

THE UNHEARD THIRD  
**VOTE** 2013

# THE RACE FOR MAYOR

What's in it  
for low-income  
New Yorkers?

**Community  
Service  
Society** | Fighting Poverty  
Strengthening  
New York

**MARCH  
2013**



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The Community Service Society of New York (CSS) is an informed, independent, and unwavering voice for positive action on behalf of more than 3 million low-income New Yorkers. CSS draws on a 170-year history of excellence in addressing the root causes of economic disparity. We respond to urgent, contemporary challenges through applied research, advocacy, litigation, and innovative program models that strengthen and benefit all New Yorkers.

[www.cssny.org](http://www.cssny.org)

## THE UNHEARD THIRD VOTE 2013

2013 marks a critical election year for New York City, as voters will choose a new mayor and a slate of new public officials. CSS is committed to ensuring that the voices of low-income New Yorkers—who make up one-third of the city’s electorate—are a part of the political debate. During the 2013 election season, CSS will sponsor public candidate forums, issue a voter guide detailing the positions of the candidates, and widely disseminate the findings of The Unheard Third, our annual survey of low-income New Yorkers. These efforts are intended to raise the visibility of issues of concern to our constituents, and to put the candidates on record with their plans to help low-income New Yorkers and the working poor.

[www.cssny.org/vote2013](http://www.cssny.org/vote2013)

### About the Authors

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We thank **The New York Community Trust** for their generous on-going support which makes The Unheard Third survey possible. Lake Research Partners conducts the survey annually for CSS.

# The Race For Mayor

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS?

This much is certain: a lot is at stake in 2013. New Yorkers will head to the polls to choose new leaders in a record number of highly contested races where no incumbent is running: at least 19 of 51 City Council seats, comptroller, public advocate, four out of five borough presidents, and, most important, mayor. What is far from certain are the issues that will determine the outcomes of these races.

In a city where more than one in five residents struggles to survive on an income that puts them below the poverty level, will the word poverty even be uttered by the candidates? Where Manhattan's long avenues stretch from the nation's wealthiest zip codes to some of its poorest—neighborhoods where the working poor wait eight years to get into public housing<sup>1</sup> and city shelters overflow with a record number of homeless families—will office-seekers propose ideas for affordable housing on the scale needed? While we applaud the vision for the future that is bringing high tech campuses to the city, will anyone running for mayor offer a vision for the future of the 58,000<sup>2</sup> mostly black and Latino young people who have left school without diplomas or jobs? Will the candidates compete on how to create opportunities for upward mobility for those struggling to support their families on low-wage, non-union jobs at car washes, retail chains, restaurant kitchens, and caring for our children and elderly—or the 348,000 unemployed New Yorkers<sup>3</sup> who are desperate to find any job at all?

These are some of the questions on the minds of low-income New Yorkers this election year. One out of three voting age citizens in New York City—a huge potential bloc—lives in

a family with an income below twice the federal poverty level of \$23,021 for a family of four. They are “the unheard third.” Their voices are too often ignored by candidates seeking public office.

More than a decade ago, the Community Service Society began annually surveying these low-income New Yorkers, with the goal of elevating their concerns and views in the public debate. Our 2012 survey is based on telephone interviews with 1,468 New York City residents conducted by the national polling firm, Lake Research. This past year, we asked low-income New Yorkers about their priorities for the next mayor. What issues would they want candidates to put front and center in the campaign? Where do the poor and those barely escaping poverty's grasp stand on proposals that will shape our schools, the safety of our streets, and the earning power of our workers? And how do their opinions align with or differ from those of middle- and higher-income New Yorkers, whom we surveyed for comparison?

This report highlights the findings of our eleventh annual survey—findings that could decide the votes of one out of three New Yorkers.

[For details on how the survey was conducted see page 32.](#)

# Who Are The Unheard Third?

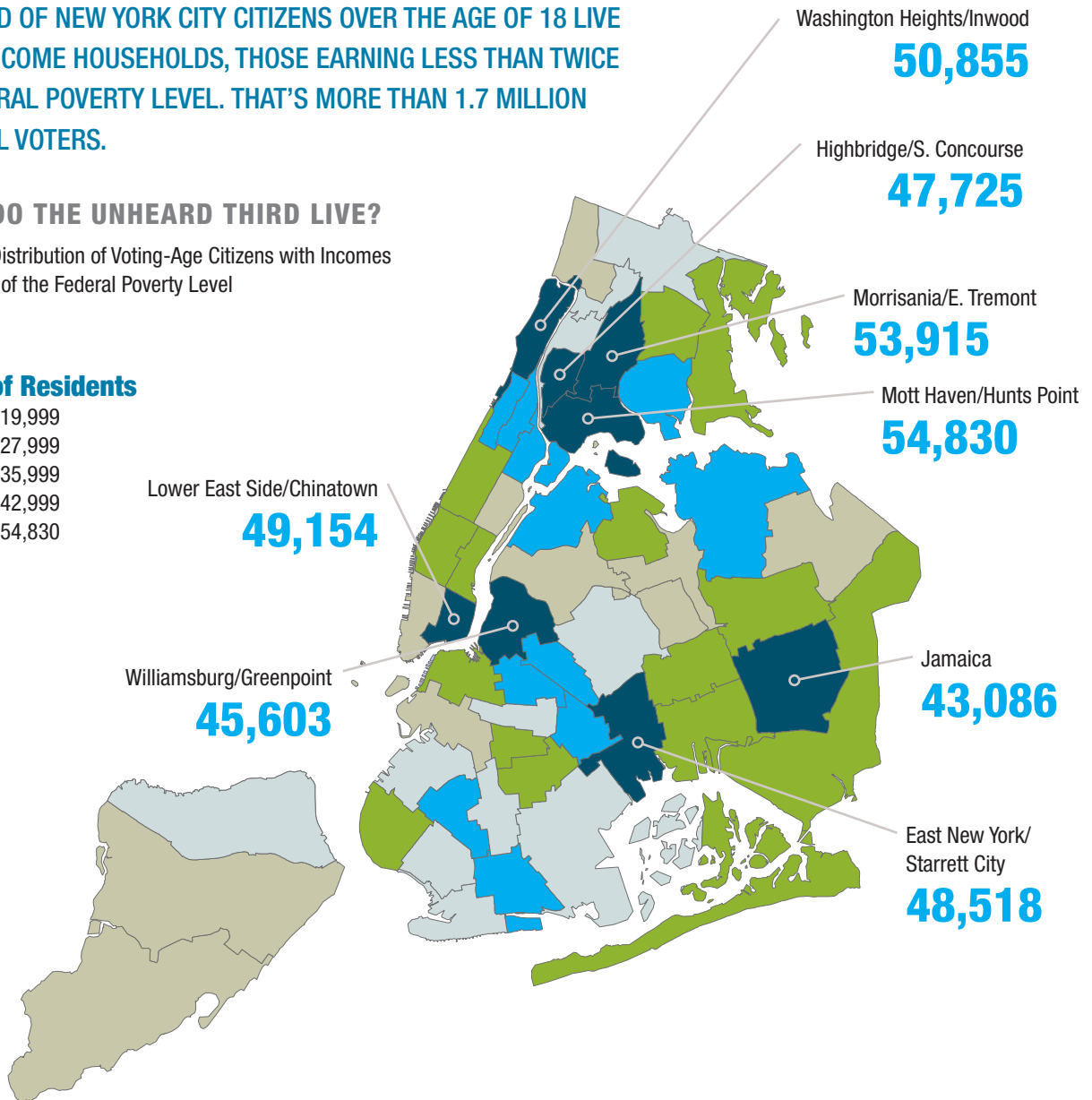
ONE-THIRD OF NEW YORK CITY CITIZENS OVER THE AGE OF 18 LIVE IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, THOSE EARNING LESS THAN TWICE THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL. THAT'S MORE THAN 1.7 MILLION POTENTIAL VOTERS.

## WHERE DO THE UNHEARD THIRD LIVE?

Geographic Distribution of Voting-Age Citizens with Incomes Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

### Number of Residents

- 12,905 - 19,999
- 20,000 - 27,999
- 28,000 - 35,999
- 36,000 - 42,999
- 43,000 - 54,830



BOROUGH	THE UNHEARD THIRD	NUMBER OF POTENTIAL VOTERS	THE UNHEARD THIRD AS A SHARE OF POTENTIAL VOTERS
Bronx	366,275	792,358	46%
Brooklyn	601,629	1,546,690	39%
Manhattan	320,825	1,130,195	28%
Queens	365,194	1,314,556	28%
Staten Island	65,175	328,577	20%
<b>New York City</b>	<b>1,719,638</b>	<b>5,112,376</b>	<b>34%</b>

## How Do The Unheard Third Compare with Other Potential Voters?

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VOTING-AGE CITIZENS IN NEW YORK CITY

RACE/ETHNICITY	THE UNHEARD THIRD	ALL POTENTIAL VOTERS
White, non-Hispanic	28%	41%
Black, non-Hispanic	27%	24%
Asian	11%	11%
Hispanic	34%	24%
BOROUGH		
Bronx	21%	16%
Brooklyn	35%	30%
Manhattan	19%	22%
Queens	21%	26%
Staten Island	4%	6%
Median Household Income*	\$15,760	\$52,200
Own Children in Household	41%	34%
Working Age (18-65 years old)	78%	83%
No High School Diploma	29%	16%
Unemployment Rate	26%	11%

\*BASED ON THE AGE AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS OF THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD

## Findings

**Finding One:** Low-income New Yorkers are more likely to say things in the city are headed on the wrong track... but all New Yorkers are worried about growing income inequality and a shrinking middle class. [PAGE 4](#)

**Finding Two:** Economic worries and hardships persist among low-income New Yorkers three years into the recovery. [PAGE 6](#)

**Finding Three:** While low-income New Yorkers put job creation at the top of their agenda for the next mayor, they, along with moderate- and higher-income respondents, do not think the solution is making the city more business-friendly. Rather, New Yorkers are united in favoring policies that help working people get ahead. [PAGE 9](#)

**Finding Four:** New Yorkers believe that the way for working families to get ahead is by raising the floor for low-paying jobs, attracting more middle-skilled jobs to the city, and ensuring that young people have the education they need to fill those better-paying jobs. [PAGE 12](#)

**Finding Five:** Virtually all New Yorkers think that it is important for the next mayor to put more resources into schools serving poor students and ensure that high school students graduate well-prepared for college. [PAGE 18](#)

**Finding Six:** While New Yorkers want to see a greater investment in public schools, views are somewhat mixed about continuing some of the specific strategies of the current administration. [PAGE 20](#)

**Finding Seven:** Low-income New Yorkers favor policies to widen access to higher education for graduates of the city's public high schools. They also want to substantially expand educational programs at all levels for those serving time in state prisons. [PAGE 22](#)

**Finding Eight:** "Reducing crime, drugs, and guns" comes in second on the list of top priorities for low-income New Yorkers. Views are divided on "stop and frisk" tactics, but those most directly affected want this police practice reined in. [PAGE 25](#)

**Finding Nine:** "Making housing more affordable" ranks in the top cluster of issues low-income New Yorkers want the mayoral candidates to address. Low-income New Yorkers experience frequent housing hardships and overwhelmingly think that it is very important that the next mayor pursue policies to increase the availability of affordable housing as part of his or her agenda. [PAGE 28](#)

# Finding One

## LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THINGS IN THE CITY ARE HEADED ON THE WRONG TRACK... BUT ALL NEW YORKERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT GROWING INCOME INEQUALITY AND A SHRINKING MIDDLE CLASS.

Half of low-income New Yorkers surveyed believe that the city is on the wrong track, with only 35 percent saying that things are going in the right direction. This contrasts with the views of higher-income residents, more than half of whom see the city moving in the right direction, and moderate-income New Yorkers, whose views are evenly divided.

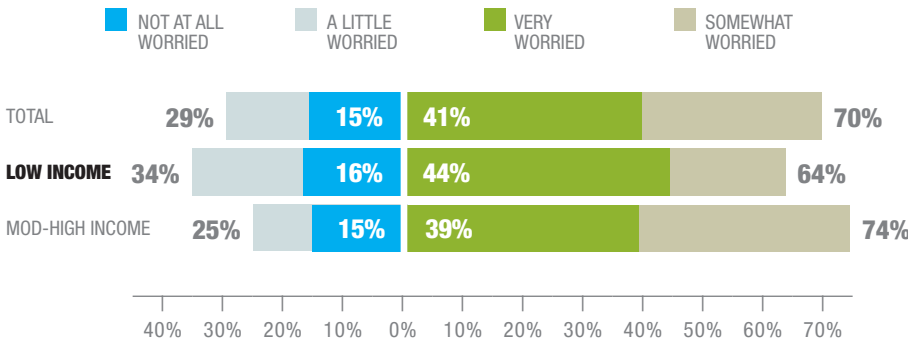
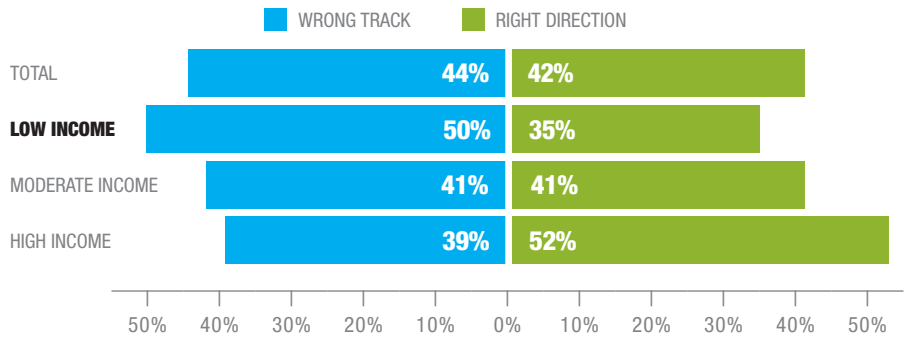
Yet, despite their somewhat greater optimism about the overall direction of the city, nearly three out of four moderate- and higher-income New Yorkers say they are worried about widening inequality between the wealthy and the poor in the city—with four in ten saying they are very worried. Democrats and African-Americans, of all incomes, are among

the most worried about the growing chasm between the haves and the have-nots. New Yorkers—across income groups—also express worries about the city’s disappearing middle class, with over half saying they are very worried about this prospect. Even more troubling, opportunities for upward mobility are seen as limited. Barely half of New Yorkers, regardless of income, think that it is possible for poor people to make it into the middle class these days. The chasm is not merely widening; it is becoming unbridgeable.

### Half of low-income New Yorkers believe things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track.

**Q:** Generally speaking, do think things in New York City are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

DIRECTION OF NEW YORK CITY, BY INCOME

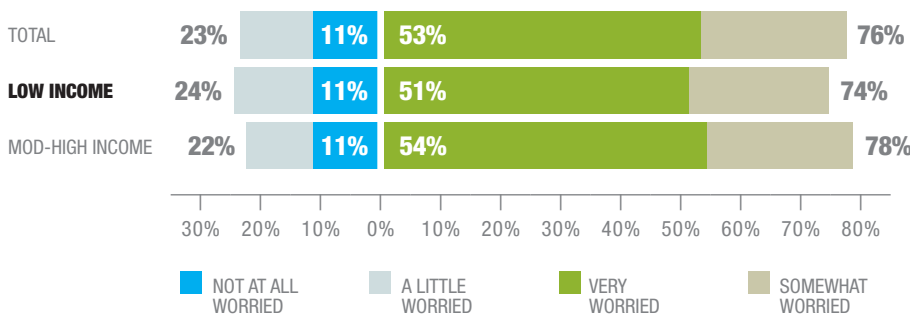
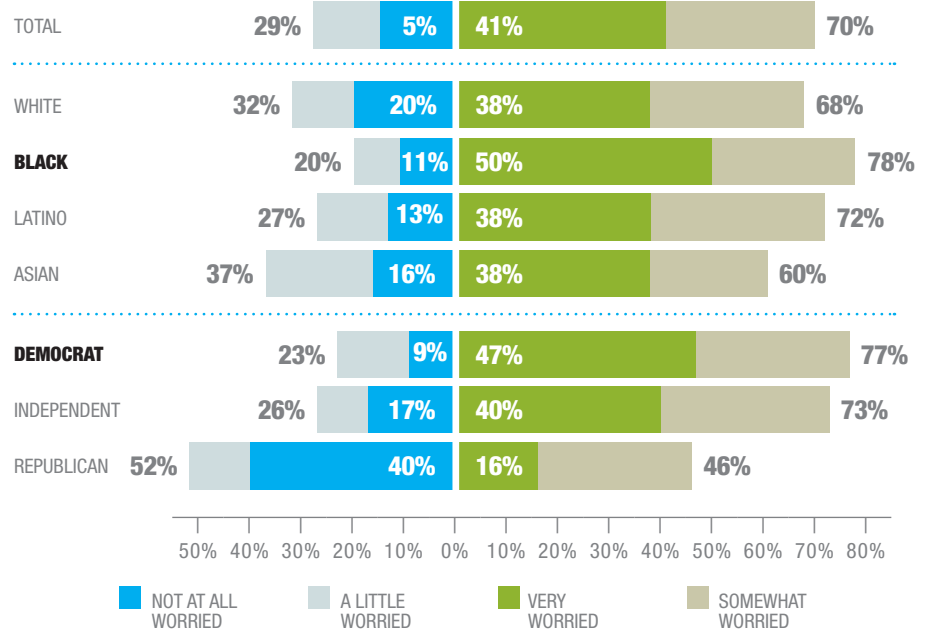


### New Yorkers across income lines are worried about widening inequality in the city, with more than 4 in 10 saying they are very worried.

