

**GETTING THE WORD OUT (OR NOT):  
HOW AND WHERE NEW YORK CITY ADVERTISES**

**MARCH 2013**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

For years, publishers of small community and ethnic newspapers have complained that New York City government agencies overlook them when choosing where to run ads about their programs and services. Yet these newspapers comprise a significant segment of the local media market. According to the [New York Press Association](#) (NYPA), the combined circulation of 95 ethnic papers in New York City is 2.94 million, or about 28 percent of the city's population, and the combined circulation of 80 weekly community newspapers is 1.6 million.

The [Center for Community and Ethnic Media](#) at the [CUNY Graduate School of Journalism](#) decided to research the city's approach to advertising. We interviewed city officials, advertising executives and newspaper publishers, and we reviewed publicly available records, including some retrieved through Freedom of Information Law requests.

The chief findings of the Center's research are:

- New York City is currently spending about \$18 million a year to convey messages about health, education, transportation, economic development, as well as job opportunities at city agencies, to the public.
- About 82 percent of the ad budget of city agencies is earmarked for mainstream publications such as *The New York Times*, the *New York Post*, the *New York Daily News*, *amNY* and *MetroNY*. The rest is dispersed among smaller community and ethnic publications, many of which are published in languages other than English.
- Of New York City's 8.2 million residents, 37 percent were born outside the United States. Nearly a quarter of the population, or more than 1.8 million people, speak little or no English. Nearly half report to census takers that they speak a language other than English in their homes.
- There are more than 270 publications that serve the immigrant and minority populations in the city, published in 36 languages. Eighteen of them are daily papers that are published in nine languages.
- Although the combined circulation of community and ethnic publications is about 4.5 million, equal to 55 percent of the city's population, they receive about 18 percent of the city's ad budget.
- Hispanics, meanwhile, make up over 28 percent of the city's population, but in one recent 13-month period, Spanish-language publications garnered less than 4 percent of the total.
- The city has language-access laws and executive orders on its books to ensure that essential city services are known about and understood by residents who are not

proficient in English. These policies have not been applied to the city's advertising messages.

- The city requires all city agencies to place their ads through advertising firms that have been awarded city contracts to provide that service.
- Two small, private ad placement firms have consistently won the city's advertising contracts - one for 15 years, the other for 24 years.
- Although public officials assured representatives of the Center and NYPA in 2011 that the next round of contract bidding would generate fresh competition, some of the terms of the new contract were more onerous than before, and those two firms were again awarded new contracts.
- The city's ad contracts have previously been for terms of one to three years; the new contract is for five years.

The Center hopes, with this report, to shine a light on the process by which the city disseminates its advertising messages and to generate a discussion about policy options that will help ensure information about city programs reaches all New Yorkers.

## **GETTING THE WORD OUT (OR NOT): HOW AND WHERE NEW YORK CITY ADVERTISES**

New York City's government is a vast machine, operating on a scale almost unimaginable. With a budget exceeding \$70 billion and about 300,000 workers on its payroll who do everything from teach children and put out fires, to clean streets and run homeless shelters, the city's reach is far and wide.

But in a small, often-overlooked corner of this sprawling bureaucracy, New York City is also an advertiser. Some of its messages are of a public service nature: breastfeeding is good for you; beware suspicious packages on subways; get a free flu vaccine or free tax preparation help. Other messages are more narrowly focused: the fire or police department has new job openings; new affordable-housing units are available in a particular neighborhood; or, you may be eligible for post-Sandy house repair services.

Because those messages often convey essential information, people who receive them have an advantage over those who do not. The city's choices about where and how its messages are delivered have important public policy consequences. Those decisions also matter greatly to the publications that stand ready to disseminate the city's advertisements. In the challenging world of newspaper publishing, being tapped as a repository of city ads can be the next best thing to winning the lottery.

More than any other city in the nation, New York faces unparalleled challenges in getting its messages heard by the broad population. As has long been trumpeted, the Big Apple is a magnet for immigrants. Of the city's 8.2 million residents, 37 percent were born outside the country. Nearly a quarter of the population, or more than 1.8 million people, speak little or no English. Nearly half report to census takers that they speak a language other than English in their homes.

