



Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project

73 Spring Street, Suite 506, New York, NY 10012
Tel: (212) 680-5100 Fax: (212) 680-5104
www.nedap.org

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release:
February 8, 2006

Contact:
Deyanira Del Rio, 917-541-3392

Immigrants and Community Groups Press for Increased Access to Banking and Financial Services

City-wide convening highlights local strategies and efforts to combat abuse by banks, money transmitters and other financial institutions

Immigrant organizers and groups representing neighborhoods across New York City today announced a coordinated effort to address abuse and discrimination by the financial service industry in immigrant communities. The half-day strategy and information sharing session, titled *Promoting Financial Justice for Immigrant New Yorkers*, took place on Wednesday, February 8, 2006, at the Open Society Institute.

Using a combination of panel discussions, mapping technology and up-to-date research, representatives of key community-based and immigrant-led organizations framed issues and detailed obstacles that low-income and undocumented immigrants and immigrant workers face with respect to financial services access. Advocates examined emerging and controversial challenges, such as ID requirements for immigrants. Groups also shared creative community strategies aimed at securing affordable financial services, fair access to housing and other economic rights for immigrant communities.

Presenters at *Promoting Financial Justice for Immigrant New Yorkers* included members and staff people from Chhaya CDC, Fifth Avenue Committee/La Union de la Comunidad Latina, Forest Hills Community House, Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project, and The Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York.

“This gathering was the inevitable result of a post-Patriot Act, financial services landscape that has become increasingly complex and hostile to immigrants, said Deyanira Del Rio of the Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project. “It represents a rare opportunity for immigrant communities to compare notes, dispel popular myths, plot strategies and shape a new financial rights agenda.”

“Jackson Heights is filled with money wiring services that charge immigrants huge fees to send money home to their families,” said Zoe Sullivan with the Forest Hills Community House. “We are organizing a credit union to ensure that people can wire money home without getting gouged, and as a way to help people better establish themselves in New York.”

###

Promoting Financial Justice for Immigrant New Yorkers is an initiative of the NYC Immigrant Financial Justice Network, a coalition of grassroots, immigration rights, legal services and civic organizations groups. The Network presses for policy reforms that remove financial access barriers for undocumented and low income immigrants. The Network is convened by NEDAP, a not-for profit resource center that works with community groups to promote neighborhood economic justice in New York. www.nedap.org.