



HONORABLE MAYOR  
WILLIAM LANTIGUA

March 11, 2010

Congresswoman Niki Tsongas  
5<sup>th</sup> District-Massachusetts  
2229 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Re: Appropriations Project Grow

Dear Congresswoman Tsongas,

Please accept this letter in support of Project GROW. The Leadership and Literacy Foundation (L&L) has been building organizations' workforce and developing employees since 1999. They are now seeking funds to create Project GROW which will create 250 new jobs in the direct service markets of childcare and food services. L&L has a successful track record partnering with Little Sprouts and Salvatore's Restaurant to measure barriers to job growth. Both organizations had the capacity to grow in 2009 but were inhibited due to the lack of a qualified workforce, and as a result, over 60 jobs were left vacant.

Project GROW will achieve 3 goals:

- Create 150 new jobs to serve unemployed residents of the greater Merrimack Valley and Boston
- Improve employment through promotions and increased wages/ hours of 100 underemployed residents
- Increase employee skills as measured by performance and quality objective evaluations.

The Merrimack Valley and Boston have significant English Language Learner populations, specifically Lawrence, where both Little Sprouts and Salvatore's corporate offices are based. This language barrier prohibits many residents from gaining employment or growing in their positions. Funds will be used for ESL classes for underemployed workers and for entry level new employees. Money will also be spent for leadership development (time management, communication, empowerment through teamwork, conflict resolution, and coworker relationships) to promote job retention and growth opportunities. Finally, funding will cover college coursework required for the underemployed to be promoted into new management positions which will support organizational growth.

Both Salvatore's and Little Sprouts have secured the capital to grow new locations. What is preventing this, is acquiring the skilled workforce to operate these new locations.

The ability to invest in the workforce to create 150 new jobs as well as improve current language and leadership abilities will allow both Salvatore's and Little Sprouts to continue growing with the needed skilled workforce required, thus investing in stimulating this current economy.

The City of Lawrence would greatly appreciate your support of this endeavor and help our community create more opportunities for our available workforce.

Sincerely,



William Lantigua  
Mayor of Lawrence