



Illinois State University Media Relations

Federal Grant For Nursing Education, Small Business Training

Date: 4/13/06

Contact: Eric Jome

Illinois State University has received a \$496,000 U.S. Department of Labor grant to help train dislocated and underemployed workers in Central Illinois. The grant helps provide an accelerated nursing education program and small business development training.

Money from the two-year grant will be used by Mennonite College of Nursing at Illinois State and the McLean County Small Business Development Center (SBDC), located within Illinois State's College of Business, to provide training for 70 dislocated or underemployed workers. Congressman Tim Johnson helped Illinois State to secure the federal grant money.

The grant helps Mennonite College of Nursing to increase its enrollment and fund an accelerated nursing degree program to meet the high demand for skilled nurses. The accelerated nursing education program will allow 10 area workers to receive Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees in one year, as opposed to the traditional two-year program. The accelerated degree program provides underemployed workers who have a desire to study nursing an opportunity to receive their education and enter a critical need employment area in a short period of time.

The accelerated program will use the same curriculum as the traditional two-year degree, but schedules will be compressed and students will attend classes throughout the entire year. The grant money allows Mennonite to hire additional nursing faculty to cover the increased teaching load. Ten people have been admitted to the accelerated program that runs from January to December 2007. Those admitted to the program have already completed the prerequisite college-level general education courses. Tuition for the accelerated program will be paid by the students.

Part of the new federal grant money will also be used to support the continuing education of 10 area students who began the traditional two-year nursing degree program at Mennonite last fall. The nursing education for those students, some of whom are displaced Mitsubishi workers, is being paid for by Federal Workforce Investment Act funds through a program to train area workers for highly skilled, critical need jobs.

"The accelerated program brings new talent to the field of nursing. This funding provides for additional capacity in our nursing program," said Nancy Ridenour, dean of Mennonite College of Nursing. "Specially designed to provide the BSN curriculum in twelve months, the accelerated program increases the number of highly qualified nurses who plan to stay in our local community."

Under the grant, the SBDC will provide small business development training to 25 displaced Mitsubishi Motors workers this summer and another training session for 25 workers in the summer of 2007. The training programs will consist of over 40 class hours on subjects such as business management, human resources practices, tax issues and marketing. The training will allow workers who have shown an interest in starting their own businesses or working in small businesses to gain the advantage they need to succeed in a new career path.

SBDC staff members are working with Career Link, a non-profit corporation that helps administer federal funds for worker training efforts, to identify and enroll displaced workers from Mitsubishi and other companies who have expressed an interest in small business development training. The grant money will also allow the SBDC to hire an additional staff member to coordinate the training program.

"Our goal is to help the small businesses in our community grow and thrive," said Elizabeth Binning, director of the McLean County Small Business Development Center. "Through this Small Business Management Course we hope to increase the success rate of businesses started by displaced Mitsubishi workers. This is an incredible educational opportunity that we are excited to offer."

Mailing Address:

Media Relations
Illinois State University
Campus Box 3250
Normal, IL 61790-3250

E-mail:

mediarelations@ilstu.edu

