



Onondaga County Legislature

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401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315.435.2070 • Fax: 315.435.8434 • www.ongov.net/legislature

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 21, 2023 COLLEEN GUNNIP, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Chase, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Bush
ALSO ATTENDING: see attached

Chair Gunnip called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

Chair Gunnip took the agenda items out of order.

2. **ADULT & LONG TERM CARE:** JoAnne Spoto Decker, Commissioner a. **2023 Transfer Resolution (\$1,000,000)**



County of Onondaga

Department of Adult & Long Term Care Services

Aging • NY Connects • Adult Protective Services
John H. Mulroy Civic Center, 10th Floor
421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

J. Ryan McMahon, II
County Executive

JoAnne Spoto Decker
Commissioner

Health and Human Services Committee Meeting March 21, 2023

Request: Release \$1 M from contingency to support Senior and Community Center physical plant and operational improvements

Goal: Assist with cost of modernization and updates of senior focal points so that they may continue to provide essential and diverse services to our valued and growing Senior population

Process: Request for Proposals from Senior and Community Centers through the Dept. of Purchase


- Grants awarded up to \$100,000
- Expenditures may include any physical plant improvement and other purchases including: plumbing, painting, carpentry, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical, internet, and also appliance and van purchases

Who will receive:

- 22 Senior and Community Centers (list provided)
- All Onondaga Town Supervisors
- All Onondaga County Village Supervisors *Mayors*

Anticipated Award: May/June, 2023

Onondaga County


 J. Ryan McMahon, II
 County Executive

Senior Centers

The following is a listing of Senior, and Community Centers, offering programs for older adults in Onondaga County. We encourage you to contact the center directly to find out about their programs, availability and possible residency requirements. Please note: addresses shown are building locations; mailing addresses may be different.


All are Air-Conditioned Facilities

Camillus Senior Center315-672-5820 27 First Street Camillus, NY 13031	Dunbar Association315-760-3155 1453 South State Street Syracuse, NY 13205
Canton Woods Senior Center315-638-4536 76 Canton Street Baldwinsville, NY 13027	Fayetteville Senior Center315-637-9025 584 East Genesee Street Fayetteville, NY 13066
Cicero Senior Center315-452-3298 5924 Lathrop Drive Cicero, NY 13039	Huntington Family Centers Senior Center315-476-3157 405 Gifford Street Syracuse, NY 13204
Clay Senior Center315-652-3800 Ext. 137 4948 Route 31 Clay, NY 13041	Jewish Community Center315-445-2360 5655 Thompson Road DeWitt, NY 13214
Frank DeFrancisco Eastwood Senior Center315-437-4011 401 S. Midler Avenue Syracuse, NY 13206	Jordan-Elbridge Community Ctr.315-689-3431 1 Route 31 Jordan, NY 13080
DeWitt Parks & Rec.315-446-9250 Ext. 134 DeWitt Town Hall, 5400 Butternut Drive East Syracuse, NY 13057	John Carno Recreation Center315-487-8243 823 State Fair Blvd. Syracuse, NY 13209

Senior Centers Continued

Manlius Senior Activity Centre315-682-7889 1 Arkie Albanese Avenue Manlius, NY 13104	Town of Salina315-457-6661 201 School Road Liverpool, NY 13088
Magnarelli Community Center at McChesney Park315-473-2673 2308 Grant Boulevard (Cor Pond & Grant Blvd.) Syracuse, NY 13208	The Salvation Army Senior Center315-479-1156 749 S. Warren Street Syracuse, NY 13202
Onondaga Senior Center315-469-3464 4834 Velasko Rd Syracuse, NY 13215	Skaneateles YMCA & Community Center315-685-2266 97 State Street Skaneateles, NY 13152
Robert Cecile Community Center315-473-2678 174 West Seneca Turnpike Syracuse, NY 13205	Syracuse Northeast Community Center315-472-6343 716 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY 13203
SAGE/Upstate315-478-1923 431 E. Fayette Street, Lower Level CNY Philanthropy Center Syracuse, NY 13202	Westcott Community Center315-478-8634 826 Euclid Avenue Syracuse, NY 13210

