

EMPLOYMENT PLAN BRIEFING

September 22, 2015



**Human Resources
Administration**

Department of
Social Services

HRA's Commitment to Support Employment

- HRA is about more than cash assistance- we help low-income workers stay on the job
- Annually HRA provides critical support that helps many low-income New Yorkers remain in the workforce:



- Efforts aimed at keeping low-income workers in the workforce are much less expensive and more efficient than providing assistance to New Yorkers after they are out of the workforce, especially after an extended absence.

HRA Cash Assistance Population



- 1/3 of adults with work requirements were subject to HRA's administrative sanction process
- 6,000 are enrolled in school, training and education
- 8,500 are receiving vocational rehabilitation or substance abuse treatment
- 2,403 are participating in the basic Work Experience Program (WEP)

Reforming HRA's Employment Approach

HRA is changing the way that it provides employment services, moving from a one-size fits all approach to improved and individualized assessments, based on the principles of maximizing education, training and employment-related services and long-term sustainability and eliminating unnecessary punitive and duplicative actions.

Improving assessments to address each client's actual strengths and needs will improve outcomes compared to the current one-size-fits-all approach that has led to more than one out of every four clients who are reported to have received employment assistance returning to the caseload within 12 months.

Maximizing education, training and employment-related services will open job opportunities and create the basis for building career pathways out of poverty.

Eliminating unnecessary punitive and duplicative actions that lead to preventable negative actions and fair hearings (that now subject New York City to potentially \$10 million in financial penalties) will allow staff to focus on more effective problem solving and allow clients to avoid delays in accessing services, finding jobs and moving into sustainable employment.

HRA's past approach was to track job placements for *only* 6 months, but 25-30% of HRA's reported placements & assistance ended up with clients returning to seek recurring Cash Assistance again within 12 months.

MAXIMIZING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PHASE OUT WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (WEP) & REPLACE IT WITH MORE EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE WORK ACTIVITIES

Total Currently Participating: 2,403

Target Date: 12/31/2016

Federal and New York State law require HRA clients who are employable to participate in work activities. Prior efforts relied largely on the placement of clients in the Work Experience Program (WEP) in city agencies, which did not provide clients with a career pathway off of public assistance and out of poverty.

With the approval of the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, HRA is phasing out the WEP program and replacing it with more effective education, training, and job placement initiatives for clients.

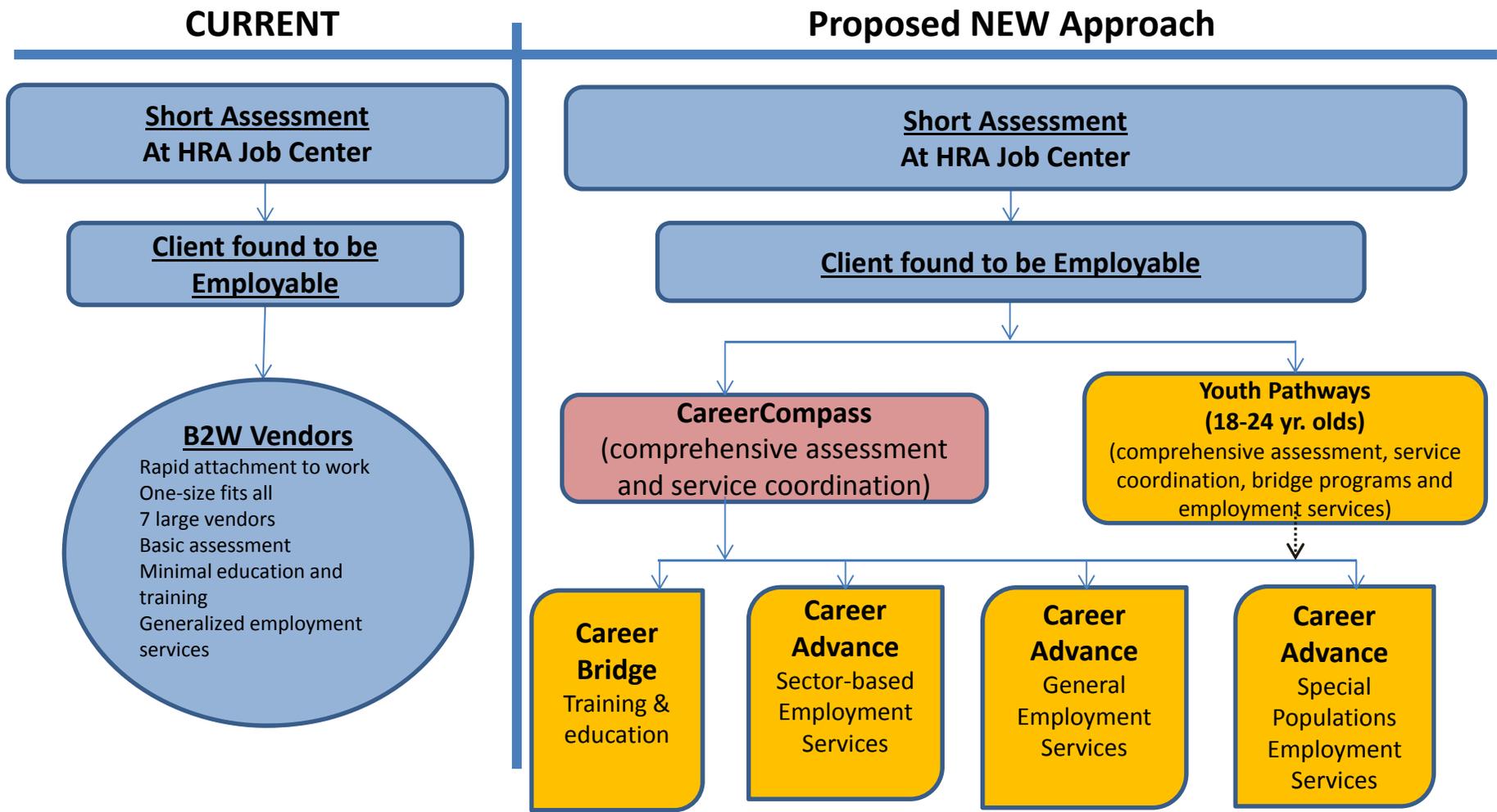
Summary of Concept Papers for HRA's New Employment Services Approach

