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City of Columbus Announces \$2.5 Million Investment in Residents to Promote Economic Opportunity

COLUMBUS, OH – Mayor Andrew J. Ginther, Columbus City Council and community nonprofit partners today announced a new program to invest in Columbus residents’ success. The two-year Economic Mobility Accelerator Program seeks to improve economic and financial security, health and wellbeing of up to 200 households.

The City of Columbus will invest \$2.5 million in cash payments to individuals who are employed, with earnings above the federal poverty level, but below Central Ohio’s regional Area Median Income. Monthly payments of \$500 may be spent at the recipients’ discretion, to help fund expenses such as housing, healthcare childcare or transportation. Recipients must participate in and graduate from one of six programs that offer job training, career services or wealth building guidance to remain eligible for direct funding assistance.

“Columbus residents are challenged to make ends meet, with 44% of the households in our city employed in jobs that do not pay enough to cover our region’s cost of living. By directly investing in our neighbors, we are directly investing in their success, in higher wage opportunities and overall quality of life for our families,” said Mayor Andrew J. Ginther.

Income qualifications to participate vary by household size. Examples include:

| Household size | Program participants must earn more than the federal poverty level... | ... but less than Central Ohio Area Median Income |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| One individual | \$1,255/ mo or \$15,060/yr | \$2,507/ mo or \$30,084/ yr |
| Four individuals | \$2,600/mo or \$31,200/yr | \$7,607/mo or \$91,284/yr |

"Through this program, we're giving Columbus residents a crucial stepping stone from simply getting by to truly thriving," said **Columbus City Council President Shannon Hardin**. "By investing directly in our neighbors’ potential, we're creating pathways for economic stability,

empowerment, and generational progress, ensuring that every family in our city has the opportunity to build a future they deserve."

Six community partners will offer economic mobility programs and administer direct funding assistance to qualifying participants. Economic Mobility Accelerator partners include:

- Alvis Inc., **EDGE (Empowering Development By Gaining Employment) Program** – Occupational training provided to Columbus restored citizens
- Columbus Urban League, **Career Connect Hub (CCH) Program** – Wrap-around education, job training and financial literacy services for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households
- Goodwill Columbus, **Commercial Driver's License Training** – Program offers low- and moderate-income individuals a Class A Commercial Driver's License training course and funding for two attempts at the CDL exam. Academy also includes wrap-around career/employer relationships to aid graduates in job placement.
- New Directions Career Center, **E3 – Educate, Empower, Elevate Program** – Suite of holistic career services aimed at underemployed women. Majority of past participants are female-headed ALICE renter households earning under \$40,000 per year.
- RISE Center & CMHA, **Ready, Set, RISE Programs** – Collection of programs addressing barriers to generational wealth. Participants receive career and life navigation and employment programs
- United Way of Central Ohio, **Tax Time Program** – Financial resources and tax assistance wealth-building initiative.

"Alvis is excited to be an implementation partner for the City of Columbus on Economic Mobility Accelerators," said Denise M. Robinson, president and CEO of Alvis. "Individuals come to Alvis with numerous barriers to employment. Having the City of Columbus as a partner helps us to provide the workforce development and support services our clients need to be successful in today's labor market. Last year, Alvis clients earned more than \$2.9 million in wages and helped to support their families and contributed to central Ohio's overall economic health."

In addition to the Economic Mobility Accelerator partners, the **Community Financial Wellness Initiative** will partner with the Financial Empowerment Center established by the Women's Commission, to further empower each participant with financial literacy training and a \$500 savings account.

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