

The High Cost of City Employee Layoffs

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The battle of the budget is heating up. The Mayor has announced a budget laced with service cuts and the layoff of over 3,700 city employees.

Like all of our fellow New Yorkers, the members of DC 37 know that serious measures are needed to close the city's budget gap. But, layoffs are not the answer. Not only will working families lose jobs, income and benefits, but millions of vulnerable New Yorkers will lose vital social safety-net services that affect their quality of life.

That is why DC 37 is calling on you to help us urge the Bloomberg administration to open its eyes and its heart and see the devastation its policies could cause and realize that these layoffs are penny wise and pound foolish. Here are a few examples of what we mean:

Community health clinics that service millions with little or no health insurance could close placing a heavier burden on hospital emergency rooms or causing people to forego treatment.

The layoffs of civilians in the New York Police Department threaten public safety since these men and women are our front-line of defense against crime.

Layoffs could cripple life-saving programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect as over-worked social workers struggle to do more with less and our children fall between the cracks.

Also threatened are our libraries and cultural institutions that provide vital resources for thousands of New Yorkers and school children. Where will immigrants go who need to learn English as a Second Language? What happens to young children for whom libraries serve as after-school sanctuaries and librarians provide much-needed homework help?

These are only a few examples of why the city's "layoffs first" approach is destructive and wrong. No responsible government can cut vital services and layoff hardworking, dedicated employees while there is a better way. And, there is.

Go to www.dc37.net and take a look at DC 37's recently released study "Massive Waste at a Time of Need!" In it we show the administration how to cut waste by reducing the \$9 billion a year it hands over to high-priced outside consultants. Eliminating this form of unregulated fiscal irresponsibility waste could save millions of dollars, prevent thousands of layoffs and protect public services. And, there's more.

We are your neighbors. Our salaries support countless community businesses. Our loss of income will impact not only us and the people we serve but our neighbors and our neighborhoods. We care too much to stand by and watch that happen. ■

District Council **37** AFSCME
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