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Statement by David R. Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society On Soaring Poverty Rate

New York, NY, September 14, 2011 - The census figures for national poverty statistics for 2010 came out yesterday. Nationally, poverty went up from 14.3 percent in 2009 to 15.1 percent in 2010, the third consecutive annual increase. This translates into 2.6 million people who slipped into poverty in the United States last year. The number of Americans living below the official poverty line, 46.2 million people, is the highest number in the 52 years the Census Bureau has been publishing poverty data.

What does this mean for New York City? Last year, the Community Service Society surveyed New Yorkers for "[The Unheard Third 2010](#)" which revealed the extraordinary challenges and hardships that are the daily lives of the poor and lower-income New Yorkers. Young people without a high school diploma and older workers who have had prolonged unemployment of months or years now are feeling hopeless. We are very concerned about them becoming permanently left out of the labor market.

Low-income working moms were especially hard hit. Our survey revealed that 4 out of 10 had their work hours or wages go down; over one-third fell behind in their rent; and 57 percent say they worry all or most of the time that their earnings will not be enough to pay the bills. The poverty rate for families headed by single mothers rose to 31.6 percent in 2010, up from 29.9 percent in 2009. What's more, they have virtually no savings to fall back on in event of an emergency.

Many low-income New Yorkers are just one illness, one lost paycheck, or one emergency away from destitution. Based on our preliminary findings for 2011, we expect to see even more severe hardships this year.

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For 168 years, the [Community Service Society of New York](#) has been the leading voice on behalf of low-income New Yorkers and continues to advocate for the economic security of the working poor in the nation's largest city.