In most other cities in the U.S., one or two immigrant groups tend to dominate numerically. But in New York, immigrants come from over 200 countries, with all the language diversity that implies. Reflecting that "gorgeous mosaic," New York City is the ethnic media capital of the world. In a recent survey by the Center for Community and Ethnic Media, more than 270 community and ethnic publications in the New York metropolitan region were identified that publish or broadcast in 36 languages. While most are weeklies, 18 are daily newspapers publishing in nine languages. (The [Center for Community and Ethnic Media](#) recently published this data in a directory, *Many Voices, One City*.)

The results of the Center's survey are consistent with research done by the [New York Press Association](#) (NYPA), a professional association that serves community papers statewide.

According to NYPA, the combined circulation of 95 ethnic papers in New York City is 2.94 million, or about 28 percent of the population.

Few understand the importance of immigrants and their publications better than Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. When the mayor launched his controversial campaign for a third term, he sought out more than 100 ethnic publications for their endorsement. “When we came back in for a third term, he was as committed in his third term as he was in his first two about making sure that we’re ever-cognizant and aware of the changing demographics of our media,” said Chris Coffey, who worked on all three of the mayor’s campaigns and later became the Assistant Commissioner of External and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment. (Coffey made these comments while [speaking on a panel](#) in 2012 at the Journalism School.) “We all get that we have to do more Russian [outreach], more Korean, more Spanish, more Indian, you can go down the list, more Haitian,” he said. “If we’re not targeting everybody, we are missing a huge population.” (Coffey has since left the administration to join consulting firm Tusk Strategies.)

Mayor Bloomberg’s interest in immigrant communities goes well beyond political expediency. He’s been a national leader on immigration reform and frequently acknowledges the critical role that immigrant entrepreneurs play in the city’s economy. His administration has been at the national forefront of policies requiring city agencies to offer services in foreign languages. As a result, city agencies are required to provide information, signs and forms in the most commonly spoken foreign languages at public places such as homeless shelters, public hospitals and schools. (Although agencies have some latitude depending on the populations they serve, these languages are generally considered to be Chinese, Italian, Russian, Korean, Haitian Creole and Spanish.)

[Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs Fatima Shama](#) is charged with overseeing the city’s language-access policies. Half-Brazilian and half-Lebanese, she speaks six languages and has been a forceful advocate of immigrant communities and language-access policies. (Shama is on the board of advisors of the Center for Community and Ethnic Media.)

Given the complex demographic portrait of the city and the Bloomberg administration’s support for immigrant communities, the question of whether ethnic publications receive a steady flow of city advertisements takes on even greater significance.

How much money does the city spend on advertising? In fiscal year 2012, which ended last June, spending on advertising exceeded \$18 million, according to [numbers provided by the Independent Budget Office](#). As Table 1 shows, that number has bounced around from a recent peak of \$23 million in fiscal year 2009.

## **Table 1: Total City Advertising Spending**

FY '09 – \$23.1 million  
FY '10 – \$15.8m  
FY '11 – \$9.8m  
FY '12 – \$18.7m

Source: Financial Management System, courtesy of the Independent Budget Office

The IBO numbers, however, include the ad budgets of CUNY, the Board of Elections, the borough presidents' offices, the district attorneys' offices, and other public entities that are not subject to mayoral authority. (For more details on CUNY's ad spending, see Appendix A.)

To focus on the portion of the city's ad budget that the current administration controls, we reviewed how different city agencies allocated their ad budgets. Until fairly recently, city agencies could go their own way with their ad expenditures. But in 2008, the Bloomberg administration began tightening up its control over ad spending, partly to ensure more consistent and better rates. It gave the task of centralizing its advertising program to the [Department of Citywide Administrative Services](#) (DCAS), which solicited bids from advertising placement firms to handle the entire city advertising budget. City agencies were then required to route their ad programs through the two private firms that won the contracts to provide this service. Those two companies were Manhattan-based [Miller Advertising Agency](#) and [Creative Media Agency](#), based in Mineola, Long Island.

Large city agencies with senior marketing executives on their staffs can tell Miller and Creative in which publications they want their ads to run. But citywide budget cuts, combined with the huge task of navigating so many ethnic groups and their publications, has resulted in many city agencies relying on the expertise of the two ad placement firms.

According to the city's vendor database and the City Comptroller's contract database, Creative Media has received 46 advertising contracts from the city over the last 15 years valued at more than \$45 million, primarily to place ads for the city's job recruitment efforts. Those same databases show that Miller has garnered 117 contracts since 1989, valued at \$20 million; Miller's focus is on non-recruitment ads.

