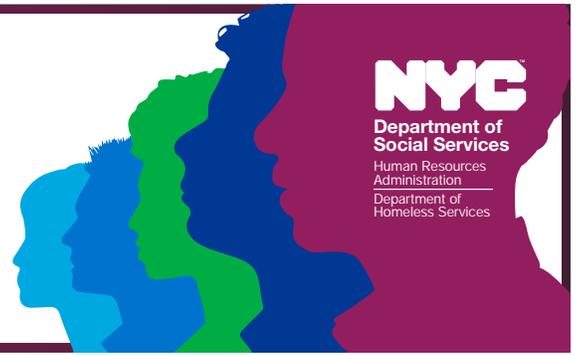


FRONTLINE PROFILES



DSS Frontline Profile: Maurice Peeples

Maurice Peeples is Senior Supervisor of Financial Management Liaisons for HRA's Adult Protective Services (APS) program. APS Financial Management helps NYC adults who cannot care for themselves and lack support in the community by managing their benefits and expenses, ensuring that their bills are paid, groceries are purchased, and they are free from financial exploitation. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Maurice has been dividing his time between working from home and working on-site to ensure checks get processed for clients in this difficult time.

"We help people who can't help themselves," said Maurice. "We are the last line of helping these people out, preventing them from going hungry and making sure they have shelter and stay safe."

When stimulus checks were issued to help those impacted by the Coronavirus, Maurice and his team adapted to processing payments from a new source (the IRS rather than Social Security, where most of the income for APS clients comes from). The checks required processing by hand, so Maurice and his team worked on-site as the pandemic was in full swing to ensure those checks were processed in a timely manner for New Yorkers in need. Still, the Coronavirus has taken a visible toll on those served by APS.

"We've had a lot of clients who have passed within the last two months," said Maurice. "When you feed these clients for years and years, and then the piece of paper comes to your desk telling you they passed—even though we don't normally have physical contact with these people, just seeing that the client has passed away, it hits you. You've been responsible for this particular person for so many years and all of a sudden they pass."

At home, Maurice and his wife have adapted to the new situation, and are ensuring their son continues to learn while he is home from school. They take every precaution with masks and other protective equipment and frequent cleaning to stay safe. The pandemic has led Maurice to reevaluate some of the things we as a society have taken for granted in the past.

"We know what essential really means now. Once our sense of normalcy is taken from us, we rely on delivery workers and people who work in the grocery stores for our basic needs. If the grocery stores shut down, are we going to go hunt our own food? Essential workers are really essential to us, and when this pandemic is over, we should look at the role they play and how we can improve their lives."

"We'll get through this together," said Maurice. "We'll definitely get through this. If you can do something to help another person, make that person's life a little better, by all means do it."

THANK YOU ESSENTIAL
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