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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb 26, 2015

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## Lumina Invests In Postsecondary Attainment in Tri-County Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative Joins National Network to Increase Post-High School Attainment

INDIANAPOLIS – Today Lumina Foundation announced the tri-county region has been selected as one of twenty communities to be part of its 75 city national program designed to dramatically increase the number of local residents with postsecondary credentials. Through an investment in the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (TCCC), Lumina will provide technical and planning assistance, data tools, flexible funding and guidance from a national network of thought leaders.

As noted in TCCC's recently published *Regional Education Report*, only 42% of tri-county residents aged 25 and over have completed an associates degrees or higher; 35% have completed no postsecondary credentials beyond high school. TCCC partners including the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Charleston Regional Development Alliance have pointed to a talent gap as a critical economic development issue for the region, as degrees and certificates awarded locally are insufficient to meet anticipated workforce demands.

According to Anita Zucker, TCCC chair and CEO of The InterTech Group, "Postsecondary attainment is vital to the long-term growth of our region's economy. Lumina's investment will empower TCCC and our partners to help more adults complete the education they need to qualify for well-paying jobs in key industries and help ensure our region has the skilled workforce we need to remain competitive."

Lumina's focus on community-based attainment began because of the Foundation's recognition that community-based networks are well-suited to play a role in institutional planning and can provide the implementation and coordination that is necessary to create impact at state and federal levels in order to improve the nation's higher education system so that it better serves students. As a community-based network, TCCC utilizes a collective impact approach to aligning resources around common goals. In partnership with four public school districts, eight institutions of higher education, countless businesses, non-profits, faith based organizations, philanthropic, economic development, civic, health and human service agencies, students, parents and other stakeholders, TCCC is dedicated to a vision where every child to graduates high school prepared for either further education or employment in the modern workforce.

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“Two-thirds of Americans live in or near cities. Our nation cannot meet its growing demand for citizens who have earned a postsecondary credential without meaningful community-based efforts that are tightly focused on increasing educational attainment,” said Jamie Merisotis, Lumina’s president and CEO. “We are very pleased with the way this work has unfolded. With 75 communities across the nation working to align the work of business, civic and education efforts in their local communities, greater coordination will occur, resulting in tangible benefits for students of all ages. These students in turn will become graduates who form the backbone of the future economic, social and cultural success of those communities.”

The overall effort connects to Goal 2025, Lumina’s national goal to increase the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. Progress toward the goal will be measured by credentials earned after high school, including certificates, associate degrees and bachelor’s degrees held by local residents. The cities selected will work with Lumina through 2016 to expand and deepen the work they have demonstrated in advancing postsecondary attainment agendas.

To view a complete list of participating cities, national thought leaders assisting these cities, and to learn more about this work, [click here](#).

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**About the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative**

*The Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (TCCC) is a community-wide movement in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties, South Carolina focused on improving the quality of life of its citizens and its workforce through education by collectively aligning resources and working toward common goals. Using data and focused community collaboration across a continuum from “cradle-to-career,” TCCC works to build and implement strategies that will facilitate widespread systemic change, with the ultimate goal of increased student success and economic prosperity for all.*

**About Lumina Foundation**

*Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina’s outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.*