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**The Council of the City of New York**

**COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION**

**Jeffrey Baker, Legislative Director**

**COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE**

**Honorable Stephen Levin, Chair**

**August 13, 2019**

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1332-A:** By The Speaker (Council Member Johnson) and Council Members Rosenthal, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to an office of constituent services

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Adds new section 21-142.2 to the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1333-A:** By Council Members Adams, Levin, Rosenthal, Lander, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Salamanca, Lancman, Reynoso, Moya, King, Cabrera, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to reporting on arrests, summonses, removals, escorts and use of force incidents occurring in department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Adds new section 21-142.1 to the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1335-A:** By Council Members Ampry-Samuel, Cumbo, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a pilot program for the provision of social work services at department of social services/human resources administration job centers

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Adds new section 21-142.3 to the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1336-A:** By Council Members Ampry-Samuel, Cumbo, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to de-escalation and trauma-informed training

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Amends section 21-140 of the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1337-A:** By Council Members Ampry-Samuel, Levin, Cumbo, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring space for children at department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Adds new section 21-142.4 to the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1347-A:** By Council Members Cumbo, Levin, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Gibson, Holden, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Chin, Ampry-Samuel, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to maintain systems in which clients may reschedule appointments over the phone

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Adds new section 21-142.5 to the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1350-A:** By Council Members Gibson, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, King, Cornegy, Chin, Perkins, Lancman, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law in relation to implementation of a plan based on findings of the audit of department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1359-A:** By Council Members Levin, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Gibson, Ayala, Salamanca, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report on termination of public assistance and reopening

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Adds new section 21-142 to the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1382-A:** By Council Members Rosenthal, Levin, Lander, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law in relation to auditing department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1389-A:** By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Ayala, Salamanca, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report on termination of public assistance

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Amends section 21-142 of the Administrative Code

**PROPOSED INT. NO. 1403-A:** By Council Members Deutsch, Ayala, Kallos, Adams and Constantinides

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report annually on comments, questions and complaints by clients

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:** Amends section 21-142.2 of the Administrative Code

**RESOLUTION NO. 721:** By Council Members Cumbo, Rosenthal, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Adams

**TITLE:** Resolution calling on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would provide a grace period before terminating public assistance or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits due to a change in income and/or employment to allow time to contest the termination of benefits or prepare for the termination.

1. **Introduction**

On August 13, 2019, the Committee on General Welfare, chaired by Council Member Stephen Levin, will vote on Proposed Int. No. 1332-A, Proposed Int. No. 1333-A, Proposed Int. No. 1335-A, Proposed Int. No. 1336-A, Proposed Int. No. 1337-A, Proposed Int. No. 1347-A, Proposed Int. No. 1350-A, Proposed Int. No. 1359-A, Proposed Int. No. 1382-A, Proposed Int. No. 1389-A, Proposed Int. No. 1403-A, and Resolution No. 721. The Committee previously held a hearing on the above legislation on February 4, 2019, as well as oversight on the client experience at Human Resource Administration (“HRA”) Centers.

1. **Background**

***Applying for Benefits***

As the largest local social services agency in the country, HRA helps more than three million New Yorkers annually through the administration of more than 12 major public assistance programs,[[1]](#footnote-1) including food assistance (also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP), cash assistance (CA), public health insurance, and child care.[[2]](#footnote-2)There are multiple ways by which a person can apply for public benefits: online at [ACCESS HRA](https://a069-access.nyc.gov/ACCESSNYC/application.do), calling the HRA Infoline, or in person at a SNAP or Job Center (for those who apply for CA).[[3]](#footnote-3) There are currently 30 Job Center[[4]](#footnote-4) and 14 SNAP Center[[5]](#footnote-5) locations citywide. Eleven Job and SNAP Centers are co-located. Some locations offer specialized services.[[6]](#footnote-6)

HRA has undergone significant modernization efforts since 2014 with respect to benefits access. To improve access to benefits and information on a pending or active case, HRA developed an online portal ACCESS HRA, which enables New York City residents to retrieve benefit information and apply and recertify for SNAP and other benefits. This portal allows clients to create an ACCESS HRA account to gain access to over 100 case-specific points of information in real-time, including application and case statuses, upcoming appointments, benefits account balances, and documents requested for eligibility determinations. Additionally, clients can make changes to contact information, view eligibility notices electronically, and opt-in to text message and email alerts. Clients can also request budget letters online. [[7]](#footnote-7)

***HRA Benefits Re-Engineering Initiative***

HRA implemented the Benefits Re-engineering Initiative, which uses technology to streamline SNAP and CA eligibility processes that allows access to online services outside of HRA’s traditional offices.[[8]](#footnote-8) The HRA Benefits Re-engineering Initiative includes increasing self-service options, online application and recertification, mobile document uploads and client-initiated scheduling for interviews on demand.[[9]](#footnote-9) As a result of the Re-Engineering plan, citywide SNAP in-center foot traffic has declined by 34% since 2014.[[10]](#footnote-10) During Fiscal Year 2018, 78% of SNAP applications were filed electronically.[[11]](#footnote-11)

***HRA Center Closings and Relocations***

The Re-engineering plan resulted in the closing and relocation of two SNAP Centers and a Job Center in Brooklyn in September 2018. Due to less foot traffic, the Fort Greene SNAP Center located at 275 Bergen Street closed on September 14, 2018, and staff was relocated to the East New York SNAP Center at 404 Pine Street.[[12]](#footnote-12) On that same day, the North Brooklyn SNAP Center located at 500 Dekalb Avenue closed and also merged with the East New York SNAP Center at 404 Pine Street because the lease for the Dekalb Avenue location was expiring at the end of the year. Caseloads were re-allocated to the East New York SNAP Center on September 17, 2018.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The Dekalb Job Center (which was co-located with the North Brooklyn SNAP Center at 500 Dekalb Avenue) temporarily relocated to 275 Bergen Street on October 1, 2018 due to the expiration of its lease, as previously mentioned. It is currently operating at the Bergen Street location until its new space at 95 Evergreen Avenue is available in early 2020.[[14]](#footnote-14) The Dekalb Job Center provides temporary CA and SNAP, as well as Medicaid coverage to New Yorkers in need. The Job Center is responsible for providing and administering applications and conducting application and recertification interviews to determine applicants’ and participants’ eligibility for benefits.[[15]](#footnote-15) The Brooklyn Satellite of the HRA Family Services Call Center (Brooklyn FSCC Satellite) at 275 Bergen Street also closed on September 14, 2018 and temporarily relocated to 404 Pine Street on September 17, 2018. This move was necessary to allow the Dekalb Job Center to relocate to 275 Bergen Street.

