



For Immediate Release

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**Hartford Workforce Development Group Receives \$450 Thousand Grant
Workforce Solutions of Metro Hartford Joins NFWS Network**

Washington D.C.— As America faces increasingly hard economic times, a promising \$30 million national initiative to address the nation's growing workforce shortages is gaining momentum as more and more communities across the country are looking for both innovative ideas and proven solutions to grow their economies.

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) announced the addition of 11 regional collaboratives, including the Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford, to its national effort to move low-wage workers into higher paying jobs while providing employers with the skilled workers they need.

The newly formed Hartford area collaborative is a grant-making partnership for workforce development consisting of business, academic, government and workforce development funders, and will receive a \$150 thousand annually over three years for a total of \$450 thousand from NFWS. Since NFWS invests 20 percent of the budget of a local collaborative, local funders will invest an additional \$1.8 million over three years.

"We are excited to be receiving the grant from the National Fund because it is vital for the Hartford area to invest in the skills development of its low-wage workforce," said Susan B. Dunn, President and CEO of the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut and a lead agency of the regional collaborative. "The region's workforce is graying, and we need to begin thinking about how to replace the wave of skilled workers who will be retiring shortly."

The Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford will join 20 other NFWS regional collaboratives from across the country implementing the NFWS approach, characterized by its sector-based, dual-customer workforce partnerships that seek to meet the needs of employers and low-skilled workers along with its emphasis on extensive public, private and community partners.

"The workforce challenges confronting America are too massive, too complex, and too urgent for any one public or private entity to solve alone," said Marlene Seltzer, President and CEO of Jobs for the Future, a national partner of NFWS. "To provide all workers—especially the lower-skilled—with the education and training they need to succeed in an increasingly demanding labor market, America needs an adequately resourced, comprehensive workforce development system."

In addition to the NFWS grant, the Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford will participate in NFWS-supported technical assistance, peer learning, research, and evaluation with other funding collaboratives from across the nation to strengthen their ability to implement proven solutions, strategies and techniques for maximum impact on their area's economy. The national aggregation of data and strategies is a tangible



benefit for the collaborative, allowing them to reduce risk as they address the big picture of Hartford's economy and employment.

And, the Collaborative has already brought together many funders including the United Way, the Nutmeg Foundation, Capital Workforce Partners and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Linda J. Kelly, President of the Hartford Foundation, noted "The Collaborative's workforce partnerships will not only train entry-level employees for better paying jobs so they can better provide for their families, they will help employers to find, retain and advance the skilled employees they need to compete in a global economy"

Other collaborative members include the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, Capitol Region Council of Governments, the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy and MetroHartford Alliance.

These funders and stakeholders are joined by state agencies, education institutions and advocacy organizations such as the State of Connecticut's Office for Workforce Competitiveness, the Connecticut Community College System, the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund and the Connecticut Association for Human Services.

Hartford has the seventh oldest working population and a relatively small, young talent pool (there was a 25% drop in the population of 18-34 year olds from 1990 to 2005), and the second lowest literacy rate of any city over one hundred thousand people.

"When our workforce attains greater skills, that can only in turn benefit the businesses they work for and the communities in which they live. It's all about progress and building a competitive advantage in the challenged economy we are facing," said Thomas Phillips, President and CEO of Capital Workforce Partners, the regional workforce board assisting with managing the Collaborative.

NFWS is a five-year, \$30 million effort to strengthen and expand high-impact workforce development initiatives around the country. NFWS is dedicated to moving America's low-wage workforce into higher paying jobs, while providing employers with the skilled workers they need. NFWS is supported by the Annie E. Casey, Ford, Hitachi, John S. and James L. Knight, Prudential and The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg foundations, Microsoft Corp., and the U.S. Department of Labor. Jobs for the Future and the Council on Foundations are national partners with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

For more information, please visit the website at: <http://www.nfwsolutions.org>

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