



Escambia County Selected to Join Four Other Communities in the National Inclusive Development Network

FloridaWest EDA joins the Inclusive Development Network community of practice to advance workforce initiatives that drive toward prosperity for all residents

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(Pensacola) (March 18, 2019) – FloridaWest today announced that Escambia County is one of five communities joining the Inclusive Development Network (IDN), an ambitious new initiative designed to advance inclusive workforce development within the selected regions through a focus on reaching underserved populations. Cleveland, Ohio; Corpus Christi, Texas; Coweta, Oklahoma; Spokane, Washington; and Pensacola, Florida, were selected from more than 35 applications for the Network’s first cohort of communities.

“Escambia County and Greater Pensacola are looking forward to a great future and we need that prosperity to include all of our citizens,” said FloridaWest CEO, Scott Luth, “By participating in this innovative network, we can build a greater future for all of us.”

An initiative of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), the Inclusive Development Network will work to identify and implement strategies that reduce equity gaps in local workforce development. Participating communities were selected based on their geography and size, as well as their existing and proposed reach with underserved populations.

FloridaWest EDA will assemble a leadership team in partnership with Achieve Escambia and Careersource Escarosa that includes representatives from business and industry, education, government, and the community. Through a specialized planning process facilitated by CAEL, the leadership teams from the selected communities will hone inclusive workforce development strategies to create education, job and career opportunities for residents of all demographics.

“Although our economy is growing, segments of our communities are still struggling with poverty, wage stagnation and underemployment. In local economic development, a focus on working adults and inclusivity can help ensure that every member of the community has the opportunity to thrive,” said CAEL President Marie A. Cini. “Each of the communities selected for the Network will help build and scale an inclusive new approach to workforce development.”

Backed by grants from ECMC Foundation and JPMorgan Chase & Co., the Inclusive Development Network will be supported by partnerships with national experts, including International Economic Development Council (IEDC), Burning Glass Technologies, Avalanche Consulting Inc. and Quest Site Solutions.

“This work is about promoting economic inclusion for working adults at the local level,” said ECMC Foundation President Peter J. Taylor. “Together, these leaders will blaze a new trail to a more equitable and prosperous future for working adults, families and communities.”

To learn more about the IDN, visit inclusivedevelopmentnetwork.org/

About FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance (FloridaWest): Located in the city of Pensacola and Escambia County, FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance is the region's economic development organization with the mission of building, growing, and sustaining the economic potential and prosperity of Northwest Florida. Through our alliance with the public and private community and business leaders, we are collectively strengthening our social, human, and business capital, and developing our communities in the process to realize our economic aspirations. Visit us at floridawesteda.com.

About the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL): Established in 1974, The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) is a Strada Education Network affiliate and national, nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership organization dedicated to partnering with educators, employers, and workforce and economic developers. Together we reimagine how education and employment fit together, and we create lifelong pathways that integrate learning and work. Our aim is to support the engaged participation of adults in thriving talent pipelines and robust economic development in the 21st century economy. Visit www.cael.org to learn more.

About ECMC Foundation: ECMC Foundation is a Los Angeles-based, nationally focused foundation whose mission is to inspire and to facilitate improvements that affect educational outcomes—especially among underserved populations—through evidence-based innovation. It is one of several affiliates under the ECMC Group enterprise based in Minneapolis. ECMC Foundation makes investments in two focus areas: College Success and Career Readiness; and uses a spectrum of funding structures, including strategic grantmaking and program-related investments, to invest in both nonprofit and for-profit ventures. Working with grantees, partners and peers, ECMC Foundation's vision is for all learners to unlock their fullest potential. Learn more about ECMC Foundation by visiting www.ecmcfoundation.org and ECMC Group by visiting www.ecmcgroup.org.

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