

Governor's Task Force on Minority Unemployment 2012 Annual Report



CONTENTS

- 1 Letter from Lieutenant Governor
Rebecca Kleefisch and Former Representative
Elizabeth Coggs
- 2 Membership and Task Force Goals
- 3 Introduction
- 4 My Life! My Plan!
- 5 Driver's License Recovery Event
- 6 Wisconsin Flexible Workforce Coalition
- 7 Additional Task Force Sub-Groups
- 8 Next Steps





*Lt. Governor
Rebecca Kleefisch*

Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and (Former) Representative Elizabeth Coggs



*(Former) Representative
Elizabeth Coggs*

June 2013

Governor Scott Walker
115 East State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Governor Walker:

In an effort to find solutions to the staggering minority unemployment rate throughout the Milwaukee area, you called for the creation of the Task Force on Minority Unemployment. You clearly identified the need for real solutions to this longstanding problem, which is at the heart of many issues facing the minority population. With a 2012 study showing that more than 50 percent of the working-age black male population in the Milwaukee area is unemployed, the challenges are many. Although this problem will not be solved overnight, as co-chairs of this task force we remain determined to advance potential solutions.

After assembling a bipartisan and diverse team dedicated to our goal, we began work in the spring of 2012 to identify employment barriers and develop strategies to pursue. Our coalition has taken a multi-faceted approach with initiatives such as My Life! My Plan!, helping residents to recover their driver's license, and the Wisconsin Flexible Workforce Coalition.

As outlined in the following report, much progress has been made and there is more work to be done. We look forward to continuing the dialogue and building on the successes of the last year. Thank you for making the employment of minorities a priority of your administration.

Forward,

REBECCA KLEEFISCH, Co-Chair
Lieutenant Governor
State of Wisconsin

ELIZABETH COGGS, Co-Chair
State Representative (Former)
State of Wisconsin

GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON MINORITY UNEMPLOYMENT

Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, Co-Chair	Hattie Daniels Rush, Holy Redeemer C.O.G.I.C.
(Former) State Representative Elizabeth Coggs, Co-Chair	Dorothy Buckhanan-Wilson, Goodwill Industries
Gerard Randall, Vice Chair	Dr. Tina Koehn, UMOS
David Karst, Wisconsin Flexible Workforce Coalition	Don Sykes, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board
(Former) State Representative Jason Fields	Tim Sullivan, Governor's Council on Workforce Investment
State Representative Mark Honadel	Charles Vang, Hmong Chamber of Commerce
Secretary Eloise Anderson, Department of Children and Families	Richard Harris, Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
Secretary Reggie Newson, Department of Workforce Development	Shelley Jurewicz, Milwaukee Metropolitan Association of Commerce
Executive Director Wyman Winston, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority	Scott Jansen, Greater Milwaukee Committee
Earl Buford, W RTP/Big Step Milwaukee	Kathryn Dunn, Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Dawn Pratt, Payne and Dolan	Jerry Roberts, Helen Bader Foundation
Tony Kearney, Northcott Neighborhood House	Sean McDowell, McDowell Construction

TASK FORCE GOALS

The goal of the task force is to increase minority participation in the workforce using the following strategies:

1. Providing relevant training to produce skilled workers that meet employers' needs in filling positions with family-sustaining wages.
2. Transitional employment: Opportunities to allow employers to mentor candidates prior to permanent employment.
3. Transportation: Assist individuals in accessing work opportunities by breaking down transportation barriers.
4. Ex-offenders: Providing employer education on the myths and benefits of hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds. Providing offenders opportunities to gain skills and access to job prospects.
5. Encouraging entrepreneurship opportunities.
6. State government needs to be a leader in hiring minorities and contracting with minority-owned enterprises.

INTRODUCTION



*DWD Secretary
Reggie Newson*

“Supporting private sector job creators is DWD’s primary objective under Governor Walker’s leadership.”

Governor Scott Walker’s foremost commitment is to foster an environment for private-sector job creation in communities across Wisconsin. This dedication to working families flows from the Governor’s time as County Executive, when creating a positive environment for job creation in the Milwaukee area was a top priority.

Early in 2012, Governor Walker directed the Council on Workforce Investment to convene a Task Force on Minority Unemployment to investigate and provide workable solutions to the unacceptably high minority unemployment rate in the Milwaukee area. Solving this challenge is integral to aiding working families and raising the standard of living for all Wisconsinites.

