



*THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF DANIEL DROMM*

37-32 75TH STREET
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY 11372
(718) 803-6373

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Contact: Alex Florez (646) 831-9835 aflorez@council.nyc.gov

**Dromm Secures \$4.5 million Citywide and
\$100,000 locally for Immigrant Groups' Funding**

Jackson Heights, NY, February 8, 2011 -- On Tuesday, New York City Council Member and Chair of the Immigration Committee, Daniel Dromm, presented funding from the Council's Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) to local groups that serve the 25th district, which has the highest percentage of foreign-born residents (encompassing parts of Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, LeFrak City, Corona, Rego Park, and Woodside). It is estimated that residents in Dromm's district are between 65 - 68% recent immigrants.

Despite the economic crisis faced by the City, Dromm rallied to restore \$4.5 million of the \$5 million in IOI funding the Mayor had initially cut from the fiscal year 2011 budget. The funds will provide adult English classes for low-income New Yorkers and affordable legal services. Locally, Dromm allocated \$100,000 for immigrant groups - the first time any IOI funding was secured for Dromm's district in the history of the initiative.

"These services are essential to our immigrant communities here in our area," said Dromm. "That is why I made saving IOI funding a top priority. The people that have the least are the ones affected the most in difficult economic times and they are always the last ones to recover. We need to ensure that they are given the opportunities and the resources necessary to become fully integrated in our society and pursue the American dream. I am proud to provide organizations that are fully committed to our immigrant people with the means to do just that."

At a press conference held in Jackson Heights, Dromm was joined by local nonprofit groups Make the Road NY, Ecuadorian International Center, Queens Community House and Sheba USA, whose main focus is to assist low-income South Asian immigrant populations.

"The demand for literacy services is overwhelming. Here at Make the Road New York, we continue to have increasingly long waiting lists of New Yorkers who want to learn English. Only 3 percent of the 1.23 million adults who speak English "less than very well" in our City are enrolled in English-language programs. The City cannot afford to reduce the already limited resources for adult literacy. Funding for the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative that supports adult education is more critical than ever," said Julie Quinton, Director of Adult Literacy.

"It is wonderful that City Council Member Daniel Dromm has arranged for Sheba USA to receive IOI funding," said Executive Director Tamanna Yasmin. "We hope we will receive the funds very soon. As you all know our main focus is to provide free service (basic English, computer, tax prep) to all immigrants with a special focus on empowering women. Therefore, this fund will allow Sheba USA to continue providing basic English classes to meet the pressing needs of the immigrant community, and will assist them to acclimate to this new culture."

"IOI funding is an investment in our City. When immigrants learn English, they become more active, involved members of the community," said KC Williams, Adult Education Director at Queens Community House. "There is a myth that immigrants do not want to learn English. The truth is that ESOL programs throughout the City are turning away applicants."

"We are pleased to be among the four organizations chosen to receive funds that will help provide a much needed service to our immigrant community," said Veronica Piedra, Deputy Director of Ecuadorian International Center. "We applaud Council Member Dromm for his steadfast effort in securing these funds for our district."

###