

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS 1
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR
JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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October 26, 2022
Start: 1:39 p.m.
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HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Carmen N. De La Rosa, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Sandra Ung, Chairperson
Erik D. Bottcher
Tiffany Cabán
Eric Dinowitz
Oswald Feliz
Rita C. Joseph
Julie Menin
Francisco P. Moya
Gale A. Brewer
Shahana K. Hanif
Lynn C. Schulman

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS 2

A P P E A R A N C E S

Barbara Dannenberg, Deputy Commissioner for
Human Capital at the Department of Citywide
Administrative Services

Silvia Montalban, Chief Equity and Inclusion
Officer at Department of Citywide Administrative
Services

Kadian Outar, Executive Director of Citywide
Equity and Inclusion at Department of Citywide
Administrative Services

Francis Torres, Deputy Commissioner of the
Division of Programs and Community Partnerships
at the Department of Correction

Andre Ward, Associate Vice President of the
David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy at The
Fortune Society

Vikki Pryor, President and Chief Executive
Officer of Getting Out and Staying Out

Michelle Pryce-Screen, Chief Program Officer of
Getting Out and Staying Out

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon. This is
4 a soundcheck for the Committee on Civil Service and
5 Labor jointly with Governmental Operations. Today's
6 date is October 26, 2022. Located in the 16th Floor
7 Committee room. Recording done by Pedro Lugo.

8 SERGEANT LUGO: Hello, everyone. Welcome
9 to today's hybrid New York City Council hearing of
10 the Committee on Civil Service and Labor jointly with
11 Governmental Operations.

12 Everyone, please place all electronic
13 devices to vibrate or silent mode.

14 If you wish to submit testimony, you may
15 send it to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that's
16 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

17 Chairs, we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: [GAVEL] Good
19 afternoon. I'm Council Member Carmen De La Rosa,
20 Chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor.
21 Thank you for joining today's oversight hearing on
22 optimizing the City's civil service exam system. This
23 hearing is a collaborative effort with the Committee
24 on Government Ops Chaired by my Colleague, Council
25 Member Sandra Ung.

3 In addition to today's oversight topic,
4 we will be hearing the following bills and
5 resolutions.

6 Intro 645 sponsored by Speaker Adams.
7 This bill would require the Department of Citywide
8 Administrative Services to offer civil service exams
9 in the Department of Corrections facilities to all
10 incarcerated individuals who meet the minimum
11 qualifications.

12 Intro 658 sponsored by me, which will
13 require the Department of Citywide Administrative
14 Services to develop a Civil Service Ambassador
15 Program.

16 Intro 698 sponsored by Council Member
17 Ung, which would codify the Public Service Corps
18 program.

19 Reso 310 sponsored by me, calling on the
20 State to raise the minimum wage annually by a
21 percentage based on the rate of inflation.

22 Reso 311 sponsored by me, calling on the
23 State to offer civil service exam training materials
24 and assistance at all Department of Corrections and
25 Community Supervision's, DOCCS, facilities.

1
2 Today's hearing will center on how the
3 City can improve administration of the civil service
4 exam to optimize the functioning of its crucial
5 system. Merit and fitness-based civil service exams
6 have been the gold standard for good government
7 practices for over a century. New York City has been
8 a leader in developing a merit-based Civil service
9 Exam, yet there is still a disconnect between the
10 ideal and the practice. While the exam system should
11 operate to safeguard the integrity of the civil
12 service system, there are numerous opportunities to
13 modernize this process while prioritizing equity and
14 efficiency. The New York City Department of Citywide
15 Administrative Services, DCAS, is charged with
16 recruiting examinees, administering exams,
17 maintaining an eligible list of potential hires, and
18 communicating with candidates about their eligibility
19 status. However, the protracted period for exam
20 administration contributes to the City's inability to
21 build, maintain, and quickly replenish the workforce.
22 According to the 2022 Mayor's Management Report, DCAS
23 took a median number of 246 days to administer an
24 exam in Fiscal Year 2022, a decrease of 318 days in
25 the prior Fiscal Year, and below the 290-day target,

1 but a substantial amount of time nevertheless. In a
2 February 2022 report, the State Comptroller pointed
3 to the extended civil service hiring process as a
4 factor that has led to local government staffing
5 shortages, cautioning that such shortages could
6 result in operational challenges which we are feeling
7 the effects of right now. Good government groups have
8 pointed to long exam development times, low frequency
9 of exams, and delays between exam dates and point of
10 hires as reason for the prolonged process. To ensure
11 the City recruits a strong pool of candidates and
12 remains a competitive employer, it is our
13 responsibility to streamline the civil service exam
14 process in order to support a continuous pipeline of
15 qualified workers to city agencies. Legislation like
16 my bill, Intro 658, is intended to support these
17 efforts and the closely related objective of building
18 a diverse municipal workforce that represents the
19 broad scope of people and talent unique to New York
20 City. Other innovations like the New York City Bridge
21 Exam are a step in the right direction. This exam
22 allows qualified applicants to apply for one exam,
23 pay one fee, and take one multiple choice exam for
24 multiple civil service titles. I look forward to
25

3 hearing more about the benefits of this new exam
4 option and what other innovations in exam system
5 administration could be implemented to optimize the
6 exam process.

7 I'd like to thank the Committee staff for
8 their hard work in preparing for this hearing,
9 Assistant Deputy Director Nick Connell, Policy
10 Analyst Elizabeth Arzt as well as my Chief-of-Staff
11 and Deputy Chief-of-Staff James Burke and Kiana Diaz
12 and my Communications Director Fray Familia.

13 Now, I would like to turn it over to our
14 co-Chair, Council Member Ung, for her opening
15 statement.

16 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Good afternoon. I'm City
17 Council Member Sandra Ung, Chair of the Committee on
18 Governmental Operations. I'm thrilled to be conducting
19 today's hearing jointly with the Committee on Civil
20 Service and Labor. I would like to thank my co-Chair,
21 Council Member Carmen De La Rosa, and her team for
22 all their hard work in putting this hearing together
23 and our Speaker, Adrienne Adams, for her leadership
24 on this important topic.
25

I would like to welcome my Colleagues who have joined us today. It's Council Members Dinowitz, Menin, Schulman, Moya, and Speaker Adams.

At today's hearing, the Committee will be examining the civil service exam system and looking at ways we can improve it. New York City government is in the midst of a staffing crisis. As of June, some agencies had vacancy rates as high as 27 percent. Since civil service exams are how most of these positions are filled, it is imperative that we ensure that as many city residents as possible have access to the civil service exam and job opportunities they afford, but we cannot just offer these exams in a vacuum and expect to get qualified candidates. We need to get out into our communities and inform people about these opportunities. Government jobs have always been a path to the middle class for people who have found other paths blocked. If you want a workforce that looks like New York City, we need to make the civil service exams available and accessible to everyone. The bills that we are hearing today will help make that possible. One of those bills, I'm happy to say, is the one I introduced. Introduction 698 will codify and expand

1 upon the Public Service Corps program, an initiative
2 administered by the Department of Citywide
3 Administrative Services, which creates internship
4 opportunities at city agencies for both the undergrad
5 and graduate students. It will require DCAS to
6 recruit students for the internships from diverse
7 backgrounds. DCAS would also be required to report
8 annually on the program's progress including
9 demographic data about the students who participated.
10 The goal of this bill is to create a pipeline of
11 students from a variety of backgrounds that are ready
12 and able to fill civil service positions upon the
13 completion of their degree. I'm hopeful that this
14 bill, along with the others being introduced by my
15 Colleagues today, will help fill the many agency job
16 vacancies with a diverse pool of well-qualified
17 employees and that may not have been traditionally
18 considered civil service careers. I look forward to
19 discussing my bill along with the bills proposed by
20 my Colleagues in greater detail with the
21 administration.
22

23 With that, I'd like to thank members of
24 the public and the representatives from DCAS who have
25 come to testify today.

2 I want to thank Nicholas Connell, CJ
3 Murray, Elizabeth Arzt, Erica Cohen from the central
4 staff for their work in putting this together.

5 Finally, I'd like to thank my own Chief-
6 of-Staff Alexander Hart for his assistance. I'd also
7 like to recognize Council Member Bottcher and Brewer
8 who have joined us today.

9 Now, I will turn it over to Speaker
10 Adams.

11 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you so much, co-
12 Chairs. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Adrienne Adams,
13 Speaker of the New York City Council, and I also
14 thank everyone who's joined us today.

15 Thank you, Council Member Carmen De La
16 Rosa, Chair of the Civil Service and Labor Committee,
17 and thank you, Council Member Sandra Ung, Chair of
18 the Governmental Operations Committee, for convening
19 this joint hearing on the City's civil service exam
20 system.

21 With the largest municipal workforce in
22 the country, New York City cannot function without
23 the ongoing dedication of approximately 300,000
24 public servants who teach our children, protect our
25 communities, and ensure that we have clean streets

1 and parks among other things to enjoy. In return, the
2 civil service offers labor protections, career
3 advancement, and economic mobility through important
4 employment benefits. For many, it offers financial
5 security and the pathway to a stable fulfilling life,
6 and I know this from my own family's experience with
7 the civil service, how rewarding it can be. My own
8 mother served for almost two decades in our city's
9 Department of Corrections where she retired as a
10 Captain. Her career allowed her to support our family
11 and raise my sister and me in Hollis, Queens, where
12 we had many opportunities to thrive and grow. My
13 mother's civil service career was a contributing
14 factor to our safety, health, and well-being. Given
15 the benefits of civil service, it is important that
16 these opportunities are available to the widest array
17 of New Yorkers, especially those who too often lack
18 access to them. We want our public servants to be
19 reflective of the communities that they serve, which
20 is why we are pursuing the legislative package we're
21 hearing today. In addition to the essential bills and
22 resolutions from my Colleagues, we will also hear
23 testimony on my bill, Intro 645. If enacted, this
24 bill would require the Department of Citywide
25

2 Administrative Services or DCAS to offer civil
3 service exams in Department of Corrections facilities
4 to all incarcerated individuals who meet the minimum
5 qualifications. Additionally, this bill would waive
6 the fee for civil service exams for individuals in
7 DOC custody and for individuals enrolled in re-entry
8 services or services related to alternatives to
9 incarceration. As we all know, offering an
10 opportunity does not guarantee results, and that is
11 why, in addition to offering exams, my bill would
12 also require DOC to offer exam preparation to all
13 incarcerated individuals and the Mayor's Office of
14 Criminal Justice, or MOCJ, to provide information
15 regarding civil service exams to organizations it
16 contracts with for re-entry or alternatives to
17 incarceration programs. We hope that by offering this
18 additional support, justice-involved individuals will
19 be provided pathways to opportunity and be fully
20 prepared to succeed. Lastly, my bill would require
21 DCAS to report annually on the number of incarcerated
22 individuals and individuals enrolled in re-entry or
23 incarceration alternative programs who participated
24 in city-provided exam preparation programming or took
25 a civil service exam in the prior year.

