

# Work and Economic Support E-Newsletter

*A monthly summary of developments impacting Wisconsin's workers and employers.*

October 15, 2008

## **Wisconsin Council on Children and Families**

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Feel free to forward this e-newsletter to other interested parties, and encourage them to sign up for this and/or other WCCF e-newsletter lists [here](#). You can contact the author, John Keckhaver, directly at [jkeckhaver@wccf.org](mailto:jkeckhaver@wccf.org) and ext. 305.

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### **1. Focus on Remedial Education - Emerging Issue in Higher Education/Workforce Policy**

When a Wisconsin high school student graduates, there is likely an expectation that a postsecondary program is the next educational step - and indeed the next step to a rewarding and fulfilling career - whether at a technical college or one of the many public or private colleges or universities in the state. Many high school graduates, however, (over a third according to a recent national report) must first take remedial coursework in order to enter the college program of their choice. Increased attention is being paid to this situation, its impact on student enrollment and graduation, and its costs. For a recent look at national data on remediation levels, and the fiscal impact of the situation, read [Diploma to Nowhere](#).

The growing interest in remedial education and its impact makes this a good time to take a look around the nation and see what is going on in other states. Experts have pointed out a number of examples worth looking at, including, Kentucky, California, and Colorado. In coming newsletters

we will explore the efforts taking place in each of these states in greater detail - as well as providing what data can be mined regarding the state of remedial education in Wisconsin.

## **2. Milwaukee's Jobless Rate for African-Americans Second Highest in the Nation**

More than half of African-American men in the Milwaukee area are unemployed according to a new report from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee's Center for Economic Development (CED). This ranks second behind only Buffalo in major metropolitan areas. The gap between jobless rates for whites and for African-Americans in Milwaukee, meanwhile, is the highest in the nation. Read Joel Dresang's [article](#) on the report in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and access the entire report from the CED webpage, [here](#).

## **3. Commerce Releases New Annual Report on Economic Development Programs**

In response to the passage of ACT 125 last year the Wisconsin Department of Commerce recently released its now-annual report on the state's economic development programs and their impacts. DOC also has unveiled its website designed to provide information, both to businesses looking for further information on funding opportunities as well as to report on how the state is spending its economic development dollars and what we are all getting in return. The report can be accessed at the Department's [web page](#).

## **4. More Information on Health Care Worker Shortage**

The shortage of health care workers, both to meet current demands and the growing needs of an aging population, is a challenge receiving much attention. For the Hospital Association's most recent Hospital workforce report, click [here](#).

And for a description of a new campaign aimed at meeting physician demand in the coming years, click [here](#).

## **5. National Job Losses Highest in Five Years**

Not since the last recession have we lost as many jobs in single month as were lost in September. 159,000 jobs were lost last month, bringing the year's total to about 765,000, and counting. The number of Americans working part time because they cannot find full time work is also rising, up 400,000 since September of last year for a total of 1.5 million. Read this recent New York Times [article](#) for more on the recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data - and a link to the BLS employment report.

## **6. Foreclosures Continue to Climb**

Foreclosures filings in August climbed 12 percent over July's total and 27 percent over August of last year. Given that the foreclosure crisis was in full swing at that time last year, continued increases are especially worrisome. What's more, with unemployment rising quickly, increased foreclosure numbers are expected into future months. Click [here](#) for recent CNN coverage of the foreclosure numbers.

## **7. Workforce Study Committee Begins Discussion of Potential Proposals**

The Legislative Council Study Committee "Building Wisconsin's Workforce" continued its series of meetings in September, hearing from a number of presenters who focused on a wide range of issues from the need for basic education and postsecondary programs to collaborate more effectively to current regional efforts by the workforce development boards.

The committee is now engaged in discussions regarding potential legislative proposals for next year's legislative session. You can access all of those presentations as well as information on future meetings at the committee's legislative [website](#). The committee's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 22nd.

## **8. Recent News**

[From 2 Rivals, 2 Prescriptions](#) (description of presidential candidates' economic plans)  
The New York Times

[Poverty Hits State's Minority Working Families Hard, Report Says](#)  
Wisconsin State Journal

[New Vision for Industrial Midwest](#)  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

[Reversing the Brain Drain](#)  
Tom Still column - Wisconsin Technology Network News

## **9. Other Reading and Resources**

[Election 2008: Workforce Education and Training, Presidential Candidates' Campaign Proposals and Legislative Histories](#)  
The Workforce Alliance

[Expanding State Education and Training by Partnering with the Unemployment Insurance Program](#)  
National Employment Law Project

[Still Working Hard, Still Falling Short](#)  
Working Poor Families Project

## **10. Upcoming WCCF Events**

The 2008 WisKids Count Child Policy Forum, an annual WCCF event, will feature Dr. T. Berry Brazelton and Dr. Joshua Sparrow - noted experts on child development. Click [here](#) for a more detailed description of the event and registration information.