Detroit, (Oct 3, 2019) – The Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center (ISAIC), the Detroit-based organization that has taken on the bold challenge of both increasing fashion manufacturing in Detroit, as well serving as a national resource for skills development in the fashion industry, has announced it will partner with the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) on workforce development programming in New York City. This comes as part of today’s announcement by the CFDA and New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) of a $14 million expansion of the Fashion Manufacturing Initiative (FMI), which aims to support fashion manufacturers in NYC’s five boroughs.

As the fashion manufacturing industry works to reinvent itself and its talent base to train for emerging technologies and rebuild a diminished workforce, ISAIC is playing a pivotal role in preparing a new generation of workers to support local manufacturing. Earlier this summer, The Empowerment Plan, the Detroit nonprofit that employs formerly homeless workers to produce sleeping bags jackets, became the first factory to be an official ISAIC-certified apprenticeship program location, implementing a US Department of Labor-approved program.

The CFDA/ISAIC partnership will begin with an assessment of NYC’s workforce needs in order to expand training and workforce development opportunities. The two groups will work with a wide variety of NYC industry stakeholders and community-based workforce development organizations to develop a master plan for programming that will ensure a robust talent pipeline with opportunities for technical instruction, on-the-job training through apprenticeships, and advanced technology training.

“While the ISAIC institute is working to increase skills and workforce training for apparel manufacturing in the city of Detroit, we are proud to be a resource to the entire apparel industry,” said Jennifer Guarino, president and CEO of ISAIC. “We look forward to working alongside those who make up New York City’s renowned fashion industry by fostering and supporting a dynamic, diverse and innovative fashion production system using the people-focused and sustainable model on which ISAIC is based.”
In its short time since beginning informally in 2017 and as a nonprofit in 2018, ISAIC has made tremendous progress towards growing Detroit’s apparel manufacturing industry. Less than six months ago, Carhartt Inc. announced the donation of space in the midtown Detroit building that houses its flagship store for the creation of the ISAIC factory. Construction of the factory is underway in that space and is on track to open and begin manufacturing in early 2020.

In addition to naming Guarino, former VP of manufacturing at Shinola and founding board member of ISAIC, as its CEO, the ISAIC board also named internationally accomplished designer Tracy Reese as president of the board. Reese has been making national news with her return to Detroit to mentor, support local talent and the launch of her Hope for Flowers sustainable clothing line, which is manufactured in Flint, Mich.

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**About ISAIC**

*The Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center (ISAIC), a Detroit-based national institute of excellence for the sewn trades,* is building a new model of talent and workforce development designed to continue the city’s economic resurgence, while supporting a more sustainable fashion industry. The unique model includes an employee profit sharing factory and builds apparel manufacturing talent by combining traditional skills with those for emerging technologies, such as automation and co-robotics. At the heart of ISAIC is the institute, which develops and implements registered apprenticeship programs, certified pre-apprenticeship curriculum and provides program consultation. Its factory, opening in early 2020, will change the landscape of the manufacturing workplace by providing a people-centric environment, ongoing learning in cutting edge technologies, equity in growth and a commitment to ethical practices. For more information, visit www.isaic.org.

**About the CFDA**

Founded in 1962, the Council of Fashion Designers of America, Inc. (CFDA) is a not-for-profit trade association with a membership of almost 500 of America’s foremost womenswear, menswear, jewelry, and accessory designers. In addition to hosting the annual CFDA Fashion Awards, the organization owns the Fashion Calendar and is the organizer of the Official New York Fashion Week Schedule. It also offers programs which support professional development and scholarships. Member support is provided through the Strategic Partnerships Group, a group of high-profile companies offering designers strategic opportunities. The CFDA Foundation, Inc. is a separate not-for-profit with a focus on domestic production through the Fashion Manufacturing Initiative (FMI). The Foundation also aims to mobilize the membership to raise funds for charitable causes and engage in civic initiatives. For more information, please visit www.CFDA.com, facebook.com/cfda, instagram.com/cfda, twitter.com/cfda, cfdatumblr.com, and youtube.com/cfdatv