In addition, on September 17, 2018. HRA began a pilot program at 275 Bergen Street for the new SNAP Self-Service Initiative, which enables direct access to SNAP services at HRA Job Centers utilizing ACCESS HRA.[[16]](#footnote-16)

# **The Client Experience at HRA Centers**

***Jazmine Headley***

On December 7, 2018, Jazmine Headley went to the recently relocated Dekalb Job Center at 275 Bergen Street with her son to get her child care benefits reinstated, which were inexplicably revoked.[[17]](#footnote-17)  Ms. Headley arrived a few minutes before 10 a.m. at and took a number for her turn to talk to a case worker who handles child-care assistance.[[18]](#footnote-18) At 12:20 p.m., her number was called and a case worker told her that she would have to reapply for child care benefits.[[19]](#footnote-19) Ms. Headley then decided to check the status of her cash allowance, for which she had reapplied in November.[[20]](#footnote-20) She had to take another number and wait to be called again. Her son was getting restless so she took him to a play area, but workers turned her away because he was not toilet trained.[[21]](#footnote-21) All the seats in the main waiting area were taken so she sat on the floor.[[22]](#footnote-22) There was a heated exchange between Ms. Headley and two security guards, also known as HRA Peace Officers. NYPD officers were called to the center after HRA personnel asked Ms. Headley to leave the office but she refused.[[23]](#footnote-23) Nearly four hours since her arrival to the job center, Ms. Headley was arrested after police officers and security guards pried her son from her arms.[[24]](#footnote-24) Ms. Headley was charged with resisting arrest, acting in a manner injurious to a child, obstructing governmental administration and trespassing.[[25]](#footnote-25) All charges were later dismissed.[[26]](#footnote-26)

At a December 17, 2018 General Welfare hearing, Department of Social Services (“DSS”) Commissioner Steven Banks indicated that the HRA Peace Officers involved in the incident have been suspended without pay and that disciplinary charges have been brought against them. Commissioner Banks announced several other actions including:[[27]](#footnote-27)

* Peace Officers shall not request NYPD intervention without first contacting the Center Director or Deputy Director.
* DSS will work with NYPD on protocols for when to seek NYPD assistance, when an NYPD supervisor should respond and when the incident should be transferred to NYPD.
* Mandatary retraining sessions for all HRA Peace Officers and all contracted security guards assigned to HRA Centers, with an emphasis on techniques for de-escalating disputes in HRA Centers. Such trainings will take place annually.
* DSS will develop implicit bias training for all 17,000 DSS staff members.

# ***The Safety Net Project Report***

In 2014, the Urban Justice Center’s Safety Net Project published a report highlighting the challenges New Yorkers face while trying to obtain public assistance.[[28]](#footnote-28) Safety Net Project surveyed a total of 130 public assistance customers across each of the 25 HRA Job Centers between October 2013 and February 2014.[[29]](#footnote-29) More recently, Safety Net Project repeated its survey at Job Centers and added SNAP Centers to the study as well.[[30]](#footnote-30) A total of 137 surveys were collected from SNAP and public assistance recipients in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. The surveys were collected from summer 2017 through early 2018. Survey respondents were asked to reflect on their experiences at HRA in the most recent year. In the most recent survey, over a third of respondents (34%) reported that HRA workers always or often spoke to them in a mean, hostile, or nasty manner at Job Centers and another third of respondents (33%) stated that they have had this experience “sometimes.” This is a slight improvement from 2014, when asked the same question, 45% of respondents replied “always” and 36% replied “sometimes.” When clients were asked how long, on average, they waited at the center before speaking with a representative, survey responders reported an average of 3.13 hours for Job Centers (compared to 3.5 hours in 2014) and 2.78 hours for SNAP Centers. Fifty-seven percent of disabled respondents at Job Centers reported that HRA does not provide services in a way that is accessible to them, compared to 82% in 2014.

The most recent study by the Safety Net Project found that 8 Job Centers had full voicemails and 64% of survey respondents said that their calls to HRA are “never” or “rarely” answered, compared to 86% in 2014. Two-thirds of respondents at Job Centers in 2014 stated that an HRA worker had lost paperwork given to them in the last year. Despite kiosks at centers and a mobile application allowing clients to self-submit necessary documents, over 50 percent of public assistance applicants/recipients and over 25 percent of SNAP applicants/recipients surveyed in 2017-2018 stated that an HRA worker had lost paperwork. Furthermore, over 50 percent of survey respondents claimed that they were not offered a receipt for submitting documents when they visited their centers. These receipts are required pursuant to Local Law 20 of 2018 (mentioned below).

As the report points out, 68% of public assistance denials in NYC are for “compliance issues,”[[31]](#footnote-31) which leads to questions of whether HRA is making it easy for clients to submit documents, make appointments and obtain information. Over half of public assistance closings (53 percent) from July 2017 through July 2018 were due to an issue with compliance.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The Safety Net Project’s study demonstrates that technological advances and enhanced staff trainings have led to clear improvements at HRA Centers in the last 4 years. However, much work needs to be done to continue to improve the client experience at HRA. The report makes several recommendations, including trainings, hiring social workers, reducing wait times and simplifying communications and procedures.

