



newsletter



WFA Partners with ME² to bring employment opportunities and energy efficiency to Milwaukee

On April 21, 2010 the City of Milwaukee was awarded over \$12 million of \$20 million U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) funds granted to the Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC) to promote energy efficiency Statewide through "Better Buildings." The Mayor's Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) will use the funds to implement the Milwaukee Energy Efficiency (ME²) program. ME² is designed to promote energy efficiency through residential,

commercial and industrial improvements. Similar efforts will be undertaken in Madison and Racine. Wisconsin is one of 25 sites to receive DOE funds to encourage "Better Buildings."

Continued on page 7

ISSUE NO. 2, JULY 2010



Pathways Out of Poverty

funding for local nonprofit groups selected ...p2



Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance by UWM CUIR

1st year evaluation ...p4



Report of National Fund for Workforce Solutions

National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) released its second annual report in ...p5



Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry

City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works Division of Forestry operates a unique workforce partnership in ...p8

Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



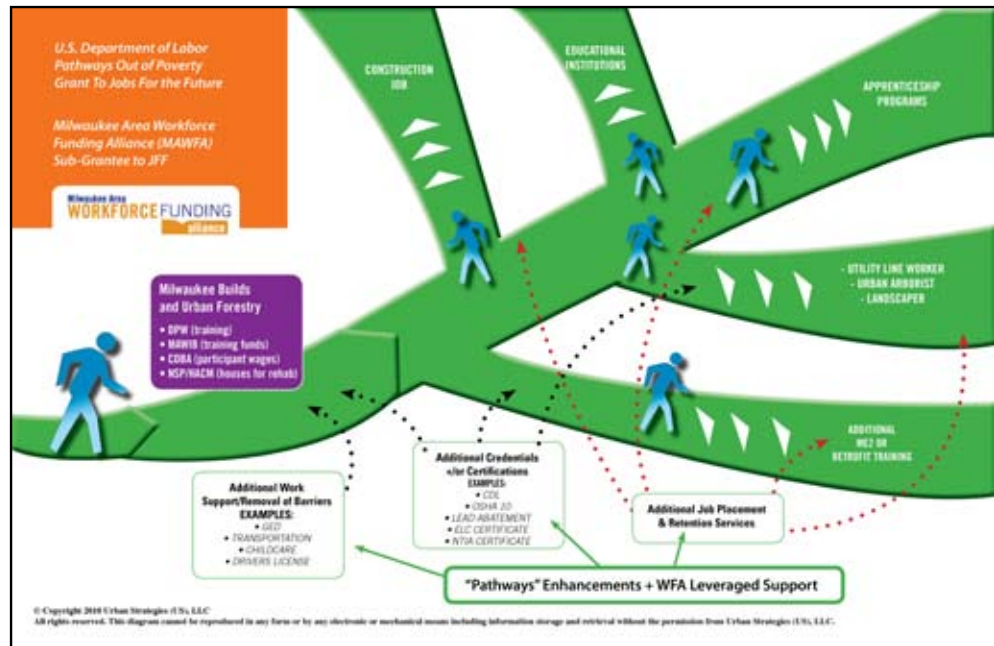
WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry p8



PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY
funding for local nonprofit groups selected

Through the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance, U. S. Department of Labor Recovery Act funding will go to several nonprofit organizations in Milwaukee in the Pathways Out of Poverty project with National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Jobs For the Future.

Following a Request for Proposals issued in early May, the following groups were selected to receive federal funding for career track enhancements to training programs:



Milwaukee Community Service Corps



Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry p8

PATHWAYS continued

These groups, along with Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (W RTP)/Big Step, were awarded \$120,000 over two years.

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District also will receive funding to provide stipends for training incentives for its construction program.

Additional credentials for the City of Milwaukee Urban Forestry Program will be possible through Pathways funding as well, extending the program to include additional career-related certifications.

