

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NYC DSS-HRA's Business Link Program Connected More than 4,000 New Yorkers in Need to Employment Opportunities in FY22**

*DSS-HRA's Employment and Support Services Administration makes vital progress for low-income jobseekers despite pandemic-related challenges*

**NEW YORK** – The Department of Social Services-Human Resources Administration (DSS-HRA) is proud to announce that more than 4,000 low-income New Yorkers were connected to employment opportunities through the Agency's Business Link program in FY22. This represents the highest number of job placements in any fiscal year since the inception of Business Link and demonstrates vital progress against the backdrop of the City's recovery from the pandemic. Business Link is part of DSS-HRA's Employment Support Services Administration's (ESSA) comprehensive network of employment programs and initiatives.

Last month, ESSA also hosted the first in-person Career Fair at Business Link since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. On June 17, more than 300 job-seeking DSS-HRA clients and public assistance recipients participated in the fair, where they had the opportunity to network with more than 50 potential employers, including City and State agencies, social service providers, and others. This included representatives from NYC Health and Hospitals (NYC H+H), the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Breaking Ground, Homes for the Homeless, Henry Street Settlement, Lutheran Social Services, Phipps Houses, and the Salvation Army.

"The Mayor's Blueprint for New York City's Economic Recovery focuses on creating and preserving an equitable and inclusive job market for all New Yorkers," said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Gary P. Jenkins**. "As part of this mission, we are proud that our Agency's dedicated initiatives have connected more than 4,000 New Yorkers in need to employment opportunities in fiscal year 2022 alone. We look forward to building on this progress as we continue to strengthen our efforts to connect the low-income communities we serve to the job-readiness supports and employment opportunities they need and deserve to successfully participate in the economy."

"Our agency is committed to not only meeting the critical needs of vulnerable New Yorkers, but also providing them with meaningful supports and tools that will help them succeed in their endeavors and break the cycle of poverty," said **HRA Administrator Lisa Fitzpatrick**. "Business Link exemplifies one of many ways in which we are going above and beyond to achieve significant results for New Yorkers in need. The progress we've made despite pandemic-related challenges reflects the hard work and dedication of our exceptional team at the Employment Support Services Administration. We will continue to innovate and use every tool

at our disposal to connect even more low-income New Yorkers to employment opportunities as we build a more equitable city for all.”

Business Link programs are designed to build equitable systems that create and promote employment opportunities for low-income New Yorkers while also connecting them with job-readiness supports. As part of Business Link’s HireNYC program, DSS-HRA has policies in place that require certain social service providers that have contracts with the City to hire public assistance recipients. Business Link also offers employee incentives such as commuter benefits during the first few weeks on the job, and employer incentives such as wage subsidy programs to encourage participation. In addition to this, DSS works closely with partner agencies to strengthen and diversify our pool of employment opportunities for public assistance recipients. As part of our continued efforts to enhance the program, ESSA recently partnered with inclusive, employment-focused organizations NPower and Pursuit that provide training for low-income New Yorkers looking for higher-wage employment opportunities in the technology sector. At the same time, we continue to strategically expand Business Link’s presence on online platforms such as LinkedIn so we can spread awareness about the program and expand our network of both candidates and employers.

"DSS-HRA's Business Link program is exactly the kind of proactivity and urgency our agencies need to have when it comes to helping New Yorkers get back to work and to helping our sectors recover. These types of programs are what this city needs to help spur economic development for working families and push forward the overall economic wellness of our entire City," said **Council Member Amanda Farías, Chair of the Committee on Economic Development**. "I am proud to see the progress this program has made, and I look forward to working with DSS to continue connecting our most in-need New Yorkers to stable and protective employment opportunities."

“In a time where we are building back from the effects of the pandemic, employment opportunities are a vital piece to the puzzle,” said **Council Member Carmen De La Rosa**. “For low-income communities, providing additional support beyond the basic job search is crucial to ensuring they can succeed at their place of employment. By providing equitable access to employment opportunities that are not blind to the needs of most vulnerable communities, we can target one of the many roots of the issues that disadvantage our people.”

“As part of our recruiting efforts, we have had a great experience participating in the Business Link initiative and connecting with an incredibly diverse pool of talent,” said **Center Light Health System’s HR Coordinator Nancy Poveda**. “Programs like this are vital to promoting equity and inclusion in the workplace. We really appreciate DSS-HRA’s focused efforts to help low-income New Yorkers gain stable employment while working with organizations like ours to help further diversify and strengthen our teams.”

### ***About Business Link:***

Business Link is DSS-HRA’s internal job placement agency serving private businesses, nonprofits and job seeking New Yorkers who are looking for employment. Business Link was launched in 1995 and is currently part of the Employment Support Services Administration

(ESSA) Career Services Client Provider and Business Services division. Business Link engages employers to recruit qualified personnel and matches job seekers to more than one job and recruits through a variety of channels, in-person, video, telephone, email, direct mailing, text, and job fairs.

Business Link's services are free. Business Link has a proven track record of over 25 years of successful collaboration with both employers and local, State and Federal agencies.

***About the Department of Social Services (DSS):***

The Department of Social Services, comprised of the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), serves millions of New Yorkers annually through a broad range of services that aim to address poverty, income inequality, and prevent homelessness. HRA serves over three million New Yorkers through the administration of more than 12 major public assistance programs. DHS oversees a broad network of shelters, services, and outreach programs dedicated to helping New Yorkers experiencing homelessness get back on their feet.

DSS is central to the City's mission to expand opportunity for more New Yorkers, address income inequality, help New Yorkers experiencing homelessness stabilize their lives, and ensure that vulnerable New Yorkers receive the benefits and assistance to which they are entitled.