***Wait Times***

Local Law 20 of 2018 requires HRA to create and issue a job center “appointment receipt” for all individuals who visit job centers. The appointment receipt would include any documents received by the agency from the visitor, the reason for the visit, and a time stamp indicating the time and date a visitor was present at the job center. The law requires the Department to post to its website a monthly report of the average constituent wait times at each job center. According to the most recent Local Law 20 report, the Citywide average wait time for Job and SNAP Centers[[33]](#footnote-33) for the 18 month period of May 2017 to October 2018 was 44 minutes.[[34]](#footnote-34) The wait times varied greatly from one job center to another and from one month to the next. The Southern Brooklyn Job Center had an average wait time of under a half hour, while the Concourse Job Center in the Bronx had a wait time of 1 hour and 33 minutes.[[35]](#footnote-35) The Richmond SNAP Center in Staten Island had an average wait time of under 10 minutes but the Concourse SNAP Center in the Bronx has a wait time of 1 hour and 5 minutes.[[36]](#footnote-36) The wait times in the Local Law 20 report are significantly shorter than the 2.78 - 3.13 hour wait times that survey respondents reported to the Safety Net Project in its most recent study.





 According to the Fiscal 2018 Mayor’s Management Report (“MMR”), the average in-person wait times at HRA locations has gone down from 42.4 minutes in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 to 34.2 minutes in Fiscal year 2018.[[37]](#footnote-37) While not defined in the MMR, this average may include HRA locations in addition to SNAP and Job Center, such as Office of Child Support Services, HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) Centers, and Medicaid offices.

The MMR also found that calls answered in 30 seconds went down significantly in FY 2018 (58% compared to 84% in FY 2017), however, the report explains that the roll-out of SNAP on-demand interviews partially led to this decrease in response time.

***Customers Observing and Reporting Experience (CORE) Facility Rating***

 The Mayor’s Management Report also includes a CORE Facility Rating. The Customers Observing and Reporting Experience (CORE) program is an inspection program that rates facility conditions and customer service at over 300 of the City’s walk-in service centers, including HRA centers.[[38]](#footnote-38)  Street Condition Observation Unit (SCOUT) inspectors arrive unannounced at service centers, conduct observations and rate 11 physical conditions and 4 customer service elements.  Using specific criteria, inspectors rate each condition as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor.  Agencies receive scores for Cleaning & Maintenance, Facility Operations and an Overall score combining the first two. CORE uses the questions below to give facilities a rating of 0-100:

* Are security guards professional, accessible, and knowledgeable?
* Is the queuing process timely and efficient?
* Are the front-line staff personnel professional, accessible, and knowledgeable?
* Is the facility accessible for Limited English Proficient customers?
* Is the facility signage in good condition?
* Is the lighting sufficient and in good condition?
* Is the floor or carpeting clean and in good condition?
* Are the walls cleans and in good condition?
* Are the windows clean and in good condition?
* Is the ceiling clean and in good condition?
* Are the restrooms clean and in good condition?
* Is there sufficient seating for customers?
* Is the seating clean and in good condition?
* Was there graffiti present? If so, what is the size and prominence?
* Is there any litter or trash present in the facility?

 In 2018, the Mayor’s Office of Operations (MOO) inspected 41 HRA facilities.[[39]](#footnote-39) All facilities scored above 66, which MOO defines as “good,” with the lowest score (67) at the HRA Job Center at 6740 Fourth Avenue in Brooklyn. Six centers received a score of 100 in 2018.[[40]](#footnote-40) As previously mentioned, the location at Bergen Street where Jazmine Headley was arrested was a SNAP center until September 2018, then the SNAP center was relocated and the Dekalb Job Center moved into the Bergen Street space on October 1, 2018. In 2018, the Bergen Street SNAP Center received an overall score of 94: 92 for operations and 97 for cleaning and maintenance. The Dekalb Job Center received an overall score of 91: 92 for operations and 90 for cleaning and maintenance.

***Council Efforts to Improve Client Experience***

At the end of 2017, the Council passed several bills aimed at improving the client experience at HRA. Local Law 20 of 2018 (mentioned above) not only requires DSS to create and issue a job center “appointment receipt” and requires DSS to report on wait times, it further requires DSS to display in job centers information on how to make a complaint and requires the department to issue a tracking number to track the status of a complaint.

Local Law 15 of 2018 requires HRA to conduct customer service and professionalism training for all employees that interact with members of the public. Such training is required twice annually and must include “techniques to improve professionalism, increase cultural sensitivity and de-escalate conflict.” This law became effective April 30, 2018. Additionally, Local Law 175 of 2017 requires DSS provide all employees with trainings on all of the following: implicit bias, discrimination, cultural competency and structural inequity, including with respect to gender, race and sexual orientation, and on how these factors impact the work of DSS no later than July 15, 2020.

1. **Bill Analysis**

**Proposed Int. 1332-A** - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to an office of constituent services

This bill would create an Office of Constituent Services within DSS. The Office would establish a system for DSS to receive comments, questions and complaints from clients, conduct a review of all cases where public benefits have been or will be terminated, maintain policies to communicate with clients in a timely manner in response to inquiries, and develop strategies and recommendations regarding such client communication. DSS would be required to post the phone number and information about the Office of Constituent Services on its website. The bill would take effect 120 days after it becomes law.

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to change the name of the Office from “Office of the Special Handler” to “Office of Constituent Services.” The reporting requirements originally included when this bill was first introduced have been moved to Proposed Int. 1403-A.

**Proposed Int. 1333-A** – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to reporting on arrests, summonses, removals, escorts and use of force incidents occurring in department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

This bill would require DSS to issue a quarterly report on arrests, summonses, removals, escorts, and use of force incidents that occur in a job center or SNAP center. This report would be submitted to the Council and published on the DSS/HRA website. The first report would be due on January 31, 2020. The bill would take effect immediately.

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to include all types of enforcement within job centers and SNAP centers, including arrests, summonses, removals, and escorts. This bill no longer requires NYPD to issue a supplementary report on use of force incidents occurring in job centers and SNAP centers. Instead, DSS would be required to report whenever NYPD is called to response to an incident at a job center or SNAP center and whether a DSS employee witnessed an NYPD officer arrest someone or brandish a weapon.

