

# The New York Times

March 12, 2010

LETTER

## Poverty in New York

To the Editor:

Re "[Calculating Poverty in New York: More by City Standard, and Less by Federal One](#)" (news article, March 3):

The federal government's definition of poverty was calculated in the mid-1960s, when it was assumed that the average family would spend far more on food than on rent. So it is more than time for a change, especially here in New York City, where housing costs are so high.

The effects of the recession have fallen disproportionately on low-income African-Americans, Latinos and working women, particularly single working mothers. At the Community Service Society, we documented multiple hardships among low-income New Yorkers in our latest yearly survey, "[The Unheard Third](#)." These included forgoing medical treatment for lack of health insurance and food insecurity, among other hardships of a life in poverty.

The government is focusing on job-creation bills, but it should also be financing skills development and career and technical education for young people. We need another stimulus, this one targeted to those groups in the population that have been hardest hit by the recession in what is now a jobless recovery.

David R. Jones  
President and Chief Executive  
Community Service Society  
New York, March 4, 2010