

# *Pulling Together After 9-11*

## The Emergency Employment Clearinghouse Program

Final Report 2001-2004



The story of how a little known  
Congressionally funded partnership  
between labor and business helped put  
New York back to work after 9-11.

# The Emergency Employment Clearinghouse Program 2001 - 2004

## **Major Funding provided by**

The United States Congress

## **Additional Funding provided by**

The New York State AFL - CIO

The United Way September 11 Fund

Deutsche Bank

The New York Community Trust

The Rockefeller Foundation

The Andor Capital Management Foundation

The Civic Alliance

The McCormack Foundation

## **Participating Organizations**

Partnership for New York City

The New York City Central Labor Council

The Consortium for Worker Education

The New York State AFL - CIO

The Fiscal Policy Institute

The United States Department of Labor

The New York State Department of Labor

The United Way September 11 Fund

The Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

The Garment Industry Development Corporation

The Queens Economic Development Corporation

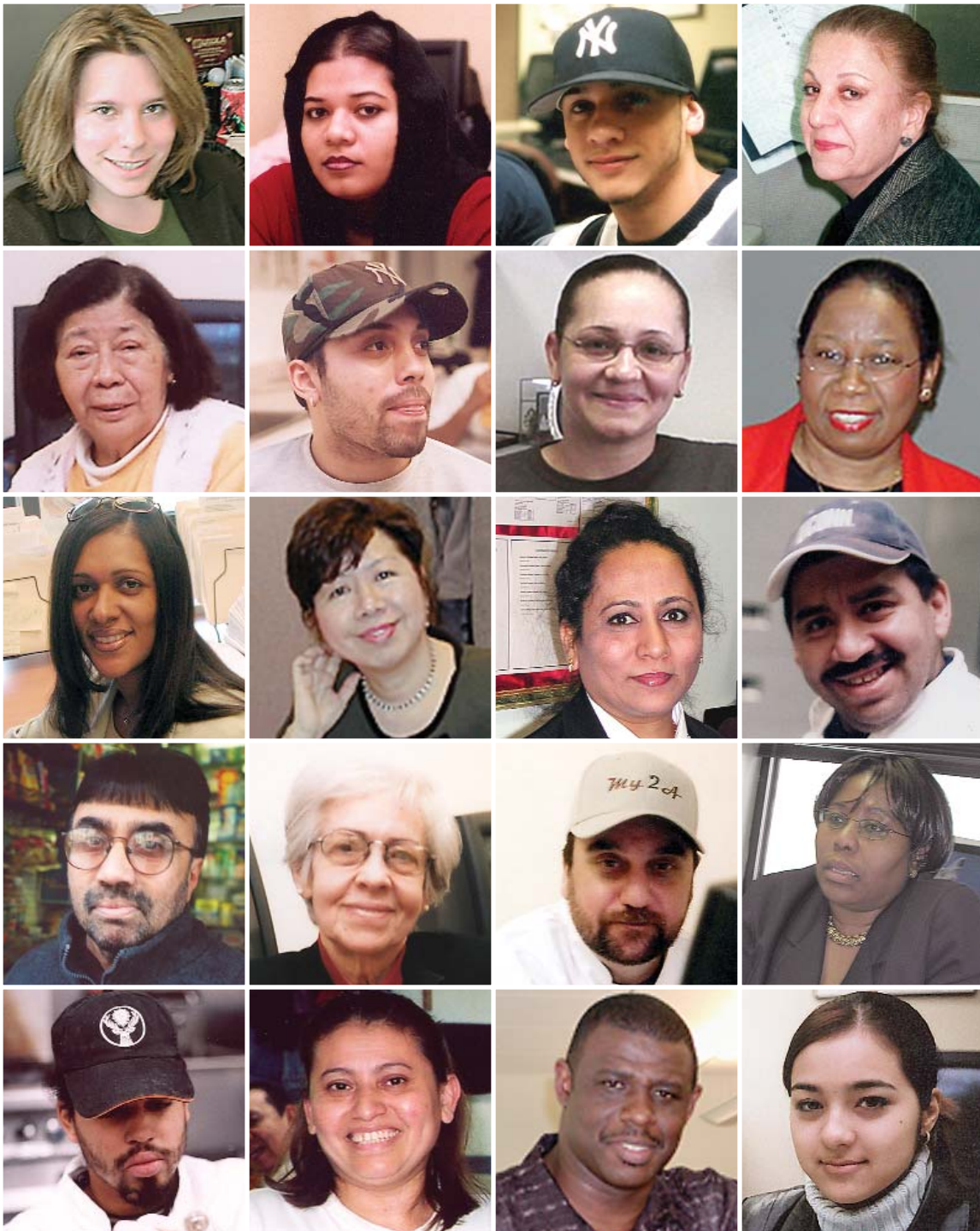
The Industrial Retention Network

UNITE - HERE

Local 1199-SEIU

The New York City Building Trades Employers Association

The New York City Building and Construction Trades Council



"The success of the EEC program was measured by 7,000 new jobs for unemployed New Yorkers and emergency financial aid that enabled more than 300 businesses to survive and retain 3,000 of their workers."

