

Low-income Transit Riders and Advocates Celebrate Agreement to Fund Half-Priced Transit Fares for the Poor

Thank Mayor de Blasio, Council Speaker Johnson and City Council Members for Establishing Historic Discount Fare Program

New Yorkers living in poverty and representatives from the broad coalition of legal, labor, human services, economic justice, transit and worker rights organizations supporting half-priced transit fares for the poor gathered at the Fulton Street Station in Manhattan today to celebrate an agreement between Mayor Bill de Blasio and City Council Speaker Corey Johnson to fund “Fair Fares” – a proposal that will promote a fairer public transit system and, given the scale and influence of New York, will have a ripple effect across the nation, with New York City offering a roadmap for a more equitable urban America.

Under the agreement the city will spend \$106 million in the FY19 City budget to provide half-priced transit fares to New York City residents with annual incomes at or below poverty, which is about \$25,000 for a family of four. About 800,000 working-age New Yorkers would be eligible for the program and could save up to \$726 dollars a year on the cost of a MetroCard.

At Fulton Street Station, low-income bus and subway riders shared their stories about struggling with the cost of public transportation:

Darlene Jackson, a Riders Alliance Member from the Bronx, said, “I am a struggling single mother who lives in the Bronx. I work part-time and I am college educated and I still can't afford my MetroCard. With Fair Fares, more of my money can be spent towards groceries. I might even be able to send my 14-year-old son to computer classes this Summer. Thank you Mayor de Blasio for making this a reality. And thank you to Speaker Johnson and the entire City Council for fighting so passionately for Fair Fares and keeping struggling New Yorkers like myself in mind.”

The release in April 2016 of the Community Service Society’s (CSS) ground-breaking report, [*“The Transit Affordability Crisis: How Reduced MTA Fares Can Help Low-Income New Yorkers Move Ahead”*](#) coincided with the official launch of the ‘Fair Fares’ campaign, led by CSS and Riders Alliance, a grassroots transit riders membership group. Working in partnership the two groups built a broad coalition of organizations and elected officials that included a majority of City Council members, the Public Advocate, City Comptroller, four Borough Presidents, three District Attorneys and more than 70 organizations. The growing public and political support for Fair Fares generated supportive editorials in nearly all the city’s mainstream newspapers.

From its inception, the effort to establish half-priced transit fares for the city’s working poor was conceived by CSS as an anti-poverty initiative. Drawing data from its citywide scientific survey, [*The Unheard Third*](#), CSS documented the heavy burden that transit fares place on low-income city residents and public support for a policy of reduced fares for the poor. *The Transit Affordability* report, which examined the consequences of high transit fares on the poor and

measures taken by other cities to alleviate transit costs on low-income riders, found that more than a quarter of low-income New Yorkers struggled to afford the subway or bus, limiting their economic opportunities and, in many cases, forcing them to choose between transit and other necessities.

“We have to make New York City a city that works for all 8.6 million New Yorkers, because at the end of the day, fairness will determine our future,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Thanks to extraordinary activism, the city is committing over \$100 million to help struggling New Yorkers access one of the most important transportation methods this city has to offer – a subway ride. Today, with the funding of Fair Fares we’re taking another big step toward making this the fairest big city in America.”

City Council Speaker Corey Johnson said, “I am proud that my first budget as Speaker is one that strengthens the social safety net and champions a New York for all. Fair Fares will open up this city to New Yorkers living in poverty and allow them to take advantage of professional and educational opportunities that would otherwise be closed to them. This is an investment in our friends and neighbors who struggle between paying the rent and commuting to work. I thank the entire City Council for their hard work, advocates like the Community Service Society and the Riders Alliance for their tireless efforts, and Mayor de Blasio for his support in making this a reality.”

David R. Jones, President and CEO of CSS said, “With yesterday’s budget agreement to fully fund “Fair Fares” New York took a major step toward making our public transit system more accessible and equitable for New Yorkers who rely on it the most, the working poor. CSS developed the proposal for half-priced fares based on our research. We recruited Riders Alliance and other advocates to help argue its merits and grow political and public support. But it took Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson and the City Council to make it a reality, and to ensure that our public transportation system is a gateway to economic mobility instead of a barrier. For that we are grateful.”