Using Freedom of Information requests, the Center obtained monthly and quarterly usage reports for [Miller](#) and [Creative](#). Those records provide extensive detail of how the two firms have allocated the government's ad dollars, dating back to 2008.

According to the [Center's summary](#) of the most recent usage report obtained for Miller, the firm placed over \$3 million of city ads between November 2010 and November 2011. During that period, Spanish-language publications garnered 3.7 percent of Miller's spending, or \$114,526, although Hispanics make up about 28 percent of the population. The papers that serve the

rapidly growing Chinese community in New York, estimated at 6 percent of the population, received \$87,469, or 2.8 percent of Miller's spending during that period. Russian publications received \$31,816; Korean publications received \$13,294; and Haitian publications received \$804.

African-Americans are an important segment for the audience of mainstream papers like the *Daily News* and make up about 25 percent of the city's population. Publications that explicitly target African-American readers in New York City, such as the *Amsterdam News*, *Our Time Press* and *Black Star News*, received \$49,873, or 1.6 percent of Miller's total spending during that period.

Meanwhile, the *NY Daily News* received \$566,684 of Miller's spending during that time, and the *NY Post* received \$518,800, or about one-third of the total for the year. Some of the disparity in expenditures is undoubtedly due to the more expensive rates charged by these larger publications.

Table 2 shows the top city agencies that placed ads through Miller during that period:

## **Table 2: Top City Agencies that Placed Ads through Miller**

(November 2010 - November 2011)

Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene - \$949,064  
Dept. of Finance - \$490,123  
Administration for Children's Services - \$283,676  
Office of Emergency Management - \$250,790  
Department of Transportation - \$154,350

Source: Miller usage reports, obtained through DCAS FOIL requests

There was no discernible pattern of ethnic media usage by city agency. For example, the Department of Aging spread its ad dollars to outlets that publish in Spanish, Russian and Chinese. But the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene used only English-language publications, according to those usage reports. As for the Office of Emergency Management, \$500 of its \$29,602 in ad spending that period went to a non-English language publication: *El Diario-La Prensa*.

[Creative's usage reports](#) for its recruitment ad spending for the period July 2010 to February 2011 revealed a similar pattern. This is particularly surprising because of the city's equal opportunity policies and emphasis on diversity in hiring. There is a unit within DCAS dedicated to ensuring compliance with equal opportunity laws and city charter requirements. As the DCAS website states, "We are committed to recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce which reflects our City's communities." Nevertheless, a review of eight months of recruiting expenditures for the city showed that of the total \$923,204 that was spent in that

period, about half went to the *New York Times*, the *NY Daily News* and the *NY Post*. As for foreign-language publications:

### **Table 3: Creative's ad spending**

(July 2010 - Feb. 2011)

Spanish-language publications –	\$29,951
Chinese-language publications –	\$2,335
Korean-language publications –	\$710
Haitian Creole-publications –	\$511
Russian-language publications –	\$209

Source: Creative usage reports, obtained through DCAS FOIL requests

Neighborhood-oriented community papers, which have a combined circulation in New York City of 1.6 million and get high marks on readership-engagement studies, received nominal amounts from both Miller and Creative during those periods.

The usage reports are not detailed enough to allow specific agency expenditures to be correlated to specific ad campaigns. But a review of city ads that have run recently in publications like the *New York Post* and the *New York Daily News* suggest they would also be relevant to minority and/or immigrant readers:

- Availability of new, low-income apartments (Dept. of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD), NYC Housing Development Corp.)
- Availability of new, affordable housing rental apartments (HPD)
- Enrollment in bus service for school-age children (Dept. of Education)
- Notice of abandoned property (Dept. of Finance)
- Free tax preparation assistance (Dept. of Consumer Affairs)

Given the Bloomberg administration's policies towards immigrant communities, it is surprising that diversity is not better reflected in its advertising policies. [In a testy exchange](#) with more than 100 small ethnic publishers at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism in January 2012, Coffey tried to explain why the city's advertising budget has remained so narrowly focused on a handful of large, mainstream English-language publications.

Coffey noted that many ethnic publications come and go, just as the immigrant communities themselves explode and then shrink. When taxpayer money is involved, he noted, the government has to have a transparent process for determining how the city's precious ad dollars are spent. "It's the people's money; it's the taxpayers' money," said Coffey. "We have to have a reason why we picked paper X vs. paper Y, and it needs to be a good reason."

