

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Contact: Amanda Allen
Direct: (312) 528-3512
Email: aallen@oaiinc.org
Web: www.oaiinc.org

**OAI, Inc. Announces Receipt of \$700,000 US Conference of Mayors / Wal-Mart
Foundation Green Jobs Training Initiative Grant
June 12, 2009**

Chicago, IL – Wal-Mart Foundation in conjunction with the U.S. Conference of Mayors donated \$700,000 to OAI, Inc. to administer in support of the City of Chicago Department of Environment's *Greencorps Chicago* program. The two-year grant will be used to expand *Greencorps Chicago's* green jobs training and development program.

Greencorps Chicago is a paid job training and community-greening program launched by the Chicago Department of Environment in 1994. In partnership with WRD Environmental, Greencorps hires 40-45 Chicagoans each spring to participate in a 9-month program designed to prepare residents for a variety of environmentally related jobs including landscaping, environmental remediation and demolition, weatherization, redevelopment and construction, recycling, and warehousing of toxic and/or potentially hazardous products.

OAI has partnered with *Greencorps Chicago* for more than nine years and continues to provide outreach and recruitment services, environmental health and safety training, academic/professional skills training, and job placement assistance to Greencorps trainees.

Greencorps Chicago combines two of the priorities of Mayor Richard M. Daley; environmental improvement and ex-offender re-entry initiatives. While providing new opportunities and skills for the formerly incarcerated, gardens are planted, computers recycled and homes weatherized. In its sixteenth season of operation, Greencorps has provided assistance to thousands of Chicago residents.

"Greencorps is about job training and increasing the amount of green space all across the City. Many of these individuals have turned their lives around and contributed to improving the quality of life for all of Chicago," said Mayor Daley at the 2008 Greencorps graduation.

Funding from the US Conference of Mayors / Wal-Mart allows the Greencorps program to expand its current weatherization program and install a new Arborist training track, both of which will meet the demands of the expanding green workforce and the goals of the Chicago Climate Action Plan (CCAP).

"OAI is proud of its continuing relationship with *Greencorps Chicago*, a premier green jobs training initiative, and is particularly pleased to have played a role in bringing this coveted USCM-Walmart grant to Chicago, where it will increase both the short- and long-term capacity of the Greencorps program," said Tipawan Reed, OAI President.

OAI, Inc is a non-profit workforce training and development agency founded 33 years ago by current president Tipawan T-Q Reed. OAI's broad goals are to empower and enhance the capacity of underserved individuals and their communities by applying innovative practices that contribute to social environmental equity, equal access to education, employment opportunities and economic self sufficiency. OAI focuses its education and training on basic academic and life skills, computer and workplace literacy, hazardous materials/environmental remediation, basic construction and green industry jobs. With its main office in Chicago's Loop, OAI operates programs in Chicago, Kansas City, MO; Dallas, TX; New York, NY; and throughout the States of Maine, Indiana and Kentucky.

For more information about OAI, Inc., visit www.oaiinc.org