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## Job fair aids SIDC workers

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Hundreds of workers slated to lose jobs in the closing of the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC) moved closer to re-employment yesterday at a job fair sponsored by the center and the employees' unions, according to SIDC officials.

About 350 employees from various job levels filed applications and scheduled interviews with any of 30 private and public institutions at the fair, the second one held at the center this year, according to Rosa Bennett, program director of re-employment and training at SIDC.

Bennett said yesterday that she couldn't provide specific figures on re-employment since layoffs began in 1983, but said she is hoping to find positions for at least 90 percent of the 1,400 workers who are expected to be laid off.

The center has been scaling down since a 1972 consent decree issued in response to a scandal over the mistreatment of patients. SIDC, then called Willowbrook, was ordered to reduce its client population from over 5,000 to 251 and transfer those remaining into community residences.

Until June, only temporary employees were being laid off, according to Thomas Tierney, deputy director of administration at SIDC. But 30 permanent employees were cut in the spring and 60 more will be cut by the end of the fall, he said.

Tierney said the cuts are justified by a decrease in client population, which has fallen from 800 in April 1984 to 470 now.

Permanent employees fare better in the job search because their positions are budgeted for the year under the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), and they can be transferred to other OMRDD facilities, according to Tierney. Temporary employees can transfer only if another facility receives temporary funding.

In addition to New York State facilities, the New Jersey Department of Human Services provided information on its facilities, focusing on the 400 SIDC employees who live in the Garden State, according to Bennett.

Although the fair was designed to make it easier for SIDC workers to investigate job possibilities at other state facilities, Bennett said, a problem remains for those who wish to stay on Staten Island. The only similar Island facility represented at the fair was South Beach Psychiatric Center.

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