2 Through this legislation and the other
3 bills we're hearing today, we hope that we can
4 facilitate bringing a wider variety of people to the
5 civil service and offer more New Yorkers the chance
6 to secure meaningful, long-term, and financially
7 beneficial careers.

8 I look forward to hearing testimony from
9 the administration on this package of legislation,
10 but, before they begin, I also would like to thank
11 the Committee staff and everyone working in the
12 background for their assistance in this hearing.

13 Now, I turn it back over into the hands
14 of our Chair, Council Member De La Rosa.

15 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so
16 much, Madam Speaker, for your leadership and for this
17 wonderful bill you've put forward today.

18 I want to recognize that we've also been
19 joined by Council Members Schulman, Dinowitz, Menin,
20 and Feliz.

21 I'll turn it over now to the Committee
22 Counsel to swear in the first panel.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. We
24 will now hear testimony from the administration.

3 Before we begin, I will administer the
4 oath to all members of the administration who will be
5 providing testimony or available for questions.
6 Please raise your right hands.

7 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
8 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
9 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
10 questions?

11 ADMINISTRATION: (INAUDIBLE)

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Good
14 afternoon, Speaker Adams, Chair De La Rosa, Chair
15 Ung, and members of the Committees on Civil Service
16 and Labor and Governmental Operations. I am Barbara
17 Dannenberg, Deputy Commissioner for Human Capital at
18 the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. I
19 am joined today by my colleagues, Silvia Montalban,
20 DCAS Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer, Kadian
21 Outar, DCAS Executive Director of Citywide Equity and
22 Inclusion, and Francis Torres, Deputy Commissioner of
23 the Division of Programs and Community Partnerships
24 at the Department of Correction.

25 I am grateful for the opportunity to meet
with you to discuss the work that we're doing to

1 strengthen our civil service process and ensure it is
2 equitable and accessible to all New Yorkers. With more
3 than two decades in city government, I understand
4 firsthand that civil service is a pathway to a
5 rewarding career. My own journey has afforded me an
6 opportunity to proudly serve millions of New Yorkers
7 while aligning my passion for public service with my
8 expertise. I am a proud civil servant, and I'm made
9 even prouder each time we open the door for someone
10 else to support their family, work for their city,
11 and dedicate their careers to serving others. Civil
12 service is an invaluable avenue to success and
13 fulfillment.

14
15 After years of diligent effort and with
16 support from our agency and labor partners, we are
17 proud to say that we are in compliance with the state
18 laws that govern the civil service process regarding
19 provisional service. It marks a time in our journey
20 where we are best suited to implement programs and
21 initiatives that can bolster outreach to the most
22 vulnerable and underserved populations. We serve and
23 support more than 80 agencies, and we continue to be
24 nimble and tailor our civil service exam offerings to
25

1 meet the hiring needs of each agency and create a
2 qualified pool of applicants to draw from.

3
4 I remember a time when exam takers met at
5 public high schools and took the tests using paper
6 and pencil. Today, candidates can register for the
7 exams online via the Online Application System or
8 visit one of our five citywide Computer-based Testing
9 and Application Centers where they can schedule an
10 appointment to receive assistance with the
11 application process. We seek to remove barriers and
12 have been actively working to modernize the process
13 and provide information and resources that outline
14 the steps interested candidates need to take. Leaning
15 on technological advancements is among the many ways
16 we're working to cast a wider net and reflects our
17 commitment to fair and equitable access to the civil
18 service process.

19 I will now take a moment to explain more
20 about the civil service process and programs and
21 initiatives DCAS has in place to make the process
22 more accessible and transparent for all New Yorkers.
23 Central to the life of the City's municipal workforce
24 are the career opportunities afforded through civil
25 service hiring. As the largest local government

1 employer in the country, we provide a wealth of
2 career opportunities in numerous professions, a clear
3 path for growth, and great benefits. Over 80 percent
4 of civil service positions with the City are
5 designated as competitive class. These roles require
6 an exam to qualify and range from law enforcement,
7 emergency services, administration, technical
8 positions, and more.

10 Civil service, a system based on merit and
11 fitness for the job, serves as the foundation on
12 which the City identifies qualified employees.
13 Through the civil service system, applicants are
14 afforded opportunities to prove their suitability
15 based on an objective assessment of their
16 demonstrated knowledge, skills, and abilities for
17 entry level and senior level roles at our City
18 agencies.

19 Civil service also serves as a path to
20 the middle class for underserved and underrepresented
21 communities. That is why it is important that we
22 operate the civil service system fairly, equitably,
23 and expeditiously. DCAS continues to work diligently
24 to introduce system improvements, strengthen
25 collaborative partnerships, and reduce the

1 provisional workforce as required by law. DCAS also
2 integrates innovative approaches to recruit new,
3 quality talent through Civil Service 101 information
4 sessions and other outreach events. Between April
5 2020 and August 2022, our Office of Citywide
6 Recruitment participated in over 480 events, reaching
7 over 23,500 participants. Civil Service 101 is a
8 comprehensive information session tailored to
9 prospective employees and job seekers who want to
10 learn more about the civil service process and make
11 it easier to understand. The goal is to demystify the
12 civil service process and disassociate it with being
13 slow and arduous. By reframing the civil service
14 process, we hope to attract the best candidates to
15 work for our city.
16

17 It is important to note that while civil
18 service exams establish a viable candidate pool for
19 City jobs, the civil service process is distinct from
20 the hiring process. The hiring process occurs at the
21 agency level with agencies working in close
22 collaboration with our colleagues at OMB. Ultimately,
23 the hiring process hinges upon vacancy availability
24 and funding.
25

DCAS utilizes exams to equitably identify candidates who demonstrate the necessary knowledge, qualifications, and skills to excel in specific roles. The three types of examinations are open-competitive exams which are available to anyone who meets the minimum qualifications, promotion which are available only to permanent employees or employees with disabilities who qualify under our 55-a program, and qualified-incumbent exams which are available to those who already work for the City as a provisional employee in certain job titles after two or more years of service.

DCAS has worked to improve the cycle time of the examination process and to break down barriers to careers in civil service. On average over the last five years, Fiscal Year 2018 to 2022, DCAS administered 180 exams per year to more than 100,000 candidates and established over 150 lists for agencies to hire from. Paramount to DCAS' vision of ensuring equitable access to civil service and city government, DCAS has proudly created a community-based footprint for civil service application and examinations through the opening of one Computer-

3 based Testing and Application Center in each of the
4 five boroughs.

5 In addition to establishing a community-
6 based presence, DCAS has moved forward with the
7 digitization of our work and utilized automation to
8 provide faster service. This is evidenced through our
9 computerized testing system and our education and
10 experience exam systems which provide instant
11 tentative results as soon as the candidate completes
12 these exams. For candidates who disagree with the
13 rating received by DCAS, we allow them to initiate,
14 transmit, and track appeals of their ratings within
15 their Online Application System dashboard.

16 To cast a wider net and provide more
17 opportunities for interested candidates to work for
18 the City, DCAS launched a pilot program in Fiscal
19 Year '22 called the NYC Bridge Exam. Through this
20 pilot, DCAS departed from our traditional testing
21 process in which we offer one exam for one title. The
22 NYC Bridge Exam allows candidates to apply for one
23 exam, pay one application fee, and take one test that
24 can be used for up to 10 civil service titles. DCAS
25 received over 4,000 applications for the first NYC
Bridge Exam, and later this month, well last month,

the multiple-choice test will be held for these candidates. This new test format allows DCAS to offer a greater quantity of exams annually without increasing the need for staffing resources. For the Fiscal Year '23 exam schedule, additional titles are being reviewed for inclusion in the next NYC Bridge Exam.

DCAS' Office of Citywide Recruitment, known as OCR, promotes the vision that the City of New York is an employer of choice with a growing, talented, and diverse workforce. The work done through OCR is integral to our targeted recruitment efforts. OCR conducts extensive outreach to educate the public and current employees on civil service career opportunities and manages the City's 55-a Program that affords qualified persons with disabilities an entry into city government without taking civil service exams. Since its inception in 2015, OCR has participated in more than 1,700 events and has reached over 83,000 participants. Of these 1,700 events, approximately 1,000 were Civil Service 101 Information Sessions.

Prior to the pandemic, OCR also participated in recruitment events at various

1 correctional facilities, including Rikers Island. On
2 average, we participate in roughly 20 events per
3 month targeting different communities across each
4 borough. Due to the limited staff within OCR and the
5 increased demand for these sessions, we developed a
6 volunteer program where current employees across DCAS
7 are trained on how to conduct the Civil Service 101
8 Information Sessions. OCR is now working on expanding
9 that program to include employees working at
10 different City agencies and will be conducting
11 train-the-trainer sessions for agency recruitment
12 staff so that they are able to effectively
13 communicate with their jobseekers about the civil
14 service process. We also plan on conducting train-
15 the-trainer sessions for career services
16 professionals at educational institutions and
17 community-based organizations so that they can share
18 information about the civil service process with
19 their students and constituents. We anticipate
20 kicking off these new initiatives by the end of the
21 calendar year. These activities fully support the
22 objectives of Introduction 658.

