



For Immediate Release

November 13, 2008

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**National Workforce Development Effort Announces \$5 Million in New Local Grants
*Revitalizing communities by focusing on dual-customer approach***

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

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) announced today the addition of 11 regional collaboratives and one new partner investor to its national effort to move low-wage workers into higher paying jobs while providing employers with the skilled workers they need. The 11 new regional collaboratives, community-based grant-making partnerships for workforce development consisting of business, academic, government and workforce development funders, will receive close to \$5 million in grants over three years. Since NFWS invests 20 percent of the budget of a local collaborative, these grants will leverage an additional \$20 million from local funders as a result.

"Workforce skills are critical to U.S. prosperity, especially in an increasingly global, competitive and uncertain economic environment. Yet many sectors of our economy and communities face skill shortages, unfilled jobs, low productivity, threats to regional competitiveness and increasing disparities between those with and those without education and skills," said Barbara Dyer, President and CEO of the Hitachi Foundation and Chair of the NFWS Investors Committee. "NFWS is a 21st century business solution that is addressing these challenges."

The 11 new regional collaboratives joining NFWS are the Front Range Funding Collaborative (CO), the Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford (CT), Central Iowa Works (IA), the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas (KS), the Omaha Workforce Funding Collaborative (NE), the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network (OH), the Job Opportunity Investment Network (PA), the Dan River Funding Collaborative (VA), the Funding Collaborative of Greater Seattle (WA), Partners for Workforce Innovation in South Wood County (WI), and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance (WI).

The new sites will join 10 existing NFWS regional collaboratives from across the country implementing the NFWS workforce approach, characterized by its sector-based, dual-customer workforce partnerships that seek to meet the needs of employers as well as low-wage workers. In addition to the NFWS grant, each site 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 analysis and strategies is a tangible benefit for the



collaboratives, allowing them to reduce risk as they address their local economy and employment.

The 10 existing NFWS regional collaboratives include: the Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative (CA), the Los Angeles Workforce Funder Collaborative (CA), the San Diego Workforce Funders Collaborative (CA), the Greater Washington Workforce Development (DC), Opportunity Chicago Collaborative (IL), Boston's SkillWorks (MA), the Baltimore Workforce Collaborative (MD), New York City Workforce Innovation (NY), the Pennsylvania Industry Partnerships (PA) and Skill Up Rhode Island (RI).

"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."

The National Fund represents one of the largest financial commitments made by the philanthropic community in the workforce arena. From its outset, this national initiative has enjoyed strong momentum toward success in large part due to the big names working together on the national level, including the Annie E. Casey, Ford, Hitachi, John S. and James L. Knight and The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg foundations, Microsoft Corp., and the U.S. Department of Labor. This momentum was again illustrated by The Prudential Foundation's recent announcement that it would join the effort and award \$1 million to the National Fund over the next three years.

"Prudential has always considered investing in the skills development of our workforce of tomorrow to be an important social strategy," said Gabriella Morris, President of The Prudential Foundation. "Prudential has decided to become a national investor in the National Fund because we saw the significant impact and results an organization with a national perspective can achieve in communities across America."

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. 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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ADDENDUM

Wichita, Kansas

The Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas has a heavy emphasis on programs geared towards placing workers in higher paying jobs within the aviation industry by removing the barriers to employment low-wage workers face such as transportation and childcare. The Alliance is working to expand access to AeroStructures, a 10-week training course in sheet metal and composite work designed in collaboration with aviation employers.

The opportunity to receive NFWS funding brought many new partners together including the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Forrest C. Lattner Family Foundation, the City of Wichita, Spirit AeroSystems, the United Way of the Plains, and Wichita Area Technical College.

"We don't have a large workforce pool so it's essential for the Workforce Alliance to focus on training the workers we have to address our workforce shortages," said Keith Lawing, Director of the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas. "To do this we are partnering with area employers to develop sector-specific programs so that the training workers receive is aligned with the skills employers desire."

Brian Black, Corporate Community Relations Manager for Spirit AeroSystems, said, "Because workforce development and economic development play critical roles in our community's success, they are cornerstones of our civic investment strategy. At Spirit we believe in the power of partnerships, and we support projects like PACES that bring communities together to enhance the quality of life and solve local problems in the cities and towns where our employees work and live."

