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DFTA LAUNCHES LARGEST MUNICIPAL PROGRAM IN THE NATION TO ATTRACT RETIREE EXPERTISE TO CITY AGENCIES

Program recruits skilled retirees and matches their talents to specific projects; City will benefit from highly specialized 'ReServists'

Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs and Commissioner Edwin Méndez-Santiago, LCSW, today announced the largest municipal program in the nation that will give retirees the opportunity to share their expertise with city agencies. The program, in conjunction with ReServe Elder Services, will match retirees—or ReServists—with short term city agency projects that utilize their expertise and experience. This partnership will result in greater civic engagement opportunities for retirees, increased capacity for city agencies, and ultimately, greater awareness of retired older New Yorker's wealth of experience and knowledge. As the number of older New Yorkers is expected to increase by 50 percent over the next 25 years, the Department is building upon its existing employment services by offering retired New Yorkers a variety of opportunities to use their skills set and knowledge to contribute to the greater public good. Deputy Mayor Gibbs and Commissioner Méndez-Santiago were joined by Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Martha J. Hirst, Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz, ReServe Board Chair Jack Rosenthal and ReServe Executive Director Claire H. Altman.

"New York City attracts the best and brightest workers in the world and we want to ensure that when they retire they have the opportunity to make this city even greater with their years of knowledge and expertise," said Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs. "The Department for the Aging is helping to create a model for civic engagement for aging services across the country."

"As more Boomers retire from their professional lives, we want to meet their need for post-retirement opportunities to 'give back' to their communities," said Commissioner Méndez-Santiago. "Retired professionals are an invaluable but under-used asset and ReServe is poised to connect these professionals with opportunities in City government, to the benefit of all. We have already used ReServists in the Department's not-for-profit arm, the Aging in New York Fund. The partnership between ReServe and the City will allow other City agencies to take advantage of the skills and talents of our retired residents."

Retired New Yorkers over the age of 55 can apply to participate in the Reserve program through the Department for the Aging's website, www.nyc.gov/aging or ReServe's website, www.reserveinc.org. After a candidate applies to become a ReServist, they are interviewed by ReServe and then matched with a specific project in a New York City agency or not for profit. There are currently ReServists matched with projects at the Departments of Consumer Affairs, Probation and Transportation. There are two ReServists at the Office of the Public Advocate. ReServists work 10 to 15 hours a week on projects that enable them to use their backgrounds in law, accounting, human resources, journalism, marketing, social work, health care, education or other fields while receiving a small stipend for their contribution. More

than 100 ReServists will be placed at city agencies.

Older Americans are increasingly regarding retirement as an active phase of life that includes work, volunteerism and public service. According to a MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures 2005 survey, half of Americans aged 50 to 70 want to do work that assists others and gives them a sense of purpose. ReServe also finds that retirees want to feel vital, physically active, intellectually stimulated and work as part of a group of people with a clear and important purpose. One retired market analyst and ReServist summed it up as, "My mind wants to work. My heart wants to work."

"We created ReServe because we saw a lack of post-retirement public service opportunities for the rising wave of highly educated older adults," ReServe Chairman Jack Rosenthal said. "ReServe has so far proved to be a win-win-win initiative – benefiting older adults eager to keep using their lifetime skills, nonprofit and service agencies that need those skills and the communities served by those organizations. The partnership with the Department of the Aging and New York City will demonstrate the power that ReServe can bring, at large scale, to municipal government for the benefit of all New Yorkers."

ReServe was created in 2005 by President of the New York Times Foundation Jack Rosenthal and Founding Chairman of the After-School Corporation Herb Sturz. To date, ReServe has placed 235 individuals in 65 nonprofit and public agencies; it currently has 250 active ReServists waiting to be matched with a specific employer. The first ReServists worked at the American Museum of Natural History, Goddard Riverside Community Center and the After-School Corporation.