**Q:** How worried are you about widening inequality between the wealthy and the poor in New York City? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, a little worried, or not at all worried? (Split Sampled Question)

## Half of blacks and nearly half of Democrats are *very* worried about widening inequality.

**Q:** How worried are you about widening inequality between the wealthy and the poor in New York City? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, a little worried, or not at all worried? (Split Sampled Question)

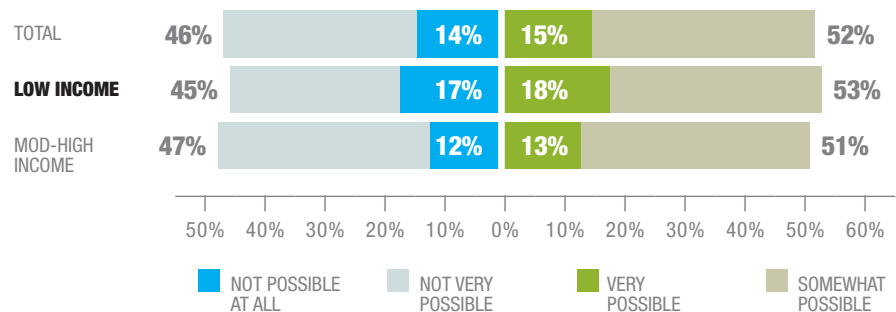


## Three out of four New Yorkers are worried about a disappearing middle class, with over half saying they are *very* worried.

**Q:** How worried are you about a disappearing middle class in New York City? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, a little worried, or not at all worried? (Split Sampled Question)

## Barely half of New Yorkers think it is possible for poor people to make it into the middle class.

**Q:** How possible is it for poor people to make it into the middle class these days, very possible, somewhat possible, not very possible, or not possible at all?



# Finding Two

## ECONOMIC WORRIES AND HARDSHIPS PERSIST AMONG LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS, THREE YEARS INTO THE RECOVERY.

The official word may be that the recession has ended, but more than three years into a limping recovery, low-income New Yorkers do not see it that way. Nearly half (48 percent) of the poor and near poor were concerned that they or someone in their household would be out of work in the coming year, with nearly a third very concerned, compared to 14 percent of moderate- and higher-income New Yorkers who were very concerned they might lose their jobs. Only 16 percent of low-income New Yorkers think the local job situation is starting to look up, a figure little changed from 15 percent a year ago. Moderate- and higher-income New Yorkers are more likely to see an improving jobs picture; 22 percent say it is starting to look up, compared to 13 percent who thought so a year earlier.

The threat of job loss combined with the sense that jobs remain scarce weighs heavily on families with little or no savings. Nearly half of low-income New Yorkers reported virtually nothing—less than \$500—to fall back on if tough times were to hit their families. More than four in ten of the working poor told us that they worry all or most of the time that their incomes will not be enough to pay the bills. And an even greater share of low-income working mothers—55 percent—said they worry all or nearly all the time that their take-home pay will not be sufficient to meet expenses.

When asked what problems they personally worry about the most, low-income New Yorkers most often say health care and prescription drugs (17 percent). The precarious situation of low-wage workers, with little

savings, in jobs that offer no health insurance and no paid sick leave, puts many one illness away from economic disaster.

Close behind health care, the other things that keep low-income New Yorkers up at night are finding or keeping a job (15 percent), schools and college tuition (14 percent) and crime (14 percent). While health also tops the list of worries for moderate- and high-income New Yorkers, retirement security is a close second.

for someone working full-time, year-round, is not enough to put a family of three above the federal poverty threshold of \$17,916. Forty-three percent of full-time workers earning poverty-level wages reported experiencing three or more serious hardships in the past year. Twenty-eight percent fell behind in the rent, nearly one in five went hungry because they couldn't afford to buy food, and almost a third had to cut back on buying clothes and school supplies for their children.

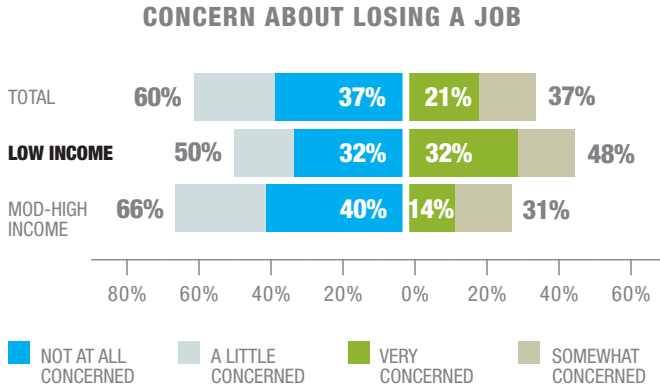
**The precarious situation of low-wage workers, with little savings, in jobs that offer no health insurance and no paid sick leave, puts many one illness away from economic disaster.**

Economic hardships,<sup>4</sup> such as a drop in wages or job loss, rose for low-income New Yorkers following the onset of the recession and have been slow to abate. In addition, over the past two years, low-income New Yorkers reported an increase in health hardships, including not being able to get medical care, not being able to afford to fill a needed prescription, or going without insurance.<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising that with continued high unemployment rates in the city and no increase in the minimum wage since it went up ten cents in 2009, many low-income families are struggling to make the rent, buy groceries, and pay for their medications.

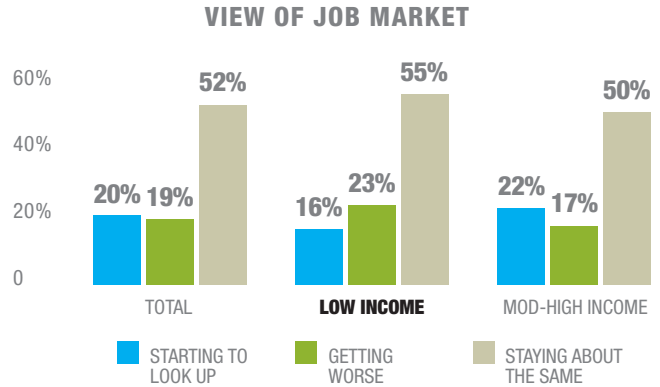
A minimum wage worker in New York is earning a poverty wage: \$7.25 an hour, or about \$15,080

## Half of low-income New Yorkers worry about losing a job in the next year, and just 16 percent say the job market in the city is looking up.

**Q:** Thinking about the next 12 months, how concerned are you that you or someone in your household will be out of a job? (Split Sampled Question)

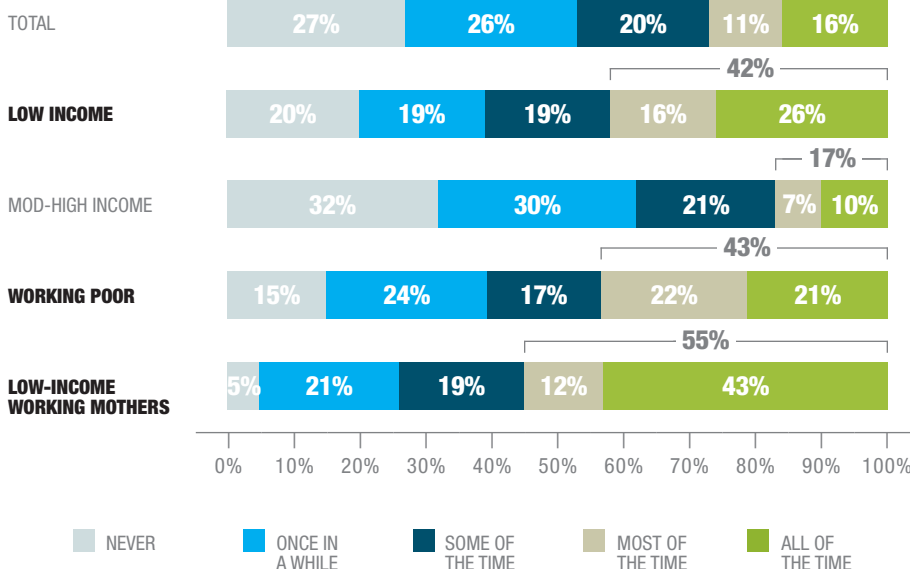
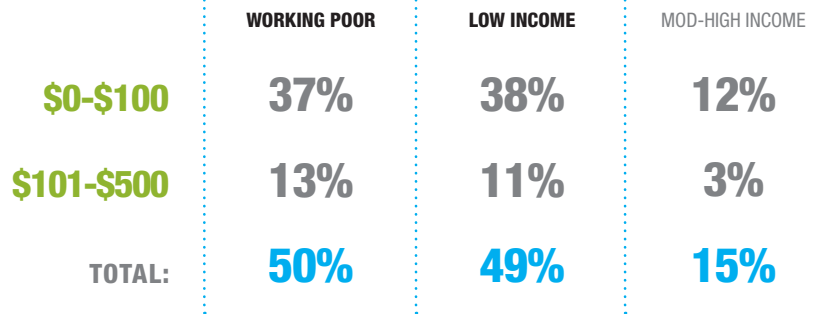


**Q:** Thinking of New York City, do you think the job market is starting to look up, is getting worse, or is staying about the same? (Split Sampled Question)



## Nearly half of low-income New Yorkers have almost no savings to fall back on.

**Q:** If tough times were to hit you and your family, how much money in savings do you currently have to fall back on?



## More than 4 in 10 low-income New Yorkers worry all or most of the time that their family income will not be enough to pay the bills.

**Q:** How often do you worry that your total family income will not be enough to meet your family's expenses and bills – all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, once in a while, or never?

## New Yorkers across incomes most often cited health care and prescription drugs as their top personal worry.

**Q:** Now I'm going to read you some problems you and your family may face. Please listen carefully, then tell me which ONE of these you personally worry the most about.

### TOP PERSONAL WORRIES BY INCOME

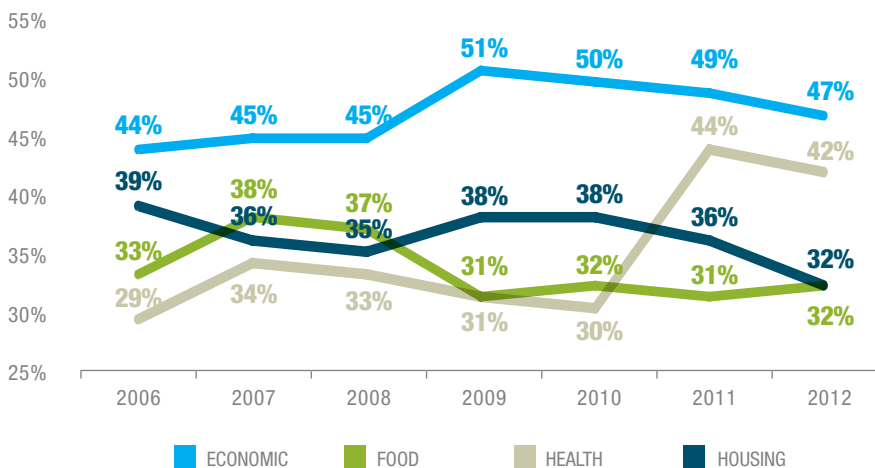
#### LOW INCOME

- 17%** - Health care and prescription drugs
- 15%** - Finding or keeping a job
- 14%** - Schools and college tuition
- 14%** - Crime, drugs, and gangs

#### MOD-HIGH INCOME

- 20%** - Health care and prescription drugs
- 19%** - Retirement security
- 16%** - Schools and college tuition
- 11%** - Crime, drugs, and gangs

### NUMBER OF HARDSHIPS\* OVER TIME AMONG <200% FPL



**Economic hardships have been slow to recede among low-income New Yorkers since the recession; health hardships have risen over the past two years.**

\*Includes only those hardships that were asked about in every year from 2006 through 2012.

## Earning poverty wages—even working full time—does not protect households from experiencing multiple hardships.

### ECONOMIC

**32%** Cut back on buying back-to-school supplies and clothes

**19%** Had hours, wages or tips reduced

### FOOD

**19%** Went hungry because there wasn't enough money to buy food

**15%** Often skipped meals because there wasn't enough money to buy food

### HEALTH

**30%** Had your health care costs increase

**26%** Been without health insurance coverage in the last year

**19%** Not gotten or postponed getting medical care or surgery because of a lack of money or insurance

**19%** Needed to fill a prescription but couldn't because of a lack of money or insurance

**16%** Had your health care coverage reduced

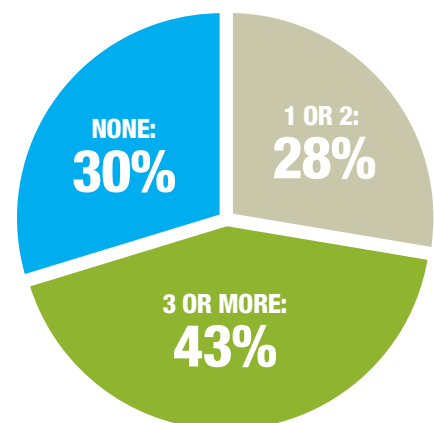
### HOUSING

**28%** Fell behind in rent or mortgage in the last year

**16%** Had either the gas, electricity, or telephone turned off because the bill was not paid

**16%** Moved in with other people

### NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD HARDSHIPS FOR FULL-TIME WORKERS (LIVING BELOW POVERTY)



# Finding Three

**WHILE LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS PUT JOB CREATION AT THE TOP OF THEIR AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MAYOR; THEY, ALONG WITH MODERATE AND HIGHER INCOME RESPONDENTS, DO NOT THINK THE SOLUTION IS MAKING THE CITY MORE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY. RATHER, NEW YORKERS ARE UNITED IN FAVORING POLICIES THAT HELP WORKING PEOPLE GET AHEAD.**

Overall, New Yorkers think this mayoral race should be about four issues: creating jobs, investing more in education, keeping the city safe, and making housing more affordable. While the top cluster of issues is similar for low- and higher-income New Yorkers, the emphasis differs. Job creation is the single most salient issue for those struggling to make ends meet, with 43 percent of low-income New Yorkers mentioning it as one of the top two issues they want mayoral candidates to address. The next three most mentioned issues for low-income New Yorkers are reducing crime, drugs and guns (31 percent), investing more in education (30 percent) and making housing more affordable (26 percent). For moderate- and higher-income New Yorkers, investing more in education and job creation roughly tie as their top two issues, mentioned by about a third of those asked. Despite the controversy and media attention surrounding the city's aggressive "stop and frisk" police tactics, it was not frequently mentioned as a top campaign issue by either low- or higher-income New Yorkers. It may be that people feel that the issue has already gotten enough attention, their views are unsettled, or that it just gets pushed down by more pressing concerns. Making the city more attractive to business comes in dead last, at four percent, for low-income respondents, and is at the bottom of the list, at seven percent for New Yorkers overall.

For some business advocates, who see job creation and pro-business policies as nearly synonymous, these findings

may seem baffling, or worse. In their eyes, the conventional wisdom is that the road to more jobs is paved with lower taxes and fewer regulations on business. New Yorkers, across incomes, do not see it this way. At a time when inadequate consumer demand is the main drag on economic growth, the public is simply not buying the argument that the solution to our economic problems is less

**In this analysis, what drives the shoe store owner to hire the next worker or open the next shop is not a tax break, but a long line of customers at the cash register who can afford to buy shoes.**

regulation and more tax breaks for business. Rather New Yorkers want their next mayor to support policies that help workers and their families get ahead. In this analysis, what drives the shoe store owner to hire the next worker or open the next shop is not a tax break, but a long line of customers at the cash register who can afford to buy shoes.

