



THE MANAGER

www.nycmea.org

Spring 2019

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MEA LEANS FORWARD IN 2019

By Vanessa DeSantis



MEA President Shelly Shulman

“The New York City Managerial Employees Association isn’t backing down in 2019,” said President Shelly Shulman, speaking at MEA’s membership meeting held in March. The MEA believes its advocacy services play a unique and vital role and still sees ways it can grow and recruit new members to replace those in titles converted to union representation by the Office of Collective Bargaining in 2018.

President Shelly Shulman detailed important changes already underway. For example, the MEA recently went to bat for senior managers concerned about the inequity of Mayor de Blasio’s Paid Parental Leave plan – a plan that partially offset its costs by eliminating two annual leave days from managers with 15 or more years of service. The MEA lost its lawsuit against the City but made a bold statement that managers deserve respect and recognition.

Mayor Bill de Blasio did sign orders to approve raises for approximately 10,400 managerial and original jurisdiction employees working in Mayoral agencies. The raises, signed last November, are in line with the contract ratified by District Council 37 last August. They will total 7.42% and be implemented over a period beginning September 23, 2017 and ending October 23, 2019.

“The mayor saw that not one union would accept the mistreatment and could use their lobbying power to fight the exact battle city managers are fighting without the recourse of collective bargaining,” said Mr. Shulman.

RECRUITMENT CONTINUES

The challenges of recruitment were raised at the meeting. The MEA can’t directly access all city manager data because of confidentiality rules at New York City’s Office of Labor Relations and relies largely on members to spread the word. The more members the MEA has the more powerful its advocacy is.

Linda Barnes, Executive Director of MEA continues to push for new membership. Under the leadership of Ms. Barnes, Member Services Representative Matthew Conley is visiting members throughout the City, helping them resolve their problems and holding on-site meetings for new and current members. “We remind our members that MEA has your back,” Ms. Barnes said.

RESPECT FOR WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

MEA also champions the importance of diversity in the workplace. “It’s a large topic and an issue we’ve been addressing at all of the city agencies,” said Ms. Barnes. MEA members are concerned that workplace differences in culture, race and gender unfairly influence pay equity and hiring practices at agencies.

“How is the City making the workplace represent the people that it actually serves?” said Edgar Landas, MEA Executive Vice President. The MEA believes ongoing training and education will help.

Ms. Barnes has also reached out to several agencies and mentioned one that has agreed to do a company-wide pay analysis that begins with a small section of workers to examine any relevant gender gaps. This agency is starting to look at its hiring practices to make sure that bias is not embedded in policy.

“A set standard of rules needs to be in place regardless of background. This is a practice we need to apply to ourselves as well. We need to make sure our conduct is the same across the board – the same level of respect, regardless of age, gender and race,” said Ms. Barnes.

NEW, IMPROVED WEBSITE FOR MEA

By Bendix Anderson

Soon, the New York City Managerial Employee Association (MEA) will have a new website that is easier to read and use – along with an updated MEA logo.

“We want people to know that we are responsive to the times and the people who we serve,” says Edgar Landas, MEA Executive Vice President. MEA officers have created a working prototype and plan to finalize the website this spring.

The design for the new web page will guide visitors to sections structured around their needs. Visitors to MEA’s old website met a welter of headlines that was often confusing and challenging to navigate. “Some of the information was not easily found,” says Mr. Landas. “We want to reduce the number of clicks.”

MEA’s new web page will also open smoothly on a variety of devices, including tablets and smartphones. MEA’s new web pages are designed to be “responsive,” meaning that they automatically adjust to different screen sizes. New colors and lettering also make the new website easier to read. Visitors will even be able to view the site in a variety of languages. “Accessibility is part of being responsive,” says Landas.

The new web page also includes a dedicated page for retirees, who are some of MEA’s most passionate members, according to Landas. People interested in joining MEA can also submit their information through the new website, in addition to sending their applications through the postal service if they prefer.



MEA Executive VP Edgar Landas

Bits & Pieces



SIMPLE WORDS THAT MEAN A LOT: "THANK YOU!"

By Linda A. Barnes, NYC MEA Executive Director

We are so proud of our 50-year history and the continuing advocacy services we provide to our members and their families. One of the advantages of functioning within a service-focused organization is we often hear the good and bad feedback from our membership. We immediately develop plans and actions to address our members concerns. Sometimes, our decisions totally eliminate the problem and sometimes not.

During calendar year 2018, we provided services to 358 members who reached out to us. Our services are provided as MEA benefits and include advocacy for work-related issues, legal services, pension counseling, educational and other benefits. On a consistent basis, our members take the time to express their appreciation for advocacy services well done. These are the moments when we hear the simple words THANK YOU. Take a look at some of the appreciative thoughts our members shared with us.

