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RICHMOND PROMISE NEWS Release

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Richmond one of thirteen cities selected to participate in National League of Cities Postsecondary Education initiative

RICHMOND, CALIF. – The City of Richmond, in partnership with the Richmond Promise and Contra Costa College, has been selected to join a new peer-learning cohort led by the National League of Cities (NLC) to remove barriers to basic needs that often prevent college students from successfully completing postsecondary degrees, certificates, or other credentials needed to gain access to careers. The Richmond Promise and the Mayor’s Office led the city’s effort to gain acceptance into NLC’s “Community of Practice on Addressing the Basic Needs of Postsecondary Students” initiative.

Richmond joins 12 other cities across the nation in monthly peer-to-peer virtual learning opportunities and tailored technical assistance from NLC staff and national content experts to help advance the city’s efforts in supporting local students. Participating cities include Akron, Ohio; Arlington, Texas; Aurora, Illinois; Jacksonville and Orlando, Florida; Las Vegas, Nevada; Tempe and Mesa, Arizona; Newark, New Jersey; Rancho Cordova, California, St. Louis, Missouri; and Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

“The education and career success of Richmond’s young people is hugely important for the future of the city,” said Mayor Tom Butt. “We want our young people to go off to college and come back to lead our community and we’ve been laying that groundwork through programs like the Richmond Promise.”

Since the launch of the Richmond Promise in 2016, the Promise and the City have emerged as national leaders in providing wraparound support for local young people pursuing postsecondary education and developing a college-going culture. As of this fall, the Richmond Promise has nearly 1,500 college Scholars representing Richmond at over 100 colleges and universities across the country. 70% of Richmond Promise Scholars are the first in their family to go to college, and Scholars are supported through scholarship awards, college and career mentorship, coaching, and other wraparound services.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has only magnified existing inequities. We know that scholarship support is just one piece of the puzzle for college success and far too many students are one emergency away from having to stop out of college, in need of a personal computer, are struggling with mental health, and are food and housing insecure,” said Jessie Stewart, Executive Director of the Richmond Promise. “The question now, for program leaders, policy makers, and practitioners, is how will we meet this moment? This is why we are thrilled to join the NLC community of practice to deepen our partnership with the City of Richmond and Contra Costa College, and learn alongside other Cities tackling similar challenges to generate solutions and leverage support to expand access and success for underrepresented students. ”

Dennis Franco, Dean of Students at Contra Costa College, adds, “Contra Costa College has been working hard for the past several years to address basic needs including an on campus food pantry, free breakfast program, and providing on-site, free mental health treatment for our students. We’re excited

to enter into this relationship with Richmond Promise, the City of Richmond, and the National League of Cities to strengthen these services and serve our shared community in a more comprehensive way.”

In today’s economy, a postsecondary credential has become essential to enter career pathways that pay a living wage. Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce [found](#) in 2016 that Americans with a type of postsecondary credential earn 25% more on average over their lifetimes than those with a high school degree or less. Moreover, individuals with some college education captured all but 100,000 of the 11.6 million net new jobs created during the 2010-2016 economic recovery.

“As high levels of educational attainment are directly linked to a city’s economic vitality and well-being, there is a great incentive for municipal leaders to support and promote postsecondary credential attainment,” said Audrey Hutchinson, Director of Education and Expanded Learning at the National League of Cities. “The National League of Cities is proud to work with the City of Richmond in addressing the basic needs of postsecondary students in the community.”

This cohort program runs from September 2020 through September 2021 with additional support through 2022 and is generously supported by the ECMC Foundation. To learn more about NLC’s Community of Practice on Addressing the Basic Needs of Postsecondary Students initiative, visit www.nlc.org/program-initiative/cities-addressing-basic-needs-of-postsecondary-students or contact Kat Maramba at 202-740-3069 or maramba@nlc.org.

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