In addition to the \$1million in Pathways Out of Poverty federal grant, Milwaukee Pathways will leverage at least \$4,855,000 in local resources in these construction and urban forestry programs.

Each nonprofit group will receive an organizational assessment and capacity-building plan in Fall of 2010 as well as an opportunity to submit the plan for funding from aligned funds of WFA funder/members.

Funds will be available from public and private funders toward capacity-building for

emerging workforce partnerships, transitional jobs wages, training funds, work supports, professional coaching, job placement and retention support.

Successful proposers agreed to participate in activities and utilize resources provided by NFWS/JFF on career advancement models and sector strategies. The groups also agreed to participate in coaching on development of workforce partnership strategies, coaching and technical assistance on strategy, design, and implementation; a national learning community that includes green sector, manufacturing, and construction “affinity” groups; documentation of best practices; and implementation tools.

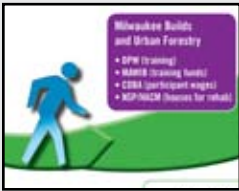
WFA will convene individual agencies’ discussions as well as community-wide planning to strengthen the pathways to careers in construction and urban forestry.

The groups selected by the Review Committee collectively will recruit and provide training and services to over 300 low-income individuals over the next two years.

Awards were made in specific categories:

- a) work supports or removal of barriers to individual employment of participants to ensure training program completion
- b) programmatic enhancements, including additional credentials or certifications to broaden the pathways to employment
- c) job development service to deepen employer relationships and increase retention
- d) site-based program supports to the organization that enhance the training experience

Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry p8

Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance 1st year evaluation



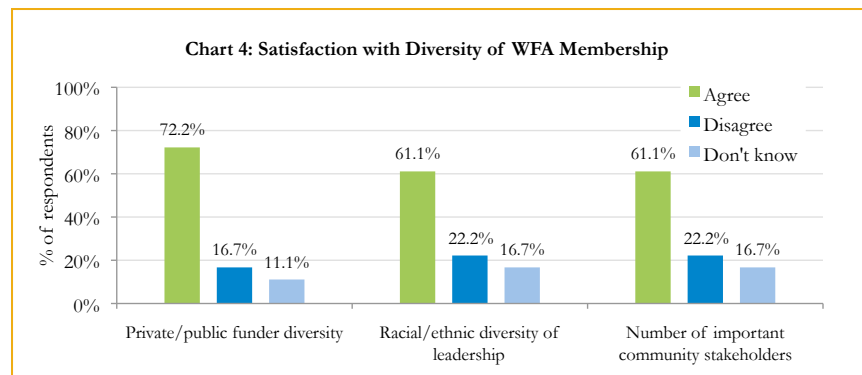
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (UWM) Center for Urban Initiatives and Research (CUIR) completed the first organizational evaluation of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance this Spring. The first year’s evaluation activities were heavily concentrated on assessing the “health,” or functioning of the Alliance and WFA members’ perceptions of progress toward two primary goals: realignment of funding in targeted workforce sectors and addressing workforce policies related to barriers to employment.

The response rate for the online survey was 82%, with 18 of 22 members completing the survey. Of the 22 WFA members identified by US, three CUIR researchers conducted follow-up interviews with 19 members, or 86% of potential respondents.

WFA's Vision, Mission and Goals

Respondents were asked to state if they understood WFA's position on the group's vision, goals, policy issues, and barriers to employment targeted by WFA. Not only did most respondents (68%) indicate that they had a very clear understanding of WFA's vision, they also believed this vision was collective (88%). In addition, 94% of respondents felt that most members demonstrate a high level of commitment to the goals of WFA.

Respondents were also asked how they felt about the composition of WFA's membership in three survey items.



Additional items included in the survey asked respondents’ opinions about the impact of WFA, as well as confidence in the group’s ability to have an impact going into the future. The responses demonstrated that 72% of respondents believe WFA will have a significant impact on workforce development going into the future. Sixty-seven percent (67%) believe members have already realigned their funding with the Alliance’s priority workforce sectors.

