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**For Immediate Release**

## **Community Foundation to Manage Polaroid Fund**

NEW BEDFORD - The Community Foundation (CFSEMA) will soon offer help to agencies willing to tackle the challenges of regional workforce development when it begins managing the New Bedford area grant program of the Polaroid Fund, through a contract with the Boston Foundation. Up to \$100,000 will be available each year for programs addressing workforce development through English literacy and adult education.

“I am delighted that we can continue a legacy of support for Greater New Bedford through this new partnership with the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts,” said Paul S. Grogan, President and CEO of the Boston Foundation.

Requests for Proposals for the first funding cycle, which will begin in January 2007, are available on-line at [www.cfsema.org](http://www.cfsema.org) and are due in the Community Foundation’s New Bedford office no later than **4 p.m. October 16**. Organizations may apply for grants of up to \$25,000 for a 12-month period.

“This is especially significant given the history of the Polaroid Company in the New Bedford area, and our long-standing relationship with the former Polaroid Foundation,” said CFSEMA President Craig J. Dutra. “The Foundation not only helped fund the feasibility that led to the CFSEMA’s inception, but several Polaroid Corp. employees were among our earliest board members.”

The Greater New Bedford region faces many challenges to developing a healthy workforce, from a large drop in manufacturing jobs over the past 20 years to the higher-than-average number of area residents who don’t have a high school diploma and who speak a language other than English at home.

This Polaroid Fund seeks to help children and adults become more independent and realize their full potential as successful members of society. Toward this end, it supports activities that help the most vulnerable people in the community build skills. These skills enable people to overcome obstacles and challenges and increase their ability to help themselves.

The New Bedford area grants will focus on proposals that meet the need for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE).

The Community Foundation will consider proposals from organizations seeking to:

- Mitigate barriers to learning such as cultural and language differences, transportation and childcare issues, and fragmentation of available services.
- Protect the cultural context and bonds of a community by preserving and supporting neighborhood based programs providing access to literacy and ABE/ESOL classes.
- Address gaps in programming and provider services. Encourage programming for all stages of adult learning, from adult basic education to preparation for successful enrollment in post-secondary education and training.
- Advocate for public policy to redress provider capacity shortages, for employer incentives to offer workplace literacy programs, and for increases for state and local funding.
- Support capacity building of programs that meet one or more of the objectives listed above.

An ***Applicants Conference will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on September 28*** for agencies interested in applying for a grant through this RFP. The meeting will be held in the Community Foundation Board Room at 227 Union Street, Room 605, New Bedford.

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