The morning after 9-11, it seemed that all of New York was asking one question: "What can we do to help?"



The view from the Fitch Printing Company after 9-11. Overnight they lost their equipment and their home.

The city was numb with grief. The economy was in a freefall. Downtown Manhattan was an economic wasteland. Overnight tens of thousands of New Yorkers were out of work. Massive layoffs were already beginning. Businesses all over the city were facing an uncertain future.

## “What can we do to help?”

**F**or the city's business and labor leaders the answer was simple: get New Yorkers back to work and help businesses survive.

One vehicle that emerged to accomplish that task was the Emergency Employment Clearinghouse program – or EEC. It was supported with \$32.5 million in Congressional emergency funding in early 2002 and grew out of a partnership between the city's labor and business communities.

For the next two and half years, the hundreds of men and women who staffed the employment program used these emergency dollars to assist tens of thousands of jobless 9-11 New Yorkers and hundreds of struggling small businesses.

**And thanks to a program designed to get results as fast as possible, the success of EEC surpassed all goals and expectations.**

Success was measured by 7,000 new jobs for laid off 9-11 workers. It was measured by \$15 million in emergency aid that enabled more than 300 small businesses not only survive but retain or rehire 3,000 of their employees. Success also came in the form of employment related education and training services for 8,000 New Yorkers to help them land a job.

The EEC program also funneled \$7 million in services to the Lower Manhattan community, providing jobs and assistance to small businesses in devastated communities like Chinatown, Battery Park City, the Financial District, Tribeca and the Lower East Side.

**The is the story of the Emergency Employment Clearinghouse—how it worked, who it helped, why it was a success and how it might be used today to deal with the long term economic effects of 9-11.**

**T**he morning after the worst day in their city's history, New Yorkers got up and went to work. That one gesture sent an unmistakable message to terrorists everywhere and put New York on the road to recovery.

**B**ut for tens of thousands of other New Yorkers, there was no work to go to. Many businesses faced ruin. Mass layoffs were already beginning.

The plight of the laid off 9-11 worker was the focus of a morning staff meeting on September 12th at the **Consortium for Worker Education** (CWE), a non-profit organization with 20 years of experience in employment related education and training programs.

"That morning we were all still stunned by what had happened to our city and our fellow New Yorkers the day before," remembered **CWE Executive Director Joe McDermott**. "We knew that overnight tens of thousands of New Yorkers had lost their jobs. Our short term goal was obvious: connect 9-11 laid off workers to jobs, any jobs, and get them back to work as soon as possible."

*"There were 50 to 60 people lined up for jobs.  
Waiters, executives, limo drivers, bank tellers, deli workers."*

Few organizations were as well equipped as the Consortium to respond to this overnight employment emergency. Established in 1985, CWE managed a network of education and training programs for a million New York City Central Labor Council union members. It was also operating seven publicly funded Worker Career Centers where unemployed New Yorkers had access to employment services to connect them to the city's job market. CWE also enjoyed a longstanding and effective working relationship with employers and the city's business community. The Consortium knew the city's world of work, its vast network of unions and employers and its economic and workforce trends.

With such a network already in place, CWE hit the ground running on September 12th. All of its programs and resources immediately focused on the 9-11 unemployed. In a matter of days, an emergency employment center had been

established on two floors at their Manhattan headquarters. Two emergency employment hotlines were set up, one for people who had lost their job, the other for employers who had one to offer. Once the city's media began to spread the word, the phones began to ring off the hook. Laid off 9-11 workers began to show up looking for help. The business community and labor unions responded magnificently with job offers.

**“In one day, the city had taken a \$17 billion economic hit.  
Job losses were estimated at 108,500.”**



An EEC job counselor taking information from a New York worker, unemployed as a result of 9-11.

