



New York Communities Organizing Fund, Inc.

2012-2013 Annual Report

New York Communities Organizing Fund, Inc. (NYCOFI) is a 501(c)(3) community-based organization established in 2010. We seek to empower low and moderate income New Yorkers to help themselves through public education, advocacy, research, and direct services. We work to improve the economic security and well-being of low income and people of color communities throughout New York State.

2-4 Nevins Street, 2nd Floor | Brooklyn, NY 11217

347.756.4949 | www.nycofi.org

NEW YORK COMMUNITIES ORGANIZING FUND, INC.

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Dear NYCOFI Friends and Supporters,

I am honored to have begun my term as Chair of the Board of Directors of New York Communities Organizing Fund, Inc. (NYCOFI) in May of 2013.

NYCOFI was founded in 2010 as a 501(c)(3) dedicated to providing public education, advocacy, research, and direct services for low and moderate income New Yorkers. Our first two years were spent developing a strong foundation and launching essential programs with our colleague organizations, especially New York Communities for Change (NYCC).

Our third year was one full of transition, as we brought on Carlie Steen as the organization's third executive director. Unfortunately, we struggled through the deteriorating health and eventual loss of Jon Kest, head of NYCC. Jon "organized" me to serve on the NYCOFI Board and he is greatly missed.

Still, there were positive developments during 2012. We produced our first policy paper: *Charter Schools in Public School Buildings: Best Practices for Co-Location*, created a new website, activated our work on Facebook and Twitter, increased the clients we served through our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, and ended with our largest organizational budget to date.

The first half of 2013 has been about moving forward: Working together with Jonathon Westin and the other leaders of NYCC to develop relationships with foundation friends and supporters, expanding our VITA program through pilot projects, and finalizing our second major policy paper, focused on the plight of low wage workers in New York City.

As we move forward, the Board, staff and I are excited about working towards improving housing, schools, and economic security for all New Yorkers.

I want thank Mark Peters, our outgoing Board Chair, for his exceptional leadership during the first three years of NYCOFI's existence, and for his continued service on the NYCOFI Board. I am prepared to work hard to continue growing and strengthening the organization and the people we serve.

In community,

Andrew Weltman
Board Chair



PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NYCOFI works collaboratively with New York Communities for Change (NYCC) to advance social, racial, economic, and climate justice on the city, state, and federal levels through strategic community organizing, timely and rigorous policy research, and extensive, durable grassroots base building and leadership development. NYCOFI sponsors organizing projects and also carries out research and direct services work. Current programming includes free tax preparation, workers' rights organizing, research on minimum wage and living wage issues, and education organizing and research to prevent inequitable co-locations with existing school. Along with NYCC, we:

- Helped start the largest movement of fast food workers in the country;
- Launched a pioneering campaign to rid schools of PCBs that is now serving as a model for the country; and
- Activated hundreds of community residents to take part in the civic life of their community.

In addition, we are involved in campaigns to improve schools by increasing parent and community participation, prevent foreclosures by escalating pressure on banks to treat borrowers fairly, organize tenants to secure repairs in their building as well as long-term affordable housing, promote workers' rights through a large scale low wage worker organizing effort, fight housing discrimination and exclusionary zoning, and ensure a fair and just rebuilding for Hurricane Sandy victims.

Specific Accomplishments

- Helped to win nearly \$2 million in back wages for low wage workers who were illegally denied minimum wage and overtime pay, including grocery store and car wash workers.
- Participated in growing a nationwide movement of low wage restaurant workers.
- Published our first major policy paper: *Charter Schools in Public School Buildings: Best Practices for Co-Location*, while working in coalition to help stop school closings and the co-locations of charter schools within traditional public schools.
- Provided support to help victims of Hurricane Sandy navigate the governmental bureaucracy while trying to return to their homes.
- Supported New York Communities for Change in their efforts on Long Island and in New York City to increase civic participation among immigrants and disenfranchised populations as well as secure neighborhood victories.
- Aided the worker rights program that has held more than 50 leadership meetings of more than 1,300 low wage workers who are taking a leading role in organizing their colleagues around the county.

NYCOFI is now moving forward toward its fourth year of existence with an innovative and ambitious agenda:

1. Providing policy research and communications capacity to build broad support for **worker rights**, including producing a needs assessment and policy paper on implementing a living wage in New York.
2. Engaging in public education and advocacy efforts for policy and administrative reforms to preserve and expand **affordable housing** and eliminate **housing discrimination**, especially in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.
3. Stabilizing neighborhoods through **preventing foreclosures** and building a strategy to reclaim neighborhoods by promoting an ambitious housing agenda through education around the mayoral election.
4. Building off of our successful paper on co-locations, initiating a strategic communications campaign to educate New York City residents about disparities in local schools and racial justice as part of a larger effort to increase access to **quality public education**.
5. Educating the community about hazards such as PCBs to **promote healthy and safe communities**.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Innovating Grassroots Policy Research

Our Policy Papers are part of broader campaigns that have real impact.

Middle School Test Prep

In May of 2011, we surveyed guidance counselors and test prep companies in Brooklyn to learn whether students in certain low income areas lack access to affordable preparation for the Specialized High School Admission Test.

Education Policy

In January of 2013, we published our first Policy Paper on co-locations entitled, *Charter Schools in Public School Buildings: Best Practices for Co-Location*.

The Effect of Foreclosures on New York City

With NYCC, NYCOFI released *How the Foreclosure Crisis is Costing New York City Millions and the Economic Stimulus that Would Result from Action by Local Government*, in March 2013.

