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MAYOR BLOOMBERG, DEPUTY MAYOR GIBBS AND CENTER FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WHITE COMMEMORATE CEO'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

National Experts Convene to Discuss the Center's Impact on Poverty

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Linda I. Gibbs and Center for Economic Opportunity Executive Director Veronica M. White today marked the Center for Economic Opportunity's five-year anniversary with a forum convening national experts, government representatives, nonprofit leaders and philanthropic partners to discuss the Center for Economic Opportunity's progress and reflect on the ways that its work can inform local and national policy. The Mayor also accepted the Innovations in American Government Award from Anthony Saich, Director of the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. CEO received the award for its pioneering approach to anti-poverty programs and for sharing its innovative best practices. The forum was held at Gracie Mansion.

"Five years ago, we established the Center for Economic Opportunity to pioneer bold, ambitious anti-poverty initiatives," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The goal was to create a vehicle that could think outside the box, take risks and find strategies that make a difference – and that's exactly what the Center has done."

"CEO's origin lies in Mayor Bloomberg's 2006 Poverty Commission, which brought new ideas and energy to the fight against poverty," said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs. "CEO now collaborates with 28 City agencies, 200 community-based providers, and dozens of experts, and has brought many new partners into the effort to figure out what works to reduce poverty."

"Over the last five years, we have helped thousands of New Yorkers through our pilot programs," said Veronica M. White, Executive Director of the Center for Economic Opportunity. "By testing our pilots, we're building a body of evidence about what works in the fight against poverty and using that evidence to improve programs, attract new investment and shape policy – an effective approach that has changed the way the City thinks about new programs."

Speakers at the CEO Fifth Anniversary Forum included members of the Mayor's 2006 Commission for Economic Opportunity – co-chairs Geoffrey Canada, President and CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone, and Richard Parsons, Chairman of Citigroup – as well as David Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society. Other speakers included Gordon Berlin, President, MDRC;

(more)

Richard Buery, President and CEO, Children's Aid Society; Sheldon Danziger, Henry J. Meyer Distinguished University Professor of Public Policy at the University of Michigan; Mark Greenberg, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Health and Human Services; Ron Haskins, Senior Fellow, Economic Studies, Brookings Institution; Jodie Levin-Epstein, Deputy Director, CLASP; Patrick McCarthy, President and CEO, The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Chief Executive Officer, San Antonio Housing Authority; John Rhea, Chair, New York City Housing Authority, and Vincent Schiraldi, Commissioner, New York City Department of Probation.

The City of New York is working to expand CEO's most successful anti-poverty programs, including many of its asset development, workforce, youth education and employment, conditional cash transfer and research initiatives to help more low-income residents. CEO programs are being expanded in several ways:

Replicating Promising Programs through the Federal Social Innovation Fund. CEO, in partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and MDRC, a non-profit social research and policy organization, received a five-year federal Social Innovation Fund grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to expand five of CEO's most promising programs in New York and cities across the country. This \$85 million public-private partnership is supporting the replication of five City of New York programs in New York and seven partner cities, including Cleveland, OH; Kansas City, MO; Memphis, TN; Newark, NJ; San Antonio, TX; Tulsa, OK; and Youngstown, OH.

Growing CUNY ASAP. CUNY ASAP reduces barriers to graduation by offering participating community college students small, cohort-based classes and one-on-one involvement with proactive academic and career advisors, as well as financial support for tuition, books, and transportation. This successful program doubled the three-year graduation rate of participating students, and nearly tripled the two-year graduation rate. The City is expanding this program at all six of the City's community colleges. CUNY ASAP also serves as a model for the City's newest community college, scheduled to open later this year.

Increasing Services through the Young Men's Initiative. CEO has provided education and employment services to thousands of disconnected youth who are out school, out of work, and who lack a high school diploma or GED. Several CEO programs, including its Young Adult Internship, Young Adult Literacy and Jobs-Plus programs will be expanded through this new mayoral initiative. CEO is overseeing the implementation and evaluation of all programs within the Young Men's Initiative.

Expanding Expansion of Financial Empowerment Centers Citywide. In 2006, CEO launched its first program, the Office of Financial Empowerment. Since that time, the Office of Financial Empowerment has launched a number of new programs designed to educate, empower, and protect low-income New Yorkers. One program, the neighborhood-based Financial Empowerment Centers, offers free, one-on-one, professional financial counseling. Since 2009, this program has served over 13,500 New Yorkers. In 2012, this program will be expanded to neighborhoods citywide.

About CEO

CEO was established by Mayor Bloomberg in 2006 as a bold new effort to identify effective anti-poverty strategies. CEO has launched over 50 new anti-poverty programs, policy proposals, and research projects that represent nationwide best practices and cutting-edge ideas. Programs are supported by an annual, \$100 million public-private "Innovation Fund" which requires that programs demonstrate success

in order to receive continued funding. CEO manages programs in partnership with City agencies and relies on nationally-recognized, independent evaluation firms, as well as a small in-house evaluation team, to measure program impacts and provide objective evidence of success to inform decisions of whether to continue, expand, or eliminate programs.

About the Innovations in American Government Award

The Innovations in American Government Awards, given by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, was created by the Ford Foundation in 1985 in response to widespread pessimism and distrust in government's effectiveness. Since its inception, nearly 500 government innovations across all jurisdiction levels have been recognized and have collectively received more than \$20 million in grants to support dissemination efforts. CEO received the award for its pioneering approach to anti-poverty programs and for sharing its innovative best practices.

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