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Governor Quinn Announces $50 Million Neighborhood Recovery Initiative

Comprehensive Effort will Keep Young People Safe; Offer Mentoring, Job Opportunities

CHICAGO – October 6, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn today announced the start of a comprehensive effort to help strengthen and revitalize Illinois' urban communities. Based largely on feedback from the Governor's Anti-Violence Commission, the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative will focus on rebuilding Illinois' most vulnerable neighborhoods and protecting young people by offering more job and education opportunities. It will also provide small businesses with access to capital and technical expertise, which will help them expand and create new jobs.

"This is a comprehensive and concerted effort to keep our young people safe, off the streets and in school. The best social program is a job – and this initiative will provide people of all ages with the skills to compete for the jobs of today and tomorrow," Governor Quinn said. "The Neighborhood Recovery Initiative is also about giving small businesses the resources to turn promising ideas into emerging companies, which will lead to better jobs for more people."

The Neighborhood Recovery Initiative follows a summer in Chicago that attracted national headlines due to dozens of shootings in several neighborhoods. The initiative will begin in a number of Chicago neighborhoods the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority has identified as having the most need, and will later be expanded to additional communities throughout the state.

The initiative's goal of revitalizing vulnerable urban communities will be accomplished in a number of ways: by engaging young people; offering job training for adults and small businesses; and by providing funding for small businesses. By helping young people avoid the influence of drugs and violence, the initiative will reduce the risk factors associated with violence.

This public-private partnership between the state and community organizations will reach an estimated 18,000 youth through programs such as: Mentoring Plus Jobs, which will provide youths with part-time jobs and additional support; the Parent Leadership Program, which will offer parents training that will help them become community leaders; and school-based counseling at K-12 schools.

Job training for adults and small businesses will also be a vital component of the initiative. Funding through the Training for Tomorrow Program will help non-profit, community based organizations identify local industries having difficulty recruiting skilled, entry level workers. It will train and place more than 1,700 people into jobs over the next two years.

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In addition, the Departments of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Transportation (IDOT) are working with regional business organizations to establish a new program for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises to help small contractors participate in state construction projects and other business opportunities within the public sector.

The initiative will also help provide additional funding to support small businesses. DCEO is partnering with financial institutions with strong small business lending backgrounds, including ACCION Chicago, Chicago Community Ventures and the Women's Business Development Center, to launch the Community Business Fund. The fund will provide critical micro- and small business financing to help put more people to work. More than 300 loans will likely be made to start-up and existing small businesses, which will lead to more than 800 jobs being created or retained over the next two years.

The program will initially begin in the following Chicago-area neighborhoods: Albany Park, Auburn Gresham, Austin, Brighton Park, Cicero, East Garfield Park, Englewood, Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Maywood North Lawndale, Pilsen-Little Village, Rogers Park, Roseland, South Shore, West Chicago, West Garfield Park and Woodlawn.

The Neighborhood Recovery Initiative builds upon Governor Quinn's ongoing efforts to combat violence in Illinois' urban neighborhoods. This summer Governor Quinn named members to the Anti-Violence Commission, which is gathering testimony from community groups and anti-violence experts to provide recommendations to the Governor. The commission has held three public meetings and will meet again next week. For more information, please visit www.antiviolence.illinois.gov.

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