23
24 In response to the pandemic, in April
25 2020, OCR switched to virtual events, allowing for

1 more flexibility for participants. As I mentioned
2 before, over 23,500 participants joined over 480
3 events between April 2020 and August 2022. OCR is now
4 back in the field and participating in both virtual
5 and in-person events. As part of these events, OCR
6 partners with sister agencies to host agency
7 spotlight sessions to highlight their hard-to-fill
8 recruitment needs for each respective agency. This
9 includes partnership with the Department of Housing
10 Preservation and Development, the Civilian Complaint
11 Review Board, Emergency Management, the Fire
12 Department, and others.

14 To attract prospective employees, DCAS
15 also hosts CityTalk panel discussions to spotlight
16 employees across various agencies. These events serve
17 as opportunities to promote City careers, the many
18 different City agencies, and the work employees
19 perform across these agencies. We also issue a
20 monthly newsletter to jobseekers and career services
21 partners across educational institutions, community-
22 based organizations, faith-based institutions, and
23 others that highlights current exams that are open
24 for filing and open job opportunities across
25 different agencies.

3 DCAS partners with the Department of
4 Education to expose students including those in
5 career and technical education programs to City jobs
6 and internships in their field of interest.

7 Additionally, in response to Local Law 173 of 2018,
8 DCAS provides the DOE with lists of upcoming civil
9 service exams that are open to high school graduates.

10 Similar to our partnership with DOE, we
11 have also established other pipelines for those
12 interested in joining city service through
13 fellowships and internships. As the City's public
14 university system, the City University of New York,
15 or CUNY, helps funnel talented, college-educated
16 candidates into government through our collaborative
17 Civil Service Pathways Fellowship. This initiative
18 connects recent graduates with full-time careers in
19 civil service, including competitive pay and
20 benefits. Candidates selected to participate receive
21 professional development, build networking and
22 mentorship relationships, and receive specialized
23 training.

24 In addition to the Civil Service Pathways
25 Fellowship program, each year our Urban Fellows
program recruits nationally for a nine-month

1 fellowship program that provides participants with a
2 unique opportunity to work with current City agency
3 decision-makers and assist in the implementation of
4 public policy. Each cohort consists of 25 talented
5 recent graduates who were selected from a pool of
6 hundreds of applicants from across the nation. It
7 serves as an entry point into city government and
8 public service.
9

10 DCAS also facilitates an annual Summer
11 Internship Program, collecting and posting internship
12 opportunities across the city and providing learning
13 opportunities to all interns. This year, three
14 courses were conducted: Civil Service 101,
15 Unconscious Bias: Why It Matters to You, and,
16 Interviewing and Networking. DCAS also assisted
17 agencies in providing mandated training, such as
18 sexual harassment prevention training, to their
19 summer interns.

20 As we review the proposed legislation, we
21 want to affirm our commitment to working with the
22 City Council to create more opportunities for New
23 Yorkers to access careers in civil service.

24 With regards to Introduction 658,
25 requiring DCAS to develop a Civil Service Ambassador

3 Program, we believe that our existing Office of
4 Citywide Recruitment is well-positioned to implement
5 this new program. We are proud that we already
6 provide similar services, and we're happy to work
7 with the Council on how to advance this work.

8 We also support Intro 698 in relation to
9 establishing a Public Service Corps program. For more
10 than 50 years, we have successfully managed our own
11 Public Service Corps, and we are committed to working
12 with the City Council to fine tune this bill and
13 introduce a new generation of New Yorkers to careers
14 in civil service.

15 Regarding Intro 645, on proctoring civil
16 service exams in DOC facilities, we stand in
17 agreement with the Council's intent to increase
18 access to civil service exams to all populations,
19 including those who are presently incarcerated.
20 Opportunity is synonymous with the spirit of New York
21 City, and opportunity should be provided to those
22 within the criminal justice system. There are several
23 programmatic and operational hurdles that we need to
24 address with DOC, and we would likely need additional
25 resources to make system improvements to support this
program. We look forward to working with the City

3 Council to identify the best way to create civil
4 service opportunities for incarcerated individuals.

5 We look forward to continued engagement
6 with you on these pieces of legislation.

7 Thank you for your time today and for
8 your commitment to strengthening civil service. Today
9 is just the beginning of a longer dialogue that we
10 would like to have with the City Council about our
11 efforts to improve programs and services. This
12 includes working with the Council to advance our
13 legislative agenda in Albany. We are working on
14 several proposals that aim to create greater
15 efficiencies and allow us to continue our efforts to
16 innovate in our approach to reforming the civil
17 service process, and now I am happy to answer any
18 questions.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll now
20 hear questions for Speaker Adams. Just a reminder to
21 Council Members and to representatives from the
22 administration, we have a stenographer here today and
23 please speak slowly so that the captioning can happen
24 in real-time. Thank you.

25 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you so much for your
26 testimony and thank you all for being here today. I'm

3 just going to ask a couple of questions then I will
4 defer to my Colleagues. I'd like to focus on my
5 legislation, Intro 645. Has the City done any
6 outreach to previously incarcerated people to
7 encourage them to take a civil service exam at all?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
9 for your questions, Speaker Adams. To answer your
10 question in short, yes, we have, and I'm actually
11 going to ask my colleague, Kadian Outar, to fill you
12 on the details of our recent outreach efforts.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OUTAR: Thank you so
14 much. We actually do work with organizations that
15 work with individuals that are justice-impacted.
16 Actually, I'm proud to say just yesterday we held a
17 CityTalk Panel conversation with Bard Prison
18 Initiative as well as Department of Health and Mental
19 Hygiene and our DCAS Investigations Unit. This was an
20 opportunity for us to kind of bring our current
21 employees within agencies and jobseekers together to
22 kind of address some of the challenges that we face
23 with individuals who were previously incarcerated.
24 Also, addressing some of the challenges that agencies
25 may have in targeting that particular population, but
we wanted to show that there is an opportunity. It's

1 an untapped talent pool. There are a lot of
2 opportunities there, and so providing this avenue for
3 individuals that either are justice-impacted or
4 recently hired within an agency and so the agency has
5 that initiative to hire individuals who are justice-
6 impacted or to walk them through what happens with an
7 investigation process so they become more familiar
8 with what that process looks like so it was a really
9 successful event with over 70 people attending.
10 Outside of that, we have participated in events at
11 Rikers Island. Previously, we had the baby showers.
12 I'm not sure if you remember those, but we
13 participated in those events. There has been a
14 resources fair at the Metropolitan Detention Center,
15 but we also target and work with community-based
16 organizations that support and provide services to
17 those individuals and so what we do is a direct
18 outreach to introduce the work that we do within
19 civil service, within DCAS, let them know about the
20 opportunities to partner with us, whether it's us
21 participating in a recruitment event that they have
22 or hosting a Civil Service 101 Information Session
23 for them, and we're looking to work with communities
24 to also engage and think about the questions that
25

2 they may have that we don't typically address in
3 these sessions and tailor our presentations to make
4 sure that we are answering the questions that their
5 jobseekers may have, and so we do know that there is
6 an opportunity to advance the work that we're doing
7 with that particular community, and we recently hired
8 an AmeriCorps member who will be with us until June,
9 and that person will be specifically focused on
10 targeting outreach toward the justice-impacted
11 community and making sure that we have robust
12 partnerships with organizations that work with that
13 community.

14 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you very much for
15 the response. I appreciate it. You've done some
16 preliminary work. It sounds like extensive
17 preliminary work. Have you considered the types of
18 titles that could be offered to individuals who are
19 in re-entry or taking the exams who are incarcerated?
20 Have you considered what types of titles would be
21 most effective?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Yes,
23 thank you for that question. Actually, this was part
24 of the discussion at yesterday's CityTalk panel, and,
25 of course, people who are incarcerated shouldn't be

2 limited to certain titles or certain occupations so
3 really any title or occupation would be appropriate
4 as long as the individual meets the qualification
5 requirements. However, I think that that's something
6 that we can definitely work towards is looking at the
7 needs of the population, of folks who are interested
8 in city employment, and then tailoring an information
9 session to discuss the specific job opportunities
10 that the City does have at this time that they're
11 interested in so definitely see an opportunity for
12 that tailoring of a conversation with those
13 individuals.

14 SPEAKER ADAMS: That's great. Do you
15 foresee any barriers to offering the exams at all at
16 DOC facilities?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: I feel
18 like that's a larger conversation that we definitely
19 need to have with our partners at DOC. Some of the
20 things that we need to consider include the
21 infrastructure, what type of internet connections are
22 available, what types of computers or mobile devices
23 are available, what type of space, how many folks
24 that we're talking about administering exams, and
25 then again how often we are going to seek to make

2 this available and at how many institutions so all of
3 that needs to be discussed so that we can best meet
4 the needs of these individuals.

5 In addition to that, as we had previously
6 stated, we can tomorrow or today provide Civil
7 Service 101 tailoring those conversations about what
8 jobs are available to the specific population,
9 walking folks through the examination process, which
10 I think is something that is a great need, and then
11 also when people are released having specific
12 sessions for those folks at our borough-based testing
13 centers so that they can then get that in-person
14 tailored conversation and assistance.

15 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. I'm glad you brought
16 that up. Are there some exams that are limited to in-
17 person examination just in general?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Yes.
19 Thank you for that question. Very quickly, DCAS
20 offers generally about four different types of civil
21 service exams. The first type is Education and
22 Experience which is fully online and can be taken
23 from anywhere, and that's the type of exam that you
24 may have heard of like a resume review or training
25 and experience, very commonly used with the federal

1 government. That's one type of exam. Another type of
2 exam is the Multiple Choice Test which most of us are
3 familiar with just from our schooldays, if I can
4 think back that far, where you're given a question
5 and there are four options for response, A, B, C, D,
6 and then you choose the best answer. You can apply
7 for those exams online but in order to take those
8 exams you must take one of those exams at our testing
9 centers. We also offer two other types of exams,
10 Practical and Physical. The Practical exams are for
11 those skilled trades where you really need to show
12 that you have the skill to do the job so think of
13 jobs like welder, painter where you have to actually
14 show that you have that skill before a city agency
15 will offer you employment which, again, are in
16 person. The Physical exams where some of our jobs
17 have a very physical component such as sanitation
18 worker or firefighter so there will be a physical,
19 in-person portion of that exam as well. Of the exams
20 that are available online, that would be the
21 Education and Experience and, again, any of our exam
22 applications or our exam information is also found
23 online.
24
25

3 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you. Just a
4 couple more.

