

Local 154
AFSCME, DC 37
PRESIDENT'S REPORT
March 26th, 2025

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Juan Fernandez – President Report

President's Report

- **DC37 is in operations at 125 Barclay Street.** If you need assistance visit our state-of-the art facility. You can walk in between 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Monday-Friday to access staff who can assist you – no appointment necessary. Our phone numbers will stay the same and you can continue to dial 212-815-1000 during business hours to reach our member service line.
- **AFSCME has been in the frontline fight against the draconian, political cuts and dismantling of service and civil rights protection programs and the firing of thousands of federal employees initiated by the Trump administration.** AFSCME has filed lawsuits in conjunction with other Unions and worker representative organizations. AFSCME has been instrumental in several of these lawsuits including the ones filed to protect probationary employees and workers' civil service rights and due process.
- **State and City Budget:** There are concerns over the impact of Medicaid cuts announced by the Trump administration. Federal Government collects over 500 billion in taxes from NY State annually and part of this money is distributed back to the States in the shape of Medicaid, grants, and other assistance. NY State is classified as a "donor" state because it receives less money from the Federal Gov. than its allocation to the Federal collection. Some states are considered "recipients" because they receive more money from the Federal Government than what they send in taxes. Medicaid is distributed to states according to a formula per person. In New York State, seven million people benefit directly from Medicaid distribution but Medicaid is also in the budget to pay for Hospitals, Home attendants, medical care, etc.

Health & Security Plan Benefits: Effective Monday, May 20, the Audiology Center resumed operations at the DC 37 Health Center located at 115 Chambers St. For all H&S inquiries and scheduling, please continue to contact the Inquiry Unit at 212-815-1234. Sign up at DC37.net for further updates.

Child Care Trust Fund. A very important and innovative item of the 2021-2026 Economic Agreement was the creation of a Child Care Trust Fund. However, this Trust Fund was scheduled to become

effective in May 2023 and was subject to the execution of a supplemental agreement between the City and the Union, which was finally signed in July 2024. Immediately, in August 2024, the DC37 Executive Board voted to authorize our Legal Dept to create this Trust Fund as part of DC37. So right now, the newly created Trust Fund is developing the necessary plans to initiate the Child Care Trust Fund operations. We will keep you posted of any announcements.

Contract Negotiations/Bargaining

- **The last City Contractual increase** for a total of 3.25% as part of the 2021-2026 Economic Agreement will be effective on May 26, 2025.
- **School Construction Authority (SCA).** The Unit B economic agreement was approved by ample majority on December 2024. The deal replicates agreement with City. Payment of bonus will take place in early February and the retro in April.
- **Unit Contract Negotiations** retroactive to May 2023. (Additional Compensation Fund - ACFs). The Union caucused over SSRT Unit demands for the .5% available under ACF. On January and February, we met to discuss the Accounting/EDP unit contract. Also, in January we met to discuss the Real Estate Unit Contract ACF. We are waiting for costing for all these Units. Although, our Local representation is in favor of incrementing RIPs, we are waiting for the costing to know the type and amounts. Also, we are negotiating on ACF with Transit Authority. In addition, we are negotiating with the City on wages and benefits for accreted Administrative Titles and waiting for the City’s proposal.

<p><u>Unit Contracts covered by Local 154: SSRT, Accounting/EDP, Clerical, Real Estate, Transit, SCA, NYCHA, DOE, H+H.</u> <u>The ACF (Additional Compensation Fund) covers longevities, RIP, Service Increments, Annuities, Uniform Allowances, etc. The Locals in the Units decide how to use the money.</u></p>

- **Bargaining for Accreted Administrative Titles**, including Local154’s Administrative Claim Examiner title. On November 6, The Union presented OLR with a proposal to create salary ranges for administrative titles. It took several years for the City to come to the table on this matter.

Summary Current Economic agreement: *The current Contract with the City covers the period May 2021-November 2026. The deal includes:*

- 5-year deal
- 3,000 Ratification Bonus, payable to people in payroll at the time of ratification.
- Increases for a total of 16.21% compounded:
 - 5/26/2021 3%,
 - 5/26/2022 3%,
 - 5/26/2023 3%,
 - 5/26/2024 3%,
 - 5/26/2025 3.25%

See most current salaries for Local 154 titles in Local154.org website.

