



Citi Foundation



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 13, 2019

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN HOUSTON RECEIVE FUNDING THROUGH THE CITI FOUNDATION AND LISC TO HELP TRAIN WORKERS FOR GROWING JOB SECTORS

Five local nonprofits will use \$870,000 in grants over three years to help 1,200 displaced workers prepare for skilled positions in healthcare, construction, and manufacturing

HOUSTON - The [Citi Foundation](#) and the [Local Initiatives Support Corporation](#) (LISC) [LINK] today announced new funding through the [Bridges to Career Opportunities initiative](#) (Bridges) that will help connect unemployed and underemployed resident in Houston to quality jobs in growth industries.

Five Houston nonprofits have been awarded \$870,000 over three years and technical support to provide services that help job seekers increase their incomes, improve their credit and raise their standards of living. Services include skills training and career development, as well as personal finance coaching, continuing education courses (to strengthen math and reading skills), and resources to help job seekers secure transportation, child care and housing arrangements, which can be impediments to career mobility.

The new funding is part of a \$10 million three-year national effort by the Citi Foundation and LISC to expand the reach of Bridges and spur economic opportunity for thousands of families, including 1,200 in Houston.

“When it comes to creating economic opportunity, Houston’s neighborhoods are rich with talent and energy,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “Thanks to the Citi Foundation and LISC, together, we can help people find their own pathway to economic vitality—and make our communities safer, stronger and healthier in the process.”

The Houston grantees all have long and successful track records of outreach in the communities they serve. They will use the Bridges funding to tailor their services to growing employment sectors and to reach a wider range of local residents.

- **Chinese Community Center** will expand its healthcare skills training so that workers can train as certified nurse aides and eventually move into more advanced positions.
- **SER Jobs** will boost its outreach to employers in the construction field in order to increase job placements, while also ensuring it can support more job seekers as they consider career pathways.
- **The Alliance** will grow its efforts among refugees, immigrants and other low-income residents to expand employment in the health and construction fields, with a particular focus on advanced career pathways that move workers beyond entry level positions into better paying jobs.

- **Wesley Community Center** will expand its healthcare training offerings in the Near North community, as well as launch new education and skills training for machinist jobs.
- **Volunteers of America** will provide advanced level healthcare training that moves participants along a career pathway toward higher wages in sectors ranging from patient care to healthcare IT.

“The demands of today’s U.S. job market are playing out in different ways for American workers and we need to support those who are being negatively impacted by the forces that are shaping the modern economy,” said Ed Skyler, executive vice president for global public affairs at Citi and chair of the Citi Foundation. “By connecting programs that provide not only education and skills building, but support services for family and housing needs, we’re helping American workers who have been or are in danger of being displaced achieve success and contribute to their communities.”

The Houston groups are among 40 community-based nonprofits to be awarded funding through this program (a full listing of participating organizations can be found [here](#).) Notably, more than half of the sites, including three of the five in Houston, are located in Opportunity Zones, a federal incentive to increase investments in low-wealth communities as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.

“The Houston network of grantees plays a critical role in improving the economic opportunity of residents living in these Opportunity Zones as well as throughout the city,” said Amanda Timm, executive director of the Houston LISC office. “Houston LISC is proud to collaborate with the Citi Foundation and our local partners to provide services such as job training and skills building to ensure residents can access critical growth opportunities.”

The majority of people who enter the Bridges program are either unemployed or working in minimum wage jobs and testing at a 6th-8th grade education level. After Bridges, more than three-quarters of participants move on to occupational skills training, and 64 percent achieve industry-recognized credentials—opening doors to living wage jobs they would not otherwise be able to access and putting them on career pathways with the opportunity for ongoing advancement. In the last two years alone, more than 3,000 training participants across the country have been placed in jobs.

“The LISC Bridges to Careers Opportunities project makes a big impact on the ability of The Alliance to move its clients into more stable financial situations,” said Dan Stoecker, chief executive officer of The Alliance. “Coupling adult education with financial literacy and skills training makes it possible for more people to get better jobs faster than they might have otherwise.”

“Wesley Community Center is thrilled to be a recipient of funding from the Citi Foundation and LISC for the Bridges to Career Opportunities initiative,” said Amy Corron, chief executive officer of Wesley Community Center. “Using the Bridges concepts and training, Wesley has developed an effective occupational career track in the healthcare field for lower-income clients living in Houston’s Near Northside and beyond, and we are able help our clients gain the basic academic skills they need to enter vocational training prepared to succeed.”

“Through funding from the Citi Foundation and LISC, Volunteers of America Texas is elated to offer high-caliber bridge programs in the Independence Heights community,” said Danita

Wadley, regional director of Volunteers of America-Texas. “We will offer competitive, high-wage career pathways in healthcare for low skilled individuals needing specialized services to close academic and workforce gaps, with the primary goal of upskilling nursing assistants and entry-level medical office staff.”

“The grant from the Citi Foundation and LISC not only enables Chinese Community Center to expand our healthcare providers training to meet the growing needs of our aging community, but also provides career advancement opportunities through scholarships for the underemployed to obtain higher wages through skills upgrading,” said Chi-mei Lin, executive director of Chinese Community Center.

“SERJobs is honored to grow our partnership with LISC, thanks to the support of the Citi Foundation. Bridges to Career Opportunities has been a key component of our efforts to rebuild the workforce, post-Hurricane Harvey. This investment will ensure that our neighbors in need have the financial resources and the professional skills to help our communities thrive, now and in the long-term,” said Sheroo Mukhtiar, chief executive officer and executive director of SERJobs.

The Citi Foundation’s investment in Bridges builds on a decades-long relationship between the Foundation and LISC. It also signals an expansion of Citi Foundation’s [Pathways to Progress](#) initiative beyond youth-focused career readiness to provide adult job seekers the full range of services needed for long-term employment.

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About the Citi Foundation

The **Citi Foundation** works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant cities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit www.citifoundation.com.

About LISC

With residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. Since 1979, LISC has invested \$18.6 billion to build or rehab 376,000 affordable homes and apartments and develop 63 million square feet of retail, community and educational space. To learn more, visit www.lisc.org.

Contact

LISC

Clare Duncan, 713-597-6843
cduncan@lisc.org

Or

Amanda Fox, 347-581-6498
amandacainfox@gmail.com

Citi

Elizabeth Kelly, 212-559-2477
elizabeth.kelly@citi.com