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COMMISSIONERS UNVEIL NEW MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR JOB TRAINING PROGRAM TO BENEFIT RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Today, during a presentation at the Columbus Chamber's 10th annual Government Day which brings together private partners with public officials to engage in public policy discussions, Franklin County Commissioners President Marilyn Brown, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, unveiled a new 5-year, \$2.5 million investment in training opportunities for Franklin County residents and businesses. The program, called People Works, is part of the County's Smart Works suite of programs and is the second of three new economic development programs to be announced by Commissioners in the past 12 months.

People Works includes the addition of an employer liaison service and two new flexible grant programs to facilitate the private sector employment and training of low-income Franklin County residents who currently receive public assistance from one or more Franklin County social service agencies. People Works matches the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individual public assistance recipients with the hiring needs of local partnering businesses and organizations.

During her remarks, Commissioner Brown, who is spearheading the program, acknowledged that Franklin County is a growing, vibrant community with a very low unemployment rate.

"Franklin County's unprecedented growth has brought challenges including a high rate of poverty, even though our unemployment rate remains at 3.5-percent," said Brown. "People Works flips the traditional paradigm and asks employers about their workforce needs to best achieve sustainable, living wage employment for our residents. As a result, we will be actively engaged in reducing poverty and helping our local businesses grow and prosper."

Franklin County People Works also makes grants available to businesses who commit to hiring recipients of public assistance from the department of Job and Family Services, the Child Support Enforcement Agency and other Franklin County social service agencies, to partially offset the cost of training either through an on-the-job training program or from an approved offsite education provider, such as Columbus State Community College.

Additionally, a new partnership among Franklin County, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and Columbus 2020, will strive to create industry-led collaborations dedicated to

generating a large pool of qualified candidates for unfilled positions within specific industries. As a result, People Works funding will be used to cover the costs of 4-8 weeks of training to benefit all of the hiring employers in each collaborative within an industry.

Finally, to administer the People Works program, the Commissioners have hired a new, full-time Franklin County Workforce Navigator to facilitate the program between the public and private sectors, making workforce connections that benefit residents as well as businesses.

"As we continue to move out of the Great Recession, we must help all people to find ways out of the trap of poverty," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "As former President Clinton always notes, the best social program is a job. And with People Works, we can hope to strategically target training and skills development to help both families in need and employers who need good workers."

"We know that having a job is the best way we can help Franklin County residents and families who are struggling financially," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "These flexible grant programs are designed to provide area employers with resources to train an already identified pool of candidates in order to meet their individual workforce needs. People Works is an excellent example of innovative government and intergovernmental cooperation."

Previously, Commissioners announced Infrastructure Works, a low-interest revolving loan program for local municipalities in order to close the financing gap on economic development-generating infrastructure projects. Later this year, Commissioners are expected to conclude the announcement of the County's new economic development programs by sharing information on Energy Works, a partnership with the Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority to offer central Ohio businesses and non-profits the opportunity to apply for low-interest loans for cost-effective, energy efficiency improvements to buildings to garner lower energy costs.

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