

Developmental center faces loss of 500 jobs

By BRUCE ALPERT
Advance Albany Bureau

ALBANY — More than 500 Staten Island Developmental Center employees and 36 College of Staten Island (CSI) workers, including 29 faculty members, would lose their jobs under Gov. Carey's proposed budget.

But aides said workers dismissed from the Willowbrook institution for the retarded could find jobs at other state developmental centers.

The CSI cuts, they add, still must be approved by the City University of New York's board of trustees.

"We simply said that we are budgeting for 143 less faculty positions and other staff reductions based on declining enrollment at CUNY," a Carey budget aide said. "We projected reductions at most CUNY schools, but it will be up to the board to make the final determination on how each school will be cut."

The board, the aide said, could also opt to make up the cuts by increasing tuition or student fees.

The Staten Island Developmental Center is scheduled to lose 1,145 of its 2,469 state employees during the next fiscal year as the state continues to transfer residents out of the Willowbrook institution to comply with a court decree. Many of the positions, Carey aides said, will be lost through attrition and other excessed employees will be trained to work in community residences being established by the state for center residents.

The governor's budget message "anticipates," however, that 546 center employees will have to be "separated" in two phases, effective July 1 and Jan. 1, 1982.

"What that means," a Carey aide said, "is that those workers will be given a choice — work in another state development center, or you're going to be out of a job."

Many center employees have refused requests that they transfer to the Bronx Developmental Center, where most of the city's developmental center vacancies existed, because of the long commuting time between their Island homes and the Bronx. More than 75 percent of the center's employees live either on the Island or New Jersey.

Mental Retardation officials had previously promised that no layoffs would result from the state's policy of deinstitutionalization, which involves the transfer of retarded citizens from large institutions to smaller community facilities where experts say the residents can better achieve their maximum potential.

In his budget proposal, Carey also recommended a restoration of more than \$350,000 in funding for the Willowbrook Review Panel. The panel, which is charged by the Willowbrook Consent Decree with monitor-

ing care provided former and current Staten Island Developmental Center residents, lost its funding last year when lawmakers claimed its recommendations were often unwarranted and extremely costly.

CSI is affected more than it was previously by any reduction in state aid to city colleges because it is classified as a senior college as a result of legislation approved last year.

Senior colleges are now funded 90 percent by state funds and beginning in 1982 will be completely funded by the state.

State officials say that cuts in staff are justified by continued declines in enrollment. According to statistics compiled by the State Division of the Budget, enrollment next year is expected to drop 8.1 percent at CSI and 2.9 percent over the entire CUNY system.

Overall, the governor has proposed a cut of \$552,000 in CSI's bud-

get, which he says can be accomplished by eliminating 29 faculty, six support positions and one unclassified job. CSI is slated to receive \$19.3 million in state aid under the budget proposal.

Other state facilities have fared much better in Carey's spending plan.

South Beach Psychiatric Center, Ocean Breeze, was allocated \$23.1 million in his budget proposal, an increase of \$2.7 million over the current fiscal year. Arthur Kill Correctional Facility in Charleston was allocated \$11 million, up \$1 million from last year.

The Institute for Basic Research at Willowbrook, which conducts research into mental retardation, is budgeted for \$7.1 million, an increase of \$823,000 over the current fiscal year.

As in past years, Carey does not recommend any funding for Island groups traditionally funded by the state. They include the Staten Island Cooperative Continuum of Education, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island Zoo, Richmondtown Restoration Center, and High Rock Nature Conservation Center.

But in past years, Island lawmakers have managed to restore funding for the agencies, usually in the state's supplemental budget passed at the end of the legislative session.

Lawmakers are to be briefed on Carey's budget proposals today and are slated to vote on the measure just prior to the start of the state fiscal year, April 1.