



Bringing Reform into the Child Support Process: HRA & CUNY Host Conference

On January 17 and 18, 2008, HRA's Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) cosponsored a conference, "A Collaboration of Minds: Helping Low-Income Noncustodial Parents Fulfill their Child Support Obligations," with the CUNY Graduate Center.

OCSE Deputy Commissioner Frances Pardus-Abbadessa welcomed the participants, and explained that the conference was organized to stimulate discussion and ideas from a diverse range of professionals on reforming the child support process and encouraging more positive engagement from noncustodial parents (NCPs). The event was attended by representatives of the family court system, social services providers, and the religious and the academic communities.



Participants visit a table of information at the OCSE conference.

HRA Commissioner Robert Doar's opening remarks provided an overview of policy goals. "Without losing sight of our core objective, which is increasing support collection for families, reform must address the barriers facing low-income noncustodial parents," he said. He identified fulfilling child support responsibility as a means of turning the powerful resource programs that have assisted custodial parents in the direction of NCPs as well.

Featured speakers included: the Honorable Kristin H. Ruth, District Court Judge, Wake County, North Carolina; Dr. Ronald B. Mincy of Columbia University School of Social Work; Vicki Turetsky, J.D., Director of Family Policy at the Center for Law and Social Policy; and Dr. Elaine Sorensen, labor economist and principal research associate at the Urban Institute.



Commissioner Doar welcoming conference participants.

According to participant feedback, the conference did an excellent job of explaining how the court and administrative systems work in New York City. In the spring, OCSE will release a conference report outlining ideas that can enhance the overall child support process, including a more consumer-friendly environment for NCPs to help avoid the build up of arrears. Also highlighted at the conference was HRA's leading role in making child support from an NCP an increasingly significant contributor to a family's economic survival.

HRA's New Logo

You may have seen the new NYC logo on taxis throughout the city and on HRA's Intranet. NYC and Company has designed a new logo for the City of New York that will provide a unified look for all City agencies and will be used by all City agencies on their official stationery and informational materials.

The NYC logo will replace both the City seal and any other HRA logo/insignia on Agency stationery. The City seal will only be used by the Mayor's Office.

Going forward, new print orders will have the new NYC logo. All existing stationery, business cards, envelopes, and other material should continue to be used with the old HRA logo or City seal until stock is exhausted. Over the next few months, you can expect to see the logo integration throughout the Agency. The colors have been chosen to reflect the Model Office Center colors.

The procedure on new Agency stationery is located in HRA Docs on the Intranet. In the HRA Policies & Procedures Folder, in the 2008 folder, it is Procedure NO. 08-01, January 14, 2008. Program managers and staff should review the memo and the templates.



HRA Program Updates Legislative Alerts Keep HRA Informed

The Office of Legislative Affairs tracks the progress of legislative and budget proposals affecting HRA programs that are before Congress and the State Legislature. The office publishes a weekly summary of legislative developments at the local, state and federal levels, called "Legislative Alerts," on HRA's Intranet homepage. Previous issues can also be located on the Intranet by linking to the Office of Legislative Affairs page. These alerts are an opportunity to keep up with new developments that affect or will affect your work—and even let you get ahead of the media.

APS's Lin Saberski a 2008 Sloan Award Winner

APS's Deputy Commissioner Lin Saberski is being honored with a 2008 Alfred P. Sloan Public Service Award. Only a handful of the City's 250,000 employees are selected to receive this prestigious award presented by the Fund for the City of New York. A profile of Deputy Commissioner Saberski will be published on the Intranet next month.

APS, under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Saberski, convened the first meeting of its new APS Advisory Council on December 4, 2007. The Advisory Council brings together representatives from community-based organizations, health care institutions, and education and training organizations to identify various areas where the Council can provide support to APS. The Council formed two subcommittees that are now developing written protocols for use in future training and community forums.

HRA Perspective Monthly Bulletin

Published by the City of New York
Human Resources Administration/
Department of Social Services

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Robert Doar, Commissioner

Office of Public Information & Communications
Barbara Brancaccio, Exec. Deputy Commissioner
Connie A. Ress, Media Director
Melinda Mousouris, Writer/Editor
Patrice Moller, New Media Producer
Alexia Innis, Assoc. Public Information Specialist

Event Calendar

March is Women's History Month

This year, HRA is planning an informative luncheon at 180 Water Street on March 28. The event will be a "brown bag" Lunch and Learn, featuring speakers who have been at the forefront of the modern women's movement and domestic violence services. Speakers will also discuss their own experiences assisting women in New York City's vast network of social services.

