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BANKWORK$™ PARTNERS WITH WORKSYSTEMS FOR CONTINUED EXPANSION OF AWARD-WINNING FINANCIAL CAREER TRAINING PROGRAM
Collaboration seeks to address growing economic divide in the Portland region

Portland, Oregon – Worksystems will partner with BankWork$™ to strengthen its support of economic growth in the Portland area, serving low-income, underserved communities and those facing multiple barriers to employment. The new collaboration to prepare workers for careers in the financial services industry continues the BankWork$™ $4-million national expansion to 15 cities by 2019.

“As the leading innovative workforce development organization in the Portland Metro region, Worksystems is the ideal partner for BankWork$™,” said Les Biller, BankWork$™ founder and co-founder of The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation. “We sought an organization that would reflect the BankWork$™ commitment to providing not just the best, most effective career training but ongoing support and mentoring. We look forward to working with Worksystems to provide a new opportunity for long-term careers for the people in Portland.”

Worksystems will collaborate with SE Works, Inc., a community based, nonprofit organization to deliver the BankWork$™ training program. For more than 10 years Worksystems has partnered with SE Works, Inc. on a number of employment and training programs serving individuals experiencing barriers to employment. SE Works, Inc. will deliver the BankWork$™ training program from their location in southeast Portland, where they host an onsite WorkSource Center providing career planning, job search skill development as well as access to training and educational opportunities.

“Our partnership with BankWork$™ builds on our existing, proven programs and adds another facet to our diverse set of trainings,” said Andrew McGough, Executive Director of Worksystems. “I believe we can attribute much of our success to the collaborations we have had with our elected leaders, our non-profit partners and the Portland business community. Bringing BankWork$™ to Portland and to Worksystems is a natural extension of our effort to be responsive to the community’s needs and concerns.”

“The most gratifying part of our program is when our graduates interview with potential employers and successfully put into action all they have learned during their BankWork$™ classes,” said Colleen Anderson, BankWork$™ Executive Director, who spent 30+ years in the financial services industry. “By partnering with Worksystems and SE Works, Inc., we will be able to bring that experience to Portland and help serve both a population eager for new career opportunities and our banking partners who seek a diverse workforce that meets the needs of their customers. We look forward to collaborating with Worksystems and SE Works, Inc. to serve Portland businesses and workers.”

BankWork$™ launched in 2006 in Los Angeles, expanded to Seattle in 2011 and launched its first class in San Francisco in June of 2015. By 2019, BankWork$™ will be operating in 15 or more cities nationwide. Its $4-million national expansion is funded by Bank of America, U.S. Bank and Wells Fargo, which have
each pledged $1 million over five years to support the rollout, and by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation, which founded the program and has also pledged $1 million.

Since its launch, BankWork$™ has achieved enviable results. It has successfully placed over 900 graduates who were hired by banks and other financial institutions. BankWork$™ achieves a graduation rate of approximately 75% and is placing approximately 70% of graduates with partner banks each year. BankWork$™ graduates also stay employed in their jobs: retention rates for 2012-13 BankWork$™ graduates showed that 86% were employed six months after their hire date and 72% one year from their hire date.

“BankWork$™ provides valuable workforce development resources for both banks and the individuals the program will serve,” said Stacey Dodson, President, U.S. Bank, Portland and Southwest Washington. “At U.S. Bank, we believe it is essential that we do our part to strengthen the communities where we live and work. Partnering with BankWork$™ is a perfect way to support those in our communities who face barriers to employment, and to provide essential job training, strengthen financial awareness and help transform lives. Our partnership with BankWork$™ and Worksystems is a win/win for the program participants and the banks who need a well trained, diverse and motivated base of potential employees. It is our privilege and pleasure to partner with BankWork$™ and Worksystems, both of whom have proven track records of success.”

Banking industry professionals and BankWork$™ Founding Partner JVS Los Angeles developed the curriculum, which is designed to be hands-on training with exposure to banks and the financial industry, and teaches sales and customer service skills through simulation exercises. The classes, which are free for participants, run for eight weeks and provide training in the skills needed for jobs as tellers, customer service representatives and personal bankers. The course culminates in a graduation and job fair with local banking partners, giving graduates the opportunity to interview for jobs immediately. BankWork$™ also offers resume building, job interview practice, job placement assistance and ongoing coaching and mentoring to help with career advancement. Participants must be 18 years or older, have a high school diploma or GED, be fluent in written and spoken English and have basic computer skills. Standard background checks are run on all students to ensure they are bondable.

BankWork$™ reflects the collaboration much sought after by the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. The Los Angeles Business Journal recognized BankWork$™ with the Project Collaboration Award at the Nonprofit and Corporate Citizenship Awards for its work in bringing together partner banks, local government agencies and philanthropies to support job training.

About BankWork$™: The program was started in 2006 in Los Angeles by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation and currently runs in Los Angeles, Seattle and San Francisco, placing more than 200 individuals in banking careers every year. As part of a five-year, $4-million national expansion in partnership with Bank of America, U.S. Bank and Wells Fargo, it is adding operations in Phoenix and Portland, Ore. in 2015 before moving to a total of 15+ cities by 2019. For more information, see www.bankworks.org .

About Worksystems: Worksystems coordinates a regional workforce system that supports individual prosperity and business competitiveness, by ensuring that the public workforce system serves businesses by developing qualified employees and giving current and future workers the skills and support they need to successfully engage, advance, and succeed in the labor market.