

My name is Katrina Porter, and I am the Chief Human Capital Officer for the City of New York, and Deputy Commissioner of the Human Capital Division at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, more commonly known as DCAS. I am joined here today by my colleagues, DCAS Assistant Commissioner for Workforce Operations, Kadian Outar and Daniel Pollak, First Deputy Commissioner with the Office of Labor Relations.

I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the vital programs and processes we implement at DCAS to deliver resources, services, and support to city agencies—and most importantly, to the people of New York City. We understand the Council's interest in ensuring consistent public services and also share in the belief that the City's workforce is among its greatest asset and is a critical component for Government service delivery.

To provide context, DCAS plays a critical role in supporting agencies' efforts to recruit and retain City employees, and foster an accessible civil service with minimal barriers to entry. In addition, we have developed innovative tools such as our interactive data website, which draws information from our annual NYC Government Workforce Profile Report.

State of the Workforce

Here at DCAS, we take a multi-pronged approach to attracting and retaining talented New Yorkers to serve in city government. This is a constantly evolving process that requires us to develop strategies to broaden the scope of the Civil Service exams we administer. We have been expanding the use of our bridge exam model, which allows candidates to take a single exam while qualifying for multiple roles.

We recently expanded this model to include, for the first time, a single exam featuring multiple public safety titles. This exam, currently open for registration, offers candidates four potential pathways into a career in public safety. Closing on November 29, we recently launched a digital marketing campaign, entitled *Choose Your Character, Choose Your Badge*, aimed at attracting a diverse pool of candidates to register.

In addition to expanding offerings, we continue to accelerate the timeline for administering Civil Service exams, enabling quicker candidate list availability for urgent agency hiring needs. In FY24, DCAS produced exam results in just under 140 days, representing the lowest such timeframe in well over a decade. Shorter turnaround times

help to ensure candidates remain engaged and are responsive to agencies looking to hire.

Annually, DCAS administers between 185 and 200 exams, offering pathways to civil service jobs for tens of thousands of New Yorkers. To date, we have administered 205 exams, which are the most we have ever undertaken in a single year. Exams are the front door to municipal service; more than 80% of city government jobs require the passage of a Civil Service exam.

We're also very proud of our latest effort to speed up onboarding. Led by DCAS, the HR Transformation initiative has helped to reduce the paperwork necessary for onboarding and streamlined hiring processes to provide a smoother pipeline, as well as prevent candidate drop-off.

MQRs

We have also looked to adjust many minimum qualifications across various titles to consider practical experience and formal education requirements while maintaining high standards across our workforce. This is a groundbreaking initiative and one that has already shown signs of promise. This ongoing initiative expands the pool of eligible candidates and reduces employment barriers. To date, we have successfully revised requirements for 44 titles, affecting approximately 22,500 jobs.

We expect this effort to continue to broaden the pathways into municipal work for New Yorkers.

Fellowships, Internships, and Apprenticeships

Our efforts to recruit talent has even expanded to include more pathways than ever for the next generation of civil servants. We have numerous initiatives aimed at engaging our city's youth. In partnership with NYC Talent, DCAS is working to meet the Mayor's Moonshot 30x30 apprenticeship goal of delivering 30,000 apprenticeships by 2030, including helping to launch the Career Readiness and Modern Youth Apprenticeship (CRMYA) for high school students interested in a civil service career.

For more than ten years, DCAS has hosted a hands-on automotive internship program in the City fleet's repair garages with NYC Public Schools during the summer where students gain experience with NYPD, DSNY, FDNY and Parks vehicles. This year, DCAS expanded the internship to be year-round.

And we're not done – we are continuing to work to expand these programs to benefit and engage even more of the city's youth. In May 2024, we successfully petitioned and received approval from the State to double the number of seats for the Civil Service Pathways Fellowship (CSPF). Beginning with this year's 67 fellows, who comprise the largest CSPF cohort in the program's history. We also successfully continue to

administer the Urban Fellows, Summer Internship Program, and Public Service Corps programs.

Retention Efforts

Beyond our exams, internships, and qualification reviews, we're laser focused on training to both increase staff morale and retention.

On the training front, we launched a new Citywide Learning Management System, NYCityLearn, which allows employees to register for classes, download transcripts, and access the City's digital training and professional development catalog anytime, anywhere. With this new system, NYCityLearn supports retention, as well as help foster a resilient workforce.

We are also committed to hearing directly from city workers. This past summer, DCAS launched the 2024 Climate Survey to assess how the city's equity and inclusion policies are impacting the workforce. The Climate Survey is part of a long-term strategy to help agencies with developing and modifying strategies to prevent Equal Employment Opportunity discrimination and sexual harassment.