Bringing Hundreds of Thousands Back to Our Communities

In the first three years of our tax program, NYCOFI has outreached to thousands of residents in low income neighborhoods, preparing more than 1,300 returns and helping families claim more than \$685,000 in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) through our Volunteer Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. In 2013, we filed 851 returns, helping our clients receive more than \$1.2 million in refunds and almost \$375,000 in EITC. In addition, we experimented with ideas for reaching new clients, including joining with the New York Legal Assistance Group to offer VITA services in conjunction with their mobile tax clinic.

Earning Recognition for Transparency

NYCOFI earned the GuideStar Silver Level distinction from GuideStar, demonstrating our commitment to transparency with financial and programmatic data.

Teaching the Next Generation of Organizers

Beginning in 2011, NYCOFI has sponsored three interns as a part of the New York Foundation's Summer Internship in Community Organizing: Max Scherzer and Won Cha in 2012, and Akil Peters in 2013.

Building an Online Community

NYCOFI introduced a new website in mid-2012. In conjunction with this, we reactivated our Facebook page and began Tweeting. The organization has also had numerous blog posts, including *No Justice, No Peas; Who Needs a Low Wage Worker Day of Action?*; and *Giving Thanks*.

Celebrating Success

Our major annual fundraiser celebrates the achievements of New York Communities for Change (NYCC) and select supporters and NYCC members. The 2012 event honored Jon Kest, the late NYCC Executive Director, as well as SEIU International President Mary Kay Henry, New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Author Matt Taibbi, New York State and Assembly member Karin Camara, as well as NYCC Members Julia Boyd and Josephina Colon.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andrew Weltman, Board Chair
First Vice President for Strategic Development, Amalgamated Bank

Regina Castro, Secretary
Community Member

Dave Daniel, Finance Chair
Comptroller, LawCash

Dorothy Amadi
Secretary to May 2012
Retired, New York City Department of
Education

Deborah Axt
Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New
York

Russell Carter
Former Vice President, Delta Funding

Hazel DaSent
Administrative Assistance, MEC Global

Steven Flax
Vice President, M&T Bank

Phillip Giles
Program Officer, Hazen Foundation

Mark Peters
Board Chair to May 2012
Attorney/Partner, Edwards
Wildman

Elliot “Skipt” Roseboro
Military Veteran, Community Leader

Carlie Steen, Esq.
Executive Director

New York Communities Organizing Fund, Inc. board members, who are residents of low and moderate income neighborhoods in New York City or professionals in the worlds of philanthropy and business, are actively involved in developing campaign and fundraising plans. All of NYCOFI's activities involve residents of the neighborhoods directly affected by our programs. The Board meets on a regular basis to review the performance of the Executive Director and set a direction for the organization.

SUPPORTERS

Arca Foundation
Discount Foundation
Hagedorn Foundation
Hazen Foundation
Long Island Community Foundation
M&T Foundation
Mertz Gilmore Foundation

New York Civic Engagement Table
New York Foundation
Panta Rhea Foundation
Douglas H. Phelps Foundation
Robin Hood Foundation/Single Stop
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Scherman Foundation

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of December 31, 2012

Assets

	2012	2011
Cash	\$ 138,127	168,250
Contributions receivable	189,500	77,500
Other receivables	13,915	25,297
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Total Assets	<u>341,542</u>	<u>271,047</u>

Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities:

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 41,046	94,797
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Commitments

Net Assets

Unrestricted	142,496	166,250
Temporarily restricted	158,000	10,000
Total Net Assets	<hr/>	<hr/>
	300,496	176,250

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 341,542</u>	<u>271,047</u>
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Our financial statements have been audited by Grass & Co., Certified Public Accountants (2011) and WithumSmith+Brown, PC, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants (2012). Copies of our full financial statements are available on our website at www.nycofi.org.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

From January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2012

	2012	2011
Revenues		
Contributions and Grants	\$ 515,393	\$ 333,646
Special Event	140,300	138,517
Less: direct cost of special event	(10,000)	(3,590)
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Total Revenues	646,693	468,573
Expenses		
Program Services	409,393	250,175
Supporting Services		
Management and General	103,520	73,818
Fundraising	8,534	27,779
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Total Expenses	521,447	351,772
Change in net assets	124,246	116,801
Net assets – beginning of year	176,250	59,449
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Net assets – end of year	\$ 300,496	\$ 176,250

MISSION AND VALUES

New York Communities Organizing Fund, Inc. (NYCOFI) is a community-based nonprofit organization that seeks to empower low and moderate income New Yorkers to help themselves. Through public education, advocacy, research, and direct services, NYCOFI works to improve the economic security and well-being of low income and people of color communities throughout New York State. NYCOFI was founded in 2010 and is part of a family of organizations that includes New York Communities for Change (NYCC), one of the premier community organizing institutions in New York State.

VALUES

- **Determination:** NYCOFI fights to increase power for low-income families who have been historically locked out of decision-making at the local, state, and national levels.
- **Commitment to Social and Economic Justice:** NYCOFI embraces and works towards a vision of society where discrimination of all kinds is eliminated.
- **Compassion:** NYCOFI is motivated by a deep understanding of the distress and hardships that exist in low and moderate income communities, including communities of color, and develop programs based on needs uncovered through building close, personal relationships with families in these communities.
- **Integrity:** All Board members and staff are bound by a code of conduct, which holds us to the highest standards of honesty, transparency, consistency, and responsibility.



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New York Communities Organizing Fund, Inc., EIN 27-2332649