

NYC Customer Service Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 3 - Spring 2018

Helping New Yorkers in More Neighborhoods Access Civil Service Jobs

The NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) recently opened its fourth Computer-based Testing and Application Center (CTAC) on Staten Island to help more New Yorkers access careers in Civil Service. The centers offer a one-stop shop where visitors can learn more about available City jobs, apply for Civil Service exams, and take scheduled Civil Service exams on-site.

In addition to the new CTAC center on Staten Island, DCAS has opened centers in three other locations in Queens, Manhattan, and Brooklyn and is currently developing a plan for one in the Bronx.

"We are very close to making pencil and paper exams a thing of the past," said DCAS Commissioner Lisette Camilo. "DCAS continues to expand its use of technology. The Mayor's commitment to supporting large-scale projects involving advanced technology makes this possible."



Ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Computer-Based Testing and Applications Center (CTAC) in the Stapleton section of Staten Island in January. From left to right: Deputy Staten Island Borough President Ed Burke, DCAS Commissioner Lisette Camilo, Council Member Debi Rose, and DCAS Executive Deputy Commissioner Dawn Pinnock.

The CTACs are staffed with knowledgeable employees who can answer visitors' questions and help them pursue available career opportunities. The CTACs include an application center and an examination area.

The application centers offer touch screen kiosks with information about Civil Service exams, job fairs, and training opportunities. If a visitor wishes to sign up for an exam, staff can help visitors sign up at the center.

The centers bring testing for City jobs closer to where New Yorkers live. The new Staten Island Center is located at 135 Canal Street, 3rd Floor. The centers can accommodate anywhere from 75-225 test takers and often exams are scored on-site before the test taker leaves.

In Fiscal Year 2017, DCAS administered 59 exams for 135,288 applicants at its CTAC locations. For more information, or to schedule a Civil Service exam, visit [DCAS Exams](#) and find directions to the nearest [CTAC](#).

Fire Department Urges New Yorkers to "Close the Door" in 16 Languages

In response to recent major fires - including the fire that killed 13 people at [2363 Prospect Avenue](#) in the Bronx on December 28, 2017 - the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) released two videos urging all New Yorkers to "Close the Door." Fire Marshals determined the tragic Bronx fire was caused by a 3-year-old boy playing with the burners on a stove. When the child's mother was alerted to the fire, she grabbed him and another young child and exited the apartment, leaving the door open.

Closing the door isolates fire and prevents smoke, heat and flames from spreading to common areas of a multiple dwelling (hallways and stairs). In a private home, closing a door to the fire area can prevent rapid spread of fire throughout the structure.

[One of the videos](#) features FDNY members delivering the lifesaving message of "Close the Door" in 16 languages spoken across New York City, including: Burmese, Cantonese, English, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu, and American Sign Language.

"If you are fleeing a fire in your home or apartment, remember to 'Close the door' to reduce the spread of fire that will threaten other occupants and responding Firefighters," said Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro.



FDNY Members urge New Yorkers to "Close the Door" when escaping fire.

To view the second video, [click here](#). Fire safety education tips can be translated into several languages at www.fdnysmart.org.

If you suspect that a child is playing with fire, or setting fires intentionally, the FDNY can help. The FDNY Juvenile Fire-Setters Intervention Program works to both educate and evaluate children (up to the age 12) who are engaging in fire play. The program is run by the Bureau of Fire Investigation and is completely confidential. To learn more about the FDNY Juvenile Fire-Setters Intervention Program, [click here](#). For translated fire safety education publications, [click here](#).

Newly Licensed Businesses Get VIP treatment from Consumer Affairs

Since the [launch](#) of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Visiting Inspector Program (VIP), senior inspectors have educated more than 1,600 new brick-and-mortar DCA-licensed businesses.

VIP offers new licensees a free, educational inspection within three months of receiving their license so they can better understand the DCA laws that apply to their business and how to avoid fines.



DCA inspector David Raja conducts a VIP visit at a store in Brooklyn that has a new cigarette retail dealer license.

To quote one business, “the inspector made us feel like a VIP” and another, “the inspector was extremely helpful and acted in a very professional way—explaining all of the violations and all of the ways that we can fix

it.” In all, about 80 percent of the businesses visited had a potential violation that they now know how to fix.

In addition to those visited by VIP, DCA has been conducting extensive education to businesses who need or will need a license in one of several new DCA license categories, including laundries, car washes, and tobacco and e-cigarette retail dealers. DCA has directly mailed information to more than 20,000 of these businesses about licensing requirements and how to comply with the law.

