

## Summit in Seattle Conceives National Network to Impact Joblessness

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Media Contact:**

Karla Smith-Jones, FareStart  
(206) 267-6212, [karla@farestart.org](mailto:karla@farestart.org)

**Eleven not-for-profit organizations from across the United States gathered at FareStart in Seattle, WA on January 28 and 29 to explore and evaluate the benefits of joining together as a national network to increase the collective impact of non-profits that work to empower lives, nourish bodies and build communities through food service training and social enterprise.**

The diverse group of providers joined this National Summit from all corners of the country: Boise, Chicago, Boston, DC, Fort Lauderdale, St. Louis, Phoenix, San Francisco and Tacoma. While the participating non-profits varied in size and populations served, all organizations found common ground in their missions to provide training to individuals facing barriers to employment, prepare nutritious meals for disadvantaged populations, and self generate revenue through social enterprise.

“Now is the time we must come together to find innovative solutions”, said Dan Buck, CEO of St. Patrick Center (St. Louis). “Considering the current economic situation, the development of self-sustaining models that combine job training and food service social enterprise is something that we need to commit to for the long-term,” Buck emphasized.

Over the course of two days, Summit participants reflected on the evolution of food service social enterprise, which first emerged in the late 1980’s with organizations like [FareStart](#) (Seattle), [DC Central Kitchen](#) (Washington DC), [Inspiration Corporation](#) (Chicago) and [Rubicon Bakery](#) (San Francisco), which were all present at the Summit. The field has grown steadily along with the recognition that food service based job training and associated enterprise offer a tangible solution to employment barriers such as homelessness, addiction, incarceration and developmental disabilities.

“We have worked directly with over 40 organizations nationally in order to further develop this model, and they are all gaining valuable knowledge and experience as they work towards the same goals”, said David Carleton, FareStart’s National Director. “We feel that the time is right for this loose association of programs to become more impactful through the establishment of a collaborative national network. We are stronger together, and our collective strength should be leveraged to help all boats rise and ultimately to increase our individual and collective impact.”

The Summit achieved the goal of setting a framework for sharing experience and documenting best practices – to the benefit of both organizations that decide to participate in the networked approach, and also those organizations looking to replicate this model in their community. Specific action items and timelines were agreed to in a number of focal areas, including governance, branding, shared resources and membership.

At the conclusion of this first summit participants enthusiastically signed on to help incubate a collaborative, national network that supports the growth of food service based training and social enterprise, providing tangible benefits to its members and populations served and working to increase the collective impact of all involved.

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Participants		
ARC Broward <a href="http://www.arcbroward.com">www.arcbroward.com</a> Fort Lauderdale, FL	FareStart <a href="http://www.farestart.org">www.farestart.org</a> Seattle, WA	St Patrick Center <a href="http://www.stpatrickcenter.org">www.stpatrickcenter.org</a> St. Louis, IL
CHEFS <a href="http://www.ecs-sf.org">www.ecs-sf.org</a> San Francisco, CA	Inspiration Corporation <a href="http://www.inspirationcorp.org">www.inspirationcorp.org</a> Chicago, IL	St. Mary's Food Bank <a href="http://www.firstfoodbank.org">www.firstfoodbank.org</a> Phoenix, AZ
Community Servings <a href="http://www.servings.org">www.servings.org</a> Boston, MA	Life's Kitchen <a href="http://www.lifeskitchen.org">www.lifeskitchen.org</a> Boise, ID	Tacoma Goodwill <a href="http://www.tacomagoodwill.org">www.tacomagoodwill.org</a> Tacoma, WA
DC Central Kitchen <a href="http://www.dccentralkitchen.org">www.dccentralkitchen.org</a> Washington DC	Rubicon National <a href="http://www.rubicannational.org">www.rubicannational.org</a> San Francisco, CA	

**About FareStart**

FareStart is a job training and placement program in Seattle, WA for homeless and disadvantaged individuals. Over the past 18 years, FareStart has provided opportunities for over 3,500 people to transform their lives, while also serving over 4 million meals to disadvantaged men, women, and youth.

