



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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**UNPRECEDENTED INVESTMENT IN COUNTY WORKFORCE,
AGGRESSIVE RECRUITING AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
ENABLES MAJOR EMPLOYMENT GAINS IN VITAL COUNTY
COMMUNITY SUPPORT DEPARTMENTS**

NYS removes mandatory monitor and end heightened monitoring for Child Protective Services — acknowledges gains made during Bello administration

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced major gains in employment in key county support areas including Child Protective Services (CPS), benefits examiners and youth detention workers. Decades of disinvestment in salaries and benefits by past administrations, compounded by the pandemic, resulted in substantial vacancies in these vital areas of county support services.

Last year on average, the Bello administration increased the wages of those performing these critical services by 11.5%. Last year, the county also established a recruitment and retention payment for all employees excluding department heads, of \$500 per quarter, which was doubled this year to \$1,000 a quarter and extended through 2024.

“During the pandemic, Monroe County had a 50% vacancy rate for CPS caseworkers. This was unacceptable to me and to the community. Caseworkers are key to public safety as they protect the most vulnerable families and deliver essential assistance,” said **Monroe County Executive Adam Bello**. “Under prior administrations, salaries and benefits for these critical employees remained unchanged for nearly a decade. Recognizing the value of our employees and investing in them is essential for sustaining the vital services our residents depend on.”

For CPS Caseworkers, the county reduced the vacancies from a high of 100 to 46. The County has an additional caseworker class starting in June and expects to fill all vacancies in the coming months. For public benefit examiners, currently there are only six vacancies from a high of 57.

For the first time in recent memory, there are no vacancies for full-time youth detention workers.

Additional county actions to attract and retain employees include:

- Eliminating the fee for civil service exams
- Hiring a fulltime recruiter
- Implementing a robust hiring campaign
- Holding multiple open interview events
- Providing study sessions for exams
- Creating a paid personal time bank for all full time employees of 40 hours

Monroe County was one of the first counties in the state to be approved to participate in the HELP Program, an initiative announced earlier this year by the state Civil Service Commission. HELP allows for a one-year testing waiver for approved titles. Monroe County is approved for Caseworker, Caseworker Bi Lingual, Examiner, Examiner- Bi-lingual and Public Health Sanitation job titles. Under HELP, new hires over the next 12 months into these job titles will not be required to take an exam to gain permanent civil service status.

“Few applicants can wait for the better part of a year to sign up, take the exam and stand by for exam results before getting hired,” **said Bello**. “I applaud the state for helping us make the hiring process more efficient for these critical positions so we can more quickly get qualified candidates in the door and out into the field.”

The county is addressing other job title vacancies with a new media campaign in 2023 as well as additional in-person recruitment efforts at job fairs, colleges and community events.

NYS releases CPS Monitor

In 2015, prior to the Bello administration, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services cited Monroe County’s Child Protective Services division for a significant number of compliance issues, many of which involved quality of work in conjunction with safety concerns. By 2018, New York State required that Monroe County hire an outside agency to monitor CPS. In 2020, the incoming Bello Administration brought on the Bonadio Group to perform a systemic review of CPS.

In 2022, New York State released the monitor and removed CPS from heightened monitoring requirements, citing confidence that the county will sustain the progress made over the past 3 years.

“I applaud the entire Child Protective Service staff for their commitment to continual improvement and ensuring the safety and security of our community’s children,” **said Bello**. “The division has made great strides over the past few years.”

To apply or learn more about open positions available at Monroe County, go to caseworkers.org.

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