



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

Press Release

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Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▫ Jobs & Economic Vitality ▫ Eco-Focused ▫ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives ▫ Many People, One Minneapolis ▫ A City That Works



Minneapolis 6th City in Nation to Launch Proven Platform to Employment Program Aimed at Putting the Long-Term Unemployed and Veterans Back to Work

MN Department of Employment and Education Commissioner, Congressman Keith Ellison, and The WorkPlace President and CEO to Speak at September 23, Kick-Off Lunch

September 20, 2013 (Minneapolis) – On Monday, September 23, the City of Minneapolis and Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and partners in collaboration with The WorkPlace will officially launch the Platform to Employment (P2E) program, a proven employment program aimed at returning the long-term unemployed and veterans back to work. The launch will take place during a business lunch at the Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center (UROC) located at 2001 Plymouth Avenue, Minneapolis beginning at 12:00 pm.

With an estimated 4.3 million Americans unemployed for 27 weeks or longer in August 2013, long-term unemployment remains a significant concern to reviving the American economy and strengthening our communities. Over the course of lunch, speakers including Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben and the President and CEO of The WorkPlace, a Connecticut based workforce council, will discuss the specific challenges faced by individuals aged 50 and over and veterans who have been unemployed long-term. An estimated 50 attendees from the business community, nonprofit foundations, and members of the workforce council are expected to attend. Congressman Keith Ellison and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak plan to attend as well.

“Platform to Employment has a proven track record of putting people back to work and strengthening the workforce,” said DEED Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben. “This is a successful public-private partnership that addresses the need for the long-term unemployed to return to work and employers’ need to recruit skilled workers.”

P2E began in southwestern Connecticut to address the specific needs of unemployed workers over 50 and military veterans. The program is a proven model that demonstrates that the right job readiness programming, combined with personal and family support services and financial counseling, can return the long-term unemployed to the workforce. Tested in multiple cohorts, including participants from urban and suburban communities, P2E has placed 80% of program participants into work experience programs, with nearly 90% of these individuals moving on to full-time employment.

Minneapolis is the sixth city in the nation to announce the expansion of the highly successful P2E program with the support of AARP Foundation, Citi Community Development, and the Walmart Foundation.

“Minneapolis Employment and Training has long been a leader in workforce development partnering, innovating, innovating, and creative problem solving,” Deb Bahr-Helgen, Director of Minneapolis Employment and Training. “We are excited about our partnership with The WorkPlace and are looking forward to launching this innovative program which adds another tool to our existing toolbox and yet another way to tackle long-term unemployment.”

AARP Foundation funds specifically go towards recruiting and serving long-term unemployed workers who are over 50 years of age. This population continues to spend longer periods of time looking for work and securing a stable income. AARP Foundation is working to reverse the downward spiral that many older Americans and their families face.

“Today, Americans aged 50 and up face choices and pressures no one could have prepared for,” said AARP Foundation President Jo Ann Jenkins. “Job loss and long-term unemployment among those 50 and older have wiped out retirements savings and caused any hopes of a secure financial future to fade. AARP Foundation is pleased to support the expansion of Platform to Employment to help put people aged 50 and up back to work in good jobs in their communities and to pave the way to a brighter and more secure future.”

With support from Citi Community Development, P2E participants will receive financial counseling and credit rebuilding assistance through St. Paul based Community and Neighborhood Housing Services so they are better equipped to face the significant financial challenges many families confront during extended periods of unemployment. This training is essential at a time when many are financially overextended and have endured a reduction in regular income, or have none at all.

"Today, we offer a salute as Minnesota takes its place among other cities across the United States where the long-term unemployed, including our veterans, will benefit from the truly innovative Platform to Employment program," said George Wright, Citi Midwest Regional Director of Community Development. "In the early going, the results have been impressive – P2E is proving that the right job readiness programming, combined with personal and family support services and financial counseling, can return the long-term unemployed to the workforce. We are delighted to join our partners in this effort."

With additional support from the Walmart Foundation, P2E will provide services to veterans. The unemployment rate for veterans has remained much higher than the national average, as service members returning from Afghanistan and Iraq have struggled to find work.

“As one of the nation’s largest private employers of veterans and those on active duty, we share The WorkPlace’s vision of a country where every veteran has a chance to succeed economically and support his or her family,” said retired U.S. Army Brigadier General Gary Profit, senior director of military

programs at Walmart. “Walmart is committed to making that vision a reality by supporting organizations and programs that provide job and skills training to our veterans. These young men and women stood up for us, and now it’s our turn to stand up for them.”

Platform to Employment offers a five week preparatory program which includes workshops on resume writing, interview preparation, self-marketing and other skills. Additionally, each participant and their family have access to optional behavioral health services and counseling through NorthPoint Health and Wellness.

Following the preparatory program, P2E helps participants find positions with local employers who have job openings. P2E enables employers to have a risk free evaluation of participants during an eight week trial period where wages are subsidized by the program.

The media are invited to attend the Platform to Employment Business Lunch and interview speakers and available program participants immediately following. For more information contact City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic communications contact Rose Lindsay at 612.673.5015.

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About The WorkPlace

The WorkPlace conducts comprehensive planning, and coordinates regional workforce development policy and programs to prepare people for careers while strengthening the workforce for employers. As national leader in the field, The WorkPlace regularly shares ideas and best practices with lawmakers, foundations, think tanks and other workforce development organizations around the country. For more information, visit www.workplace.org or <http://www.platformtoemployment.com>

About AARP Foundation

AARP Foundation is working to win back opportunity for struggling Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and isolation. By coordinating responses to these issues on all four fronts at once, and supporting them with vigorous legal advocacy, the Foundation serves the unique needs of those 50+ while working with local organizations nationwide to reach more people, work more efficiently and make resources go further. AARP Foundation is AARP’s affiliated charity. Learn more at www.aarpfoundation.org.

About Citi Community Development

Citi Community Development (CCD) is leading Citi’s commitment to achieve economic empowerment and growth for underserved individuals, families and communities by expanding access to financial products and services, and building sustainable business solutions and innovative partnerships. Our focus areas include: commercial and philanthropic funding; innovative financial products and services; and collaborations with institutions that expand access to financial products and services for low-income and underserved communities. For more information, visit www.citicommunitydevelopment.com.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts. By operating globally and giving back locally, Walmart is uniquely positioned to address the needs of the communities it serves and make a significant social impact within its core areas of giving: Hunger Relief and Healthy Eating, Sustainability, Career Opportunity and Women’s Economic Empowerment. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Walmart has donated more than one billion meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart’s giving, visit foundation.walmart.com.