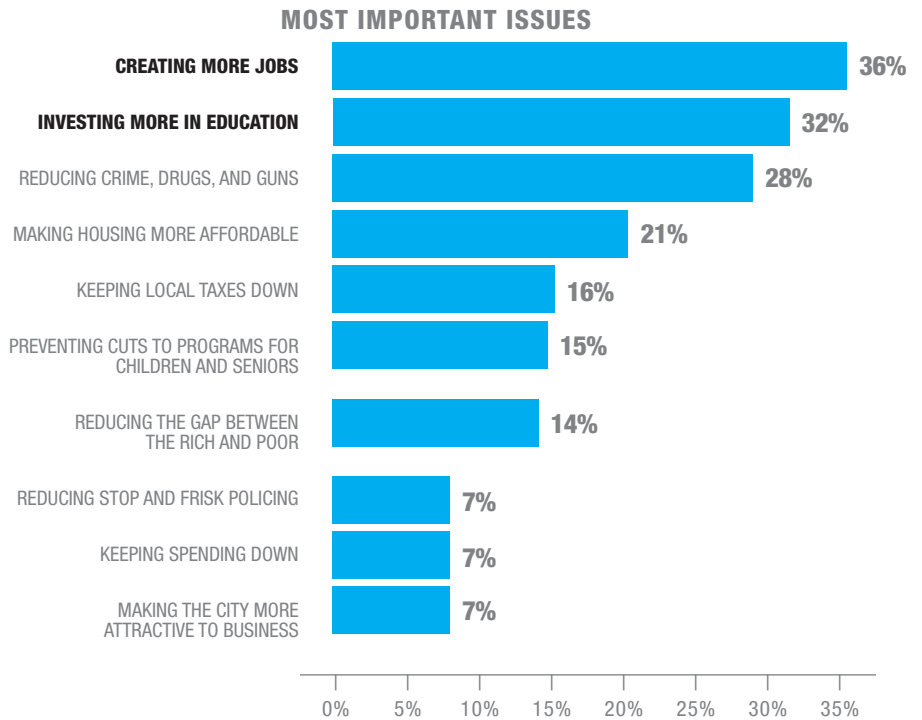
Asked about their preferences for the 2013 election, New Yorkers—across incomes and by more than a three-to-one margin—favor a mayor who supports policies that help working New Yorkers and their families get ahead over a mayor who supports policies that make New York City a good place to do business. When examples of specific policies are

spelled out, New Yorkers prefer worker-friendly over business-friendly policies by a similar wide margin. Seventy-two percent of all New Yorkers agree with the statement, "We need a mayor who supports policies that help working New Yorkers and their families get ahead, like making housing more affordable, protecting schools from cuts, and promoting better benefits for workers." This

is compared to only 20 percent (17 percent of low-income and 23 percent of moderate- and higher-income respondents) who agreed that, "We need a mayor who supports policies that make New York City a good place to do business, like lower taxes and fewer regulations for small businesses." These views confirm polling results from the previous year.

**New Yorkers want the next administration to focus on creating jobs and investing in education.**

**Q:** Next year there will be an election for New York City mayor and other city officials. Thinking about the city elections in 2013, what are the two most important issues that you would like candidates to focus on?



**TOP CLUSTER OF ISSUE CONCERNS BY INCOME**

LOW INCOME	MOD-HIGH INCOME
<b>43%</b> - Creating more jobs	<b>33%</b> - Investing in education
<b>31%</b> - Reducing crime, drugs, and guns	<b>32%</b> - Creating more jobs
<b>30%</b> - Investing in education	<b>27%</b> - Reducing crime, drugs, and guns
<b>26%</b> - Making housing more affordable	<b>18%</b> - Making housing more affordable

**BOTTOM CLUSTER OF ISSUE CONCERNS BY INCOME**

LOW INCOME	MOD-HIGH INCOME
<b>7%</b> - Reducing stop and frisk policing	<b>9%</b> - Making the city more attractive to business
<b>5%</b> - Keeping spending down	<b>8%</b> - Reducing stop and frisk policing
<b>4%</b> - Making the city more attractive to business	<b>8%</b> - Keeping spending down

**Top and bottom tier election issues are similar across income groups, but low-income New Yorkers are more likely to say job creation and affordable housing are important.**

**Q:** Thinking about the city elections in 2013, what are the two most important issues that you would like candidates to focus on?

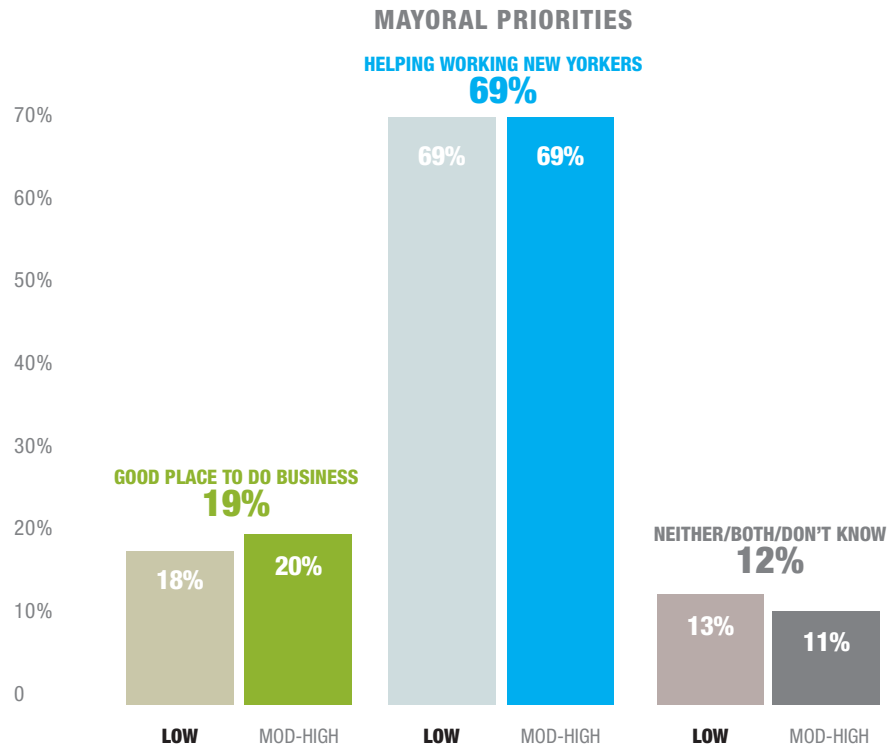
**By more than a three-to-one margin, New Yorkers prefer a mayor who supports policies that help working New Yorkers and their families get ahead over pro-business policies.**

**Q:** And thinking about our next mayor, which of the following two statements do you agree with more?

**Statement A:** We need a mayor who supports policies that make New York City a good place to do business.

**Statement B:** We need a mayor who supports policies that help working New Yorkers and their families get ahead.

(Split Sampled Question)



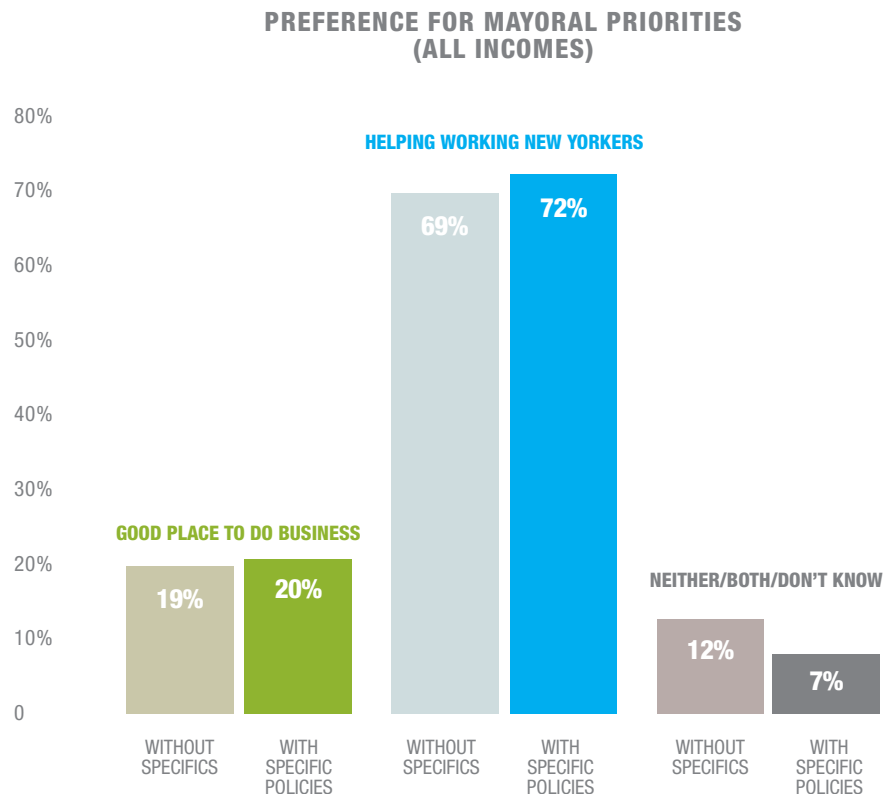
**New Yorkers prefer a mayor who supports worker-friendly policies over a mayor who favors business interests by the same wide margin when specific policies are included.**

**Q:** And thinking about our next mayor, which of the following two statements do you agree with more?

**Statement A:** We need a mayor who supports policies that make New York City a good place to do business like **lower taxes and fewer regulations for small businesses.**

**Statement B:** We need a mayor who supports policies that help working New Yorkers and their families get ahead like **making housing more affordable, protecting schools from cuts, and promoting better benefits for workers.**

(Split Sampled Question)



# Finding Four

**NEW YORKERS BELIEVE THAT THE WAY FOR WORKING FAMILIES TO GET AHEAD IS BY RAISING THE FLOOR FOR LOW-PAYING JOBS, ATTRACTING MORE MIDDLE-SKILLED JOBS TO THE CITY, AND ENSURING THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE EDUCATION THEY NEED TO FILL THOSE BETTER-PAYING JOBS.**

The findings reflect an underlying core value that people working hard should be able to earn a decent living, and certainly at least escape poverty. Measures raising the floor of income and benefits for low-wage workers, including increasing the minimum wage and requiring employers to provide at least a few paid sick days, enjoy nearly universal support from New Yorkers. Nearly nine out of ten respondents of all incomes think it's important for the next mayor to pursue such policies. However, those with low incomes show real intensity on this issue. Eight in ten low-income New Yorkers say policies to raise the floor are very important, in contrast to 62 percent of moderate- and higher-income respondents.

## **INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE**

The New York State legislature has been debating raising the minimum wage since last year. Most recently, Governor Cuomo called for an increase from \$7.25 to \$8.75 in his January 2013 State of the State Address. When asked specifically about the original legislative proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$8.50 with an annual adjustment to keep pace with inflation, New Yorkers are overwhelmingly in support. Ninety percent of low-income respondents and 88 percent of all New Yorkers favor the legislative proposal, with the vast majority strongly in favor. Support cuts across party lines, with two-thirds of Republicans indicating their support, along with the wide majority of Independents and Democrats. Although the state minimum wage

is set by Albany, the mayor can be a powerful voice pushing for passage. Some cities, like San Francisco, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque have gone a step further and set their own city minimum wages above state and federal levels. (See CSS Policy Update, *The Case for Raising New York State's Minimum Wage*, for more on this issue.)

## **PASSING PAID SICK DAYS**

While many of us take for granted being able to take off a day or two from work when illness strikes, this is far from the case for 43 percent of working New Yorkers, including the majority of low-wage workers in industries like restaurants and retail. Sixty-two percent of low-income, working New Yorkers reported that they do not have a single paid sick day to use if they or a family member need to recover at home or seek medical care. That puts workers living paycheck to paycheck in the impossible situation of choosing between the earnings and the job they need and their own or their child's health. The impact this has on public health was brought home this winter during one of the worst flu seasons in years, when many workers were forced to go in sick or send ill children to school, worsening the epidemic and crowding emergency rooms. But lack of paid sick time is a continuing challenge for low-income workers who literally cannot afford to get sick.

Passing a law that would require employers to provide a minimum number of paid sick days for workers

has been hotly debated over the past few years in New York City. As the public has listened to both sides and learned more about the issue, support has grown from 74 to 83 percent in favor in the last year, while the number of undecided has shrunk from 17 percent in 2011 to just 4 percent now. New Yorkers of all income levels favor the idea of passing a law requiring employers to offer workers a minimum number of paid sick days. Support is intense. Nearly two out of three New Yorkers strongly favor passage of the paid sick days bill originally before the City Council that would have required small businesses to provide five paid sick days and larger businesses of 20 or more workers to provide nine days. The bill has since been amended to exclude mom-and-pop shops with fewer than five workers from having to provide paid sick days, but these establishments would not be allowed to fire a worker for being out sick for up to five days. Other amendments reduce the amount of required sick time to just five days regardless of business size, effectively exclude seasonal workers, and allow for voluntary shift changes in lieu of paid time off. All these provisions respond to concerns voiced by those opposed to a law. It is likely that polling on the amended language would boost already high support even further.

Despite support from 37 of 51 Council members—a veto-proof majority—City Council speaker and mayoral contender Christine Quinn has prevented the bill from coming to the floor for a vote. She argues that now is not the time to pass a law that could destroy jobs in a still weak economy. Proponents of the measure, along with leading economists, have countered that there is simply no evidence to support such fears. They point to research on the impact of minimum wage increases and the experience of localities that have already put paid sick days laws in effect to show that such laws have not had any negative impact on employment. Small costs

of the magnitude being considered can easily be absorbed by minor adjustments in operations or prices once a law provides a level playing field so that no business is at a competitive disadvantage. (See CSS Report, *The Impact of Paid Sick Days on Jobs: What's the Real Story?*) It defies logic to think that businesses in the service sector, those most likely to be affected, will abandon their customer base and incur the much greater costs of relocating to avoid paying for a few paid sick days. Moreover, to focus only on the small costs to businesses ignores the substantial savings on the public health side. These include reduction in flu cases and other contagious illnesses, fewer emergency room visits by workers unable to get needed care during normal work hours, decreased workplace accidents, and greater likelihood of workers getting cancer screenings—all of which have been shown to be related to access to paid sick leave.<sup>6</sup>

With Speaker Quinn blocking action on paid sick days and other mayoral candidates urging passage, paid leave has already emerged as an issue in the race for City Hall. We looked at levels of support among critical voting groups. Paid sick days is favored by New Yorkers across party lines, including 87 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of Independents, and 69 percent of Republicans—with support rising over the previous year for every group. Nearly eight in ten New Yorkers say they are more likely to vote for a mayoral candidate who supports paid sick days and the majority would be less likely to vote for someone opposed to passage. Black and Hispanic Democrats, in particular, say they are much more likely to vote for a mayoral candidate who supports paid sick days. (See CSS Policy Update, *Paid Sick Days: Support Grows for a Work Standard Most Low-Wage Earners Still Lack in New York City*, for more on this issue.)

## BROADENING THE JOBS BASE

The Bloomberg administration's actions to reinvent New York City as a high tech center are hugely popular. A global competition won by Cornell University in partnership with Technion-Israel Institute of Technology will bring the city a world-class graduate academic center designed to spawn new inventions and technology companies. Columbia and New York University have since announced plans to expand their engineering schools as well. Nearly nine out of ten of those polled want the next mayor to continue policies that bring high tech jobs to the city.

But equally popular are strategies to attract more middle-skill jobs, which, to date, have not been part of a highly-touted plan. Over the past three decades, changes in technology and globalization have led to an increasing polarization of job opportunities—and wages—in the United States. Job growth has come at both ends of the skill spectrum, among highly-trained workers who use technology to increase their productivity and for low-skilled workers in service jobs that require physical proximity and benefit from increased demand from high-paid workers for services like child care and restaurant meals. Many middle-skill jobs have been automated or shipped overseas to less expensive labor markets. These national trends are even more pronounced in the New York City area. According to an analysis by New York Federal Reserve Bank economists Abel and Deitz,<sup>7</sup> from 1980 to 2010, upper middle-skill jobs, like repairing and installing equipment, construction, and teaching increased by just 38 percent in the New York downstate area compared to 46 percent nationally and lower middle-skill jobs, such as administrative support and machine operators, actually fell by 7 percent downstate compared to a 20 percent increase in the United States.