**Proposed Int. 1335-A** – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a pilot program for the provision of social work services at department of social services/human resources administration job centers

This bill would require DSS to create a pilot program for the design, development, implementation and provision of social work services at one job center in each borough. The DSS Commissioner would be required to submit a report to the Mayor and Speaker of the Council with findings from the pilot program by July 15, 2020. DSS would be required to expand social work services to all job centers by January 1, 2021. The bill would take effect 120 days after it becomes law

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to begin the implementation of social work services through a pilot program first. It has also been amended to only require social work services in job centers.

**Proposed Int. 1336-A** – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to de-escalation and trauma-informed training

In an effort to improve the client experience at job centers and SNAP centers, this bill requires DSSto conduct trainings on de-escalating conflict and trauma-informed care for all DSS employees and contractors providing security services in such centers. DSS would be required to report on the number of individuals who have received such training. This bill would take effect 120 days after it becomes law.

 Since introduction, this bill has not significantly changed.

**Proposed Int. 1337-A** – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring space for children at department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

This bill would require DSS to designate a sanitary space with comfortable seating and age-appropriate and educational materials for children in job centers and SNAP centers. The bill would require DSS to create a poster containing information on the availability of such space and report to the Council and post on DSS’s website a list of locations where such spaces are available. The bill would take effect 120 days after it becomes law.

Since introduction, the bill has been amended to clarify that such space shall be provided as practicable, and to require that the list of locations be published on DSS’s website within 30 days.

**Proposed Int. 1347-A** – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to maintain systems in which clients may reschedule appointments over the phone

This bill would require DSS to maintain systems in which clients can reschedule in-person appointments over the phone. This bill would also require DSS/HRA to notify clients of the option to reschedule such appointments in the written notice clients receive in the mail. The bill would take effect 120 days after it becomes law.

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to remove language regarding rescheduling appointments online because the appointments this bill addresses are required to be completed by a mandated deadline in order for the client to continue to receive benefits. The amended bill has also removed language that would require DSS to notify clients when a requested service does not require an in-person visit to a job center of SNAP center, because the appointments this bill addresses do require an in-person visit.

**Proposed Int. 1350-A** – A Local Law in relation to implementation of a plan based on findings of the audit of department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

This bill would require the DSS Commissioner to implement the plan to improve the client experience, as is proposed in Proposed Int. 1382-A for the year 2019 (see below). The Commissioner would be required to implement such plan by January 1, 2021. DSS would be required to submit to the Council and post on its website an initial progress report detailing the efforts to improve the client experience. This report would be due March 1, 2021. DSS would be required to issue three subsequent progress reports over the next six years. These reports would be due on March 1, 2023, March 1, 2025, and March 1, 2027. The bill would take effect on the same date that Proposed Int 1382-A takes effect and would be repealed when all reports required under this local law have been submitted.

 Since introduction, this bill has been amended to include three additional progress reports, due every two years for the next six years.

**Proposed Int. 1359-A** – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report on termination of public assistance and reopening

This bill would require DSS to issue a report on instances in which public assistance cases were terminated and subsequently reopened. The report would also include how many such instances resulted in at least one disbursement date passing before the case was reopened. The first report would be due on November 15, 2019. The report would be submitted to the Council and Public Advocate and published on the DSS website. The bill would take effect immediately.

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to include additional demographic information: whether the case head has limited English proficiency and whether the case head had been granted an accommodation for a disability by DSS.

**Proposed Int. 1382-A** – A Local Law in relation to auditing department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

This bill would require DSS to conduct an audit analyzing operations, policies and procedures at job centers and SNAP centers, with the goal of increasing operational efficiency. DSS would be required to perform the audit in consultation with at least five organizations that work with job center and SNAP center visitors. The report would include recommendations made by such organizations and whether DSS will implement such recommendations. The bill would require the report of findings and recommendations from the audit to be submitted to the Council and posted on DSS/HRA’s website by March 1, 2020. The bill would take effect immediately and be deemed repealed on May 1, 2020 or the day after the submission of reports required by Proposed Int. 1350-A (see above).

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to require DSS to consult with five organizations that work with job center and SNAP center visitors. This bill has also been amended to require DSS to respond to each recommendation submitted by such organizations. This bill has also been amended to add additional criteria to audit and report on, including various types of wait times, case sizes at each center, and complaints submitted to the Office of Constituent Services.

**Proposed Int. 1389-A** – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report on termination of public assistance

This bill would require DSS to issue a quarterly report on instances in which public assistance cases were terminated and instances in which applications for public assistance were denied. The first report would be due on November 15, 2019. The report would be submitted to the Council and the Public Advocate and published on the DSS/HRA website. This bill would take effect immediately.

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to include information about denials. This bill was also amended to include additional demographic information: whether the case head has limited English proficiency and whether the case head had been granted an accommodation for a disability by DSS.

**Proposed Int. 1403-A**– A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report annually on comments, questions and complaints by clients

This bill would require DSS’s Office of Constituent Services to submit monthly reports to the DSS Commissioner on the number of comments, questions and complaints received from clients. The number of comments, questions and complaints would be disaggregated by the 20 most frequent categories of inquiries. DSS would also be required to submit to the Council and post on the DSS website an annual report on comments, questions and complaints received. The bill would take effect immediately.

Since introduction, this bill has been amended to allow for more categories of complaints in the report to have a better understand of what comments, questions, and complaints are more prominent.

**Res. 721** – Resolution calling on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would provide a grace period before terminating public assistance or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits due to a change in income and/or employment to allow time to contest the termination of benefits or prepare for the termination.

Resolution 721 calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would provide a grace period before terminating public assistance or SNAP benefits due to a change in income and/or employment to allow time to contest the termination of benefits or prepare for the termination. Such legislation will ensure that vital resources are not abruptly cut off during a period of transition, which could contribute to job loss, food insecurity and homelessness.