All respondents agreed that other members listen to their ideas: 22% indicated they “strongly agreed” and 61% stated they “agreed” with this item (17% selected “don’t know”). Although 56% of respondents stated they were disappointed with the level of their own involvement, 72% indicated they intend to increase their involvement over the next year. The UWM CUIR survey will be repeated in early 2011.

Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund
for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership
in Urban Forestry p8

Report of (NFWS) Annual Evaluation



National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) released its second annual report in June 2010, just prior to the National Gathering of local sites. These are some of the major findings.

Growth

The second year of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS or National Fund) saw major growth:

- ▶ The number of NFWS funding collaboratives across the country increased from 10 in 2007 to 22 in 2009.
- ▶ The number of funders supporting the collaboratives grew from 183 in 2008 to 256 in 2009.
- ▶ The number of workforce partnerships reporting data increased from 37 in 2008 to 63 in 2009.
- ▶ The number of participants served by the workforce partnerships over the course of the initiative grew from 6,306 in 2008 to 18,036 in 2009.
- ▶ The number of employers receiving services from the partnerships increased from 504 in 2008 to 998 in 2009.
- ▶ The number of participants receiving degrees or credentials increased from 679 to 9,735; the number receiving a GED or high school diploma grew from seven to 402; and the number receiving an occupational skills certificate or credential increased from 388 to 3,309.

Influence of Sector

The sectors served by workforce partnerships were very different from one another in their occupational structures, labor force needs, labor force demographics, and competitive dynamics. These differences had implications for the populations served, the kinds of programs workforce partnerships offered, the services received by both individuals and employers, and participant outcomes.

Emerging Strategies

Many of the collaboratives were new enough that they had not yet developed an overarching strategy. Among those that had, there appeared to be two principal approaches.

The first was to fund or develop sector partnerships with strong employer engagement that were capable of brokering the range of services low-income, low-skilled individuals need to access good jobs in the targeted industries.

continued on p.6

Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund
for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership
in Urban Forestry p8

Report of (NFWS) Annual Evaluation



The second strategy sought to more fully embed National Fund key principles into the practices of public institutions, especially one-stop career centers and community colleges, allowing them to assume much of the brokering role.

Career Pathways/Career Advancement

Partnerships also followed different approaches to career advancement, particularly for new entrants. Some were based on an understanding of the industry's career pathways; often participants continued to be guided and supported after they found a job. Other strategies focused on providing participants formal skills and credentials, while a third approach simply helped low-skilled, low-income individuals gain access to jobs in industries that offer opportunities for decent wages and benefits.

Systems Change

Most of the collaboratives and at least half of the workforce partnerships articulated strategies for changing institutional or organizational behavior, employer practices, or public policy. Compared to the collaboratives, the partnerships' strategies tended to be more tightly linked to work within specific sectors and with particular targeted populations. The collaboratives focused more on broad organizational and policy changes.

Advocacy Efforts

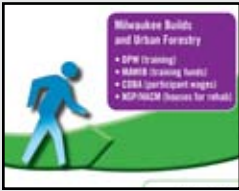
Advocacy efforts by both the national NFWS actors (the national investors, Jobs for the Future, the Council on Foundations) and the regional/rural funding collaboratives centered largely on the Obama administration and the new federal monies coming to the states. National NFWS presented information to the administration and Congressional staff on what had been learned from effective practices that was relevant to federal investments and policies in workforce and education. The collaboratives helped mobilize local stakeholders to advocate for how the local funds should be used and to take maximum advantage of the new funding.

Internal Challenges

In its second year, the National Fund continued to have internal challenges as well. As in 2008, a key concern was the extent to which collaboratives and partnerships were fully implementing the initiative's core principles and creating effective sector brokers. A number of the funded "partnerships" were actually better described as sector training programs, more restricted in their commitments and purposes than the NFWS intended.

