

## **Walmart Foundation Awards League for Innovation \$3.5 Million to Support Job Skills Training**

*Grant will support middle-skills training for low-income adults and older youth and design a competency development and documentation model*

May 22, 2013 - Chandler, Arizona. Low-income adults and older youth looking to improve their prospects for better paying jobs may get that opportunity at 12 U.S. community colleges as part of a new grant-funded project supported by the Walmart Foundation.

The Walmart Foundation has awarded a \$3.5 million grant to the League for Innovation in the Community College for a second Walmart Brighter Futures Project. One of the project's goals is to provide low-income adults and older youth the skills necessary to obtain middle-skill jobs enabling them to become financially self-sufficient. The second goal is to develop a model that will provide project participants with confidence that they have acquired the skills needed by employers and that will empower them to document those skills and communicate them effectively to employers.

Throughout the 2.5 year project, a cohort of community colleges will provide training and support services to move low-income, low-skill workers into middle-skill jobs. To achieve the project's overarching goal, adults and older youth will need to upgrade their skills and obtain credentials that match the skills required for 21st century jobs.

"The League is honored that the Walmart Foundation has chosen our organization to provide the leadership for this important work," said League President and CEO Gerardo E. de los Santos. "Once again, community colleges are seen as the responsive segment in higher education to address the workforce and economic development needs of the nation."

The project builds on the foundation laid by the League's initial Walmart Brighter Futures Project, in which eight U.S. community colleges provided job readiness skills, credentialed job training, and other services to more than 8,300 dislocated workers.

"The Walmart Foundation supports programs that provide people with ways to improve their lives through workforce readiness, job placement and support services," says Julie Gehrki, senior director at the Walmart Foundation. "We are proud to continue our work with the League for Innovation, which expects to help 9,000 workers gain the necessary skills for today's job market through this continued partnership."

Andrew Meyer, Vice President for Workforce Development at the League, will serve as the project's director.

According to Meyer, "We know there is a strong correlation between the level of education and credential attainment and employment in low-income jobs. By training low-income individuals for middle-skill jobs, there is a stronger likelihood that those individuals will move closer to becoming financially self-sufficient."

Meyer also pointed out that, “The community colleges selected to participate in the Walmart Brighter Futures project will be conducting important work that will change the lives of many individuals.”

Selection of community colleges to participate in the project is expected to be completed by mid-August.

### **About the League**

The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international organization dedicated to catalyzing the community college movement. The League hosts conferences and institutes, develops web resources, conducts research, produces publications, provides services, and leads projects and initiatives with more than 800 member colleges, 160 corporate partners, and a host of other government and nonprofit agencies in a continuing effort to make a positive difference for students and communities. Information about the League and its activities is available at [www.league.org](http://www.league.org).

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