



*Creating Solutions. Inspiring Action.®*

## **Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) Louisville Member-Led Local Project**

BHEF is an organization of Fortune 500 and other CEOs, prominent college and university presidents, and foundation leaders working to advance innovative solutions to our nation's education challenges in order to enhance U.S. competitiveness. BHEF brings together these extraordinary leaders to address education-related issues that are fundamental to our nation's ability to compete globally. These include improving student achievement and readiness for success in college and work, and strengthening education, particularly our national capacity in science, technology, engineering, and math. BHEF members develop, adopt, and promote best practices for investing in education among corporate and foundation leaders, nationally and locally. They also advocate for policy changes at the federal, state, and local levels.

### **The College Readiness Initiative**

BHEF's College Readiness Initiative (CRI) provides a dynamic platform for leaders from business and education to work together to promote college readiness, access, and success for underserved populations. The CRI harnesses the influence and resources of BHEF and its membership. Building on this distinct perspective, the CRI addresses critical P-20 education pipeline issues; identifies practical solutions to local education concerns; focuses on systemic solutions and programs that support key aspects of systemic improvement; and creates a platform for local member-led projects to develop strategic approaches, test them, and disseminate lessons learned.

### **CRI Member-Led Local Projects**

BHEF's member-led local projects provide opportunities for teams of corporate, university, and foundation leaders in selected communities to work together to support local education improvement efforts. BHEF works with members to bring relevant stakeholders to the table, offers strategic consultation and expertise, and provides members with national perspective and information to make their ideas for educational improvement a reality. The CRI member-led local projects benefit the communities in which BHEF members work and live, as well as the business and education sectors generally, by enhancing the impact of their individual and collective efforts, and bringing these local efforts into national focus. BHEF and its members benefit through the creation of a platform to develop strategic solutions to important educational challenges and to analyze local impact and disseminate the lessons that are learned to a national audience.

### **CRI Member-Led Local Projects: Focus on Louisville**

For almost two years, BHEF has partnered with its members and the Louisville community to increase the region's college degree attainment rates. Following a site visit in November 2007 where BHEF staff met with over 50 Louisville community members, the organization committed to working with Louisville to improve college enrollment and success, particularly for disadvantaged students. Specifically, BHEF recommended that the Business Leaders for Education (BLE) Forum lead an effort to determine goals, identify measurable targets toward accomplishing these goals, and develop a plan to improve key educational outcomes in Louisville. The group agreed to a three-pronged strategy focused on 1) developing and implementing K-12 college and work readiness standards and assessments, 2) targeting "comebackers," those adults who return to college to finish their degrees, and 3) increasing college retention and degree attainment. BHEF supports these efforts by fostering collaboration among local K-12 education, higher education, business, and foundation leaders, and by offering strategic consultation and national perspective. In addition, BHEF brings the support and expertise of other BHEF members working on similar issues across the nation, and shares the lessons of BHEF's Kentucky members' efforts with the BHEF members around the country.

Local BHEF members involved in the project: David Jones, Chairman, Humana, Inc.; Lee Todd, President, University of Kentucky; and Michael McCall, President, Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

For more information on BHEF's Member-Led Local Project in Louisville, please contact Jeanne Contardo at [jeanne.contardo@bhef.com](mailto:jeanne.contardo@bhef.com) or 202-367-1269.