Prepared by the Onondaga County Office for Aging
(315) 435-2362 www.ongov.net/aging


 J. Ryan McMahon, II
 County Executive

JoAnne Spoto Decker Commissioner, Adult & Long Term Care Services
Executive Director, Office for Aging

Revised: 03/2023

Onondaga County Senior Centers



Onondaga County Senior Centers



- Request to release \$1M to assist with cost of modernization to valued, growing senior population
- Provide grants to senior centers throughout Onondaga County
- City of Syracuse seniors rose 43%; Onondaga county seniors rose 29% ~ in last decade
- Average age of senior participant at a senior center is 75 years old
- 22 current listings of senior and community centers (pg. 2)
- If money received, going through the Department of Purchase for competitive request for proposal
- Grants would be awarded up to \$100,000
 - Expenditures include physical plant improvements, etc. (*as per listed on sheet, pg. 1*)
 - Provide transportation to seven community centers, Jordan Elbridge is one
 - Looking to provide funding for other centers who want to make a purchase; will not be able to provide upkeep for that

Comments from Maria Mahar:

- Senior center's started in the 1970's – things changed since then, need updating
 - For example, had to close Dunbar in August due to heat
 - Update air conditioning
 - Need for more fitness equipment; Zumba, strength training
 - Need Internet connection
 - Need physical updates to have more senior come to the centers
- If updates are approved can connect to evidence based programs
 - Blood pressure checks, diabetes, etc.
 - If vehicles are funded, can do field trips for outreach to senior centers, apple festival; trip to grocery store
 - If updates to seniors centers:
 - Might be additional revenues to help senior centers generate more updates

Questions from Committee:

- Will there be a grant application that needs to be filled out?
 - Yes, in process of writing that now; in hopes to be able to receive funding
 - Typically write grants for services like home care, meals; it is challenging to write grants for windows and doors, etc.
- Is there a matching?
 - No matching

Request: Is there a panel selected to review these grants? Suggest a member from this committee be put on like with the Opioid settlement program money when grants come in to advocate in the future for additional funding

- Yes, that could be done

Questions/Comments from Committee:

- Is \$1M enough for senior centers? Looking at 22 (referring to senior centers); not familiar with the ones in the suburbs; the buildings in the city are old
 - Office for Aging has funding also; anticipate getting smaller projects
 - People looking for programming
 - This grant is for physical plant purposes
 - There is some funding to measure for this; may be able to get from Office for Aging
- If successful, money can be budgeted for the following year
- Have you taken an assessment of the need in 22 places?
 - Up to \$100,000 for each place is 10 not 22
- Is the million dollars based on a broad assessment of needs throughout the county?
 - When annual plan is done, Office for Aging does an assessment of needs
- When you talk to the directors, 2 populations are served; health related, 70's might be considered seniors, but very active seniors who want to do things

- Yes, still active, talk about pickle ball, art classes, field trips, exercise, a lot of people cannot afford a membership to the “Y”, why not go to senior center
- One senior center has meals on wheels program; kitchen needs updating; serving more and more meals
- Would be nice to see proposals for starting point

Comment from JoAnne Spoto Decker:

- Wanted to invite all to our Older Americans Month Celebration Luncheon for Onondaga County on Thursday, May 18, 2023. Be able to see Senior Citizen of the Year – Laura Hand and Caregiver of the Year – Monica Williams

A motion was made by Dr. Chase, seconded by Ms. Kuhn to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED

1. HEALTH DEPARTMENT: Ann Rooney, Deputy County Executive, Human Services

a. Authorizing the Onondaga County Center for Forensic Sciences to Donate Surplus Equipment to the Syracuse University Forensic and National Security Sciences Institute

- Going through inventory at Forensic Science Center; had pieces of equipment in storage
- County has MOU (memorandum of understanding) with SU because of their Forensic Science Program
- Students come down and do learnings inside the County’s center
- Use of items for student concerns, not for practicality at the Forensic Science Center; past useful life as far as actual usage at the center, but not for student learning
- Equipment is being donated for SU student use

A motion was made by Dr. Chase, seconded by Ms. Kuhn to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED

3. PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT: Carl Hummel, Commissioner

a. Informational: HELP Program

PAR-03-23

POLICY ADVISORY REPORT

TO: All Municipal Civil Service Agencies
FROM: Municipal Services Division
SUBJECT: Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP Program)
DATE: January 13, 2023

In response to local agencies having significant challenges filling positions across local government due to the tight labor market, competition with private sector employers and eligible lists that have become exhausted, the New York State Department of Civil Service, Municipal Services Division (MSD), is pleased to announce the Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP Program). This is a temporary program to help local government employers address the current staffing issues for critical health and safety titles.

