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MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES HISTORIC LOW IN WELFARE CASELOADS

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Human Resources Administration Commissioner Verna Eggleston today announced that New York City public assistance caseloads have dropped to their lowest levels in more than 40 years. The March 2006 public assistance caseload of 402,281 persons is the lowest since 1964, the same year President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress launched the War on Poverty. Currently, of those public assistance recipients who move from welfare to work, 88% have retained their jobs after three months, and 75% percent have stayed employed after six months. In 1996, public assistance caseloads in New York City peaked at over 1.1 million.

"We promised to move New Yorkers to self-sufficiency and we are delivering on that promise in an historic way," said Mayor Bloomberg. "People are leaving the welfare rolls in record numbers and they are getting - and keeping - jobs that allows them to live independently and enjoy the dignity of work."

The number of New Yorkers receiving public assistance at the end of January 2002 was 459,056; at the end January 2003 the number was 422,185; at the end of January 2004 the number was 432,538; at the end of January 2005 the number was 424,163, and at the end of this past January the number of New Yorkers receiving public assistance was 412,452.

"Individuals and families are receiving the support, training and work experience necessary to achieve sustainable employment and reach their maximum level of self-sufficiency," said Commissioner Eggleston. "In order to efficiently and effectively serve our customers, we abandoned the 'one size fits all' social service program model and created an individualized model of service delivery."

The Bloomberg Administration has combined service initiatives which focus on client engagement in work-related activities, job placement and retention. For example, the Administration's WeCARE program customizes case management to address the individual health, wellness and vocational training needs of clients who face multiple and complex barriers to employment.

(Visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/pdf/public_assistance_caseloads_mar06.pdf to go to a graph that charts the number of public assistance recipients in New York City from 1955 to 2006.)

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