5 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Okay. We will
6 hear from our Speaker soon again. In the meantime, I
7 do have some more technical questions.

8 I do want to recognize we've been joined
9 by Council Members Caban, Hanif, and Joseph.

10 How many civil service titles are subject
11 to competitive examination and does DCAS administer
12 all exams by a standard that meets its own merits or
13 is there room for improvement in that exam system?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
15 for that question. There are currently about 800
16 civil service titles that are competitively tested
17 for within the city, and, during the course of our
18 job analysis, which is sort of the first step, once
19 we determine that an exam needs to be administered we
20 would perform an analysis of what that job entails,
21 we would interview current incumbents and basically
22 get the statistics of what type of work is involved
23 and also what type of qualifications folks need to
24 have in order to perform that work, and all of that
25 informs what type of test format that we utilize for

2 that test. I hope that that speaks to the second part
3 of your question.

4 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: The room for
5 improvement?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: There's
7 always room for improvement. As I said in my
8 testimony that we have made leaps and bounds over the
9 last 20 plus years of my time here at DCAS in the way
10 that we administer civil service exams in the length
11 and the amount of time it takes to go from taking the
12 exam to actually establishing that civil service list
13 and also demystifying what civil service is and how
14 to obtain one of these really great jobs in city
15 government. Civil service is the foundation upon
16 which government service is founded. However, to
17 folks who are not familiar with government it can
18 seem very strange because it is different than any
19 other job application process you would normally go
20 through.

21 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: You mentioned the
22 recruitment centers. I always ask this question. One,
23 is there information available in multiple languages?
24 That's important. The test is just in English I'm
25 assuming, right?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: All civil
4 service exams are in English. One of the requirements
5 for civil service jobs are that you can understand
6 and be understood in English. Now that doesn't mean
7 you have to have perfect grammar and everything else
8 so, again, I don't want people to see that as a
9 barrier for when they're taking exams. Yes, at our
10 testing centers, the staff that are there in person
11 do speak English, some do speak other languages.
12 However, if someone comes in and wants to ask a
13 question in another language, we have a phone system
14 where they can reach an interpreter through that
15 phone, and that way can receive assistance.

16 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Yeah. Just to say
17 that language access is a barrier even, for example,
18 in the citizenship exam. When you reach a certain
19 age, you are offered the exam, for example, in your
20 native language. Sometimes a person can perform a job
21 duty even if they can't communicate in English or
22 take an exam in English, right, and then that leads
23 me to my next question before I pass it back to
24 Speaker Adams who I see is back with us. There is a
25 question that has come up with talking to some
workforce advocates about unnecessary barriers, for

1 example, credentials required for certain titles that
2 create a barrier to entry. One example they mentioned
3 is a bachelor's degree that is required for food
4 handlers, although the requirement is not necessary
5 to perform the job so how do you all counterbalance
6 when there is a credentialling requirement and that
7 skill or that credential is not necessary for the job
8 they're applying for?
9

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
11 for that question. We routinely look at the
12 qualification requirements of our titles, as I stated
13 earlier that we have very, very many, and we work
14 really closely with our agency partners who are
15 actually hiring these folks and they know who's
16 coming through the door, who can do the job, who may
17 or may not meet the qualification requirements that I
18 stated today, and we also work with our labor
19 partners, again to make sure that our qualification
20 requirements actually meet what is necessary in order
21 to perform the job. One of the things that we do when
22 we're setting qualification requirements as part of
23 that job analysis I had spoken about earlier where we
24 work with agencies and current incumbents of the jobs
25 in order to determine what those qualification

1 requirements might be, we also take a nationwide look
2 and will look to see what industry standards there
3 are for jobs that require licenses. There are some
4 things that are beyond the control of what we can
5 set, but certainly if there are jobs where agencies
6 are having difficulty finding qualified people
7 because of the qualification requirements, that is
8 definitely something that we can adjust and work with
9 agencies.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. I'll pass
12 it back to Speaker Adams.

13 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you so much, Chair
14 De La Rosa. Apologize for that. I just wanted to get
15 one more, maybe two more out regarding my bill. It
16 would also require DCAS to report on the number of
17 people incarcerated or involved in re-entry that have
18 taken a civil service exam so I'm just interested to
19 know what type of tracking do you currently do to
20 monitor who was taking and also passing the test.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
22 for that question. What we currently do in order to
23 understand who is taking our civil service exams and
24 where they're coming from, because that is something
25 that's very important for us to know, we collect

1 demographic information that's voluntary on the test-
2 taker's side, and we can take a look at that
3 demographic information. It includes things like
4 address so we know where they live. It includes race,
5 gender, their qualifications, what their skills are.
6 It can include a lot of information so we definitely
7 can track where our test-takers are coming that way.
8 We can also track what their level of qualification
9 is so their level of education for example. As long
10 as people indicate that, that is something that we
11 can report out on. As far as incarcerated individuals
12 or people who were recently incarcerated, that is
13 something, again like through the address I don't
14 think that we would be able to track that just
15 because they would probably not use the facility as
16 their address, although I could be wrong there. That
17 is something that we can talk about, like maybe
18 having a checkbox or having an indicator if the
19 person chooses to indicate that they either are
20 incarcerated or were recently previously incarcerated
21 so that is definitely something we can talk about.

23 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, great. My last
24 question along the lines of data. You mentioned
25 collecting data that you get with regards to

2 demographics and other things. Has the data that
3 you've collected and the data that you look at and
4 monitor, has any of it actually informed any changes
5 to the exams and, if so, have the changes made the
6 exams more equitable?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
8 for that question. We use that data, which again is
9 exam specific, specific to that title, so we can use
10 that information to, once again, determine where our
11 candidates are coming from so if there's a residency
12 requirement for the job and we're seeing that the
13 majority of the test-takers or a large number of
14 test-takers are coming from outside the city, that's
15 something that we can have a conversation with the
16 agency about as far as how to either change our
17 recruitment methods to target more New York City
18 residents or take a look at that at that job and
19 determine if we need to broaden that residency
20 requirement. Other things that we can look, sure, we
21 try to ensure that jobs, we tailor our recruitment to
22 underserved populations and/or occupations where one
23 gender may be more prolific in that job, like
24 uniformed services, so we can target our recruitment
25 based on those demographics that we can reach

2 different communities and give information about
3 these jobs to communities that may not generally be
4 considered.

5 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you very much.
6 Thank you for your testimony today, and, once again,
7 I thank both Chairs for their work on this hearing.
8 Thank you so much.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so
12 much, Madam Speaker. We want to ask about the Mayor's
13 Management Report. In September 2022, the Mayor's
14 Management Report stated that DCAS targeted timeframe
15 for exam administration to exam results completion is
16 290 days, a period of time that's over nine months
17 long. Can you explain the steps of the exam
18 administration so that we all have the same
19 understanding of what's being measured and reported
20 in the Mayor's Management Report?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG:
22 Certainly. Thank you for that question and thank you
23 for your interest in what all these steps are. The
24 MMR is tracking the time from exam administration so
25 the day that we give the exam and folks sit and take

1 the exam or the last day that we give the exam to the
2 day that we establish or publish that eligible list
3 so everything is finalized at that point and agencies
4 are able to hire. There are quite a few things that
5 happen in that meantime that involve the candidates
6 and DCAS as well as the agencies. There's about eight
7 steps that we take after an exam is given, and some
8 of these steps are required by law.

10 The first thing that happens after, let's
11 say, a multiple choice exam is that we hold the
12 protest review session, and there's a protest review
13 period which is 30 days, again as mandated by law.
14 The protest review period is for candidates to
15 challenge DCAS' exam items so if they found that a
16 question that was on the exam didn't seem right or
17 they saw the answers and they think their answer is
18 better or as good as the answer that DCAS is
19 providing, this provides candidates the opportunity
20 to make that challenge so that's one thing that
21 happens. We might give a practical or a physical
22 exam, which is something that I talked about, earlier
23 if that's what the job entails.

24 After that 30 days, we will convene a
25 Test Validation Board, or the TVB, and that is a

2 board that consists of labor, someone from the agency
3 that is performing the work and a representative from
4 DCAS, and they will review all of those challenges to
5 the exam that I just spoke about and determine which
6 ones are valid and then make those adjustments.

7 There's an also an eligibility review
8 period so whether or not the person who sat and took
9 the exam was eligible for the job because, again,
10 once we establish that list, agencies hire from that
11 list, and we have to ensure that those folks are
12 eligible. We finalize the score after all of this.
13 There may be a background investigation involved.
14 Some titles require investigation before appointment,
15 and so all of that will happen before the list is
16 established. All of that takes time, and that is all
17 contributing to that 290-day target.

18 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Okay. I'm
19 assuming that the target is determined based on how
20 much time it takes to kind of complete each of those
21 steps.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Correct.
23 That time can vary, and I think that you've seen that
24 in the number of days that it's taken over the years
25 for this process to be completed so depending on the

2 exam, some exams may have a quicker turnaround time
3 than others depending on how many parts there are,
4 how many people take those exams, we can have exams
5 where 100,000 people take them, and those take a
6 little bit longer to process so that will impact what
7 that number looks like depending on what type of
8 exams we gave for that Fiscal Year.

9 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Is DCAS exploring
10 any ways to reform the exam to reduce that timeframe?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Yes, we
12 are constantly looking for ways to shorten that
13 timeframe because we agree that the faster we get to
14 establishing the eligible list, the quicker that we
15 get people to the agencies eligible for hire, and so
16 some of the things that we've proposed through
17 legislation would assist with that with shortening
18 that time of the legally mandated time periods and
19 then also automation, continuing to automate as much
20 as we possibly can of this process so that we can
21 take that manual aspect out.

22 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. I have ore
23 questions, but I'm going to pass it on to Chair Ung
24 and then to any Colleagues who want to ask questions.

2 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you, Chair. I have
3 a couple of quick questions. Just following up what
4 you were testifying before about credentials and job
5 titles, is there a public list about the credentials
6 that goes with job titles?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
8 for your question, Chair Ung. I would say the most
9 publicly accessible way for folks to see what
10 qualifications they would need for a job is on the
11 exam schedule itself. Every year, July 1st, DCAS
12 releases an annual exam schedule, and witness that
13 exam schedule we include the job description and also
14 those qualification requirements so that before an
15 exam opens for filing folks are aware of what those
16 qualification requirements are.

