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## **ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES FIRST-EVER PEER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SPECIALISTS**

*CPS Mentorship Program Was Made Possible Via Collaboration Between ACS, Office of Labor Relations, DC 37 & Local 371*

**NEW YORK, NY** – Today, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced the first-ever 'CPS Peer Mentorship Program', which will allow newly hired Child Protective Specialists (CPS) the opportunity to receive additional support and helpful insights from more senior CPS who serve as mentors.

"There are few missions more critical, and few jobs more important and meaningful, than being a CPS; they work around the clock to make sure kids are safe and families have the support they need. That's why I'm committed to improving the work environment for every CPS," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. "The CPS Mentorship Program takes us one step further to enhance morale, lower attrition and benefit the long-term growth of our experienced frontline employees, which in turn helps us better carry out our important mission of making sure children are safe and families are supported."

"Child Protective Specialists perform challenging work that is of vital importance to the City. We want to thank DC 37 for their collaboration in creating an Equity Panel in our last collective bargaining agreement to address unique recruitment and retention challenges such as this," **said Mayor's Office of Labor Relations (OLR) Commissioner Renee Campion**.

"SSEU LOCAL 371 is proud to be partners in the creation and implementation of the Mentorship program. The aim is to support and retain CPS workers and provide them with the tools to effectively and efficiently service children and families," **said Anthony Wells, SSEU Local 371 President**.

"We at DC 37, are in support of the mentorship program and very interested in monitoring its' progression. This new model provides much needed support to the entry level CPS who can benefit from the experiences of their seasoned peers. The seasoned peers who have always tried to "show the newer workers the ropes" to prepare for the stressful nature of the job, whenever possible, will finally get the acknowledgment they deserve. This program provides time and structure for the mentoring to occur in a productive and positive environment. We are very happy to have partnered with SSEU Local 371, ACS and OLR to provide this program to our membership. We are confident it will be successful and hope to be able to have further conversations to expand the program to other City agencies," **said Rose Lovaglio-Miller, of DC 37**.

The CPS Mentorship Program is part of Commissioner Hansell's ongoing work to support CPS and improve recruitment and retention. ACS has expanded opportunities for professional growth

and staff appreciation and increased the use of technological advancements to support frontline child-protection staff with tools like electronic tablets, Zipcars to speed access into the field, and new software called “Safe Measures” to ensure timely responses to high priority cases.

Child Protective Specialists, who are part of the City’s Administration for Children’s Services, investigate about 60,000 reports of abuse or neglect in New York City every year, in response to calls to the state hotline. They provide thousands of families a year with services ranging from free food and cribs to mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment. Child Protective Specialists meet education and background requirements, and they receive extensive training before they are deployed and on an ongoing basis.

The CPS Mentorship Program works in three key ways:

- First, CPS in good standing, with three or more years of experience, will be eligible to apply to become a mentor. Each mentor will serve as a peer mentor for two years. Those selected as a mentor will spend up to an hour and a half per week with about three CPS mentees, or newly hired CPS. Hours may be broken into telephone check-ins or in-person meetings. In addition to building important leadership skills, those selected to become a mentor will be compensated for their efforts to provide this support to new CPS. Each mentor will receive \$2,500 each year during their mentorship period.
- Second, Commissioner Hansell explained that mentees will feel more personally and emotionally supported in their workplace and the CPS profession. The Mentorship Program will allow new CPS the opportunity to troubleshoot difficult concepts with experienced CPS peers who understand what it is like to be new to CPS.
- Finally, the CPS Mentorship Program will ultimately help the children and families ACS works with. The program is expected to enhance morale, lower attrition and benefit the long-term growth of experienced frontline employees, which in turn helps ACS better carry out our important mission of making sure children are safe and families are supported.

The CPS Mentorship Program is expected to be up and running by the end of April, beginning with a Mentor orientation event.



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