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**AACC, WALMART FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE JOB READY, WILLING AND ABLE INITIATIVE
Initiative expands capacity of community colleges to train and place students in middle-skill jobs**

Washington, DC—Through a new \$4.19 million grant from the Walmart Foundation, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) announced today the Job Ready, Willing and Able initiative to expand the capacity of community colleges to prepare and place their students in middle-skill jobs for the long-term health and stability of our country.

Through a selective process, 17 community colleges will receive funding to collaborate with local employers to provide unemployed residents with training and access to middle-skill jobs. Four of the colleges that participated in the Workforce Economic Opportunity Initiative funded by the Walmart Foundation in October 2008 will receive funding to act as mentors. Work is expected to begin in spring 2014.

AACC will build on its experience from the Workforce Economic Opportunity Initiative. Twenty predominantly rural community colleges focused on developing leadership and partnerships to respond to workforce and economic development challenges. The timing of this grant, in light of the economic downturn, created unexpected and unprecedented challenges for these colleges. However, it reinforced the need to partner with industry and to leverage expertise and resources to create relevant programs and opportunities.

Mentor colleges, selected from the original cohort will leverage their programmatic and outcome experience, as well as significant partnerships. AACC also will equip colleges to use tools, including the Virtual Career Network career navigation platform launched with support from the U.S. Department of Labor, to help connect students with high growth jobs.

“With the support of the Walmart Foundation, this network of community colleges will boost the employability of residents while building sustainable partnerships with the workforce community,” said AACC President and CEO Walter G. Bumphus. “This is not just a grant—it’s an investment that will go a long way toward revitalizing the communities these colleges serve and ensuring people are on a promising career track.”

To encourage a holistic approach to serving students, these community colleges will also provide wrap around services. This program supports Walmart Foundation’s commitment to economic prosperity and opening job opportunities for those who need them most, as well as confidence in working with community colleges as economic engines in their communities.

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“We are committed to creating opportunities for people to live better, and one important way we do this is by supporting middle skills job training,” said Julie Gehrki, senior director of the Walmart Foundation.

“Community colleges are a pathway for students to gain a valuable education and access to career opportunities, and through partnering with organizations like AACC we can help ensure that people receive the skills needed to succeed as they enter the workforce.”

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The American Association of Community Colleges is a national organization representing the nation’s close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges. The colleges are the largest and fastest growing sector of higher education, currently enrolling more than 13 million students each year.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts. By operating globally and giving back locally, Walmart is uniquely positioned to address the needs of the communities it serves and make a significant social impact within its core areas of giving: Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating, Sustainability, Career Opportunity and Women’s Economic Empowerment. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Walmart has donated more than 1 billion meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart’s giving, visit foundation.walmart.com.