



Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALTERNATIVE STAFFING ALLIANCE CONVENES FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE FORUM PROMOTES PEER LEARNING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING AMONG SECTOR PRACTITIONERS

Brookline, MA—Alternative staffing organization (ASO) professionals from across the US and Canada gathered in Chicago for the first-ever Alternative Staffing Alliance Conference, held October 17-19, 2007. The conference brought together diverse practitioners who shared ideas and best practices and discussed the impact of alternative staffing as a growing and viable workforce development strategy. Alliance members – whose focus is to help disadvantaged individuals enter the mainstream labor market – work with businesses to meet their temporary staffing needs. The model delivers quality services to employers and supports motivated jobseekers to overcome obstacles to employment.

In addition to 20 practitioner organizations, the conference drew thought leaders from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, National Economic Development and Law Center, Public/Private Ventures, Safer Foundation, University of Massachusetts and University of Rhode Island.

Conference presenters provided alternative staffing operators with sector performance and policy updates plus a range of practical business information. Business workshops featured techniques for selling and retaining employer customers, and showcased effective systems for tracking and evaluating data. Practitioners also discussed strategies to address the competitive impact of worker exploitation in the temporary staffing industry, particularly the problem of “specialty agencies” that recruit and place undocumented workers. Chicago-area business owners, worker and legal advocates and a media consultant shared their perspectives on this issue and provided valuable context for the discussion.

For many, the conference was a first opportunity to meet their peers, and practitioners were very enthused about this chance to exchange information about their respective programs and challenges. Mike Wynne, executive director of Emerge Community Development (Emerge Staffing) in Minneapolis, believes the Alliance now has “great momentum” and looks forward to what members can achieve by working together. Going forward, Alliance members will continue to connect through participation on various committees, developing strategies and tools that promote the sector and support existing and prospective practitioners.

The Alternative Staffing Alliance is a member-based nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Alternative Staffing Organizations (ASOs). The Alliance was launched in March 2007 with funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. It is our mission to promote and expand the alternative staffing sector and to raise awareness of, and support for, alternative staffing as a sustainable workforce development strategy. For additional information, contact (617) 232-5380, extension 107.

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