



**For Immediate Release**

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**Wichita Workforce Development Group Receives \$450 Thousand Grant  
Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas Joins NFWS Network**

**Washington D.C.**— As America faces increasingly hard economic times, a promising \$30 million national initiative to address the nation's workforce shortages is gaining momentum with more and more communities across the country looking for both innovative ideas and proven solutions to grow their economies.

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) announced today the addition of 11 regional collaboratives, including the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas, to its national effort to move low-wage workers into higher paying jobs while providing employers with the skilled workers they need.

The newly formed Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas is a community-based grant-making partnership for workforce development consisting of business, academic, government and workforce development funders, and will receive a \$150 thousand annually over three years for a total of \$450 thousand from NFWS. Since NFWS invests 20 percent of the budget of a local collaborative, local funders will invest an additional \$1.8 million over three years.

"We don't have a large workforce pool so it's essential for the Workforce Alliance to focus on training the workers we have to address our workforce shortages," said Keith Lawing, Director of the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas. "To do this we are partnering with area employers to develop sector-specific programs so that the training workers receive is aligned with the skills employers desire."

The Wichita collaborative will join 20 other NFWS regional collaboratives from across the country implementing the NFWS approach, characterized by its sector-based, dual-customer workforce partnerships that seek to meet the needs of employers and low-skilled workers along with its emphasis on extensive public, private and community partners.

"The workforce challenges confronting America are too massive, too complex, and too urgent for any one public or private entity to solve alone," said Marlene Seltzer, President and CEO of Jobs for the Future, a national partner of NFWS. "To provide all workers—especially the lower-skilled—with the education and training they need to succeed in an increasingly demanding labor market, America needs an adequately resourced, comprehensive workforce development system."

In addition to the NFWS grant, the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas will participate in NFWS-supported technical assistance, peer learning, research, and evaluation with other funding collaboratives from across the nation to strengthen their ability to implement proven solutions, strategies and techniques for maximum impact on their area's economy. The national aggregation of analysis and strategies is a tangible



benefit for the collaborative, allowing them to reduce risk as they address the big picture of Wichita's economy and employment.

The opportunity to receive NFWS funding brought many new partners together including the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Forrest C. Lattner Family Foundation, the City of Wichita, Spirit AeroSystems, the United Way of the Plains, and Wichita Area Technical College.

The Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas has a heavy emphasis on programs geared towards placing workers in higher paying jobs within the aviation industry by removing the barriers to employment low-wage workers face such as transportation and childcare. The Alliance is working to expand access to AeroStructures, a 10-week training course in sheet metal and composite work designed in collaboration with aviation employers.

Brian Black, Corporate Community Relations Manager for Spirit AeroSystems, said, "Because workforce development and economic development play critical roles in our community's success, they are cornerstones of our civic investment strategy. At Spirit we believe in the power of partnerships, and we support projects like PACES that bring communities together to enhance the quality of life and solve local problems in the cities and towns where our employees work and live."

NFWS is a five-year, \$30 million effort to strengthen and expand high-impact workforce development initiatives around the country. NFWS is dedicated to moving America's low-wage workforce into higher paying jobs, while providing employers with the skilled workers they need. NFWS is supported by the Annie E. Casey, Ford, Hitachi, John S. and James L. Knight, Prudential and The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg foundations, Microsoft Corp., and the U.S. Department of Labor. Jobs for the Future and the Council on Foundations are national partners with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

For more information, please visit the website at: <http://www.nfwsolutions.org>

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