It is easy to understand why some foreign-language and minority-focused publications might not



be considered the advertising vehicles of choice for city agencies. Many are small, with limited financial resources. As a result, some don't have sophisticated media kits with important information about their distribution and ad rates. Others may not meet the editorial standards of the ad buyers, or have not invested in the administrative systems necessary to provide timely proof that ads were published. The latter is essential to a smooth billing process.

Nonetheless, there is always at least one strong, high-quality publication to serve each immigrant community. And there are compelling economic reasons why it makes sense for the city to utilize more community and ethnic publications. Let's say the city wanted to place full page ads in five large immigrant-oriented daily newspapers: the Chinese-language *World Journal* and *Sing Tao*, the *Korea Central Daily News*, the Greek community's *National Herald* and *El Nacional*, widely read by Dominicans. According to the NY Press Association, to get its ad before the combined 270,000 readers of those diverse publications, the city would have to pay about \$18,000. That is considerably less than the \$30,000 it would have to spend on one full-page ad to reach about the same number of readers of all ethnicities in either the *NY Post* or the *NY Daily News*. (To cover all five boroughs with *The New York Times* would cost the city nearly \$80,000.) "The city can a) save money and b) be much more strategic about its advertising," says Tom Allon, mayoral candidate and CEO of Manhattan Media, a publishing and media advertising company.

In conversations in the fall of 2011 with representatives of the Center and NYPA, city officials acknowledged that its advertising messages were not getting out into minority and ethnic communities to the extent that they thought they should. They indicated that in the next round of bidding for the city's ad contracts, they hoped there would be more competition, which would, in turn, generate some fresh thinking on ad placement. The usage reports for Miller and Creative, for instance, show that they invariably place ads in *El Diario-La Prensa* to reach the Hispanic market. However, over the last 10 years, the Mexican population in New York City has grown by 71 percent, making it the third largest Hispanic group in the city. Reflecting that growth, *Diario de Mexico* launched a New York edition in 2002. Yet *Diario de Mexico* appears nowhere on Miller and Creative usage reports through 2011.

At the CUNY advertising conference, Coffey made clear that he understood the frustrations of the community and ethnic publishers in the audience and spoke of how difficult it was to make changes. "The city is a big thing. It is this big engine... there's a whole process, there's a contracting piece that takes months to put up," he explained. He then dropped broad hints that change was about to unfold. "We're going to work on this even more," he told the audience. "We hope to have more to say about it in the next few months. I wish I could say it right now." Just two weeks after the conference, the city issued its new [bid solicitation document](#) inviting ad placement firms to apply once again for its business.

The new bid document, however, was not written in a way that seemed likely to encourage new entrants. The document stated that applicants must have placed at least \$500,000 in ads in each of the last three years in order to be eligible. That requirement was an improvement over

the 2008 bid document, which set the threshold at \$1million. But a new hurdle was added to the 2012 document: Bidders must “have successfully completed in a timely fashion at least five (5) projects similar in scope to the required [project].”

Advertising executives complain that the city’s criteria are still too onerous. “The way the bid was written makes it seem unlikely that any entity other than the entity currently providing this service for the City has the qualifications necessary to bid,” concluded Michelle Rea, executive director of both NYPA and its sister organization, the New York Press Service, which places ads in state newspapers and decided not to apply for the city’s business. (Rea is on the board of advisors of the Center for Community and Ethnic Media.)

In the new bid document, the city also extended the life of the contract to five years. Previously, the longest city ad contract was for three years, though most were of a one-year duration. “I’ve never seen a five-year RFP (request for proposal),” said Rea.

The Center knows of only one bid that was submitted other than those by Miller and Creative. (DCAS did not provide answers to the Center’s questions about the bidding process or the contract.) In its application for the non-recruitment portion of the advertising contract, [Multi-Cultural Media Services](#) promised to deliver \$1.6 million in additional savings to the city above what the contract called for. The firm also noted its minority/women-owned business certification and a client list that included the Metropolitan Transit Authority, NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

As of the date of this report, Multi-Cultural Media had received no response to its bid. In June 2012, however, Creative was awarded \$2.2 million of the new contract, exclusively to place recruitment ads in *The New York Times*. And on September 30, Miller was awarded \$6.8 million of the new contract. It remains to be seen how the remaining \$10.8 million of the contract total will be allocated.

