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MAYOR BLOOMBERG, DEPUTY MAYOR GIBBS AND CENTER FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WHITE ANNOUNCE CITY RECEIVES HARVARD UNIVERSITY'S INNOVATIONS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AWARD

Center for Economic Opportunity Recognized for Innovative Anti-Poverty Work and Hailed as a National Model; Cities across the Country Aim to Replicate New York City Successes

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Linda I. Gibbs and Center for Economic Opportunity Executive (CEO) Director Veronica M. White announced today that New York City's Center for Economic Opportunity is the winner of the Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government Innovations in American Government Award. CEO received the award for its pioneering approach to anti-poverty programs and for sharing its innovative best practices. CEO's successful programs are currently being expanded in New York City and replicated in cities across the country through the federal Social Innovation Fund.

"Time and again New York City eagerly tries bold ideas even at the risk of failure – and that is precisely why our programs are so successful," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Not only are our results improving the lives of New Yorkers, but as the award from Harvard shows, we are a leading model for the nation in the charge to find solutions to deeply entrenched challenges."

"Fresh approaches to the persistence of poverty are needed and cities are on the front line of this battle," said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "CEO has taken on the challenge with an unparalleled rigor – in creativity and accomplishment. We are honored by this recognition and are committed to joining with other leaders across the country to replicate the success and develop new approaches."

"Over the last five years, CEO has become a catalyst for innovative and effective programs," said CEO Executive Director Veronica M. White. "The result has been dozens of new initiatives that have helped thousands of New Yorkers. These achievements have helped CEO to attract new public and private resources to help expand successful programs in New York and cities across the country."

"Not only is CEO innovative, it demonstrates a sea change in how a city can unite the disparate interests of previously siloed agencies, funders, providers, and businesses to tackle poverty, one of our nation's major growing challenges," said Anthony Saich, director of the Ash

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Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. "In honoring CEO's efforts as an Innovations in American Government Award winner, it is our hope that jurisdictions across the country can benefit from best practices in financial literacy, education, and employment training to move the working poor up the economic ladder."

"Poverty is one of the great challenges of our time, and as someone who has spent a great deal of time working on the issues of poverty and social policy, I'm particularly pleased that CEO was selected as our Innovations in American Government Award winner," said David Ellwood, dean of Harvard Kennedy School. "The award honors the Center's efforts to support the working poor at key transition points—starting school, entering the workforce, and having a family."

The Center for Economic Opportunity, in partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and MDRC, a non-profit social research and policy organization, recently received a five-year federal Social Innovation Fund grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to expand some 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 – Jobs-Plus, Family Rewards, Project Rise, SaveUSA, and WorkAdvance – in New York and seven partner cities: Cleveland, OH; Kansas City, MO; Memphis, TN; Newark, NJ; San Antonio, TX; Tulsa, OK; and Youngstown, OH.

Programs based on successful New York City pilots include:

SaveUSA, based on New York City's SaveNYC, is a matched savings initiative offering low-income tax filers the opportunity to save a portion of their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and receive a 50 percent match if they continue to save for one year. During the three-year SaveNYC pilot, approximately 80 percent of New York City participants successfully saved for a full year, many for the first time. Mayor Bloomberg recently announced that in the first year of SaveUSA, participants in New York and three other cities opened more than 1,600 SaveUSA accounts with close to \$1 million in savings.

Jobs-Plus, based on the success of New York City's first Jobs-Plus site at Jefferson Houses, addresses entrenched poverty amongst public housing residents by saturating targeted developments with job and career support, community building and rent incentives. In a previous national pilot, residents' earnings continued to rise even after the program ended, greatly outpacing the income of a comparison group. During the program's first two years in New York City, over 300 participants were placed in jobs and the program will now be expanding to additional sites.

Family Rewards, based on New York City's Opportunity NYC demonstration, rewards families for achieving milestones that lead to better health, education and employment outcomes. New York City launched Opportunity NYC, the nation's first conditional cash transfer program, in 2007 as a three-year demonstration offering very low-income families a broad range of financial rewards for activities and outcomes intended to reduce current poverty while also working to reduce longer-term poverty. The program successfully reduced severe poverty by 13

percentage points, increased average savings by \$221 (62%) and increased parents' full-time employment by six percentage points.

Project Rise, based on CEO's Young Adult Internship Program & Young Adult Literacy Programs, offers education and paid internships to young adults who are out of school, out of work, and who lack a high school diploma or GED. Approximately half of the youth who entered the Young Adult Internship Program remained engaged in employment or education nine months after completing the internship while those in the Young Adult Literacy Program increased their attendance, program retention and math gains.

WorkAdvance, builds on CEO's Sector-Focused Career Centers and Advance at Work programs, as well as national best practices, to create a new workforce model that employs sector-focused and skills-building strategies. A study of the original New York pilots showed that the participants were three times more likely to be placed in jobs, work more hours, and earn higher hourly wages than clients at the traditional workforce centers.

CEO is also being recognized by Harvard University for its successful City University of New York Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (CUNY ASAP) initiative. With only one in five community college students in the nation graduating each year, CUNY ASAP reduces barriers to graduation by offering small, cohort-based classes and one-on-one involvement with proactive academic and career advisors. The 1,300 CUNY ASAP students at the city's six community colleges also receive financial support for tuition, books and transportation. CUNY ASAP doubled its three-year graduation rate, and nearly tripled its two year graduation rate. In addition, 75 percent of its graduates go on to four-year colleges. The City's newest community college will open later this year following this unique model.

CEO's work includes several asset development programs piloted by the Office of Financial empowerment and also extends to key policy efforts: as a result of CEO's work, New York City was the first jurisdiction in the country to introduce an alternative to the much-criticized federal poverty measure. The new measure of poverty for New York City is based on recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences. Informed by CEO's success, the U.S. Census Bureau released its first report on a new Supplemental Poverty measure for the nation in 2011.

About CEO

CEO was established by Mayor Bloomberg in 2006 as a bold new effort to identify effective anti-poverty strategies and use new resources to enhance the City's ongoing work to help low-income New Yorkers. Over the last five years, CEO has implemented 50 new anti-poverty programs, policy proposals and research projects that represent nationwide best practices and cutting-edge ideas. 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 to inform decisions of whether to continue, expand, or eliminate programs.

About the Innovations in American Government Award

