

City Spending More To Cut Provisionals, Add Permanent Staff

By DAN ROSENBLUM | Posted: Monday, January 12, 2015 5:00 pm

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services will administer more civil-service exams and boost hiring of permanent civil servants following an adjustment to the city's expense budget approved last week by the City Council. Over the fiscal year that ends June 30, \$3.3 million is being spent to help the agency convert provisional employees to those covered by civil-service protections.



DCAS is responding to a 2007 State Court of Appeals decision, Long Beach v. Civil Service Employees Association, which compelled the city to limit provisional appointments to the nine-month maximum

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DANEEK MILLER: 'A welcome change.'

stipulated by law. In 2008, the Bloomberg administration planned to replace what then numbered more than 37,000 provisional employees, a program that Mayor de Blasio requested last fall to extend through next year. During a Council hearing in November, DCAS Commissioner Stacey Cumberbatch said the agency sought to reduce the time it takes from administering a test to establishing a hiring list—currently a median of 441 days, according to the most recent statistics.

Giving DCAS \$7M

The city will allocate \$7 million to DCAS over the next four years for these purposes, I. Daneek Miller, the Council's Civil Service and Labor Committee Chairman, said in a statement.

"This administration's investment in a system which has been historically under-resourced and under-valued is a welcome change," Mr. Miller said.

The extra funding also includes \$516,000 to hire seven employees at computer-based testing and application centers and to "insource" five technology positions. DCAS is retaining consultants to develop new civil-service exams and to create 173 candidate work stations. It will also hire more than a dozen staffers within its Division of Asset Maintenance and create 18 positions to reduce buildings' greenhouse-gas emissions as part of the "One City, Built to Last" sustainability initiative.

"These resources affirm the administration's commitment to equity and inclusion by providing us with the resources necessary to better partner with agencies and unions ensuring that the city is prepared for its present and future workforce needs," said Ms. Cumberbatch in a statement.

Acts on All Budget Shifts

The Council's Dec. 7 vote was based on the Mayor's November plan and part of a routine procedure to recognize new costs, revenues or initiatives since June, when the city passed its annual budget. Upper West Side Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal was the sole holdout vote against the bills.

The adjustments appropriated \$284.5 million in new revenues citywide. Of that, \$766 million of additional tax money will be partially offset by other lower-than-expected gains, including a more than \$500-million shortfall in taxi-medallion sales.

The package of bills also allocated \$28.9 million to the NYPD to cover overtime expenses for enhanced training for 20,000 police officers and \$13.7 million to pay for a three-month-long summer mobilization to flood 10 high-crime precincts with police.

Other agencies received money to fund headcount increases and other initiatives. They included: \$2.2 million for 46 new EMS positions within the FDNY; \$8.2 million for the Department of Correction to increase staffers to reduce the officer-to-inmate ratios in adolescent units; funding for the Department of Education to hire 25 Teachers to lead classrooms when high-level instructors are evaluating their peers; \$1 million for the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications to hire a Chief Technology Officer and a 14-member information-technology team; and 48 staffers to work in the Human Resources Administration's rent-arrears program.

Employee-Linked Changes

The de Blasio administration is also tapping \$276.9 million from the collective-bargaining reserve to settle costs for contracts reached since June, including those with District Council 37, Teamsters Local 237, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East and the New York State Nurses Association.

Because of high investment returns, the city will spend \$8 million less this year on pensions, slightly lowering total contributions to \$8.4 billion.