

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**COMMISSIONERS RECEIVE 'FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT AWARD' FROM COLUMBUS
URBAN LEAGUE**

Today, during the Columbus Urban League's 2015 Empowerment Day at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners was recognized and awarded the Honda Financial Empowerment Award for its dedication to workforce development and financial education efforts. The award was accepted by Franklin County Commissioners Marilyn Brown and Paula Brooks.

The theme of this year's event is 'Achieving the American Dream 4 All,' and the program focused on significant efforts to support the one in three families who live paycheck to paycheck as they strive to build a better life.

Franklin County has undertaken many efforts and initiatives to lift families out of poverty and into living wage employment. One example is the County's recently announced People Works program which includes an employer liaison service and two flexible grant programs to facilitate the private sector employment and training of low-income Franklin County residents who currently receive public assistance, and matches the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individual public assistance recipients with the hiring needs of local partnering businesses and organizations. More information about People Works can be found at www.FranklinCountyOhio.gov/PeopleWorks.

"My workforce development focus has been to innovate ways to bring unemployed and underemployed Franklin County residents to sustainable-wage jobs," said Commission President Marilyn Brown. "While unemployment in Franklin County may be low, we have more work to do to reduce poverty, especially for those who often face the most barriers to employment. Our partnership with the Urban League and its programs such as summer youth employment and the Choose 2 Change program for ex-offenders does just that. Coupled with People Works, these outside-the-box initiatives are yielding truly thrilling results."

"It's been a pleasure to see the awesome growth of the Columbus Urban League's programs under CEO Stephanie Hightower and her able board and staff team," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "My focus as a commissioner remains on good jobs for everyone. I learned as an Urban League board member that we need to reach people in ALL of Franklin County. I thank the Columbus Urban League for this heartfelt award!"

"The best way to empower someone and help them out of poverty is to help them find a job," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "We know there is a gap between what skills employers are looking for, and the skills many of our under- and unemployed residents have. We are working on innovative training programs to bridge that gap to lift more of our residents out of poverty with living wage jobs that put them on a career path to financial stability and achieving the American Dream."

"The work of our County Commissioners has allowed the Columbus Urban League to empower individuals and deliver transformational services with integrity, innovation and collaboration," said Stephanie A. Hightower, President and Chief Executive Officer of Columbus Urban League.

For more information on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, log on to: www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners