

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

Milwaukee LISC announces the opening of two new Financial Opportunity Centers at Milwaukee Urban League and Milwaukee Jobs Work

Centers help clients improve credit, increase income, and build wealth over time

(Milwaukee-February 13, 2018) LISC Milwaukee is proud to announce the launch of two new Financial Opportunity Centers in Milwaukee, operated by the Milwaukee Urban League (MUL) and Milwaukee Jobs Work (MJW). Based on a proven national model, Financial Opportunity Centers (FOCs) are career and personal finance service centers that help low- to moderate-income people build smart money habits and focus on the financial bottom line. A national nonprofit focused on comprehensive community and economic development, LISC has a network of more than 80 FOCs across the country, embedded in local community organizations that are trusted, known for their history of providing quality services, and convenient to where people live and seek out services.

Financial Opportunity Centers offer a data-driven successful model which bundles multiple supports, delivered to clients over time. FOCs provide employment and career counseling, one-on-one financial coaching and education and low-cost financial products that help build credit, savings and assets. They also connect clients with income supports such as food stamps, utilities assistance and affordable health insurance. The cornerstone of the FOC model is providing these services in an integrated way—rather than as stand-alone services—and with a long-term commitment to helping clients reach their goals.

“FOCs are really about economic mobility,” said Donsia Strong Hill, executive director of LISC Milwaukee. “They give people a vision of a different future, and provide them with the services and skills they need to realize it.” explained Strong Hill.

FOCs underpin LISC’s equitable economic development strategies in Milwaukee, based on the philosophy that financially stable households create a ripple effect and fuel neighborhood economies.

“When individuals gain living wage employment and build wealth, they are better positioned to support local businesses, buy homes, invest in higher education, and start their own businesses. These are all characteristics of a healthy, vibrant community,” said Donsia Strong Hill.

Data indicates the Financial Opportunity Centers’ bundled approach leads to concrete gains in job retention, net income and credit scores. A recent study of 40,000 FOC participants, showed those who took advantage of bundled services that focused on employment, income supports and financial management skills made significant, lasting progress—with incomes expanding by an encouraging 76 percent.

The Milwaukee Jobs Work (MJW) FOC will be located at 2821 N 4th St. MJW identifies motivated individuals through assessment, training, placement and provides wrap around services as they develop their professionalism. Their support will help participants maintain and sustain year-round employment while building their financial stability. Their unique ability to help people find and sustain a job will be a feature of this FOC.

"We are excited to partner with LISC and become a Financial Opportunity Center site (FOC) in Milwaukee." said Bill Krugler, President of Milwaukee Jobs Work. "The cornerstone of the FOC model - providing integrated services with a long-term commitment to helping clients reach their goals -- is consistent with the unique work Milwaukee Jobs Work does in helping motivated individuals overcome employment barriers to achieve economic self-sufficiency. We believe the FOC model and its proven tools will enhance our ability to execute our mission and together we can empower, educate and enable individuals to tap into their own potential."

The Milwaukee Urban League FOC will be located at 435 W North Ave. For 99 years, The new FOC will build on current MUL services, providing one-on-one financial coaching, education and low-cost financial products that help build credit, savings, and assets. MUL has provided services and assisted community residents through its primary program areas of Education and Training and Workforce Development. MUL has demonstrated achievement in increasing the number of African-American youth in accessing post-secondary education. Additionally, MUL’s workforce development services offer case management, counseling, comprehensive trainings, and ultimately job placement.

“With this invaluable partnership with LISC, the Milwaukee Urban League is taking a holistic approach to supporting community residents with employment and financial needs, linking job placement and financial education that increase income, decrease expenses and build credit,” said Dr. Eve Hall, President and CEO of Milwaukee Urban League.

Milwaukee LISC currently supports two additional Financial Opportunity Centers at Riverworks Center on the north side, and Journey House on the south side of Milwaukee. These two centers have more than 500 clients per year who participate in bundled services. LISC’s Financial Opportunity Centers program would not be possible without the support of funders who provide their time, expertise and resources.

Financial Opportunity Centers in Milwaukee are supported by many generous private donors including Chase Bank, State Farm, and the Zilber Family Foundation. LISC provides additional financial support, technical assistance and training, a shared data system, and network sharing across sites and cities.

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About LISC: *Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is the recognized leader in neighborhood development. LISC provides programs, tools and investments that help communities thrive. Since 1980, LISC national has marshaled \$13.7 billion from investors, lenders and donors to foster the revitalization of more than 300 urban neighborhoods and rural communities. Since 1995, LISC Milwaukee has invested \$140 million in the central city by mobilizing resources for neighborhood revitalization and investing these funds through grants, loans and technical assistance to neighborhood-based community development efforts. Visit: www.lisc.org or www.lisc.org/milwaukee.*

About Milwaukee Jobs Work: Milwaukee JobsWork prepares and encourages motivated individuals living in poverty to achieve economic self-sufficiency through sustainable employment. They provide dependable employees and business support for small businesses. At the same time, they collaborate with anchor institutions and give them an opportunity to support the community through business development. For more information visit www.milwaukeejobswork.org.

About MUL: The Milwaukee Urban League (MUL) was founded in 1919 as a social service agency to support African-American individuals and families in employment, education, health, and housing as they migrated to the city, primarily from southern states. The National Urban League was founded in 1910; here in Milwaukee, the MUL represents one of 88 affiliates located around the country in 36 states and the District of Columbia. As Urban Leagues, the overall emphasis is to “Empower Communities and Change Lives.” For more information visit www.tmul.org. Visit: <http://www.tmul.org/>