

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NEW YORK CITY'S HUMAN CAPITAL**

### **Conference Series is a First Step in Developing a Blueprint for the Unemployed and Underemployed**

Nearly 400 advocates, government officials, and philanthropists turned out for the second in a two-part series on how New York City will ensure that all workers have the education and skills they need to access family sustaining jobs and to help employers retain their economic preeminence. The half-day conference, entitled, **“New York’s Human Capital - Ensuring Shared Prosperity and Economic Competitiveness,”** explored the gaps and options for public assistance recipients, the formerly incarcerated, immigrants and young adults.

The conference was co-hosted by the Community Service Society of New York (CSS) and the Center for an Urban Future (CUF). The first session was held on July 23 and focused on the evolving skills needs of the city’s business community. The goal of the second conference was to examine how policymakers can address the challenges of individuals with limited education and work experience; discuss job opportunities for New Yorkers; and identify workforce development strategies that will benefit these populations.

“We must have an educated, trained and healthy workforce in order to connect New Yorkers to jobs and fuel economic growth in New York and move the city forward as a global leader,” said David R. Jones, president and CEO of the Community Service Society of New York. “We cannot move forward if we do not address the extraordinary barriers that are impediments to progress for the formerly incarcerated, immigrants, disconnected youth, public assistance recipients, and others. New York’s political leaders must exercise political will, and advocates for social change must hold politicians and each other accountable to move people from poverty to self-sufficiency and a degree of prosperity.”

Andy Breslau, Executive Director of City Futures, said, ““If we don’t face up to the difficult human capital challenges with the same spirit of resolve and innovation that city officials have recently approached our physical infrastructure, New York risks condemning itself to a future that fails its citizens and drives away private sector investment. In our first conference, we heard over and over again from employers about the globally competitive

environment New Yorkers are in and the need to improve the skills of our labor force. From greater preparation in math and science to improved interpersonal and soft skills, it is clear that a comprehensive view—one that includes everything from skilled immigrants with visa issues, the needs of the recently incarcerated to the retention of our highest skilled executives and PHD’s—is essential.”

Today CSS and CUF focused on current skills gaps facing the city’s working age population. Within the context of four populations – public assistance recipients, the formerly incarcerated, young adults, and immigrants – the conference will address such questions as:

- 1) *How do we ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the labor market and educational opportunities needed to enter the middle class--and create shared prosperity in our city,*
- 2) *How can policymakers address the challenges faced by individuals with limited education and work experience,*
- 3) *What good job opportunities exist for these New Yorkers,*
- 4) *What workforce development strategies have proven effective for these populations,*
- 5) *How has the downturn affected these populations,*
- 6) *Should subsidized employment opportunities be considered as a way to integrate more New Yorkers into the workforce?*

Panelists presenting today included Lisette Nieves of Year Up, Elizabeth Yeampierre of UPROSE, Saru Jayaraman, ROC-United, Glenn Martin of the Fortune Society, Mindy Tarlow of the Center for Employment Opportunities and Chung-Wha Hong of the New York Immigration Coalitions. Respondents are Ester R. Fuchs of Columbia University and Philip Weinberg, NYC Workforce Investment Board. (Bios are enclosed in press packet).

CUF and CSS will follow up on the conference series with the release of a Human Capital Blueprint outlining actions New York City can take to ensure that employers have the skilled workers they need, and job seekers have the education, training, and work experience required to fuel economic growth and shared prosperity in the years ahead. The blueprint will be available online at [www.cssny.org](http://www.cssny.org) and [www.nycfuture.org](http://www.nycfuture.org).

*This conference is the second of a two-part series examining the human capital needs of New York City, made possible through generous support from the Ira W. DeCamp Foundation and the Altman Foundation.*

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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.*

*The Center for an Urban Future is a New York City-based think tank dedicated to independent, fact-based research about critical issues affecting New York’s future, including economic development, workforce development, higher education and the arts.*