John Raskin, Executive Director of the Riders Alliance, said, "The Fair Fares program is a huge achievement, not only for the hundreds of thousands of people who will benefit directly but for every New Yorker who cares about living in a fair and inclusive community. In our city, geographic mobility is economic mobility too. New Yorkers can get ahead, but only if they can get around. For too long, our transit system has been priced out of reach for the New Yorkers who need it most, and our entire city has suffered as a result. Fair Fares is an enormous step toward addressing that problem. Thanks to Speaker Corey Johnson for his dogged determination in fighting for this program, to members of the City Council for their overwhelming support and to Mayor Bill de Blasio for making this proposal a reality."

"Fair Fares represents a major step forward for our city," said **NYC Council Finance Chair Daniel Dromm**. "The \$100 million we secured will make bus and subway fares more affordable for thousands of low income New Yorkers who rely upon mass transit each day. Fair Fares has long been a priority of the Council and I am pleased to see it come into fruition. I thank all of those who advocated for this victory over the past several months, and worked with us to make it a reality."

"Fair Fares will make our City more affordable and equitable by ensuring that low-income New Yorkers have access to mass transportation. I commend Speaker Johnson, my Council colleagues, and all the advocates who worked to make this landmark achievement a reality," said **Council Member Rory I. Lancman**.

"We started the fight for Fair Fares two years ago and today we can celebrate a significant victory," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, chair of the Council Committee on Transportation**. "I am proud to stand by the Community Services Society and Riders Alliance as a longtime ally in celebrating this win for New Yorkers for whom the choice between a MTA fair and a necessity just got a little easier. Thank you to the Mayor for his commitment to fund Fair Fares every year. I congratulate my colleagues in the Council who under the leadership of Speaker Corey Johnson never lost sight of the importance of making equity in public transportation a priority in this budget."

"In a city where mobility equals opportunity, and with the cost of public transit rising but wages stagnating, the inclusion of Fair Fares in this year's budget is a historic win for impoverished New Yorkers," said **Council Member Mark Levine**. "New Yorkers who fall below the poverty line already face an incredible struggle to make ends meet, and having an affordable way to get around the city could mean the difference between having a job and not, being able to take your kids to school and not. By funding the cost of offering half-price MetroCards, Speaker Johnson just guaranteed that eligible New Yorkers could save up to \$700 annually, dramatically increasing their quality of life."

"Subway fare shouldn't stand between low income New Yorkers and well-paying jobs. Yet, for too long, transit fare has become a significant barrier to a better, more economically stable life. I am thrilled the FY19 budget includes funding for Fair Fares and join New Yorkers everywhere in thanking Speaker Corey Johnson and Mayor Bill de Blasio for their tremendous leadership and partnership. I also specifically want to recognize the incredible commitment of the community service Society and Riders alliance for leading this important conversation and helping us bring fairer fares to low income New Yorkers," said **Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson**.

"I am so proud of the hardest fought victory of this budget season: the securing of funding for Fair Fares, thanks to the unshakeable leadership and commitment of Speaker Corey Johnson in partnership with Mayor de Blasio. This initiative will make a significant difference in the lives of New Yorkers in greatest need, particularly working women in poverty—1 in 3 of which say they struggle to afford bus and subway fare. This is unacceptable in 2018 in a resource rich city committed to equity, as our city very much is, and I am thrilled that we are taking this major step in the direction of true equity and progress," said **Council Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo**.

"This fair reduction will make an important difference for working moms trying to balance their own jobs with taking care of their children, which already involves the challenging logistics of drop off, pick up, doctors' appointments, etc. With 40% of single moms in New York City living in poverty, Fair Fares will remove one more financial burden from their plate."

"Discounted MetroCards will ensure low-income New Yorkers have greater access to our City's public transportation system, which translates to more educational and employment

opportunities. For too long, poor and working-poor New Yorkers have had to choose between purchasing a meal or a MetroCard. Fair Fares will prevent our City's residents from having to make this choice, especially those who live in districts like the one I represent. I applaud Speaker Johnson, Mayor de Blasio, my colleagues at the Council, and all advocates for their leadership on this revolutionary benefit," said **Council Member Diana Ayala, Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus**.

"For over a century, the subway has been the great equalizer that has connected New Yorkers with centers of employment, educational institutions, and friends and family. With the funding of Fair Fares, our municipal government can continue its commitment to providing upward mobility for all. I want to commend Speaker Johnson and community partners for their tireless work in advocating for this program, and I thank Mayor de Blasio for joining with the City Council in support of serving those who need our assistance the most," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**.

"Our victory for fair fares is testament to what's possible when everyday New Yorkers stand with their elected leaders to fight for what's right," said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. "Soon, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers will get relief from having to decide between purchasing essential living expenses or subway fare. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of groups like the Rider's Alliance and Community Service Society of New York – and with the bold leadership of Speaker Corey Johnson and Mayor De Blasio – our City is moving on to the next stop towards equity and access for all low income New Yorkers."

"Public transportation is a basic necessity for New Yorkers, but so many cannot afford MetroCards," said **Council Member Adrienne Adams**. "I am so proud that Fair Fares was included in our final budget. It will help the city's most vulnerable population and make a significant difference in their lives. Thanks to Speaker Corey Johnson for championing the charge and Mayor de Blasio for his committed partnership with the Council, ensuring the best for our great city."

"Fair Fares ensures that every New Yorker has the opportunity to take advantage of the great equalizer: our public transportation system. This makes sure that New Yorkers do not have to skip a meal, miss a job interview, or worse because they can not afford a Metrocard. As the Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee, I know that this will also help prevent New Yorkers from entering the criminal justice system. Thank you to Speaker Johnson and Mayor de Blasio for funding this important effort," said **Council Member Keith Powers**.

"Having basic access to public transportation should not overwhelm a household budget," said **Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik**. "The Fair Fares plan to provide low-income New Yorkers with half-priced MetroCards is a significant step toward increasing transit affordability."

"Making the subways affordable to New Yorkers is a social justice issue," said **Council Member Rafael Espinal**. "In the city that never sleeps, we need fair fares so low-income New Yorkers can swipe their way to the opportunities New York City has to offer. Congratulations to Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, the tireless advocates and most importantly, to New Yorkers on this major win!"

“I am proud to join Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, and my City Council colleagues and advocates in celebration of the Fair Fares initiative,” said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso**. “The cost of a metro card will no longer inhibit New Yorkers from taking advantage of the economic opportunities our city has to offer. Full priced metrocards penalized those who could least afford it— charging more to riders who couldn’t cover the up-front cost of an unlimited metro card which would have saved them money in the long term. The Fair Fares Initiative will ensure that our transit system is equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.”

“Fair Fares for low-income New Yorkers is a smart investment in our City’s economic success and will sustain communities experiencing extreme economic hardship. After all, It isn’t public transit if people can’t afford the fare. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson for listening to our constituents, and I applaud advocates like Riders Alliance and Community Service Society for their hard work and perseverance. In the immigrant communities I represent like Sunset Park, discounted transit fares mean better access to education, health care and jobs along with a little relief from our City’s high cost of living,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**.

"I'm grateful to Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to Fair Fares," said **Council Member Kalman Yeger**. "This incredibly important program will bring new opportunity for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers and give much-needed help to those who need it the most. If our city is to be truly fair, Fair Fares is the way to get there. Fair Fares is the result of our two branches of government working in partnership to make a great city even greater."

“In too many neighborhoods across New York City, people are struggling to make ends meet while finding ways to simply have the money to commute to work every day,” said Council Member Donovan Richards. “No New Yorker should have to risk breaking the law to get to work because of poverty. Fair Fares will help families put food on the table and spend money at local businesses more often. Dedicating \$106 million to the neediest New Yorkers so they can get to work or school is a big win for working families and truly shows where New York City’s values are. I’d like to thank Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson and the Riders Alliance for making this new program a reality,” said **Council Member Robert Cornegy**.