- **SODEXO.** We are facing layoffs at hotels and shelters housing immigrants because Federal government, under Trump's policy, took away 80 million allocated to immigrant housing, our SODEXO members will lose jobs due to these cuts. All shelters and hotels housing asylum seekers are expected to be closed by June 30, 2025. We have met Sodexo management a couple of times to go over this issue.
We will also continue with Sodexo contract negotiations as soon as we deal with the layoffs.
- **Contract Negotiations at NYLS.** On January 12, 2025 members voted unanimously in favor of a 3-year Contract agreement covering July 2022-June 30, 2025. The increases are 4-3-3 retroactive to July 2022. However, DC37 requested to continue negotiations because some items were missing in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A new MOU was drafted, signed by both parties and members should be paid this week.
- **The Work Flexibility Committee.**
On March 18, Mayor Adams announced a one-year extension of the 2024 remote work pilot program. In February, 2024 the Union and NYCHA reached an agreement closely resembling the plan with the City. The Union also reached a remote work agreement with HH. The Union has continued to meet with City agencies, Authorities, and Departments regarding the implementation of their Remote Work plans. In addition, NYCHA and H+H also continue with remote work.
- **Due to the accretion of several titles at DOE,** Local 154 will be representing a group of five attorneys in that Department.

- **Unions win changes to Tier 6.** After strong Union mobilization to Albany, the legislature modified the Tier 6 FAS (Final Average Salary) from 5 to 3 year during the 2024 Albany’s Legislative Session. Also, will keep the exclusion of a cap over overtime earnings until 2026. This follows the vesting changes from 10 years to 5 years gained in 2022.
The ALBANY Lobby Day took place on March 4, 2025 and Executive Director Henry Garrido thanked and congratulated members for their strong showing in Albany.
- **AFSCME released a revised Financial Code**, the locals’ financial reporting obligations and rules for handing funds. The next Treasurer’s Workshops will take place on June 2025.
- **DC37 Health and Security benefits enhancements:**
DC37 Short Term Disability – Effective February 1st, It was increased from \$200 per week to \$300 per week for all eligible members for a maximum of 26 weeks.
DC37 Optical Benefit – Effective March 1st, it was increased to a maximum of \$250 every two years.
- **Local 154 Scholarship.** If you want to submit an application, see details on Local 154’s Scholarship application visit www.Local154.org.

Health Care Issues

- On December 27, 2024, the City issued a request to the PPO Health care provider finalists AETNA and Emblem Health for their best and final offer. City hopes to roll out agreement with new vendor by January 1st 2026.
- Prescription Tax: the City Financial Services was reviewing a proposal to levy additional costs for every prescription dispensed for both active and retirees. DC37 and other Union lobbied to stop the Prescription Tax. Finally on November 2024, the proposal was rejected.
- Since expected Union savings negotiated as part of the 2013 health care agreement with the City were not attained, the City has decided to resort to binding Arbitration in order to establish a course of action: Negotiated Acquisition, Medicare Advantage and PICA. Since the Medicare Advantage Plan has been repeatedly blocked in court, the savings expected to generate were not achieved. If the Medicare Advantage plan is not put in effect, the options will be re-bidding Senior Care to reflect new changes or the City might try to impose co-pays or premiums at ACP’s or the City may try to impose new rates for HIP VIP.
- There are two Medicare Advantage cases pending in Court:
 1. The Champion/Medicare matter asks whether the HIP HMO rate, used for a full healthcare program, sets the benchmark for all plans offered by the City, including relevant here for Senior Care, a MediGap plan; and, whether Senior Care could be considered an alternative to Medicare Advantage. In mid-December 2024, the Court of Appeals issued its decision in the Champion/Medicare Advantage matter, the first of the two appeals to be heard by that Court. The Court affirmed the injunction

prohibiting the City from charging retirees for any plan up to the statutory cap, meaning the City may only charge if the plan costs more than the statutory cap. The Court, however, left unresolved what the statutory cap actually was, finding that the City had not properly raised the issue below or preserved it properly for appeal. (The Court took this position even though the MLC had raised the issue of HIP VIP being the appropriate comparator rather than the HIP HMO since the latter is a comprehensive program in our amicus submission.)