Cincinnati, Ohio

An emphasis of the Workforce Network is on the rapidly expanding health care sector. Employers in the health care industry have faced a shortage of workers qualified for jobs requiring more complex skills. As a result, the Workforce Network has worked with The Health Alliance and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to support Career Pathways, a program that connects education and training programs to enable individuals to advance up the job ladder. By clearly establishing a pathway for educational and career advancement, employees will be given the motivation and knowledge of how to advance in their career.

The opportunity to secure NFWS funding resulted in new partnerships all working together to ensure all of Cincinnati's workforce development funds have the largest impact possible. These partnerships include leaders from The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Macy's, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Messer Construction, as well as the region's Workforce Investment Boards, state and local government, educational institutions, and service providers.



“Developing our workforce to be better prepared for jobs today and tomorrow is one of our community’s highest priorities,” said Kathryn E. Merchant, President/CEO of The Greater Cincinnati Foundation and Chair of the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network. “Support from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions will help propel us toward our goal of ensuring that our community’s low-wage/low-skill workers have greater opportunities to be successful as we develop a unified system to bolster the region’s economy.”

“This project makes good business sense for Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati hospitals. We have been able to design a career pathway that is employer led and meets hospital employment needs while simultaneously helping people achieve greater socio-economic self-sufficiency,” said William Lecher, Senior Clinical Director, Specialty Resource Unit, Patient Attendant Department & Patient Escort Team. “Our experience working with the career pathway process tells a great story: our incumbent employees have higher academic achievement and higher academic retention compared to the general college student body. The pathway provides for genuine wage and income advancement. Our employee retention rate is strong.”

South Wood County, Wisconsin

Partners for Workforce Innovation (PWI), which was created around the opportunity to receive NFWS funds and assistance, resulted in new partnerships among funders, businesses and service providers –including Ocean Spray Cranberries, NewPage Corporation, the Alexander Charitable Foundation, Bell Family Charitable Foundation, Riverview Health Care Foundation, Mid-State Technical College, North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Heart of Wisconsin Business & Economic Alliance, Urban Processing, and others. PWI aims to grow in both size and scope to be truly reflective of a broad, community-based effort.

“This opportunity is not only exciting, but also is very timely as the hard-working people and organizations of our community partner to recreate our local economy from one that had been heavily dependent on the paper industry. Participation in this national initiative will have a direct positive impact on our workers and our companies,” said Kelly Lucas, President and CEO of Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County, Managing Partner for PWI. “Matching available jobs with skills development and establishing new workforce pipelines is essential for economic growth.”

“Helping our workforce adapt to meet changing needs is critical to future economic prosperity,” said Cheryl Urban, President of Urban Processing, a cranberry grower/food processor and a founding member of PWI. “The NFWS initiative is providing the platform for us to create new relationships and a community-wide focus on the importance of comprehensive workforce development. We are pleased to be part of this effort.”

The PWI collaborative is taking a dual-customer approach to its work over the next three years - investing in low-skilled individuals to grow prosperity one person at a time by integrating education and supportive services as well as focusing on articulating clear and detailed career pathways in four industry sectors vital to the region: healthcare,



manufacturing, technology, and skilled trades. And in a vivid illustration of the community's economic transition, programs for developing renewable energy using existing paper industry infrastructure are being evaluated and pursued.

"It is a priority for us to adapt our workforce to meet the future needs of a diversified economy. Through this approach we can build economic self-sufficiency into our community," said Carl Wartman, Chairman of Riverview Health Care Foundation and a retired paper industry executive.

Denver, Colorado

The Front Range Funding Collaborative sees its greatest opportunity to move workers into higher-level jobs in healthcare, where high-projected growth and an aging workforce will create a large demand for skilled trades in this sector.

The opportunity to receive funding from NFWS created new partnerships among local organizations and businesses like the Rose Foundation, Mile High United Way, city government and the Constructors Designers Alliance.

"The National Fund has helped us create a viable coalition that can work in many areas, because it prioritizes the systemic change that business, government, labor, and foundation leaders have recognized as vital," said Chuck Shannon, an executive at the Mile High United Way. "We have a dynamic economy and employers are going to need skilled workers."

"A sufficient and stable income is the single most important element in moving families and individuals up the economic ladder," said Sheila Bugdanowitz, President and CEO of Rose Community Foundation. "We are proud to be part of this shared effort to help people contribute to the economy and to improve their chances for success."