



Human Resources Administration
Department of Social Services
Robert Doar, *Commissioner*

Employment and Work Supports Are the Surest Path Out of Poverty

HRA's efforts to help New Yorkers in need escape poverty are based on a work-first philosophy. The Agency believes employment is the best and most reliable path to better financial health, especially when combined with work supports like food stamps, which help an entry-level paycheck stretch further while clients work toward self-sufficiency. This philosophy is reflected in HRA's new "Welfare vs. Work" campaign, which shows the benefits of employment combined with federal, state and local programs which help those working in low-income jobs, and compares this to the lack of options available on traditional cash assistance.

"Work is the best way out of poverty, and HRA is committed to helping clients find and keep jobs." said Deputy Commissioner of Employment and Contracts Katy Gaul. "This effort makes it clear that employment earns more for a family than welfare."

A mother of two living below the poverty line might receive around \$9,000 per year in cash assistance, along with approximately \$5,500 in food stamps and \$2,400 in child support, for a yearly total of about \$17,000. If that same mother of two gets an entry level job paying \$9.00 per hour, she will earn a yearly income of about \$15,000 after taxes, plus about \$3,300 in food stamps, \$4,400 in child support payments, almost \$8,800 in tax refunds from the Earned Income Tax Credit, and childcare services valued at about \$9,400 per year (note that this represents the value of services provided, not a cash payment for child care), making the overall value of work combined with work support programs over \$48,000 per year.

HRA's Family Independence Administration (FIA) Employment Services and Job Centers provide a wide variety of options to job seekers with different skills and backgrounds. Vendors in the Back to Work program work with clients from the moment they apply for cash assistance through their placement and retention in a job to build strong relationships with clients and ensure job placements are as successful as possible. The Work Experience Program (WEP) provides a simulated work experience where clients gain experience and build work skills, with time dedicated to job hunting. Business Link connects local businesses with pre-screened employees that fulfill their staffing needs, and can also help businesses access benefits like tax breaks for hiring HRA clients. The Begin Employment Gain Independence Now program (BEGIN) combines hands-on work experience with education and training to make clients more job ready. The Employment Services program also holds job fairs twice a year, where hundreds of NYC employers meet with HRA clients ready to begin a new career.