

Workers are warned of 248 job losses at Willowbrook

By MARK LABATON

Nearly 300 Staten Island Developmental Center workers have been told that they might be fired, demoted or transferred to other mental health facilities because of state budget cuts, the Advance has learned.

Letters signed by Joseph P. Costello, director of personnel for the center, were sent to the workers after the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities announced, on July 27, that it would eliminate 248 positions at the center by October.

Developmental center and Office of Mental Retardation officials said a reduction in the facility's staff of about 2,400 is necessary because of cuts in 1982-83 budget allocations. Gov. Hugh Carey had called for a staff reduction of 1,119 employees by March 31, 1983 in his budget proposal earlier this year.

"As a result of funding cuts," Costello's letter said, "there may

be a reduction in the number of positions in the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. There is a possibility that you may be separated from state service, required to vertically bump, or retreat to a different title at a lower salary grade, or you may be assigned to another location in the same title and salary grade."

The letter informed employees of their civil service rights and suggested that put their name on a list so they could be placed at other facilities.

William Knowlton, a spokesman for the state Office of Mental Retardation, said yesterday that workers notified held "jobs that could not be justified." Developmental center officials gave the state Office of Mental Retardation a list of the positions that they thought were needed least, and workers received letters on the basis of how much seniority they held, said James Walsh, dep-