We encourage every site to plan an educational event during the month of March. For more information and ideas, contact Barbara Woods at 212-331-3336.

Volunteer for HRA events!

If you would like to participate in initiatives planned for the upcoming year, please contact Denise Blanks at 212-331-3338 or blanksb@hra.nyc.gov

PAI Lunch & Learn Workshop

Stress Management, Tuesday, March 18, HRA Headquarters, 180 Water Street, 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. Eric Reid, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and Supervisor of Personal Service Unit at DC 37, will speak on managing stress. For more information, please contact Karin Feldhamer via email.

HRA Blood Drives

Help Maintain NYC's blood supply. Make your donation at the following locations:

Wednesday, March 5, 2008, Department of Citywide Administration Services (DCAS), 2 Washington Street, Manhattan, Room 1980 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Thursday, March 6, 2008, Department of Citywide Administration Services (DCAS), 2 Washington Street, Room 1980, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

HRA staff is invited to take part in the two DCAS blood drives above and should use group number 1295 to be credited the three (3) hours compensatory time for the blood donation.

Friday, March 7, 2008, General Support Services (GSS) and Investigation Revenue & Enforcement Administration (IREA), 250 Church Street, Manhattan, First Floor Training Room, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To make an appointment, call Valerie Sheafe at (212) 274-6414.

An Outstanding HRA Job Center and Service Complex Opens in Northern Manhattan

Upper Manhattan's civic leaders joined Commissioner Doar and HRA staff to celebrate the ribbon cutting for three new model offices: the Dyckman Model Job Center, the Inwood Model Job Center and the Washington Heights Model Food Stamp Center, all located at 4055 10th Avenue in Manhattan.

Among the guest speakers who spoke about the accomplishment of the new complex were: Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Guillermo Linares, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, and New York City Council Members Miguel Martinez and Robert Jackson.



City Council Member Miguel Martinez, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Commissioner Doar, MOIA Commissioner Guillermo Linares and City Council Member Robert Jackson cut the ribbon.



MOIA Commissioner Linares and Commissioner Doar speak with Assistant Deputy Commissioner Barbara Ramirez Giove.

"Everyone who has grown up here has learned so much," Commissioner Linares said. "We want our children to grow up here, but treated with respect and seeing the world as something they can conquer. This is the vision and customer service they receive at the HRA Services Center."

The speakers expressed their gratitude to Mayor Bloomberg for fulfilling his promises to modernize the City's cash assistance, food stamp and public health insurance offices and, to HRA for overcoming obstacles to obtain a suitable location so that services for northern Manhattan could remain within the community.



Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer at the podium.

HRA Obtains Reform in Indigent Burial Regulations

HRA's Burial Claims Unit, under Director JoAnn Orr, assists relatives, friends and official organizational sponsors in applying for a cash benefit toward a funeral under the New York State Social Service Laws and Rules of the City of New York. The unit of 12 caseworkers and support staff all require strong social work skills and a desire to help others because of the challenges of interviewing those who are arranging a funeral for an indigent loved one or requesting reimbursement.

In October 2007, HRA took a leadership role in organizing stakeholders and initiating hearings to amend the regulations governing public burial to include services for veterans and an increase in the amount of the benefit.

The City code previously designated three official organizational sponsors who can apply to HRA for the burial benefit on behalf of a decedent. The amended rules create the opportunity for organizational sponsorship of burial claims for indigent veterans. "We want to ensure that deceased veterans who served our country will be buried in the veterans' cemetery rather than in Potter's Field," said Ms. Orr.

In addition, for many years the maximum benefit under law was \$800 and the maximum cost of the portions of a funeral eligible for the benefit was \$1400. HRA has now increased the benefit from \$800 to \$900, and the maximum cost of a funeral for eligibility has been raised from \$1400 to \$1700. The change will take effect in March 2008.

The Burial Claims Unit is committed to helping people and treating them compassionately as they go through the grieving process. Under Ms. Orr's management, the unit has streamlined the claim process and reduced unnecessary documentation costs for applicants.



Burial Claim Unit's assistant manager, Ira Kluger, special project coordinator, Sylvia Hambright, and director, JoAnn Orr.