Position on proposed legislation

Intro 075

Before concluding, I would like to address Intro 075. As part of our work on the Government Workforce Profile Report, DCAS developed an interactive online tool that provides extensive information, including nearly all the data required by the proposed legislation.

The tasks involved in producing the report, such as data collection, merging various datasets, cleaning data, data analysis, and checking for errors; all require a significant amount of time. Allowing interagency stakeholders the opportunity to verify the data further lengthens the timeline.

DCAS is concerned, among other things, that the bill's mandated two-week refresh rate as well as the twice annual reporting requirement are too challenging to fulfill. However, we would welcome a dialogue with the Council about these provisions.

Intro 212-A

With regard to Intro 212-A, ensuring that exams are readable and accessible are a core function of DCAS' exam development process. When formulating questions for an exam, DCAS works with agency Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), who are permanent incumbents serving in the relevant title, to craft questions that will accurately test a candidate's knowledge of a title's work. DCAS' Exam bureau brings together two separate panels of 3-5 SMEs (depending on available agency staff)—a question writing

panel and a separate panel of experts (all of whom are permanent incumbents in the title) who review the first panel's work. The question writing SMEs craft questions specific to the knowledge, skills and abilities of a title while the second panel reviews the first panel's content for appropriateness to the work of the title.

So, to be clear, exam readability and accessibility are two areas we already actively undertake when developing exams.

Conclusion

I hope this testimony has conveyed that while we do not directly control the hiring processes of individual city agencies, we work diligently to support them in meeting their hiring needs.

We are committed and passionate about helping New Yorkers join city government, and we are working tirelessly to position the City of New York as an employer of choice. Hiring and retaining the brightest and most talented New Yorkers is one of our top priorities. The Civil Service system undoubtedly provides a pathway to the middle class for all New Yorkers. Through the initiatives, programs, apprenticeships, and partnerships we've outlined here, DCAS continues to recruit qualified candidates to fill city vacancies.

I'd like to thank the City Council for its partnership with DCAS in advancing this important work.

I am happy to now answer any questions you may have.



November 19th, 2024

**Testimony of Henry Garrido, Executive Director, District Council 37, AFSCME
Before the New York City Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor, Jointly
with the Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation**

Good Morning. I'm Henry Garrido, Executive Director of District Council 37, AFSCME, and I testify before you today on behalf of the city's largest municipal employee union. We represent 150,000 members and 89,000 retirees across every city agency. Thank you to Chair De La Rosa and Chair Restler and members of both committees for the opportunity to testify on the critical issue of workforce vacancies and their far-reaching impact on city services.

The City of New York currently has 22,000 job vacancies, and at least 8,000 are DC 37 union positions. The state of the city workforce is a matter of urgent concern. Across numerous agencies, persistent vacancies are undermining the quality of public services that New Yorkers rely on and threatening the city's ability to function effectively. From delays in social services, to our parks and playgrounds not being cleaned regularly, working families and children are suffering the most. We have a responsibility to make sure the needs of all New Yorkers are being met.

Parks Department – The Parks Department is central to the quality of life for New Yorkers. Parks are where our children play, where families gather, and where we turn to for respite in this dense urban environment. Yet, chronic understaffing has left parks across the city in disrepair, with fewer maintenance workers and groundskeepers available to care for green spaces. We have lost nearly 1000 staffing lines including community coordinators, gardeners, park rangers, and Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers. Vacancies in these roles mean longer waits for basic upkeep, from trash removal to repairs of playground equipment, impacting the safety and usability of these essential community spaces.

Human Resources Administration – There are 72 job postings for Benefits Opportunity Specialists series and 24 Eligibility Specialists, and even more vacancies in the agency. The HRA is the backbone of New York City's social

safety net. Its staff ensures that the most vulnerable among us—families facing food insecurity, individuals requiring housing assistance, and workers seeking job training—receive timely support. Yet, the agency’s staffing crisis is creating a bottleneck that delays vital services.

Caseworkers and eligibility specialists are overwhelmed with caseloads far beyond what is sustainable. These delays hurt not just individuals but the broader community, as people unable to access services are left in dire straits. Without immediate action to recruit and retain HRA workers, we risk a collapse of the very systems meant to provide stability for those in need.

Department of Buildings – At the Department of Buildings, vacancies are delaying construction projects citywide, hindering economic development and housing production at a time when New York City desperately needs both. These delays slow down the creation of housing and critical infrastructure projects.

The ripple effect of these vacancies impacts everyone, from workers on job sites to residents waiting for much-needed housing. Filling these positions is not just about efficiency—it’s about meeting the urgent needs of our city’s growth and housing crisis.

Department of Transportation – Parking Equipment Service Workers

DOT’s Parking Equipment Service Workers are essential to maintaining the city’s parking meters, a critical source of revenue for New York City. However, this workforce currently faces a troubling 12% vacancy rate. This shortage increases the burden on remaining workers, leading to higher overtime demands and heightened stress levels.