**Craig Walker**, who managed CWE's emergency effort, recalled the first few weeks. “On the first day, before we opened our doors, we had 50 to 60 people lined up ready to sign up,” he said.” There were waiters, executives, limo drivers, bank tellers, deli workers. We matched them with jobs that business owners and

labor unions had called in. Every day was a 12 hour day. No one complained. It was therapeutic to be helping. Every job match was a victory and there was a great feeling among the staff.”

As workers were processed, job counselors realized that many were suffering psychological and emotional damage from their 9-11 experiences. Along with trying to get them work, they began referring them to on site counselors or other outside counseling programs.

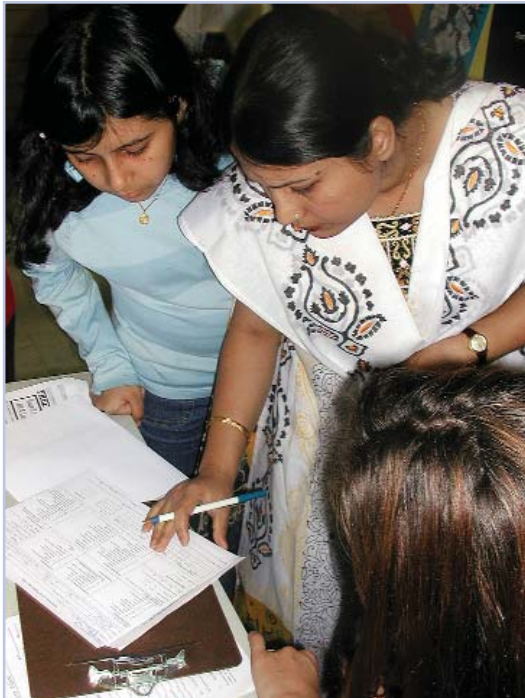
Realizing a longer range strategy would be required, the Consortium reached out to the **New York City Central Labor Council** and its 400 affiliated union locals and the **Partnership for New York City**, the major voice for business in the city. Taking the lead to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with the emergency, they conferred with other labor and business leaders, elected officials, city and state agencies, non-profits and organizations like **The United Way**.

The Consortium also commissioned the **Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI)**, a leading think tank and research organization, to conduct a post 9-11 job loss study.

It took just two weeks for the FPI to issue its preliminary report on how hard New York had been hit. The news was grim. In one day, the city had taken a \$17 billion economic hit. Job losses were originally estimated at 108,500 – or 2.4 percent of the city's workforce – and \$6.7 billion in lost wages.

The Institute's revised report, issued in early November, confirmed most of the preliminary report's dire findings. Almost 80,000 New Yorkers had been laid off,

60 percent of them low wage earners who averaged \$11 an hour. Another 76,000 workers avoided layoffs by working less and earning less. More than half the layoffs – about 42,000 jobs – came from five industries – restaurants, retail, hotels, air transport and building services. More than 5,000 workers in the securities industry lost their jobs and over 20,000 high finance jobs had moved out of the city.



A Queens woman, accompanied by her daughter, signs up for EEC training services.

**“Almost 17,000 unemployed New Yorkers passed through EEC employment centers in the first three months.”**

“Before the attacks of 9-11, New York City was already feeling the effects of the national recession and its unemployment rate was on the increase,” said FPI Deputy Director **James Parrott**. “So the attacks devastated an already weakened local economy. The city was faced with an immediate employment crisis of immense proportions.”

In November, in a show of support for the wounded city, the U.S. Congress convened in Downtown Manhattan for the first time in over 200 years. At one meeting between city leaders and the Congressional leadership about what New York's immediate needs were, **Central Labor Council President Brian McLaughlin**

made a plea for funding. "It is all well and good that you have set aside billions to assist the airline industry and our major corporations," he said. "But you also have an obligation to the workers of this city and their families who are in dire straits. We're facing an employment emergency. Give us the funding and we will put New Yorkers back to work and help the businesses that had to lay them off. Do not leave our workers behind."

As the meeting broke up, McLaughlin was approached by **Rep. Bill Thomas**, a California Republican and chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee. "I heard what you said about getting people back to work," he said. "We do want to help. Get a proposal to me as soon as you can and let's see what

we can do." A door had opened.



Training and education programs were important elements in getting New Yorkers skills they needed to land a job after 9-11.

A proposal from the **Partnership for New York City**, the **New York City Central Labor Council** and the **Consortium** was on Thomas' desk within ten days. The New York Congressional delegation then went to work building support for the proposal in Washington.