The Governor directed the task force to review existing programs at all levels and recommend how these resources could be leveraged to increase minority employment in Milwaukee County.

The task force is co-chaired by Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and former State Representative Elizabeth Coggs. The co-chairs have facilitated monthly meetings throughout the Milwaukee area to examine various pockets of excellence that positively impact unemployed residents of the city of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County. Since the inception of the Task Force, swift action has been taken to develop and execute solutions to Wisconsin’s minority unemployment problem. The results have already impacted lives:

- The innovative My Life! My Plan! program served more than 1,000 Milwaukee-area students in 2012, providing valuable assistance that prepares students to make informed decisions about career choices after high school.
- DWD joined with a number of local and state stakeholders to host a driver’s license recovery event that enabled pre-screened Milwaukee residents to recover their driver’s licenses, a valuable credential for job seekers and for workers to have a consistent way to get to work.
- The Wisconsin Flexible Workforce Coalition, previously known as the Seasonal Workforce Coalition, has provided a mechanism for those with no work history to access temporary employment leading to family-supporting jobs.
- The Minority Task Force is working with partners to increase job placement and promote employment opportunities for ex-offenders.
- The Task Force has partnered with Schneider National, the nation’s largest privately-held trucking company, to increase opportunities for minorities in the transportation industry.

The task force remains dedicated to increasing opportunities for minority residents of the Milwaukee area by supporting economic development, entrepreneurship, workforce training, personal responsibility, and family-strengthening initiatives in Milwaukee.

MY LIFE! MY PLAN!



Scott Jansen
Talent Dividend Director
Greater Milwaukee Committee

Background

My Life! My Plan! is sponsored by the Milwaukee Talent Dividend and consists of a half-day workshop that encourages students to consider their education through the lens of various career pathways. Young people and their families are able to access resources that encourage them to make informed decisions about education and career options. During the workshop, students engage on a number of topics including:

- Career clusters and pathways, many specific to potential jobs in the metropolitan Milwaukee area.
- Interaction with career coaches from the local business community who can guide students through career and education decisions.
- Information about programs that will help students to develop a personalized plan for their career and education pathway.

By the Numbers

- More than 1,000 Milwaukee-area students completed My Life! My Plan! through December 2012, exploring valuable information about their career options that puts students on the right track to post-secondary success. By July 2013, more than 3,000 students will have completed the program.
- 319 private-sector mentors worked with students in 34 workshops in 2012 to complete career assessments that will enable students to consider education options that complement their interests.
- 87% of students who completed the workshop reported that they are better able to plan for classes, 89% reported higher understanding of career pathways, and 93% are more confident about their plans after high school.

Why It Matters

This program brings together students and business professionals to prepare students to consider careers after high school. Mentors assist youth in completing an on-line career assessment and exploring career options. Connecting business professionals with high school students provides students with valuable insight and confidence to plan a career and prepare for a post-secondary education that matches the student's career aspirations.



DRIVER'S LICENSE RECOVERY EVENT



*The Honorable
Derek C. Mosley
Milwaukee Municipal Court*

Background

The Task Force came to a consensus that one of the foremost barriers for unemployed workers is the lack of a valid driver's license. In an effort to help address this issue, DWD and the state Department of Transportation joined with the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board and the Milwaukee Municipal Court to host a driver's license recovery event on August 25th, 2012 at Goodwill Industries.

Municipal Judge Derek C. Mosley led dozens of trained volunteers to review the transportation records of individuals who attended the event. Each participant received information about court obligations, payment plan options, and a court date to complete the license reinstatement process. The Helen Bader Foundation offset some legal costs for 150 participants to reinstate their license. An anonymous donor provided funds to offset costs for an additional 10 participants and the state Dept. of Corrections provided funds for 13 participants.

By the numbers

- 328 participants were pre-screened by partner agencies.
- 400 participated in the driver's license recovery event, including 200 walk-ins.
- 223 were qualified to attend court and complete the reinstatement process.
- 173 attended court and received reinstatement verification, including 15 walk-ins.

Why It Matters

The lack of a valid driver's license is a significant employment barrier that often prevents otherwise qualified candidates from being hired. This event provided Milwaukee residents an opportunity to work out payment plans and get their driver's license back, removing transportation as an obstacle to employment.



WISCONSIN FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE COALITION



David Karst
Co-founder
Flexible Workforce Coalition

“The Wisconsin Flexible Workforce Coalition creates employment opportunities for individuals that may have barriers to employment.”

