

# NYC Commission on Women's Issues

## Quarterly Update – Summer 2010

### In this Issue

#### **Finances:**

##### Free Foreclosure Legal Services

Learn how to access free legal services for those at risk of home foreclosure

##### Fee-Free Bank Accounts for All New Yorkers

Protect your Money and Avoid Costly fees with an NYC SafeStart Accounts

#### **Safety:**

##### New York Opens Third Family Justice Center

Victims of Domestic Violence can meet with a prosecutor, speak with a trained counselor, and apply for housing and financial assistance in just one visit

#### **Business:**

##### Save Your Business Money

Learn how you can save money for your business with the Business Express Incentives Estimator

#### [Put it in your Calendar!](#)

Discover new organizations and events through our Events Calendar

#### In Other News

Events, Awards, and Updates of Interest

#### About the NYC Commission on Women's Issues

Learn more about what the Commission is doing for you

#### [Make a Suggestion](#)

What would you like to see in the next issue?

### **Free Foreclosure Legal Services**

NYC Service Legal Outreach is a new initiative that will provide free legal support for New Yorkers at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure. The program, offered through NYC Service with the help of the NYC Law Department and Center for New York City Neighborhoods, will increase the availability and effectiveness of free legal representation by training and dispatching 300 volunteer attorneys to help non-profit organizations expand their legal services.

The program is part of an ambitious home foreclosure prevention effort and will focus on supporting homeowners during the critical and mandatory settlement

conference stage of foreclosure proceedings. The foreclosure proceedings provide an opportunity for the homeowner and the bank to negotiate alternatives to foreclosure before the foreclosure process happens. Homeowners who receive legal advice during foreclosure have a better understanding of their options and obligations, and are more likely to avoid foreclosure.

If you or someone you know is a homeowner facing foreclosure proceedings, visit The [Center for NYC Neighborhoods](#), or call 311 to learn more about free legal services.

If you are interested in volunteering in this program, please visit [NYC Service](#) or call 311.

### **Fee-Free Bank Accounts for All New Yorkers**

Protect your Money and Avoid Costly Fees with an NYC SafeStart Account, offered through the Office of Financial Empowerment!

Open an account at one of ten participating banks and credit unions.

Tired of paying fees at check cashers? Frustrated by your bank's overdraft charges? Then sign up for the new NYC SafeStart Account, a safe banking account for all New Yorkers. As an NYC SafeStart account holder, you'll receive an ATM card for easy access to your money, but unlike other accounts, you'll never be charged overdraft fees. And there are no monthly fees, as long as you meet the minimum balance (\$25 or less).

#### **To find a branch in your area where you can open an NYC SafeStart Account, call 311!**

Participating financial institutions include Amalgamated Bank, Capital One Bank, Carver Bank, CheckSpring Bank, M&T Bank, Bethex Federal Credit Union, Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union, Lower East Side People's Federal Credit Union, Neighborhood Trust Federal Credit Union, and Union Settlement Federal Credit Union. For more information on the NYC SafeStart Account and other financial programs in the City, please visit the [Office of Financial Empowerment](#).

### **New York Opens Third Family Justice Center**

In April, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence made another great step in decreasing domestic violence by opening a Family Justice Center in the Bronx, the third in the City. The Family Justice Center is a one-stop service center where victims of domestic violence can get the help they need all in one place. Services include legal support, counseling, safety planning, assistance with filing police and probation reports, prosecution of domestic violence crimes, aid for elderly and/or disabled, and help assessing affordable housing and public benefits.

The first Family Justice Center opened in Brooklyn in 2005 and the second Center opened in Queens in 2008. These two centers together have seen over 80,000 visitors since they've opened, with a combined daily average of over 130 people a day.

The Bloomberg Administration has made significant strides in reducing domestic violence, starting with the appointment of Yolanda B. Jimenez as the first commissioner to head the new Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence in 2002. As a result of the City's focus on this issue, family related homicides have declined by 20% citywide over the last eight years.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, help is available 24-hours-a-day in all languages by calling 911, 311, or the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-621-HOPE (4673).

To learn more about City programs to help reduce domestic violence, including how you can help, visit the [Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence](#).

### **Save Your Business Money**

Are you launching or expanding your business in NYC? If you are one of the 50,000 women entrepreneurs in New York, *NYC Business Express Incentives Estimator* can help navigate through the myriad of business incentives available through City, State and Federal programs to save you money! These incentives include tax reductions, improved loan rates, and discount programs. By filling out a simple online questionnaire about your business, you can uncover a list of incentives for which you may be eligible for from a database of 44 different programs.

This new tool is part of [NYC Business Express](#), an interactive online tool created by the Department of Small Business Services. In addition to the Incentives Estimator, NYC Business Express provides online applications for necessary permits and licenses, and provides information on the requirements needed to start, operate or expand your business in New York City.

For more information, visit [NYC Business Express](#).

### **In Other News**

#### **[Mentor it Forward](#)**

Learn how you can get involved in NYC's speed-mentoring program!

#### **[Young Women Get Involved](#)**

Read about this year's NYC Young Women's Volunteer Summit and how young New Yorkers gave back to their community.

#### **[Quit Smoking Today!](#)**

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has a new campaign showing how quitting smoking can reverse the damage caused by cigarettes.

#### **[Get Counted!](#)**

If you haven't already returned your census form, open your door to the Census Taker and help New York be fully counted! The door-to-door phase started May 1st.

### **About the NYC Commission on Women's Issues**

The New York City Commission on Women's Issues (formerly the Commission on the Status of Women) was established by Mayoral Executive Order in 1975 as an advisory body to the Mayor on matters impacting the lives of New York City women. Currently, the Commission serves as an important vehicle through which women and families can connect with City services that support and address their needs.

We hope this newsletter will be an extension of this work. Not only will we share with you the newest initiatives and programs coming out of the City, but also we will help you understand how these efforts impact you as a woman.

For more information on our key programs such as the NYC Women's Resource Network, the NYC Young Women's Volunteer Summit and the NYC Ladders for Leaders program, please visit [www.nyc.gov/women](http://www.nyc.gov/women) to find out how you could benefit and/or participate today!

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