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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Awards Learn To Earn Pilot Grants to Promote Financial Stability

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2/16/2021

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

MEDIA CONTACT

Charles Pearce, Director of Communications, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Phone

(617) 894-4550 (tel:6178944550)

Online

Charles.Pearce@massmail.state.ma.us (mailto:Charles.Pearce@massmail.state.ma.us)

BOSTON — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that organizations in Boston, Holyoke, and Worcester will each receive grants to design career pathway programs that aim to promote financial stability for unemployed or underemployed adults. These grants are being awarded through the Learn to Earn (LTE) initiative which seeks to support individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs in gaining and retaining employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand.

Ascentria Care Alliance in Worcester, JRI/STRIVE Boston in Boston, and Holyoke Community College in Holyoke will work with partners to prepare jobseekers for in-demand careers in the healthcare industry such as residential supervisor, sterile processing technician, and community health workers.

LTE is a comprehensive initiative designed to test approaches for minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on the benefit receipts. These include improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects. These three new pilots will be informed by the lessons from an initial group of seven pilots that have been engaged in this work over the past two years.

"These new programs will lower the barriers that adults face in seeking employment, while ensuring they continue to receive the support they need to be successful in the workplace," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "Learn to Earn programs promote individual and family empowerment while also supporting the continued growth of Massachusetts businesses in need of skilled workers."

"Learn to Earn demonstrates how the Commonwealth can bring together businesses and community organizations as partners to cooperatively address key issues faced by our residents, while serving as a model to others," said **Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "Learn to Earn tackles issues related to 'cliff effects' through coordinated, collective efforts to better enable people to achieve long-term economic stability."

The LTE pilot programs are funded through the state budget and have received regional and national attention during the initial two years of the program. The grant program is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Steering Committee consisting of the Secretariats of Labor and Workforce Development, Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Economic Development. LTE leverages the regional industry sector partnership model of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) and adds individualized benefits counseling, financial coaching, and other family-focused supports.

"Learn To Earn is a cross secretariat initiative which will help participants increase their income and meet employer needs for talent," said **Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta.** "It aligns the employment priorities of the Workforce Skills Cabinet, the resources and expertise of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Housing and Economic Development, and regional workforce stakeholders across the Commonwealth."

LTE was designed by the Executive Steering Committee with input from the advocacy community and agencies such as the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), among other key stakeholder groups. These groups continue to collaborate to align education, economic development, and workforce policies to address structural barriers and disincentives to work that often impede economic stability.

"Given the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, we will continue ensure the impact of LTE programming innovations and policy reforms reach populations who have traditionally experienced higher rates of unemployment and barriers to employment, including populations emphasized by the Black Advisory Commission and Latino Advisory Commission, who have been key champions of advancing this work," **said Commonwealth Corporation President and CEO Christine Abrams**.

The Learn to Earn Executive Steering Committee and Commonwealth Corporation have seen high demand for this initiative. The three program design grants represent an initial investment of $74,928.30. Program design

grants will be awarded for approximately three months, followed by program implementation grants of up to 2 years for an additional total of $810,000; grants are not re-occurring.

Learn To Earn Grant Recipients

Ascentria Care Alliance will develop training and placement services for Commonwealth residents receiving public assistance to obtain Residential Supervisor, Case Management, and Direct Care jobs in the Central Massachusetts region. Employer Partners include: Seven Hills Foundation, YMCA of Central Massachusetts, Massachusetts Association for the Blind (MAB), and Community Services, Inc. Other Partners include: MassHire Central Region Workforce Board, Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester Community Action Council, Inc., and MassHire Career Center.

JRI/STRIVE Boston will develop training and placement services for Commonwealth residents receiving public assistance to obtain Sterile Processing Technician jobs in the Greater Boston region. Employer Partners include: Mass General Brigham, Boston Children's Hospital, and New England Baptist Hospital. Other Partners include: JVS, Boston Private Industry Council, MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center, MassHire Boston Career Center, and the Black Ministerial Alliance.

Holyoke Community College will develop training and placement services for Commonwealth residents receiving public assistance to obtain Community Health Worker jobs in the Western Massachusetts region. Employer Partners include: Baystate Health, Clinical and Support Options (CSO), Behavioral Health Network (BHN), and the Mental Health Association (MHA). Other Partners include: MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center, MassHire Holyoke Career Center, MassHire Springfield Career Center, and Springfield WORKS/Western MA EDC.

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Media Contact

Charles Pearce, Director of Communications, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Phone

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Online

Charles.Pearce@massmail.state.ma.us (mailto:Charles.Pearce@massmail.state.ma.us)

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EOLWD manages the Commonwealth's workforce development and labor departments to ensure that workers, employers, and the unemployed have the tools and training needed to succeed in the Massachusetts economy.

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