**"The New York Congressional delegation went to work building support for the EEC program."**

Two key supporters were **Rep. John Sweeney**, a Republican from Troy and **Rep. James Walsh**, a Republican from Syracuse. They both carried the appropriation through any barriers and particularly cleared the way with the Administration and with **U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Elaine Chao**. Both Rep. Sweeney and Rep. Walsh supported the appropriation at the crucial White House meeting when the post 9-11 aid package to New York was discussed.

**Senators Chuck Schumer** and **Hillary Rodham Clinton** worked hard to ensure support. Also playing a key role was **Rep. Charles Rangel**, the ranking minority member of the New York delegation and the co-chair of the important House

Ways and Means Committee. He was joined by **Rep. Nita Lowey, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Rep. Joseph Crowley, Rep. Jerrold Nadler, Rep. Jose Serrano** and other members of the New York delegation.

Shortly thereafter, \$32.5 million was included as part of a larger emergency relief package for New York City. **The Emergency Employment Clearinghouse – EEC** – was a reality. “By partnering with the Consortium and the labor unions, we knew we could respond quickly to what was a real crisis for unemployed New Yorkers and the small business community,” said **Kathryn Wylde**, President and CEO of the **Partnership for New York City**. “We are all proud of what the EEC program was able to accomplish. It demonstrates that business and labor partnerships can work to everyone's advantage.”

The Consortium would take the lead in managing and coordinating the three year emergency effort, supported by New York's business and labor communities. A two pronged strategy was developed. One strategy would target laid off 9-11 workers and get them employment related services leading to a job and/or training they might need to acquire employable job skills. The other effort would utilize \$15 million in emergency financial aid to struggling small and mid-sized businesses. This part of the program would provide short term wage subsidies to help businesses get back on their feet and retain workers marked for layoffs or rehire those already let go. Specific program goals were established in several categories. To ensure accountability, the program would be closely monitored and audited by the federal **Department of Labor's** regional office in New York City.

**“The city's union leadership played a leading role in identifying jobs and working with employers.”**

To accomplish their goals, CWE hired more than 200 EEC staff – job counselors, job developers, managers, business services personnel, business sector specialists and administrative staff. Many of them were hired from the 9-11 jobless pool and they soon began helping others find a job. In addition, a citywide network of business, labor and community-based organizations and other non-profit partners was established to deliver EEC program services to every borough, with emphasis on the hardest hit Manhattan communities south of 14th Street. “It was absolutely necessary that we worked in every borough and partnered with community, business, and union groups,” **Joe McDermott** said.

The city's union leadership and rank and file also played a leading role in identifying jobs and passing the word to businesses that employed their members about the assistance the EEC program could provide. Among the most active were the **New York City Central Labor Council** and its members, **UNITE** and **HERE** locals that represent garment and clothing workers and the member unions of the **New York City Building and Construction Trades Council**. Across the city, other unions got involved in the program, including **Local 1199 SEIU** hospital workers, the **United Auto Workers**, the **Amalgamated Industrial Union**, **Actors Equity**, the **Bakers Union** and others.

“The citywide business and labor network EEC put together was key to its success.”



This worker at Fitch Printing was out of work for a year before a wage subsidy grant to Fitch from the EEC program enabled the firm to rehire him. He and most of those rehired as a result of the grant are still on the job today.

Early in 2002, ads about the EEC program began to play on **Bloomberg Radio**, a station that concentrated on the financial, corporate and business communities. Every morning and evening during “drive time” the ads urged business owners, executives and managers to call the EEC Helpline if they had jobs, knew about jobs or were in trouble themselves. The response was overwhelming.

**Tavern on the Green** and other restaurants called to hire unemployed waiters and kitchen staff. **The League of Voluntary Hospitals** partnered with **Local 1199** of the hospital workers union and pledged a thousand jobs. Businesses in financial trouble called to inquire about the wage subsidy program.

Early results in 2002 indicated how intense the need for help was among unemployed workers. During the first three months, almost 17,000 unemployed New Yorkers passed through the EEC offices. More than 6,500 registered for services.

When laid off 9-11 workers showed up at an EEC employment center, they were guaranteed a comprehensive, professional program with plenty of one-on-one attention. First, a full assessment of their skills, work history, education, and communication skills was made. Then they would be assigned to their own job counselor who would work with them to develop an employment plan. Many had employable skills that could be matched to positions in the EEC Job Bank. Others needed education and training assistance, ranging from basic job readiness skills like resume writing to a 10 week English As A Second Language (ESL) course to four months of study at an approved professional or vocational school. All had access to computers, phones, copy machines, postage, and tools necessary to link into the world of work.

