

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York State 2010

Notes on Action for a Better Community (ABC) Press Conference, June 30, 2010, Rochester, NY on release of Diana M. Pearce, *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York State 2010* (New York State Self-Sufficiency Steering Committee, 2010).

- 1) The publication is a complete updating of a 2000 report and the result of a NYS-wide collaborative effort. It's based on methodology by Dr. Pearce. It's one of 37 studies for states, the District of Columbia and New York City. According to Donna Addkison, Family Economic Security Program Director for Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), it enables us truthfully to say what a self-sufficient income without need for government assistance is. It lays this out for ten (10) family types by category of expense and county-by-county. Thus we can ask better and tougher questions, especially for policy and in this time of public budget constraints. The detailed tables are building blocks for communities, families and individuals.
- 2) James Norman, ABC President & CEO, stated that the study demonstrates the utter inadequacy of truly out-dated federal poverty-level standards and their bases (formulated in the 1960s), minimum wage guidelines, and pay levels for many lower-income occupations. It shows the way for work that needs to be done in job training, education, employment education, economic development, and public policy.
- 3) Policymakers must take this seriously. The study is solid basis for political advocacy. Some states and jurisdictions are already setting policy on the basis of their reports.
- 4) Sarah Lowery, Research Coordinator, Center for Women's Welfare, School of Social Work, University of Washington, called attention to key elements:
 - a) The approach, pp. 7-12 (esp. pp. 7-8); Figure 1, cost break-down items by % (p. 10); NYS map w/geographical differences, p. 12; Figure 4 compares standard w/ other guidelines (p. 13), Table 5, wages of NY's 10 largest occupations (p. 27).
 - b) Ways to use the standard in public education, advocacy, etc., pp. 32-34.
 - c) See < www.selfsufficiencystandard.org > for reports, more information. Website is by the Center for Women's Welfare, School of Social Work, University of Washington,
 - d) Monroe County chart, p. 71.
- 5) Other press conference participants:
 - a) Ivelisse Diaz, ABC client w/income 50% of self-sufficiency, demonstrates utility of the report. She calmly and clearly encouraged citizen interest and advocacy.
 - b) Brian Hetherington, Empire Justice Center, who posed reasonable and provocative questions for policymaker and citizen consideration.
- 6) For www.SMARTny.org: *Reality Check: Promoting Self-Sufficiency in the Public Workforce System: Working with Women, Youth and Ex-Offenders* (rev. ed.; Washington, D.C.: Wider Opportunities for Women, date?). 1st ed. 2006.
www.wowonline.org/resources/documents/RealityCheck2.pdf