



A periodic email newsletter from Anthony Maione, President & CEO, intended to provide community leaders and partners with information about United Way's ongoing efforts to reduce the number of people in need in Rhode Island.

Skill Up Awarded \$450,000 Grant from National Workforce Fund

Skill Up Rhode Island, United Way's workforce development effort devoted to creating career opportunities for lower wage workers while meeting employers' critical needs for skilled employees, has been nationally recognized with a \$450,000 grant over three years from the newly launched National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

The Fund was created by the Annie E. Casey, Ford and Hitachi Foundations, the U.S. Labor Department and others.

This is an exciting development as United Way has been working hard in Rhode Island to create the best possible environment for preparing people for the workplace. This grant - from some of the leading foundations in the field - tells us that we are on the right track.

We're joined in our efforts by the Governor's Workforce Board, the Office of Adult Education and Making Connections Providence on four pilot projects in the Marine Trades (Newport); Customer Service/Retail (Woonsocket), and Healthcare and Construction (Providence). We are also helping to support developments on behalf of adult education, industry partnerships and statewide strategic planning.

Skill Up is breaking new ground in the workforce development field by attempting to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers. Our goal is for participating workers to make significant progress towards individual or family-sustaining wages, while providing employers with the trained workforce they need.

For example, our partnership in Newport teams the International Yacht Restoration School with CCRI and several employers to train potential workers for jobs currently available in the boat building and repair field.

In Providence, we're working with the building trades unions and YouthBuild in supporting pre-apprenticeship construction programs, and with hospitals to support career ladders in healthcare positions. In Woonsocket we're working with Family Resources, other community groups and a local employer to train for positions in distribution centers.

High quality workforce partnerships like these are critical in the years ahead as the nation faces a shortage of well-prepared workers. It's predicted that the number of available employees with two-year degrees and skill certificates will fall short of the economy's needs.

By focusing on improving jobs skills United Way of Rhode Island is helping people do better on their own, while at the same time improving our State's economy.

Tony