

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact Person	Gregory E. Pitoniak
Company Name	Southeast Michigan Community Alliance
Telephone Number	734-229-3549
Email Address	gregory.pitoniak@semca.org
Web site address	www.semca.org

Workforce Investment Act Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs in Southeastern Michigan Selected for ‘Gold Standard’ Evaluation

Taylor, December 1, 2011 — The Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA) is one of twenty-eight randomly-selected local workforce investment areas in the nation to participate in a “Gold Standard” evaluation of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. WIA provides \$3 billion annually for employment and training services to approximately 600 similar areas around the country. Thousands of workers and job seekers have benefited from these services in southeast Michigan since the Act was passed in 1998, receiving skill assessment, career information and counseling, employability skills, resume help, occupational training, job seeking assistance, and more. The Southeast Michigan Community Alliance meets the needs of businesses and workers in Wayne (excluding the City of Detroit) and Monroe counties.

“With high unemployment and a growing need for a more skilled workforce, providing effective and efficient employment and training services is important,” says Ms. Charlie Mahoney, chairperson of the SEMCA Workforce Development Board that oversees workforce development investments in the region. “Yet because these services have not been assessed using rigorous evaluation methodologies, we do not know how they are affecting the employment opportunities and earnings of customers throughout the nation. The results of this national evaluation will tell us how WIA-funded services such as training affect customers’ employment rates, earnings, and other related outcomes and whether the benefits of these services measured in dollars are greater than their costs.”

As part of this national evaluation, customers visiting the Michigan Works! Service Centers in Wayne and Monroe counties (excluding the city of Detroit) will be randomly assigned to one of three research groups. Each research group will have access to a different range of services. Everyone will be able to access the basic services at the Michigan Works! Service Centers and the vast majority of customers will be able to access all the services available. Random assignment is used in this study, just as it is used in drug trials, because it is the most rigorous scientific approach and produces the most defensible findings.

Gregory E. Pitoniak, Chief Executive Officer of SEMCA, says that staff is currently engaged in training to prepare for the start of random assignment, which will begin December 5 and continue for approximately fifteen months. “We are eager to learn what types and sequence of services work best for which types of customers, so we can ensure everyone who walks in our door will receive the most effective assistance possible in their search for a job, a better job, or a new career,” Pitoniak stated. “We are looking forward to release of the first impact findings in 2015.”

The U.S. Department of Labor contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct the Gold Standard evaluation. Mathematica is a nonpartisan policy research firm that conducts research and surveys for Federal and state governments, foundations, and private sector clients. The employee-owned company has conducted some of the most important evaluations of employment, education, nutrition, welfare, and early childhood policies and programs in the United States and abroad. Mathematica engaged Social Policy Research Associates, MDRC, and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce as partners in the Gold Standard evaluation of WIA.

For more information, contact Gregory Pitoniak, 734-229-3549 or Mathematica's project director for the study, Sheena McConnell at smcconnell@mathematica-mpr.com

###