

Legal Services workers lobby for homeless
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New Yorkers eked out a major victory in homelessness prevention thanks to concerted lobbying efforts by striking Legal Services workers. On Sunday, June 30, the mayor and City Council were to decide the fate of a program designed to attack homelessness at its roots by providing free legal representation to indigent families facing eviction.

The program had been slated to be cut as part of Mayor Dinkins' Doomsday budget. Since May, members of the Legal Services Staff Association (LSSA) lobbied for the program's restoration, while the managers of Legal Services of New York (LSNY) demonstrated little con-

cern.

By midnight on Sunday, LSSA lobbyists had salvaged \$2 million of the \$3 million originally allocated to the program. At 1 a.m., LSSA members buttonholed a prominent city official leaving City Hall and convinced him to return to negotiations to secure more money for the program. Shortly thereafter, the official reported that the original \$3 million had been restored. LSSA members continued to lobby at City Hall until 6:30 a.m. to protect the program from losing its stature in the final budget.

Reflecting a history of mismanagement and indifference to New York's indigent, LSNY management sent a lone representa-

tive to City Hall on Sunday to lobby for less than an hour. In contrast, LSSA members camped out for two nights running. Now that funding for the Homelessness Prevention Program is secured, LSNY has lost an excuse for not negotiating seriously.

In a related development, 12 of the 14 members of New York City's delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives wrote LSNY board chair Chris Lunding on June 26 and informed him that unless the Legal Services strike is settled quickly, they will have "no alternative but to investigate the status of the significant amount of federal funds that are not being used."