



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
New York, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2008

No. 102

www.nyc.gov

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE LAUNCH
OF A LEARNING NETWORK TO SHARE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGIES FOR *OPPORTUNITY NYC*, THE NATION'S FIRST CONDITIONAL
CASH TRANSFER PROGRAM**

*Learning Network Will Include Countries and Cities Developing Or Implementing Incentive-Based
Poverty Reduction Programs As A Strategy For Information Sharing*

Mayors and Senior Staff from Six Cities Join Discussion on Poverty Reduction Initiatives

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the Rockefeller Foundation today announced the launch of a new Conditional Cash Transfer Learning Network which will share New York City's experience designing and implementing *Opportunity NYC*, the nation's first conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, as well as to continue learning from other countries and US cities about incentive-based poverty reduction programs. The announcement was made at a meeting of mayors and senior staff from six cities at Gracie Mansion to discuss poverty reduction strategies. The Mayor was joined by Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs; Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) Executive Director Veronica White; Rockefeller Foundation Initiatives Vice President Darren Walker; Miami, Florida Mayor Manuel Diaz; Savannah, Georgia Mayor Otis Johnson; Shelby County, Tennessee Mayor A.C. Wharton, Jr., as well as representatives from the cities of Baltimore, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The CCT Learning Network is funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and managed collaboratively between the Center for Economic Opportunity and MDRC, the research organization evaluating the program.

"We are encouraged by the interest generated in *Opportunity NYC*, and look forward to sharing our expertise with others as they seek to tackle the issue of poverty in their respective countries and cities," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The CCT Learning Network will help us to expand the dialog about how incentive-based programs work, as well as the challenges faced in creating and implementing other poverty reduction strategies."

"We have learned a great deal from other countries and national experts. And, recently we have had the opportunity to begin giving back." said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "Through the leadership of CEO and with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation we will continue the work of sharing our experiences and learning from others through the CCT Learning Network."

The Learning Network provides an important opportunity for cities to exchange information and data on what works, and in particular for those in New York City to share findings from *Opportunity NYC*

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with their counterparts in other cities and interested parties at the state and federal levels. The network also represents an opportunity for policymakers and practitioners in the US to learn from the experiences of other countries, and to contribute to the growing international body of knowledge about CCTs.

CCT programs are being implemented in over 20 countries around the world, and unlike conventional approaches to poverty reduction which focus on social services to create a safety net for those in need, incentive-based strategies increase participation in targeted activities and programs that decrease factors that contribute to poverty and long-term dependency. Financial incentives are awarded when households meet specific targets. *Opportunity NYC* provides cash incentives to low-income families in three key areas: education, health, and employment and training.

“As a global foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation has a keen interest in finding poverty-fighting models that work in different contexts around the world,” said Rockefeller Foundation Initiatives Vice President Darren Walker. “The Foundation is proud to be a lead funder of *Opportunity NYC*, and we see the CCT learning network as an important means to further our investment in this groundbreaking pilot program.”

As part of the CCT Learning Network, city officials and *Opportunity NYC* partners have met with national and local legislators to discuss the initiative, and have participated in conferences with officials from countries implementing CCT programs. The Center for Economic Opportunity recently hosted a delegation of representatives from the United Kingdom where, in February, Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced efforts to initiate a Contract Out of Poverty, using the same kind of economic incentives as *Opportunity NYC*. The purpose of the visit was to understand the structure and operation of the program. The CCT Learning Network will continue to expand its outreach nationally and internationally, convening and attending information sharing meetings, best practices, and the evolution of CCTs.

The Center for Economic Opportunity

The Center for Economic Opportunity was established by Mayor Bloomberg to implement innovative ways to reduce poverty in New York City. The CEO works with City agencies to design and implement evidence-based initiatives aimed at poverty reduction, and manages an Innovation Fund through which it provides City agencies annual funding to implement such initiatives. It will oversee a rigorous evaluation of each program to determine which are successful in demonstrating results towards reducing poverty and increasing self-sufficiency among New Yorkers. The CEO is also charged with oversight of *Opportunity NYC*, including its design, management and implementation. Copies of the Center for Economic Opportunity's *Strategy and Implementation Report* are available at www.nyc.gov.

The Rockefeller Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation was established in 1913 by John D. Rockefeller, Sr., to "promote the well-being" of humanity by addressing the root causes of serious problems. The Foundation supports work around the world to expand opportunities for poor or vulnerable people and to help ensure that globalization's benefits are more widely shared. With assets of nearly \$4 billion, it is one of the few institutions to conduct such work both within the United States and internationally.