



ALIGNING FOR IMPACT

THE MILWAUKEE AREA WORKFORCE FUNDING ALLIANCE

BY ROBERT HOLM

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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE





The **Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance** is a consortium of private and public funders of workforce development (including education, job training and placement, and support services) dedicated to increased employment that benefits both businesses that need skilled workers and individuals seeking good jobs with family-supporting wages.

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The **National Fund for Workforce Solutions** is an unprecedented initiative of national and local funders whose goal is the career advancement of low-wage workers using a model of substantial employer engagement to increase the potential for successful outcomes. Since 2007, this dual-customer effort has invested in organizing employers, creating workforce partnerships, and advocating for public policies and private practices that make businesses more competitive and workers more likely to earn family-sustaining wages.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The leaders who have stepped beyond traditional institutional boundaries to grow the Workforce Funding Alliance are largely the same as those who contributed their time, candor, and valuable insights to this report. Steven Mahan of the Community Development Grants Administration and Gil Llanas of Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance (now retired) joined Kathryn Dunn as co-chairs of the Workforce Funding Alliance to endorse this project and gave generously of their time in the first interviews and reviews. Over 25 other leaders from the alliance and its workforce partnerships similarly gave of their time and insights during the interview process:

Daniel J. Bader, Helen Bader Foundation

Mayor Tom Barrett, City of Milwaukee

Gary Beier, Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association

Lisa Boyd, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Earl Buford, WRTP/BIG STEP

Gwen Dansby, JPMorgan Chase

Kathryn Dunn, Greater Milwaukee Foundation

Deborah Fugenschuh, Donors Forum of Wisconsin

Norma Gaines, YWCA, Milwaukee Area Healthcare Alliance

Robert Giloth, Anne E. Casey Foundation

Karen Gotzler, Urban Strategies

Brenda Gray, Milwaukee Area Health Education Center

Katie Hamm, Diverse & Resilient (formerly United Way)

Mark Kessenich, WRTP/BIG STEP

Kim Kujoth, City of Milwaukee Urban Forestry

Gil Llanas, Northwestern Mutual Foundation (retired)

Susan Lloyd, Zilber Family Foundation

Kendra Lodewick, Program and Policy Insight

Steven Mahan, Community Development Grants Administration

Mary Anne Martiny, The Harley-Davidson Foundation

James Milner, Urban Strategies

Jane Moore, Greater Milwaukee Foundation

Paula Penebaker, YWCA

Antonio (Tony) Perez, Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee

Clare Reardon, Froedtert Hospital

Lamont Smith, Urban Strategies

Donald Sykes, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Julia Taylor, Greater Milwaukee Committee

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Finally, this report is dedicated to the late Eric Parker of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership. His passion for the Workforce Funding Alliance galvanized its early leaders, including Dan Bader of the Helen Bader Foundation, Don Sykes of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Jane Moore of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, James Milner of Urban Strategies, and Mayor Tom Barrett who, along with Kathryn Dunn and Karen Gotzler, invested their resources and reputations to bring others to this cause. Eric embodied the spirit of collaboration in the name of economic opportunity and justice that underlies the Workforce Funding Alliance. His mark on the alliance’s vision remains.

One purpose of this document is to give special attention to organizations that were willing to make concessions and to think differently, because if we stayed stuck in our little boxes, we could never have achieved the level of collaboration we have.

–Kathryn Dunn, Greater Milwaukee Foundation

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PREFACE

For over three decades, Milwaukee leaders have advanced the national cause of building a workforce system that reduces poverty and provides the skills that individuals, employers, and communities need in order to succeed. Their major efforts range from the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative and the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership created almost 20 years ago, to the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development in the past decade, as well as many, many others.

Building on the lessons of those initiatives, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance represents an important evolution in how the region organizes its resources to address unemployment and poverty. It does so by adding a critical innovation to those past initiatives: an approach and structure for aligning Milwaukee's myriad of resources and individual leaders toward a collaborative, mutually reinforcing set of workforce development strategies.

Until recently, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance has avoided public attention while it focused on the long-term work of building sustainable cooperation among private and public leaders. With much of that foundational work maturing, the Workforce Funding Alliance has reached a turning point. It has formalized a legal entity to represent its networked alliance of institutions, written the commitments of Mayor Tom Barrett and some of Milwaukee's largest philanthropies into its bylaws, and developed plans for sustaining itself well beyond the national funding that helped spark its creation.

