



Northland Foundation announces 18 nonprofits to participate in first round of Strengthening Communities Initiative

(May 20, 2010)

A group of 18 nonprofit organizations has been selected for the first round of the Northland Foundation's *Strengthening Communities Initiative*. The nonprofits, whose work supports economic recovery in northeastern Minnesota, will begin receiving tailored technical assistance right away with opportunities to apply for a competitive financial award either at the end of June or in October.

"It's exciting to get technical assistance for the first cohort underway," said Erik Torch, Northland Foundation's grant program manager. "This is an outstanding group of organizations chosen from a very competitive field of applicants, and we anticipate their Strengthening Communities experiences will enhance their ability to serve the region not just now but for the long term."

Funded primarily through a federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act grant along with Northland Foundation resources, the initiative is designed to build nonprofits' capacity to help lower-income people of all ages to find and keep employment, earn higher wages, and/or improve their ability to access State and Federal benefits. Up to 40 nonprofits will participate over an 18-month period. Applications for this first cohort were due in March, and applications for the second round will be accepted through August 13th. Northland will host information sessions June 23rd and 24th for nonprofits considering applying in August.

The program includes individualized technical assistance provided by professional consultant Kathy Keeley, competitive grant awards, and a series of nonprofit trainings. The assistance will vary according to each participant's needs, from organizational development to fund development, succession planning, strategic plan creation, and more.

"We have tripled in size within the past five or six years, but some of our financial and administrative systems have not kept pace," said Rebecca Ellenson, executive director at SOAR Career Solutions which is among the first cohort organizations. The Duluth nonprofit offers a range of career planning and employment readiness services.

"Through our work with Kathy Keeley and, we hope, a financial award, we'll be able to fine-tune the organization in some critical ways that will improve our ability to serve clients."

(continued)

Following are the 18 participants in the first Strengthening Communities Initiative cohort.

| NONPROFIT PARTICIPANT | LOCATION | SERVICE AREA |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Champion Life Ministry, Inc. | Duluth | Duluth |
| CHOICE, unlimited | Duluth | Carlton, Lake, St. Louis Counties |
| Churches United in Ministry (CHUM) | Duluth | Duluth |
| Circles of Support | Grand Rapids | Itasca County |
| Common Ground Construction | Duluth | Seven county Arrowhead Region |
| Community Action Duluth | Duluth | Duluth |
| Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation | Duluth | Duluth |
| Human Development Center | Duluth | Carlton, Cook, Lake, St. Louis Counties |
| Lake Superior School District/ Two Harbors Chamber of Commerce | Two Harbors | Lake County |
| Little Treasures Child Care & Family Center | Duluth | Duluth |
| Lutheran Social Service | Duluth | Duluth |
| Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans | Duluth | seven-county Arrowhead Region |
| Minnesota Citizens Federation – Northeast | Duluth | Carlson, Lake, St. Louis Counties |
| Minnesota Diversified Industries | Grand Rapids | Itasca, St. Louis Counties |
| Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, Inc. | Virginia | seven-county Arrowhead Region |
| Northern Communities Land Trust | Duluth | Duluth |
| Program of Promise | Duluth | Duluth |
| SOAR Career Solutions | Duluth | St. Louis County |

For more information, visit www.northlandfdn.org/Grants/StrengtheningCommunities.shtml



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