17 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you. Is there a
18 either yearly or some form of reviewing those
19 credentials that's associated with job titles or
20 qualifications?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: It's
22 generally a partnership between the hiring agency and
23 DCAS or Labor because, again, DCAS, we give the
24 exams, we establish the lists, but agencies are the
25 ones who are interviewing these folks and actually

2 hiring and working with them so it's generally a
3 collaboration between them (INAUDIBLE) listen, we're
4 not getting candidates that we need or we've got lots
5 of internal candidates that would be a great fit for
6 this job but they don't meet this qualification or
7 whatever and so we'll work with them to tailor those
8 qualification requirements so that they are
9 representative of what is actually necessary.

10 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Great. Thank you for
11 giving us more information on that. Also, just from
12 your testimony, you said there was a community-based
13 presence. What does that mean? What does that entail
14 in terms of the community-based presence?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: I
16 certainly believe that having a testing center
17 available in each of the boroughs is a community-
18 based presence that we are bringing civil service to
19 people where they live or work instead of just one
20 location in Manhattan or something like that so we
21 are trying to set that presence. Also, trying to
22 offer more options for folks to come into our testing
23 centers. You don't have to just take a test. You can
24 come in and you can find out about other jobs. You
25 can come in and, again, use our interpreter phones.

2 You can come in and get information on how to
3 register to vote so we are trying to make these more
4 ingrained in the community, and we look for any
5 opportunity to share our spaces with the community so
6 that there is that collaboration and that open
7 dialogue.

8 CHAIRPERSON UNG: That's great. I look
9 forward to working together with you on that in my
10 community. I certainly know there's a lot of interest
11 in the community about civil service jobs.

12 Now, I just have a couple of questions
13 about the bill I'm introducing. Currently, how many
14 colleges and universities participate in the Public
15 Service Corps program?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Over the
17 years, our Public Service Corps program began in 1966
18 so we've had involvement with about 100 city agencies
19 so I would say most city agencies have participated
20 in Public Service Corps through the years. Currently,
21 we have, I think there are 24 that are currently
22 working, I'm sorry, I'm desperately trying to find
23 the number in my notes, that are participating.

2 CHAIRPERSON UNG: No worries. If possible,
3 could you share that list of the 24 with us or
4 whatever number it is. Thank you.

5 How does a university or a school that
6 wants to be involved in the program, how do they get
7 involved?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Schools
9 will participate in DCAS' recruitment effort so DCAS
10 will have various types of recruitment, either
11 virtual, online, or in person for schools and
12 universities to become involved and then also for the
13 students and themselves to get involved and to get
14 information about this federal work study program and
15 understand that they can either have an internship
16 where they receive pay or they receive credits toward
17 school.

18 CHAIRPERSON UNG: How does a school know
19 about the program? Basically, is this something a
20 school has to approach you with (INAUDIBLE) program
21 or do you actively go to these schools and tell them
22 about the program?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Yes, DCAS
24 actively reaches out to colleges and universities.
25 Our major school, obviously CUNY, is our largest

1 school and largest partner throughout all of their
2 schools and their system, but we also reach out to
3 our private schools in the area as well.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you. If you have
6 the number for this, what percentage of interns that
7 participated in the program actually then become
8 full-time city employees.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We
10 actually were working to discover that number, and
11 it's actually a small percentage of the number of
12 interns. The last five years, we've had almost 3,400
13 interns work at city agencies, and these interns are
14 at various stages of their school career. They may be
15 freshmen, they may be sophomores, they may be folks
16 who are not really sure where they want to be in
17 their career so the City provides these opportunities
18 for them to get this work experience and hopefully
19 it's a wonderfully positive experience that they will
20 want to come to work for the City once they've
21 completed their schooling.

22 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you. How does DCAS
23 work with the schools to include students from a
24 diverse background to take part in this internship?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: As I
3 explained a little earlier, we try to have as many
4 different platforms in order for students to receive
5 this information, and so that's how we work with the
6 school so that we offer these information sessions
7 regularly so that at any time a student can become
8 aware of the program and join. There isn't like a
9 certain period where if you don't join by today you
10 have to wait until next year or something like that.
11 It's a continuous process.

12 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Great. Let's talk about
13 the program during 2020 to 2021. I think the number
14 is only 34 interns participated in the program. That
15 is down from previous years. Do you think that was
16 partly due to the pandemic? Are there other factors?
17 Do you think, I hope, next year that we will go back
18 to the levels that it was or more?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Yes, we
20 definitely saw a downturn in the number of students
21 who were interested in this program due to the
22 pandemic. I definitely think that that was the
23 largest factor. We are seeing that students are
24 coming back so right now we've gotten up to 89 in
25 recent months so, again, we're very hopeful that we

2 will either reach those numbers as in previous years
3 or hopefully exceed them.

4 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Me too. How does DCAS
5 work with city agencies to identify the internship
6 opportunities? Is there a conversation you have with
7 city agencies every year or is it every two years
8 about what are the needs?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG:
10 Fortunately, the Public Service Corps program is part
11 of DCAS and it's part of the Human Capital Office,
12 and we actually hold biweekly meetings with our
13 agency HR partners so we very regularly, every few
14 months or every quarter, we re-introduce all of these
15 wonderful programs that we have because you never
16 know, you may have a new partner who isn't aware of
17 the program or the agency used to use the program and
18 now they haven't but maybe they should so we
19 regularly, again, provide this information because
20 these are fantastic opportunities for agencies to,
21 first of all, introduce city employment to new
22 prospective employees but also to have positions
23 filled by an intern. Agencies are only responsible
24 for 25 percent, if they take a salary, of that salary
25 so it's really (INAUDIBLE) through the work study

3 program so it's a really wonderful opportunity for
4 agencies to have more people.

5 CHAIRPERSON UNG: I agree. Thank you. My
6 last question, I think this is going back to Chair De
7 La Rosa's question about language abilities and
8 credentials. Are there thoughts to really looking
9 through all the job titles and figuring out what job
10 titles, I recognize English is needed like you said,
11 but what job titles were having really proficient
12 English isn't as necessary as some other job titles.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Sure.
14 Again, we regularly work with agencies who are doing
15 this hiring, and we do provide a language assessment
16 for agencies to use in order to determine if people
17 do meet that minimum that is necessary in order to
18 communicate on the job, and I also want to stress
19 that this is a legal requirement so changing that
20 requirement could be done through legislation.

21 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you for ending
22 with that. I'm done with my questions. Thank you.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank
24 you.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you. We
3 Council Member Brewer followed by Council Member
4 Hanif for questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Just in
6 terms of the Public Service, I think I know every
7 program in the city and I don't know this program so
8 that's a problem so you need to tell elected
9 officials what it is and then my newsletter is
10 100,000 people so would be glad to tell people. We
11 all know Urban Fellows, but we don't know this
12 program.

13 Number two, when you said something about
14 you have to live in the city, yes, you have to live
15 in the city unless you're one of the uniforms so you
16 said something like, are there other situations,
17 because I don't like it when you don't have to live
18 in the city so are there other situations that you
19 don't except for the uniform because you checked to
20 see if people are applying from outside the city the
21 ostensibly they have 90 days to move in. Is that the
22 deal?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: That is
24 correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Try to get
3 rid of them and get people who live in the city.

4 The final issue is, my issue, I know the
5 Mayor wants everyone to be working full-time, but
6 we've got 24,000 vacancies in the City of New York
7 and nobody's going to come work for the City so are
8 you getting complaints that people are not able to be
9 hybrid, even though half the folks are hybrid, the
10 Mayor may not know that, so my question to you is are
11 you hearing it anecdotally, can you be a little more
12 honest about it because we have a problem, nobody, no
13 lawyer, no IT person, and maybe others are not going
14 to work for the City of New York at this current
15 time. You have a salary issue also. That's also more
16 of a bargaining issue. Have you heard any discussion
17 about hybrid or not hybrid or I'm not applying, I'm
18 not going to take the job or the agencies are
19 complaining to you or you can't say anything?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
21 for that question. I think that the Mayor has been
22 very clear with his...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And I've been very
24 clear that it makes no sense.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: However,
3 what we do is we choose to focus on other flexible
4 scheduling options that we have available so flexible
5 days, you don't have to show up to the office Monday
6 through Friday 9 to 5, right, so changing that
7 scheduling of when people can either report to work
8 or leave work, some people would like to work later,
9 most people would like to work earlier, offering
10 those weekends, if you have an office that's
11 available on the weekends, and I personally have
12 staff that take advantage of this as well. It offsets
13 childcare, it offsets all kinds of other activities
14 and things like that so focusing on ways that we can
15 flexibly schedule our employees is something that
16 we're encouraging agencies to do.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But you do find,
18 even anecdotally, that people want more flexibility
19 in the time that they're in the office and working
20 elsewhere. Yes, she does. Thank you very much.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you so much,
22 Chairs Ung and De La Rosa. I wanted to follow up on
23 the language access piece and get an understanding of
24 if you have data to share on how many limited
25

2 English-proficient folks took the exam or attempted
3 to take the exam.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We don't
5 collect data on language proficiency. We could
6 probably gather that information anecdotally from
7 agencies, but we don't track that information.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: The exam is
9 currently only available in English?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Correct.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Is there an
12 opportunity to have it be available in the top 10
13 languages most spoken in our city?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: That's
15 something that would require legislative
16 intervention.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Would you support
18 it?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: I think
20 that opening our opportunities to a broader audience
21 is something that we're all wanting to do so we're
22 all looking forward to doing that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Great. I was a
24 former Brooklyn College student so really appreciate
25 that CUNY is one of the largest partners, but I

1 didn't know about the Public Service Corps or other
2 programs available to learn about the civil service
3 opportunities. I'd love to just understand what is
4 the process of engagement with CUNY schools. I went
5 to most majority student of color body, children of
6 immigrants, first generation so just curious how
7 information is reaching students.
8