The Department also worked with the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) who advocated for the program's establishment on behalf of Local Districts of Social Services (LDSS) statewide given the aggravated recruitment difficulty some LDSS are experiencing filling Caseworkers and Social Welfare Examiners on a permanent basis.

The Department solicited input from local agencies to determine the appropriate scope of the local HELP program. Your input made it clear that health and safety positions have the greatest number of vacancies or positions filled by provisional appointments.

The titles identified are found in the following examination holdings:

Holding Name	Number of Provisionals and Vacancies Statewide
Social Welfare Examiner	478
Caseworker	433
Social Work Services	227
Higher Level Caseworker	160
Human Services Paraprofessional	134
Public Safety Dispatcher	120
Public Health Sanitarian - Engineer	92
Child Support	57

Aging Services	27
Higher Level Social Welfare Examiner	19
Total	1,747

While the Department of Civil Service has been working diligently to fulfill requests for examination services submitted by local civil service agencies and converting examinations to training and experience format, agencies are indicating that they need to fill positions faster than the Department can currently accommodate.

The Municipal Services Division sought approval from the Commission at its January 11, 2023, meeting to establish the HELP Program for local government employers.

The HELP Program is a tool that is available on a temporary basis for agencies that believe eliminating the competitive examination will speed up the hiring process for critical titles that meet the HELP Program's criteria. Using this tool, local civil service agencies can place competitive class positions in the non-competitive class on a temporary basis.

Local agencies experiencing emergency staffing issues can seek a 12-month approval from the Commission to implement the HELP Program for titles that meet the program's criteria. The 12-month duration of this program begins when the rule making takes effect (filing with the NYS Department of State).

To assist with expedited processing of positions that could be filled through the HELP Program, this PAR contains a sample rules resolution package that you can use to request the temporary placement of positions in the non-competitive class. Positions removed from the competitive class as a result of this program must have the parenthetical (HELP Program) as part of the title to help differentiate them from their counterparts in the competitive class.

Participation in the HELP Program must be done by following the procedures detailed in section 20 of the Civil Service Law and by submitting a rules resolution to amend your local Civil Service Rules to the Municipal Services Division for presentation to the State Civil Service Commission. The Commission approved the program and established a deadline of December 31, 2023 for the submission of initial rules resolutions from local civil service agencies to "opt-in" to the program.

HELP Program Criteria

Titles appropriate for hiring under the local HELP Program will be limited to positions that provide critical services, which if left unfilled, would result in the basic health, safety, and daily needs of New Yorkers being unmet. As mentioned above, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) are supportive of the HELP Program for positions in local social services districts such as Caseworkers and Social Welfare Examiners.

To ensure the integrity of the merit system, titles for which agencies can make appointments under the HELP Program must meet all the below criteria:

Criteria 1: Titles are deemed to be critical, direct care, health and safety titles. Employees serving in these titles provide services or care directly to clients, consumers, patients, or the public. Titles tested in the examination holdings listed above meet this criterion.

Criteria 2: A severe shortage of candidates exists, evidenced by an inability to attract sufficient qualified candidates to fill vacancies despite extensive and exhaustive recruitment efforts. It is the responsibility of the civil service agency to demonstrate this criterion.

Criteria 3: Titles are filled via open-competitive examination only. Titles are excluded from this program if they can be filled via promotion examination. It is the responsibility of the civil service agency to demonstrate this criterion.

HELP Program Implementation

If the Commission approves the non-competitive jurisdictional classification of positions that meet the above criteria, below outlines the requirements for implementation:

Minimum Qualifications: Agencies must ensure that candidates meet the minimum qualifications for the title and any other conditions of employment.

