

SBS IN THE NEWS



Staten Island Advance

City to help Islanders looking for work Career centers, which link potential employees with local employers, to stay open longer

By STEPHANNIA F. CLEATON
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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Staten Islanders who are looking for employment will receive a little more assistance from the city in the way of available free job placement services through the city's Workforce1 Career Centers

Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced yesterday that by leveraging \$4.25 million in state funds, starting today, the city will keep the Workforce1 Career Center at 60 Bay St., St. George, and the six others throughout the city open from 8:30 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on alternate Saturdays. Until now, the seven Workforce1 Career Centers have operated only Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The expansion is one of 18 initiatives announced by Bloomberg in October to help New Yorkers cope with the dismal economy.

"Despite the downturn in the economy, our Workforce1 Career Centers are on pace to match last year's record-setting total of more than 17,000 job placements. But we can do more," said Bloomberg, who was joined yesterday by Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert C. Lieber and Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Robert W. Walsh at the recently opened Workforce1 Career Center on East 163rd Street in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx, the seventh center opened by the Bloomberg Administration.

"In these tough economic times, we're doing everything we can to help New Yorkers keep the jobs they have and help those who don't have jobs to find them. We're significantly increasing the hours of operation at all seven of our Workforce1 Career Centers across the city, including adding weekend

hours. It's one of the 18 initiatives we devised in October to help New Yorkers ride out this economic downturn and speed our city's recovery. Today, we're following up that announcement with action," Bloomberg said.

The centers, in all five boroughs, help New Yorkers prepare for and find employment, and they link local employers with skilled workers.

"By establishing relationships with local businesses and offering them recruitment services of value, we have increased the number of New Yorkers that we place in jobs at our Workforce1 Career Centers across the city from 127 per quarter in 2004 to more than 4,000 per quarter today," said Commissioner Walsh.

Staten Island's unemployment rate remained at 5.1 percent for two straight months, with 12,400 Staten Islanders unemployed and actively searching for work in October, the state Department of Labor reported. In October 2007, the jobless rate was 4.7 percent, with 11,300 Islanders unemployed and looking. Overall, New York City's unemployment rate remained unchanged for October and September at 5.7 percent, but was up 0.5 percent points from October 2007.

The city also will invest nearly \$3 million to upgrade and expand the Workforce1 technology infrastructure to enhance the process of matching job seekers to job opportunities.

SBS partnered with the New York State Department of Labor and the City University of New York to create the seven Workforce1 Career Centers to help New York City residents find and prepare for employment, by providing an array of services