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We do
10 hold those Information Sessions, and that is
11 absolutely an area where we would like to reach more
12 and more people. This is a fantastic program. Most
13 students I think first learn about this Public
14 Service Corps opportunity through their Work Study
15 Office so I think that's another misnomer that people
16 think that this is, well it is part of the work study
17 program, but it is its own separate and distinct
18 program, and I think that we have a great opportunity
19 in order to get that information out there and really
20 reach all of the students who are interested in these
21 great opportunities working at city agencies.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So one pathway is
23 the Work Study program where students are learning
24 about it (INAUDIBLE) Are there Information Sessions
25

2 and is there like a public calendar or (INAUDIBLE)
3 you administer that?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Again, we
5 have limited resources as well so the staff do
6 regularly go to different schools and host these
7 Information Sessions.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OUTAR: Thank you. A
9 part of the Civil Service 101 outreach that we do is
10 we particularly focus on CUNY schools and different
11 colleges and universities too where there is
12 participation in a career fair that they may be
13 hosting, and every time we show not just the exams
14 but the different pathways of getting into city
15 government so if we're doing a Civil Service 101
16 session, before we get to the examination process,
17 we're talking about the different paths that people
18 can use and take to get into city government and so,
19 if we're doing it virtually, we're walking them
20 through that page on our job board to say hey, this
21 is where you go if you want to learn more about these
22 types of internships. If you are (INAUDIBLE) work
23 study, then this is an opportunity for you to do so
24 and then provide them with additional information
25 where they can get more, connect with our Public

1 Service Corps program so we do direct outreach with
2 CUNY. We have participated and worked with all of the
3 two- and four-year colleges and have a continuous
4 relationship with the CUNY graduate program, and
5 we're always looking for different ways, if there's a
6 panel conversation that we can participate in, if
7 there's just a resources fair as long as we have the
8 capacity to be there, we try to make sure that we're
9 working with these CUNY schools as much as possible.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Could you share how
12 many since the start of this year, how many Info
13 Sessions there were, or event that you all
14 participated in across the CUNY pipeline?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OUTAR: I will need to
16 get back to you on the CUNY-specific events, but for
17 colleges and universities we've participated in over
18 450 events, which includes Information Sessions as
19 well as career fairs. (INAUDIBLE) calendar is filled
20 with events that are happening across the different
21 CUNY schools.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Great. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you. I have
24 a few more questions. In the 2022 Mayor's Management
25 Report, DCAS said that in FY-23 the agency will

2 continue to empower applicants to apply for the civil
3 service exam online and to administer specific
4 automated exams with faster reporting times. Can you
5 describe what features make an exam a good candidate
6 for automation and has DCAS automated all exams for
7 which automation would be appropriate method of
8 examination at this point?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
10 for your question. We consider most exams are
11 appropriate for automation other than the in-person
12 physical and practical examinations that we discussed
13 earlier. We do think that an online platform paired
14 with our current testing centers and offering that
15 in-person assistance as well is definitely the goal
16 of where we want to be in the future.

17 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. On the
18 testing centers, would you keep demographic data on
19 the communities that examinees are coming from?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We
21 definitely have that information so we can certainly
22 pull that information. Again, it would be specific to
23 the exams that they took so it would be exam-
24 specific, but we can definitely put that information
25 together however you're interested in seeing it.

2 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Yeah. I think it
3 would be interesting to see, for example, in
4 Manhattan, the center is in Lower Manhattan, correct,
5 so I represent Upper Manhattan and not to be selfish
6 but it's a long commute for some folks to come all
7 the way downtown so in that case where the center is,
8 thinking of communities that are transit deserts,
9 Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island, how do we know that
10 the folks who are taking advantage of the center
11 aren't just folks that are in that immediate vicinity
12 and that there's kind of like borough equity in the
13 way that people are navigating their way toward the
14 center?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: One way
16 that we can try to understand is that when we are
17 inviting people to our testing centers to take those
18 exams, we look to see where they're coming from
19 because if you live in the upper part of the Bronx
20 we're not going to invite you to take the test in
21 Staten Island. We do take a look at that when we are
22 sending those invitations so that folks who are
23 closest in that area to that community are able to
24 take the test close to home. Now, somebody may want
25 to take a test closer to where they work, and, if we

3 don't know where they work, if they're not a city
4 employee, we don't know where they work so they can
5 always request to change and take a test at another
6 test center instead of the one that they were
7 assigned.

8 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Okay. Has DCAS
9 conducted any studies or performed research to
10 compare the city's hiring process with that of the
11 private sector in an attempt to identify whether the
12 length of time it takes to get hired in the municipal
13 workforce from application to onboarding deters
14 candidates from joining the municipal workforce?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
16 for that question. It's kind of hard to compare the
17 two when we have a civil service system that
18 definitely adds more layers and more steps to the
19 process for most city jobs. However, an area where I
20 feel that we do excel is in our recruitment. I don't
21 think private industry or private jobs do as an
22 intense and thoughtful recruitment as the City of New
23 York does in order to reach all populations including
24 those that are underserved.

25 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Okay. There's a
question here around the scores. Currently, the State

2 scores exams and then establishes ranked order lists
3 of candidates. From the ranked order lists, the
4 hiring managers must select from one of the three
5 highest score on the eligibility list. The system is
6 referred to as the one-in-three rule. Many other
7 jurisdictions have moved away from the system and
8 transitioned to a band scoring, which establishes
9 statistically equivalent range. Proponents argue that
10 band scoring is a more equitable process and provides
11 managers with larger hiring pools to find the best
12 candidate. How does DCAS score the exams and could
13 the City use band scoring to create their eligible
14 candidates list instead?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
16 for that question. DCAS scores our exams, the scoring
17 is automated, and it is based on that individual's
18 performance on that test how they achieve their
19 score. However, band scoring is something that the
20 City of New York does utilize at times. We do
21 administer exams, particularly our education- and
22 experience-based exams, which again are fully online.
23 We receive very large numbers of test-takers for most
24 of our tests, right, and the passing score is 70 so
25 the scores between 70 and 100, the numbers are

3 limited so we have very many test-takers who score
4 exactly the same on a civil service exam, and so for
5 those folks they are banded together and when an
6 agency is seeking to hire as part of one-in-three
7 they can hire any one in that test score range in
8 order to fulfill that one-in-three so it is something
9 that we do where it is applicable and where we can,
10 where it makes sense.

11 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. A question
12 about the fees. Exam fees are intended to correlate
13 to the salary of positions for which exams would
14 qualify a candidate. DCAS' Annual Report for the 2021
15 report exam fee, revenues were projected 5.4 million.
16 Can you explain in more detail what this figure
17 represents and how closely do exam fees match the
18 actual cost of administering the exam?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: The 5.4
20 million number is the total revenue that DCAS
21 collected from examination fees for that entire
22 Fiscal Year. I just want to point out that these fees
23 are collected by DCAS but they certainly do not
24 remain at DCAS. They are part of the City's general
25 fund. Those exam fees are set by Civil Service Law.
Again, the State law requires us to charge a fee for

2 examinations, and those fees are based on the salary
3 that the test-taker would earn if they were hired
4 into that title for which they're taking the
5 examination, and that can range from 40 dollars for
6 our entry-level positions up to 100 dollars for our
7 higher-level promotion examinations. I also want to
8 point out that although we do charge fees for
9 examinations, there are fee waivers that are
10 available to folks who qualify so the population that
11 we were talking about earlier who are currently
12 incarcerated, anyone who's currently unemployed or
13 receiving public assistance or public services
14 qualifies for a fee waiver of those exam fees. We
15 also provide fee waivers for our veterans so there
16 are, again we're trying to keep civil service
17 accessible to everyone.

18 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: I love the fee
19 waiver option, but it's kind of counterintuitive that
20 we would charge a fee based on a job that someone
21 doesn't have yet so I would think that it could
22 create a hardship for someone who's trying to go for
23 a hired position in that scale so why is it based on
24 the job the person is trying to reach rather than the
25 cost of administering the actual exam?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Again,
4 it's in the law how we set the exam fees, but also
5 just to talk about an operational, we wouldn't know
6 what it costs to administer an exam until we actually
7 administer it because, again, depending on how many
8 people take the exam, what type of test it is,
9 whether it's in person, whether it's online, that
10 could change the cost per candidate.

11 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. As you
12 know, we've been holding a few hearings and so we
13 know that DCAS alone is not who decides the entire
14 hiring process so I do have a question about OMB and
15 the level of communication and in the process of
16 hiring because if OMB says there's no budget line,
17 there's no budget line, can you describe that sort of
18 relationship correlation from the administering of
19 the test to the actual hiring process?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG:
21 Certainly. Thank you for that. We set our exam
22 schedule every year, as I said earlier, with, of
23 course, modifications that are made throughout the
24 year depending on agency need, and when we determine
25 what exams we're going to give for that year we take
a look at where provisional employees are serving so

3 who needs the opportunity to take a civil service
4 exam who currently already works for us. We also
5 reach out to the agencies beginning in January to see
6 what their upcoming hiring needs are, where they're
7 seeing attrition, and where they think that their
8 needs will be in the upcoming years so all of that
9 information together determines what titles appear on
10 the exam schedule, and we try to keep a regular
11 schedule of examinations so that we don't have a
12 civil service that's exhausted and has no people on
13 it and we haven't given an exam again yet so we would
14 like to keep that constant flow of candidates to
15 agencies and that's what we strive to do. OMB's piece
16 of the hiring is, as you indicated, they determine
17 whether or not there is a budget for each agency to
18 hire whichever employees in what area the agency is
19 looking to hire. That does not impact our examination
20 schedule because budgets change from year to year and
21 an agency's hiring need is going to come through so
22 even during the pandemic when we were giving
23 examinations and the City had a hiring freeze, we
24 were still offering those opportunities for jobs
25 because we knew that agencies would begin hiring

3 again and that they would be a need for these
4 qualified candidates to be available to hire.