Based on the language in the DCAS bid document, there’s little reason to think that Miller or Creative will institute changes to the city’s historical patterns of advertising - or that the city is asking them to alter their strategy. Of the \$7 million that the city is expected to spend over the next five years on recruitment ads, the DCAS document estimated that only \$700,000 would be earmarked for publications other than *The New York Times*, the *NY Daily News*, the *NY Post*, *El Diario*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *NY Law Journal*.

As for the \$12.8 million non-recruitment portion of the bidding process, only \$2 million was allocated to publications outside the normal circle. In other words, of the total \$19.8 million to be spent over five years, just 13.9 percent, or \$2.77 million, was outlined by DCAS as going to all “other” publications.

Efforts to get Miller and Creative to explain their thinking about the pros and cons of advertising in ethnic and minority publications have been unsuccessful. When the CUNY Graduate School of

Journalism invited representatives from Creative and Miller to speak at the 2012 advertising conference, both declined the offer. After Coffey intervened, Nicole Miller agreed to attend. She and a colleague sat in the audience, but did not speak publicly during the all-day event.

Despite repeated requests by phone and email, neither firm agreed to be interviewed for this report. Requests for an interview with a current member of the mayor's press office also went unheeded.

There is little in the public record to explain why Miller and Creative have succeeded in securing so many successive government contracts. Many small publishers are puzzled by their track record, or downright suspicious. There is no indication of any political relationships or a history of campaign contributions.

Miller was formed in 1919 by Adele and Samuel Miller and has been populated by Miller offspring ever since. According to public records, the current owners of the private, family-owned company are Andrew, Nicole, Daniel, Robert and Leonard Miller. The firm states [on its website](#) that it has annual billings of more than \$75 million, with particularly strong client ties to auto dealers and real estate firms. (Miller serves some of the city's leading real estate families, including Lefrak, Spitzer, Solow and Helmsley.) In addition to doing work for New York City, Miller's government clients include the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

Miller seems particularly proud of the work it has done for the city's Department of Health, which is consistently the city's top ad-spending agency. Among the topics the department has used Miller to advertise about are AIDS awareness, healthy eating habits, the benefits of breast-feeding and its poison hotline. On its site, Miller explain its approach to its work: "The success of an important public interest campaign cannot accurately be quantified in terms of lives saved or public awareness created. However, a compelling public interest campaign is deemed successful if it is graphically arresting and the media choices reflect intelligent planning."

In the advertising industry, intelligent planning is generally considered to mean selecting ad vehicles that reach the maximum number of people in the target audience at the lowest possible cost. By those measures, placing ads in publications that are read by large numbers of the city's most vulnerable, low-income, minority and immigrant residents (and that charge less than those in the mainstream, English-language media) would seem to meet that definition of "intelligent planning."

Creative Media, also family-run and privately-held, was founded in 1976 by Arthur Krieger. Krieger's widow, Stephanie, has taken over the running of the firm since her husband's death in 2008. On forms filed with the city, Creative says it has less than \$5 million in annual gross revenue.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the current advertising contract is scheduled to run until 2017, the Center would like to offer some alternative approaches to the city's advertising policies for consideration.

The Mayor's Office (current and future) could make a diversified advertising program a higher priority. Marketing officers within city agencies could demand more from ad placement firms like Creative and Miller. There is nothing, short of time and resources, to prevent city agencies from being more proactive right now. In a recent advertising campaign for a program benefiting minority and women-owned businesses, for instance, an official at the Department of Small Business Services prodded Miller to add a few more foreign-language publications to its original list. "It would be ideal if they were more proactive with the analysis that is done," said the official, who insisted on anonymity. "They could do more homework to learn about other publications."

City Council members could hold hearings to review the contracts, the city's approach, and legislative options for requiring that a portion of the city's future ad budget be earmarked for a more diverse array of publications. This could be similar to the city's decision to earmark a portion of its general contracts for minority and women-owned businesses, though the effectiveness of that program has been criticized.

The City Comptroller, who has the authority to monitor city contracts and audit city agencies, could decide to review the Miller and Creative contracts to make sure that the bidding and contract awards process was executed appropriately.

The reach of the city's language-access policies could be extended. City agencies are currently required to develop [language-access implementation plans](#) and report how well they are meeting their goals. However, a review of those implementation plans makes it clear that advertising messages and public awareness campaigns have not been considered to be subject to language-access policies.