**“EEC offered unemployed workers a comprehensive and professional employment program.”**



The first graduating class from the EEC's culinary training program included Apolinar Romero (standing, far right) and Alejandro Santa Maria (kneeling, far left). This training program enabled these former Windows on the World restaurant workers to land better jobs in the restaurant industry.

In Manhattan, a special unit was established to deal with the many professional employees who had lost their jobs after 9-11. All of these combined resources led to thousands of meaningful jobs.

**Abdoul Deen**, who had immigrated to the United States from his native Sierra Leone 1990, was employed as the office manager at an office equipment

firm in Downtown Manhattan when the planes struck the World Trade Center. By November he had been laid off and in early 2002 had made his way to an EEC employment center. After updating his resume, he began an EEC assisted job search which yielded no early results. Looking for alternatives, EEC counselor **Austin Childs** asked Deen if was interested in teaching and mentioned the CUNY's Teaching Fellows program. With EEC's help, Deen applied for the pro-

gram and was accepted. Today, as a New York City high school teacher, he continues to teach students at Chelsea Vocational High School in Manhattan, while pursuing a master's degree at Lehman College.

"I always wanted to be a teacher," Deen said. "I am fortunate that the EEC program was available to me and that Austin Childs pointed me in the right direction. It opened up an entire new career for me."

**Apolinar Romero** and **Alejandro Santa Maria** had both worked as kitchen helpers at Windows on the World restaurant on the top of the World Trade Center, but were fortunate to have been scheduled for the night shift on September 11. For months they looked for work but could not connect. Through their union and the **Restaurant Opportunity Center** (ROC), they were referred to an EEC center, where a job counselor suggested they consider a program to upgrade their skills.

Supported by federal training dollars, they enrolled in a six week culinary skills training course at a baking and culinary program in Queens operated by CWE and supported by the **Central Labor Council**, the **Bakers Union** and bakery owners. There they learned basic culinary skills – preparation of salads, sandwich platters, short order dishes, and training in knife and kitchen skills – and earned a culinary skills certificate.

["I always wanted to be a teacher. I am fortunate that EEC was there for me. It opened up an entire new career for me."](#)

"Our research indicated that there was a real need in professional kitchens and corporate catering operations for entry level workers with skills," said **Steve Hill**, a professional chef who manages the culinary program. "We were able to place most of our people right away. With these basic skills they can grow within the food services field."

Today both Apolinar and Alejandro are working in the food services field, one as a line cook in a Manhattan restaurant and the other in a corporate catering operation.

**Sandra Bensliman** credits her present good fortune to a day three years ago when she enrolled in the EEC program. "Through the EEC program I was able to obtain a grant to attend a business training program" she said. "I learned much from the training and it instilled me with the confidence to get back into the workforce." Sandra soon found work after completing her studies. Since then, Bensliman has been awarded a certificate of achievement, a pay raise and has received outstanding evaluations for her work. "I will be eternally grateful for the EEC program," she said. "I only hope that the program continues for others who find themselves in challenging unemployment situations."

The other major element of the EEC program was a business and employment stabilization program targeted at small and mid-sized businesses and their employees. The strategy centered on providing short term wage subsidies to stabilize struggling businesses and help them to keep their workers employed, rehire those who had been laid off, or hire new workers. The program provided wage subsidies of between 50 and 60 percent of an employee's base salary for a period of 90 days. Companies that retained an employee at their own cost 90 days after the end of the subsidy received a 10 percent incentive.

*“The strategy centered on providing short term wage subsidies to stabilize struggling businesses.”*



A worker at Martin Greenfield Clothing manufacturers in Brooklyn was able to remain on the job after an EEC wage subsidy package avoided layoffs at the Brooklyn plant.

“The program worked because it was a real partnership between our program and the employer,” said **Bruce Herman**, who managed the program. “It required the employer to match the public investment we made. It was a quick, cost effective way to assist businesses keep their people on the job and contribute to the tax base instead of signing up for unemployment or welfare. And we know now that the majority of businesses in the program were able to recover and grow and that most of their employees remained.”

The program hired a staff of specialists who were assigned to various industry sectors, including arts and entertainment, transportation, health care, food services, manufacturing, retail, construction, information technology and finance. Working with the **New York Industrial Retention Network** and citywide business trade organizations and unions, they would seek out companies in need, guide them through the process and monitor their progress.

