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THE UNHEARD THIRD 2010:

Survey Shows No Recovery in Sight, No Jobs for Low-Income New Yorkers

New York, NY--The lack of jobs has eclipsed the economy as New York's biggest problem, and most New Yorkers do not see signs of improvement in either the economy or the job market, according to *The Unheard Third 2010*, the Community Service Society's annual survey of New York residents. The survey of 1,414 New Yorkers reveals dissatisfaction with the city's economy and job market across incomes, as well as the struggles of low-income New York households, which face high levels of job loss, long-term unemployment, and the feeling of having little or no control over their own economic situations as the recession drags on.

The Unheard Third 2010 is the 9th annual edition of The Unheard Third, the only poll in the nation to regularly gauge the opinions and experiences of low-income urban residents. Conducted in July and August 2010 in collaboration with Lake Research Partners, the survey includes primarily low-income respondents from across the five boroughs reached on both landlines and cell phones, as well as respondents with moderate or higher incomes.

David R. Jones, president and CEO of the Community Service Society, said, "The jobs crisis has plunged low-income, and some moderate and higher income New Yorkers, to new depths of despair." He continued, "Economists declared the recession officially over months ago – however, they have not surveyed struggling New Yorkers trying to make ends meet today, months after the declaration. More jobs are needed now, not only for New Yorkers but for people across the nation."

The findings reveal that New Yorkers, especially low-income New Yorkers, are not experiencing the so-called recovery. Thirty percent of all respondents across income groups, including 36 percent of low-income respondents, name the lack of jobs or unemployment as the top problem facing the city, an increase over the past several years. Two-thirds of low- and moderate-income New Yorkers, and more than half of higher-income respondents, feel the job market in their communities is just fair or poor and staying the same or even getting worse.

"The cycle of extraordinary poverty continues without a safety net or anything to fall back on, other than relatives who are likely to be facing financial hardship as well," Mr. Jones added.

The Unheard Third 2010 also reveals sobering effects of the jobs crisis. Thirty-six percent of low-income respondents, and 40 percent of black respondents across income groups, report losing their jobs or having their hours, wages, or tips reduced in the last year. Unemployment is highest among the poor, as is long-term unemployment: two-thirds of unemployed, low-income New Yorkers have been out of work for more than a year, with 31 percent jobless for three years or more. Part-time workers want to work

more hours, and 60 percent of low-income respondents are worried that their household won't be working enough hours to make ends meet in the next year, with a similar number worried about losing their jobs. Finding and keeping a job is the top personal worry of low-income New Yorkers. Thirty-one percent of all respondents, and 40 percent of low-income respondents, feel they have little or no control over their personal economic situations.

"The Unheard Third 2010 reveals that for low-income New Yorkers, there has been no recovery, and there is none in sight," concluded Krista Pietrangelo, author of the report. "New Yorkers across incomes are decidedly negative about the state of the city and the job market, and low-income families continue to experience high levels of job loss, rising under-employment, and acute worries related to jobs and financial security."

Further findings from *The Unheard Third 2010* to be released later this fall will detail more impacts of the lingering recession, including high levels of hardships related to food, health care, and housing, low or non-existent savings, and worries about meeting daily financial needs and commitments among low-income New Yorkers.

Future releases will also spotlight the ongoing struggles of low-income working mothers and blacks in New York, whom the jobs crisis and its effects have particularly impacted. Low-income African Americans are the racial group most likely to name the lack of jobs as the top problem facing the city (40 percent) and the most likely to say that job training is the single most important government benefit that would help them get ahead (21 percent). Almost half (47 percent) report having zero savings.

Low-income women are also struggling. Half (50 percent) of low-income, working, custodial mothers report losing a job or having their hours, wages, or tips reduced in the last year, one-third (34 percent) fell behind in rent or mortgage payments, and 3 in 10 (31 percent) report having unpaid medical bills. Fifty-seven percent of low-income working moms report that they worry all or most of the time that their incomes will not be enough to meet their expenses and bills, with 1 in 3 (34 percent) saying they worry about this all of the time.

The alarming results of *The Unheard Third 2010* call for immediate action on behalf of New York's workers and families. According to Mr. Jones, "Policy makers must directly address the jobs crisis, creating jobs programs for the unemployed to put people back to work, and strengthening essential safety net supports such as Unemployment Insurance. We must also support New York's young people in entering the labor market by ensuring they all have the opportunity to earn basic credentials, such as a high school diploma or GED."

Learn more about [The Unheard Third 2010](#) survey .

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"The Unheard Third," conducted by CSS and fielded by the national polling firm Lake Research Partners, is a unique snapshot of the policy preferences and experiences of low-income New Yorkers. The survey is partially funded through the support of The New York Community Trust . CSS has used the survey to inform and guide its research, direct service programs, and policy recommendations. It has served to narrow the focus of the agency's agenda on the working poor and reinforce its belief that public policy aimed at this population must, in part, be guided by the life experiences and ideas of New Yorkers living in poverty.

For 165 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.