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"ADDRESSING BARRIERS, BUILDING COMMUNITY"

Two-Part Forum Explores Issues Affecting Latinos in NYC Latino School Enrollment Rates Exceed Blacks Puerto Ricans Suffer More than Any Other Latino Group in NYC

The Community Service Society of New York is hosting a two-part forum exploring issues affecting Latinos in New York City. The forums feature two panels, the first held today and the second to be held on Monday, May 17, both at the United Charities Building. The forums take a look at the Latino experience, with special emphasis on housing, health care and youth. Latinos will be the largest racial/ethnic group in NYC in the future.

"Over the past two years, CSS has begun to further explore the Latino experience in New York in order to develop a policy agenda that addresses the quality of life for New York's nearly 2.3 million Latinos," said David R. Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society of New York. "CSS research clearly identifies recurrent themes of struggle and hardship for all people of Latino descent with particular emphasis on New York's Puerto Rican community."

Today's panel will discuss "**Barriers to Latino Engagement in the New York City Economy: Lessons Learned from Recent CSS Research**," and will focus on how Latinos are faring in the recession, issues unique to native-born and immigrant Latinos, public and subsidized housing, disconnected youth, and disparities in health care.

"This forum will demonstrate the relevance of CSS research and advocacy to the city's largest minority," said Juan Cartagena, CSS General Counsel and Vice President of Advocacy, and host and moderator of the Latino forums.

The first session will be discussed in four parts: Part 1: *The Unheard Third 2009: A Profile of Low-Income Latino New Yorkers*; Part 2: *Housing for Latinos in New York City: Commonalities and Differences*; Part 3: *Latino Youth in New York City: School, Work, and Income Trends for New York's Largest Group of Young People*; and Part 4: *Latino Health Disparities and Insurance Coverage*.

There are more than 2.3 million Latinos living in New York with approximately 500,000 living in public housing. Also in New York, there are 170,000 disconnected youth – a large number of whom are Latino; and 2.6 million New Yorkers are without health insurance. These numbers, particularly as they apply to Latino New Yorkers warrants a major shift in policy to address their needs.

CSS research has also unveiled the following findings:

- Of native-born Latinos, Puerto Ricans have, by far, the lowest rates of school enrollment.
- Latino low-income workers lack paid sick days more than any other racial/ethnic group in the city.
- In New York City, Central and South Americans have the highest rate of home-ownership among Latinos; Mexicans have the highest rate of living in unregulated apartments; Dominicans have the highest rate of living in regulated apartments; and Puerto Ricans have the highest rate of living in public and subsidized housing.
- Across the state, Latinos are more likely to lack health insurance than any other racial/ethnic group.

The first session will feature CSS experts in health care - Arianne Garza; youth – Lazar Treschan; housing policy – Tom Waters; and strategic planning - Krista Pietrangelo.

The second session, on May 17, is entitled “**Building Community: Latino Political and Civic Engagement,**” and will include a discussion on mass incarceration, criminal justice consequences, voting rights, redistricting, and joblessness. Panelists will include experts Jose Luis Morin, Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY; and Lucia Gomez Jimenez, Governor’s Office of Community Affairs.

In closing, Mr. Cartagena said, “The dialogue from the Latino forums will help CSS and other advocacy organizations develop policies to improve the quality of life for Latinos in New York. “

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For 160 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.