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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, CUNY ANNOUNCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO ADVANCE CAREERS OF CITY'S HUMAN SERVICE WORKERS**

*The City will offer eligible employees of human services organizations the opportunity to advance in their careers by earning a CUNY degree or social work license*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the Human Services Career Advancement Scholarship, the City's landmark new program for offering eligible human services workers an opportunity to advance in their careers by earning a City University of New York (CUNY) degree or a social work license. This scholarship program, offered through CUNY and the NYC Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, will help create a pipeline of qualified New Yorkers to lead the city's human services organizations.

The \$2 million investment will make degree scholarships available to approximately 50 individuals for Master's degrees and approximately 70 individuals for Associate or Bachelor's degrees. It will also enroll 300 students in a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) test prep class.

"Human service workers are the vital link between public benefits and the New Yorkers who need access to them. They kept New York City afloat as we fought back COVID-19, and I'm proud to support exciting new opportunities for them to grow and develop in their fields," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Thanks to our partners at CUNY and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, New York City will create a new generation of human service leaders that keep our city strong and connected."

"With the Human Services Career Advancement Scholarship, the City is directly addressing identified barriers to advancement for human service workers," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives J. Phillip Thompson**. "This investment in human services workers, who play such a key role in the City's infrastructure, will allow us to create a pipeline of workers to rise through the ranks within our City's human services organizations, and will ultimately benefit New Yorkers who receive their services."

"The human services sector played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring vulnerable New Yorkers were connected to important support services and mental health care. Offering higher education scholarships within this professional field will help our City develop a sustainable pipeline of social workers to care for New Yorkers through this next stage of recovery and beyond," said **Melanie Hartzog, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**.

“This innovative partnership between the City and CUNY will make it financially possible for more human services professionals – who contribute so much to our city – to earn degrees and licenses that will help them move up in their careers,” said **Chris Neale, Deputy Director of the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development**. “Not only will this investment help workers advance, but it will also build a pool of talent to fill leadership positions across the sector.”

FPWA and The New School’s Center for New York City Affairs will lead a Steering Committee of human services umbrella organizations and direct service providers to promote the program and advise on design and implementation.

“CUNY is pleased to help provide the Human Services Career Advancement Scholarship, leveraging the University’s workforce development capabilities at a time of unprecedented need,” said **CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. “This win-win program will enable New York City workers to gain the benefits of a CUNY education and acquire the training, skills and credentials to advance their careers in fields that benefit millions of New York residents. We thank the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development for enabling CUNY and our other partners in this endeavor to aid New York’s recovery by expanding and improving the delivery of social services.”

“Our city’s most critical services are driven by a workforce made up of approximately 60,000 people. Of those, 67% are women, and 68% are persons of color. The Human Services Career Advancement Scholarship creates a path to a degree or licensure for these essential workers who have had to put their education on hold because of a deficit of financial and other critical supports,” said **Jennifer Jones Austin, Executive Director of FPWA**. “FPWA is thrilled to be a part of this project because it lifts up New York’s Human Services workforce and recognizes the integral role they have in keeping our city and residents going strong.”

“This new scholarship program will open up career advancement opportunities for the predominantly women of color workforce providing City-funded human services,” said **James Parrott, Director of Economic and Fiscal Policies at the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School**. “This will help retain and reward a valued workforce, and contribute to enhanced service delivery. And, this new partnership reflects the City’s renewed commitment to invest in the nonprofit workforce.”

Human services workers operate homeless shelters, manage senior centers, support youth in summer jobs, connect people to permanent employment, and ensure the welfare of New York City’s children. But the human services organizations that employ them often lack sufficient funding to invest in professional development.

Workers at eligible nonprofits that hold human services contracts with the City of New York can apply for a scholarship for up to 50% of tuition costs for an Associate, Bachelor’s, or Master’s degree at a participating CUNY college. Workers with a Master’s in Social Work degree but no license can apply to participate in a test prep class, offered by the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, which will be available free of charge and cover the cost of the LMSW license exam and the license fee.

### **Eligibility**

Applicants for the degree scholarships and LMSW test prep must meet the following criteria:

- Have at least one year of experience in the human services sector, either in New York City or elsewhere, though priority will be given to candidates with more years of experience
- Be currently employed at an eligible nonprofit provider organization
- Have written commitment from their organization
- Applicants to the Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree scholarships must also be New York State residents.
- Applicants to the Associate or Bachelor's degree scholarships must have earned some college credits previously.

More details about eligibility are available on the program website site: [www.cuny.edu/hscas](http://www.cuny.edu/hscas).

### **Key Dates and How to Learn More**

CUNY and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development will be convening information sessions about these degree scholarships on June 15 and June 23 for interested applicants. Degree scholarship applications for the fall 2021 semester are due by July 2 and applicants will be notified about whether they are awarded on or just after July 23.

To learn more about the scholarship programs or the LMSW test prep classes, to register for an information session about the degree scholarship programs, and to apply, visit [www.cuny.edu/hscas](http://www.cuny.edu/hscas).

“When New York City’s families need some help to ensure children’s well-being, the child welfare workforce is there for them,” said **Kathleen Brady-Stepien, President and CEO of the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies**. “We owe it to the hard-working direct care workers and caseworkers to support them, and that includes supporting their continued education. We want our workers to succeed so they can ensure our families succeed.”

“It’s encouraging to see the City begin this new and long-awaited sector-wide career ladder system that will benefit New York City’s hard-working and committed nonprofit workforce,” said **Roderick Jenkins, Senior Program Officer, New York Community Trust**. “This effort advances a model that workforce funders have seen work successfully in other sectors and it should expand in the years ahead to add more rungs and provide a more robust ladder of opportunity.”

“Human service workers are the backbone of our City, supporting New Yorkers with access to critical services when in need,” said **Stephanie Ruiz, Manager of Education and Professional Development at LiveOn NY**. “This scholarship program creates the pathway for individuals to further their career and progress forward in the human services sector. We are proud to support the future leaders across the field, who are working to create a better future for New York City.”

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