“Fair Fares is a major budget victory that ensures the price of public transit does not stand between New Yorkers and access to an education or a paycheck. I am proud of this Council, Speaker Johnson and Mayor de Blasio for working to strengthen our city's social safety net,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the Committee on Education**.

"For so many low income New Yorkers, mobility is the key to economic opportunity and the pathway to the middle class. Half-priced Metro cards will go a long way toward making sure struggling New Yorkers are able to get to work, pick up their children, and complete essential daily activities. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson and my City Council colleagues for advocating for this needed benefit," said **Council Member Peter Koo**

"I would like to commend Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson for including \$106 million dollars of funding in the FY 2019 budget for the Fair Fares initiative. It is not right when members of our underserved community cannot afford to take public transportation to work, school, and to travel throughout New York City. This is an important step in providing adequate

resources for those who require them most, and I am confident that by working together we can continue to implement similar programs for our hardworking families," said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene**.

"No New Yorker should have to make the choice between putting food on the table and buying a ride on the subway," said **Council Deputy Leader Jimmy Van Bramer**. "Budgets are a reflection of values, and by providing half price metrocards to 800,000 New Yorkers, we are going a long way to making our City fairer for so many of our neighbors. I want to congratulate Speaker Corey Johnson and the New York City Council who made this a priority from day one. Today, we make our City better, fairer, and more just for all."

"This is a watershed moment for New York City. For far too many New Yorkers, the rising costs of housing, health care, and child care consume the vast majority of their incomes, leaving them with hard choices to make. When people have to choose between buying a MetroCard and buying a meal, their socioeconomic mobility is limited. With Fair Fares, New Yorkers under the poverty line will have new opportunities to connect with all the things that make our city the greatest city in the world. I want to thank all the advocates who fought so passionately for this program, and to Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson for making it happen," said **Council Member Costa Constantinides**.

"There are countless New Yorkers who face the hard decision everyday of whether or not they have to forgo a meal to save up for a subway swipe," said **Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.** "With Fair Fares, fewer New Yorkers will have to make that choice. I'm incredibly proud of this Council and commend Speaker Corey Johnson for his tireless efforts in seeing this initiative through."

"This agreement funding Fair Fares as part of the City's Budget will bring equity back to a transit system which in recent years has priced out low income New Yorkers," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "Low-income New Yorkers deserve to be treated with respect, and by funding half priced MetroCards we are making sure New York City's working poor can afford to get to work without begging for a swipe or having to jump the turn style. Thank you to Mayor Bill de Blasio for working this policy through and into the budget and thank you to Speaker Corey Johnson for his relentless commitment and leadership on this initiative."

"Fair Fares is a huge victory that will significantly broaden transit accessibility for the most vulnerable New Yorkers. So many of our neighbors now stand to benefit from the relief of a reduced fare. I am proud that the City Council and Mayor de Blasio came together on this great step forward for our city," said **City Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

"Subways and buses are the lifeblood of our city, but for too long, our mass transit system has imported an undue burden on low-income New Yorkers. A MetroCard swipe can be the ticket to a job, an education, a doctor's appointment, or to see family – in other words, it's a necessity," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. "We should make access to the transit system part of our larger effort to make New York more equitable and uplift New Yorkers in need. Fair Fares does just that, and I'd like to thank Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, and the Council Members who

championed this policy, as well as Riders Alliance, the Community Services Society, and all of the advocates who worked tirelessly to make this a reality.”

State Senator Jesse Hamilton said, “Investing in our communities is always a sound decision, guaranteed to pay dividends for years to come. I welcome the expansion of critical education, housing, and affordability programs this budget announcement presents. Expanding 3-K for All, adding to our supportive housing stock, and implementing Fair Fares to make our transit system more affordable, all represent steps in the right direction. Both at the City and State levels, we must work to remove the barriers New Yorkers face and build inclusive communities where everyone can realize their aspirations.”