5 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. In your
6 testimony, you talked about the Office of Citywide
7 Recruitment, and you said that due to limited staff
8 within OCR and an increase in demand for these
9 sessions we developed the volunteer program, but I
10 want to know more about that staffing need at OCR. Do
11 you have more details you can share?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG:
13 Certainly. I'm going to turn that over to my
14 colleagues.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OUTAR: Thank you.
16 Within the Office, typically whenever we participate
17 in events we would usually have two individuals that
18 are going out to different events. Take today, for
19 example, we're in Brooklyn and we're also in the
20 Bronx at the East Tremont Library so in order to make
21 sure that we're reaching different communities, we
22 usually utilize different volunteers from either
23 Human Capital because they're intimately familiar
24 with the civil service process or we open it up to
25 other individuals across the agencies who are
interested in moving forward or learning more about

2 the civil service process for themselves or for
3 professional development because they also get to
4 learn about doing presentations, but we also try to
5 find out different ways that we can enhance the
6 resources that we have.

7 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: How many staffers
8 do you have in that specific Recruitment Office? Do
9 you know that?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OUTAR: On a full-time
11 schedule, we have four individuals that are staffed
12 then myself, but we also utilize the Public Service
13 Corps program, college aides, interns, AmeriCorps
14 members to kind of support our needs on an ongoing
15 basis so while we always recommend and appreciate
16 additional resources because we can reach more
17 people, we try to make the best of what we have
18 available, utilizing the internship programs that are
19 available.

20 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: I'll just use
21 that point to say something I've been saying at all
22 the hearings so those of you that have been here
23 repeatedly will hear me say this repeatedly, we're
24 concerned about the proposal for PEGs across city
25 agencies given that we already know from previous

2 hearings that most of our agencies are operating with
3 high vacancy rates so I just want to put that on the
4 record again for our Mayor and the administration to
5 consider and continue to talk as we go through this
6 budget modification process. I don't know if Council
7 Member Ung has a question.

8 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you. I actually
9 just have one question. Do you have any issues or
10 anticipate any issues reporting about the demographic
11 data of the Public Service Corps interns?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We can
13 certainly provide that data. The Public Service Corps
14 demographics over recent years show that our interns
15 are majority female, over 60 percent, and majority
16 non-white, over 70 percent.

17 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Great. Thank you. Just
18 making sure, the Bill 698, are there any issues with
19 that bill the way it's drafted right now?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We
21 certainly support the bill, and we certainly support
22 the spirit behind and we do look forward to working
23 with you in order to better understand how we can
24 improve upon the program that we currently have and
25

2 how we can expand upon it to meet the goals of the
3 bill.

4 CHAIRPERSON UNG: After this hearing
5 today, you still anticipate more back and forth about
6 the language of the bill?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We would
8 love to continue the conversation just so we can
9 fully understand whether or not we are meeting the
10 goals of the bill because that is something that we
11 want to do.

12 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Okay. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you. I also
14 have some questions about Intro 658, which is my
15 bill. The MMR directly attributes the rise of New
16 York City job applications in Fiscal Year 2022 to an
17 86 percent increase in job openings as well as
18 targeted hiring. Can you explain what is meant when
19 DCAS uses the term targeted hiring and how does DCAS
20 identify when an exam or eligible hire is a result of
21 targeted hiring?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
23 for that question and thank you for raising this
24 point. We realize that the language that we used
25 wasn't what we meant so what we meant by targeted

2 hiring is targeted recruitment. DCAS doesn't do the
3 hiring for the City so that is what we meant by
4 targeted hiring.

5 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: How do you
6 identify if an exam or eligible hire is a result of
7 this type of targeted recruitment? How do you track
8 that?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: I'm going
10 to ask my colleague to, because she does a fantastic
11 job of tracking people who take exams from
12 recruitment events and then what happens to them
13 afterwards.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OUTAR: Thank you,
15 Barbara, and thank you for that question. When it
16 comes to targeted recruitment, there's a strategy
17 that's focused on immediately filling the positions
18 that are vacancies where there is no civil service
19 list or the title does not require an examination so
20 this process usually includes agencies recruiting and
21 selecting the best candidates through the resume,
22 cover letter, and structured interviewing process.
23 This strategy is also informed by the review of the
24 workforce data that determines whether there is
25 under-utilization that exists within a particular

3 title, meaning that there are less individuals
4 employed within a specific title in a demographic
5 than exists within the job market and so we
6 definitely work with the agencies so that they are
7 able to review their workforce data and determine
8 what titles fall within that under-utilization which
9 is really the presence of few minorities, race,
10 ethnicity, or women that are in a particular job
11 group than would be expected given their availability
12 in a relevant job market so we work with the agencies
13 to provide them with the data that they need and
14 based on their hiring needs as well to determine what
15 titles should be focused on and where they should
16 focus their attention. We also work with them to
17 discuss different strategies that they can take to
18 make sure that they're reaching those diverse
19 candidates so whether it's through doing a spotlight
20 event with them, whether it's taking them along to
21 any kind of recruitment events that we're going to,
22 we just try to figure out different ways that we can
23 help to promote their agencies and increase their
24 recruitment capacity as well.

25 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Does that mean
you will help the agencies work to tailor the

1 agency's recruitment plan with the agency's diversity
2 goals?
3

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OUTAR: What we do is,
5 for example, right now we're having ongoing
6 conversations with two agencies who have similar
7 recruitment needs and so we speak to them on a
8 monthly basis about what they're currently doing.
9 Sometimes the agencies are doing different things
10 that benefit each other so we work with them about
11 that then we encourage them to look at their
12 workforce data to really determine where their needs
13 are, who is being hired into the position, where they
14 should focus their attention, and then help them to
15 develop that plan. The end goal of this is once they
16 develop that plan, because it's not just a one-time
17 we need to recruit and hire, it's a continuous plan
18 that thinks about different pipelines that they're
19 building, we'll work with them to make sure that they
20 are meeting those recruitment goals.

21 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: The MMR reports
22 downward trend in new hires of black people and women
23 for Fiscal Year 2022. Alternatively, the MMR reports
24 an upward trend in new hires of men and people who
25 are of Asian Pacific Islander and people who identify

1 as race other than Asian, white, black, or Hispanic.
2
3 What factor explains these downward trends for black
4 people and women, and then what factors explain these
5 upwards trends for men, Asian Pacific Islander, and
6 additional people who identify as other races, and
7 has DCAS examined the rates of taking and passing
8 civil service exams across various demographics in
9 order to identify barriers to equity that might be
10 embedded in the system?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
12 for that question. As we discussed earlier, our data
13 and statistics look different from year to year
14 depending upon which exams we offer and which jobs we
15 are filling so for last year the majority of the
16 hiring was done in the uniformed services so think of
17 our officers and that type of employees where the
18 majority of the hiring or the majority of that
19 workforce is very strongly male and strongly leans
20 white so that is a reason for that change in last
21 year's demographics just because that's where the
22 hiring was happening, and those are job titles for
23 which there is massive hiring so if we have a hiring
24 in those areas it can definitely skew, and that's
25 where our recruitment efforts, not just at DCAS but

3 at the agency level, really come into play with doing
4 that outreach and reaching communities and letting
5 them know about these jobs so we can change what that
6 candidate pool looks like.

7 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: You work directly
8 with, for example, in the uniforms with the FDNY.
9 There was a whole hearing on FDNY diversity that our
10 Fire and Emergency Management had, you work with the
11 uniformed agencies to try and develop some of these
12 goals for recruitment?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Correct.
14 Specifically with the Fire Department, DCAS is very
15 involved with their recruitment and scheduling of
16 examinations and testing of candidates.

17 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: When DCAS
18 administers an exam for a uniform and we see that
19 trend that it's mostly male white, is there a
20 conversation that happens to identify what were the
21 barriers in that specific exam cycle that created
22 that inequity.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Yes, and
24 those conversations occur before the exam is given so
25 as candidates are applying, as recruitment efforts
are happening, as recruitment events are happening,

1 we are constantly in contact with the agencies, they
2 have very robust recruitment departments to share
3 that information. We did four recruitment events this
4 weekend, what does this week look like as far as the
5 applicant pool, and we can share that information
6 with them so that they know within days whether or
7 not their recruitment efforts are working and whether
8 or not they need to continue to do that outreach with
9 that population.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: A question on
12 provisional employees. A provisional employee is an
13 appointment made when there's no other viable
14 eligible list in which at least three people are
15 willing to accept the permanent position in a
16 competitive class. Provisional employees are eligible
17 to part of a union but have neither the bargaining
18 rights nor the job security. With the goal of
19 reducing the number of provisional employees in
20 government in 2016, the State Legislature amended the
21 Civil Service Law to allow DCAS to administer a
22 qualified incumbent exam to reduce the number of
23 provisional employees. Have qualified incumbent exams
24 been an effective tool in reducing the number of
25

3 provisional employees, and how often does DCAS
4 administer this incumbent exam?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank you
6 for that question and thank you for highlighting this
7 historic change in the type of exams that we
8 administer. We're very proud that we were able to
9 change legislation and change the laws to which types
10 of exams that we can administer. The qualified
11 incumbent exam has been very critical in assisting
12 the City with having our qualified provision pool of
13 employees become permanent civil servants and so this
14 is an exam that's tailored to them. Only current city
15 employees who are provisionally employed for two
16 years or more successfully are eligible to take that
17 exam. Again, that's another exam that is completely
18 automated so a much quicker turnaround time because
19 it's automated and also because we are familiar with
20 the population. They are employees. Our next round of
21 qualified incumbent exams, and it is the last round
22 under this legislation, will be at the beginning of
23 next Fiscal Year so the end of the summer where you
24 will see that we will be administering these
25 examinations.

3 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Does DCAS have a
4 target for provisional employee reduction in FY-23?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: We do.
6 Our current Provisional Reduction Plan expires on
7 December 31, 2023, and that goal is for the
8 competitive workforce for there to be 6.5 percent or
9 less provisional employees employed on that day. I'm
10 very happy and proud to say that we are currently at
11 4.7 percent of provisional employees which is very
12 far below that threshold and the City is in
13 compliance with the current mandate as written so
14 this is something that we're very proud of and that
15 we've worked with our agency and labor partners very
16 diligently over the last years in order to achieve
17 this compliance.

