



Press Release

Virginia Asian Chamber Of Commerce and Diverse Coalition of Workforce Development Service Providers to host 2nd Town Hall Concept Planning Meeting

Date: January 9, 2009; Ashland, Virginia ; Contact: Tinh Phan, Chairman

Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce (VACC) and a coalition of twelve workforce development service providers will host its 2nd Asian American Workforce Development Town Hall Planning Meeting with focus on helping Asian Pacific Islanders minority linguistic newcomers and other underserved communities deal with unemployment issues during the recession. The meeting will be held on the 14th of January in Richmond. VACC represents the voice of more than 350 Virginia Asian American entrepreneurs, hundreds of other events attendants, individuals and families from 37 Asian communities, and other Asian and Non Asian organizations in the United States and worldwide.

The January 14th planning session will take place at Noon at O'Charley Restaurant located at 6291 West Broad Street in Richmond. Subsequent sessions will be held monthly with a final blueprint of collaboration models being introduced to the Coalition in mid spring. VACC urges any citizen who cares about this issue, job seekers, and anyone working in the workforce development system service to attend this meeting. Lunch is available for order and is on one's own.

Background: Due to the urgency of the global recession with thousands of Virginians losing their jobs, the Asian Chamber last month hosted **The Virginia Economic Outlook Forum 2009** in Richmond, bringing on eight (8) economic specialists to speak to 90 participants. As a result, the Chamber created a pilot program aiming to create collaboration among service providers wishing to better serve the needs of *all* linguistic minority dislocated workers.

"This pilot project allows for relationship building among workforce service providers of dislocated workers within the diverse and underserved minority linguistics communities", Tinh Phan, VACC Chairman said: *"Our project intends to be inclusive of anyone from any ethnic backgrounds facing tough times as the global recession is an American issue and we are all in this together as Americans"*, he added.

With the theme of *Addressing Virginia's Asian Pacific Islanders and Other Minority Linguistic Dislocated Workers Issues during the Global Recession*, the project class for participating agencies to contribute their ideas in the development of a plan of actions for a variety of collaborative activities that will help the mainstream job and training service providers statewide to better coordinate multi-lingual outreach and direct service efforts in the years ahead. The results of the forum will be sent to all the stakeholders of the Virginia workforce development system, allowing the coalition to continue to formulate a proactive agenda on how to enhance their service to Virginia's linguistic minority dislocated workers in the years to come.

A *dislocated worker* is an individual who has been terminated or laid off or who have received a notice of termination or layoff from employment, is eligible for or has exhausted their entitlement to unemployment compensation, and is unlikely to return to their previous industry or occupation. The person may also be long-term unemployed and has limited opportunities for employment, may be self-employed, and may be unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which they reside or because of natural disasters.

According to a recent report by the *Pew* Center, the economic downturn has taken a far greater toll on minority linguistics communities than it has on the U.S. population as a whole due to their limited access to job and training and re-training resources as a result of acculturation and language diversity barriers, especially among the Asian communities, and the types of jobs hold.

Agencies collaborating on this initiative so far include, among others, **Goodwill Industries, United Way 211, Virginia Community College System's Rapid Response Team, City of Richmond Hispanic Liaison Office, Virginia Employment Commission, AARP, Virginia Council of Churches, Dominion, Challa Law, Asian Fortune**, members from diverse Asian American Pacific Islanders, and members from all other Virginia minority linguistic community groups.

For more information, to request to take part in this important planning meeting, and/or to be put in a mailing list to receive future updates on the final findings of this project, please contact: **Tinh Phan** at **Tel: (804) 798-3975; Email: aabac@aabac.org**