



media release

WICHE to Work with Arkansas, Colorado, and Nevada on Project to Help Adults Finish their Degrees

Boulder, Colorado — The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) announced this week that it has chosen three states to participate in its new project *Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners*. WICHE will work with Arkansas, Colorado, and Nevada over the next two years to stimulate and guide policy and practice changes that will make it easier for “ready adults” – those who are just shy of having enough credits to obtain a degree but haven’t yet returned to college – to earn their diplomas. The overarching goal of *Non-traditional No More*, which is supported by a \$755,100 grant from Lumina Foundation for Education, is to increase adult learners’ access to and success in postsecondary education.

Meeting that goal is becoming more and more important, not only to individuals but to our society and economy. “Changing demographics and the growing demand for an educated workforce are causing states and postsecondary institutions to broaden their thinking about how to increase degree attainment,” says WICHE President David Longanecker. “This project provides a unique opportunity for them to comprehensively target ready adults and bring them back to college.”

As a first step, *Non-traditional No More* will help the three states – which were selected via a competitive process – to identify their ready adult population. Next, the project will assist the states in creating a navigable path to college success for those adults through a comprehensive focus on academic policies, financial aid and financing, student support services, and communications, including marketing and information sharing designed to reach out to the ready adult population. In addition, WICHE will help states create and sustain new policies and practices.

Arkansas, Colorado, and Nevada will each receive \$65,000 over two years and be an integral part of a coordinated national 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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3035 Center Green Drive, Suite 200 Boulder, CO 80301 303.541.0200 fax: 303.541.0291

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. While WICHE is a Western organization, it also oversees several projects that are national in scope, including *Non-traditional No More*. 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.

03/04/08

Contact

Demarée Michelau
WICHE Public Policy and Research
303.541.0223
dmichelau@wiche.edu

W W W . W I C H E . E D U
3035 Center Green Drive, Suite 200 Boulder, CO 80301 303.541.0200 fax: 303.541.0291