



• Communication • Collaboration • Commerce

OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

October 5, 2007

For more information

Contact: Robert McLean: (315) 470-1832

Beth Savicki: (315) 470-1833

Carol Hill: (315) 470-1848

**Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce Awarded
NYS Department of Labor Grant to Improve Workplace Literacy**

SYRACUSE, NY – The Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce’s proposal to lead a community-wide effort to improve literacy and learning in the workplace has been approved by the New York State Department of Labor.

In a letter to Chamber President Darlene Kerr, DOL Commissioner M. Patricia Smith notified the chamber of the selection and outlined the need, scope and purpose of the pilot program officially known as Limited English Proficiency and Contextual Learning in the Workplace. The award approved funding of up to \$486,280 for the two-year project.

In the spirit of Journey 2 Jobs, the chamber will work collaboratively with four community employers, four literacy services providers and CNY Works to increase the employability and career advancement opportunities for individuals who have limited English language proficiency. This project will serve as a model for other businesses and can be replicated in other regions of the state. The program will be integrated into ongoing community wide literacy initiatives through the participation of the Family Literacy Alliance of Greater Syracuse.

Employer partners in the project include Anaren Microwave, Inc., ICM Corporation, Loretto and St Joseph's Health Center.

Literacy services will be provided by Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES, the WorkKeys Center at Syracuse University, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Syracuse and Partners in Learning, Inc.

Carol Hill, director of workforce solutions and community relations at the chamber said, "We are very excited about our selection to lead this project. In Onondaga County there is a growing immigrant population and an economy that is shifting to a knowledge and service based focus. The immigrant population is a viable resource for employment but they all too often lack the necessary skills to keep jobs, improve their wages, and move up to the next job title at the same business."

Hill also said that the chamber's role in this effort fits perfectly with one of the organization's major goals of actively supporting the implementation of a 21st century workforce development, attraction and retention strategy for the community.

The program is expected to begin in November at all four workplaces.

XXX