Proposed Int. No. 1332-A

By The Speaker (Council Member Johnson) and Council Members Rosenthal, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

..Title

A LOCAL LAW

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to an office of constituent services..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-142.2 to read as follows:

§ 21-142.2 Office of constituent services. a. There shall be an office of constituent services within the department. The duties of such office shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Establishing a system to receive and respond to comments, questions and complaints from clients;

2. Conducting a review of all inquiries from clients about cases where any public benefits administered by the department have been or will be terminated including, but not limited to, the reason for such termination, whether the recipient was notified that such public benefits have been or will be terminated and whether the department has complied with the applicable statutes, rules and regulations with respect to such cases;

3. Establishing and maintaining policies regarding communication with clients in a timely manner in response to inquiries;

4. Developing strategies and recommendations for the commissioner regarding client communication; and

5. Performing such other duties and functions as may be appropriate.

b. The department shall post on its website the phone number for the office of constituent services and a statement indicating that any person may contact such office if such person has a comment, question or complaint regarding any public benefit administered by the department.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law, except that the commissioner may take such actions as are necessary for its implementation, including the promulgation of rules, prior to such date.

ACK

LS #9653

8/6/2019 4:25pm

Proposed Int. No. 1333-A

By Council Members Adams, Levin, Rosenthal, Lander, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Salamanca, Lancman, Reynoso, Moya, King, Cabrera, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to reporting on arrests, summonses, removals, escorts and use of force incidents occurring in department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-142.1 to read as follows:

§ 21-142.1 Arrests, summonses, removals, escorts and use of force incidents in a job center or SNAP center. a. As used in this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Basis for encounter. The term "basis for encounter" means the conduct, offense or reason that formed the basis for the initial approach by a peace officer or security guard that led to an arrest, summons, removal, escort or use of force incident.

Escort. The term “escort” means the accompaniment of an individual by a peace officer or security guard out of a job center or SNAP center following a request that such individual exit the job center or SNAP center.

Injury. The term “injury” means any physical harm an individual sustains as a result of a use of force incident, and consists of the following categories: (i) physical injury, such as minor swelling, a contusion, laceration, abrasion or complaint of substantial contracted pain; (ii) substantial physical injury, such as a significant contusion or laceration that requires sutures or any injury that appears to require treatment at a hospital emergency room; and (iii) serious physical injury, such as a broken or fractured bone, heart attack, stroke or any injury that appears to require hospital admission.

Job center. The term “job center” means any location designated by the department as a job center where individuals can complete an application for cash assistance in person.

Peace officer. The term “peace officer” means an individual who is designated as a peace officer pursuant to section 2.10 of the criminal procedure law and works for the department and is charged with promoting security within a job center or SNAP center.

Removal. The term “removal” means the taking into custody of an individual in a job center or SNAP center by a peace officer pursuant to section 9.41 of the mental hygiene law.

Security guard. The term “security guard” means an unarmed individual with a current and valid registration card issued in accordance with article 7-A of the general business law authorizing such individual to perform security services in New York, who is employed by an entity with which the department contracts to promote security within job centers and SNAP centers.

SNAP center. The term “SNAP center” means any location designated by the department as a SNAP center where individuals can complete an application for the supplemental nutrition assistance program in person.

Use of force incident. The term “use of force incident” means any instance where a peace officer or security guard responds to an incident or condition at a job center or SNAP center and takes action in a manner intended to have an immediate effect on the body of another person, and consists of the following categories: (i) the use of hand strikes, foot strikes, forcible take-downs or the wrestling of the subject to the ground; (ii) the discharge of oleoresin capsicum spray; (iii) the deployment of a conducted electrical weapon; (iv) the use of a mesh restraining blanket to secure an individual; (v) the intentional striking of a person with any object, including a baton or other equipment; (vi) a police canine bite; and (vii) the use of physical force that is readily capable of causing death or serious physical injury, including the discharge of a firearm.

b. No later than January 31, 2020, and no later than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter thereafter, the department shall post on its website and submit to the speaker of the council an aggregate report on arrests, summonses, removals, escorts and use of force incidents in job centers and SNAP centers for the preceding quarter. Reports required pursuant to this section shall not contain personally identifiable information. Such reports shall include:

1. The total number of arrests by a peace officer, disaggregated by:

(a) The job center or SNAP center where the arrest occurred;

(b) The offense charged; and

(c) Whether the arrestee was issued a desk appearance ticket or was the subject of a live arrest;

2. The following information for each summons issued by a peace officer:

(a) The date the summons was issued;

(b) The job center or SNAP center where the summons was issued;

(c) The offense; and

(d) Whether the summons was civil or criminal;

3. The following information for each removal:

(a) The date the removal occurred;

(b) The job center or SNAP center where the removal occurred; and

(c) The basis for the encounter;

4. The following information for each use of force incident:

(a) The date the use of force incident occurred;

(b) The job center or SNAP center where the use of force incident occurred;

(c) The category of the use of force incident;

(d) The number and category of injuries to a peace officer or security guard;

(e) The number and category of injuries to any other individual;

(f) The basis for the encounter; and

(g) Whether or not an arrest was made;

5. The total number of times the department called the police department for assistance at a job center or SNAP center, disaggregated by:

(a) Whether a department employee witnessed an arrest being made; and

(b) Whether a department employee witnessed a police officer displaying a firearm, oleoresin capsicum spray, conducted electrical weapon, baton, or any other weapon; and

6. The total number of escorts, disaggregated by:

(a) The job center or SNAP center where the escort occurred; and

(b) The basis for the encounter.

c. The reports produced pursuant to subdivision b of this section shall be stored permanently and shall be accessible on the department's website.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

AM

LS 8539/9765

8/5/19 11:55 AM

Proposed Int. No. 1335-A

By Council Members Ampry-Samuel, Cumbo, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

..Title

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a pilot program for the provision of social work services at department of social services/human resources administration job centers

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-142.3 to read as follows:

§ 21-142.3 Social work services in job centers. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Job center. “Job center” has the same meaning as set forth in section 21-142.1.

