CSW Launches Advancing Community Equity and Upward Mobility (ACE-UP)

**Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 24, 2022:** Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW), with support from Lumina Foundation, is convening 20-25 community colleges and their industry partners in a first-of-its-kind community of practice, Advancing Community Equity and Upward Mobility (ACE-UP). The purpose of ACE-UP is to design and uplift strategies colleges can employ to help their industry partners create more inclusive workplace environments leading to worker retention, advancement, and economic success. ACE-UP is targeting grantees participating in the U.S. Department of Labor’s Strengthening Community Colleges initiative and other institutions seeking to increase employment equity through educational and economic opportunity with a particular focus on Black, Hispanic, and Native American populations.

Five themes underpin the ACE-UP learning experience: advancing and institutionalizing equity, aligning policies and practices, enhancing student services, increasing employer engagement, and using data to drive decision-making. Drawing on a spiraling curriculum design, these themes will emerge and re-emerge over the course of the community of practice, guiding discussion, lessons, and resources.

Director of Competencies and Credentials Melissa Goldberg will lead the ACE-UP Community of Practice. A two-year, $500,000 grant to CSW from Lumina, with companion research and documentation by the Urban Institute, supports the effort. Of the project, Goldberg states, “We believe the ACE-UP CoP will provide community colleges and their industry partners with important tools, resources and opportunities for peer networking to create more equitable solutions for workforce credentialing and quality employment opportunities for individuals seeking career success.”

“Lumina is excited to support CSW in this imperative work of building strong networks between community colleges and their industry partners to center around equity and inclusivity in the workplace,” said Georgia Reagan, Strategy Officer with Lumina Foundation. “With CSW’s years of expertise in this field, the ACE-UP Community of Practice will be a valuable tool in ensuring students and workers of color have equitable access to training opportunities and good jobs.”

Customized to meet the needs of participating community colleges and their industry partners, ACE-UP is led by experts at Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, alongside nationally recognized researchers, professionals, and practitioners to support member learning. ACE-UP will involve a series of bi-monthly workshops, as well as coaching and technical assistance sessions through Summer 2024. Participants will work with peer community college and industry partners from across the country, gain exposure, employ practical planning tools, and reflect on and plan for
applying the principles that underlie effective strategies at their colleges and industry partner workplaces. Ultimately, participating institutions will leave ACE-UP with an actionable plan to implement at their institutions.

Inclusivity and diversity are core values of ACE-UP. The cohort will represent a cross-section of community colleges and industry partnerships with respect to size, urbanicity, location, industry sectors and targeted students/learners.

Colleges interested in participating in ACE-UP are encouraged to apply for membership at www.ace-up.org/application before the November 18, 2022, application deadline. Applicants will be informed about the status of their applications on or about December 16, 2022. Please email Melissa Goldberg at mgoldberg@skilledwork.org with any questions or to seek more information.

**About Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW):** CSW is a national workforce policy nonprofit that catalyzes change in educational and labor market systems, policies, and practices to increase economic mobility, particularly for people of color and others historically excluded from success. For more than 30 years, CSW has focused on achieving scalable improvements in worker skills, lifelong learning, and job quality. CSW collaborates with change makers to develop strategies, identify evidence to inform strategies, build the capacity of organizations, manage initiatives, and evaluate lessons learned.

**About Lumina Foundation:** Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. The foundation envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation’s need for talent through a broad range of credentials. Lumina’s goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy.