

Submitted

# NYS DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAM

2/9/2012

Provided to Joint Legislative Committee  
on Human Services Issues

presented by Eleanor Moran  
on behalf of all 22 Displaced Homemaker Centers  
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**NEW YORK STATE DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAM**  
**February 13, 2012**  
**Human Services Issues**

As you all know, the Displaced Homemaker Program has successfully provided workforce development and training assistance to your constituents for 34 years....thanks to your ongoing support. It has been your voices that have enabled the voices of your neighbors, families and friends to resound with pride as they acquired employment that provided financial independence for them. It has been your voices that spoke on their behalf so they could overcome or avoid reliance on an already over-burdened welfare system. It has been your voices that helped the Displaced Homemaker Program bring employers and job-seekers together to build not only a stronger economy, but stronger families.

In his 2012-2013 proposed budget, Governor Cuomo has NOT funded this program. For 2011-2012 **the centers were funded for \$3.046 million dollars (\$2.5 million Local Asst-001; and \$546,000 OTDA/TANF)**. As always, we thank you for your appreciation of the value of this program and for your belief that we can make a difference to each family we assist and ultimately have an impact on the state-at-large.

**This year we are asking you to re-fund the Displaced Homemaker Program at a level \$5.3 million for assistance to individuals who qualify for services under the OTDA definition.** This amount approaches but does not exceed the 2009-10 level of \$5.6 million that was committed through OTDA. In collaboration with our local Departments of Social Services in the year 2010-2011, **we have collectively moved 2515 families (200% of poverty) closer to financial independence or out of poverty...this at a level of \$2.7 million.** We are very successful at training, motivating, supporting and advocating for those living in poverty. With our funding from OTDA raised to the 2009-2010 level we could again partner with OTDA to reach out to thousands of more families.....thus building our family structure as well as our State economy. Now is not the time to reduce funding for programs that have a proven track record.

Based on last year's performance we show a **Cost Per Individual Served of \$745 and a Cost Per Entered Employment of \$3,010. At a minimum wage this translates into a return to the State of New York through earned taxable income of \$14 million.....and most of our women earn above minimum wage. Consequently, we have the potential of looking at a return of over \$21,000,000. A darn good return on your investment!**

**We have heard from our State leaders that we have a commitment to help New Yorkers raise themselves up.** And, we couldn't agree more. These centers that offer displaced homemaker services succeed in doing just that....but in a far more significant sense. Our goal is to not only help these women reach financial independence, but to see their families become stronger; to watch their children as they follow a parent who is more focused, committed and confident; and to see the impact their financial independence has in each community. Our greater goal is to develop a job seeker who knows how to acquire the highest level of employment possible for them; to teach them how to demonstrate her value for advancement; and to show them the value of becoming a role model that will motivate their families so that they too will become viable and contributing members of their communities. So while we are clearly cost-effective from a financial perspective, we also have the ability to shape the direction the families in our communities....in YOUR communities.

We hear a lot of talk about "**rebuilding trust in State government**". To me and to the other center directors that implies a far greater concept than just a financial incentive. Money is but one force that drives us....and those we serve. What greater opportunity does this state have than to maintain a proven program such as the Displaced Homemaker Program which strives to build a stronger labor market by providing knowledge, training, motivation, connections to the labor market and ongoing support throughout the transition to **paid work**. Which State program has had a greater long-term impact than the Displaced Homemaker Program? We believe in this program as do the women who have been served and placed; as do the employers who have hired them; as YOU have each year by ensuring our funding is available. Our communities acknowledge and respect the services we provide because they are able to see, hear and feel the results.

**Investing in a proven program that benefits individuals, communities and the State is one great investment.....and it is one opportunity that cannot be missed.**

I had been hopeful that I would have had the opportunity to address you today as I have over the past years, but the time for approval to speak was closed.

We cannot pick up a newspaper, watch the television, surf the internet, nor become involved in conversations without hearing the fear and frustration in the voices of our neighbors, our friends and our families. The severe impact of lost jobs, cuts in wages or benefits, plant closures, loss of homes, and so on are clearly overwhelming. Accompanying all of this is the likelihood that **child support payments may end; bills may go unpaid; houses may be lost; and yes, often spouses vanish under the pressure. But do you realize that displaced homemakers are the most vulnerable? Divorced or separated they are at risk of falling onto the roles of welfare.....at a great expense to the state.** They have few skills, little insight into current employer issues and expectations, and limited (if any) opportunities to acquire even the most basic technological skills needed to become employable. They are finding themselves more and more in a position where they will have the responsibility to financially keep their families going....somehow.....somehow. We need you to put them into a position of priority....them and their children.....by helping us help them. Our centers are unique....we do not duplicate services....rather we complement those services that are not obtainable elsewhere in the system of state services. We are working partners in each of our respective communities. We are the “go to” agency when businesses seek prospective employees who have been given a solid understanding of today’s workforce so they may move rapidly into employment. **We have been YOUR partner for many years and are ready to again join forces with you to address the needs of our families and our State.**