This comment is from a member who was besieged by various EEOC claims filed by the same subordinate employee for a period of years. In order to resolve the problem and eliminate this manager's concern, I attended the various EEOC interviews with the member, as well as submitting a letter to the agency commissioner to intervene.

"I will be retiring at the end of the month. Before leaving, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for

your support. In all my years as a member, I never experienced the level of support and professionalism that I received from you and the MEA. I sincerely thank you and everyone at MEA!"

Another manager was disqualified for a civil service exam because of a mix-up in communication. We appealed to DCAS on his behalf, and he was provided an opportunity to come in and take the exam:

"Just wanted to say thank you for all your help. This takes a load of my mind for the rest of my career. One less thing I have to worry about. Again, thank you very much for your help."

This note of appreciation is from a member who wanted to enhance her educational career by utilizing the MEA Scholarship Fund benefit:

"I want the association to know that I am so grateful for the scholarship received toward my education. The receipt of the scholarship will benefit my ability to support the progress of my dissertation. Thank you again for accepting my application and providing the funds".

One manager expressed his appreciation for the outstanding legal service provided by our MEA Counsel, Mr. Stuart Salles and his team:

"Much appreciation and thanks to the Managerial Employees Association for providing such a capable and highly professional law firm to protect my civil service rights."

One manager was ultimately laid off, but reached out to us to say this:

"Thank you so very much for taking the time yesterday to speak with me and offer encouragement. Your guidance was just what I needed at a time when confusion and self-doubt can be pervasive".

When you have a work-related or non-work-related concern, remember to contact us immediately. Our MEA Counsel Stuart Salles and his team provide free consultations and benefit services for all work-related issues. For non-work related matters, such as wills, divorce, real estate or other civil matters, you can receive a free consultation from Counsel. You will need to pay a discounted rate if you choose to hire Counsel to represent you or complete required legal documents.

All member concerns are coordinated through the MEA Executive Director's office, whether legal or non-legal. We strive towards achieving membership satisfaction for every individual who contacts us. We welcome your feedback so we can improve our services. Email us at info@nycmea.org or call us at 212-964-0035.

The simple words "THANK YOU" mean as much to us as it does to you. Member satisfaction continues to be the driving force behind our 50-year stability.

WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK!

MEDICARE UPDATES, EMBLEM HEALTH LETTER, AND 2018 MEDICARE PART B REIMBURSEMENT

by Joel Fishelson and Larry Konstan

In January, 2019 many of our members, as well as non-member managers and others covered by Emblem Health's Express Scripts drug program for MEDICARE recipients received letters from Emblem Health regarding payments they made for prescription drugs in 2014 and 2015.

The letter stated : "The amount you paid for a recent prescription is different than it should have been. As of January XX, 2019 there is an open balance on your account of \$XXX.XX This is the amount you owe, but you don't have to pay this now. We are just letting you know."

The letter went on to indicate how the amount owed was determined.

We immediately questioned this letter with the NYC Office of Labor Relations Employee Benefits Program and were advised that no payment would be required. We notified those managers that received the notice.

Since there may be others that have not been in touch with MEA we are providing the following information that OLR received in writing from Emblem Health.

"Emblem Health will not be recouping any monies – the letter does indicate that they do not need to pay anything at this time"

"Emblem Health will not bill the member for the balance at any time"

The letters were the result of a Medicare review conducted in 2016 for the years 2014 and 2015 that was not completed until December 2019.



Organization Committee Chair Joel Fishelson and Larry Konstan, former Deputy Commissioner, HRA

2018 Medicare Part B Reimbursement

Your 2018 Medicare Part B Reimbursement was either electronically sent to you via direct deposit or mailed to you on or after April 10, 2019.

You will also receive a letter from the NYC Office of Labor Relations (OLR) Employee Benefits Program stating that you need to check the amount of your Medicare Part B reimbursement against what you actually paid for Medicare Part B in 2018. For the majority of us the Medicare Part B payment is deducted directly from their monthly social security check. If you fall into this category, Medicare sent you a statement (Form SSA-1099) in January which lists what your Medicare Part B cost was for 2018.

If you calculate that you were underpaid by NYC OLR for your 2018 Medicare Part B cost you must fill out the form (it will be

on the opposite side of their letter) and mail to the address listed on the bottom of their form. Please keep a copy of this form and letter for your records.

If you received the correct amount do NOT do anything.

Repeat -

DO NOT FILL OUT THE FORM.

If you are in an IRMAA (Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount) situation, i.e., you pay more than the basic amount, *please do NOT fill out this form* but follow the process that you do annually to receive your additional reimbursement.

Please keep this information in a safe place. Hopefully, most of us will receive the correct basic reimbursement and will not have to complete any additional forms

For further information, please visit this OLR link:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/olr/health/retiree/health-retiree-medb-irmaa.page>



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