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The Literacy Cooperative Grants Six Local Literacy Organizations Funding to Improve Literacy Programming

(CLEVELAND) – March 20, 2006 – The Literacy Cooperative, a newly established entity working to advance literacy skills in Greater Cleveland, announced it has selected six organizations to participate in a capacity building project to support literacy programming development. The project will be funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant allocated to The Literacy Cooperative by the Board of Cuyahoga County Commissioners.

The organizations selected are: Euclid City Schools ABLE, Heights Parents Center, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Vocational Guidance Services and a joint venture between Seeds of Literacy and Garden Valley Neighborhood House. Up to \$250,000 will be distributed to these organizations to support their engagement in the project.

Over the next four months, participating organizations will be matched with consultants who will provide assistance in the areas of program development, literacy curriculum, instruction, data tracking and evaluation. The organizations will identify and develop best practices to improve current services and transfer this knowledge to the broader group of providers and organizations focused on literacy.

“After months of planning, we’re excited to take the first step towards improving literacy levels in Greater Cleveland,” Omobola Lana, project director, said. “This is the first of, hopefully, many more dollars that we’ll be able to bring into the community to help local literacy organizations reach their goals. Additionally, the project encourages collaboration and the sharing of ideas among organizations, which will enhance literacy efforts.”

The goal of the TANF grant is to strengthen community organizations and deliver high-quality literacy programming to out-of-school youth ages 16-18 or 19 if enrolled in high school equivalency courses; and pregnant or parenting young adults age 18-24, in targeted communities in Cuyahoga County where the rates of literacy are estimated to be equal to or exceed 50 percent.

The Literacy Cooperative received 11 grant proposals in response to the RFP. Proposals were reviewed by a committee that included representatives from The Literacy Cooperative, Invest in Children, Family and Children First council, philanthropic community and a national literacy consultant.

The Literacy Cooperative

The Literacy Cooperative is a joint initiative of The Cleveland, George Gund and Martha Holden Jennings foundations. Working on behalf of the community, the organization seeks to improve literacy levels among children, youth and adults in Greater Cleveland through an expanded and coordinated effort. The Literacy Cooperative will focus on five strategic areas: providing a centralized information and referral center; ensuring that training, curriculum, and instruction techniques are available to providers; establishing evaluation and accountability standards; identifying and securing public and private funding for literacy; and launching a public awareness and outreach campaign.

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