We found near-universal support for expanding the mayoral agenda to include attracting more middle-skilled jobs that pay decent wages but do not require advanced degrees. Greater investment in infrastructure that would put people to work in jobs such as upgrading subways, public housing, schools, and parks draws wide and strong support. Nine out of ten low-income New Yorkers favor both these latter job creation strategies, which are also supported by similar percentages of moderate- and higher-income respondents. These positions are consistent with our other findings. Most of the recent job growth in New York City has been at the extremes: high-skill and high-paid or low-wage service sector jobs. It stands to reason that New Yorkers worried about widening economic disparities and a disappearing middle class would be likely to favor strategies to bolster the missing middle: jobs that pay good wages and provide basic benefits.

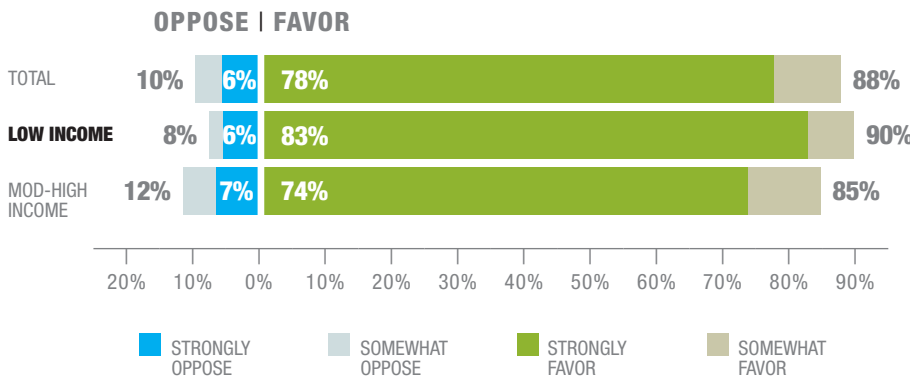
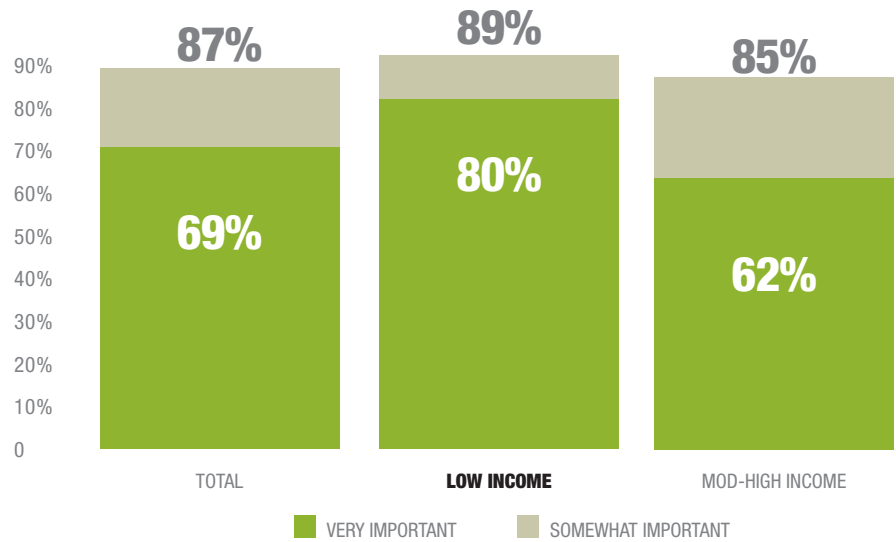
## EDUCATING NEW YORKERS SO THEY CAN FILL HIGH- AND MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS

At a recent mayoral forum, business leaders representing the city's largest corporations described the city as a magnet attracting the best and brightest college graduates from around the country to fill their jobs. Glaring in its omission was any praise for home-grown hires. How do we strengthen the pipeline of well-qualified graduates from New York City public schools to the jobs of the future? In responses to a series of questions, New Yorkers across income lines show strong support for putting more resources into education, especially schools serving poor children, and to doing more to expand access to higher education for groups that are now underrepresented.

**New Yorkers agree that it is important for the next mayor to pursue policies that help low-wage workers get ahead; however, low-income New Yorkers are much more likely to say it is very important.**

**Q:** How important is it to you personally that the next mayor pursue this as part of his or her agenda? Very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

**PROMOTE MEASURES TO HELP LOW-WAGE WORKERS GET AHEAD, LIKE RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE AND REQUIRING PAID SICK DAYS**

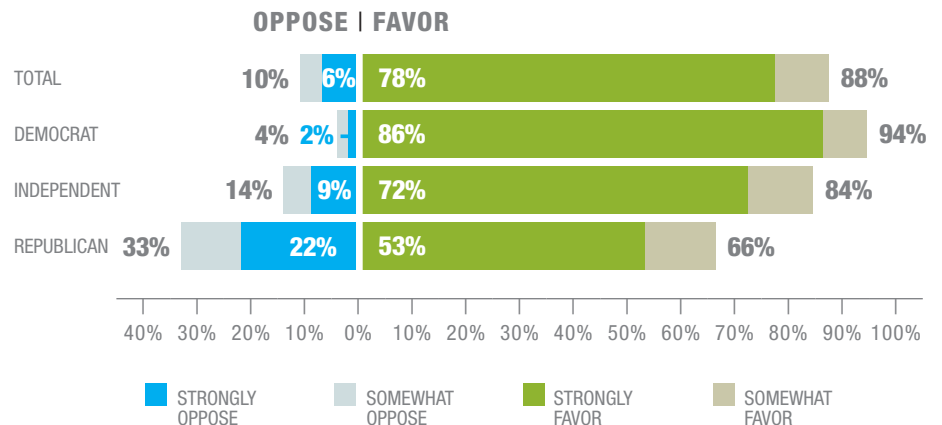


**By wide majorities, New Yorkers of all incomes strongly favor raising the minimum wage and indexing it to keep pace with inflation.**

**Q:** The New York State legislature is considering raising the state minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.50 an hour and then adjusting the minimum wage each year to keep pace with the cost of living. Do you favor or oppose raising the state minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour?

**Support for a minimum wage increase is especially strong among Democrats, but two-thirds of Republicans also favor it.**

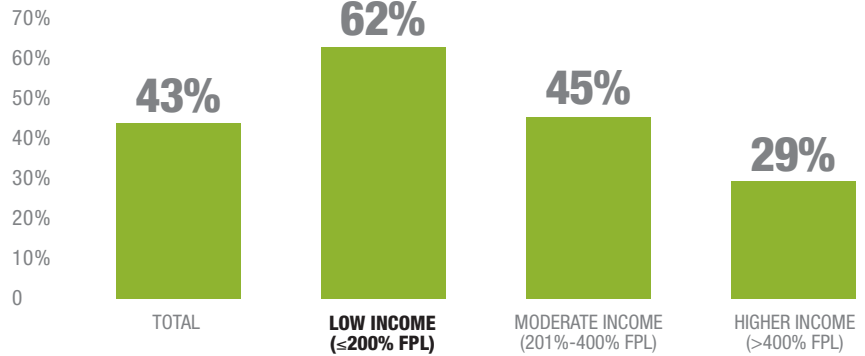
**Q:** The New York State legislature is considering raising the state minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.50 an hour and then adjusting the minimum wage each year to keep pace with the cost of living. Do you favor or oppose raising the state minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour?



**A majority of low-income workers in New York City—62 percent—lack paid sick leave.**

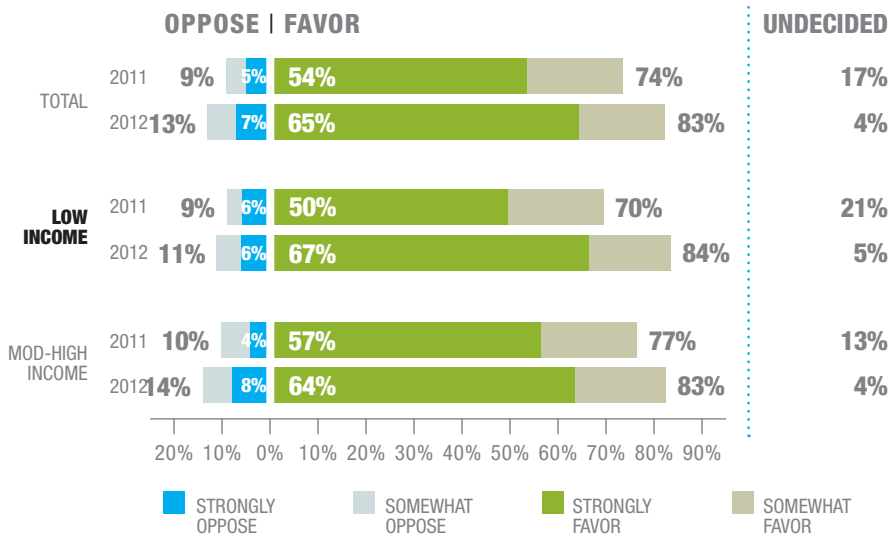
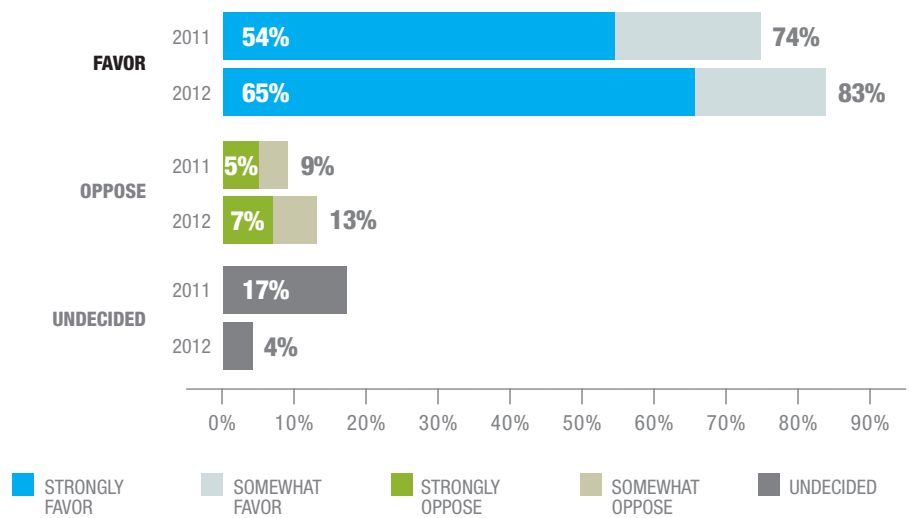
**Q:** Which of the following benefits do you receive from your employer?

PERCENT OF WORKERS SAYING THEY DO NOT RECEIVE PAID SICK LEAVE



**As the public has learned more about the paid sick days issue, fewer are undecided and support has grown.**

**Q:** The New York City Council is considering a proposal that would require employers in New York City to provide workers with at least five paid sick days a year if they are a small business, and nine paid sick days a year if they are a business with 20 or more employees. Would you strongly favor this proposal, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal, or are you undecided?

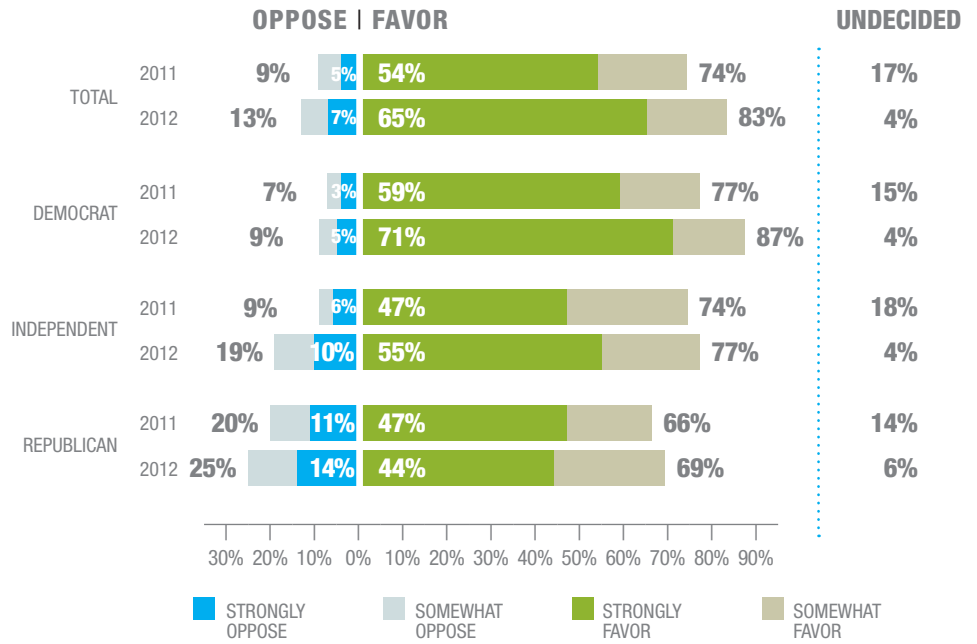


**New Yorkers of all income levels favor passing the paid sick days proposal with real intensity; about two-thirds strongly favor a New York City law.**

**Q:** The New York City Council is considering a proposal that would require employers in New York City to provide workers with at least five paid sick days a year if they are a small business, and nine paid sick days a year if they are a business with 20 or more employees. Would you strongly favor this proposal, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal, or are you undecided?

**Across party lines, New Yorkers favor making paid sick days an employment standard. Over two-thirds of Republicans support paid sick days as do three-quarters of Democrats and Independents.**

**Q:** The New York City Council is considering a proposal that would require employers in New York City to provide workers with at least five paid sick days a year if they are a small business, and nine paid sick days a year if they are a business with 20 or more employees. Would you strongly favor this proposal, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal, or are you undecided?

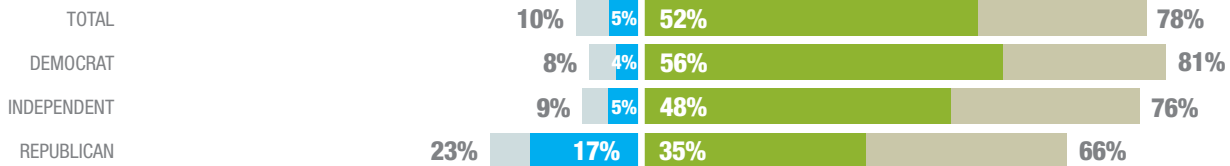


**Nearly 8 in 10 New Yorkers are more likely to vote for a mayoral candidate who supports paid sick days and a majority would punish one opposed to the proposal.**

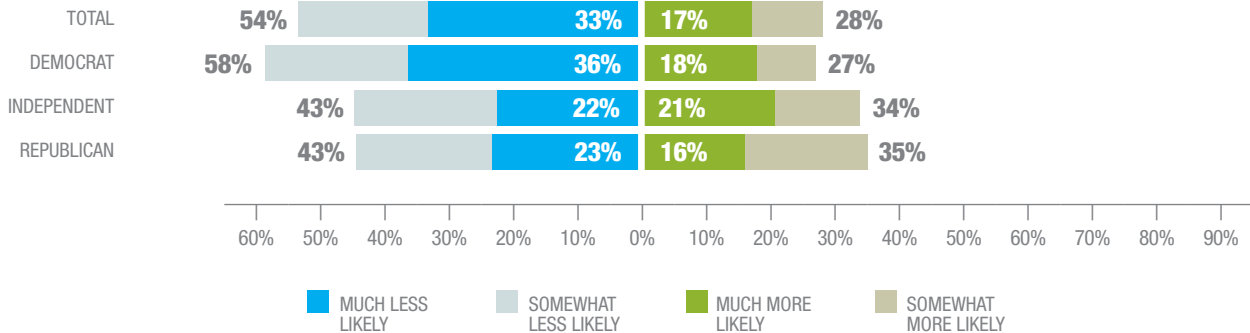
**Q:** Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for mayor who [opposed/ supported] the proposal which requires employers in New York City to provide their workers with paid sick days? (Split Sampled Question)

**LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR | MORE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR**

IF MAYORAL CANDIDATE *SUPPORTED* REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE PAID SICK DAYS

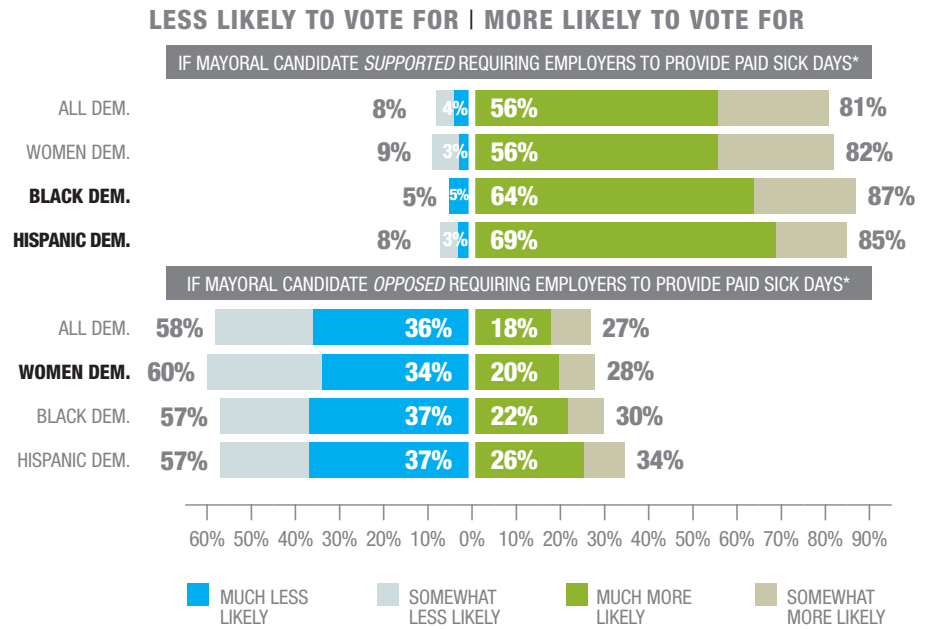


IF MAYORAL CANDIDATE *OPPOSED* REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE PAID SICK DAYS



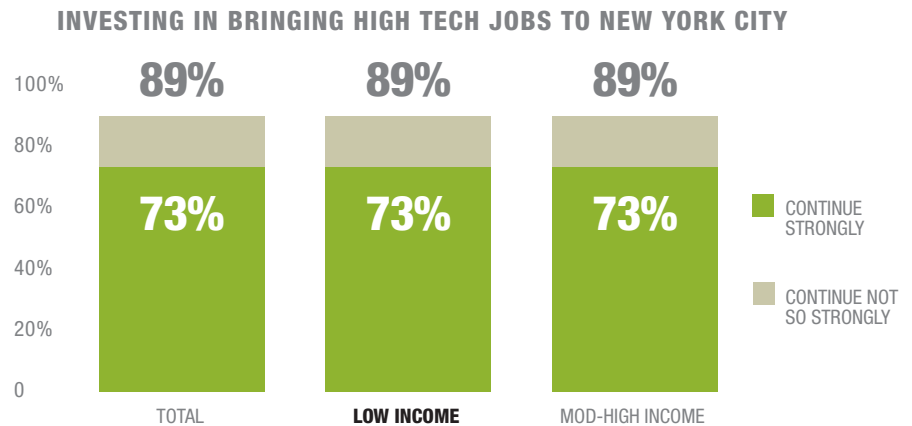
**Black and Hispanic Democrats are particularly likely to vote for a mayoral candidate if he or she supported paid sick days.**

**Q:** Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for mayor who [opposed/supported] the proposal which requires employers in New York City to provide their workers with paid sick days? (Split Sampled Question)



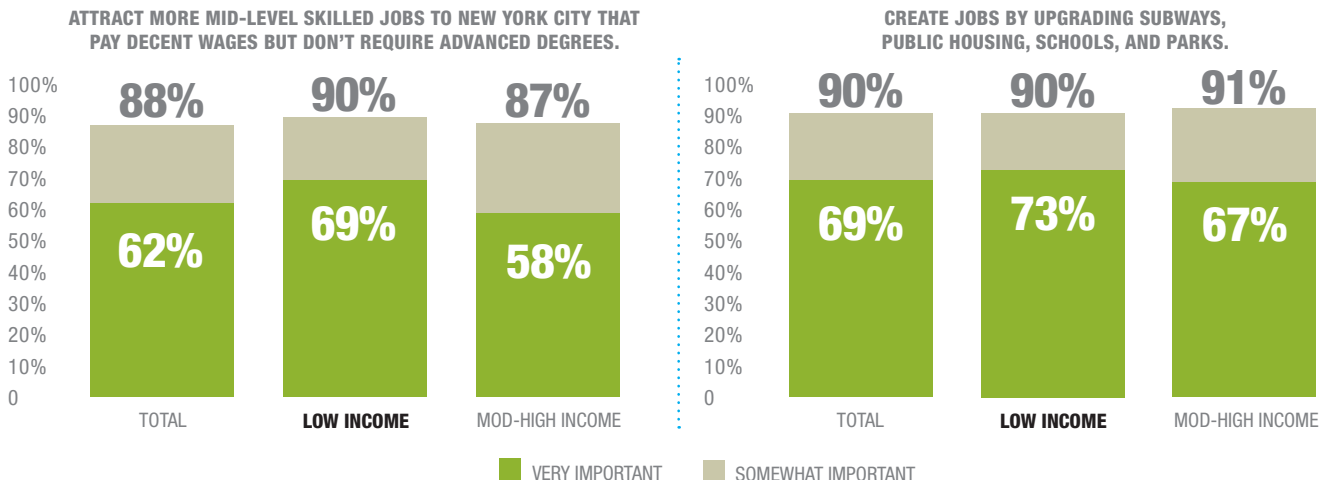
**Nearly 9 in 10 New Yorkers say the next mayor should continue the current administration's policy of bringing high tech jobs to New York City.**

**Q:** Should the next mayor continue or discontinue this policy and do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?



**New Yorkers are united in a near-universal belief that it is important for the next mayor to make policies for creating middle-skill jobs part of his or her agenda.**

**Q:** How important is it to you personally that the next mayor pursue this as part of his or her agenda? Very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?



# Finding Five

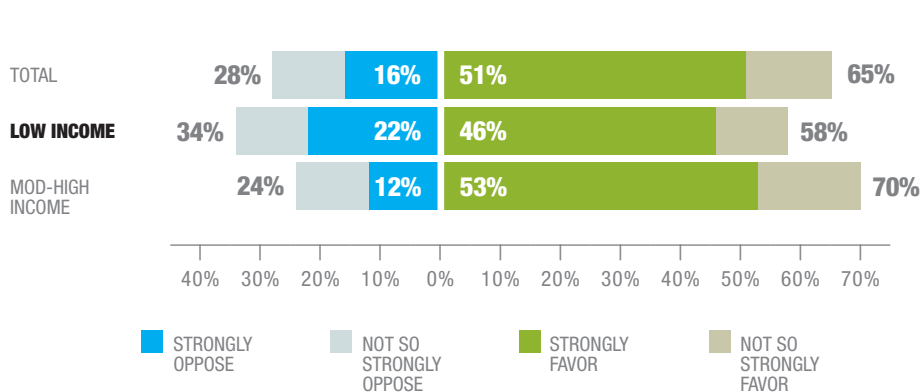
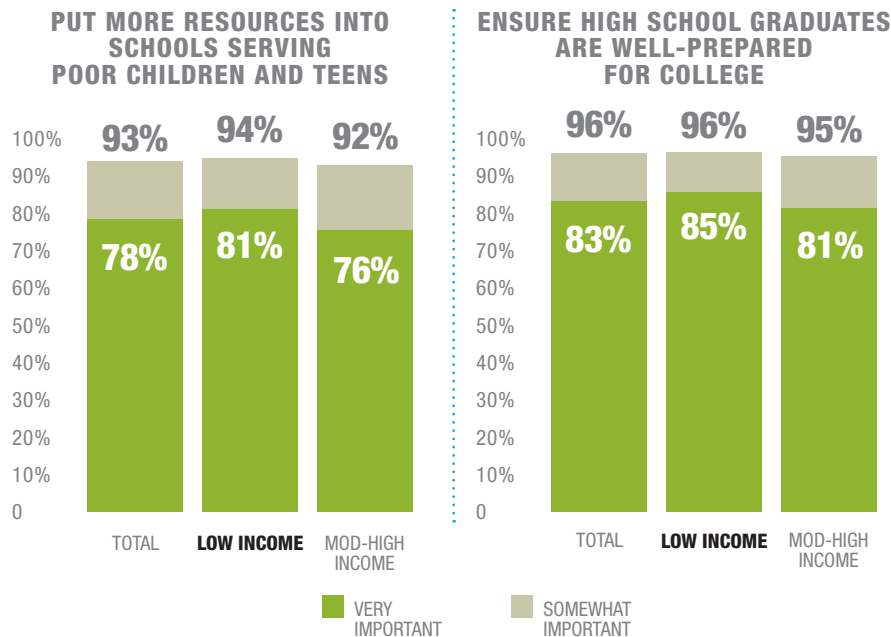
**VIRTUALLY ALL NEW YORKERS THINK THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE NEXT MAYOR TO PUT MORE RESOURCES INTO SCHOOLS SERVING POOR STUDENTS AND ENSURE THAT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GRADUATE WELL-PREPARED FOR COLLEGE.**

Over 90 percent of New Yorkers want the next mayor to invest more resources in schools serving poor children; 81 percent of low-income respondents and 76 percent of those with moderate and higher incomes see this as very important. Similarly high levels of support are seen for bolstering college-readiness, now at dismally low levels. Only 21 percent of New York City students starting high school in 2006 graduated in 2010 with high enough scores on state math and English tests to be deemed ready for higher education or well-paying careers.<sup>8</sup> For both blacks and Hispanics it was only 12 percent. This compares with 40 percent of white graduates and 51 percent of Asian-Americans who achieved the college-readiness standard.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, more than half the college-ready graduates came from just 20 of the 360 high schools that were included in the analysis.<sup>10</sup>

Although a majority of those surveyed favored increasing the age when someone is allowed to drop out of high school, support for this idea was greater among moderate- and higher-income respondents (70 percent in favor) than among low-income respondents (58 percent in favor). However, nearly everyone supports the idea of launching a massive publicly-funded campaign, on the scale of the city's anti-smoking efforts, to encourage young people to finish high school. This effort could build on and go well beyond the Ad Council's current Boost Up campaign, which features a stack of desks 12 Empire State Buildings high, representing the 7,000 high school students who drop out every school day in the United States.

**Virtually all New Yorkers say it is important that the next mayor pursue policies that would put more resources into schools serving poor students and ensure that high school graduates are prepared for college.**

**Q:** How important is it to you personally that the next mayor pursue this as part of his or her agenda? Very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

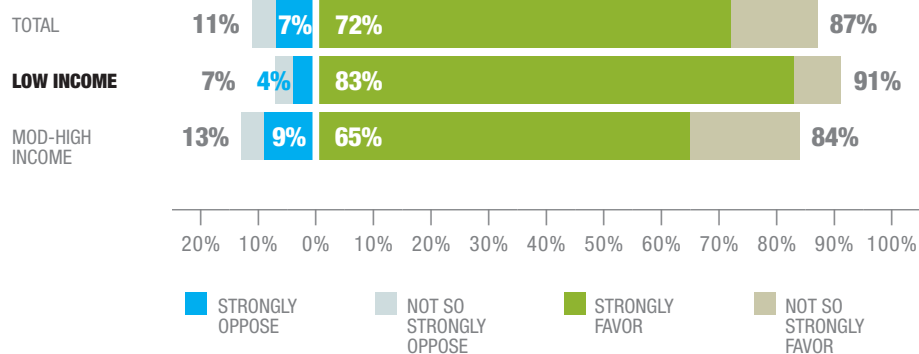


**Nearly two-thirds of New Yorkers favor raising the age when someone is allowed to drop out of high school to 18; support is stronger among higher-income New Yorkers.**

**Q:** Do you favor or oppose raising the age when someone is allowed to drop out of high school to 18? (split sample question)

**There is nearly universal support for creating a massive public campaign to encourage students to finish high school. More than 8 out of 10 low-income New Yorkers strongly favor such a proposal.**

**Q:** Do you favor or oppose creating a publicly-funded campaign, similar in size to the anti-smoking efforts, designed to encourage children to not drop out and finish high school? (split sample question)



# Finding Six

## WHILE NEW YORKERS WANT TO SEE A GREATER INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VIEWS ARE SOMEWHAT MIXED ABOUT CONTINUING SOME OF THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIES OF THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION.

The emphasis on standardized tests has been criticized by some educators and many progressives, but it does have the support of a fairly wide majority of New Yorkers, including two-thirds of low-income parents who strongly favor continuing the policy of focusing on testing in the public schools. New Yorkers, however, are divided over whether or not to continue the policy of closing low-performing schools and opening new schools in shared buildings. Fifty-four percent of low-income parents would continue this policy, while 38 percent think it should be discontinued. This approach clearly remains

controversial, especially compared to the near-universal support for increasing resources to schools serving poor children.

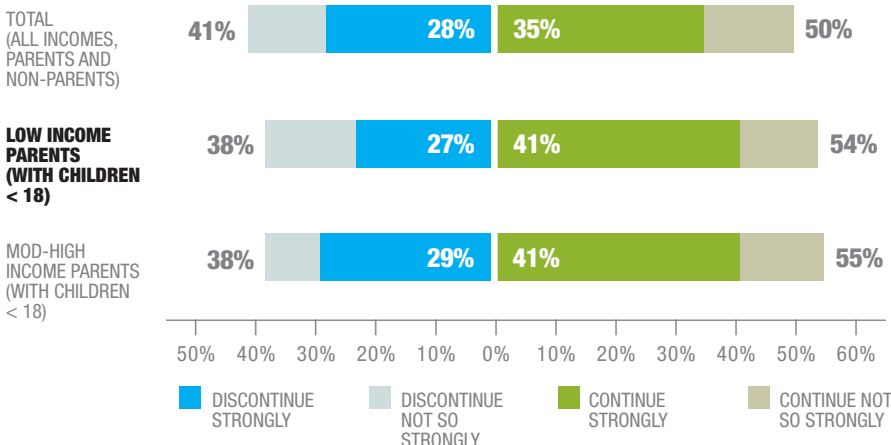
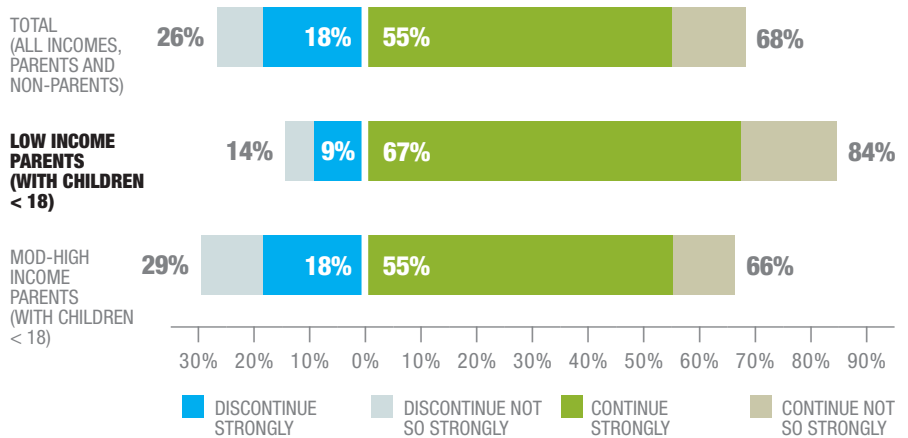
Gifted programs in the public schools have also been controversial, with some arguing access is fairly based on merit and others arguing that the programs, which disproportionately serve white children, reintroduce segregation within schools and don't provide enough opportunities for children of color. Low-income New Yorkers—including 68 percent of low-income parents—feel strongly that the next mayor should expand access to

gifted programs. Support is especially high among blacks and Latinos; 75 percent of low-income blacks and 74 percent of low-income Latinos strongly favor broader access to gifted education.

Expanding and improving high school technical education that prepares students for careers like health occupations or construction draws even greater support than expanding access to gifted programs, with 94 percent of low-income respondents saying it is important for the next mayor to pursue this, including 83 percent of low-income blacks and 82 percent of low-income Hispanics who say it is very important. Clearly there is a strong interest in strengthening the job high schools do preparing young people both for college and for careers beyond the low-paid world of retail and fast food.

### A wide majority of New Yorkers, including over 8 out of 10 low-income parents, favors continuing the policy of focusing on testing in public schools.

**Q:** Should the next mayor continue or discontinue this policy [focusing on testing in public schools] and do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?



### New Yorkers are divided over whether or not to continue the policy of closing low-performing schools and opening new schools in shared buildings. A small majority of low-income parents favor continuing the policy.

