



**Wider
Opportunities
for Women**

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NEW REPORT DEFINES ECONOMIC SECURITY IN D.C.

“BEST” Blueprint for District’s Next Administration Promotes Good Jobs, Education, Services & Savings to Emerge from Recession

Washington, D.C. – A [new report](#) released today by Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) presents a new yardstick for the District’s incoming administration to focus economic development on creating good jobs and economic security for D.C. families.

The report, called the *Basic Economic Security Tables for the Washington, DC Metro Area (BEST)*, calculates the monthly income necessary for families to move beyond the poverty line and attain economic security – covering a range of expenses like child care, housing, health care, transportation, savings and retirement – and it offers a blueprint for policymakers and individuals to rebound from the recession and plan for the future.

"This report should be a call to action for the incoming administration to refocus the District's economic development strategy on creating real economic security for families. That means investing in good jobs and connecting people to training and education, coordinating affordable child care and housing, promoting savings for emergencies and retirement, and working with the entire D.C. community to forge ahead," said **WOW Executive Director Joan Kuriansky**.

Coming on the heels of federal reports about high poverty and unemployment in the D.C. region, the BEST argues that the poverty line is just the tip of the iceberg of financial struggle in D.C. Roughly half the district’s residents, it finds – mostly single parents – fall below standards of economic security. A single parent raising an infant, for example, needs an income of approximately \$57,000 per year – or a \$27-per-hour wage in a full-time job – to be economically secure.

The report builds on a recent national opinion poll commissioned by WOW which found that Americans of all ages are concerned about saving for the future. The survey found that people view economic security as more than just scraping by – it means being able to make ends meet and also save for emergencies and retirement.

“This report offers an affirmative, concrete vision of what it takes for families to make ends meet and save for the future. We’re coming out of a recession and need to focus not just on lifting people from poverty but actually building economic security,” said Kuriansky.

The report is the first of its kind to factor savings into an economic security planning tool and breaks down monthly BEST costs for family configurations in D.C. of up to two workers and 6 children, as well as for Alexandria City, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Montgomery County and Prince George’s County.

A policy brief accompanying the D.C. tables highlights six steps for the incoming administration to build economic security for local residents. They include:

- **Create good jobs in the District**, targeting the high-growth sectors of professional and business services; trade, transportation and utilities; education and health services; and green jobs;
- **Establish a coordinated system of training and education to prepare all adults and youth for good jobs;**
- **Increase availability of child care and housing for low- and moderate-income families;**
- **Help D.C. residents save for emergencies and retirement;**
- **Coordinate and make public assistance available, accessible, and publicized to residents in need of a range of services; and**
- **Establish an interagency task force and citizen-based advisory group to align District services and programs that promote economic security.**

“Increasing costs, a lack of good jobs, insufficient education and training, and declining personal savings have become major obstacles to economic security for thousands of D.C. residents. We hope the D.C. BEST serves as a benchmark to guide policymakers’ decisions and helps families plan for the future. With tangible goals in hand, we have a roadmap for moving forward,” said Kuriansky.

WOW, which for 45 years has been a leader in preparing women for the workforce in Washington, D.C. and across the country, is creating the economic security tables for other states and cities, and the nation as a whole.

View the D.C. BEST report, policy brief and executive summary on the web here:

http://www.wowonline.org/ourprograms/dc/dc_fess/

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