

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Chris Abele

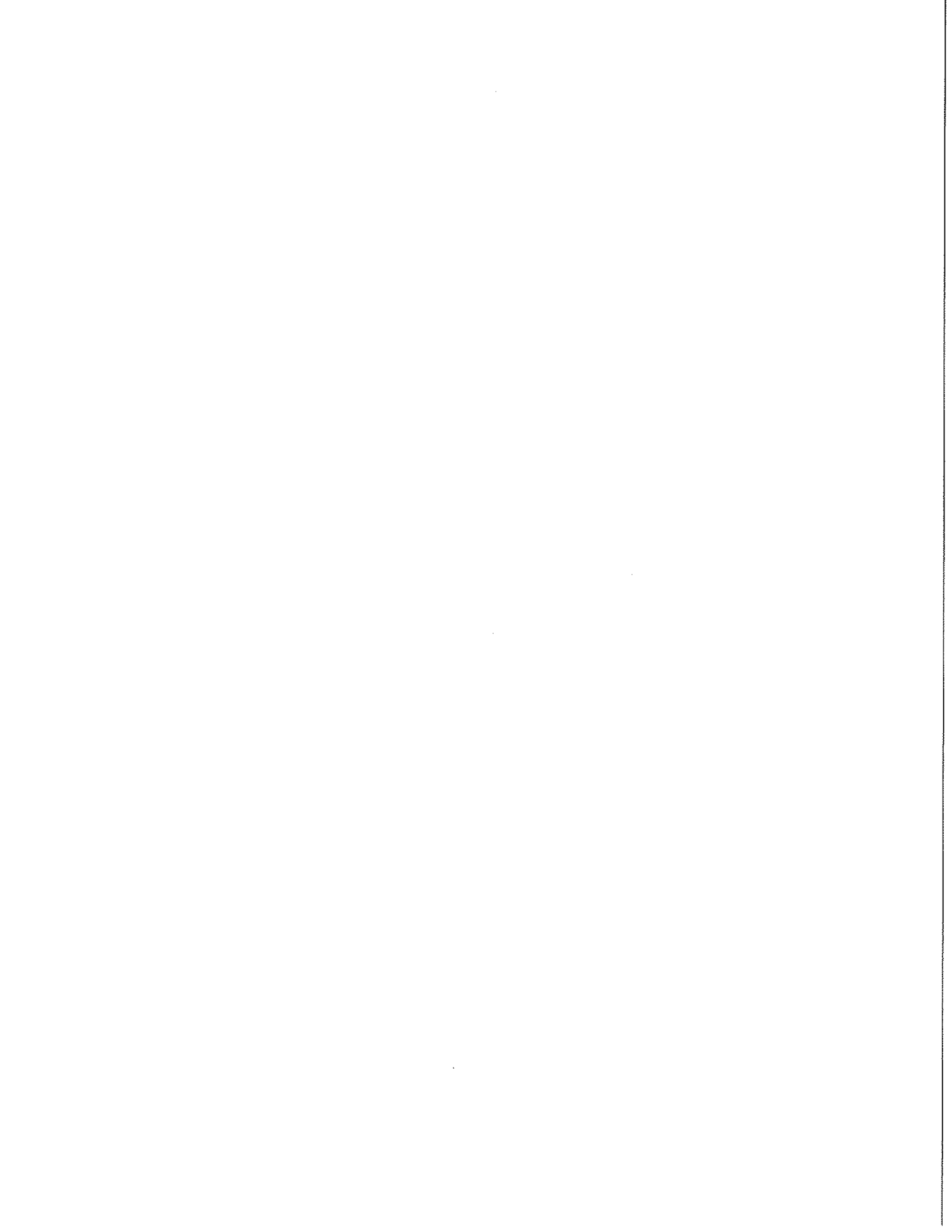
MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

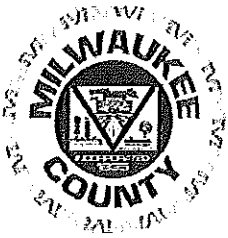
DATE: June 21, 2017  
TO: The Honorable Milwaukee Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive  
RE: County Board File No. 17-459 – Communication to the Governor

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As has been my past practice, I am returning file 17-459 to you unsigned as it is a statement of the County Board's policy position.

I am also attaching my letter to the Governor that outlines my rationale for requesting this change. I look forward to working with you and other key partners as we continue to support workforce development efforts in our county.





OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

# *Milwaukee County*

CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

April 28, 2017

Dear Governor Walker,

As you know, I share your commitment to economic growth and development for our state. While there may be different perspectives on the best approach to meet these goals, everyone agrees that connecting people to jobs is at the foundation. Milwaukee County is in the best position to succeed in building this foundation, which is why I am requesting that you return the designation of Milwaukee County as a local workforce investment area and the County Executive as the Chief Elected Official. I come to this conclusion based on a few observations, as described below.

Returning the designation to the County is in line with national best practice – to administer workforce services at a more regional level. Workforce must occur on a regional level due to the mismatch between the location of workers and the location of jobs. An example where we've found success in these efforts lies with the Milwaukee County Transit System's JobLines routes that connect about 1,000 Milwaukee workers with 150 employers in Waukesha and Washington counties every day. Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow has been a strong supporter of our efforts, which provide a mutual benefit. We all must think and act bigger than just our own localities if we are to succeed.

Milwaukee County interacts directly with the workforce through its services – from the House of Correction to child support services to disability services to housing services. Furthermore, we provide a natural link between the workforce and jobs through our mass transit system. Because of Milwaukee County's history of working with these populations, which have a high degree of overlap with the unemployed population, we understand their needs and how to customize services to address each population's unique challenges to entering the workforce.

Milwaukee County, with its emphasis on economic development, has collaborative partnerships with adjoining counties, who account for a large portion of available jobs, as well as regional business partners who express to us their workforce needs. We already regularly and successfully work with these entities on issues of shared interest, like public safety communications and transit, and want to see Milwaukee County employers and workers share in the economic opportunity as well.

For years, we have been a regular partner of Employ Milwaukee and believe they do good work. In the past year, we've developed an even deeper partnership with Employ Milwaukee. For example, Opportunity Knocks, which launched in fall of 2016, is a novel housing model that utilizes home equity created through home renovation to fund reentry services and first-time home ownership. Opportunity Knocks takes tax-foreclosed homes in Milwaukee County suburban municipalities, renovates the homes while providing job training to nonviolent House of Correction (HOC) offenders, provides reentry services to the offenders after the renovation, and sells the house to a first-time homeowner through the County's new Section 8 Homeownership Program paired with HOME funds for down payment assistance. Employ Milwaukee has been a crucial partner in this initiative.

We've also partnered with Employ Milwaukee on Uplift MKE, a unique job training and placement program that is empowering workers with the skills they need. Built on a pay for performance model, this effort has already placed more than 100 individuals in jobs averaging more than \$15 per hour. These job training and placement efforts are targeted directly to workers, particularly those in and near the Sherman Park area, who most need support to successfully climb the ladder of opportunity.

Uplift MKE been so successful that we expanded it less than a year in, adding \$500,000 in funding for Uplift MKE and \$165,000 for the Boys and Girls Club of Milwaukee to add a Youth Career Development project manager to serve teenagers in Sherman Park and other areas. In 2015, more than 300 teenagers found employment through the efforts of the Boys and Girls Club, and this funding will expand their reach.

The main reason to bring the County and Employ Milwaukee together is to create a more natural and seamless opportunity to work together on these initiatives and others, which I believe will exponentially increase our success rates, and therefore, our ability to empower more people. This level of coordination is not just desirable, it is a requirement of the Workforce Investment Act as it explicitly states that local entities must coordinate with supportive services, like transit and wraparound care.

We will continue to work closely with the City of Milwaukee and the efforts they have spearheaded, such as the Mayor's Earn and Learn program. I look forward to working with you to plan and implement a seamless transition that will ensure and grow the continued success of Employ Milwaukee's efforts.

Sincerely,



Chris Abele  
County Executive

Cc: Ray Allen

## FACTS SUPPORTING COUNTY LEADERSHIP OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### WIOA CALLS FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION & COUNTY SERVICE INVOLVEMENT

The purposes of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act of 2014 clearly indicate the necessity of regional involvement and broad collaboration to meet the needs of workers.

*“The purposes of this Act are the following: ... (6) For purposes of subtitle A and B of title I, to provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants, and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.”*

The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act of 2014 calls for state and local workforce development plans to include coordination and activities with county level agencies (29 USC 3174, Sec 134)

WIOA IDENTIFIED AGENCIES FOR COORDINATION	COUNTY LEVEL AGENCIES PROVIDING SERVICES
Child Support Services	Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Mandated County Department</li> </ul>
Disabilities Services	Disabilities Services Division, Milwaukee County Department of Health & Human Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Mandated County Department</li> </ul>
Cooperative Extension Services	Milwaukee County Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Mandated County Department</li> </ul>
Economic Development activities	Economic Development Division, Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services
Correctional Re-entry Services	Milwaukee County House of Correction Milwaukee County Community Justice Council
Veterans Services	Milwaukee County Veterans Services Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Mandated County Department</li> </ul>
Individuals with Barriers to Employment	Milwaukee County Office of African-American Affairs

### CONSISTENCY OF LEADERSHIP ACROSS STATE & NATION

- Every Local Workforce Designation in Wisconsin is County Based
- The ten most comparable Counties by population to Milwaukee County all recognize county leadership in their local Workforce Investment Board.

