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Hamilton County To Help Dropouts Drop Back In *Community Partners Kick Off “Connect2Success”*

Cincinnati (August 11, 2008) Hamilton County’s Department of Job and Family Services is teaming with Cincinnati State and other community partners to target 700 area dropouts for wraparound services that will help them gain an education and much more.

Connect2Success arose out of a proposal, jointly introduced in 2007 by Commissioners Todd Portune and David Pepper, to identify and personally contact area high school dropouts and facilitate their re-enrollment in an educational program of their choosing. Students will remain in the program, until they obtain their high school diploma or equivalent degree. Connect2Success will also help students find and retain employment; gain job readiness skills; secure connections to apprenticeships, training, or post-secondary connections; and secure a range of services customized to address barriers such as ex-offender status or disabilities.

According to the U.S. Census, approximately 17 percent of adults over age 25 in Hamilton County did not graduate from high school. It is estimated that as many as 30 percent of students drop out before achieving a high school degree.

Studies collected by the National Education Association show that high school dropouts are 72 percent more likely to be unemployed and will earn \$260,000 less in their lifetime than someone with a high school diploma.

“There are over 15,000 high school dropouts between the ages of 15-25 in our area,” said Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune. “They all run the risk of having fewer opportunities in life. One of the best things we can do to improve their future, and in doing so to improve Hamilton County, is to be successful in obtaining their life affirming commitment to get their high school degree.”

Cincinnati State has agreed to a goal of 80 percent (560 students) completing the program successfully and achieving a high school diploma, GED certificate or vocational certificate.

“Dropping out is a crisis that has long-term impact on the individual and on their community,” said Hamilton County Commissioner David Pepper. “When a young person turns their back on education, we all pay. Getting them re-engaged with education will not only make them stronger, it will make this community stronger.”

Hamilton County will match a \$250,000 grant from the state to Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates (JCG) to support vocational training. Cincinnati State and Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates will connect the participants with area agencies that will provide high school credit-recovery classes, GED preparation and vocational training leading to certification. Cincinnati State and JCG will work with a collaborative of local community partners called Connect2Success to ensure the students receive additional support.

About Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services

The Department of Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, elderly protection, child care, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food stamp disbursement and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands each year and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.

About Cincinnati State

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College offers more than 75 associate degree programs and more than 40 certificate programs in business technologies, health and public safety, engineering technologies, humanity and sciences and information technologies. Some 14,000 students are enrolled annually at Cincinnati State in credit and non-credit classes. Cincinnati State has a 93% graduate placement rate within 3 months of graduating, and its students have a 91% pass rate on required licensing and registry exams.

Cincinnati State has the largest co-op program among two-year colleges in the United States, placing students in such major companies as Procter & Gamble, General Electric, Disney World, 5/3 Bank and the Health Alliance. For information on Cincinnati State visit www.GoAheadGetThere.com.

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