasizes helping New Yorkers build long-term careers. It also uses a sector-based approach, meaning it focuses on jobs and skills related to industries that are growing and provide living-wage employment. The new HRA Employment Program is part of a two-year plan approved by the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

"My administration is committed to building an economy in which every New Yorker can maintain stable employment and earn a family-supporting wage. The new HRA Employment Program is an integral part of a broader program of matching city residents to the skills they need for jobs in growing industries, which will both strengthen our economy and help reduce income inequality," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

"The best way out of poverty is a job that pays enough to support a family and the skills to turn that job into a career. Making lasting gains in the fight against poverty and income inequality means investing time and effort in each client's success," said **Human Resources Administration Commissioner Steven Banks**. "We no longer take a one-size-fits-all approach to employment. Instead, we're using the many resources of our city to match clients with opportunities which suit their skills and give them the best chance for long-term success."

The new employment programs will also have specialized services for youth and other groups with specific needs, such as homeless New Yorkers or those with Limited English Proficiency. Since the lack of a high school diploma generally limits workers to very limited, extremely low wage jobs, the programs will emphasize completing at least a high school equivalency diploma and also provide opportunities for trade certification and community and four-year college.

The three RFP's for employment programs include:

- **CareerCompass** vendors will work with clients aged 25 and over to assess their skills and experience, help them create a service plan, and match them with the employment, sector-based training, education, adult literacy, high school equivalency or other program which best suits them. CareerCompass vendors will stay involved with clients after they are placed to ensure they receive the support they need to complete their program.

- **YouthPathways** vendors will work with clients aged 18 to 24, with a special focus on the needs and potential of young people. YouthPathways will provide similar in-depth assessment services to CareerCompass, along with training, education, job placement and other services that are specifically focused on young New Yorkers.
- **CareerAdvance** vendors will focus on providing expert sector-based training and employment in growth industries. Other CareerAdvance programs will focus on providing services to communities such as homeless New Yorkers and domestic violence survivors, those with previous involvement in the criminal justice system, those with limited English proficiency, LGBTQI New Yorkers, and others in need of specialized services.

CareerCompass and YouthPathways will be the entry points of HRA's employment program. Vendors at these programs will work to find the best fit for clients, whether that is direct employment, a CareerAdvance program, or a wide variety of other programs, such as financial literacy, available through other City agencies.

The three RFPs presented here do not represent the full range of HRA's resources for and commitment to employment services. The Agency is committed to using partnerships with the many existing employment and support services throughout New York City, and will expect the same from vendors as outlined in the RFPs. CareerCompass, CareerAdvance, and YouthPathways vendors will be able to make use of new and existing partnerships with other City agencies, such as the Department of Small Business Services' Workforce 1 program; HireNYC, which leverages the purchasing power of the City to help social services clients find employment with City contractors and development projects; the Parks Opportunity Program, which offers subsidized employment in the Parks Department and other subsidized jobs programs; education and training opportunities presented through various partners; and a wide variety of other services reflecting the scope and diversity of New York City. Clients will also continue to be able to select internships and education opportunities to enroll in as long as they meet HRA standards and fulfill their work requirements under federal and state law.

A concept paper was previously issued for CareerBridge education and training services. However, in response to the comments to the concept papers recommending a more streamlined approach, HRA instead redirected resources from CareerBridge to include training and education offerings in CareerAdvance and YouthPathways.

The three RFPs are now available to view on the City's Health and Human Services Accelerator system, which helps streamline the City's contract bidding process.

"I applaud the efforts of Mayor de Blasio and HRA Commissioner Banks for creating this new employment program for those on public assistance. This commitment by the City ensures that those on public assistance will be given the best available opportunities to become self-sufficient through training and work. This program allows some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers the chance to succeed, and I look forward to working with the City on this initiative," said **Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, Chair of the Committee on Social Services**.

"Job training, education, and skills development are critical tools for helping New Yorkers to find stable, fulfilling careers and build better lives for themselves and their families. New Yorkers deserve support programs that recognize and reflect our city's incredible diversity. The new vision for careers pathways will better serve all those in need by creating a variety of options to connect clients with the educational or employment opportunity that's right for them. I commend Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Banks for committing to re-imagining these programs to make sure that they are meeting the needs of every New Yorker who relies on them," said **Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the Committee on General Welfare**.

"We applaud HRA's commitment to transforming its approach to workforce development and aligning it with the City's vision of Career Pathways," said **Chris Neale, Director of the Workforce Development Board at**

the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. "By investing more in building the skills of its customers, HRA will help prepare them for good jobs with family-supporting wages."

"The City's new employment programs have the potential to not only help New Yorkers who've struggled to find work that pays wages that help them care for themselves and their families, but also to build careers that help them achieve long-term financial stability," said **Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO of Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.** "Focusing on the specific and specialized needs of clients seeking employment, providing them with the supports needed to help them enter and remain in the workforce, and then matching them with employment opportunities helps ensure their ultimate success."

"The members of Make the Road New York are incredibly encouraged by the Mayor and Commissioner Banks' commitment to innovation in how our city approaches workforce development. As they are acknowledging in this new approach, it is critical to support New Yorkers in accessing education, adult literacy, high school equivalency and other programs that put families on the path to real economic self-sufficiency. Incomes increase when immigrant New Yorkers have a real chance to learn English and advance their education, helping entire communities to not just survive but to thrive," said **Deborah Axt, co-Executive Director at Make the Road New York.**

"In today's labor market, many low-income New Yorkers need education and support to escape poverty, not just work experience. HRA's Employment Program signals a welcome and overdue overhaul of the City's anti-poverty strategy – and potentially a national model for other cities," said **Thomas Hilliard, Senior Researcher at the Center for Urban Future.**

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