Diversity and Inclusion: Agencies must ensure that diversity, inclusion, and equity principles are utilized when filling positions.

Vacancy Postings: Agencies must publicly post vacancies with minimum qualifications included.

Local Websites: Local agencies must alert qualified candidates on how to apply for employment to positions that fall under the HELP Program.

Decentralized Continuous Recruitment Examinations: Local civil service agencies can continue using decentralized, continuous recruitment examinations to fill positions on a competitive basis during the HELP Program.

Promotion Examinations: Employees may be eligible to participate in promotion examinations if they meet the qualifications and time in title as provided for in section 52(12) of the Civil Service Law.

Competitive Class Status: At the end of the 12-month period, employees occupying positions filled through the local HELP Program will be granted competitive class status without the need to participate in a competitive examination. Local civil service agencies will need to submit a rules resolution to delete the HELP Program titles from the non-competitive class which will have the effect of conveying competitive class status upon individuals appointed pursuant to the HELP Program. It is recommended that your agency record the dates the HELP Program titles are filed with the Department of State so you can track appointments and be aware when your agency would need to submit a rules resolution to delete these titles from your rules. Staff of the Municipal

- Related to Personnel Resolution that is going to Ways & Means; impact is on positions within the departments that this committee and Public Safety
- NYS Civil Service has recognized that there are hiring problems throughout the state
- Implemented new program called HELP (Hiring Emergency Limited Placement) Program
- Allows jurisdictions to hire (certain titles) into non-competitive titles; normally competitive (i.e. case worker), sign up for exam, sit for exam, wait for results; long process of taking test
- Under this program now able to hire someone, as long as meeting qualifications, into new position on non-competitive basis
- Program lasts 12 months from time the county submits to state for approval on the titles; have to create new titles under the program, i.e. have case worker title and case worker (HELP Program) title
 - Mature from the HELP Program title into the standard case worker title; without ever taking test
 - Will not be provisional; start probationary period when hired in

- Everyone currently provisional will go into one of these positions, immediately start probationary period
- End of 12 month period move into permanent competitive class positions without having to take test

Questions from Committee:

- Once in that position subject to same rules and regulations of civil service even though did not take a test, if not meeting expectations?
 - Probationary period starts when one goes in
 - (i.e. this passes in April, state approves titles by May 1st ~ (May 1 -2023 – May 1-2024) if county hired someone in March of 2024, in two months they would be out of the program, but the probationary period starts in March of 2024 and runs for a year (from when hired)
 - Program ends 1 year from when state approves titles
- How many current provisional people fall into this category?
 - Do not have that breakout on provisionals; have examples of total numbers: in personnel resolution putting funded vacant and filled provisional positions
 - (i.e. - funded vacant for IM workers – 25; case workers – 19; child care workers – 9; employment counselor – 14)

Comment from Ann Rooney

- Example of case worker – list came out in December, already exhausted list; so without this would be trying to fill more provisional

Additional Questions/Comments from Committee:

- Is this a state program?
 - Yes, NYS Department of Civil Services authorized this program; amended the rules of NYS Civil Service laws to do this; could not do without this
- Will this allow us to do job fairs more easily because not dependent on tests?
 - Yes, and do on the spot interviews; looking at late spring/end of summer
- Will the Legislature know the titles being created by session date?
 - Yes, listed on sheet, not final yet, will be at Ways & Means
 - 17 titles asking state to approve; no guarantee all will be approved
- This is Human Services and Public Safety?
 - Public Safety are part of 911 positions; not police~ not part of program
- Full presentation will be at Ways & Means
 - Resolution will be there
 - Preparing resolutions that goes to the state, will have ready for the state by April 5th
- Not budget dependent?
 - No, these are filled provisional and funded vacant positions

A motion was made by Ms. Gunnip, seconded by Ms. Kuhn, to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**
 DATE: **MARCH 21, 2023**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk
 Onondaga County Legislature

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
MARIA MAHAR	Adult & Long Term Care
JoAnne Spoto Decker	ALTC
Carl Hummel	Personnel
Ben Yaus	LAW
Ann Rooney	C.E.
John DeSantis	Leg.
Jim Beebe	Leg.
Tim Fratocchi	Counsel