Social work services. “Social work services” means the coordination of client services to expedite and assist clients with obtaining such services, where such coordination is provided primarily by a social worker.

b. The department shall establish a pilot program for the design, development, staffing, implementation and provision of social work services at one job center in each borough. No later than July 15, 2020, the commissioner shall submit to the mayor and the speaker of the council a report outlining the findings of such pilot program.

c. No later than January 1, 2021, the department shall ensure that social work services are expanded to all job centers and available during regular hours of operation of such centers.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

ACK

LS #9380/ LS#9401

8/6/19 4:05PM

Proposed Int. No. 1336-A

By Council Members Ampry-Samuel, Cumbo, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

..Title

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to de-escalation and trauma-informed training

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Section 21-140 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as added by local law number 15 for the year 2018, is amended to read as follows:

  § 21-140 Client service [training] trainings. a. Pursuant to subdivision c of this section, the department shall conduct two trainings per year on best practices for improving interactions between department employees and clients of the department.

                     b. Such [training] trainings shall include techniques to improve professionalism, increase cultural sensitivity, [and] de-escalate conflict and use trauma-informed theory.

c. The department shall provide such [training] trainings to all appropriate employees identified by the department whose primary responsibilities include interacting with members of the public in a client service role at any location designated by the department either as a job center where individuals can complete an application for cash assistance in person or as a [supplemental nutrition assistance program center] SNAP center where individuals can complete an application for the supplemental nutrition assistance program in person.

d. A contractor providing security services under a city contract at any location designated by the department either as a job center where individuals can complete an application for cash assistance in person or as a SNAP center where individuals can complete an application for the supplemental nutrition assistance program in person shall provide the training described in subdivision b of this section to its employees having regular contact with the public at such centers. All new or renewed city contracts for security services at such centers shall contain a provision requiring employees of any security contractor having regular contact with the public at such centers be provided with the training described in subdivision b of this section.

 e. On or before January 31, 2020, and annually thereafter, the department shall report to the mayor and the speaker of the council the number of individuals who have received the trainings pursuant to subdivision c of this section, disaggregated by the positions held by such individuals. The first such report shall be preliminary and limited to the data reasonably available to the department for the preceding calendar year.

                     f. Nothing in this section shall preclude the department from providing such training to employees other than those identified by the department pursuant to subdivision c of this section.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

ACK

LS # 9381/9400/9451

8/6/19 12:46 PM

Proposed Int. No. 1337-A

By Council Members Ampry-Samuel, Levin, Cumbo, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

..Title

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring space for children at department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding new section 21-142.4 to read as follows:

§ 21-142.4 Space for children in job centers and SNAP centers. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Child. The term “child” means a natural person under the age of 13 years.

Client. The term “client” means a visitor who has made initial contact with the department at a job center or SNAP center, either through a self-service kiosk or with a staff member responsible for keeping track of visitors.

Job center. The term “Job center” has the same meaning as set forth in section 21-142.1.

SNAP center. “SNAP center” has the same meaning as set forth in section 21-142.1.

b. The department shall designate a sanitary space in every job center and SNAP center for any client with a child in such center where providing such space is practicable and does not compromise the space needs of the department or safety of clients. Such designated space shall include comfortable seating and age-appropriate and educational materials for any child who utilizes such space.

c. The department shall create a poster containing information on availability of space for children pursuant to this section and any additional accommodations for children. Such poster shall be displayed in a clear and conspicuous manner in all job centers and SNAP centers. Information about space for children in job centers and SNAP centers shall be made available on the department’s website. Within 30 days after the effective date of the local law adding this subdivision, the department shall create a list of all locations with spaces for children available pursuant to this section. The department shall submit such list to the speaker of the council and make such list available on the department’s website.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

ACK

LS#9380/9399/9402

8/5/19 12:15 PM

Proposed Int. No. 1347-A

By Council Members Cumbo, Levin, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Gibson, Holden, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Chin, Ampry-Samuel, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to maintain systems in which clients may reschedule appointments over the phone

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-142.5 to read as follows:

§ 21-142.5 Job center and SNAP center appointments. a. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Job center. The term “job center” has the same meaning as set forth in section 21-142.1.

SNAP center. The term “SNAP center” has the same meaning as set forth in section 21-142.1.

b. The department shall maintain systems in which in-person appointments for services at job centers and SNAP centers can be rescheduled over the phone. The availability of such systems shall be communicated to clients in the written notice clients receive communicating the date, time and location of their appointments.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

AM

LS #9405/9585

8/6/19 4:39 PM

Proposed Int. No. 1350-A

By Council Members Gibson, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, King, Cornegy, Chin, Perkins, Lancman, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

In relation to implementation of a plan based on findings of the audit of department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Section one of a local law in relation to auditing department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers, as proposed in introduction number 1382-A for the year 2019, is amended by adding new subdivisions e, f, g and h to read as follows:

e. As soon as practicable and no later than January 1, 2021, the commissioner of social services shall begin to implement the plan to improve the client experience required pursuant to subdivision d of this local law.

f. The commissioner of social services shall make every effort to ensure that the plan to improve the client experience is implemented at every job center and SNAP center.

g. No later than March 1, 2021, and no later than March 1 every two years thereafter for the next six years, the department shall post on its website and submit to the speaker of the council a report on the progress of the implementation of the plan to improve the client experience. Such report shall include, at minimum:

1. What changes to operations, policies and procedures have been implemented to improve wait times;

2. The current wait times at each job center and SNAP center and how such wait times are calculated;

3. What changes to operations, policies and procedures have been implemented to improve the efficiency and ease of use of the department’s phone lines or any similar successor technology;

4. What changes to operations, policies and procedures have been implemented to address staff-to-visitor ratios;

5. What changes to operations, policies and procedures have been implemented to improve access to technology in job centers and SNAP centers; and

6. Whether the number of visitor complaints received has increased or decreased since the implementation of the plan to improve the client experience.

h. The reports specified in subdivisions c and g of this local law shall not contain personally identifiable information.

§ 2. This local law takes effect on the same date as a local law relating to auditing department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers, as proposed in introduction number 1382-A for the year 2019, takes effect and is deemed repealed upon the issuance of all reports required by section one of this local law.

