



New York Public Welfare Association, Inc.

Founded in 1869

130 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210
Sheila Harrigan, *Executive Director*

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November 5, 2022

Maria Kenneally, Municipal Assistance
Debra Bruns, Director of Testing Services
NYS Department of Civil Services
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12239

Dear Maria and Debra:

Thank you for your expertise on Civil Service policies and for joining state and local commissioners at the table at the commissioners' convening in October. At our NYPWA meeting on November 3, 2022, the local commissioners discussed what more would be helpful to them.

First, we appreciate your willingness to hear our sense of urgency. The workforce situation is precarious as local districts struggle to have enough workers across all programs and services. We appreciated the in depth discussions with you and your strong support for exploring ways to speed up the pace of action. We need to keep all the options on the table. It will take multiple strategies to make a difference. These include competitive Training & Experience exams for eligibility workers and caseworkers, decentralizing the social welfare examiner series, the potential use of non-competitive positions, and other suggestions that were identified and that are currently being reviewed or pursued. Local districts want to stay engaged in the conversation with you and the other agencies.

There are a core group of experienced local commissioners represented on the larger workgroup that OCFS convenes with Civil Service and other entities. Local commissioners are also willing to engage in discussions directly with you and your teams on technical considerations as applicable. When local commissioners explore changes involving the civil service system, they are mindful that these are county wide concerns as DSS operates in that broader context.

A stable workforce is essential for eligible New Yorkers to receive the public benefits they need. Caseworkers and supervisors must be available in order to achieve child safety and permanency, as well as to offer adult protective services. The staffing situation is bleak. We are very motivated to engage in solutions. We appreciate your leadership and the local commissioners offer you their support and expertise as policies emerge.

Sincerely,

Sheila Harrigan
Executive Director

Cc: Eileen Tiberio, NYPWA President/
Commissioner, Ontario County DSS