We all need to ask if **what we are doing is right for the people of New York.** We feel, as I am sure each of you feels as well, that our moral and ethical responsibility to work with families who are struggling to escape poverty should guide our decisions and all political decisions. We also feel that when we actively respond to the reality of the challenges we face today that there is hope for families to get to a better place. We want to continue to be part of that journey for

women and their families. We want to continue to provide the support, direction and insight they need to bring their families to a better place. **But we need you to help us accomplish that.**

**WE would again like the opportunity to be a part of the solution....as we have done successfully for 34 years.** But for us to do so, we need YOUR support, your trust, and your advocacy for the continuation of our funding. As you negotiate the 2012-2013 New York State Budget, we need you to again be our voice – the voice of the hundreds of thousands of displaced homemakers in New York State

It is with the greatest respect that I, on behalf of all of the displaced homemakers you represent, ask you to insure that this program continues to play a pivotal role in rebuilding New York State's economy by:

- **supporting our presence in the 2012-2013 New York State budget at the level of \$5.3 million.**

**Why? Because when the Displaced Homemaker Program puts women to work:**

- **Tax revenues go up**
- **Consumer spending goes up**
- **Welfare roles drop**
- **Families become stronger and more independent**

**It's a win-win all the way around. Thank you again for this opportunity. As always I appreciate your interest in the Displaced Homemaker Program, and your willingness to include us in submitting this testimony.**

**We look forward to working in partnership with you again in the upcoming years. Make it a great day!**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Eleanor Moran, Executive Director (315) 793-9700**

**Women's Employment & Resource Center, Inc., 1411 Genesee St., Utica, NY 13501**

**NYS Displaced Homemaker Funding Committee**



## THE FACTS ABOUT DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS.....

### Nationwide

- ▶ **Number:** in 2003 there were 7.3 million displaced homemakers in the US.
- ▶ **Income:** 42% of them had an income below the national poverty level.
- ▶ **Education:** 58% had a high school diploma or less.
- ▶ **Employment:** over 50% were unemployed.

### New York State

- ▶ **Number:** in 2003 there were 463,081 displaced homemakers in New York State.
- ▶ **Income:** 38% or 175,971 of those displaced homemakers lived in poverty.
- ▶ **Education:** 62% of them had a high-school diploma or less.
- ▶ **Employment:** Of those employed 50% earned minimum wage.

### NYS Displaced Homemaker Program

- ▶ **Number:** 3,624 displaced homemakers were served by the program in 2010-2011. Approximately 217,929 displaced homemakers have been served by the 22 statewide centers since 1978.
- ▶ **Income:** 80% of the participants served in 2010-2011 had an annual family income of less than \$20,000. 69% of those served in 2010-2011 were receiving TANF assistance or eligible under 200% of poverty guidelines.
- ▶ **Education:** 53% of the women served in 2010-2011 had a high school diploma or GED. 24% of those served in 2009-2010 had not completed high school or gotten a GED.
- ▶ **Employment:** 897 displaced homemakers served entered the workforce. 82% of them retained that employment over 90 days. Since 1978 over 52,000 of the individuals served have entered the workforce.

## **NYS DHP COST:**

Funding for the 22 statewide DH Centers is **\$2,700,000** million

- Cost per displaced homemaker Served is **\$745**
- Cost per Entered Employment is **\$3010**
- Cost per Retained Employment (90 days) is **\$3673**

### **THE 22 DISPLACED HOMEMAKER CENTERS** **2010 – 2011 NYS FINANCIAL IMPACT**

- With **897 new workforce employees**, using minimum wage calculations, an estimated **\$14 million dollars were contributed to New York State's economy**. Since most participants earned a higher income, the total state impact is closer to **\$21 million**.
- According to recent Department of Social Services data, the cost to maintain a family of three on public assistance is approximately **\$12,500 a year**. As a result of our program **204 DHP participants** previously on public assistance entered the workforce. This represents **savings to the State of approximately \$2.5 million**.

(Dept. of Social Services, 2003) ([www.womenwork.org](http://www.womenwork.org), 2005-2007)

2/16/2011