

MARCH, 2023

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced that — with more than 96 percent of city workers fully vaccinated against COVID-19 — the city will make vaccination optional for current and prospective city workers effective February 10, 2023, following the expected ratification at the next Board of Health meeting. The COVID-19 vaccine mandate for city workers has helped keep New Yorkers safe and New York City operations running throughout the pandemic. With the vast majority of city workers and New Yorkers vaccinated, and more tools readily available to protect people from serious illness, the vaccine requirement for the primary series of shots has served its purpose, driving rates of vaccination up among the city's workforce during a critical period in the pandemic.

Beginning February 10, 2023, the city will make the COVID-19 vaccination requirement optional for city employees, in addition to New York City Department of Education (DOE) employees. At this point, the city has fully processed and issued decisions for all pending reasonable accommodation appeals. While the approximately 1,780 former employees terminated for failing to submit proof of vaccination will not be able to automatically return to their previous positions, they will be able to apply for positions with their former agencies through existing city rules and regulations and hiring processes. The city will also end the vaccination requirements for nonpublic school, early child care, and daycare staff.

As part of this change, beginning February 10, 2023, visitors to Department of Education (DOE) school buildings will no longer be required to provide proof of at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. This will allow students' families and loved ones to attend school activities, celebrations, and events.

The necessary amendments to the city's vaccination policy for current city employees and DOE visitors are expected to be made at the next Board of Health meeting on February 9, 2023.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Reported: NYC DEP launched our water bill Amnesty Program, which helps property owners who have fallen behind on their water bills. NYC Water Board has approved a one-time-only offer to help New Yorkers, property owners in all tax classes and with any amount of water bill debt are eligible. The Amnesty Program will offer customers up to 100% forgiveness of accrued interest if they pay all or part of their outstanding debt and enter into a payment agreement. DEP also continues to provide support for low-income water customers as well.

The Amnesty Program will run until April 30, 2023. So please encourage anyone you know who may be behind on their water bill to take advantage of this offer now. If you would like more information or have any questions about the program, please visit nyc.gov/dep/amnesty or call (718) 595-7000. In addition,

DEP Reported: In preparation for a multi-month shutdown of New York City's Delaware Aqueduct planned for later this year, DEP has begun slowly introducing water from the Croton system into the city's supply of tap water. DEP operates 19 protected reservoirs spread across three separate water supply systems located in the Catskills and Hudson Valley. Water sourced from each system, and each reservoir within each of those three distinct systems, may taste slightly different to some people. However, New Yorkers can rest assured because DEP scientists test the City's tap water approximately 2,000 times every single day of the year to ensure it remains safe and of the highest quality. Any New Yorkers with concerns about their tap water should report it to 311 so DEP Water Quality Specialist can investigate. More information on the City's water distribution system and source water can be found [here](#).

Additional information on the complex repair of the City's Delaware Aqueduct, which conveys approximately half of the water consumed in the city each day, can be found [here](#).

Department of Sanitation (DSNY) Reported: DSNY Waste Set Out times will change on April 1st – As part of DSNY's commitment to keeping the streets clean, DSNY is implementing a new rule to reduce the time that trash, recycling, and curbside composting will sit on sidewalks. The new rule goes into effect April 1st, 2023.

Residents: Residential Buildings have two options:

- Place waste out after 6 p.m. in a container of 55 gallons or less with a secure lid, or
- Place waste out after 8 p.m., if putting bags directly on the curb;

To ensure collection, all waste must be set out by midnight.

Businesses: Businesses that place waste at the curb* for collection have two options:

- If using a container with a secure lid, place waste at the curb 1 hour before closing or
- If putting bags directly on the curb, place waste out after 8 p.m.

*This does not apply to businesses that have waste collected from a loading dock. Remember, containers must be removed from the curb by the time your business reopens.

Mayor's Office Reported: Mandatory In-Person Engagement with FIA & Employment Services and Support Administration: Employment Services Providers

HRA will begin mandatory in-person appointments for Cash Assistance recipients who are required to participate in an Employment Services program. Engagement with HRA Employment Services and Support Administration (ESSA) Providers is mandatory for Cash Assistance recipients but was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. This mandatory engagement resumes in early 2023 and will be in-person, with some limited exceptions.