“I applaud the Mayor and the Speaker of the City Council to come together so early to pass a fair and balance budget that expresses the priorities of New York City including expanding 3-K, school accessibility, affordable housing funding and Fair Fares. Fair Fares is a victory for all New Yorkers because it allows the most vulnerable to continue to use public transportation to get to and from work and school even if there are on a fixed income. Our public transportation is the great equalizer in New York and I believe this shows how New York City can lead on important social justice initiatives,” said **Assembly Member Harvey Epstein**.

“The life-blood of New York City is our transit system, it functions so much more than a mode of transport. It is an artery that brings our children to school, a system of ebb and flow that allows New Yorkers to reach their employment, and the Mayor’s endeavor in reducing the Metrocard fares for qualifying New Yorkers is integral to the fabric of New York City. We function as a community, and to deprive those in need of this vital system would be a grievous error. I applaud the Mayor and look forward to working with the Mayor and his administration to further this achievement,” said **Assembly Member Jaime Williams**.

“For the thousands of New Yorkers who have been arrested this year for jumping a turnstile, it’s very clear that \$2.75 is a prohibitive cost that many in our city cannot afford. Our clients arrested for fare evasion face dire scenarios including jail time at Rikers Island and even possible ICE detention and deportation,” said **Tina Luongo, Attorney-In-Charge of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “But with Fair Fares codified in the budget, many will now avoid these nightmarish consequences. The Legal Aid Society lauds Mayor Bill de Blasio and Speaker Corey Johnson for making the dream of Fair Fares a reality.”

“I typically spend three to four hours on the train every day and most weeks, I worry that I won’t have enough money to afford the subway fare. It’s embarrassing asking strangers for swipes to get from my shelter to my daughter’s school to work and then back again. The subway should not be a barrier, but a path to opportunity in New York City so we can be reliable workers, responsible parents and engaged citizens. I will benefit from this program, as well as other low-wage workers across the city. I am excited that I shared my story and by coming together with other fast-food workers we are making our city stronger. I want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, the Riders Alliance and the Community Service Society of New York for their leadership,” said **Shani Rahman, Fast Food Justice member**.

“\$120 for a monthly metro card is costly. That’s why fast-food workers support Fair Fares

because some of my coworkers can't eat and others can't support their kids on our tight budgets. I know of people who have had to sleep outside the store or in the breakroom, because they couldn't afford the commuting costs. Working people need to know they can get to their jobs on time. I'm proud to be speak up about this issue with other fast-food workers and Fast Food Justice members to make a change. This program will make a big difference thanks to the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, the Riders Alliance and the Community Service Society of New York. A half-price bus and subway fare for the poorest New Yorkers is a start towards making transportation more affordable for all," said **Justin Peprah, Fast Food Justice member**

Mohamed Attia, Co-director of the Street Vendor Project said, "Street Vendors are low-income New Yorkers who are struggling with the Unfair Fares every day, and finally the city has agreed to support low-income New Yorkers and fund Fair Fares and make NYC the fairest city for everybody. We would like to thank the city council for the great work and The Speaker for the phenomenal support!"

"Everyone should have access to public transportation. I live in Flushing, Queens and many of my neighbors are struggling just to get by. New York City is a big place and I have to use the train to get around. I actually already have a discounted MetroCard that I receive because of my disability. It's helped me and more people should have access to this benefit. I use the train and buses to go to doctor's appointments, visit my daughter and grandkids in the Bronx and to go to VOCAL-NY to build power for change. If it wasn't for my reduced fare MetroCard, I wouldn't be able to do any of these things," said **Carl Stubbs, Community Leaders at VOCAL-NY**.

"This victory has been many years in the making, and we are pleased that the City will finally make Fair Fares a reality for hundreds of thousands of low-income New Yorkers. For too long, poor New Yorkers, especially black and brown individuals, have been criminalized because they could not afford the price of a MetroCard. Thank you to Speaker Corey Johnson who pushed for this from the moment he became Speaker, as well as the rest of the City Council and the entire Fair Fares coalition who never gave up the fight," said **Bertha Lewis, President and Founder of the Black Institute**.