DCA also conducted a series of open houses for both laundries and businesses impacted by the City's new tobacco laws. At these events, DCA staff walked the hundreds of attendees through the licensing process and explained regulations under the new laws.

DCA welcomes these new businesses to its family of licensees!

Helping Permanent Residents Attain Citizenship through NYCitizenship

The DSS team's superior customer service was a major part of the program's success. DSS staff work directly with clients and help guide them through the complex naturalization process.

Ms. Lopez was one of the first senior clients who became a citizen through the work done during the second year. Her oath ceremony was in February 2018, and she was thrilled to become a citizen:

“I have been in the country for a long time and thought that it was time to give it a try. Everyone was very nice and attentive. My experience was incredible. The attorney was very nice, patient, and clear with explaining the process of citizenship. My dream has finally come true; I will be able to vote and have a voice in this country.”



The NYCitizenship team with former Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Richard Buery, MOIA Commissioner Nisha Agarwal, and NYC Center for Economic Opportunity Director Matt Klein at the Year 2 Launch.

DHS Social Media Recognized for Outstanding Customer Service

Last spring, the Department of Homeless Services was recognized as the outstanding City agency in social media customer service by the Mayor's Office of Digital Strategy's (MODS) Team Digi. The award was based on exceptional performance determined by the quantitative and qualitative measures MODS uses to track how well agencies are following the principles of the Digital Playbook in their digital communications to meet New Yorkers where they are and helping to create a fairer and more equitable city.

To reach as many New Yorkers as possible, DHS prioritizes mobile online services to engage with clients, constituents, and other key stakeholders.

Through direct messaging on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, DHS engages New Yorkers in a variety of ways, especially by providing those at risk of eviction with information about City services to keep them out of shelter. For clients in shelter, DHS offers information about (and connection to) the Office of the Ombudsman and Shelter Hotline, as well as to other City agencies, such as the City Commission on Human Rights, to address other related concerns. DHS also connects constituents with information about HOME-STAT outreach and helps them make 311 service requests for those in need of street outreach. DSH averages 75-100 messages sent and received a week.



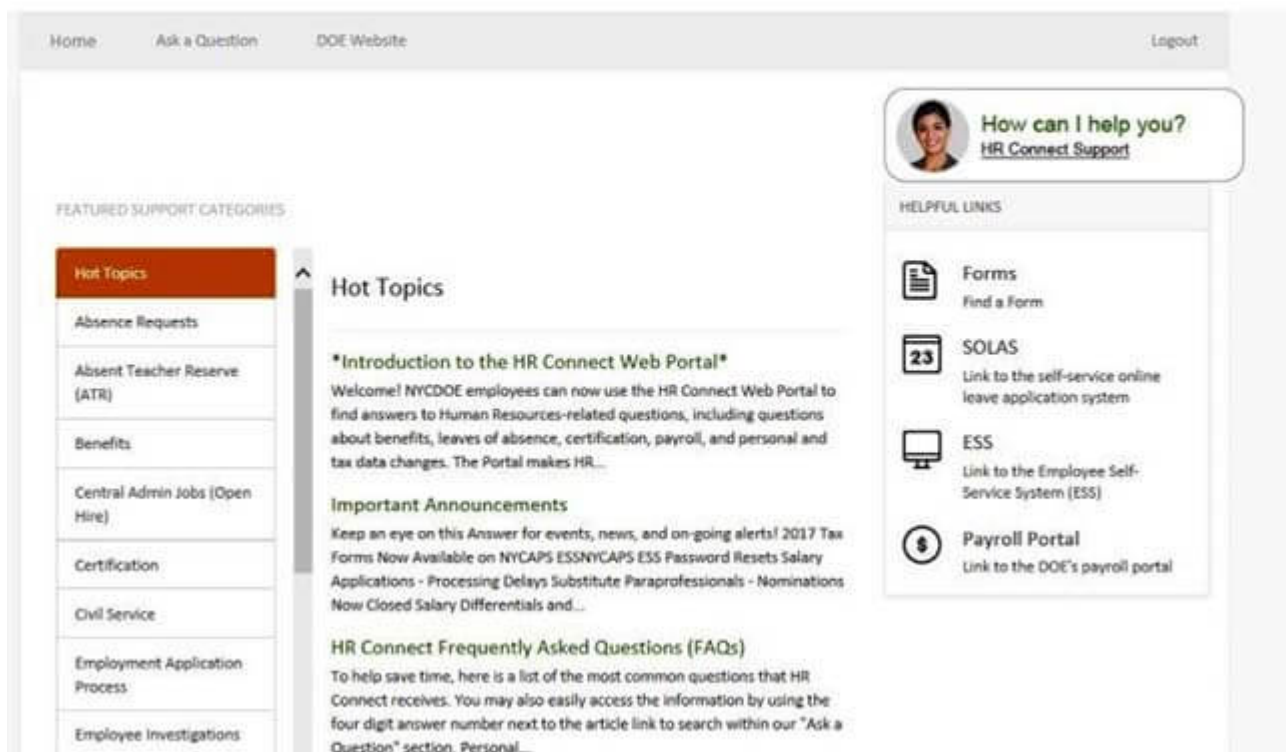
Expanding Customer Service Options for Department of Education Staff

