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Public/Private Ventures to Cease Operations after 35 Years of Evaluation and Research for Nonprofit Social Programs

National nonprofit organization based in Philadelphia to end its work this summer

Philadelphia, PA – Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a national nonprofit that does research and evaluation to help strengthen social programs, will cease operations on or about July 31, the organization announced today.

Founded nearly 35 years ago, P/PV has come under budgetary pressures in recent years, brought on by the economic downturn, as well as diminished support for programs that serve the poor, inadequate funding for organizational infrastructure, and shifts in how nonprofit research and evaluation services are paid for. Those issues led P/PV's board to conclude that the organization is not sustainable in the current funding climate.

"Like so many other nonprofit organizations, P/PV was hit hard by the recent recession," P/PV President Nadya K. Shmavonian said. "Over the last few years, we have worked to chart a new, sustainable path forward. We were able to secure generous core support from several private funders, and in April of last year, we made difficult staff cuts across the organization. Unfortunately, these changes were not enough to keep us competitive as a small, mission-focused agency—not without long-term funding to cover our core operational expenses, particularly those related to distilling and disseminating knowledge."

P/PV's board and staff have begun the process of winding down the organization responsibly. Working closely with funders and partners, they will complete as many projects as possible by July 31 and will transfer others to organizations that can finish work that extends beyond that date.

P/PV will provide severance packages for its 27 employees. Along with its headquarters in Philadelphia, P/PV has offices in New York City and Oakland, CA.

"Our team has worked tirelessly in our efforts to reposition the organization for a sustainable future, and we are extremely grateful to them," Shmavonian said. "Over the next months, we will be focused on helping our employees make a smooth transition to new opportunities. In many cases, we hope that staff will have the opportunity to complete project work with other organizations that our funders and we identify."

P/PV's mission is to improve the effectiveness of social programs, particularly those that aim to help young people from high-poverty communities successfully transition to adulthood. Working in close partnership with organizations and their leaders, P/PV has conducted research leading to better services and outcomes; evaluated programs; and designed and managed select demonstration projects. The organization is well known for sharing the lessons of its work through accessible, relevant research reports and guides, as well as workshops, conferences and leadership academies.

"For more than three decades, P/PV has brought the unique lens of practitioners to its work, helping them to incorporate and apply the lessons learned from research to strengthen their programs," said Cay Stratton, P/PV's board chair and a senior fellow at MDC. "The organization's work has also influenced philanthropy and public policy, and, ultimately, improved the lives of many low-income youth and families. The board is deeply saddened that we are unable to sustain P/PV, but we take great pride in the critical role that the organization has played for so many years."

P/PV has done groundbreaking work in a number of areas, including important research on Big Brothers Big Sisters and Boys & Girls Clubs, support for the replication of the Nurse-Family Partnership, pioneering work in prisoner reentry and recent influential studies of sector-focused employment programs.

The organization has conducted many high-profile projects in its history, including the [Summer Training and Education Program](#), which produced important lessons about designing and replicating interventions for young people; and in 1995, the first rigorous study of [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#), which showed powerful effects for participating youth and set the stage for the widespread expansion of the mentoring field.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, P/PV developed a number of programs aimed at very at-risk youth, including those involved with the juvenile justice system, with projects like the [National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth](#) and the [Youth Violence Reduction Partnership](#). P/PV went on to develop the [Ready4Work](#) initiative, which provided reentry services to nearly 5,000 youth and young adults returning from incarceration. The initiative helped generate bipartisan support for the Second Chance Act, signed into law in 2008.

P/PV launched [Amachi](#) in its home city of Philadelphia to provide mentoring for children of incarcerated parents. Under the leadership of the city's former Mayor and P/PV senior fellow W. Wilson Goode, Sr., Amachi spread rapidly. Over the last decade, there have been at least 350 Amachi-modeled programs in more than 250 US cities and all 50 states. To date, these programs have served more than 300,000 children, and the program has been extended in several sites to include children of military families.

In recent years, much of P/PV's most influential work has been in the field of workforce development, perhaps most notably its [Sectoral Employment Impact Study](#), which showed that job training programs that are tied closely to local employers' needs can have a profound impact on participants' employment, earnings and access to benefits. In 2011, P/PV published [Priorities for a New Decade](#), a white paper urging a bold rethinking of program evaluation across the nonprofit sector.

A key objective over the next few months will be to identify a home for P/PV's many publications, which are used widely by practitioners, researchers and policymakers. P/PV will also share some closing reflections about the social sector, focused on the central challenges that social programs face, the role of intermediary organizations in a resource-constrained environment, and the opportunities for funders and providers to work together to ensure that programs draw on sound evidence and data.

"It is our hope that P/PV's mission and values will live on in the continued work of our staff and partners" said William Julius Wilson, a member of the P/PV board and Lewis P. and Linda L. Geysler University Professor at Harvard University.

"P/PV has contributed in countless ways to the knowledge base that is so important to addressing the needs of people living in poverty across the country."

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P/PV's mission is to improve the effectiveness of social programs, particularly those that aim to help young people from high-poverty communities successfully transition to adulthood. For more information, please visit www.ppv.org