The second case will be heard during the first quarter of 2025.

- Anthem reached a multi-year agreement with Memorial Sloan-Kettering so there will be no disruption in member treatment there.

Current Issues:

- Intro 1096 in City Council. The Union position is that this will replace collective bargaining for the whims of whomever has a majority in City Council or the economic winds of the time. DC37 has maintained a premium-free health care environment thanks to collective bargaining which this bill will end.
- Accusations that DC37 is supporting a pension actuarial changes bill are FALSE. DC37 has voted, for the past two years, in the two pension systems where we have representation, against this City’s proposal. Any statements to the contrary are absolutely false.

DELTA DENTAL SERVICES

Dental Services: Our new Delta Dental plan started on September 2020. Delta Dental is the new dental network provider with 1800+ participating dentists in the New York City area and no added cost to DC37 members; DC 37’s Health and Security has invested 10 million dollars to offer a panel with expanded services and increased fees for dental work. Members should have received a package with detailed information and plan participation ID cards in August. Visit : [Welcome DC 37 | Delta Dental \(deltadentalins.com\)](http://Welcome DC 37 | Delta Dental (deltadentalins.com))

The newly renovated dental center at 115 Chambers Street was reopened starting November 15, 2022; for appointments call 212-766-4440.

Drug prescription costs continue to increase at astronomical speed and without end in sight. Recently MLC approved PICA to include two new drugs, one with a cost of \$1.8 Million and another with a cost of \$2.1 Million. In Congress we support passage of HR3 to help regulate drug prices.

VISIT DC37.NET and LOCAL154.ORG TO STAY INFORMED

Other Chapter Activity:

Transit Authority: Since TA had hired people in non-Claim Specialist titles to replace CS positions, we met with Labor Relations to discuss unit's integrity on March 12.

Human Rights Commission. In year 2024 we filed an IP (improper practice suite) due to Human Rights Commission hiring new staff under a different title to replace AHRS and to perform duties defined under the Human Rights Specialist job titles. We filed an IP and also complained to DCAS about the improper way of using the list appointment process. At the end of last year, we were very close to a settlement, however we asked OCB to designate a mediator.

Law Department. In January 2025, two members, in different titles, were reassigned from provisional status to temporary status. The Union approached DCAS and one of the reclassifications was stopped.

Member's Benefits.

***Paid Family Leave:** It became effective January 7, 2019. (From Research memo: Employees taking Paid Family Leave receive 67% of their average weekly wage, up to a cap of 67% of the current statewide average weekly wage. For 2025, the SAWW is \$1,757.19, which means the maximum weekly benefit is \$1,177.32. This is \$26.16 more than the maximum weekly benefit for 2024. New for 2025, in the private sector, including cultural and libraries, a pregnant mother is eligible for up to 20 hours of additional sick leave, beyond their regular accrual, for prenatal doctor visits. The 2025 maximum employee contribution will be \$354.53 per employee. The goal amount on the pay stub shows the maximum contribution. However, that is NOT what every employee will pay. It indicates that no one will pay more than this amount. The deduction is based on gross bi-weekly wages including overtime, therefore it may fluctuate from paycheck to paycheck. Employees earning less than the cap of \$91,373 will not reach the maximum contribution. The rate of deduction and benefit is set by the NYS Department of Financial Services. -- This union negotiated New York State benefit is available to all DC 37 members, including those in the six nonprofit and private sector locals. PFL provides a salary and job security while you bond with your newborn or adopted child, care for a sick parent, and more.

For Vision Services please contact the DC 37 Health and Security Plan's Inquiry Unit at 212-815-1234 to request a basic optical voucher with a list of participating panel providers. The list of vision panel providers is also available on DC37's website at DC37.net

For Podiatric Services please contact your Medical Health Insurance Carrier for a list of participating Podiatrists covered by your Medical Health Insurance (e.g. GHI or HIP).

For additional information, visit DC37.net/benefits or call 212-815-1234.

