



For Immediate Release

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CareerEdge Expands Soft Skills Partnership with Charlotte Technical College

Sarasota, FL.: CareerEdge Funders Collaborative will be joining forces for the second year with Charlotte Technical College (CTC) to expand its *Bridges to Careers* soft skills training program for students at the college. With funding from Gulf Coast Community Foundation, CareerEdge is assisting CTC in the development of employability curriculum to help low-income and under-employed individuals achieve an industry-recognized credential. The program targets female students in particular. The grant is made possible by the Miriam P. Raines Charitable Fund, an endowment at Gulf Coast to help women in Charlotte County educate themselves to further their life skills.

Bridges to Careers is a training program created by CareerEdge in response to employer feedback which revealed that, even though employees had the required technical skills, they often lacked the important “soft skills” to accompany them. The program follows a career-preparedness model, with modules in communication, customer service, maintaining a positive attitude, teamwork, and overall professionalism. It also addresses job readiness with training in résumé writing and networking.

All Charlotte Technical College students will have access to career awareness, career exploration, and career placement assistance at the CTC Career Lab with a Transitions Counselor. These programs also will be implemented at the CTC Adult Learning Center to assist non-English speaking students and those working toward a GED or diploma.

“Students come out of school prepared with the proper skills to get and maintain a job, and employers are pleased with the technical and soft skills that graduates enter their organizations with,” explains CareerEdge Funders Collaborative Executive Director Mireya Eavey.

The CTC *Bridges to Careers* program will feature some new initiatives for the 2017-18 school year. There will be a volunteer tutor and mentorship program available to students, and dual-enrolled high school students can elect to participate in the program. *Bridges* training is now incorporated within all certifications rather than just stand-alone cohorts and is woven into the CTC strategic plan.

According to CTC, the college’s Technical Advisory Committees, which comprise local employers for each program of instruction, have expressed their support for the *Bridges* program. They recognize that it helps to fill the need for more “soft skills” or “employability skills” training for entry-level employees.

“We want them to come out ready to work and highly employable with all of their skills ready to go,” says Deelynn Bennett, Director of Charlotte Technical College. *“The Bridges program is ideal in terms of advancing the career-ready practices that all CTC students are expected to learn as they progress through their programs.”*

About CareerEdge Funders Collaborative

CareerEdge is an innovative partnership of business, government, and philanthropic organizations that leverages public and private dollars to provide opportunities for better jobs and wages in Manatee and Sarasota counties. The first regional collaborative of workforce investors in the southeastern United States to be designated as a site of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, CareerEdge was created with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, City of Bradenton Central Community Redevelopment Agency, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Bank of America, Bradenton 14th Street Community Redevelopment Agency, Bradenton Downtown Development Authority, and Manatee Community Action Agency. It is also supported by contributions from the Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation, Microsoft, Sarasota County Government, Jane’s Trust, JP Morgan Chase, Scheidel Foundation and United Way Suncoast . For more information about CareerEdge and its partners, please visit www.careeredgefunders.org or call 941.328.6985

About Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Together with its donors, Gulf Coast Community Foundation transforms our region through bold and proactive philanthropy. Gulf Coast is a public charity that was created in 1995 through the sale of the Venice Hospital. Since then, we have become the philanthropic home of more than 650 families who have established charitable funds here, and we have invested over \$240 million in grants in the areas of health and human services, civic and economic development, education, arts and culture, and the environment. Learn more at GulfCoastCF.org.