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The National Youth Employment Coalition Selects Pilot Sites for National Postsecondary Success Initiative

Washington, DC, November 10, 2009— The Postsecondary Success Initiative (PSI), is a three-year pilot supported by the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) and the [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#) to build the capacity of community-based organizations to reconnect low income youth and young adults to a path leading to postsecondary attainment and employment at a living wage. This initiative aims to identify effective practices and strategies; expand organizations' ability to use data to inform programming and interventions that lead to postsecondary attainment for low income and minority youth; strengthen formal partnerships with postsecondary institutions; influence systems change for youth service providers and postsecondary institutions to sustain programming for completion of postsecondary outcomes and, ultimately, to inform national and state policy.

Grant awards totaling \$4.2 million will be made to eight sites over three years. The following sites were selected through a competitive process to participate in the Postsecondary Success Initiative: Improved Solutions for Urban Systems (ISUS) in Dayton, OH; [Larkin Street Youth Services](#) in San Francisco, CA; [Los Angeles Conservation Corps](#) in Los Angeles, CA; [MY-TURN](#) in Brockton, MA; [Open Meadow](#) in Portland, OR; [The College Initiative](#) in New York, NY; [X-Cel](#) in Jamaica Plain, MA and [Youth Development Institute](#) in New York, NY.

Thirty percent of all students drop out, reflecting the decline in educational attainment in the United States over the last ten years. In fact, the Millennial Generation-- those born between 1977 and 1984-- will be the first to have lower educational attainment than the previous two generations. However, aspirations for drop outs remain high. Sixty percent eventually complete secondary education and enter postsecondary, but only ten percent attain a degree. The barriers that exist for youth to graduate high school often magnify over time as youth acquire greater financial and family responsibilities.

“The PSI initiative provides a unique and timely opportunity to identify comprehensive strategies for low income youth and young adults to earn a postsecondary credential. The eight sites reflect an advanced array of approaches, a spirit of innovation, and a commitment to youth that is unparalleled. We look forward to our work together to increase the numbers of youth that achieve postsecondary success,” says Mala B. Thakur, Executive Director of the National Youth Employment Coalition.

For additional information about the NYEC PSI, contact Laura Jiménez, Director of Postsecondary Achievement at (202) 659-1064 or lj@nyec.org.

The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) is a national membership network that improves the effectiveness of organizations that seek to help youth become productive citizens. Toward this end, NYEC sets and promotes quality standards; tracks, crafts and influences policy; provides and supports professional development; and builds the capacity of organizations and programs. To learn more about NYEC, visit www.nyec.org.