

Mayor de Blasio Appoints Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez as Commissioner of the Department for the Aging

April 9, 2019

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today that Lorraine A. Cortés-Vázquez will serve as Commissioner of the Department for the Aging. As Commissioner, Cortés-Vázquez will work to advance DFTA’s mission to eliminate ageism, ensure the dignity and quality of life of older adults, and support caregivers.

Cortés-Vázquez has extensive experience in government, private, and non-profit sectors. She is currently Senior Advisor to Mayor de Blasio and was previously New York's 65th Secretary of State. Prior to serving in this role, she was the Executive Vice President for the AARP. She also previously served the City as Bureau Chief for Bureau of Program and Resource Development for DFTA for 14 years. In this role, she administered a \$10 million budget, managed a staff of 108 people over 13 divisions, and managed the Fund for Aging Services, Inc., a public-private venture of DFTA.

“Lorraine is an experienced and dedicated public servant, and I know she will do an incredible job as DFTA’s new Commissioner, where she will serve the diverse needs of approximately 1.6 million older New Yorkers,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I look forward to supporting her in this new role as she works to make New York the most age-friendly city in America.”

“Lorraine is an experienced and knowledgeable public servant with an extraordinary understanding of our city. I am very pleased to welcome her as the head of our Department for the Aging, and looking forward to working with her in this new role,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**.

“I thank Mayor de Blasio for this opportunity to serve older New Yorkers and make New York among the best age-friendly cities in US. It is exciting to return to DFTA at this stage in my career and to continue to work with non-profit partners who ensure older New Yorkers receive the support, services, respect and dignity they deserve,” said **DFTA Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**.

As Senior Advisor to Mayor de Blasio, Cortés-Vázquez worked with Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson on strategic policy initiatives and worked within the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to advise the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs and Public Engagement Units.

Before joining the Administration, Cortés-Vázquez served as the Senior Vice President, Corporate Relations & Government Affairs for EmblemHealth. Cortés-Vázquez was also Executive Vice President for Multicultural Markets & Engagement at AARP where she ensured that the interests of multicultural audiences age 50-plus were integrated into everything AARP does, with the goal to increase multicultural presence among AARP membership and increase AARP's presence and involvement in multicultural communities. Prior to joining AARP, Cortés-Vázquez was Secretary of State in New York from 2007 to 2010 – the first Latina to serve in that role.

Cortés-Vázquez also served as President of the Hispanic Federation, a nonprofit network of 92 Latino health and human service agencies in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and as Executive Director of ASPIRA of New York, the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit Latino youth leadership development and education advocacy agency.

Cortés-Vázquez obtained her undergraduate degree from Hunter College and earned a master's degree from New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. She is a Toll Fellow, having completed the national leadership program for elected and appointed officials. She also earned certificates from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and from Columbia University's School of Non-Profit Management.

Her first day as Commissioner of the Department for the Aging will be April 15.

“Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez has dedicated her life to public service at all levels, and her appointment as the new commissioner of the City's Department for the Aging is well-deserved. Ms. Cortés-Vázquez's record of achievement speaks for itself, and I know she will bring the same passion to DFTA that she has brought to positions throughout her career. The senior citizens of New York City will have a true advocate in Ms. Cortés-Vázquez, and I congratulate Mayor de Blasio on an excellent appointment. I look forward to working with Ms. Cortés-Vázquez on the issues that concern our senior population in the future,” said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

"I commend Mayor de Blasio on his appointment of Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez to serve as Commissioner of the NYC Department of Aging," said **Congressman Adriano Espaillat**. "During her tenure as New York's Secretary of State, and in her capacity at City Hall, Ms. Cortés-Vázquez has consistently advocated on behalf of New York residents and families, and I am confident she will demonstrate the same qualities in her new position as Commissioner of DFTA. More than 1.6 million New Yorkers fall within the umbrella of DFTA's responsibility. New York City's seniors are witnessing a hyper-dynamic city that is undergoing tremendous change. The challenges they face - related to housing, health care, quality of life - are unique and take innovative solutions and creative thought leaders. Ms. Cortés-Vázquez will advocate for New York seniors as a champion on the issues that matter most to them and the challenges they face daily."

"Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez has distinguished herself in the nonprofit, government and corporate sectors, serving New Yorkers in countless capacities, and I am confident she will be a tremendous asset to the City's Department for the Aging," said **Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie**. "Her vast experience and commitment to helping New Yorkers who need it most make her the perfect candidate to lead this department."

"I commend Mayor de Blasio for the appointment of Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez as the new Commissioner of the Department for the Aging. Additionally, I would like to congratulate Lorraine as the new commissioner," said **Assembly Member Marcos A. Crespo**. "Lorraine has been an outstanding leader throughout her career, from her advocacy for New York families to her work in the healthcare sector. I have no doubt she will bring her great vision and leadership skills as we look to bring the highest quality service and respect to older adults in all five boroughs."

"I congratulate Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez on her appointment as Commissioner of the Department for the Aging, and I look forward to working closely with her as we prepare for the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse aging population," said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin, Chair of the Committee on Aging**. "The next few years will be a critical time for New York's older adults. As our city experiences a rapid rise in the number of seniors, older New Yorkers are also aging into poverty at a rising rate and facing an acute affordable housing crisis. These issues will require a comprehensive response from city agencies, including significant investment in services for seniors and those involved in their care. I look forward to working with Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez, who has decades of experience in both the nonprofit and governmental sectors, to continue our vital efforts on behalf of older adults across our city."

“As a member of the City Council’s Committee on Aging, I am ecstatic about Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez’ return to DFTA as its Commissioner. She brings with her decades of valuable experience as a public servant and a commitment to ensure our city’s aging population is treated with dignity. I look forward to working with her in her new role as she leads this vital agency,” said **Council Member Diana Ayala, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction.**

“Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez has been an advocate for the aging in New York for most of her career. We have had the pleasure of working with Lorraine for many years, including when she served as AARP’s Executive Vice President for Multicultural Markets & Engagement. She has championed a variety of issues critical to older New Yorkers, from affordable housing and livable communities to economic security and wellness. She will be a strong advocate for older adults in New York City, and AARP applauds Mayor de Blasio for her appointment,” said **Beth Finkel, AARP New York State Director.**

“LiveOn NY congratulates Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez on her appointment as Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging,” said **Allison Nickerson, Executive Director, LiveOn NY.** “The DFTA network of community based services is critical to enabling older New Yorkers and their caregivers to thrive in their communities. We look forward to working with Incoming Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez to make New York a better place to age.”

“We commend the Mayor on appointing Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez to lead the Department for the Aging. Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez’s extensive experience makes her uniquely qualified to improve the quality of life of older New Yorkers – many of whom are women who play vital roles in the lives of their families and communities,” said **Ana Oliveira, President and CEO of The New York Women’s Foundation.**

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