

# Work and Economic Support E-Newsletter

*A Monthly Summary of Developments Impacting Wisconsin's Workforce and Employers*

June 25, 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 mailing lists at <http://capwiz.com/wccf/mlm/signup/> You can contact the author, John Keckhaver, directly at [jkeckhaver@wccf.org](mailto:jkeckhaver@wccf.org) and ext. 305.

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1. \*\*\*New Issue Brief from WCCF\*\*\*  
**Aiding Success: Workforce and Financial Aid Trends Call for Increased Funding of Higher Education Grants for Technical College Students**

Continuing economic and demographic changes are increasing the need to build a highly skilled workforce – particularly at the middle-skill level (post high school training and credentials such as technical diplomas and associate degrees). The state's Technical Colleges are primed to provide these needed skills and credentials, but unfortunately financial aid for technical college students has failed to keep pace with rising costs and the increased demand.

In *Aiding Success*, Council staff examine recent workforce and financial aid trends and offer alternative funding approaches that could stem the rising level of unmet financial need experienced by technical college students and meet the increasing demand for technical college-trained workers. This is the first in a new series of issue briefs from WCCF examining barriers to and opportunities for family-supporting employment in Wisconsin.

[http://www.wccf.org/pdf/aiding\\_success.pdf](http://www.wccf.org/pdf/aiding_success.pdf)

## **2. RISE Initiative Moving Forward (Career Pathway and Bridge Program Development)**

The RISE Initiative (Regional Industry Skills Education) is a Joyce Foundation-funded effort by the Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Technical College System to develop bridge and career pathway programs around the state at the technical colleges. The advantages of these approaches are numerous – and have been highlighted in this e-newsletter in the past. (For a brief primer on these approaches see Bridges, Pathways, and Leadership) [http://www.wccf.org/pdf/bridges\\_fullreport\\_200707.pdf](http://www.wccf.org/pdf/bridges_fullreport_200707.pdf)

The state has awarded its first set of grants aimed at developing the bridge and pathway curricula and a second call for proposals has gone out. You can find out much more about these opportunities, along with a wealth of background information at the RISE website. <http://www.risepartnership.org/>

## **3. “Building Wisconsin’s Workforce” Study Committee Established**

Membership has been set for the Wisconsin Legislative Council Special Committee on Building Wisconsin’s Workforce. For a member list, meeting schedules as they are developed, and other materials go to the committee’s website.

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/WORK/index.htm>

The charge of the committee, with Representative Strachota as Chair and Senator Wirch as Vice Chair, is to study and make recommendations regarding the coordination of existing resources of K-12 educational institutions, technical colleges, universities, government agencies, and private organizations to: meet the future workforce needs of the health care, skilled trades, construction, advanced manufacturing, and technology fields; retain workers in these fields, and retrain and update the skills and education of workers in these fields.

## **4. Pressure Builds for Paid Sick Leave in Milwaukee**

A dozen states will be considering legislation this year regarding adopting mandatory paid sick days for many employees. Municipalities are also getting in on the act, with San Francisco and Washington D.C. having adopted such rules as local ordinances. Milwaukee may soon add its name to that list.

A grass-roots coalition has collected 40,000 signatures which, after being certified, would require the Milwaukee City Council to develop the legislation and either approve it or put it on the ballot during the next election. See the recent Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article on this development. <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=764861>

## **5. Credit Crisis Hits Student Loans**

The ongoing collapse of the housing market and subsequent credit tightening continues. Yet one more impact is now being felt as several current student loan lenders have decided students at two-year colleges are simply too big of a risk. Here are two articles explaining the situation further:

Student Loans Start to Bypass 2-Year Colleges  
New York Times, June 2<sup>nd</sup>

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/02/business/02loans.html?\\_r=1&ref=education&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/02/business/02loans.html?_r=1&ref=education&oref=slogin)

Lenders' Pullback on College Loans Sad Statement  
The Northwestern – June 6<sup>th</sup>

<http://www.thenorthwestern.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080606/OSH0602/80605186>

## **6. Unemployment Developments**

The national unemployment rate spiked last month to 5.5 percent, up from 5.0 percent in April. In Wisconsin, the U-Rate crept up to 4.4 from 4.3 in April. The rise in unemployment has sparked discussions of unemployment compensation reform.

Read a recent editorial on the subject from the Appleton Post-Crescent.

<http://www.postcrescent.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080618/APC0602/806180633/1531/APC06>

And for the OMB Watch take on the national situation, and a potential legislative response, click here.

<http://www.ombwatch.org/article/articleview/4270/>

## **7. Midwest Attorneys General Taking on Foreclosures**

The foreclosure crisis has been waiting for someone to get beyond the hand-wringing stage, and it appears state attorneys general may be the first ones to do just that. Read this recent CNN story on what a few attorneys general, including in neighboring Illinois, Minnesota and Iowa are doing about the still worsening foreclosure crisis.

[http://money.cnn.com/2008/06/16/real\\_estate/States\\_action/index.htm?postversion=2008062120](http://money.cnn.com/2008/06/16/real_estate/States_action/index.htm?postversion=2008062120)

## **8. Recent News and Stories**

Toppling SUV Sales Sink GM Janesville Plant  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel – June 3<sup>rd</sup>

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=757761>

Janesville Bracing for Future Without GM Plant  
Capitol Times – June 4<sup>th</sup>

<http://www.madison.com/wsj/topstories/289484>

Plan Would Raise Tuition 5.5% at UW Schools  
Green Bay Press Gazette – June 4<sup>th</sup>

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080604/GPG0101/806040698/1978>

A Shallower [workforce] Pool  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel – June 8<sup>th</sup>

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=759434>

Boost Service, Cut Fares to Save County Transit System, Consultant Says  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 16<sup>th</sup>

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=762717>

Consumer Confidence Skids More Than Expected  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 24<sup>th</sup>

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/ECONOMY?SITE=WIMIL&SECTION=HOME&TEMP\\_LATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/ECONOMY?SITE=WIMIL&SECTION=HOME&TEMP_LATE=DEFAULT)

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

Low-Income Workers and Families Hardest Hit by Economic Decline Need Help Now  
Center on Law and Social Policy

[http://clasp.org/publications/compiled\\_indicators\\_piece.pdf](http://clasp.org/publications/compiled_indicators_piece.pdf)

Congressional Action Needed to Ensure Low-Income Adults Receive Critical Employment and Training Services under the Workforce Investment Act  
Center on Law and Social Policy

[http://clasp.org/publications/action\\_needed\\_for\\_wia\\_final.pdf](http://clasp.org/publications/action_needed_for_wia_final.pdf)

Work-Life Policies for the Twenty-First Century Economy  
The Mobility Agenda

<http://www.mobilityagenda.org/worklife>

State Strategies to Reduce Child and Family Poverty  
National Governor's Association

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0806POVERTYBRIEF.PDF>

Metro Raise: Boosting the Earned Income Tax Credit to Help Metropolitan Workers and Families

Brookings Institution

[http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/05\\_metro\\_raise\\_berube.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/05_metro_raise_berube.aspx)

Learning and Earning: An Analysis Shows the Relationship Between Education and Pay  
Education Week

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/06/12/40jobs.h26.html?tmp=567117341>

Job Opportunities for the Green Economy: A State-by-State Picture of Occupations that Gain from Green Investments

Green Jobs for America

<http://www.kintera.org/htmlcontent.asp?cid=81548>