Background

BuySeasons, an e-commerce retailer located in Waukesha County, relies on thousands of workers to increase capacity during their peak season each year. BuySeasons has joined with a number of other Milwaukee-area companies that have a significant seasonal workforce to provide an opportunity for employees to access seasonal employment throughout the year. This effort enables seasonal workers to transition through several seasonal jobs in a year as part of what is now the Wisconsin Flexible Workforce Coalition.

Seasonal employment opportunities enable individuals with barriers to employment to establish a work history and gain practical experience that can aid them in finding additional work. The Workforce Coalition also strives to ensure that workers are able to continue earning a wage, empowering families who might otherwise rely on government assistance.

The Minority Task Force is currently examining how the coalition model can be adapted more widely to serve more challenged workers and to transition current seasonal workers into full-time employment.

By the Numbers

Since the Flexible Workforce Coalition’s inception, more than 2,865 individuals have accessed a seasonal job opportunity. The coalition consists of 40 seasonal employers and 43 community-based organizations that refer individuals to employment opportunities.

Why It Matters

The Flexible Workforce Coalition works to connect citizens with barriers to employment, including a criminal record, lack of work history, or lack of post-secondary education, to transitional employment opportunities at major Milwaukee-area employers. Gaining this positive work experience aids workers in finding and successfully working in a full-time, permanent job.

The work experience available to job seekers through the Flexible Workforce Coalition is invaluable, helping workers to gain knowledge of basic work requirements, learn a new trade, and earn money to support themselves and their families. The opportunity to add work experience to their resume also strengthens their prospects of finding permanent employment.

ADDITIONAL TASK FORCE SUB-GROUPS

Connecting Ex-offenders to Employment Opportunities

The city of Milwaukee is home to a significant population of ex-offenders who have been released from prison into the local community. A criminal record is considered a barrier to employment, as certain crimes may preclude individuals from accessing employment.

The Milwaukee Re-entry Network hosted an Employer Summit in Milwaukee in November 2012. The summit provided a forum for hiring employers to learn about the benefits of hiring ex-offenders. Information on resources, financial incentives and best practices were shared with employers who attended.

Commercial Driver's License Training for Minorities

There are currently more than 1,200 jobs each year that go unfilled because of an insufficient number of workers with valid commercial driver's licenses (CDL). The task force has developed a working group comprised of task force representatives and a representative from Schneider National of Green Bay, the largest privately-owned trucking company in the United States.

The working group is charged with developing a short-term, intensive pilot program to quickly train individuals in Wisconsin who qualify for CDLs. This program would be targeted at unemployed minority residents in the Milwaukee area and would provide an efficient mechanism to aid residents in getting valid CDLs and finding employment in the transportation industry.



NEXT STEPS

Under Governor Walker's leadership, the Task Force on Minority Unemployment is committed to identifying and implementing solutions to the longstanding problem of minority unemployment, particularly the unacceptably high unemployment rate among working-age black men in the Milwaukee community.

With the engagement of community, business and government leaders, the task force looks forward to continuing the conversation in 2013. The task force will examine and support innovative models that promote long-term employment opportunities for workers, both existing and in the next generation.

In 2013, the task force will build upon the early success of the My Life! My Plan! program and other task force initiatives. Working with major Milwaukee-area employers, the Wisconsin Flexible Workforce Coalition will work to recruit unemployed Milwaukee residents for employment opportunities. Recognizing that transportation continues to be a significant barrier to employment in the Milwaukee region, the task force will continue to examine and advance recommendations for permanent solutions to this issue.

Among the various initiatives that we hope to pursue are:

- Engaging with Revolution Labs to kickstart entrepreneurship among residents of the 30th St. Corridor;
- Pursuing activities related to academic and career plans for Milwaukee-area students including a budget initiative that makes available such planning for all Wisconsin students;
- Using mobile labs to aid individuals in learning vocational skills as they enter or re-enter the community;
- Encouraging business leaders to partner with local schools and corrections institutions to inspire learners to prepare for the workplace;
- Increasing the frequency of Driver's License Recovery Events; and
- Promoting transportation and logistics as a good-paying career for residents of the 30th St. corridor

The Task Force on Minority Unemployment has made many strides to address the issue of minority unemployment in the Milwaukee area, and there is much more progress to be made. To this end, the task force members share an ongoing commitment to pursue solutions that support employment for all Wisconsinites.







201 East Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 266-3131
<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov>