LISC RI Awards $412,575 in Workforce Development Funds to Genesis Center

LISC’s new ‘Bridges to Career Opportunities’ helps to address education and skills gaps

PROVIDENCE (January 21, 2016)—The Social Innovation Fund (SIF)—part of the federal Corporation for National and Community Service—has recently awarded an $11.3 million grant to the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) for its new Bridges to Career Opportunities (BCO) program.

In Rhode Island, LISC has awarded Genesis Center $412,575 to build the Bridges program here and reach 550 people over the next 36 months. Participants will work with Genesis Center coaches to map career pathways and then receive training in math, reading and English as a Second Language in combination with job readiness “soft skills”—all contextualized to vocational training in specific industry sectors that prepares them for employment. Employers will play an important part in BCO by contributing to the education and skills training curricula and hiring graduates of the program.

“It’s clear that many hardworking families continue to struggle even though they want to work and good jobs are available. They have fallen through the cracks and aren’t able to read, write or manage numbers well enough to move up the economic ladder,” said Jeanne Cola, executive director of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation’s Rhode Island office (LISC RI). “This program is proving that we can do something about that.”

Bridges to Career Opportunities developed from LISC’s successful Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) model, based on client-centered financial and employment coaching services. There are 80 LISC FOCs across the country providing integrated services to over 23,000 low-income families each year. LISC’s Bridges program provides long-term financial coaching, which assists these families in expanding their income, credit, savings and job opportunities. Bridges participants will receive FOC services along with education and training to help them address challenges, improve their financial stability, prepare for employment and successfully complete the program.

Shannon Carroll, president and CEO of Genesis Center, responded to the award by saying, “Genesis is pleased to be working with LISC to expand and strengthen our focus on bridge programming. Using a model that delivers integrated basic skills and vocational training, along with individualized financial and career coaching, we are providing a combination of services that will enable the low-income, unemployed and underemployed residents of our community to achieve financial stability.”

About LISC
As a national organization working in 31 urban areas and more than 1,000 rural counties in 39 states, LISC helps nonprofit community development organizations transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities that are good places to work, do business and raise children. LISC equips struggling communities with the
capital, program strategy, and know-how to become places where people can thrive. It combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources. Since 1980, LISC has invested $14.7 billion to build or rehab 330,000 affordable homes and apartments and develop 53 million square feet of retail, community and educational space. For more, visit http://www.lisc.org.

LISC opened the Rhode Island office in 1991. Since then we have invested nearly $300 million in neighborhoods across the state, helping to create more than 7,500 affordable homes and supporting the development of more than 2 million square feet of commercial, child care, educational and community space. Please visit us at www.rilisc.org.

**About Social innovation Fund**

Representing a new way of doing business for the federal government, the Social Innovation Fund unites public and private resources to evaluate and grow innovative community-based solutions that work. These solutions must have at least preliminary evidence of results in low-income communities in three priority areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures and youth development.

The Social Innovation Fund is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more, visit www.nationalservice.gov.