AM

LS #6449/6451

8/6/19 12:05 PM

Proposed Int. No. 1359-A

By Council Members Levin, Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Gibson, Ayala, Salamanca, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

..Title

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report on termination of public assistance and reopening

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Section 21-142 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as added by a local law for the year 2019 amending the administrative code of the city of New York, relating to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report on termination of public assistance, as proposed in introduction number 1389-A, is amended by adding new paragraphs d and e to read as follows:

d. Re-open after termination. The department shall post on its website and submit to the speaker of the council and the public advocate a report on reopened cases for the relevant reporting period. The first such report shall be due on November 15, 2019, and shall cover the quarter that began on July 1, 2019. Subsequent reports shall be posted and submitted no later than 45 days after the end of each quarter thereafter. Such report shall include the following information for the relevant reporting period:

1. The total number of reopened cases;

2. The total number of reopened cases, disaggregated by the type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;

3. The total number of instances in which a case was reopened within three months of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance termination and was reopened for the same type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance, disaggregated using the welfare management system reopen codes;

4. The total number of instances in which a public assistance case was terminated and at least one disbursement date passed before such case was reopened for the same type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;

5. The data required by paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this subdivision shall be further disaggregated by:

(a) The council district the case head lives in;

(b) The reported race, ethnicity, gender and age category of the case head;

(c) Whether the case head has limited English proficiency; and

(d) Whether the case head has received a reasonable accommodation for a disability from the department.

e. The reports produced pursuant to subdivisions b, c and d of this section shall be stored permanently and shall be accessible on the department's website. Reports required pursuant to this section shall not contain personally identifiable information.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

AM

LS #9469

8/6/19 4:20pm

Proposed Int. No. 1382-A

By Council Members Rosenthal, Levin, Lander, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

In relation to auditing department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Audit of job centers and SNAP centers. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Appointment. The term “appointment” means a meeting between a department employee and a visitor at a job center or SNAP center to apply or recertify for public assistance or to make an inquiry with respect to an open or closed public assistance case or any other meeting for which a ticket is issued.

Department. The term “department” means the department of social services.

Job center. The term “job center” means any location designated by the department as a job center where individuals can complete an application for cash assistance in person.

Public assistance. The term “public assistance” means all forms of public benefits administered by the department and provided by the federal government, the state of New York, or the city of New York for which an individual may apply through the department, including but not limited to: cash assistance; medicaid; and the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

SNAP center. The term “SNAP center” means any location designated by the department as a SNAP center where individuals can complete an application for the supplemental nutrition assistance program in person.

Ticket Issued. The term “ticket issued” means that a visitor has made contact with the department at a job center or SNAP center, either through a self-service kiosk or with a staff member responsible for keeping track of visitors, and has made such contact so that the department has a record, either written or electronic, of such visitor’s time of arrival at such center and the reason for the visit.

Total current wait time. The term “total current wait time” means the amount of time a visitor spends waiting at a job center or SNAP center. Total current wait time includes wait time for each ticket a client receives while at the center.

Visitor. The term “visitor” means any individual who, by scheduled appointment or walk-in, enters a job center or SNAP center to apply or recertify for public assistance, to make an inquiry with respect to an open or closed public assistance case or for any other appointment for which a ticket is issued.

Wait time. The term “wait time” means the amount of time a visitor spends waiting to be called to begin an appointment after such visitor has been issued a ticket at a job center or a SNAP center. Wait time begins when the visitor has been issued a ticket or, for appointments scheduled prior to the visitor’s arrival at the center, the scheduled appointment time, whichever is later, and ends when such visitor is called to begin an appointment.

b. The department shall conduct an audit and consult with and respond to recommendations made by at least five organizations that have experience working with visitors. The audit will focus on operations, policies, and procedures at job centers and SNAP centers, with the goal of increasing operational efficiency at such centers. Such audit shall be limited to the data reasonably available to the department. The audit shall include an analysis of data from the prior calendar year concerning:

1. The current wait times at each job center and SNAP center for each ticket regardless of ticket type;

2. The total current wait times at each job center and SNAP center for each visitor combining all ticket types;

3. The current wait times at each job center and SNAP center for each ticket, disaggregated by the type of ticket by queue;

4. The total time a visitor spends at each job center and SNAP center beginning when a ticket is issued and ending when the visitor’s last ticket of the day is closed;

5. The number of visitors who are issued more than one ticket at job centers or SNAP centers on the same day;

6. For each job center and SNAP center, the number of cases and persons served and the number of applications received, disaggregated by whether such cases or applications are recurring or non-recurring;

7. For each job center and SNAP center, the average case size, the number of adults and children served by the center’s caseload and the percentage of applications accepted;

8. The number of recertifications scheduled at each job center and SNAP center;

9. The number of staff assigned to each job center and SNAP center, disaggregated by title;

10. The number of SNAP applications submitted through ACCESSHRA accounts or any similar successor technology;

11. The number of SNAP recertifications submitted through ACCESSHRA accounts or any similar successor technology;

12. The number of on-demand telephone calls completed;

13. The efficiency and ease of use of the department’s phone lines;

14. Visitors’ access to technology in job centers and SNAP centers;

15. Monthly reports submitted to the commissioner of social services pursuant to subdivision c of section 21-142.2;

16. Issues regarding operations, policies, and procedures at job centers and SNAP centers raised by the organizations that have experience working with visitors; and

17. Recommendations to address issues regarding operations, policies and procedures at job centers and SNAP centers received from the organizations that have experience working with visitors.

c. No later than March 1, 2020, the department shall post on the department’s website and submit to the mayor and the speaker of the council a report of the findings from such audit including the outcome of consultations with the organizations that have experience working with visitors conducted pursuant to subdivision b of this section.

d. No later than March 1, 2020, the department shall post on the department’s website and submit to the mayor and speaker of the council a plan to improve the client experience at job centers and SNAP centers in response to findings from the audit. Such plan shall include actions to address complaints received pursuant to subdivision b of section 21-142.2, to the extent that such complaints relate to the client experience at job centers and SNAP centers. Such plan shall include a response to each recommendation received pursuant to paragraph 17 of subdivision b of this section. The responses shall indicate whether the department will implement such recommendations, and if the department does not intend to implement the recommendations, the reason(s) for such determination.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately and expires and is deemed repealed on May 1, 2027 or the day after submission of the reports required by a local law in relation to implementation of a plan based on findings of the audit of department of social services/human resources administration job centers and SNAP centers, as proposed in introduction number 1350-A for the year 2019, whichever is later.