The impact extends beyond the workers themselves. Unfilled positions mean delays in maintaining and repairing parking meters, which directly affects the city’s ability to collect parking revenue efficiently. Given that these positions are in the Labor class and require only a driver’s license—no civil service exam—this vacancy rate is both avoidable and unacceptable.



Finance – Finally, I want to highlight the critical impact of vacancies in revenue-generating positions across various city agencies. From tax assessors and auditors to enforcement officers, these roles bring in essential funding that the city relies on for its operations. There are currently 20 postings for City Tax Auditors, a 6% vacancy rate. Each additional auditor can bring in millions of additional dollars. Every unfilled position represents lost revenue, exacerbating budget shortfalls and further straining city resources.

Investing in these roles is a net positive for the city’s finances. Yet, these positions remain unfilled, even as they offer some of the clearest returns on investment. This is short-sighted and counterproductive.

Closing – New York City’s strength lies in its people—and that includes the dedicated workers who ensure this city runs. The vacancies across city agencies are not just numbers on a spreadsheet; they represent a growing inability to deliver the services that New Yorkers depend on daily.

District Council 37 stands ready to work with this Council and the administration to address this workforce crisis. Together, we can build a city workforce that is robust, well-supported, and capable of meeting the needs of all New Yorkers.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

See sample figures on next page.



Sample Figures from www.nyc.gov/opendata on 2024 job postings. Some posting may be duplicated as internal and external.

<u>Row Labels</u>	<u>Sum of # Of Positions</u>
Full time	3823
Part time	458
Grand Total	4281

<u>Row Labels</u>	<u>Sum of # Of Positions</u>
Entry-Level	784
Executive	39
Experienced (non-manager)	3037
Manager	274
Student	147
Grand Total	4281

<u>Row Labels</u>	<u>Sum of # Of Positions</u>
Competitive-1	2297
Exempt-4	392
Labor-3	52
Non-Competitive-5	1403
Pending Classification-2	137
Grand Total	4281

**Testimony of Sylvester Ervin
Associate Parks Service Worker
Local 983, DC 37
Before the Civil Service and Labor and
Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation Committees
November 19, 2024**

Good morning Chairs de la Rosa and Restler, as well as members of the Civil Service and Labor and Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation Committees. My name is Sylvester Ervin and I am a Local 983, DC 37 member working as an Associate Parks Service Worker (APSW) in the Parks Department.

The lack of staffing in the Parks Department is impacting the conditions in parks throughout the city. When the weather is warm, parks become crowded and heavily utilized. As a result, trash piles up and there is not enough staff to keep up with the conditions in the parks. The workers try their best to maintain a clean and enjoyable environment for park goers, but it can be a losing battle at times.

Another area where there is a severe workforce shortage in parks is the Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers. This work is done by my fellow union brothers and sisters in Local 983. These workers patrol the parks and keep them safe. There are currently a little over 200 PEP officers to patrol 28,000 acres of parkland throughout NYC. These PEP officers are further spread thin during the summer months since they are also responsible for patrolling beaches, pools, as well as recreation centers. In order to combat the safety issue in parks, as well as the other areas I mentioned, we need to start by hiring additional PEP officers.

The city needs to recognize hiring is not keeping pace with attrition and retirement. This is resulting in shortfalls in the city's workforce. The city must invest in its workforce in order to maintain services for New Yorkers and tourists alike who have come to enjoy the city's parklands, not only in the summertime, but year round. New York City needs to invest in increasing its workforce and hiring additional staff to meet the needs of many of its agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.



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Testimony in Support of Ints 0075 and 0212

November 19, 2024

To the Committee on Civil Service and Labor:

My name is Molly Senack, and I am the Education and Employment Community Organizer for the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY).

In the last two years, significant efforts have been made in NYC to increase the hiring and workplace retention rates of people with disabilities. Local Law 12, enacted in January 2023, requires all NYC agencies to develop (and eventually implement) a five-year plan to ensure that each agency's workplace, programs, and services are accessible to people with disabilities. Additionally, in the summer of 2023, Mayor Adams announced an initiative to support career advancement for people with disabilities. It includes the creation of a Center for Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion and the expansion of the existing NYC: ATWORK, both of which aim to remove barriers to people with disabilities seeking employment. This initiative is happening in conjunction with an expansion of NYC's 55-a program, which allows qualified people with disabilities to be hired for municipal civil service positions without having to take qualifying exams.