HR Connect, the Department of Education's Human Resources service center, provides outstanding service to DOE employees through both the call center and walk-in center. Last summer, HR Connect rolled out a major upgrade to its customer relations management (CRM) platform, the centerpiece of which is the new HR Connect online customer service portal, providing an additional service option to DOE employees. Employees can now use the portal to find answers to their questions 24/7, with no wait, and receive help from a virtual assistant.

The portal has been an instant hit: since launched it has received over 175,000 visits, including more than 13,000 during the first week of school. The most popular topics include:

- Employee Self-Service (NYCAPS ESS) Access
- Enrolling in Health Benefits
- Updating Personal Information

- New Hires – Teachers, Principals, and other staff
- HR Connect Frequently-Asked Questions



The portal's debut, along with additional training of Customer Service Representatives and upgrades to the CRM platform and procedures, is also facilitating shorter wait times for employees using the call center or the walk-in center.

Looking Back: Customer Service in the Wake of Hurricane Maria

Hurricane Maria brought tremendous damage to several islands in the fall of 2017, causing significant hardship in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. DOE's Division of Human Resources Office of Field and Information Services (DHR OFIS) certification team rose to the challenge of helping relocate displaced educators from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands temporarily to the NYC school system.

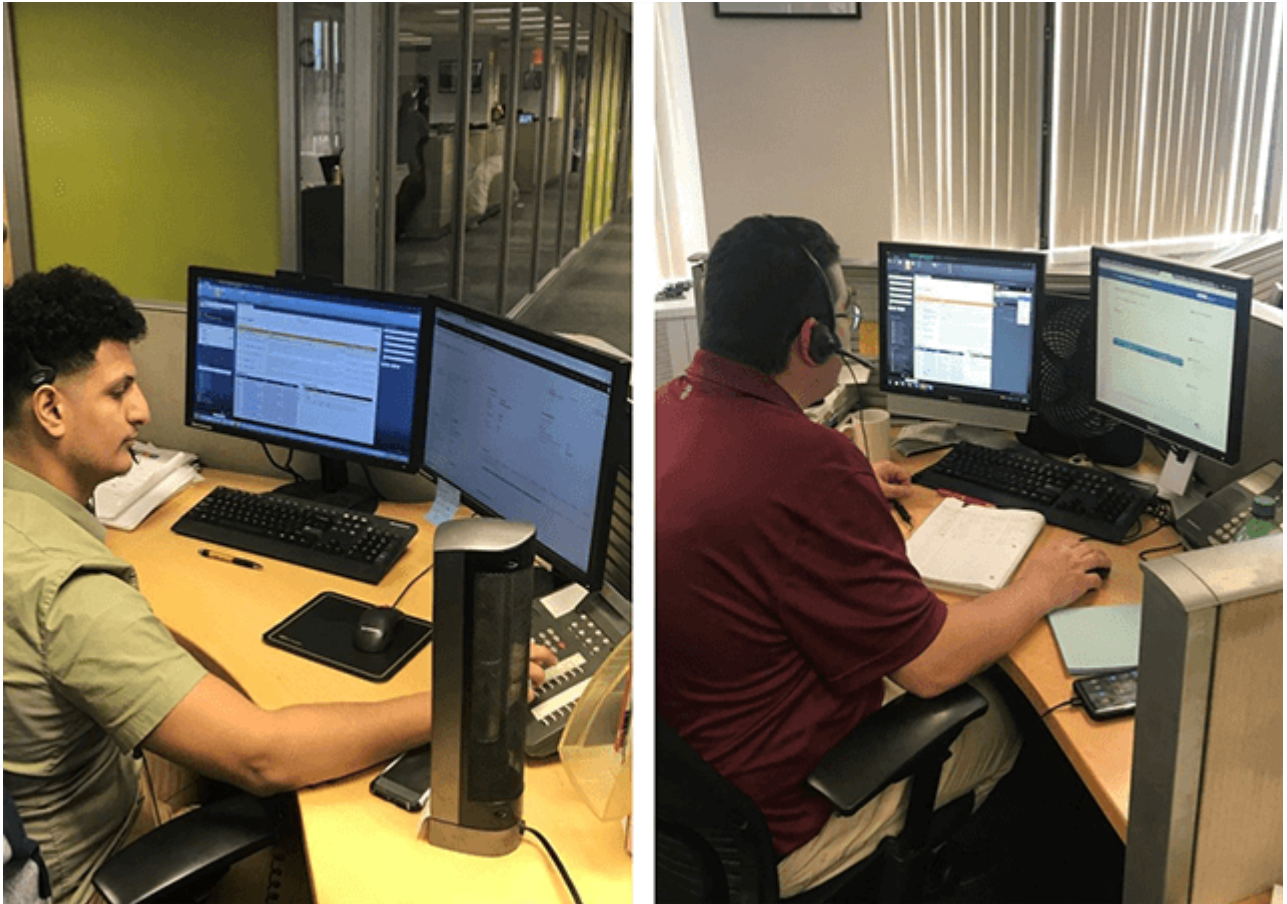
One special education teacher from Puerto Rico shared, "The devastation was such that even 103 days after Hurricane Maria schools were still being used as shelters, I could not teach classes without electricity or potable water service."