# EEC Performance vs. Goals

0%

100%

## Contacts

Goal 103,000

Actual 118,117

Percentage of Goal Met **115%**

## Reached/Appointments Set

Goal 30,900

Actual 59,435

Percentage of Goal Met **192%**

## Registered for Services

Goal 20,600

Actual 24,195

Percentage of Goal Met **117%**

## Job Placements

Goal 5,150

Actual 7,012

Percentage of Goal Met **138%**

## Wage Subsidy/Jobs Retained

Goal 3,331

Actual 3,323

Percentage of Goal Met **100%**

## Training/Education Services

Goal 5,701

Actual 6,453

Percentage of Goal Met **115%**

Accountability was a crucial element. The EEC did not simply write checks. It required businesses to first provide detailed financial information, including tax returns and payroll information documenting a negative economic impact on their operations directly following 9-11. After their eligibility was established, an EEC panel reviewed and selected the participants. Employers were required to file monthly invoices to the EEC to ensure that the subsidies were going to real employees.

**“Unlike unemployment or welfare checks, short term wage subsidies benefitted both workers and business owners.”**



The happy crew of owners and workers at Fitch Printing celebrate their new plant in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. Located directly across the street from the South Tower of the World Trade Center, their plant and equipment were largely destroyed on 9-11. An EEC wage subsidy grant enabled the company to rehire seven employees laid off after 9-11.

Unlike unemployment or welfare checks, short term wage subsidies benefitted both workers and business owners. For example, take the case of **Tech Sew Manufacturing** in Chinatown, a community economically devastated after 9-11. Their monthly sales dropped 34 percent. Working with an EEC funded partnership between the **Garment Industry Development Corporation** and the garment union

locals of **UNITE/HERE**, Tech Sew became aware of the wage subsidy program. As a result of a \$101,600 wage subsidy agreement, 25 workers retained their jobs, enabling the company to continue to bid on new work. Their workforce stayed intact and as things improved, they were able to add even more workers.

The economic ripple effect from the wage subsidy strategy can reach far beyond the business and employees it directly benefits. For example, the **Queens Theater In The Park** was about to cancel 12 upcoming productions and staff members were put on a part time status. A wage subsidy contract for \$80,000 with the EEC

enabled the theater to go forward with all its productions and return 13 employees to full time work.

“By being able to go forward, we not only were able to bring back our own people, we were able to pay all the performing artists and the casual labor force that only works if there's a show,” explained Executive Director **Jeffrey Rosenstock**.

Located across the street from the World Trade Center, **Fitch Printers** prided itself as the city's oldest printing concern. Its offices and most of its printing equipment were destroyed on 9-11 leaving the company and its 75 employees without a workplace. The company struggled to stay alive, sharing another printing firm's office and contracting out much of its work. It took the company a year to find and equip new space in Manhattan and start to rehire many of its laid off employees. **Adam Friedman** of the **New York Industrial Retention Network**, a partner in the EEC program, linked Fitch President and CEO **George Pavlides** with EEC sector specialist **Elizabeth Crowley**. Fitch signed on for a \$42,000 wage subsidy, enabling them to hire seven former employees.

“A Queens company dependent with two hard hit industries – food services and the airlines – used the EEC wage subsidy program to weather the storm.”

“After what we had been through,” said **John Fitch**, a fourth generation owner, “the wage subsidy program was a breath of fresh air for us. It allowed us to bring on employees who were going to be important in helping us grow the company again. Five of them are still with us, and we are growing again.”

Thanks to an EEC-funded Downtown Manhattan partnership between labor, business and community based organizations, over 190 downtown businesses took advantage of the wage subsidy program, saving over 1,900 jobs in the garment, food services, healthcare, information technology, financial services , manufacturing, retail and the arts and entertainment industries.

A Queens company aligned with two hard hit industries - food services and the airlines - used the EEC wage subsidy program to weather the storm. When airports were closed and tourism declined after 9-11, the **Flying Food Group** lost 15 percent of its airline food business. It was forced to lay off 125 workers as losses continued. With assistance from their union, a wage subsidy contract allowed the company to carry on during this difficult period and retain 47 workers who were scheduled for layoffs. As the business slowly improved, Flying Foods increased its workforce.

Out in Brooklyn, EEC sector specialist **Lou LaCarbonara** learned from the **UNITE/HERE** union locals and the **Garment Industry Development Corporation** that **Martin Greenfield Clothiers**, one of the largest clothing manufacturers left in Brooklyn with 175 employees, was in financial trouble. Greenfield, which makes top of the line hand-tailored clothing for clients like Brooks Brothers and Neiman Marcus, was having trouble getting its imported fabrics and also experienced a decline in orders because of the industry wide downturn. The owner, 74 year old Martin Greenfield, a legend in the high end clothing business, signed up for an EEC wage subsidy grant of \$94,000, saving the jobs of 27 employees.