HRA's new approach focuses on individualized assessments and supports; career counseling and strengths-based motivational strategies; and coordinated service delivery so that clients can make informed choices, set career goals, develop plans to achieve their goals, and access the services they need to get on a path to long-term economic security.

To achieve this vision, we anticipate:

- Contracting with a larger number of smaller and specialized vendors;
- Providing some on-site services, such as at homeless shelters;
- Emphasizing education and quality jobs with sustainable wages over rapid attachment consistent with the Jobs for New Yorkers Taskforce report; and
- Seeking innovative proposals and partnerships that would expand the breadth and depth of the services available to HRA clients beyond those that can be paid for by available employment funds.

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Concept paper 1: YouthPathways

- ❑ Understanding the issues facing youth ages 18-24, HRA's YouthPathways Program will engage select vendors to provide coordinated and integrated CareerCompass and Bridge services and, for vulnerable youth, specialized EA services.
- ❑ Vendors will also work with Bridge and EA vendors to enroll clients in appropriate education and training programs.
- ❑ Innovative proposals to develop or make available additional services to vulnerable youth, such as to help youth or families overcome generational poverty; target additional services to youth who are 'aging' off their parents' cases and onto their own case; support youth aging out of foster care, young parents, undocumented immigrants, etc.

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Concept paper 2: CareerCompass:

- Vendors will provide assessment, counseling and career planning assistance; and service coordination for clients over the age of 24 that ensures continuity of services and progression of clients between providers and programs. Periodic check-ins, reassessments, and revisions to the client's employment plan will also be provided, as needed.

Concept paper 3: CareerBridge:

- HRA's career pathways approach places a special emphasis on training and education that enables clients to progress towards their career goals, particularly for those with limited English proficiency and/or lacking a high school education.

Summary of Concept Papers for HRA's New Employment Services Approach

Concept paper 4: CareerAdvance: Employment and Advancement (EA)

- Sector-based employment services
- General employment services ; and
- Special populations requiring customized services

EA vendors will be expected to implement job development strategies that are demand-driven and focus on high-growth sectors.

- They should have well-established relationships with employers that enable them to prepare clients for successful employment.
- Services will include coaching and assisting clients in obtaining and learning from on-the-job skills development opportunities and education or training needed to obtain or advance in their desired career.
- All vendors must provide targeted advancement services for clients. Contractors will continue to provide services for up to one year after a client's initial job placement toward the goal of successful career advancement.

Recent HRA Reforms

Reforms to improve services and address HRA policies that have harmed clients, have had an adverse impact on staff workload and morale, and subject the City to potential financial penalties:

Automatic restoration of licenses for NCP's who are on SNAP and currently complying with their child support order

Implementing DSNAP following FNS approval

Online printing of Medicaid renewal form now available

LGBTQI cultural competency training in progress for HRA staff

Inclusion of Harm Reduction Services as a referral option for CA clients

Self-Service check in

EFT for Landlords for HOME project

Neighborhood Homelessness Outreach Prevention Project

Implementation of legal services program to assist clients in obtaining SSI

Expand anti-eviction legal services

HRA Reforms

Ongoing Reforms Implemented in the Employment Plan Reform

Implementing independent job search pilot as part of our State-approved Employment Plan

Now accommodating different hours of engagement for clients in service options (25/30/35): Applicants and Clients with new Employment Plans

Enrolling clients in HSE, ESL, ABE in full-time education activities
Remove current HRA imposed age limitation on high school enrollment

Created Office of Youth Engagement

Developed new youth engagement model and services, including expanded external partnerships

Pilot to increase availability of ABE, ESL, and HSE through vendors

Developed additional contextualized literacy offerings

HRA Reforms

Developed program approval and attendance track process for 4-year students

Counting homework time for those in 2-year and 4-year education programs

Implement RightFax as a potential efficiency for appointment reduction at TAG

Develop fillable version of the FIA School Training and Enrollment Letter (W-700D) to eliminate the need for in-person submission and reduce administrative burden on participating training and educational programs (particularly CUNY) in verifying enrollment and hours of participation

CBO Engagement Direct Referrals Pilot

Job Skills Training at HRA

Work Study at CUNY

Internship opportunities for students on breaks between terms

Created internship program for students in educational programs beyond 1 year