



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS CREATE WORKFORCE READY YOUTH
*Opportunity Inc. partnering with education and industry to better prepare area youth
as they enter the workforce or continue their education*

Hampton Roads, VA (January 12, 2005)—Opportunity Inc. is pleased to announce the funding of two new initiatives that will provide youth between the ages 14 and 18 with job readiness skills. Each program reflects collaboration between local public school systems and Opportunity Inc.

Supplemental Guidance Counselors

Opportunity Inc. has committed to provide \$64,000 to fund a pilot program that will provide supplementary guidance counselors, during daytime hours, to provide substantive supervision and enhance job readiness. The counselors will be equipped to provide tutoring, dropout prevention strategies, alternative secondary school services, summer employment opportunities, leadership skills training, community service, adult mentoring, drug and alcohol prevention, and follow up services for each eligible student.

Workplace Readiness Skills Project

Opportunity Inc. has committed another \$223,000 to fund a program proposed by the Virginia Beach City Public Schools to enhance the workforce preparation of all youth attending public schools in Virginia. The first phase of the program, which begins in January, calls for the development and implementation of a curriculum for classroom instruction and competency measurement of the thirteen (13) Virginia Workplace Readiness Skills. The second phase entails an implementation plan to disseminate the established curriculum to public schools throughout Hampton Roads and across greater Virginia.

“These programs are exciting examples of effective partnerships that empower our young people and enable our workforce. It is Opportunity Inc.’s commitment to facilitate and forge such relationships,” said Judy Begland, President and CEO of Opportunity Inc.

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In order to develop our emerging workforce, Opportunity Inc. has created a Youth Council chaired by Rodney Jordan, Founding Partner of Melanet, LC. “The Youth Council is comprised of experienced community leaders dedicated to preparing youth for success in today’s and tomorrow’ workforce. Developing effective relationships between our partners in K-12, higher education and the private sector is critical to that success,” said Jordan.

Recent recommendations from the Youth Council have directed Opportunity Inc. to contract with a consultant to develop a comprehensive plan for better preparing Hampton Road’s youth for entry into the workforce or furtherance of their education. In an effort to connect young people with existing community resources, Opportunity Inc. has also developed a comprehensive inventory of youth resources throughout south and western Hampton Roads. This inventory is available to agencies and organizations by calling OppInc. “It is encouraging to see the various resources available to the youth in our community. However, having lots of programs does not automatically equate to lots of results. This information provides a beginning blueprint for strategic partnership and capacity building, as well as identifying and addressing gaps in services,” said Jordan.

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About Opportunity Inc.

Opportunity Inc. promotes effective workforce strategies throughout South and Western Hampton Roads. Its initiatives are intended to respond to the needs of the business community for trained and qualified workers. Through successful efforts that strengthen the regional workforce, the organization endeavors to increase per capita income, promote greater corporate competitiveness and improve regional prosperity.