Clients will be contacted twice by HRA or our programs before the mandatory appointment period begins using at least one of four methods of communication: email, telephone call, text message (for some), and/or mail.

HRA Employment Services offers Cash Assistance clients opportunities to learn new skills and improve their chances of connecting to careers that will lead to success and financial security. Employment Services works closely with clients to identify opportunities that match their needs, skills, and career goals, with a goal of establishing long-term financial stability and security. Clients work with a Career Pathways provider in one of three programs:

CareerCompass, YouthPathways, and CareerAdvance. More information on each of these programs is included below. These providers will also assist clients who need them with connecting to childcare services.

- **CareerCompass** assists clients with finding employment, training, or education programs, as well as internship and community service opportunities, to match their skills and reach their goals;
- **YouthPathways** provides career, education, and training services for clients ages 18-24, including internships and community service opportunities tailored to their goals and needs;
- **CareerAdvance** offers career, education, and training services in specific employment sectors, including people with limited English proficiency and older adults;

WeCARE and Substance Use (SU) providers provide a continuum of services to help cash assistance clients and applicants with medical and/or mental health conditions that affect their employability to attain their maximum levels of self-sufficiency.

Office of Substance Use Policy, Planning and Monitoring is responsible for CAS' substance use initiatives, including developing substance use policies and programs, and monitoring and providing technical assistance to the HRA substance use contractors. The Office monitors and provides technical assistance to the following contracted programs: Substance Use Centralized Assessment Program (SUCAP), and four case management services programs.

New York State Social Services Law Section 132 requires local social service districts to identify, and refer for treatment, cash assistance clients who have substance use disorders. ACCESS HRA provides a self-attested to screening instrument that is followed up with and confirmed by HRA's Benefit Access Centers (BACs) or simply used by the BAC staff during the interview. The state mandated screening instrument is used to identify cash assistance applicants and recipients who may have a substance use problem. An individual who screens positive receives a comprehensive substance use assessment by one of the contracted vendors employed by Customized Assistance Services (CAS). Based on the results of this assessment, the contractors refer the individual for a range of services or treatment tailored to meet the client's needs.

The Office of Reasonable Accommodations (ORA) is responsible for the clinical review of requests for Reasonable Accommodations (when review is required) that support clients with physical, mental, or medical disabilities in accessing HRA programs and services. ORA clinicians review clinical documentation and make recommendations on Reasonable Accommodation requests that support clients in accessing HRA programs and services.

DSS/HRA Reported:

2022-2023 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) – Application Available on AHRA

Applications for the Regular HEAP component can be submitted via ACCESSHRA. The 2022-23 HEAP season runs from November 1, 2022- March 15, 2023, or until funding for this component is exhausted.

As previously reported, the Emergency HEAP Benefit opened on January 3, 2023. Emergency benefits are available to assist eligible households with a heating emergency or a heat-related domestic emergency. Only one Emergency benefit of each type is available per HEAP household for the 2022-2023 season. Regular component benefits, if available, must be utilized first to resolve heating emergencies for eligible households. The application period for the 2022-2023 Emergency HEAP, which consists of heating and heating-related benefits, began January 3, 2023, and is slated to end March 5, 2023, but will continue until funding allocated to this component is exhausted.

All applicants for the Emergency benefit component may apply via telephone and in person.

More information, including 2022-23 benefit amounts and eligibility requirements, can be found [here](#).

NYC Free Tax Prep: Tax Season 2023

The Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration (DSS/HRA) is partnering with the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) for the City's Annual Tax Season Initiative to help working individuals and families learn about and claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) EITC in order to reach more eligible New Yorkers. **New Yorkers who earned \$80,000 or less in 2022 can use NYC Free Tax Prep to file for free** with the help of an IRS certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)/Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) volunteer preparer. NYC Free Tax Prep volunteer preparers can help New Yorkers claim valuable tax credits, including a bigger NYC EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit).

