

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced today that the U.S. Department of Education's Projects with Industry program has awarded a \$1.7 million five-year grant for the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) of Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties.

"Our community and our economy need every single person who can contribute," **Arcuri said**. "Young adults with disabilities have a lifetime of productive work ahead of them, and can rise to the top in many careers. This project will help young people who need assistance in overcoming barriers to develop high expectations and give them the skills they need to find and retain good jobs."

"This project is a wonderful result of outstanding collaboration," **said Alice Savino, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board**

. "We have been in constant communication with Congressman Arcuri's office on this important project, and he has given it his personal attention to help us secure the funding we need."

The grant will fund "CareerStart," a regional project to increase the numbers of young people with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 25 who make a successful transition to work.

Key populations to be served in the project include youth getting ready to graduate from high school, high school dropouts, young offenders, and refugee youth. The WIB projects that over five years, 475 high-needs young adults will find work through this project.

Under the program, a full array of workforce development services will be offered through a coordinated structure that will eliminate duplication, maximize resources, and address the unique career needs of individuals with disabilities. Placement oriented services will be offered including: assessment, vocational and career counseling, job training (including training opportunities in realistic work settings), job readiness counseling, job placement and career advancement services, referral to supportive services such as transportation and child care, job modification and accommodations. Services will be provided in a culturally sensitive manner and outreach will be monitored to ensure the inclusion of underserved minorities. The project will work with the Resource Center for Independent Living, The Utica Culinary Skills Training Center, the Underground Café, and the Mental Health Association of New York State to help young adults set goals, acquire skills and find work.

Savino said the project will create a local Business Advisory Council that includes: Fiber Instrument Sales, Lutheran Care, Presbyterian Home, Masonic Care, Mohawk Valley Nursing Home, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce, Rome Area Chamber of Commerce, VESID (NY State Office for Vocational Education Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Small Business Development Center, Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, Oneida County Workforce Development, Oneida County Mental Health, Cosmopolitan Center, Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Utica School of Commerce, Mohawk Valley Community College, Arc of Oneida-Lewis, Human Technologies Corp., Central Assn. for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Oneida County Dept. of Social Services, Resource Center for Independent Living, Mental Health Assn. of NY State, Utica National Insurance Group, Crouse Community Center and Underground Café.

###