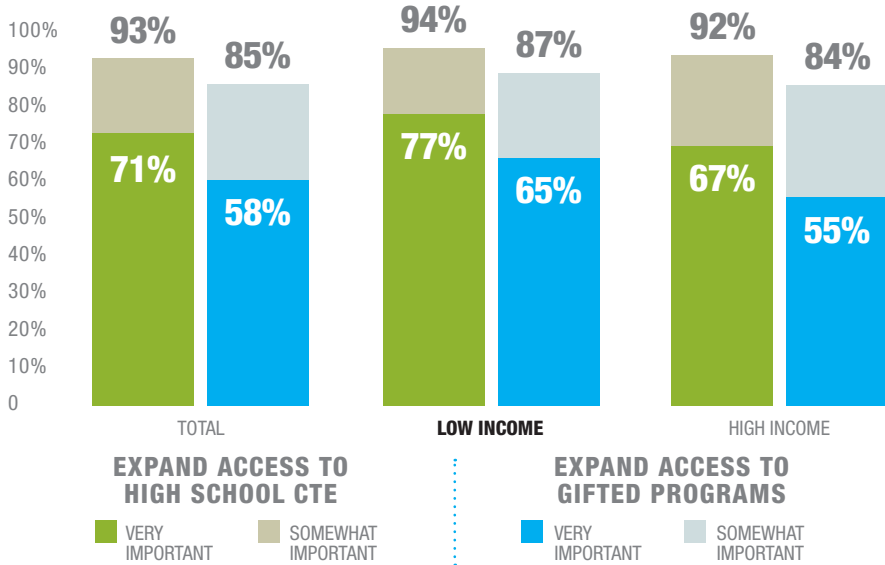
**Q:** Should the next mayor continue or discontinue this policy [closing low-performing schools and opening new schools in shared buildings] and do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?

**Among low-income New Yorkers, blacks and Latinos are much more likely than whites to say it is very important that the next mayor expand access to gifted programs in schools.**

**Q:** How important is it to you personally that the next mayor pursue this [expand access to gifted programs in the schools] as part of his or her agenda? Very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

VERY IMPORTANT    SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

**EXPAND ACCESS TO GIFTED PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS**



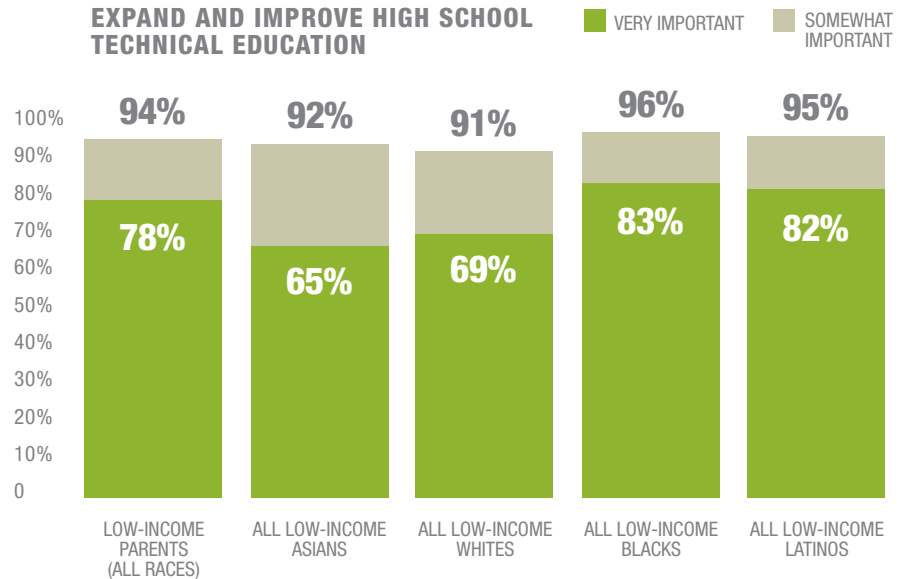
**Expanding and improving high school career and technical education draws even stronger support than expanding access to gifted programs across income levels, with more people saying it is very important.**

**Q:** How important is it to you personally that the next mayor pursue this as part of his or her agenda? Very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

**Low-income New Yorkers, especially blacks and Latinos, and parents with children under 18, say it is very important that the next mayor expand and improve high school career and technical education.**

**Q:** How important is it to you personally that the next mayor pursue this [expand and improve high school technical education that prepares students for careers like health occupations or construction] as part of his or her agenda? Very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

**EXPAND AND IMPROVE HIGH SCHOOL TECHNICAL EDUCATION**



# Finding Seven

**LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS FAVOR POLICIES TO WIDEN ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR GRADUATES OF THE CITY'S PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS. THEY ALSO WANT TO SUBSTANTIALLY EXPAND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT ALL LEVELS FOR THOSE SERVING TIME IN STATE PRISONS.**

## GETTING INTO CUNY

One consequence of the Great Recession that didn't draw much initial notice was the increased demand for CUNY four-year colleges, especially among white students and transfers from private colleges looking for a more affordable alternative. As applications from students with higher SAT scores have increased, the number and proportion of black and Latino students in the entering freshman classes, especially at the most selective CUNY senior colleges, have fallen. (See CSS Report, *Unintended Impacts: Fewer Black and Latino Freshman at CUNY Senior Colleges After the Recession.*) Black and Latino students who make up 72 percent of city public high school classes filled only 28 percent of the freshman seats at CUNY's five top-tier colleges in 2011. As recently as 2008, black and Latino students had made up 36 percent of freshman enrollment at those institutions.<sup>11</sup>

Given these trends, we asked New Yorkers whether or not they favored using affirmative action to achieve racial and ethnic diversity at CUNY, the city's public university system. The policy is supported by 58 percent of moderate- and higher-income New Yorkers. Lower-income whites tend to oppose it (57 percent oppose while 36 percent favor) whereas low-income communities of color favor affirmative action by similar, modest majorities (54 percent of blacks, 53 percent of Latinos, and 53 percent of Asians). However, when presented with the argument that affirmative

action will ensure that the mix of students at the top CUNY four-year colleges resembles the mix of students in the city's public schools, support dramatically increases among low-income respondents to 68 percent overall and rises for all groups. Support among low-income whites rises to a majority of 56 percent, and reaches 74 percent for blacks, 72 percent for Hispanics, and 68 percent for Asians. Some low-income New Yorkers may be wary that "other groups" will be the beneficiaries of affirmative action at their expense. Bringing in the notion that each group will be fairly represented appears to allay those concerns.

## GETTING OUT OF PRISON WITH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

New Yorkers across incomes support the idea of providing significantly more education and training to people serving time in state prisons. Three-quarters of lower-income respondents, as well as eight out of ten moderate- and higher-income respondents support the idea of providing much more GED and vocational training than is currently offered. When college-level education is included, the idea also draws wide support, with three out of four in favor across income groups. It makes sense. New Yorkers know that most of those

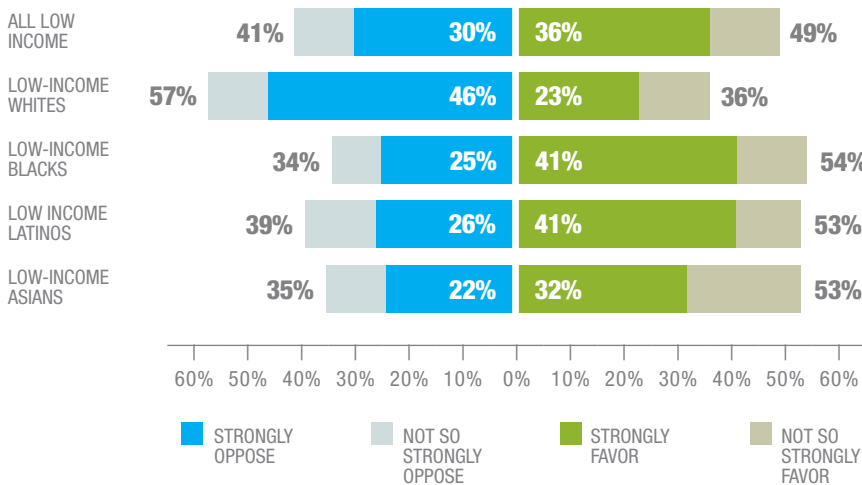
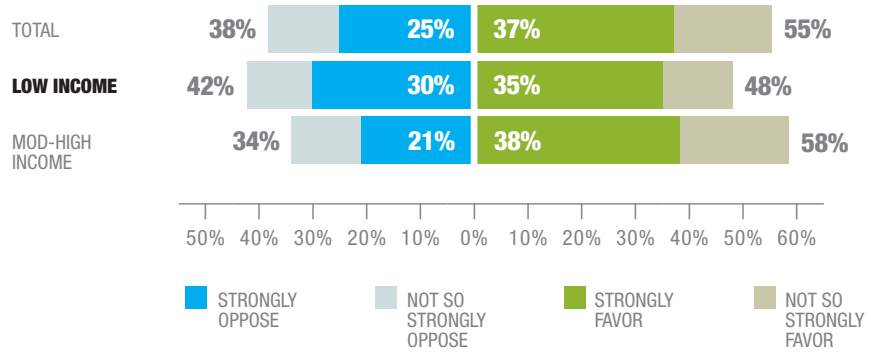
**A far more popular policy, however, is guaranteeing admission to a four-year CUNY college for any New York City public high school students who graduate in the top quarter of their high school class.**

A far more popular policy, however, is guaranteeing admission to a four-year CUNY college for any New York City public high school students who graduate in the top quarter of their high school class. That draws support from 82 percent of moderate- and higher-income New Yorkers and 89 percent of low-income respondents, including 77 percent who strongly support this policy idea.

coming out of prison will be returning to their old neighborhoods, and they want them armed . . . with skills and education.

**New Yorkers overall favor affirmative action at CUNY; low-income New Yorkers, however, are somewhat divided over the issue.**

**Q:** Some universities use affirmative action to achieve racial and ethnic diversity. Do you favor or oppose using affirmative action at CUNY, the city public university system? (split sample question)

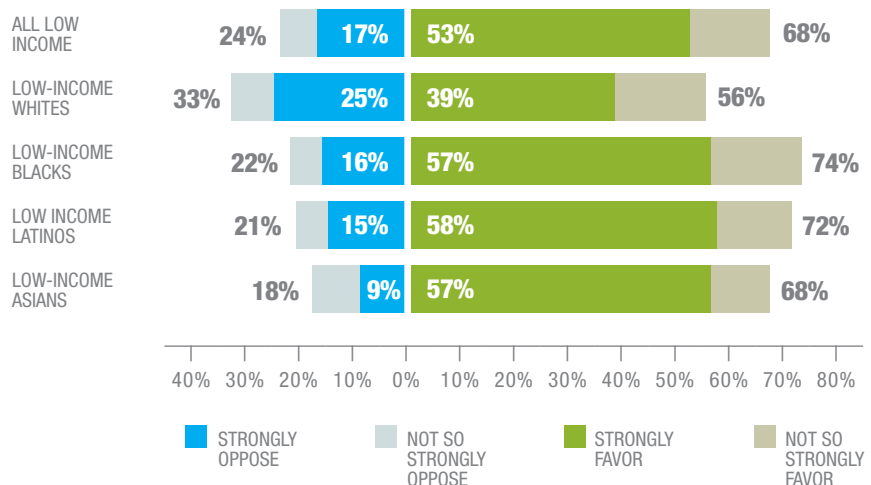


**Low-income whites tend to oppose affirmative action, but low-income blacks, Latinos, and Asians favor it by modest majorities.**

**Q:** Some universities use affirmative action to achieve racial and ethnic diversity. Do you favor or oppose using affirmative action at CUNY, the city public university system? (split sample question)

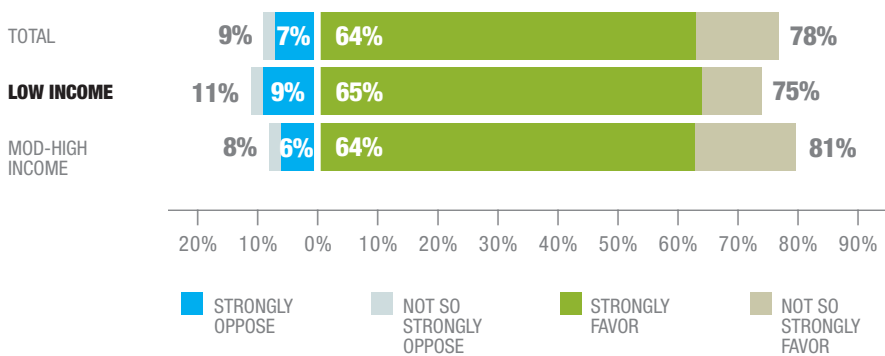
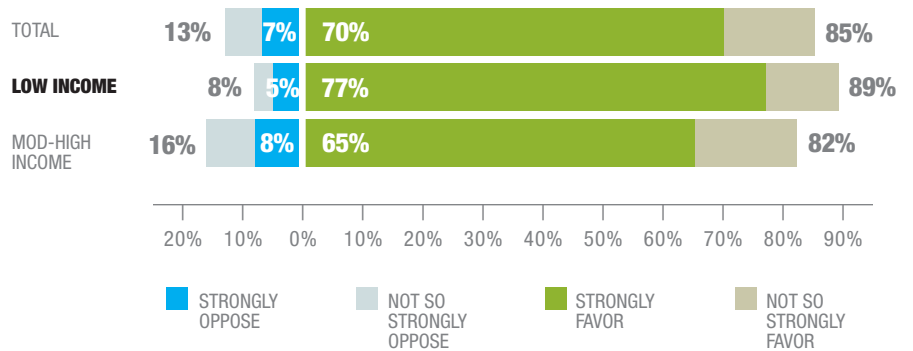
**However, when given the argument that affirmative action will ensure that CUNY's top schools will more closely resemble the mix of students in the city's public schools, support among low-income New Yorkers increases dramatically.**

**Q:** Some universities use affirmative action to achieve racial and ethnic diversity. Do you favor or oppose using affirmative action at CUNY, the city public university system, *to ensure that the mix of students at the top CUNY 4-year colleges resembles the mix of students in the city's public schools?* (split sample question)



**New Yorkers across income levels favor a policy guaranteeing admission to a four-year CUNY college for any NYC public high school students who graduate in the top quarter of their high school class.**

**Q:** Do you favor or oppose a policy where any student who graduates in the top quarter of their New York City public high school class would be guaranteed admission into a 4-year college in the CUNY system, the city's public university?

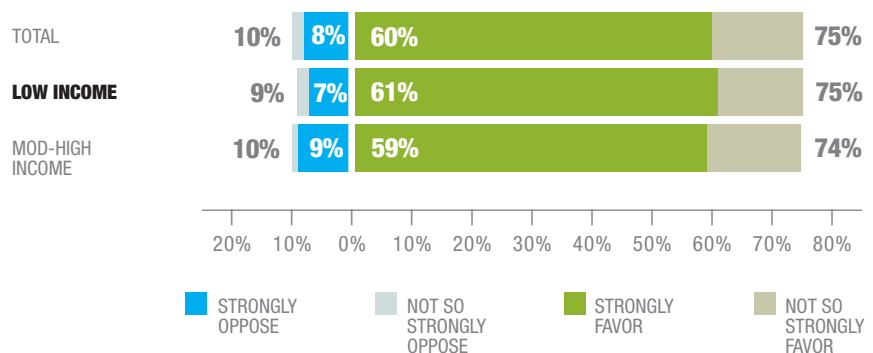


**New Yorkers across income levels favor much more education and training for people serving time in state prisons. Nearly two-thirds of New Yorkers strongly favor such a proposal.**

**Q:** Some people have proposed that people serving time in state prisons should get much more education or training, including GEDs and vocational training than they get currently. Do you favor or oppose more education and training for people serving time in prison, or are you unsure? (split sample question)

**When college-level courses are included, more education and training for people serving time in state prisons continues to draw wide support.**

**Q:** Some people have proposed that people serving time in state prisons should get much more education or training, including GEDs, vocational training, **and college level courses** than they get currently. Do you favor or oppose more education and training for people serving time in prison, or are you unsure? (split sample question)



# Finding Eight

**“REDUCING CRIME, DRUGS, AND GUNS” COMES IN SECOND ON THE LIST OF TOP PRIORITIES FOR LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS. VIEWS ARE DIVIDED ON “STOP AND FRISK” TACTICS, BUT THOSE MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED WANT THIS POLICE PRACTICE REINED IN.**

The city’s leaders are proud to remind us that New York is the safest big city in the nation. Many attribute the rise in tourism, growth in business, and influx of new college graduates to the record drop in crime that has changed perceptions of New York City. The fears most often raised in connection with crime are about going back to the bad old days of murder, crack, graffiti, and squeegee men. Low-income New Yorkers are less likely to see crime as a problem of the past. Public safety remains a large and present concern, as was made clear in their responses to questions about personal worries and the mayoral agenda.