The Council is now considering legislation that will contribute to these efforts:

- Int 0212 would require the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to provide civil service exams in plain, simple language, making it easier for people with disabilities to obtain civil service positions regardless of whether they decide to participate in the 55-a program. Additionally, this bill would ensure that more people who do participate in the 55-a program have access to the promotion opportunities and increased job security that even under the program require taking and passing a qualifying exam.
- Int 0075 would require DCAS to provide consistent and updated information on the makeup of the city government workforce, including data on race, gender, age, salary, and managerial status. This bill would also require the publication of semiannual reports aggregating and summarizing that data. This type of transparency is an invaluable first step towards equity.

However, Int 0075 excludes a crucial component of the comprehensive data it seeks to collect: disability status. In 2022, only 34.8% of disabled people between the ages of 16-64 were employed in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people with disabilities are less likely to work in traditionally higher paid managerial or professional positions than people without disabilities- 37.4% compared to 43.9% respectively. Employees with a

disability are almost twice as likely to only work part-time as people without a disability (30% vs 16%), and according to the American Community Survey, people with disabilities in NYS are also almost twice as likely as people without disabilities to live below the poverty line (30% vs 17%).

As stated above, NYC is making an active effort to improve this landscape. Including disability status in the data reports required under Int 0075 would not only shed light on the success of the employment expansion measures put forth by the City, but also on the impact that the intersection of race, gender, and disability has on wage parity, job retention and advancement, and overall representation within each city agency.

We thank the Council for your time and effort, and support the passage of these pieces of legislation. However, we also ask that disability status be included as a part of the comprehensive data publication required under Int 0075. Without its inclusion, the picture provided of the city workforce will be incomplete, and any efforts to improve and expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities will be hindered by the omission.

Sincerely,

Molly Senack (She/Her)
Education and Employment Community Organizer
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York
Email: msenack@cidny.org Phone: (917)-415-3154

New York City Council
Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation
Galen Oettel

Good morning, my name is Galen Oettel, and I am a member of DC 37. I thank the City Council for holding this hearing to address the critical issue of staffing shortages within the Parks Department and their impact on our work, our parks, and the communities we serve.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green, and resilient parks system. Unfortunately, the budget for the next fiscal year threatens to undermine this goal. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed and under-resourced Parks Department to maintain equitable and accessible parks for all. Despite growing demand and the evident need for these spaces, NYC Parks now employs fewer workers than before the pandemic, and thousands fewer than it did decades ago.

Staffing shortages have been particularly severe for the Natural Resources Group (NRG). We're working to conserve New York City's natural resources for ecosystem and public health through management, restoration, acquisition, and public engagement using scientifically supported and sustainable approaches. However, the continued absence of Play Fair funding has resulted in the elimination of essential positions that are crucial for managing and protecting the city's natural areas.

Without sufficient investment, these losses will have long-term consequences for our natural areas, our communities, and future generations of New Yorkers. I urge the Council to take action to restore critical funding for NYC Parks.

Thank you,

Galen Oettel
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation

I am submitting testimony today as a private citizen of New York City. Today's staffing shortages in the Parks Department are not only making it hard to keep parks safe, accessible and clean in the present, but will have **long-term and far-reaching impacts** on the city.

As an employee of the Parks Department, I was speaking recently to someone who has been an employee of the Department for many years in a maintenance and operations (M&O) role. He said this has been the worst year of his time at Parks in terms of M&O staffing deficiencies and the difficulty of maintaining parks. When the Parks Department does not receive sufficient funding to hire enough M&O staff, it creates a tale of two cities. While parks in wealthy neighborhoods have conservancies to fill in the gaps created by Parks' staffing shortage, low income neighborhoods must make do with inadequate Parks maintenance, which leads to crumbling sidewalks, overflowing trash bins, and unsafe conditions-- but only in low income neighborhoods.

When I was hired for my job at the Parks Department, the job description said that my role involved advocating for the open space needs of New Yorkers. Instead, due to our staffing shortage, my biggest job has been to turn down opportunities for new parkland. I work on rezonings on behalf of the Parks Department, and am supposed to identify opportunities for expanding existing parks or establishing new ones in rezoning areas. Through the rezoning process, agencies such as DCP will often present the Parks Department with opportunities to take jurisdiction and management of new pieces of land, with the goal of increasing the quality of life of New Yorkers. Because Parks has no staff to maintain any additional acreage, I am most often forced to turn these offers down. That's right: New York City could have more parkland, but we don't because we don't have anyone to maintain it. These decisions, made because of a staffing shortage today, will impact New Yorkers for generations to come. The Parks staffing shortage goes beyond impacting just open space. For example, in one rezoning area there were calls for 100% affordable units on a certain housing site. Parks does not want this to happen because we are relying on that site to pay to maintain an adjacent park, and the site would not have the money to do that if the units were 100% affordable. All of this goes back to Parks not having the staffing to maintain our parks ourselves, and the outcome is increased inequality.

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