



## Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP/BIG STEP)

### Quarterly Narrative Report

August 1, 2012 to October 30, 2012

### WRTP/BIG STEP-Milwaukee County Ready To Work Partnership

The **WRTP/BIG STEP** is an innovative and nationally recognized workforce intermediary. A not for profit agency, **WRTP/BIG STEP** has developed comprehensive systems to align the needs of unemployed and underserved community residents seeking family supporting careers. As an intermediary, WRTP/BIGSTEP is an integrated funding model leveraging public and private investments and partnerships in meeting the needs of the economy and connecting people with careers. As an industry led organization, **WRTP/BIG STEP** works with industry to develop training and employment programs to connect Milwaukee County residents with employment and training opportunities in the local construction and manufacturing industries, and emerging sectors of the economy. Labor market data and recent news highlight the need to develop a skilled and qualified workforce in a coordinated manner. By working with industries to close the skills gap in workforce development, **WRTP/BIG STEP's Industry led, Worker Centered and Community Focused** approach substantially improves the economic strength of the entire Milwaukee community.

**WRTP/BIG STEP** is a “high road” approach to put real people on real family supporting career pathways by facilitating recruitment, training, direct hire, placement and retention services for Milwaukee County Residents. Complimentary to traditional “jobs programs”, **WRTP/BIG STEP** has developed a flexible and industry responsive model that identifies construction and manufacturing workforce needs first, and then develops strategies and programs to connect Milwaukee County residents with those jobs. This ensures that the training we provide our participants prepares them for placement in pre-targeted jobs upon successful completion of the programs. Our participants are placed in employment through industry designed and credentialed on the job training programs where they learn and earn as they begin their new careers.

### Program Activities and Outcomes

The Ready To Work program was launched in August of 2012 with the goal of connecting Milwaukee County residents to career pathways and employment. The project is designed to engage industry and develop education and training programs and partnerships that lead to careers and meet the needs of private sector employers and emerging needs within Milwaukee County. The Narrative Report is complimentary to Data & Fiscal Reporting providing to Milwaukee County, and highlights work completed in the three areas of the project design – working with industry and Milwaukee County to identify employment opportunities, expanding and enhancing community workforce partnerships, and implementing effective workforce strategies to connect individuals with education, training, and employment.

### Industry & Milwaukee County Partnership

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Our training numbers have increased as well as our placements in jobs with our industry partners. Training takes time of course, in the first quarter of our partnership, our training numbers are steadily increasing. The large majority of our field work in this first quarter has been in the manufacturing sector due to demand and immediate opportunities. We are anticipating continues strong demand in Manufacturing through the winter, and project in spring, construction jobs will open creating opportunities for Milwaukee County residents to begin training in those trades.

Our outreach to local industry employers including Harley Davidson, HB Systems, OilGear, Hellerman-Tyton, GE Healthcare Systems and V&L Tool has also increased substantially as we ramp up our programming under the Ready to Work program. A manufacturing needs assessment is in process that will assess the manufacturing needs of nearly 300 Wisconsin manufacturers and should be completed in the second quarter of the Ready to Work program. In addition, our **WRTP/BIG STEP** Construction program met regularly with the Joint Apprenticeship Committees and the Construction Labor Management Council to assess the construction needs of the community at large and identify trends in construction employment in the next year. This allows **WRTP/BIG STEP** to target its apprenticeship training programs to fields in the construction trades that will be hiring in the near future.

In addition to our work in identifying private workforce development needs through our work with industry and labor, **WRTP/BIG STEP** has also begun the process of identifying public workforce needs under the Ready to Work program. **WRTP/BIG STEP** Big STEP met with the Milwaukee County Department of Public Works, the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services and the Milwaukee County Parks Department to preliminarily assess their department workforce development needs, establish a communication channel, and begin a working relationship with the heads of those departments for future workforce training partnerships.

### **Community Workforce Partnership**

**WRTP/BIG STEP** has facilitated monthly Community Workforce Partnership meetings held in August, September, and October. Community based organizations attending these meetings include the Northcott Neighborhood House, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, the Milwaukee Christian Center, the Annie B Casey Foundation, Legal Action of Milwaukee, Wisconsin Community Services, Interfaith Coalition of Milwaukee, Center for Self Sufficiency and the Wisconsin Seasonal Workforce Coalition. The Community Workforce Partnership's goals are to coordinate, expand and enhance, **WRTP/BIG STEP's** community outreach efforts by coordinating our programming with existing community based activities, coordinating referrals between agencies to ensure that underprivileged community residents find our programs, are prepared to enter them and have access to the full breath of community support available to ensure they are successful while training and transitioning into their new career pathways. For example, through this partnership in the first few months of the Ready to Work program we have facilitated the creation of a bi-monthly Resourcer Information Session to prepare individuals who have additional barriers to employment and implemented pilot HSED/GED workshops and a Driver's License Recovery Workshops.

### **Career Pathways & Placement Activities**

The **WRTP/BIG STEP-Milwaukee County Ready to Work Partnership** is off to a fast start. Under the program we have doubled the number of General Information Sessions (GIS), implemented bi-monthly Resource Information Sessions (RIS) sessions and related career pathway workshops, and ramped up significant field work with the all the targeted employment sectors. In the first quarter according to our third party verified reports, we saw 492 individuals come through the COE eligible for services through the R2W program, we placed 217 individuals into a career pathways

program; began to identify the future private and public industry workforce development needs; addressed the needs of industry partners to begin to close the skills gap that hampers the progress of their businesses; created a forum for community based organizations to coordinate referral and support services to ensure the success of the participants as they transition to family supporting careers and out of poverty; and finally our most important accomplishment is that we have placed 44 individuals in employment that will lift their families out of poverty and provide them with the economic stability to strengthen the economic success of Milwaukee County. The initial successes of Milwaukee County Ready to Work in the early phase of the program are due to the well developed formula **WRTP/BIG STEP** has in place. **WRTP/BIG STEP** is on track to meet and exceed the goals of the program to serve 1000 new participants and place 500 Milwaukee County residents in family supporting careers.