

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Contact: Maureen Conway  
Director, Workforce Strategies Initiative  
The Aspen Institute  
Tel: 202-736-2502

## **27 ADMITTED TO SECTOR SKILLS ACADEMY PROGRAM TRAINS LEADERS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Washington, D.C., July 18, 2007** – Twenty-five Americans and two people from the United Kingdom, all of whom focus on a type of workforce training known as “sectoral employment development,” have been admitted to a yearlong leadership program developed by the Aspen Institute’s Workforce Strategies Initiative (WSI) and Public/Private Ventures (P/PV). Both WSI and P/PV are known for their research on workforce issues.

Projects using the sectoral employment approach attempt to prepare workers by developing a deep understanding of important industries in their region, and connecting with area employers to create training and other services that both support the industries’ competitiveness and connect workers to good-paying jobs. These sector projects focus on jobs in a variety of industries, including health care, information technology, construction and manufacturing.

The leadership program, known as the Sector Skills Academy, was started in 2005 with assistance from the National Network of Sector Partners and funding from the Flint, Mich.-based Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The purpose is to train and support the next generation of sector program leaders. To date, 49 people have participated in the Academy, which bases admission on a competitive application process.

As in the past, the new group includes participants from urban, suburban and rural settings, who work in community colleges, nonprofit organizations, state and regional government, business associations and labor-management partnerships.

The Academy consists of three, three-day meetings held in various cities around the country where participants learn from experienced sector project leaders, visit well-known training programs, share their own experiences and engage in classroom-style learning activities. The group’s first set of meetings was held in late June in Denver, Colo.

“Today’s competitive, global economy poses many challenges to those trying to prepare workers for 21<sup>st</sup> Century job opportunities,” said Maureen Conway, director of WSI. “We believe the sector approach can help employers secure the skilled workers they need and help workers secure good-paying jobs, while also improving the effectiveness of regional economies.

“The Academy was developed to expose participants to some of the country’s best thinking about and examples of sectoral employment development, so that when they return to their community they can become a valuable resource to those formulating workforce policies and practices. We’ve heard from many graduates who’ve done just that,” she said.

Additional information about the Sector Skills Academy is available at:

<http://sectorskillsacademy.org>.

WSI ([www.aspenwsi.org](http://www.aspenwsi.org)), a program of the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C., identifies and advances strategies that help low-income Americans gain ground in today’s labor market. It engages in applied research, facilitates dialogue, shares new ideas and disseminates research findings.

P/PV ([www.ppv.org](http://www.ppv.org)), based in Philadelphia, Pa., is an action-based public policy and program development organization.

The Aspen Institute, founded in 1950, is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue. Through seminars, policy programs, conferences and leadership development initiatives, the Institute and its international partners seek to promote nonpartisan inquiry and an appreciation for timeless values. The Institute is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Its international network includes partner Aspen Institutes in Berlin, Rome, Lyon, Tokyo, New Delhi, and Bucharest, and leadership programs in Africa, Central America and India.

###