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Groundwork Ohio Announces New Grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to Support Early Childhood Equity Project

Columbus, Ohio: Groundwork Ohio is pleased to announce it has received a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) of Battle Creek, Michigan to complete a comprehensive data and communications project that examines outcomes from birth through career readiness with a special focus on racial and rural inequities impacting Ohio's children. WKKF is a leader in supporting both early childhood education and racial equity. The Ohio Early Childhood Race and Rural Equity project is funded by a half a million dollar grant from the Foundation to begin January of 2018 through December of 2020.

Currently, analysis shows us that only 40% of Ohio children enter Kindergarten ready to learn. However, a deeper analysis shows us that a mere 23.9% of black students and 23% of Hispanic students enter Kindergarten ready to learn. These disparities remain even when controlling for poverty.

“Because we know that Kindergarten readiness predicts future education and career success, these numbers are an urgent problem for Ohio's future economic prosperity,” said Shannon Jones, Executive Director of Groundwork Ohio. “Only 43% of the Ohio adult workforce have a credential or degree leading to meaningful employment, despite the fact that by 2020, 65% of all jobs will require education beyond a high school diploma. As we begin to explore this gap, it is indisputable that some kids are getting left behind more often than others,” said Jones.

Groundwork Ohio will begin its project by completing a full data analysis of existing statewide and local equity metrics, looking at disaggregated data for children from birth through 8 years old and beyond. Equity metrics include infant mortality, access to home visiting, incidence of lead and asthma, access to quality child care, access to preschool, kindergarten readiness, suspension and expulsion, 3rd grade reading achievement, 8th grade math achievement, high school graduation and college attainment.

A report will be designed, distributed statewide and studied during a series of six community facing events including four urban communities and the Appalachian region in the project's first year to share data, and solicit responses, learnings and best practices from local community stakeholders. Additional learnings and recommendations will be published and subsequent events will occur in other communities with a strategic focus on rural communities in the project's second year.

“This effort will create a baseline for early childhood stakeholders and policymakers statewide of how we are currently serving, or not serving, Ohio kids,” said Shannon Jones. “Only by measuring equity and raising awareness around the problem, will we begin to close these gaps so that all children, regardless of race and geography, have a promising future.”

Groundwork Ohio is a committed, nonpartisan advocacy organization formed in 2004 that believes quality early learning and development is the most transformative strategy to improve school outcomes, increase the life-long success of Ohio's children, and lay a strong foundation for economic prosperity

in the state of Ohio. To learn more about Groundwork Ohio visit www.GroundworkOhio.org and follow us on Twitter @GroundworkOhio and Facebook, www.facebook.com/GroundworkOhio.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit www.wkkf.org.

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