



## ASSOCIATION OF DISPLACED HOME MAKER CENTER DIRECTORS

### NEW YORK STATE DISPLACED HOME MAKER PROGRAM FEBRUARY 2015

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for supporting the **New York State Displaced Homemaker Program (DHP)** for the past 37 years by ensuring our funding in the State budget. Our partnership for almost four decades has had a profound impact on families statewide enabling 350,000 displaced homemakers and low income single mothers to become employable. The 14 Statewide Displaced Homemaker Centers deliver much-needed services in an extremely cost effective manner, saving the State millions of dollars and this year again we are not in the Governor's Executive Budget. From providing job readiness and skills training to employment assistance and retention, **it has been consistently proven that DHP Centers play an essential and critical role in the economy of their communities and State funds are critical for Centers to be able to keep their doors open and provide these much needed services.** Simply put, we enable women in transition to become working and tax paying members of their communities.

Women who have been helped by DHP funds are an essential part of communities across the State. They have successfully integrated into corporate, non-profit and service careers. Their success is a direct result of the skills and confidence gained through the unique and intensive services they received through DHP Programs. DHP Centers continually hear from executives, CEOs, program directors, administrative staff, and non-profit professionals who began their journey to success with a caring DHP trainer who believed in their potential and supported them through weeks (and sometimes months) of difficult and intensive job training and coaching. DHP Centers in our State have earned the trust and respect in their communities and have built a great reputation among the business communities (There isn't a DHP Center in our State that isn't supported and respected by their local business community).

For those of you who may be newer to your charge of serving the needs of New York, here is additional information about how DHP helps all of our communities. The Displaced Homemaker Program has served your constituents for 37 years. We assist individuals who have lost their source of income for a variety of reasons. Many are struggling to escape the welfare system or seek our services because they are determined NOT to enter the welfare system. DHP Centers are a lifeline for these women. Women seeking DHP services are women we all know ... they are our neighbors, family members and friends AND they represent families that must find a way to survive. We all know someone who has endured the financial and emotional struggles of being a single parent or has had their family stability devastated by divorce, separation or the death or unemployment of a spouse. The Displaced Homemaker Program has decades of experience dealing with the compound and critical challenges that confront these families. We understand the unique problems faced by women who must pick up the pieces after a life-altering crisis or loss. DHP staff are trained to respond to these women with compassion while offering solid strategies to help them regain their confidence and move toward employment. We are trained to help these families overcome the negative experiences that have left them feeling demoralized and humiliated, believing that no one will want to hire them. Often, an abusive partner has made them believe that they have no value in the job market as a ploy to keep them trapped, with their children, in an untenable and dangerous situation. I urge you to think about a woman you know who is overwhelmed with financial difficulties and struggling to support their family. ***Please give serious consideration to the ways that this program could make a significant difference in their life right now. Training, self-development, job referral, encouragement and understanding ... these services are essential to leading someone out of poverty and to self-sufficiency. Our participants become working, contributing members of their communities making DHP a cost effective and efficiently run program. For a very small investment in DHP Centers, New York State gets a very big return.***

Displaced homemakers exist even in areas that we perceive to be affluent. Lack of financial resources translates into inescapable poverty for someone ... or, it may also translate into a downward spiral from financial stability to welfare for others. DHP programs are unique in that each Center examines the most critical needs of its specific area and customizes services/programs to meet the needs of its community. ***Our Centers are all well-respected in our respective parts of the state. We are recognized by participants, other service providers, and other public entities. But we urgently need your support to continue these important programs.***

Most DHP Programs use State funding as matching funds to access federal and local grants. This allows us to expand the services we provide in our respective communities. We work diligently to offer the best services to the women who depend on our Centers. Most of you are well aware of the profound impact your local DHP program has had on your community, the women they serve and the businesses with which they place these women. You have proudly funded us for the past 37 years because of our successful record of helping women become employed. ***You have supported us because the return of investment for this program is \$14.00 for every \$1.00 spent ... and when you also consider the earnings of the women we have helped to find jobs, the savings to the welfare system, and the benefits of their buying power to the State and local economies, there is no question that DHP Centers are a smart investment for the State of New York.***

**This year we are asking for funding at a level of \$3.5 million to support the services these Centers provide for April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016.** Again this year, it is important to provide funding for the Displaced Homemakers Program for a period of 12 months to avoid a situation in which some programs are forced to suspend activities due to lack of funding. We need your assurance that DHP Centers will be funded so that we can continue critically important services through the 2015 to 2016 fiscal year.

DHP Centers have consistently proven that we get results. Each year DHP Centers:

- Move an average of 2,500 families to financial independence annually
- Generate \$14 million of new taxable income through women who become employed as a direct result of our training and supportive services
- Serve individuals at a cost of less than \$1600 per individual

**Where else can you find a return on investment at that level?** Any private business would be ecstatic to see that ROI for their business. But more importantly, where else do you find services provided by any state that includes a component that promotes individual growth of confidence and determination to remain self-sufficient?

The fact is that the Displaced Homemaker Program is a strong and proven program that New York State has proudly supported for over 37 years. Our home regions know who we are and what can be expected from our services. Its evolution has been one that reflects a partnership between the program and the State's Legislative Representatives. It reflects the trust that we have placed in each other to ensure its continuance.

The need for this program has NOT diminished. It has escalated. On behalf of all of the Centers in New York State, we are asking you to continue this important fight with us. For 37 years we have worked cooperatively to eliminate the generational and situational poverty that women in transition and their families are facing. Once again, we are depending on you. We need your help to continue our positive impact on communities and families across our State. As you know, living in poverty has a profound impact on families. It places women and their children at risk for even greater problems like homelessness and violence. It places children at risk for health problems, malnutrition and academic failure. By securing our funding again this year, you are enabling us to build stronger communities by giving a woman all the tools she needs to get her family out of poverty.

DHP outcomes over the last 37 years clearly show that funding our programs is an investment in our State, not only for the present generation, but also for future generations. Helping low-income mothers find jobs and assisting them to become economically self-sufficient makes a difference in their children's lives and helps families make the difficult journey out of the generational poverty cycle. The DHP program is not only cost effective, it is an integral component of our State's economic success.

Again, thank you for continuing to partner with us and for all you have done to ensure funding for DHP Centers Statewide. **Please fund our Centers at a level of 3.5 million this year. We are depending on your action.**

Respectfully submitted, on behalf of the New York State Displaced Homemaker Programs,

**Dammi Herath, PhD**  
Executive Director  
Women's Opportunity Center  
315 N. Tioga Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 272-1520

**Elizabeth M. Miller, PHR**  
Executive Director  
Capital District Women's Employment & Resource Center  
175 Central Avenue  
3rd Floor, Albany, NY 12206  
(518) 225-3131

**Stephanie Eghigian**  
Executive Director  
Women's Employment & Resource Center  
185 Genesee St., Ste. 601  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 793-9700