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**Northwest Louisiana Collaborative Awarded Grant to Strengthen Innovation to Help Local Workers,
Jobseekers Build Careers**

Awards Represent Distribution from Federal Government's Social Innovation Fund

Shreveport, La (October 21, 2011) – The Workforce Innovations in Northwest Louisiana (WINLA), a funding collaborative led by The Community Foundation of North Louisiana, has been selected to receive a prestigious grant from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. WINLA is one of only five sites nationwide to receive the grant, which will help expand its work supporting local, employer-led workforce partnerships designed to prepare workers and jobseekers for sustainable jobs in the local market.

The \$300,000 grant, which will be awarded over a two-year period, will allow WINLA to create career pathways in the health care and energy industries for unemployed and under-employed individuals in northwest Louisiana while promoting the area's economic vitality. Research indicates that demand in this area for employees in each of these sectors will outpace the trained workforce supply over the next 10 years, presenting a critical labor market challenge and a key opportunity for workforce partnerships.

"WINLA represents a unified effort among local leaders in the employer, education, labor and philanthropic sectors to create lasting job opportunities for our citizens and foster a skilled labor force for our employers," said Paula Hickman, executive director of The Community Foundation. "This award is a nod to our careful and collaborative planning and will help us achieve greater economic stability in northwest Louisiana."

"This most definitely is the outcome we wanted and this funding will provide the additional support WINLA needs to continue helping individuals and families in our community who are striving to make themselves economically self-sufficient," Shreveport Mayor Cedric Glover said.

WINLA leadership members have been working for more than a year to strengthen the funding collaborative, attract matching funds, formalize the existing health care workforce partnership and develop the energy sector partnership. The collaborative today includes representatives from business, higher education governmental and labor sectors who have joined with WINLA to identify area workforce needs while providing training to create sustainable career tracks for jobseekers. The Consortium for Education, Research and Technology of North Louisiana (CERT) will manage the health care partnership and will help coordinate additional partnerships as they are identified.

"We are grateful to The Community Foundation for stepping up and giving the leadership to our regional funding collaborative, and CERT is pleased to serve as the operational managing partner for our workforce partnership in health care," said CERT Executive Director, Patti Trudell. "In addition to the

\$300,000 we received from the Social Innovation Fund, our collaborative raised nearly \$900,000 in cash and aligned investments from our regional partners. We're creating a funding stream that will continue to form additional workforce partnerships in health care, energy and other high demand employment sectors.”

“Our ability to effect positive outcomes is greatly enhanced through collaboration. We are grateful to the National Fund for Workforce Solutions for recognizing the strength of our partnership, and to The Community Foundation for leading this effort. Together, we will create pathways to prosperity for our workers and enhance the human capital advantage of our employers,” said Jim Henderson, chancellor of Bossier Parish Community College Chancellor, one of the higher education institutions involved in the effort.

The announced award comes as part of the third round of funding supported by the federal Social Innovation Fund grant awarded to the [National Fund](#) and its implementation partner, [Jobs for the Future](#). The five grants awarded nationwide total \$2.1 million.

“The National Fund model is locally driven, and unique to every region and every industry sector,” said Damian Thorman, National Program Director at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and Chair of the National Fund. “But all of our sites are built upon a similar strategy: implement job training and career support programs in close partnership with employers, ensuring that businesses benefit from a skilled workforce and employees get the skills and certifications that lead to sustainable careers.”

The awards represent a combination of federal funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service’s [Social Innovation Fund](#) and an equal amount of matching funds raised by the National Fund from private donors. The Social Innovation Fund is an innovative federal program that addresses major challenges confronting communities by growing high-impact nonprofit organizations delivering proven solutions.

Organizations providing critical support to this effort include:

- Bossier Parish Community College
- Caddo Parish Commission
- Capital One Bank
- City of Shreveport
- The Community Foundation of North Louisiana
- Consortium for Education, Research and Technology of North Louisiana (CERT)
- Foundation for Louisiana
- Goodwill Industries of North Louisiana, Inc.
- Northern & Central Louisiana Interfaith
- NW LA Council of Governments
- NW Louisiana Technical College
- Shreveport Chamber of Commerce
- Southern University at Shreveport
- United Way of NW Louisiana
- Workforce Investment Board #70
- Workforce Investment Board #71
- Willis Knighton Health System

About Workforce Innovations in Northwest Louisiana (WINLA):

Led by The Community Foundation of North Louisiana, Workforce Innovations in Northwest Louisiana (WINLA) is a regional funding collaborative that serves the parishes of Caddo, Bossier, Webster, DeSoto, Bienville, Claiborne, Natchitoches, Sabine, Red River and Lincoln.

About the Community Foundation of North Louisiana

Established in 1961, the Community Foundation of North Louisiana's mission is to strengthen communities through philanthropy. By bringing together fund donors, their financial advisors and nonprofit agencies, the Foundation is a powerful catalyst for building charitable giving and effecting positive change in our area. Through the generosity and vision of our family of donors, both past and present, the Foundation has granted nearly \$40,000,000 to vital nonprofit organizations since our inception. In our shared endeavor to build a more robust, vibrant community, we fund a variety of critical initiatives, including education, health, arts and culture, and poverty alleviation. Through integrity and sound financial practices, the Foundation has successfully stewarded the philanthropic interests of past donors and is poised to lead the next generation of givers to address the challenges facing our region.

About National Fund for Workforce Solutions:

The [National Fund for Workforce Solutions](#) is an award-winning national initiative focused on helping low-wage workers obtain good careers while at the same time ensuring that employers have the high-quality skills that will enable them to succeed in this highly competitive economy. Since 2008, the National Fund has raised nearly \$24 million to support 30 communities that have contributed an additional \$104 million in locally-raised resources from 216 different funding sources, including community foundations, United Ways, corporate foundations, workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce and state agencies. Each of these communities has created local funding collaboratives that are collectively investing in more than 80 sectoral workforce partnerships. The addition of these six new sites brings the total number of communities where the National Fund is working to 30. Ten national funders lead the effort: [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#); the [California Endowment](#); [Ford Foundation](#); [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#); [JPMorgan Chase & Co.](#); [Microsoft](#); [The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation](#); [The Hitachi Foundation](#); the [Prudential Foundation](#); and the [Walmart Foundation](#).

About Jobs for the Future:

[Jobs for the Future](#) develops, implements, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In 200 communities in 41 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers.

About the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the Social Innovation Fund:

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. The Social Innovation Fund is an initiative of the Corporation that improves the lives of people in low-income U.S. communities. Through an innovative public-private partnership, the Social Innovation Fund and selected local and national grantmakers co-invest in programs that increase the scale of community-based solutions that have evidence of real impact in the areas of youth development, economic opportunity or healthy futures. Every federal dollar invested is matched with private funds, and all programs are rigorously evaluated. As a result, the most effective approaches can be expanded to reach more people in need and key lessons can be captured and broadly shared. For more information, visit [NationalService.gov](#).

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