"Fair Fares are a key piece of the puzzle for helping impoverished New Yorkers expand their opportunities and climb the ladder out of poverty. Mayor de Blasio has always spoken eloquently about the need to end the 'tale of two cities,' but our public policy hasn't kept up with the Mayor's vision. Today's victory is a big step in the direction of policy that not only makes the cost of living in the city a little more bearable for those living in poverty, but makes it more possible for those New Yorkers to seek out the education, career skills, vocational training, and eventually interviews and higher-wage jobs which constitute the pathway out of poverty and towards self-sustainability," said **Jose Ortiz Jr, Executive Director of the NYC Employment and Training Coalition**.

"Thank you to the Mayor, the City Council, and especially Speaker Johnson, for fighting alongside this great Fair Fares coalition to achieve this victory for 800,000 people striving for a better life here in our city." **Lisa Schreibersdorf, Executive Director of Brooklyn Defender Services**, said: "I thank Speaker Corey Johnson and Mayor Bill de Blasio for offering this critical

support to New Yorkers in need of reduced fares. Brooklyn Defender Services has strongly supported the Fair Fares campaign because so many of the people we represent are arrested and prosecuted for fare evasion when they simply cannot afford the fare. While we continue to urge an end to the policing of poverty, we applaud the City's decision to make this investment in helping New Yorkers who otherwise cannot afford to get to school, work or doctor appointments. I am very pleased that New York City is taking this groundbreaking step to make our transit system truly public and alter the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents."

Johnny Rivera, member of WE ACT and resident of East Harlem said, "I applaud the Mayor and City Council for demonstrating leadership on an equity issue disproportionately affecting low-income residents struggling to pay a subway fare. As a city, we win on two fronts: minimizing expense in the justice system and unleashing the higher productivity of our community member."

"The affordability and upkeep of public transit is a critical, yet often under addressed public policy area. The Fair Fares initiative takes an important step to make NYC subways and buses more affordable for low income New Yorkers. It is a significant foundation upon which to address the still crucial need to upgrade and maintain the transit system infrastructure. Congratulations to those who lead the way and came together to get this done," said **Monsignor Kevin Sullivan, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York.**

Maaji Newbold, member of Theatre of the Oppressed said, "Every day when I enter the subway it is a challenge: should I get something to eat or should I get on this ride? It's a cost to me either way. So the support we're getting from the Mayor and the city is very important, because we work hard, the rent is too high, and we need help to balance it out."

"Today we are taking an important step forward for transportation justice! Thanks to the organizing of directly impacted transit riders and the leadership of Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson and the City Council, Fair Fares can begin to alleviate the burdens of our inequitable transit system and provide greater access to opportunity." said **Elena Conte, Director of Policy at Pratt Center for Community Development.**

Alaster Williams, Leader at Picture the Homeless said, "I would just like to say that my partner and I will not have to flip a coin to determine who is going to ride the bus or train; we'll be able to ride together now. This move is long overdue and Speaker Johnson the City Council and the Mayor should be applauded for finally realizing that a lot of New Yorkers are in need of this program and will greatly benefit from it"

I grew up in East New York Brooklyn, and there were days that we were so broke, you had to make the choice of buying food to eat, or having train fare for one day. Most times we chose the food. Today's decision to provide half fare metro cards to people living in poverty is a game changer, decisions like this will improve lives. I am proud to live in a city that puts its most vulnerable people first. **Said Stanley Fritz, Campaigns Manager at Citizen Action of New York**

"Fair Fares is an important first step to ending the criminalization of the poor. New Yorkers shouldn't have to choose between putting food on the table and paying their fare. We applaud the

City Council and Mayor's office on helping almost 800,000 New Yorkers," said **Vaughn Armour, member of New York Communities for Change.**

"The #FairFares Project will be an amazing support to communities across the city. Especially in the Flatbush Brooklyn community where the median household income falls below the citywide median and we have a greater number of residents living below the poverty line, Fair Fares will allow greater equity for people to travel to work, school and glean from other resources around the city. For some, the barrier to seeking employment is having enough subway fare to travel to and from interviews. The reduced-price Metro Cards will reduce the financial strain on families and individuals for subway transportation so that they can focus on other necessities and opportunities," said **Pia Raymond, Founder/CEO Creating Legacies.**

"With transportation making up a large share of the household budgets of low income families, Fair Fares will bring much needed relief to poor New Yorkers and provide them improved access to economic opportunities," said **Alex Matthiessen, founder and director of the Move NY campaign.** "Now we need to focus on passing congestion pricing and other new revenue sources needed to not only fix our subways and buses but fund other fare discount programs like 'CityTicket-7' so that all New Yorkers can more easily afford to use our public transit system."

"FPWA applauds both Mayor de Blasio and City Council Speaker Corey Johnson for taking another major step forward to reduce inequity and increase opportunity for New Yorkers with low incomes who struggle daily to pay for basic living expenses", said **Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.** "With half-fare metro cards, many New Yorkers who've had to go without basic household needs just to travel to essential destinations like work and school will now have the support they need to get where they need to go, and ultimately to get ahead."

"This Fair Fares program will be a God-send for impoverished families and poor New Yorkers to help move them forward in life. Reducing fares will open doors to job search and gainful employment, to furthering education and training and getting people to preventive health care, to primary care and hospital clinic, to the soup kitchen, food pantries, vegetable markets and back home. It is the right thing to do. Our families need access to transportation to take them further in life," said **Reverend Terry Troia, Project Hospitality**

Eric McClure, Executive Director of StreetsPAC, said, "The provision for Fair Fares in the city's budget will mean a significant economic boost for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, literally changing their lives for the better. We applaud Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson for striking a deal that will open up opportunity to those among us who need it most."

"The working poor in the City of New York are under socioeconomic siege. The working poor are under extreme socioeconomic pressure due to the loss and lack of affordable housing and rampant neighborhood gentrification throughout the City of New York, which has and which continues to threaten to displace them. The working poor are under extreme economic pressure as the cost of living in the City of New York has risen dramatically, yet wages for the working poor are in stagnation, failing to keep pace with the rising cost of living in every facet of our municipal economy. New York City continues to be a tale of two Cities. The rich continue to get

richer, and the poor see no way out of the socioeconomic dungeon. The cost of public transportation continues to rise in the City of New York, and traveling just to and from work for the working poor in the City has become a significant socioeconomic challenge, applying pressure on every aspect on their cost of living. We must acknowledge that the working poor are the backbone of New York City's economy and culture, in all of its facets, and if the working poor are under socioeconomic pressure then the City, as a whole, is under socioeconomic pressure. This agreement by the Mayor of the City of New York, Mayor de Blasio, and the City Council to provide \$106 million in funding for 'Fair Fares', a program cutting the price of MetroCards in half for low-income New York City residents is a dynamic step in the right direction on behalf of the working poor of the City of New York to help them in their simple quest to lead descent dignified lives in our Civil Society, and the religious community of faith in social justice applauds and wholeheartedly supports it," said **Bishop Dr. Raymond H. Rufen-Blanchette, STM, ThD, Executive Chairman, The Clergy Campaign for Social and Economic Justice.**

For more than 170 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. We respond to urgent, contemporary challenges with applied research, advocacy, litigation and innovative program models that help the working poor achieve a better quality of life and promote a more prosperous city. Visit us at www.cssny.org

The Riders Alliance is a grassroots organization of subway and bus riders pushing for better service at affordable fares and a stronger public investment in mass transit. Visit us at ridersny.org

###

[The Community Service Society of New York \(CSS\)](http://www.cssny.org) is an informed, independent, and unwavering voice for positive action on behalf of more than 3 million low-income New Yorkers. CSS draws on a 171-year history of excellence in addressing the root causes of economic disparity. We respond to urgent, contemporary challenges through applied research, advocacy, litigation, and innovative program models that strengthen and benefit all New Yorkers.

The Community Service Society of New York
633 Third Ave, 10th FL
New York, NY 10017
www.cssny.org