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Sec. Newson Announces Creation of Minority Unemployment Task Force to Focus on Improving Opportunity in Milwaukee County

Bipartisan panel will develop strategies as part of Governor's Council on Workforce Investment

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced the creation of a task force that will work under the guidance of Governor Scott Walker's Council on Workforce Investment to develop action steps that address minority unemployment in metro Milwaukee, particularly the unacceptably high unemployment rate among black males.

“Governor Walker and his Administration are committed to doing everything possible to promote economic growth in Milwaukee and connect unemployed residents, particularly black males, with job opportunities,” Secretary Newson said. “This task force will concentrate on strategies that will advance this commitment and help break the longstanding dilemma of black male unemployment facing metro Milwaukee.”

The Governor's Task Force on Minority Unemployment will be co-chaired by Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and state Representative Elizabeth Coggins. The panel will review all workforce training programs in the Milwaukee area, identify best practices, and recommend to the Governor a skills pipeline that will effectively prepare and connect unemployed black males with employment opportunities.

A recent study by Dr. Marc Levine of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee stated that, as of 2010, only 44.7% of black males age 16 – 64 were currently employed. Membership of the task force is being finalized and will be announced in the near future. A series of public meetings will kick off later this spring.

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