

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2010

Contact(s):Julia Klaiber, CEOs for Cities
202.420.9451Laura L Rodwan, United Way for Southeastern Michigan
313.226.9484 or 313.477.2750Cara I. Belton, United Way for Southeastern Michigan
313.226.9484 or 313.520.8454**NATIONAL POVERTY EXPERTS GATHER IN DETROIT FOR
UNIQUE DIALOGUE ON \$13 BILLION OPPORTUNITY DIVIDEND**

[DETROIT, MI] – National experts on the challenges of poverty will gather in Detroit March 2 at the invitation of CEOs for Cities and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan to engage in a renewed dialogue on one of the nation’s most intractable problems.

The Opportunity Dividend Summit is aimed at capitalizing on research published by CEOs for Cities, a national network of urban leaders, that indicates a one percentage point reduction in poverty rates in the nation’s 51 largest metropolitan areas would yield a \$13 billion savings to public benefits programs. This “Opportunity Dividend” is calculated by direct savings to public programs such as Medicaid, food stamps and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

“The Opportunity Dividend Summit is bringing innovative thought leaders together to address the challenges of poverty and its effect on public benefit programs, and we are pleased to host this important event here in Detroit,” said Michael J. Brennan, CEO and president of United Way for Southeastern Michigan. “The goal of the Summit underscores the commitment we share in exploring solutions to this critical issue effecting so many individuals and families in our region, and our nation.”

In this one-day summit, national experts will present their best recommendations on how to achieve the Opportunity Dividend within 24-48 months using the unique Pecha Kucha method of 20 slides in six minutes. This format allows for a large number of good ideas to be presented succinctly and creatively, along with the rationale and evidence of their effectiveness.

“We urgently need to re-start the conversation on how to tackle poverty in America, and we need to do it in a way that grabs the attention of urban leaders,” CEOs for Cities President and CEO Carol Coletta said. “We have to move from a recitation of the problem, stop treating urban leaders as non-actors in solving this problem and bring new energy to the task.”

--MORE--

Outcomes from the Opportunity Dividend Summit will be presented to CEOs for Cities' national network of partners at its upcoming Strategy Session 2010 in New York City. Presentations will also be made available online by both CEOs for Cities and United Way for Southeastern Michigan for use by urban leaders and United Way practitioners nationwide.

The Opportunity Dividend Summit has been made possible by generous support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and GMAC Financial Services/Ally Bank.

About City Dividends

The research behind the Opportunity Dividend is part of a larger body of work by CEOs for Cities called *City Dividends*, which calculates the monetary value of: increasing college attainment rates by one percentage point (Talent Dividend); decreasing vehicle miles traveled per person per day by one mile (Green Dividend); and decreasing poverty rates by one percentage point (Opportunity Dividend) in the largest 51 metropolitan areas in the U.S. The cumulative economic benefits of realizing the City Dividends are equal to \$166 billion annually.

About CEOs for Cities

CEOs for Cities is a national cross-sector network of urban leaders from the civic, business, academic and philanthropic sectors dedicated to building and sustaining the next generation of great American cities. Additional information is available at www.ceosforcities.org.

United Way for Southeastern Michigan

United Way for Southeastern Michigan mobilizes the caring power of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties to improve lives in measurable and lasting ways throughout the region. The organization is led by a diverse group of volunteers from business, labor, government, human services, education and the community. United Way provides opportunities to invest in the metropolitan Detroit community through its annual Campaign and is a leader in convening partners to impact local residents each year by increasing economic self-sufficiency, protecting children and youth at risk, strengthening families, empowering neighborhoods and communities, and promoting health and wellness. Additional information is available at www.LiveUnitedSEM.org.

###