The Bloomberg administration has made fighting crime and tougher gun control, in particular, high priorities. But the sharp increase in aggressive stop and frisk tactics, a police practice of stopping, questioning and searching people for “suspicious” behavior, has come under legal challenge and attack by civil rights groups and community leaders. They charge it amounts to racial profiling that violates the rights of those targeted. In 2011 alone, close to 700,000 stops were made. Eighty-seven percent of those stopped were blacks and Latinos, many of them young men.<sup>12</sup> While the mayor defends the tactic as a deterrent to crime and a way to get illegal guns off the streets, critics point out that 88 percent<sup>13</sup> of all stops did not result in an arrest or summons being given and weapons were recovered in only one percent of all stops. In January 2013, a federal judge ruled that the police department’s practice of routinely stopping people for trespassing outside residential buildings enrolled in the

“Clean Halls Program” in the Bronx was unconstitutional because it failed to meet standards for searches. In response to mounting protests, the police began new training in March, which has led to a 22 percent decline in the number of stops to 533,042 in 2012.<sup>14</sup>

A slim majority of New Yorkers say the next mayor should discontinue aggressive stop and frisk policing, including 55 percent of moderate- and higher-income respondents. The views of low-income New Yorkers, however, are more divided, perhaps because of their degree of concern about crime. A lot depends on who is asked, where they live, and what arguments are presented. When asked whether the next mayor should continue or discontinue aggressive stop and frisk policing, low-income New Yorkers overall were split down the middle, with 46 percent saying continue and 46 percent saying discontinue, and the rest undecided. Opinions differed by race. Low-income whites were more likely to support continuing over discontinuing (51 to 41 percent) and blacks were more likely to hold the opposite view (35 percent continue and 58 percent discontinue). Views of low-income Hispanics were in between, with slightly more for continuing (48 percent) versus 44 percent for discontinuing the tactic.

When presented with arguments for and against stop and frisk, 45 percent of low-income respondents overall agreed with the statement that the practice should be continued because it acts as a deterrent by discouraging people from carrying

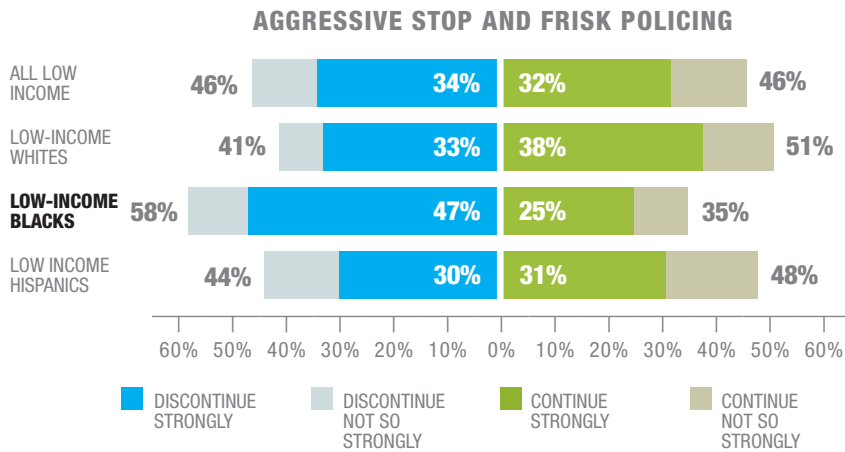
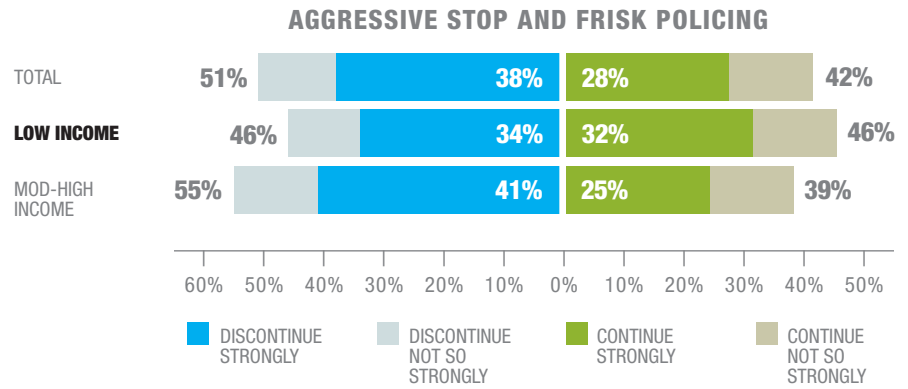
guns, helps reduce crime, and makes neighborhoods safer, as compared to 39 percent who agreed with the view that stop and frisk should be decreased because it mostly targets young black and Hispanic men that are not doing anything illegal. Once again, the opinions of low-income blacks tell a different story. Sixty-one percent of them say this police tactic should be decreased. Low-income Hispanics, the other group most likely to be subject to this police treatment, are divided, with slightly more saying the tactic should be continued (46 percent) compared to 38 percent saying it should be decreased.

Views on this issue were different when respondents were given the argument that stop and frisk does not reduce crime or make neighborhoods safer. Then more low-income New Yorkers (46 percent) thought it should be decreased compared to 38 percent who said it should be continued. When presented with the version of statements making the case that stop and frisk is not effective in reducing crime, over half of both low-income blacks and Hispanics agreed that stop and frisk police tactics should be decreased.

Looking at the findings for all income groups, those who live in neighborhoods where “a lot” of people have been stopped and frisked over the past year are more likely to think that the next mayor should discontinue the policy. Sixty-five percent of them say aggressive stop and frisk policing should be discontinued, including 55 percent who *strongly* feel that way. Those living in neighborhoods where stop and frisk incidents are few are fairly evenly divided over whether or not the practice should be continued.

**A slim majority of New Yorkers say the next mayor should discontinue aggressive stop and frisk policing. Low-income New Yorkers are evenly divided.**

**Q:** Should the next mayor continue or discontinue this policy and do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?



**Among low-income New Yorkers, a slim majority of whites favor continuing stop and frisk policing, while a majority of blacks favor discontinuing the policy.**

**Q:** Should the next mayor continue or discontinue this policy and do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?

**When presented with arguments on both sides of the issue, New Yorkers are divided on whether or not the NYPD should continue stop and frisk. Low-income New Yorkers narrowly favor continuing the policy while moderate- and higher-income residents say it should decrease.**

**Q:** Which statement about NYPD's stop and frisk policy is closer to your view?

**Statement A:** Some/Other people say that it should continue because it acts as a deterrent by discouraging people from carrying guns, helps reduce crime, and makes neighborhoods safer.

**Statement B:** Some/Other people say that it should be decreased because it mostly targets young black and Hispanic men that are not doing anything illegal.

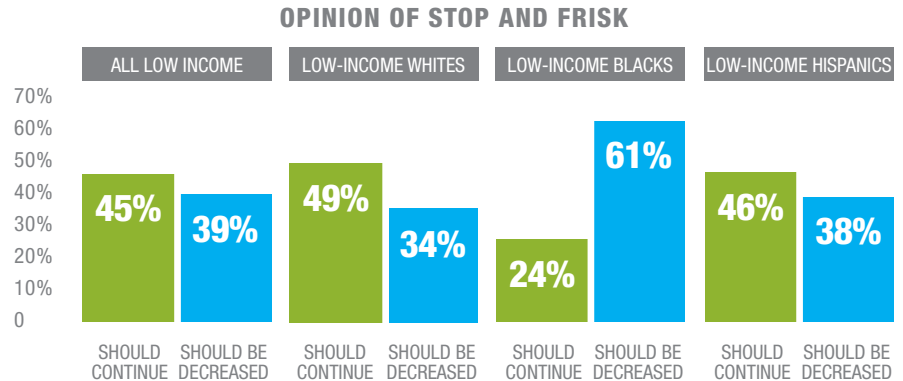


**Among low-income New Yorkers, whites and Hispanics narrowly favor continuing the policy while a wide majority of blacks think the policy should be decreased.**

**Q:** Which statement about NYPD's stop and frisk policy is closer to your view?

**Statement A:** Some/Other people say that it should continue because it acts as a deterrent by discouraging people from carrying guns, helps reduce crime, and makes neighborhoods safer.

**Statement B:** Some/Other people say that it should be decreased because it mostly targets young black and Hispanic men that are not doing anything illegal.



**However, when given the argument that stop and frisk does nothing to reduce crime or make neighborhoods safer, low-income New Yorkers think it should be decreased.**

**Q:** Which statement about NYPD's stop and frisk policy is closer to your view?

**Statement A:** Some/Other people say that it should continue because it acts as a deterrent by discouraging people from carrying guns, helps reduce crime, and makes neighborhoods safer.

**Statement B:** Some/Other people say that it should be decreased because it mostly targets young black and Hispanic men that are not doing anything illegal and **does not reduce crime or make neighborhoods safer.** (Split Sampled Question)

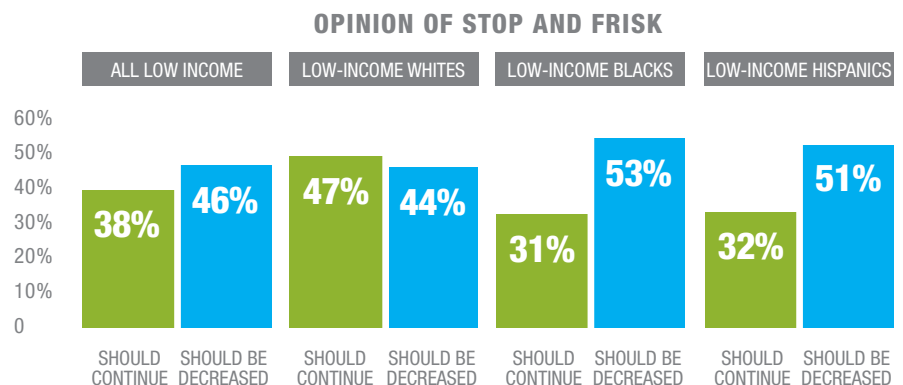


**When given the argument that it does not reduce crime or make neighborhoods safer, a majority of Hispanics think stop and frisk should be decreased, and low-income whites are almost evenly split.**

**Q:** Which statement about NYPD's stop and frisk policy is closer to your view?

**Statement A:** Some/Other people say that it should continue because it acts as a deterrent by discouraging people from carrying guns, helps reduce crime, and makes neighborhoods safer.

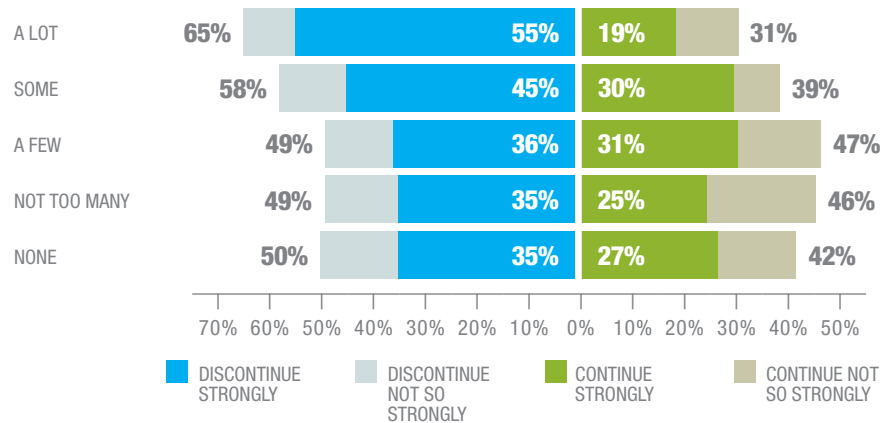
**Statement B:** Some/Other people say that it should be decreased because it mostly targets young black and Hispanic men that are not doing anything illegal and **does not reduce crime or make neighborhoods safer.**



**Those who live in neighborhoods where stop and frisks are common are more likely to want the next mayor to discontinue the policy.**

**Q:** Thinking about your neighborhood, how many people in your neighborhood have been stopped and frisked over the past year, a lot, some, a few, not too many, or none?

**SHOULD THE NEXT MAYOR CONTINUE OR DISCONTINUE AGGRESSIVE STOP AND FRISK POLICING?**



# Finding Nine

**“MAKING HOUSING MORE AFFORDABLE” RANKS IN THE TOP CLUSTER OF ISSUES LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS WANT THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES TO ADDRESS. LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS EXPERIENCE FREQUENT HOUSING HARDSHIPS AND OVERWHELMINGLY THINK THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE NEXT MAYOR PURSUE POLICIES TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AS PART OF HIS OR HER AGENDA.**

## AFFORDABILITY

Nearly half of low-income New Yorkers consider being able to afford the rent, mortgage, or maintenance costs to be a serious problem; three out of ten say it is a very serious problem for them. Affordability trumps other housing problems from repairs to safety among low-income New Yorkers overall. Over one-third of low-income New Yorkers reported at least one housing hardship over the past year. Nearly a quarter fell behind in the rent, 15 percent had the utilities or phone turned off because of unpaid bills, and 12 percent were threatened with foreclosure or eviction.

These findings are not surprising given the high and rising rent burdens—the

portion of household income spent on rent—for low-income households. Most of New York City’s low-income households live in private, unsubsidized rentals. If we exclude those who benefited from Section 8 vouchers that limit their rents to 30 percent of their incomes, the proportion paying at least half their incomes in rent increased from 41 to 49 percent from 2005 to 2011. Eighty percent of the poor now pay half or more of their income for rent. That leaves them, on average, with a meager \$4.40 a day per household member for everything else: food, clothing, MetroCards, and other necessities.<sup>15</sup> Shelters are overflowing with a record number of 48,694 homeless, including 20,000 children.<sup>16</sup> Growing numbers are now

the “working homeless”; the head of the city’s Department of Homeless Services, Seth Diamond, has testified that about a quarter of homeless families have earnings.

New Yorkers, at every income level, agree on the importance of increasing the availability of affordable housing, but low-income New Yorkers express greater intensity on this subject. Eighty-five percent of moderate- and higher-income respondents think it is important for the next mayor to increase affordable housing, with 64 percent saying it is very important. Over nine out of ten low-income New Yorkers think it is important that increasing affordable housing be on the next mayor’s agenda, and eight out of ten think it is very important.

## NEW YORK’S PUBLIC HOUSING

Unlike public housing elsewhere in the nation’s largest cities, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) units remain an extremely large and critically important part of the city’s rental stock, housing over 400,000 New Yorkers in 334 developments throughout the five boroughs. NYCHA brings in over a billion dollars in annual federal housing subsidies to the city; but federal

operating support has not kept pace with rising costs of an aging stock in a high-cost city. Moreover, about \$100 million is siphoned off the top each year and diverted to other city agencies under past agreements.<sup>17</sup> Maintenance and management troubles plaguing NYCHA have received a lot of recent media attention.