**“Wage subsidy help was so important in keeping our people on the job.”**



Martin Greenfield, owner of Martin Greenfield Clothiers in Brooklyn, works with fabric on the floor of his plant.

“We’re nothing without our workers,” Greenfield said. “We were emptying our pockets to keep them on the job. We were really in trouble. That’s why your wage subsidy help was so important in keeping our people on the job. It helped us get through the worst. Now we’ve added even more workers as business improves.”

Staten Island businesses were hurting too. **Staten Island Travel** lost over \$250,000 in cancelled reservations. Payments had to be refunded to clients. Losses amounted to \$20,000 a month and the small firm had to borrow money from several sources to stay open. With a \$12,545 EEC wage subsidy contract, the company was able to keep its five employees as the business slowly but surely returned to profitability.

Up in the Bronx, **Louis Baldinger & Sons**, manufacturers and restorers of lighting fixtures, was hit hard by the downturn in the hospitality sector, where much of their business was concentrated. With the help the **International**

**Brotherhood of Electrical Workers**, Baldinger was able to sign a wage subsidy contract for \$17,000 which resulted in the retention of three workers and the rehiring of two more.

The year 2002 was the most intense for both parts of the EEC program as the national and local economic picture darkened. But nowhere was it darker than in New York City.

**“In 2002, New York City accounted for a staggering 18 percent of all job losses in the nation.”**



Lower Broadway news stand owner Mike "the Mayor" Patel, suffered huge losses after 9-11. A small EEC grant helped him to hang on. Today he's still selling papers and lucky lottery tickets. "God bless America", says Mike.

According to the **Center for an Urban Future**, in 2002 New York City accounted for 97 percent of New York State's job losses, even though the city had only 42 percent of the jobs. New York City also accounted for a staggering 18 percent of all job losses in the nation, even though it represented only 2.8 percent of the jobs. The Fiscal Policy Institute reported that by the time the city's economy bottomed out, New York had lost 237,000 jobs, a 6.3 percent decline, more than three times the national job decline.

During this time, the EEC program began to expand economic strategies designed to lead to better outcomes for the unemployed and greater value for private employers. This "industry sector" approach works most effectively when unions, employers, government and founda-

tions collaborate to map their regional labor markets and create "industry specific" development plans for workers and employers.

To support the post 9-11 rebuilding of New York, in 2002 the Consortium formed an industry sector partnership. The partners were the New York City Building Trade Employers Association (BTEA), a trade organization representing 25 con-

## Thanks To An EEC Grant, Musical Goes From Bust To Broadway

After 9-11, the small off-Broadway **Vineyard Theater** on West 15th Street was in deep financial trouble. They were not alone. The city's arts/entertainment/culture industry, which provides in excess of \$13 billion to the city's economy and accounts for 120,000 jobs, was also hurting. New Yorkers were not going to the theater and out of towners were not coming to New York.



The cast of Avenue Q on Broadway.

By early 2002, the Vineyard was about to lay off 15 workers and cancel an upcoming production. When they heard about the EEC wage subsidy program to help struggling businesses, they made their case to EEC Specialist **Heather Beaudoin**. The Vineyard was approved by the EEC review committee for an \$88,000 wage subsidy package. It enabled them to retain their employees and also go ahead with an inventive new musical, **Avenue Q**.

Avenue Q opened on February 11 at the 129 seat Vineyard to great reviews and ran until May 11, helping the local Union Square economy to revive. The rest, of course, is history. So inventive was the show that Broadway beckoned.

After opening in the 2002 season and winning the Tony Award for Best Musical, Avenue Q has run on Broadway for three years, with no sign of letting up. A national tour is planned. From a modest wage subsidy grant grew a Broadway hit, employing stagehands, ushers, actors, not to mention the multiplier effects for restaurants, parking garages, hotels. The show has poured millions of dollars into the New York City economy and continues to do so. It has also given people a million laughs.

## When The Ax Fell On Dan Gonzalez

In November 2001, the ax fell on **Dan Gonzalez**. The 46-year-old computer professional from Upper Manhattan was laid off from his position as an Assistant Vice President at Merrill Lynch, one of several thousand the firm let go after 9-11. With over 15 years experience at American Express, Mount Sinai Medical Center and Merrill Lynch, Mr. Gonzalez found himself on the street looking for a job in the IT or financial fields, two sectors that had been hard hit as a result of 9-11.