The alliance now also has received public recognition, such as the Milwaukee Award for Neighborhood Development Innovation—the MANDI award—which honors extraordinary efforts to revitalize Milwaukee's central city. These events make the time right for telling the story of the alliance, what it has accomplished, and what lessons it offers for those inspired to join its mission and work.

SHARED DECISION MAKING AND ALIGNED RESOURCES

Founded in 2008, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance is a consortium of private foundations and public agencies that fund workforce development. The alliance helps its 29 members strategically align over \$16 million of investment each year in education, job training, and placement and support services dedicated to increasing employment in Milwaukee. Its strategies benefit both businesses that need skilled workers and individuals seeking good jobs with family-supporting wages.

THE COLLABORATIVE AND PARTNERSHIP MODELS

Like other groups supported by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, Milwaukee's Workforce Funding Alliance adapted two important models of philanthropic and workforce development activities. The *funders collaborative* and *workforce partnerships* help public leaders and philanthropy operate together on shared strategies for workforce development. These models also enable employers to contribute invaluable industry expertise to the workforce development planning process.

The Workforce Funding Alliance uses the funders collaborative model to guide its activities. The collaborative is comprised of private foundations, public agencies, and employer representatives who mutually agree to coordinate their workforce development efforts and investments in a region. They jointly identify community-wide needs and coordinate activities to align their collective efforts strategically toward achieving community-wide results.

The WFA's second central model is the workforce partnership, a group of employers who work together with funders and workforce service providers to improve workforce systems serving both jobseekers and employers. The alliance currently works through six workforce partnerships that engage employers and

job-training organizations to build their capacity and create effective linkages to workforce development systems (see *Appendix I, Milwaukee's Workforce Partnerships*).

COLLABORATIVE GRANTMAKING STRATEGIES: ALIGNED AND POOLED FUNDING

Two complementary methods of investing in shared strategies—aligned funding and pooled funding—facilitate collaborative grantmaking among the alliance's diverse members.

- > The **aligned funding** method provides flexibility to WFA members to pursue their individual funding priorities, while enabling them to contribute to WFA's common goals.
- > The **pooled funding** method enables WFA members to support projects that benefit from a shared responsibility among the contributing members.

Both of these collaborative funding models rely upon creating a shared understanding of the systemic issues facing low-income workers in Milwaukee. They also require a sustained effort to build consensus on shared strategies.

ALIGNED FUNDING

Aligned funding is the WFA's dominant approach to collaborative grantmaking. It gives individual funders the flexibility to invest in the elements of the alliance's work that fit their own priorities and requirements, without blocking elements that do not. For instance, when an applicant asks the alliance to fund a multi-pronged job training strategy, one funder may only be able to support tuition scholarships, while another wishes to support only case management or subsidies for paying wages for on-the-job training. Aligned funding strategies help

maintain funder consensus around the overall vision, even when consensus on funding the entire project would not be possible.

Aligned funding also helps funders move toward consensus on major issues facing the region. For instance, as employer-led workforce partnerships began to inform the alliance's strategies, individual alliance members have used that information to make sector strategies a priority for their own boards and staff. In the process of aligning strategies, foundations have identified important funding gaps or redundancies.

The alignment process enables funders to make their investments in the context of their peers' strategies. This is the heart of the aligned approach. As one recent Milwaukee observer described it:

Each funder's contribution complements the contributions of the others, resulting in a coherent package of grant support that no single funder could assemble on its own. It demonstrates the power of collaboration among a well-organized group of funders. It also enables program officers to clearly explain to their boards how their contributions, no matter how small, fit into a larger picture and leverage other funds to produce a large impact (Goldberg 2011).

The experience of JPMorgan Chase Foundation provides an example. The foundation was seeking to make a significant impact on workforce development but had limited funds to do so. By participating in the WFA, its program officer could recommend that her national board award relatively small but well-placed grants of \$45,000 to each of three organizations that would fill important gaps in the larger picture (Goldberg 2011).

