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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS & CITI ANNOUNCE EXPANSION OF THE CITY'S FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTER NETWORK IN CENTRAL AND WESTERN QUEENS

New Financial Empowerment Center and Two Public Library Mobile Locations Now Open

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz today joined Bob Annibale, Global Director of Citi Community Development and Microfinance; Brandee McHale, Chief Operating Officer of Citi Foundation; Mae Watson Grote, Executive Director of The Financial Clinic; and Mary Abbate, Associate Executive Director for Community Services of the Queens Community House to celebrate the opening of a new Financial Empowerment Center and two mobile locations in Central and Western Queens. The City's network of Financial Empowerment Centers provides free, one-on-one, multilingual professional financial counseling to New York City residents.

The new Center and two mobile locations, administered by DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE), are generously funded through a \$250,000 Citi Foundation grant and operated by The Financial Clinic. The Center is housed in the Queens Community House in Jackson Heights and the two mobile sites are located in Queens Library branches in Jackson Heights and Long Island City. Counselors help clients with money management, budgeting, credit counseling, negotiating with creditors, finding affordable banking services, debt management, government benefits screenings and more. Services are available in English, Spanish and Chinese.

"Thanks to Citi's New York Community Development Team and Citi's Foundation, we are delighted to be able to expand our network of Financial Empowerment Centers throughout Central and Western Queens," said Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "When your finances get complicated, there's nothing more effective than sitting down with a professional to review and solve your concerns on a one-on-one basis. We've been able to help thousands of New Yorkers consolidate and reduce their debt, manage their credit records and set budgets so they can build for their families' future. It couldn't be easier to find one of our free, professional financial counselors—just call 311 or visit nyc.gov/ofe."

"In these difficult economic times, Citi's priority is to support initiatives to help people manage their personal finances. We are delighted to sponsor this Financial Empowerment Center in Central Queens, which will deliver critical help to residents in managing their finances and bolster the efforts of other Citi partners, like Grameen America, to provide services to their low income microentrepreneurs," said Bob Annibale, Global Director of Citi Community Development and Microfinance.

"Citi Foundation focuses on economic empowerment and financial inclusion so we are a strong supporter of the City's Financial Empowerment Centers. Financial inclusion brings low income consumers into the financial system to help them increase income levels, build assets and move them out of poverty," said Brandee McHale, Chief Operating Officer of Citi Foundation.

"The Financial Clinic is delighted to expand its services further into Queens, delivering life-changing financial coaching to working families which has the demonstrated impact of lowering debt and increasing savings," said Mae Watson Grote, Executive Director of The Financial Clinic.

"Queens Community House is delighted to host a Financial Empowerment Center at our Jackson Heights hub. Each day, 550 immigrants from 86 different countries gather at this site to learn English, embark on a path to citizenship, and become leaders and advocates for their communities. Financial empowerment is another way for these participants to take a proactive role in improving their lives by investing in their futures," said Irma Rodriquez, Executive Director of Queens Community House.

"Queens Library welcomes the Financial Empowerment Centers. Accessing free, valuable information and counseling that enriches lives is core to the library's mission," said Thomas W. Galante, CEO of the Queens Library.

As part of the Bloomberg Administration's aggressive efforts to fight poverty in New York City, the Mayor's Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) piloted the City's Financial Empowerment Centers which were created to offer free, one-on-one financial professional counseling in person or by phone in multiple languages. The pilot Financial Empowerment Center opened in the Bronx in June 2008, followed by three more Centers in May 2009. Today, there are more than 20 Financial Empowerment Center locations in the City. The Centers' financial counselors have conducted almost 16,600 counseling sessions, served more than 9,300 clients, reviewed more than 6,500 credit reports, created nearly 4,700 budgets, helped New York City residents pay down nearly \$4 million in debt and build more than \$300,000 in savings.

For complete list of Financial Empowerment Centers, visit nyc.gov/ofe or call 311. The new Financial Empowerment Center and mobile locations are located at:

**New York City Financial Empowerment Center
At Queens Community House**

74-09 37th Avenue, 4th Floor, Room 417B
Jackson Heights
646-810-4050 ext.112

Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 10am – 6pm; Tuesday 11am – 7pm; Friday 9am – 5pm

Queens Library at Jackson Heights

35-51 81st Street
Jackson Heights, Queens
646-810-4050 ext.112

Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays 2 – 6pm

Queens Library at Long Island City

37-44 21st Street
Long Island City, Queens
646-810-4050 ext.112

Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 4 – 8pm

The Financial Empowerment Centers are supported by the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, which serves as an umbrella not-for-profit organization that was established to strengthen public programs serving the needs and general welfare of New Yorkers. Through private sector contributions the Mayor's Fund supports many of the City's initiatives, including those of OFE.

Financial Empowerment Centers are also offered in partnership with Asian Americans for Equality, Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, Catholic Charities, Credit Where Credit Is Due, The Financial Clinic, Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation and Phipps Community Development Corporation, with generous support from the Mayor's Fund, BNY Mellon, CIT, Fidelity Investments, Capital One, Citi, H&R Block, ConEd, the F. B. Heron Foundation, H&R Block, Jackson Hewitt, M&T Bank, NeighborWorks America and Verizon.

The Department of Consumer Affairs enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses, DCA

licenses more than 78,000 businesses in 55 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) is the first local government initiative in the nation with a mission to educate, empower, and protect New Yorkers with low incomes so they can build assets and make the most of their financial resources. Toward that end, OFE seeks to increase access to high-quality, low-cost financial education and counseling; improve access to income-boosting tax credits; connect households to safe and affordable banking and asset-building products and services; and enforce and improve consumer protections to enhance financial stability. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at nyc.gov/consumers.

The Citi Foundation is committed to the economic empowerment and financial inclusion of low-to-moderate income individuals and families in the communities where we work so that they can improve their standard of living. Globally, the Citi Foundation targets its strategic giving to priority focus areas: Microfinance, Enterprise Development, College Success, and Financial Capability and Asset Building. In the United States, the Citi Foundation also supports Neighborhood Revitalization programs. The Citi Foundation works with its partners in Microfinance, Enterprise Development, and Neighborhood Revitalization to support environmental programs and innovations. Additional information can be found at www.citifoundation.com.

Citi Community Development (CCD) is leading Citi's commitment to achieve economic empowerment and growth for underserved individuals, families and communities by expanding access to financial products and services, and building sustainable business solutions and innovative partnerships. Our focus areas include: commercial and philanthropic funding; innovative financial products and services; and collaborations with institutions that expand access to financial products and services for low-income and underserved communities. For more information, please visit www.citigroup.com/community.

The Financial Clinic is a non-profit organization, which builds the financial security of working poor people by addressing their immediate financial challenges and then helping create trajectories for long-term goals and financial mobility. The Financial Clinic provides one-on-one financial counseling and coaching at all Financial Empowerment Centers in Queens where financial coaches help clients meet their goals for money management, credit, debt, banking and savings. For more information, visit www.thefinancialclinic.org.

Queens Community House is a nonprofit organization committed to the personal growth of the diverse people it serves and to the creation of self-reliant, open, responsible communities. The Jackson Heights office of Queens Community House is home to many community services including Adult Education and Community Organizing, which is overseen by Assistant Executive Director Mary Abbate. This site serves as the "hub" location and host partner for the Financial Empowerment Center in Central and Western Queens. For more information, visit www.queenscommunityhouse.org.