HRA Opens New Common Benefit ID Card Centralized Referral Unit in Manhattan

On Monday, August 6 HRA unveiled the newly remodeled Common Benefit ID Card (CBIC) Centralized Referral Unit at 109 E 16th St. in Manhattan. The unit provides referrals for replacement CBIC cards to clients who have lost their cards. The new space has been optimized to efficiently handle demand, serving clients as quickly as possible and eliminating the need to go to an HRA center.

For cash assistance recipients, CBIC cards act as both a form of identification and a way of accessing benefits like Food Stamps through the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system, which lets clients use their CBIC like debit cards at grocery stores and other businesses. Clients who lose their cards previously had to visit a Job Center or Food Stamp Office to obtain a referral for a replacement card (cards are issued by New York State, but clients require a referral from the City).

The newly designed CBIC Centralized Referral Unit makes the best use of available space to efficiently accommodate clients. HRA’s General Support Services remodeled the space to accommodate the needs of staff and minimize the amount of time that clients have to wait. The CBIC Centralized Referral Unit is part of a larger effort by HRA to reduce crowding and wait time at centers. The Agency has made activities such as food stamp applications accessible online and renewals available by mail, fax, and phone. HRA has also reconfigured a number of center waiting areas to make the best use of space. These changes help New Yorkers apply for benefits and services, such as work supports like food stamps and child care, while minimizing the amount of time needed to be at the centers.