- St. Louis County, Missouri
- Pima County, Arizona
- Montgomery County, Maryland
- Honolulu County, Hawaii
- Westchester County, New York
- Fresno County, California
- Shelby County, Tennessee
- Fulton County, Georgia
- Mecklenberg County, North Carolina
- Erie County, New York

## MILWAUKEE COUNTY: "SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY"

The 2016 Workforce Development Programs Mapping & Analysis by the Office of African-American Affairs reports:

*"1. Milwaukee County engages in a significant amount of workforce development activity. Currently, at least 8 out of 14 County departments under the leadership of the County Executive have workforce development programs, which serve at least 1,100 individuals annually. A snapshot of these efforts by department is provided in Section IX and a profile and analysis of each program identified during this assessment is provided in the Appendix. The information presented in the profiles varies based on the information provided by departments. In addition, there are departments such as Human Resources and Community Business Development Partners that provide workforce-related activities inherent to their mission that are not detailed in this report. Milwaukee County's workforce development programs serve a variety of populations, including low-income individuals, seniors, persons with disabilities, former offenders, incarcerated individuals and students."*

Milwaukee County Workforce Programs Snapshot

Department	Program	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Information Management Services	Internship Program		✓	✓			
Department on Aging	Interfaith Elder Adult Programs	✓	✓	✓			✓
Parks	Summer Youth Employment Program Student Conservation Associates		✓	✓		✓	
Zoo	PROJECT SEARCH		✓	✓			
Economic Development Division	UPLINKS		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Board of Comstock	Preparation for Success, FUTURE Certification, American Job Center, Cultural Training, Word of Hope Ministries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child Support Services	New Pathways for Fathers and Families	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Health & Human Services	Wapauand OTS, Wapauand EST, Individual Placement Services, Grant Avenue Club, Multicultural Services		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Community Employment Program, Disability Services, Face Forward Program, Power of Harney Youth Employment Program		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## **CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN EMPLOY MILWAUKEE & MILWAUKEE COUNTY**

### **Uplift Milwaukee – DAS-Economic Development**

- 181 individuals placed in sustaining employment in the first year of program implementation.
- First source employment program that is demand driven and provides job seekers access and training to job openings.
- Leads to sustainable employment as individuals are placed and Employ Milwaukee is reimbursed if individuals stay in employment for at least 3 months.
- First source employment is leading to improved outcomes for job seekers including higher wages (average \$14/hour) and access to training not otherwise available.
- Majority of individuals served are chronically unemployed or underemployed.
- Initiated with \$400,000 of County funds in 2016, expanded with an additional \$500,000 of County funds in 2017.
- Program expanded in 2017 with a partnership between the Boys and Girls Club in Sherman Park to create a new youth employment coordinator position.
- Uplift targets the areas of highest need – incentivizing job placements for individuals from the Milwaukee County zip codes of highest unemployment and the greatest need.

### **American Job Center – House of Correction**

- A two year, \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, ending 6/30/17.
- Seeks to serve 750 participants with 125 having comprehensive case management and training services following incarceration. Has served more than the planned 750 through the House of Correction pre-release Job Center.
- Teach inmates job readiness skills and job training.
- Partnership between HOC and Employ Milwaukee. WIOA contracted American Job Centers are required partners for post-release co-enrollment in WIOA funded employment services.

### **New Pathways for Fathers and Families - Child Support Services**

- A five-year (10/1/15-9/29/20) grant aimed at supporting fathers with children ages 24 and under in targeted Milwaukee neighborhoods.
- Designed to improve the employment and economic mobility of participating parents. New Pathways curriculum, which offers program services in economic stability, responsible parenting, and health marriages/ relationships, fosters positive father-child engagement and encourages healthy relationships.
- Through increased economic stability and parental responsibility, child support outcomes have consistently increased since the initial program started in 2011.
- Funded by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and Office of Family Assistance (OFA).
- Launched in 2015, the program aims to serve 955 participants per year.

### **Earn & Learn Summer Employment Placement Partnership with Milwaukee County Parks**

- Provide paid work experience to 40 youth for six weeks of employment and career preparation skills training
- Goal is to provide youth with employment opportunities that helps them gain hands-on work experience and earn wages