For a full copy of the report, including the local site summaries, please contact Karen Gotzler at kgotzler@urbanstrategies.biz or 414-221-9500.

Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry p8

Microsoft Donations

Microsoft Donations Top \$750,000 to Milwaukee Workforce Development Groups

Over \$770,000 in free software has been donated by Microsoft Corporation through the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance (WFA) to local workforce development nonprofit groups.

As a local site of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS), WFA participates in the NFWS-Microsoft partnership to build the capacity of eligible workforce development organizations to better serve low-income, low-skilled individuals.

Microsoft Foundation is a funder/member of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Each funder/member contributes resources to the national

efforts. Microsoft has committed up to \$8 million in donated software to NFWS sites.

If you fund a nonprofit working in workforce development and want to be they have been invited, please contact Yvette Patrick at Urban Strategies at 414-221-9500.

Microsoft®



continued from p.1

WFA Partners with ME²

The ME² program also will provide new training and employment opportunities in the “Green” building trades for unemployed and low-skilled individuals. With public and private resources, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance (WFA) is partnering with the OES to provide the leverage needed to meet the ME² program goals. Further resource alignment is planned through leveraging Recovery Act Pathways of Poverty funds to support the workforce training needs of ME². WFA is pleased at this opportunity to deploy resources that will positively impact the Milwaukee community.

Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry p8

Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry

City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works Division of Forestry operates a unique workforce partnership in urban forestry with support from Pathways Out of Poverty federal ARRA funding through Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance.

The city and county will need additional Tree Trimmer crews to deal with an Ash Borer infestation crisis. Trained Tree Trimmers learn the same “rope and saddle” climbing skills as those required for electric line workers. WeEnergies and their subcontractors anticipate hiring graduates for utility line jobs. Many of the future jobs for the program graduates will be in the Forestry/Electric Power industry.

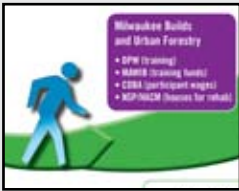
Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP)/Big Step led the recruitment, screening and selection process as a part of the Partnership. Over 400 applicants responded for 25 positions.

With Pathways funding, the Urban Forestry program will be extended from a six-month, on-the-job, entry-level training program in Tree Trimming to a 32-week program. WRTP’s staffing company, Triada, employs participants during training, which will prepare them to enter an Urban Forestry track, leading to a four-year degree, or an Electric Power track, offered by WRTP and union and employer partners.

The project is funded through a unique set of partners, including City of Milwaukee Community Development Grants Administration (CDGA), Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB), U.S. Forest Service and others. The program will be offered again in 2011.



Current Issue



Pathways Out of Poverty p2



WFA 1st Year evaluation p4



Report of National Fund for Workforce Solutions p5



Unique Workforce Partnership in Urban Forestry p8

SAVE THE DATE

July 27

at 12 pm:
Nursing and Allied Health Ladders at Community Colleges

August 24

at 12 pm:
Rapid Credentials at Community Colleges



NFWS Webinars

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) hosts several webinars to provide a forum for peer learning among the different NFWS sites. They are a great opportunities to learn about best practices from around the country.

Each webinar series—or affinity group—is focused on a specific issue within workforce development. Most webinars are convened monthly and last for an hour or an hour and a half, typically during the middle of the day. Urban Strategies staff listens in and participate in the webinars, so feel free to ask us for more details on any one of these webinars. We will also make sure that you are on the correct email notification list.

Please contact Lamont Smith at lsmith@urbanstrategies.biz if you are interested in learning more about these following webinar series:

- Green Affinity Group
- Policy and Systems Change topics

Please contact Monica Wauck at mwauck@urbanstrategies.biz if you are interested in learning more about these following webinar series:

- Community College Affinity Group
- Manufacturing Affinity Group
- Healthcare Sector Affinity Group
- NFWS Practice Webinars

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WFA, PLEASE CONTACT:



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Urban Strategies

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Donors Forum of Wisconsin