

WICHE



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

media release

Lumina Foundation Awards WICHE \$755,100 to Work with Adults to Finish College

Boulder, Colorado — The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) announced today that Lumina Foundation for Education has awarded it a \$755,100 grant for its project *Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners*. The goal of *Non-traditional No More* is to increase adult learners' access to and success in postsecondary education. WICHE will work with three states over the next two years to stimulate and guide policy and practice changes that will create a more navigable path to degree attainment for adults.

Non-traditional No More will provide state and institutional leaders with a unique opportunity to address critical needs in the adult population. "The title of this project captures it all," says WICHE's executive director, David Longanecker. "Those we have called non-traditional are now becoming quite traditional within American higher education. And that trend must continue if we are to meet the emerging high-skills/high-wage employment requirements of this global age and if more Americans are to be enabled to enjoy a high standard of living."

As a first step, *Non-traditional No More* will help states identify their "ready adult" population — those adults who are just shy of having enough credits to obtain a degree but have not yet returned to college. Next, the project will help states create a navigable path to college success for adults through a comprehensive focus on academic policies, financial aid and financing, student support services, and information sharing, including marketing and communications designed to reach out to the ready adult population. Further, states will be aided in enacting new policies and practices and sustaining them.

WICHE will issue a call for participation later this year. States that are selected to participate in the project will receive \$65,000 over two years and be an integral part of a coordinated effort organized by WICHE to conduct this important work. In addition to overseeing state-level activities, WICHE staff will publish policy and research papers, speak at conferences and meetings, and work to expand the impact of the project beyond the states that receive direct services.

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WICHE & Lumina Foundation for Education

The **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education** and its 15 member states work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life. Our programs – Student Exchange, WCET, Policy Analysis and Research, and Mental Health – are working to find answers to some of the most critical questions facing higher education today. WICHE is the only organization in the West that focuses exclusively on higher education issues, from access and accountability to tuition and fees to distance learning and innovation. Public higher education is the primary backbone of the Western economy, and WICHE's policy research and collaborative programs support the West's citizens and its constantly evolving cultures. WICHE's 15 member states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. For more information about WICHE, please visit www.wiche.edu.

Lumina Foundation for Education, an Indianapolis-based, private, independent foundation, strives to help people achieve their potential by expanding access and success in education beyond high school. Through grants for research, innovation, communication, and evaluation, as well as policy education and leadership development, Lumina Foundation addresses issues that affect access and educational attainment among all students, particularly underserved student groups, including adult learners. The foundation bases its mission on the belief that postsecondary education remains one of the most beneficial investments that individuals can make in themselves and that society can make in its people. For more details on the foundation, visit its website at www.luminafoundation.org.

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