

# City finally allocates 90Gs in CETA funds for Willowbrook salaries

By BRUCE ALPERT

After more than six weeks of delay, the United Cerebral Palsy Association is being allocated more than \$90,000 for salaries of 95 employes at the Willowbrook Developmental Center under a federal jobs program.

The association has continued to pay the employes despite the absence of the federal funds by borrowing the money needed to meet bimonthly payrolls, UCP executive director Robert Schonhorn said yesterday.

If the association had not been able to borrow the money, Schonhorn said the 95 employes, who have been working as therapy aides at Willowbrook for three months, would not have been paid for their last six weeks of employment.

"We have been requesting the money for some time," Schonhorn said. "And we're just glad that the money finally will be handed down so we will be only one pay period behind in the money needed to meet the payrolls."

UCP had been allocated funds to pay for 95 employes at Willowbrook under a contract from the New York Urban League, one of 200 New York City agencies which disperses funds under the Comprehensive Employment Training Act.

Both the Urban League and the city's Department of Employment, which administers the CETA program in the five boroughs, denied direct responsibility for the delay in forwarding funds to UCP.

Richard Howard, newly appointed director of the league's \$1.3-million CETA program on Staten Island, said that as far as he was concerned the fault rested with the city.

Vouchers requesting funds for the UCP program were submitted to the Department of Employment in time for

the agency to provide the funds needed by the association to meet its payrolls, he said.

"You know it's election time and maybe some of the priorities of some of the Employment Department staff was not what it should have been," Howard said.

That statement was labeled "a lot of nonsense" by Alan Weiss, director of the Adult Work Experience program for the Department of Employment.

"It's very possible that we may not have been as fast as we should have, but we don't delay releasing funds for a long period of time without a reason," Weiss said.

Weiss said that he did not know why the city delayed release of the funds but that in the past delays have been caused by the Urban League's failure to submit vouchers on time and provide enough documentation to support the requests for money.

Most of the 200 agencies that sponsor CETA programs, he said, receive their allotments well in advance of required payrolls for group's utilizing the CETA funds.

"We only hold up the release of the funds when the requests are sent in late or when there's some question about a claim," Weiss said.

In addition to the UCP program, the Urban League also has contracted with the state Department of Mental Hygiene to provide 39 workers at the Willowbrook Developmental Center.

No allocation has been made to the state in at least the last month and a half, according to Howard, because the state has not submitted vouchers.

Howard said that he assumed the workers were being paid out of state funds, indicating that he could not understand why the Department of Mental Hygiene had not issued a request for the federal CETA funds for more than a month.

Officials from the state's Bureau of the Budget said they could not explain why state funds were being used to pay the salaries of the 39 workers when federal funds were available.

"It doesn't make sense," one budget official said. "I'll have to look into it."

He promised an answer by the end of the week on why vouchers have not been submitted to the Urban League for payment of CETA funds.