18 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. I do have
19 a question about the tests being administered at the
20 Department of Corrections facility, and I know that
21 the Speaker had a great line of questioning around
22 that, but I do have a question about the statewide
23 implications. I know that there's a bill before the
24 State Legislature where a proposal to do the same to
25 kind of expand that program. Does DCAS have a
position on that?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Again, we
4 fully support any effort expanding the reach of civil
5 service and making our civil service exams and jobs
6 more accessible to everyone.

7 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: And you will
8 work, I'm assuming, closely with the Alternatives to
9 Incarceration Coalition that exists in the city, and
10 I know that the Council has specific Council
11 initiatives geared towards some of those groups.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Okay. Just for
14 the record, are there any concerns with the
15 implementation and passage of my bill, I'm copying
16 Council Member Ung, Intro 658, the Ambassador
17 Program?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Again, we
19 fully support this bill, and we look forward to
20 working with you just to discuss how this works with
21 our current programs and initiatives and how we can
22 address any gaps.

23 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. I think
24 that's it. Thank you so much for coming today. This
25 has been a series on the civil service exam so we're
excited to continue and to work with you to make sure

2 that this is more equitable and efficient across the
3 board so thank you so much for all you do.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DANNENBERG: Thank
5 you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chairs.
7 We'll now turn to public testimony. We'll be limiting
8 each speaker to three minutes.

9 For in-person panelists, please come up
10 to the table once your name has been called.

11 For virtual panelists, once your name is
12 called a member of our staff will unmute you and the
13 Sergeant-at-Arms will set the timer and give you the
14 go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to
15 announce that you may begin before delivering your
16 testimony.

17 Our first panelist will be Audre Ward who
18 is here in person followed by Vikki Pryor who is on
19 Zoom.

20 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: We give you extra
21 points for coming in person.

22 ANDRE WARD: Good afternoon, Council
23 Member Chairs De La Rosa and Ung and Members of the
24 Committees on Governmental Operations and Civil
25 Service and Labor.

3 My name is Andre Ward, and I'm the
4 Associate Vice President of the David Rothenberg
5 Center for Public Policy at The Fortune Society.
6 We've been around for about 55 years doing re-entry
7 and policy-related work.

8 At The Fortune Society, one of the first
9 things participants say to us is I need a job and can
10 you please find me a job. This is the constant plea
11 we hear whether the participant has just come home
12 from prison, has been mandated to participate in some
13 way in our alternatives to incarceration program or
14 has come to us voluntarily to begin or resume
15 engaging in our services. We work with them to obtain
16 the hard and soft skills necessary to find a job in
17 the field of their choice. This includes counseling
18 them on how to talk about gaps in their resumes due
19 to incarceration and other periods of instability. It
20 includes making sure they have professional attire,
21 which we provide thanks to clothing donations we
22 receive year-round. Sometimes it means encouraging
23 people to continue their education first, perhaps
24 while working in entry-level positions. For many, it
25 also means trying to get up to speed on the advances
in technology that occurred while they were

2 incarcerated. However, in far too many instances even
3 though these issues have been addressed, individuals
4 are well-prepared, and they otherwise meet job
5 criteria, they still face an uphill battle simply
6 because of their criminal legal system involvement.

7 It is critical to note that people of color who have
8 been incarcerated face ever-growing hurdles to
9 obtaining employment. This difficulty is compounded
10 for women of color. Black women have a 6.4 percent
11 unemployment rate in general while those who were
12 incarcerated have an unemployment rate of nearly 44
13 percent compared to that of formerly incarcerated
14 white men at 18 percent. This difficulty in obtaining
15 employment creates significant future earning losses
16 and produces a profound racial disparity between
17 entire communities. Opening doors to employment
18 opportunities for formerly incarcerated people is
19 just a matter a racial justice and the moral thing to
20 do. It is also the smart thing to do in public
21 safety. Numerous studies have shown that people are
22 more likely to desist from crime if they are
23 employed. High-quality employment with access to
24 benefits and the potential for upward employment
25 mobility are even more likely to play a role in

2 desistance. There are many theories about the
3 connection between employment and desistance such as
4 the relief it provides from economic pressures and
5 the benefits of engaging in a highly structured
6 routine. Civil service in particular, and maybe
7 because I've been here, thank you, civil service in
8 particular allows people to give back to their
9 communities through their employment and offers
10 career advancement. Intro 645 and Resolution 311
11 would provide pathways to the kind of stability and
12 opportunity that too often eludes people despite
13 their best efforts when they come home from prison
14 and jail. Finally, offering access to Information
15 Sessions about civil service exams and the exams
16 themselves to people while they are held in our city
17 jails also sends a clear message to them, this is a
18 moment in your life, you have potential despite any
19 hurdles, and we want to see you make something of
20 yourself. That kind of message is invaluable. For all
21 these reasons, The Fortune Society is pleased to
22 support the bill and resolution before the Committees
23 that will expand access to civil service exams for
24 people involved in the criminal legal system even
25 while held in city jails or state prisons. We also

3 trust that these Committees and the broader City
4 Council will monitor the implementation of Intro 645.
5 Successful implementation will depend on the ability
6 of people in custody having access to the related
7 programming and their ability to take the exams.
8 Their ability will depend on DOC staff ensuring they
9 have access. As has been the subject of many hearings
10 before the Council, the New York City Department of
11 Corrections has had challenges ensuring that the
12 uniformed staff and even daily conditions of city
13 jails when staff are not at their posts, people are
14 not in their custody to be transported to programming
15 and program providers cannot access people in their
16 housing units. Therefore, we are hopeful that these
17 Committees will provide the necessary oversight to
18 ensure successful implementation should this bill
19 become law.

20 We thank the Speaker for introducing this
21 important bill and certainly you, Chair De La Rosa,
22 for your support for it and for Resolution 311 as
23 well as to you and Chair Ung for holding this
24 hearing. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you, Andre,
and I thank you for your service to our city. I'm

2 fortunate enough to know The Fortune Society and the
3 impact you have in our community so thank you so much
4 for coming.

5 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
7 panelist is Vikki Pryor, and I believe that's our
8 last panelist that we have here today, but if you're
9 on the Zoom and your name has not been called and
10 you're waiting to testify please use the Zoom raise
11 hand function. I'll now turn it over to Vikki Pryor.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

13 VIKKI PRYOR: Good afternoon, Members of
14 the Committee on Civil Service and Labor, and thank
15 you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My
16 name is Vikki Pryor, and I'm the President and Chief
17 Executive Officer of Getting Out and Staying Out,
18 GOSO, a non-profit re-entry program. I'm delighted to
19 share this afternoon with our Chief Program Officer,
20 Michelle Pryce-Screen. Michelle.

21 MICHELLE PRYCE-SCREEN: Thank you, Vikki.
22 Good afternoon. Founded nearly 20 years ago, GOSO
23 works with more than 1,350 legal system-involved
24 young people each year from across New York City to
25 secure brighter futures for themselves and their

3 communities. The individuals we serve are the sweet
4 spot for this legislation, and we appreciate the
5 chance to share with you why it is so important for
6 New York City to administer civil service
7 examinations for individuals in Department of
8 Corrections custody. GOSO offers comprehensive re-
9 entry programming and violence prevention services
10 for young people citywide on the ground and in
11 schools, hospitals, jails, juvenile centers, and
12 upstate prisons. We focus on intervention and
13 prevention and believe that our participants and all
14 young people should have a right to another chance
15 and the support to make changes in their lives that
16 will allow them to flourish and contribute positively
17 in our communities. As our participants seek to
18 better themselves, they face not only the threat of
19 violence but barriers within the legal system,
20 poverty, systemic social inequities as well as lack
21 of housing, healthcare, education, and jobs, and
22 mental health challenges. These obstacles make it
23 difficult to manage day-to-day life and to take steps
24 necessary to secure productive and prosperous
25 futures. Access to civil service examinations while
in the Department of Corrections' custody is

2 essential for those that we serve. GOSO provides a
3 full spectrum of services through a programmatic
4 philosophy we call the Three E's, Employment,
5 Education, and Emotional Well-being. It is this
6 holistic approach that has enabled GOSO to maintain
7 annual recidivism rates of 15 percent or below.
8 Through GOSO's workforce development program, we team
9 with employer partners to offer intensive job-
10 readiness, training and placements in paid
11 internships, and permanent employment in fields like
12 construction, food service, hospitality, and other
13 fields. Many of our participants have no work history
14 and establishing them in a field that provides a
15 plausible future and an opportunity for growth is
16 crucial to building confidence and keeping them
17 inspired and motivated to reach their next goal. GOSO
18 also refers participants to five vocational training
19 courses.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has expired.

21 MICHELLE PRYCE-SCREEN: Through our
22 partnerships with local businesses, employers agree
23 to provide GOSO participants with subsidized
24 internships and/or direct employment opportunities.
25 Through these opportunities, our participants, most

2 of whom enter GOSO with no work experience or
3 marketable skills, gain vital firsthand experience
4 useful to their chosen career path. We're breaking
5 down barriers. We are here to voice support for the
6 legislation being discussed today, which provides
7 significant strides in lowering barriers to steady,
8 sustainable, and good-paying jobs. Today, it is
9 impossible to take these examinations while
10 incarcerated. This de facto prohibition creates a
11 barrier for those who want a head start on their
12 rehabilitation. Waiving the fees reduces another
13 barrier. Though fees for these examinations sound
14 reasonable, they are a deal-breaker for impoverished
15 young people. We support the training provided for in
16 the Speaker's bill, the call for New York State to
17 offer the tests in DOCC facilities as well as to pay
18 equity and increase educational efforts about the
19 civil service exam that is a part of the larger
20 legislative package. We thank Speaker Adams for
21 introducing this important legislation as well as all
22 the Council Members here today for addressing this
23 gap in access for those who are incarcerated or
24 court-involved. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so much
3 for coming and testifying. We appreciate your words
4 and your concern and the work you've been doing.
5 Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chairs, there are no
7 hands raised on the Zoom, no one else here in person
8 with us so I'll turn it over to you to close it out.

9 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: All right. Like I
10 said earlier, this is a series sort of that we've
11 been doing on the civil service exam and what's
12 happening over at DCAS. We thank everyone for coming
13 over to testify and all the Colleagues for their
14 questions and presenting legislation here today. With
15 that, the hearing is adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 10, 2022