ACK/AM

LS 9459/LS 9474

8/6/19 4:00pm

Proposed Int. No. 1389-A

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Rosenthal, Lander, Adams, Richards, Ayala, Salamanca, Chin, Kallos and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report on termination of public assistance

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-142 to read as follows:

§ 21-142 Reporting on the termination and denial of public assistance. a. For the purposes of this section the following terms have the following meanings:

Case head. The term “case head” means the head of household who is the member of the applicant household designated by the household to represent the household in all matters pertaining to its eligibility for and receipt of public assistance, as defined in Title 18 of New York Codes Rules and Regulations Part 387.1(u)(1), and as indicated in the welfare management system.

Reopened case. The term “reopened case” means a case of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance that was terminated and subsequently reopened within three months of termination.

Welfare management system. The term “welfare management system” means the system defined in section 21 of New York social services law.

b. Termination report. The department shall post on its website and submit to the speaker of the council and the public advocate a report on instances in which ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance was terminated during the relevant reporting period. The first such report shall be due on November 15, 2019, and shall cover the quarter that began on July 1, 2019. Subsequent reports shall be posted and submitted no later than 45 days after the end of each quarter thereafter. Such reports shall include the following information for the relevant reporting period:

1. The total number of ongoing cash and supplemental nutrition assistance cases terminated;

2. The total number of cases terminated, disaggregated by type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;

3. The total number of cases terminated, disaggregated by reason(s) why the ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance was terminated, using the welfare management system closing codes;

4. The data required by paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this subdivision shall be further disaggregated by:

(a) The council district the case head lives in;

(b) The reported race, ethnicity, gender and age category of the case head;

(c) Whether the case head has limited English proficiency; and

(d) Whether the case head has received a reasonable accommodation for a disability from the department.

c. Denial report. The department shall post on its website and submit to the speaker of the council and the public advocate a report on instances in which applications for ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance were denied during the relevant reporting period. The first such report shall be due on November 15, 2019, and shall cover the quarter that began on July 1, 2019. Subsequent reports shall be posted and submitted no later than 45 days after the end of each quarter thereafter. Such reports shall include the following information for the relevant reporting period:

1. The total number of ongoing cash and supplemental nutrition assistance applications denied;

2. The total number of applications denied, disaggregated by type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;

3. The total number of each type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance applications denied, disaggregated by the reason(s) why such applications were denied, using the welfare management system denial codes;

4. The data required by paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this subdivision shall be further disaggregated by:

(a) The council district the case head lives in;

(b) The reported race, ethnicity, gender and age category of the case head;

(c) Whether the case head has limited English proficiency; and

(d) Whether the case head has received a reasonable accommodation for a disability from the department.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

AM

LS #9449

8/5/19 11:45 AM

Proposed Int. No. 1403-A

By Council Members Deutsch, Ayala, Kallos, Adams and Constantinides

A LOCAL LAW

..Title

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services/human resources administration to report annually on comments, questions and complaints by clients

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Section 21-142.2 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as added by a local law for the year 2019 amending the administrative code of the city of New York in relation to an office of constituent services, as proposed in introduction number 1332-A, is amended by adding new subdivisions c and d to read as follows:

c. Beginning on January 31, 2020, the office of constituent services shall submit monthly reports to the commissioner indicating:

1. The number of comments, questions and complaints received;

2. The number of comments, questions and complaints received in which information was provided and the matter resolved;

3. The number of comments, questions and complaints received in which the matter was escalated for resolution, disaggregated by the 20 most frequent categories of inquiries; and

4. Recommendations made pursuant to paragraph 4 of subdivision a of this section.

d. No later than January 31, 2021 and annually thereafter, the commissioner shall post on the department’s website and submit to the mayor and the speaker of the council a report that shall include a compilation of the monthly reports submitted pursuant to subdivision c of this section during the preceding calendar year.

§ 2. This local law takes effect on the same date as a local law of the city of New York for the year 2019 amending the administrative code of the city of New York relating to an office of constituent services, as proposed in introduction number 1332-A, takes effect.

NLB/ACK

LS #8811

8/5/19 12:10 PM

Res. No. 721

..Title

Resolution calling on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would provide a grace period before terminating public assistance or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits due to a change in income and/or employment to allow time to contest the termination of benefits or prepare for the termination.

..Body

By Council Members Cumbo, Rosenthal, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson, Chin, Kallos and Adams

Whereas, The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) program provides public assistance to needy families through federal funds given to states allowing them to develop and implement their own public assistance programs; and

Whereas, In New York, those receiving temporary cash assistance can receive transportation and child care expenses so that they can meet their work and/or educational requirements; and

Whereas, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, provides critical food assistance to people struggling to make ends meet, and has contributed to the overall reduction in poverty nationwide; and

Whereas, In New York State, both public assistance and SNAP are administered by the Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance (“OTDA”), and the Human Resources Administration (“HRA”) is the agency that provides assistance to eligible applicants; and

Whereas, Both public assistance and SNAP help low income families get back on their feet by providing vital resources at a critical time in their lives; and

Whereas, Changes in employment and/or income can change a recipient’s eligibility for SNAP and public assistance, including child care and transportation expenses; and

Whereas, Those changes in eligibility can leave recipients navigating government bureaucracy to restore funding that helps pay the bills and put food on the table, often resulting in taking time from work and family obligations; and

Whereas, Continuity and stability must be provided to recipients of benefits as family circumstances change, especially to families with children; and

Whereas, New Yorkers receiving benefits should be supported through the process of beginning a new job, looking for a job, or having their work hours drastically change; and

Whereas, Additionally, all termination letters should clearly state why benefits are being terminated, the exact paperwork needed to reverse decisions and how to submit needed documents, including an online option, if available; and

Whereas, Action must be taken to ensure that vital resources are not abruptly cut off during a period of transition, which could contribute to job loss, food insecurity and homelessness; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would provide a grace period before terminating public assistance or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits due to a change in income and/or employment to allow time to contest the termination of benefits or prepare for the termination.

CP

LS 9695

1/11/19

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