



**NOW LEGAL DEFENSE
AND EDUCATION FUND**

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March 12, 2002

VIA MAIL AND E-MAIL

LMDC Invitation for Public Comment
Draft Assistance Plan for Individuals
c/o Empire State Development
P.O. Box 4438, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10017

Dear Lower Manhattan Development Corporation:

The NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Assistance Plan for Individuals ("Draft Plan"). Specifically, we address our comment to the training component of the Draft Plan.

NOW Legal Defense has been working for thirty years to define and defend women's rights. One of our major goals is to eliminate barriers that deny women economic opportunities.

We support efforts to provide training as part of a comprehensive strategy to revitalize Lower Manhattan after the devastating terrorist attacks. Training is one of the principal ways to help workers get and keep jobs with good pay and benefits, and training grants will help Lower Manhattan businesses and workers in their efforts to recover and retool.

In order to best promote a diverse workforce and reflect New York City's population, we encourage the LMDC to incorporate an emphasis on nontraditional training and employment for women into this and future training plans. Nontraditional training opportunities, i.e. training for jobs where women make up less than 25% of the workforce, provide real paths to better paying, more stable employment. For example, construction, information technology, and law enforcement jobs often provide more economic security than traditional female-dominated jobs such as service or administrative support work. Investing our public resources in result-oriented programs, like nontraditional training programs for women, will generate double benefits: it will help facilitate the revitalization of Lower Manhattan, while also accelerating the development of all our City's potential.

We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you as you develop training programs to discuss how these goals could be incorporated into training efforts.

Very truly yours,

Kathy Rodgers

Kathy Rodgers
President