Together with the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the DHR OFIS certification team has advised and assisted teachers in obtaining temporary NYSED certifications that will be valid through the end of the 2017-2018 school year. If displaced teachers should choose to stay, the DHR OFIS certification team

will encourage them to pursue a NYSED initial teaching certificate through the [reciprocity pathway](#).

The DHR OFIS Certification team has provided services to these educators with compassion. A special thanks to Valerie Fallon, Yvonne Rodriguez, and the entire DHR OFIS certification team for modeling excellent customer service, and going above and beyond to meet their customers' needs. For more information on how the City is supporting those displaced by Maria Hurricane, visit the [NYC Hurricane Service Center](#).

DOE's P311 Call Center Answers Questions from Students' Families



Ammar Munnassar and Ralph Franzese handling calls at DOE's P-311 Center

Serving 1.1 million students is challenging, but the New York City Department of Education is making it possible with its P311 Call Center. P311 handles phone calls from families and school staff – answering questions about topics like enrollment, safety, and special education services. Families who call P311 can access over-the-phone interpretation services in more than 200 languages. In addition to handling inbound calls, the call center staff members make outbound calls to underserved families to inform them about special initiatives, upcoming events, and enrollment deadlines.

P311's newly implemented Service Cloud application is improving customer service for families. Service Cloud is a customer relationship management tool. It offers robust reporting, a dynamic agent desktop, and an expansive knowledge base. With this new technology, the call center streamlined communication with families as all interactions with families are logged in one place. Since implementation, P311 submitted to DOE staff over 190,000 requests from families across the City. P311 assists families with questions about the

enrollment process for 3-K to high school. Families can apply to programs in 3K, pre-K, and kindergarten over the phone by contacting P311; inform families of upcoming specialized programs such as gifted and talented and specialized high schools; and, if families are experiencing issues in their child's school, P311 addresses those issues by providing information or sending those complaints to the appropriate office.

What's next? P311 will continue to expand throughout the Department of Education and will find optimal ways to communicate with families. Next year, the call center hopes to introduce chat functionality and a customer portal so families can access the knowledge base and track their open tickets online. Families and school staff can call P311 at 718-935-2009.

Mayor's Office of Operations (OPS)

Emily Newman, Acting Director

Bonda Lee-Cunningham, Senior Advisor

Editor

Francisco Navarro, OPS

Alexandra Ozols, OPS

Contributors

Nicholas Benson, DCAS

Kathleen Brannigan, DOE

Paul Curtis, DOE

Sophia Kim, FDNY

Abigail Lootens, DCA

Beatriz Miseses-Hernandez, DHS/HRA

Kathy Young, FDNY

If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, please send an email to customerservice@cityhall.nyc.gov. Enter "Subscribe" in the subject field.

To view prior issues of the newsletter, click [here](#)