The city's language-access policies are supposed to apply when an essential service or benefit is being offered that a person with limited-English proficiency would miss out on if not for translation. When the issue was raised with Commissioner Shama, she agreed that language-access policies should apply to city ads, since she considers information about topics like AIDS prevention, poison hotlines and flu shots to be an essential benefit. Her office can require that language-access implementation plans provide details of how agencies intend to promote more diverse ad spending. In an interview Shama said that her office has limited ability, however, to force city agencies to comply.

There may even be legal grounds for requiring city advertising campaigns to be published in foreign languages. There is a provision in the federal Civil Rights Act, for instance, that requires agencies receiving federal funding to take affirmative steps to ensure meaningful access to

services, benefits, programs and information for people with limited English proficiency. The city's affordable housing program, run by the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development, is heavily funded by federal monies, as are many of the city's health and educational programs.

Of course, no one is suggesting that the city's advertising budget should be an entitlement program for community and ethnic publications. There are undoubtedly steps they can take to improve their prospects for garnering more New York City government advertising. The NY Press Association is helping professionalize the sector by procuring circulation audits and developing media kits and business plans for about 25 ethnic newspapers. And the Center for Community and Ethnic Media is running editorial and new media training programs, as well as conducting research into ad networks that would support small community and ethnic media outlets.

If even a small percentage of the city's ad budget was redirected to high-quality, well-run community and ethnic publications, it could have a tremendous impact. Of the 270 media outlets the Center surveyed, nearly half said they were working with five or fewer full-time staff. With limited resources, many publishers double as editors, reporters and even ad sales staff. A little increase in advertising revenue could go a long way toward strengthening the city's community and ethnic media while simultaneously helping the city get its messages out to all New Yorkers.

\* This "white paper" was researched and written by Professor Sarah Bartlett, director of the Urban Reporting program at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, with the assistance of Garry Pierre-Pierre, executive director of the Center for Community and Ethnic Media. Funding for the report was provided by the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

## APPENDIX A: HOW CUNY ADVERTISES

According to financial records provided to the Center by the Independent Budget Office, the City University of New York (CUNY) is consistently among the top five government units that advertise:

### TOP LOCAL GOVERNMENT AD SPENDING

#### FY '09

1. Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - \$9.8m
2. NYPD - \$5.1m
3. CUNY - \$2.1m
4. Department of Correction - \$1.4m
5. Department of Parks and Recreation - \$781,318

#### FY '10

1. Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - \$8.9m
2. CUNY - \$2.0m
3. NYPD - \$924,008
4. Department of Transportation - \$715,897
5. Miscellaneous - \$529,090

#### FY '11

1. Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – \$5.4m
2. CUNY - \$1.7m
3. NYPD - \$345,414
4. Board of Elections - \$291,119
5. Department of Parks and Recreation - \$287,769

#### FY '12

1. Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - \$9.3m
2. NYPD - \$2.2m
3. CUNY - \$1.8m
4. Fire Department - \$1.4m
5. Miscellaneous - \$933,999

Source: Financial Management System, courtesy of the IBO

In reviewing Miller's usage reports, it is clear that CUNY does not rely on the firm for help. From November 2010 to November 2011, for instance, CUNY placed just \$917.64 worth of ads using Miller's services. "We have an in-house agency," explained [Michael Arena](#), the university director for communications and marketing, which allows CUNY to avoid paying the ad agency fee of 15

percent or more. Over the last year, Arena says his office placed 56 ads with the *NY Daily News*, the *NY Post*, the *New York Times*, *Metro* and *AM New York*, and that during that same period it placed 249 ads with local, ethnic weekly and monthly publications. “We have found them to be extremely effective tools for reaching all sorts of people in all the boroughs,” said Arena of the latter group. Because so many of them are weekly publications that lie around on kitchen tables longer, he says he gets more second and third readers for each paper than he would with a daily.

CUNY does take advantage of the city contract with Creative to place recruitment ads. According to Creative’s usage reports, CUNY placed a total of \$851,506 in recruitment ads with Creative from July 2008 through June 2009. (The Creative usage reports obtained through Freedom of Information requests did not break out spending by specific governmental agencies for subsequent years.) A review of the spending patterns in ’08-’09 indicated that CUNY devoted a small percentage of its recruitment ad budget to non-English-language publications. Arena said that most CUNY recruitment ads are targeted at publications like the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that serve a specialized, national academic audience.