For him, his wife Elizabeth and teenage daughter, Gina, Christmas 2001 was full of uncertainty. After the New Year, he heard about CWE's Emergency Employment Clearinghouse (EEC) program and came in to sign up for services. EEC's **Jeff Vargas** met with him about employment strategies and told him about the federally funded Individual Training Accounts which provided \$4500 for training. Gonzalez applied for and obtained an ITA. He used it to enroll in a 20-week computer security course at **New Concepts Computer Training** in Queens, where he was able to learn important new skills. Once he had those new skills, and an updated resume to reflect them, Gonzalez went through several interviews with ABN-AMRO, a high profile investment bank. That led to a job offer that Mr. Gonzalez accepted in November 2002.

Not only was he back at work, but making 10 percent more than he had earned at his previous job. Today he is still on the job. "I can't say enough good things about my experience with the EEC program." Mr. Gonzalez said. "Being able to add to my skills through the Individual Training Account was the key element in my being able to effectively compete in this very tough job market. The EEC program was there for me and I'll never forget them for it."

tractor associations and 1,500 construction firms, and the New York City Building and Construction Trades Council, which encompasses all construction unions. Construction is a \$16 billion industry that employs approximately 250,000 workers in the region. As a first step, CWE financed the first ever in depth study of the construction industry by the Fiscal Policy Institute. The study, "Building Jobs: A Blueprint for the New New York", identified several serious challenges facing the industry on the labor and management side.

**"We have been able take a current look at our industry and begin to plan strategically for the future."**

"By working cooperatively with the Consortium and the city's Building Trades Council unions, we have been able take a current look at our industry and begin



The Construction Skills 2000 program, supported by a partnership between labor and management in the construction industry, prepares city high school students for careers in the construction industry.

to plan strategically for the future," said

**BTEA President Louis J. Coletti.**

"The industry partnership we forged between management and labor sets out initiatives that will allow the New York construction industry to be prepared and competitive over the next decade and beyond."

The Consortium also continues to be involved with two other industry partnerships, including one with the **Garment Industry Development Corporation**. The Corporation is a single union, multi-firm, labor management partnership that covers hundreds of New York area employers and more than 30,000 union garment workers who are members of **UNITE**. Addressing a industry wide decline, one partnership initiative led to a new export program that grew garment industry jobs amid an overall industry decline. The partnership was also a major player in the EEC program to provide post 9-11 relief to a devastated garment industry in Chinatown and elsewhere.

Several business, labor and government partnerships are flourishing at a multi-service training center in Long Island City in Queens managed by the Consortium and the NYC Central Labor Council. One collaborative effort between the Consortium, Bakers Union Local #3 and baking industry owners has resulted in a program that equips union bakers with new skills required in a marketplace that now demands hand made artisan breads in addition to mass produced products. At the same center, CWE partners with the Central Labor Council, the Building and Construction Trades Council and the Building Trades Employers Association in a construction skills program that targets city high school students and graduates for construction careers. A culinary skills program provides unemployed union restaurant workers and teenagers who are “aging out” of the city's foster care program with marketable food service industry skills. State and city funds also support ESL, computer literacy and other education courses open to all New Yorkers.

The Consortium continues to conduct research and develop future plans for several other important New York City industry sectors, including Arts /Entertainment/Culture, Food Service/Hospitality, Retail, Transportation and Healthcare.

In the end, the Emergency Employment Clearinghouse program represented an effective federal investment in New York City during her darkest hour. The returns on the investment are new jobs, stronger businesses and an “industry sector” model for the future.

With lessons learned from the EEC program, the Consortium, the Central Labor Council, the Partnership for New York City and their business, government and foundation partners will continue to develop the model as a solution to the city's workforce and economic development challenges.



# The Emergency Employment Clearinghouse Program

## Why It Worked

The Elements of a Successful Workforce Development  
and Business Assistance Program.

- Adequate Funding
- Labor/Business Partnerships
- Economic and Labor Research
- Program Flexibility
- Media Outreach Campaign
- Targeted Business Sector Strategy -
  - Research and Target Specific Business Sectors
  - Target Training for Expanding Job Sectors
  - Target Use Of Short Term Wage Subsidy For Struggling Businesses
  - Worker Retention Policy Instead Of Unemployment
- Getting The Jobless Back To Work
  - Thorough Individual, Personalized Assessment
  - Develop Employment Plan With Customer
  - One-On-One Counseling
  - Training, Education and Skills Upgrade
  - Effective Job Placement through Labor/Business Partnerships
  - Follow Up
- Accountability
  - Performance Based Model
  - Quality Control
  - Internal Audits
  - Government Audits and Oversight

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