

FEATURE

COLAs *continued from page 9*

other housing options upon intake, evening and weekend hours for ACS programs and "a collaborative process of re-defining DFTA's contracts."

More than 3,000 employees in ACS-funded programs were expected to be affected, including those working in Preventive Services, FRP, Homemaking, Independent Living, Adoption and Substance Abuse programs. All DFTA contracts, with an estimated 7,000 employees, were reportedly covered by the agreement. Similarly, it was believed that all DHS contracts with nonprofit providers were covered.

"It is great," said Igal Jellinec, Executive Director of the Council of Senior Centers and Services. "We are very pleased and grateful. It is \$70 million into 3 systems which is huge."

"This adjustment was badly needed and will go a long way towards helping agencies recruit and retain skilled staff," said Laurn Bholaï-Pareti of the Council on Homeless Polices and Services. "Our workforce had seen the real value of their wages decline by almost 20% over ten years."

"We are happy that the Mayor recognized the critical nature of the work that our employees perform and very pleased that he recognized their longstanding need for salary adjustments," said Jim Purcell, Executive Director of the Council of Child and Family Caring Agencies (CORCCA).

Each of these umbrella groups representing the affected sectors participated with HSC in the negotiations leading to the agreement.

Executives at individual provider agencies also expressed relief.

"I am very excited for our staff," said Carolyn McLaughlin, Executive Director of Citizen's Advice Bureau. "Some of the staff of our senior centers are making \$18,000 a year. How can you live on that?"

"We are very pleased with this move by the city," said Andrew Martin, Associate Director for Government & Media Relations at Volunteers of America-Greater New York. "They are a long time coming and we feel they will help us to retain a lot of our employees who work so hard each day to combat homelessness."

The actual impacts of the salary adjustments are expected to vary from agency to agency depending upon whether staff had previously received in-house, agency-funded COLA adjustments during the period since January 1, 2001.

There continued to be considerable uncertainty about the timing and mechanics of how the COLAs would be implemented as we went to press. Written instructions on precisely how the process would work had yet to be issued by any of the three City agencies. "We are still in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget," said DFTA spokesperson Christopher Miller.

At least certain aspects appeared clear. Employees who had received salary increases equal to the new COLA adjustments during the period in question would not receive additional, duplicative adjustments.

A number of individual provider agency executive directors expressed con-

cerns about how the program would be implemented: When and how monies would flow to agencies? How would the program work for nonprofits with unionized workforces?

"Now we need to figure out the mechanics of how it gets to the workers," said Jellinec.

(NYNRP will provide additional details on the implementation process as they become available in the "Breaking News" section of our website: www.nynp.biz and through our E-Newsletters. To subscribe to these free E-Newsletters, email editor@nynp.biz.)

UNPRECEDENTED PROCESS

The negotiations leading up to the agreement were almost as significant as the COLAs themselves, says HSC's Michael Stoller.

For the past several years, HSC had been leading a "Workforce Campaign" aimed at winning salary adjustments for employees in the human service sector as a whole. "We had had some success a couple of years ago at the State level and then turned our attention to the City to address those sectors which had been left out," says Stoller. When the City reached an agreement with DC37 for a major group of its own employees, HSC stepped up its efforts. After an agreement with DC 1707 for employees of nonprofits operating City-Funded day care centers was announced in January, HSC got a call.

"We had been knocking at the door and they finally answered it," says Allison Sesso, HSC's Associate Director.

"They recognized HSC as their one point of contact," says Stoller. "We created teams with each of these umbrella groups and providers." The HSC teams met to discuss potential productivity improvements it could offer and then met with the individual commissioners of the affected agencies. HSC negotiated the overall form of the agreement, in consultation with the individual sector coalitions, with the Mayor's Office.

"Once it started going it really moved fast," said Stoller.

"The Mayor was really eloquent about acknowledging the work that our employees do," Stoller. "I think the nontangible piece of this was vitally important - that the sector was recognized for the work it does in a very public, very clear way by the Mayor of the City of New York."

Stoller is hopeful that this year's process will become a pattern for annual negotiations leading to regular salary adjustments for human service workers.

"We want to get through this one, iron out the kinks and learn what we can learn," he says. "Hopefully, this will set a pattern citywide."

A number of program sectors were not included in the final agreement. Implementation of the new Out-of-School Time contracts at the Department for Youth and Community Development (DYCD) preempted the inclusion of youth services programs in the agreement. Employees on contracts with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) also were not covered by the agreement.

"We are worried about the parity be-

tween those employees on DHS contracts and those on DHMH and HRA programs," said VOA's Andrew Martin.

"We are concerned about any subsequent that didn't get raises and we will be looking at that," said Stoller.

The agreement did not address rapidly rising costs for non-personal related expenses such as rent, insurance, fuel, etc.

"It came up in discussions, but this was really about getting the workers paid,

both from our point of view and their point of view," said Stoller.

Subsequent to the announcement, the individual service sector teams have been meeting with individual City agencies to work out details of the productivity improvements which will trigger the final 2% wage increase in the package.

"I think they are pretty reasonable and fair," said Stoller. "Everything was agreed to by the coalitions."



New School University
**Robert J. Milano Graduate School
 of Management and Urban Policy**
 72 Fifth Avenue New York NY 10011

CHANGE.

Milano

Earn a Master of Science degree in:

- Nonprofit Management
 - Health Services Management and Policy
 - Human Resources Management
 - Organizational Change Management
 - Urban Policy Analysis and Management
- Ph.D. degree:
- Public and Urban Policy

Applications still being
 accepted for Fall. Join us for an

UPCOMING OPEN HOUSE

**Tuesday, June 7
 Wednesday, June 22
 6:00 p.m.**

Program Concentrations in:

- Strategic Health Management
- International Policy & Program Management
- Community Development & Nonprofit Management
- Housing & Community Development
- Finance & Economic Development
- Workforce Development
- Social Policy

Courses Available

- Degree and Non-Degree
- Day and Evening
- Saturday
- On-Line
- Site-line (1/2 on-line and 1/2 in-class)

An affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

To RSVP or for more information: 212-229-5400 ext. 1120
 or e-mail milanoadmissions@newschool.edu
www.newschool.edu/milano