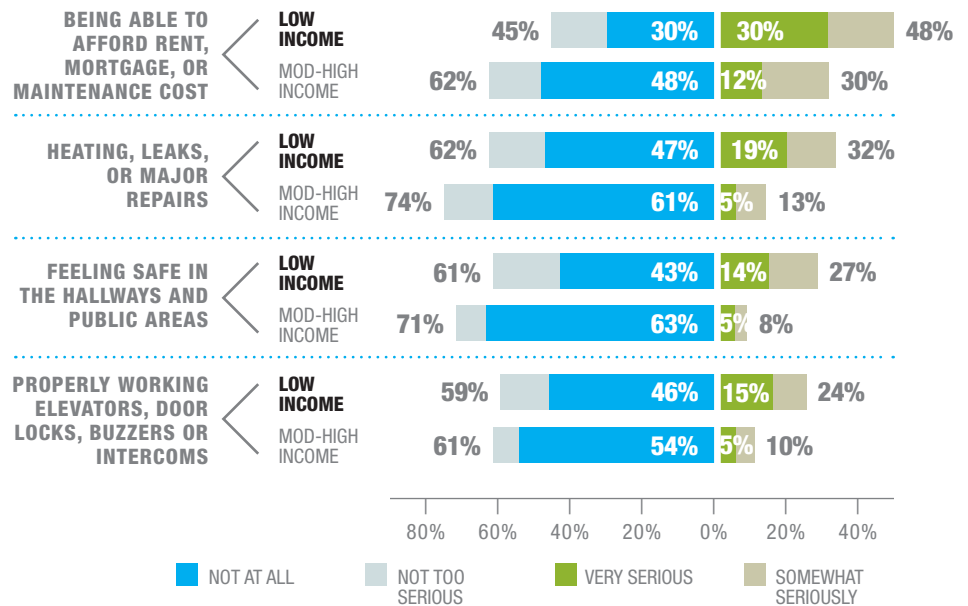
In comparison to low-income New Yorkers overall, NYCHA residents do

have far more complaints about their housing. Half or nearly half say they have serious problems with properly working elevators, door locks, buzzers or intercoms; major repairs like heating and leaks; and feeling safe in the hallways and public areas. A third or more say maintenance is a very serious problem. Among low-income New Yorkers in non-subsidized rentals, 29 percent say major repairs are a serious problem, and 21 percent report serious problems with working

elevators and entry safety. Despite the fact that rents are kept at 30 percent of income for those living in public housing, paying even that amount is hard for many poor NYCHA residents because their incomes are so low. Thirty-six percent of poor families living in public housing say meeting the rent is a very serious problem, on par with 35 percent of poor families living in non-subsidized rentals who cite affordability as a very serious problem.

**Nearly half of low-income New Yorkers consider being able to afford rent, mortgage, or maintenance costs to be a serious problem, with 3 out of 10 saying it is a very serious problem.**

**Q:** And thinking more about your housing, please tell me for each of the following if they are a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, not too serious a problem, or not a problem at all where you live.



LOW	MOD-HIGH	TYPE OF HARDSHIP
23%	8%	FELL BEHIND IN RENT OR MORTGAGE IN THE LAST YEAR
15%	5%	HAD EITHER THE GAS, ELECTRICITY, OR TELEPHONE TURNED OFF BECAUSE THE BILL WAS NOT PAID
12%	5%	MOVED IN WITH OTHER PEOPLE EVEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
12%	3%	BEEN THREATENED WITH FORECLOSURE OR EVICTION
<b>34%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>AT LEAST ONE HOUSING HARDSHIP</b>

PUBLIC/SUBSIDIZED HOUSING	OTHER RENTAL/OWN	TYPE OF HARDSHIP
25%	12%	FELL BEHIND IN RENT OR MORTGAGE IN THE LAST YEAR
19%	8%	HAD EITHER THE GAS, ELECTRICITY, OR TELEPHONE TURNED OFF BECAUSE THE BILL WAS NOT PAID
16%	6%	MOVED IN WITH OTHER PEOPLE EVEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
16%	5%	BEEN THREATENED WITH FORECLOSURE OR EVICTION
<b>41%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>AT LEAST ONE HOUSING HARDSHIP</b>

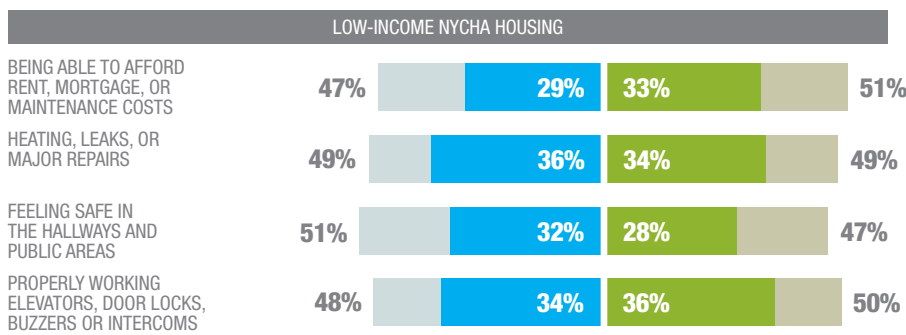
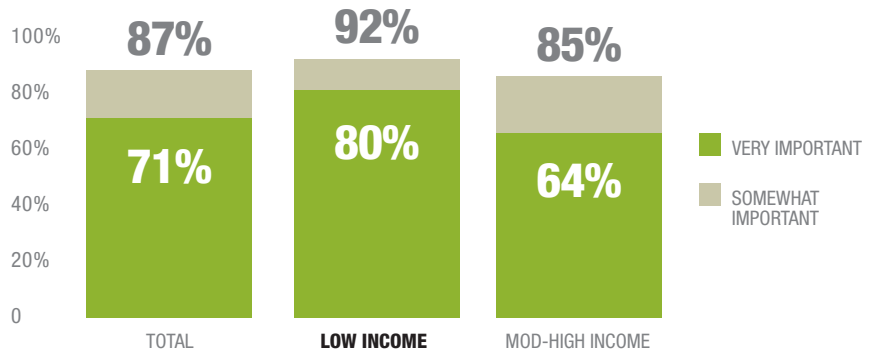
**Over one-third of low-income New Yorkers, and 4 out of 10 New Yorkers living in public or other subsidized housing, experienced at least one housing hardship.**

**Q:** In the last year have you or any member of your household [experienced these problems]?

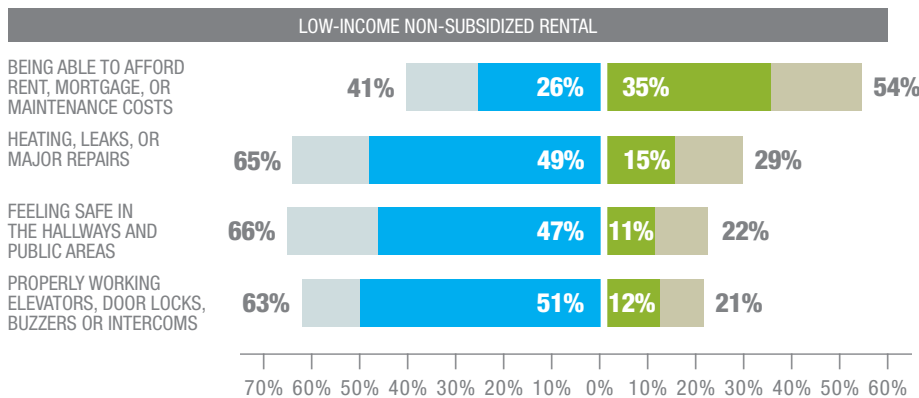
**New Yorkers across income levels agree on the importance of increasing the availability of affordable housing, but low-income New Yorkers are much more likely to say it is very important.**

**Q:** How important is it to you personally that the next mayor pursue this as part of his or her agenda? Very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

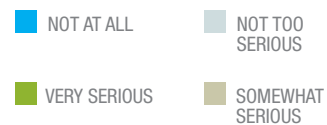
**INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**



**Low-income New Yorkers living in public housing are much more likely to report serious maintenance and security problems than low-income New Yorkers in non-subsidized rentals, whose main complaint is affordability.**

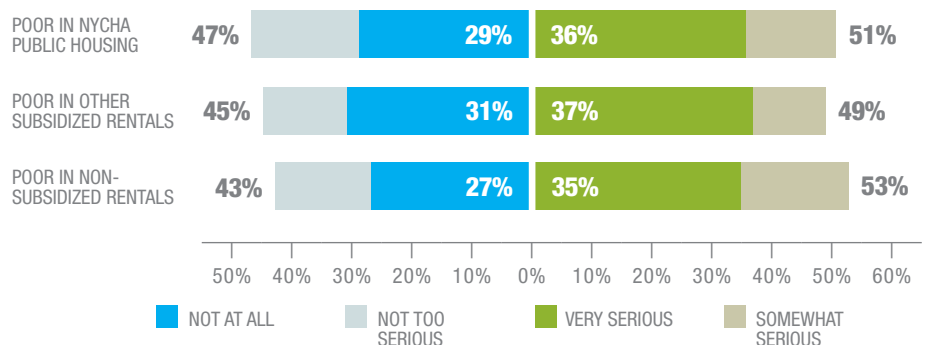


**Q:** And thinking more about your housing, please tell me for each of the following if they are a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, not too serious a problem, or not a problem at all where you live.



**Even though their rents are capped at 30 percent of their incomes, poor NYCHA residents still find affording the rent to be a serious problem.**

**Q:** Is the following a serious problem, somewhat serious problem, not too serious problem, or not a problem at all where you live... being able to afford the rent?



# Summary

**This election year, New Yorkers don't buy the argument put forward by the business elite that putting their interests first is the key to a prosperous city.**

Wall Street and the big banks, bailed out by the taxpayers, are making money again. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of low-wage workers have gotten nothing since a dime increase in the minimum wage in 2009 and face wealthy corporate and political leaders, who have ample leave themselves, but would deny those at the bottom the right to earn even five paid sick days a year.

New Yorkers are worried about the disappearing middle class and overwhelmingly want their next mayor to focus on helping working families get ahead.

Views on the issues that those on the right and progressives alike might think the mayoral election will turn on—like police tactics and education policies—turn out to be more nuanced and complicated than either side might acknowledge.

But there is strong support from low-income New Yorkers—and broad agreement from those on the other end of the income spectrum—for a set of policies that everyone sees moving the city in a positive direction of growing and shared prosperity. This agenda includes:

- **Raising the floor for low-wage workers** with a higher minimum wage, indexed to inflation and requiring employers to provide at least five paid sick days to their workers.

- **Pursuing strategies to bring more middle-skilled jobs to the city** to broaden the economic and tax base and complement initiatives that promise to make the city a world class center for high tech industries.

- **Investing in infrastructure on a massive scale** to address the needs made even more apparent by Superstorm Sandy. Now is exactly the right moment, with a slack labor market, historically low interest rates and post-Sandy rebuilding funds, to upgrade our power and transportation systems to withstand extreme weather events and meet 21st century needs. We can speed up subway construction, provide all our students with safe and welcoming classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art labs, replant thousands of trees, and dream up the next High Line. We found almost universal support for creating jobs by upgrading subways, public housing, schools, and parks. These projects can provide good-paying jobs to unemployed skilled tradespeople and create new apprenticeships for low-income New Yorkers and young people with few prospects. The city can implement local hiring requirements that offer a path to the middle class.

- **Filling the pipeline to better-paying jobs with well-educated graduates.** New Yorkers want to put more resources into schools serving our poorest students so they can receive a first-rate education and the support they need to learn. We found a broad consensus for expanding access to gifted programs, ramping up the quality and quantity of career and technical education, and opening our public senior colleges more widely to groups who have been left out, particularly low-income blacks and Latinos. And New Yorkers want to put at least as much effort into persuading young people about the

importance of finishing high school as we do persuading them not to smoke.

- **Making a new commitment to affordable housing** on the scale needed so those who work here can afford to live here. While expanding housing programs targeted to the middle class could ease supply with some trickle-down for the poor, real help will require deeper construction and operating subsidies to make housing affordable to families in the lowest third of the income distribution.

These are the issues the 2013 elections should be about.

## Endnotes

1. A total of 184,046 families were on NYCHA's waiting list for public housing as of 4/23/2012. Annual turnover is 3.3%.
2. 2011 ACS data show 136,143 people ages 16 to 24 in New York City, are so-called "disconnected youth" who are neither in school nor working. Of those, 57,654 have no high school diploma and another 78,489 have only a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma.
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, preliminary seasonally adjusted number of unemployed for December 2012.
4. Four economic hardships are tracked annually: whether, in the past year, you or a member of your household has had to cut back on buying school supplies and clothing because of lack of money; had your hours, wages or tips reduced; lost your job; or received assistance from charity.
5. Three health-related hardships have been consistently tracked: whether, in the past year, you or a member of your household has not gotten or postponed getting medical care or surgery because of a lack of money or insurance; needed to fill a prescription but couldn't because of a lack of money or insurance; or been without health insurance coverage.
6. See Rankin, Reiss and Pietrangolo, "Sick in the City: What the Lack of Paid Leave Means for Working New Yorkers," CSS Policy Brief, Oct. 2009, pp. 10-13 for data showing that workers without paid sick days are more likely to use the emergency room (controlling for health insurance coverage and income), send a sick child to school, and go to work sick. See Kumar, et. al., "The Impact of Workplace Policies and Other Social Factors on Self-Reported Influenza-Like Illness Incidence During the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic," *Am. J of Public Health*, published online ahead of print, Nov. 17, 2011; "Paid Sick Days in New York City Would Lower Health Care Costs by Reducing Unnecessary Emergency Department Visits," Institute for Women's Policy Research Fact Sheet, Feb. 2012; Asfaw, et.al., "Paid Sick Leave and Nonfatal Occupational Injuries," *Am. J of Public Health*, Sept. 2012.; and Peipins, et.al., "The Lack of Paid Sick Leave as a Barrier to Cancer Screening and Medical Care-Seeking: Results from the National Health Interview Survey," *BMC Public Health*, July 2012.
7. Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz, "Job Polarization and Rising Inequality in the Nation and the New York-Northern New Jersey Region," *Current Issues in Economics and Finance*, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Volume 18, Number 7, 2012.
8. "College-Readiness Low Among State Graduates, Data Show," by Sharon Otterman, *New York Times*, June 14, 2011.
9. Based on CSS analysis of data from the New York State Education Department Information and Reporting Services website.
10. "College-Readiness Low Among State Graduates, Data Show," by Sharon Otterman, *New York Times*, June 14, 2011.
11. 2008 figures are from Treschan and Mehrotra, "Unintended Impacts: Fewer Black and Latino Freshman at CUNY Senior Colleges after the Recession," *CSS Report*, May 2012, p.2 and 2011 figures are from Pérez-Pena, Richard. "At CUNY, Stricter Admissions Bring an Ethnic Shift." *New York Times*, May 22, 2012.
12. Stop-and-frisk data cited is compiled by the New York Civil Liberties Union based on NYPD reports. There were 685,724 stops in 2011. Accessed online 2/7/2013 at <http://www.nyclu.org/content/stop-and-frisk-data>.
13. Center for Constitutional Rights provided this figure accessed 1/27/2013 at <http://ccrjustice.org/stopandfrisk>.
14. The 2012 figure, released by the NYPD February 8, 2013, was reported in the *New York Times* in "Number of Frisks Fell in '12, Police Data Show," by Wendy Ruderman, Feb. 9, 2013.
15. Victor Bach and Tom Waters, "Making the Rent: Before and After the Recession," *CSS Policy Brief*, June 2012, p.3.
16. NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYCSStat, shelter census reports, October 2012, cited by [www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/pages/basic-facts-about-homelessness-new-york](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/pages/basic-facts-about-homelessness-new-york), accessed 1/27/2013.
17. According to a position paper from the NYC Alliance to Preserve Public Housing on the NYCHA FY2013 Annual Plan, \$75 million a year is paid to the NYPD for "special services" under a 1995 Memorandum of Understanding and \$23 million annually goes to PILOT payments (in lieu of property taxes).

# How the Survey Was Conducted

The Community Service Society designed this survey in collaboration with Lake Research Partners, who administered the survey by phone using professional interviewers. The survey was conducted from July 8th to July 25th, 2012.

The survey reached a total of 1,468 New York City residents, age 18 or older, divided into two samples:

- 935 low-income residents (up to 200% of federal poverty standards, or FPL) comprise the first sample:
  - ▶ 499 poor respondents, from households earning at or below 100% FPL
  - ▶ 436 near-poor respondents, from households earning 101% - 200% FPL
- 533 moderate- and higher-income residents (above 200% FPL) comprise the second sample:
  - ▶ 328 moderate-income respondents, from households earning 201% - 400% FPL
  - ▶ 205 higher-income respondents, from households earning above 400% FPL.
- This year's survey also included an oversample of 250 cell phone interviews among adult residents at up to 400% FPL.

Telephone numbers for the low-income sample were drawn using random digit dial (RDD) among exchanges in census tracts with an average annual income of no more than \$40,000. Telephone numbers for the higher-income sample were drawn using RDD in exchanges in the remaining census tracts. The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, region, immigration status, education and race in order to ensure that it accurately reflects the demographic configuration of these populations. In the combined totals respondents in the low-income sample were weighted down to reflect their actual proportion among all residents. Also, in the combined totals, the sample is weighted by telephone status. Interviews were conducted in English, Spanish and Chinese.

In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those which would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. The margin of error for the low-income component is +/- 3.2%. The margin of error for the higher-income component is +/-4.2%. The margin of error for the entire survey is +/- 3.7%.

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