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Northwest Area Foundation Partners for New Collaborations within African-American Communities

ST. PAUL, Minn., (Nov. 12, 2015) – A new initiative is underway to advance the financial capability of communities in cities with the highest African-American populations within the Northwest Area Foundation’s region: Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; Seattle and Tacoma, Washington; and Des Moines, Iowa.

Funded by an initial \$1.2 million in grants from the Foundation, the initiative will bring together a cohort of six African-American-led groups. The cohort will provide culturally tailored work that strengthens asset-building services, sharpens policy advocacy strategies, and grows leadership capacity to benefit the communities. Cohort members include:

- African American Leadership Forum – Minneapolis (aalftc.org)
- Minneapolis Urban League – Minneapolis (mul.org)
- Self Enhancement Inc. – Portland (selfenhancement.org)
- Centerstone – Seattle (center-stone.org)
- Tacoma Urban League – Tacoma (nul.iamempowered.com/affiliate/tacoma-urban-league)
- The Directors Council – Des Moines (thedirectorscouncil.org)

“By strengthening African-American-led organizations that provide critical services and advance strategic policies, this initiative will ultimately improve and protect the economic security of African-Americans,” explains Kevin Walker, Foundation president and CEO. “It’s precisely the type of work we want to fund through our Financial Inclusion portfolio.”

The grant also helps establish a learning community among cohort members and two national technical assistance providers: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED). NAACP is long known for its work to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all persons. CFED is dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for low-income families and communities in the United States.

Collaboration is a key aspect of the initiative. Beyond the collaboration between the cohorts themselves and the NAACP and CFED, the grant supports and promotes efforts by the cohorts to reach out and convene other organizations that can work collaboratively with groups within the African-American communities of each city.

The \$1.2 million grant will fund the first of three years for this initiative.

The Northwest Area Foundation supports organizations that drive proven approaches and promising innovations to help people build assets through good jobs and financial capability. Its grantees are champions of change who reflect the diverse cultural strengths of its region, which includes the eight states of Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, and more than 75 Native nations. The Foundation listens to, learns from, and leads others to grantees' transformative program and policy work, which helps hardworking people and families overcome crises today so they can establish good credit, launch small businesses, save, and begin to feel secure and hopeful about tomorrow. The Foundation was established in 1934 and is based in St. Paul, Minnesota. For more information, please visit www.nwaf.org.

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