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**Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford Shares in
Council on Foundations' Highest Award for Distinguished Grantmaking**

HARTFORD – Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford, one of 22 national sites supported by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, is sharing in national recognition from the Council on Foundations. The National Fund for Workforce Solutions received the Distinguished Grantmaking Award for Collaboration Tuesday from the Council on Foundations, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit membership association of some 2,000 grantmaking foundations and corporations.

The Distinguished Grantmaking Award puts the spotlight individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of philanthropy. The National Fund for Workforce Solutions partners with more than 200 local funders to work closely with employers and workforce leaders from the public and nonprofit sectors to help prepare workers to succeed in a post-recession economy. The National Fund tests how the lessons learned from these groundbreaking pilot projects in workforce development can be applied on a national scale.

Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford is working with three sectors where lower-skilled employees could advance to mid-skill jobs with the right mix of training and supports: advanced manufacturing, health care, and energy and utilities. By focusing on the needs of both employers and their workers, partners come together to develop effective, long-lasting solutions.

“This award is a recognition of innovative investments in the jobseekers, employees, and businesses here in Greater Hartford,” said Susan B. Dunn, president and CEO of United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, the Collaborative’s lead agency and founding member.

To create lasting change for the region’s workers and employers, WSCMH has adopted a three-pronged strategy: to invest in sector-based workforce partnerships that identify and respond to the needs of both employers and workers, and that align resources to meet those needs; to build capacity among partners, regional employers, and service providers; and to advocate for policies that will support a stable, self-sufficient workforce and a healthy business community.

Barbara Dyer, president and CEO of The Hitachi Foundation and chair of the National Fund, said: “There are approximately 80 million adults in the workforce who fear for their future because they don’t see how they can gain the skills to be valuable in the 21st century economy. We have employers that cannot find workers with the kinds of skills they need to propel their businesses forward. Ultimately, it’s a problem for the competitiveness of the nation. It’s the role of philanthropy to create an environment that sparks innovative solutions.”

Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford is funded regionally by Capital Workforce Partners, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the Nutmeg Foundation, and United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut. Other collaborative partners include the Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce, Capitol Region Council of Governments, Connecticut Association for Human Services, Connecticut Business and Industry Association, Connecticut Center for Advance Technology, Connecticut Community College System, Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, Connecticut Employment and Training Commission, Connecticut Employment & Training Commission, MetroHartford Alliance and the State of Connecticut Office of Workforce Competitiveness.

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