Civil Service:

Civil Service Examinations:

January 2025 - The Union requested the inclusion of the following tests for Local 154 Titles, in the 2026 Exam Calendar: Public Records Aide TC 60215; Public Records Officer TC 60216; Associate Public Records Officer TC 60217; Special Consultant TC 51001; Administrative Claim Examiner TC 10044, Claim Specialist. And, we also asked for help in making a Departmental Librarian (one out of two) TC60210 a permanent employee.

New Test in the Calendar:

Public Record Officer tests# 5145 & 5542 application starting on April 9, 2025.

If you are employed in a provisional position or any other non-permanent position, I encourage you to take a civil service test. The life of all existing lists has been extended for one year. Please visit DCAS's website

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/employment/how-can-you-find-upcoming-exams.page> for more details. Share this information with your colleagues and co-workers.

Tests:

DCAS's test information line can be reached at (212) 669-1357.

The **Associate Human Rights Specialist** list was established in August 2023. This list is being used by the agency.

Other Active Lists: * Claim Specialists. On May 22, 2019 DCAS released the **Claim Specialist** test list #9023 with 669 names on it; test #9023 has been extended to Feb. 26, 2025.

During the second week of August 2023, DCAS released copy of the **Special Consultant** Exam 8048 List. This list with 716 eligible includes a total of 506 people with score of 100 or better.

Research Assistant Exam #8040. This list has been extended to March 11, 2025.

Claim Specialist Test was scheduled for April 3-23, 2024.

Civil Service Tests – The Process - Please Read carefully

What happens after the test?:

- You will receive a score notice card. If you did not receive it, please contact DCAS. If you did receive it, then give a copy to your personal or human resource department and let them know that you are in the list.
- If you received a disqualification notice or you are dissatisfied with your score, you are entitled to an appeal. The appeal must be filed within 30 days to DCAS's Committee on Manifest Errors. If the Committee denies your appeal, then you can file an appeal with the Civil Service Commission. For the appeal with the Civil Service Commission, please let us know; the Union could help you with this process.
- After the agencies request certifications of the list, the same agencies will send “canvass letters” to enough high scoring eligible to fill their job lines. If you received a canvass letter, do not leave your current job. A canvass letter is not an offer of appointment. Please answer these

canvass letters and attend the interviews. Let your agency know that you have been invited to an interview. Your agency may agree to help you stay in your agency.

- Ranking. Successful candidates are placed on an eligible list in order of their respective final examination ratings, including seniority and veterans' credits. The rule provides that if two or more eligible receive the same final rating, they shall be placed in the list, for administrative purposes only, by the position derived of their last five digits of their social security number. All eligible with the same final score are equally reachable for appointment.
- If you are a top scorer you **might be** considered for the job but having a high score does not guarantee that you will be hired. An appointment from the list must be made by selecting one of the three highest ranking eligible willing to accept the appointment.
- If you are removed from the list or you became ineligible for appointment because you failed to reply to a canvass letter or because you declined an appointment, you may request restoration to the list.
- The Civil Service Law provides that the duration of an eligible list shall be not less than one year nor more than four years.
- People who are appointed to Civil Service positions are expected to serve a one-year **probationary period**. Credit is given to those who were serving in the same city title previous to the appointment.

*** Workplace Violence Program:**

The 2009 Labor Department's regulations require all public employers to develop and implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan. The Union is making sure that such plans are developed with Union participation. Several Unions, including Local 154, filed complaints with the State Department of Labor and PESH for lack of a proper WVPP at several agencies including DOH-MH, DOT, Fire Department and others. **What is Workplace Violence? NYCRR Part 800.6 defines workplace violence as "Any physical assault or acts of aggressive behavior occurring where the public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment".**

Please notice that our Contracts, Job Description, Salaries and President's reports are available in our website www.Local154.org. If you have topics or questions about any labor issues for Local 154 website, please send them to Secretary Sheera Glass, President Juan Fernandez or Exec Board Member James Whooley at L154AFSCME@aol.com.

Next Meetings:

- **Executive Board Remote Meeting: Tuesday April 15, 2025 at 6 PM.**
- **General Membership Meeting is scheduled at 6 PM on March 26, 2025. Post card was mailed to members. This is an in-person meeting at DC37.**