



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

media release

WICHE to Work with New Jersey & South Dakota on Project to Help Adults Finish their Degrees

Boulder, Colorado — The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has chosen two new states to participate in its project *Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners*. WICHE will work with New Jersey and South Dakota 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*, supported by two grants from Lumina Foundation for Education totaling more than \$1.1 million, 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. “In light of the current economic difficulties, this project provides a unique opportunity for these states to improve the education of their workforces,” says WICHE President David Longanecker. “By helping states target ‘ready adults’ and bring them back to college, the project will help them develop a highly educated workforce that will be one key to an economic recovery.”

Non-traditional No More will help New Jersey and South Dakota – 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.

New Jersey and South Dakota will join Arkansas, Colorado, and Nevada, which began work on the project last year. Each state will receive \$65,000 over two years and be an integral part of a coordinated national effort organized by WICHE to conduct this important work. WICHE staff will oversee state-level activities, 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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About 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 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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