Help spread awareness so that New Yorkers don't miss out on valuable tax credits or spend their money on tax prep fees. Below are some tools to help amplify NYC Free Tax Prep:

- **Digital Toolkit**
- Print materials.
- Download flyer in: **English | Español (Spanish)**
- Download **multilingual brochure**.

Note: Additional translations will be available on the DCWP **Tax Campaign page** in the coming weeks.

Quick Links:

Official NYC Free Tax Prep URL: *nyc.gov/taxprep*

DCWP Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram handle: *@helloDCWP*

Hashtags: *#FreeTaxPrep #EITC*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Reported: 24 bathrooms at 12 subway stations will reopen to the public May 2. The 12 stations with reopened bathrooms are the second group in NYC Transit's phased reopening of subway bathrooms since they were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bathrooms, one male and one female at 12 stations, will be open daily from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a one-hour closure for cleaning from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

NYC Transit began to reopen bathrooms on [January 9](#) at nine stations. As part of the reopening the agency tracked bathroom usage as well as cleanliness and safety concerns. NYC Transit implemented a "flush counter" that found the men's bathrooms had three times as many flushes as the women's bathrooms with over 27,000 flushes compared to 8,400 flushes.

Overall, the bathrooms have been used over 35,000 times since they were reopened in January, and of the thousands of recorded uses, there have been no significant safety issues or cleanliness complaints from customers or employees. Since the reopening, none of the bathrooms have had to close for maintenance repairs.

Prior to the first phase of reopening, the MTA took advantage of the closures of bathrooms to perform needed maintenance to these facilities, including:

- New motion activated faucets
- New fixtures (hand dryers, dispensers)
- New/painted privacy panels
- New lighting
- Tile grouting
- New door signs reflecting hours of operation
- Ceiling painting
- Deep cleaning

Bathrooms will reopen at the following stations May 2:

- Norwood – 205 St
- Woodlawn

- 168 St
- 72 St
- Brooklyn Bridge – City Hall
- 57 St – 7 Av
- Atlantic Av – Barclays Center
- 36 St
- Coney Island – Stillwell Av
- Euclid Av
- Flushing – Main St
- Queensboro Plaza

Following the second phase, over 30 percent of bathrooms in the subway system will be reopened.

The bathrooms reopened during the first phase in January:

- 161 St–Yankee Stadium
- 14 St–Union Sq
- East 180 St
- 42 St–Bryant Park
- Jay St–MetroTech
- Kings Highway
- Jackson Hts–Roosevelt Av
- Forest Hills–71 Av
- Fulton St

Did You Know:

The City is Offering Temporary Water Bill Amnesty

As New York City recovers from the pandemic, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is offering this limited [one-time amnesty](#) with up to 100% interest forgiveness for all delinquent customers. Those who owe water and wastewater charges may be eligible for this amnesty offer.

Taxpayers have until April 18 to file their taxes this year.

If you earned \$80,000 or less in 2022, **NYC Free Tax Prep** provides free, professional, tax preparation with IRS certified VITA/TCE volunteer preparers.

Learn more about NYC Free Tax Prep [here](#).

The fiscal year 2023 property tax rebate is for homeowners whose New York City property is their primary residence and whose combined income is \$250,000 or less.

Great news! Homeowners have until **March 15, 2023**, to apply if they haven't already received the fiscal year 2023 property tax rebate.

Think you qualify? More info at www.nyc.gov/propertytaxrebate.

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Young people aged 14-24 can now apply to the Department of Youth & Community Development's SYEP.

SYEP connects NYC youth with career exploration opportunities and paid work experience each summer. Participants have the opportunity to explore their interests and career pathways, develop workplace skills and engage in learning experiences that help develop their social, civic and leadership skills.

To apply, visit: nyc.gov/syep. Employers can also hire NYC youth through SYEP. The deadline is **March 31, 2023**.

If you have further questions about SYEP, contact Community Connect at **(800) 246-4646** or **use this form** to email them.

Respectfully Submitted by:



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