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# Clark College, Bank of America Partner to Break down Barriers to Access

*Train-the-trainer course tackles poverty through education and employment*

VANCOUVER, Wash. —Bank of America donated \$20,000 to provide training for Clark College instructors and local community partners to help people in poverty navigate social services and education. The one-time training session for 50 staff members will ensure Clark College and local agencies work in unison to boost access to services.

The goal of the grant is to assist people, who live in poverty, to become self-sufficient by attaining education and jobs. The project is called “From Poverty to Self-sufficiency through Education and Employment.”

Clark College provides an abundance of opportunities to students who otherwise might not have access to education.

“Since 44 percent of Clark students are low-income and first-generation college students this initiative is central to our campus,” said Lisa Gibert, president/CEO, Clark College Foundation.

“Teaching skills on how to use a search engine, navigate and access transportation and steps in applying for financial aid or scholarships are just a few of the countless areas we can help students become self-reliant.”

The partners in the project are [Clark College Foundation](#), [Clark College](#)—its [WorkFirst](#) and [Career Pathways](#) unit—[WorkSource](#) (Vancouver, White Salmon and Stevenson), [Vancouver Housing Authority](#) and [Partners in Careers](#) a job-training service in Vancouver. The three major regions served are Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties.

“We’re helping people in Southwest Washington access the resources they use to land a job or enroll in higher education,” said Christine Sanford, consumer market manager for Bank of America. “Bank of America is enabling individuals to access valuable services and programs to prepare for a more financially stable future.”

Training will be conducted by Tigard, Oregon-based [Communication Across Barriers](#) using a model called [Opportunity Community](#). The model defines the real causes of poverty and serves individuals who live in different types of poverty, provides training resources for community professionals and provides structures to help people get out of poverty and prosper.

[Clark College Foundation](#) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the fundraising partner of [Clark College](#) in support of student learning and program excellence. [Clark College](#) is a community college providing two-year transfer degree studies, technical training and basic skills courses for 24,000 full-time and part-time students during the 2012-2013 academic year.

[Bank of America's](#) commitment to corporate social responsibility is a strategic part of doing business globally. The goal is to help create economically vibrant regions and communities through lending, investing and giving. Follow [Bank of America](#) on Twitter at @BofA\_Community.

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