Recent foundation trends make this strategy all the more important. According to Daniel Bader of the Helen Bader Foundation, the need to leverage diminishing funds among multiple foundations was one of the key motivations for creating the alliance. A number of private foundations had gone out of business in the wake of the financial crash that began in 2007. The assets of those that remained operating were severely constrained. The alliance offered a way for private foundations to increase the impact of smaller grants by targeting them more effectively with other funders.

POOLED FUNDING

As important as consensus building is for aligned funding strategies, it is even more so for pooled funding. Some funding collaboratives have described pooled funding as a "mutual fund" model of investing: Members contribute to a centrally controlled fund that invests in one or a variety of beneficial programs. In Milwaukee, the WFA's members decide collectively about the purpose and use of such funds, but the alliance board manages them.

Like aligned funding, pooled funding has been a source of important innovations in Milwaukee. An example is the alliance's capacity building fund, which has financed organizational capacity assessments for all WFA-supported workforce partnerships and their affiliated training programs run by community-based organizations. The WFA has conducted organizational assessments of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership–Building Industry Group Skilled Trades Experience Program (WRTP-BIG STEP), the Milwaukee Christian Center, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, and Northcott Neighborhood House. The WFA is also funding capacity building initiatives to address assessment findings. Funding for collaborative management, particularly for Urban Strategies, WFA's management consultant, also comes in part from pooled funding, as do technical assistance, seed grants, and local evaluation. In contrast, the alliance uses aligned funds for the operations activities of the workforce partnerships.

THE ROLE OF SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND VISION

To build the basis for both the pooled and aligned funding strategies, the alliance has invested in creating a common language and vision among its members. Early surveys and interviews indicated that funders had divergent definitions of core concepts, even of workforce development itself. Before joining the alliance, a number of foundations did not define any of their work as workforce development, although they were funding a variety of programs at the heart of this broader concept that they now share. Building a shared concept of the term "workforce intermediary" also has taken effort.¹ The alliance has made an explicit effort to build common understanding of such core concepts.

The alliance also helps build a shared understanding of each funder's priorities, as well as how each might fit with the region's strategic needs. Before joining the alliance, many of the funders had focused on specific niches of workforce development. This helped them put their work in the context of regional problems and strategies by facilitating dialogue about the issues. In a recent example, the WFA brought in Marc V. Levine, senior fellow and founding director of the Center for Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, to discuss his research on the dire unemployment situation for black men in Milwaukee. This created a rallying point for funders and prompted shared recognition of the need to address that problem together.²

FUNDING IMPACTS

A core competency of the alliance is improving the alignment and effectiveness of financial resources, and its accomplishments in this arena have been significant. First, it has aligned over \$15 million in

annual public and private funding toward common goals shared by alliance members (see *Table 1 and Appendix II, Summary of Participating Funders, October 2008-September 2009*). This includes approximately \$6 million per year in funding from the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, in addition to the \$10 million per year in funding from other public and private sources. The alliance also secured nearly \$1.5 million in pooled funding from its local members over its first four years.

This level of alignment and coordination was a primary goal of the leaders who brought the funders together in 2008, and a significant advance from the findings of studies conducted between 2006 and 2008 that identified efficiency and a lack of coordination at the heart of Milwaukee's workforce system challenges. As a result of the new level of communication and coordination, alliance leaders estimate that about 20 percent of funders have shifted their funding priorities toward shared, synergistic objectives to achieve collective results (Llanas et al. 2012).

TABLE 1.
WORKFORCE FUNDING ALLIANCE FUNDS

POOLED FUNDS	2008	2009	2010	2011
Helen Bader Foundation	\$20,000+	\$35,000+	\$35,000+	\$265,000+
Greater Milwaukee Foundation	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$40,000+
Zilber Family Foundation		\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
JPMorgan Chase Foundation			\$45,000	\$95,000
City of Milwaukee Housing Authority		\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
National Fund for Workforce Solutions	\$37,500	\$150,000	\$112,500	\$300,000
POOLED AND ALIGNED FUNDS	2008	2009	2010	2011
Pooled Funds Total (Local)	\$62,500+	\$257,000+	\$259,500+	\$722,000+
Aligned Funds (including from the Workforce Investment Board)	N/A	\$20m	\$16m	\$14.5m

Source: Urban Strategies

NATIONAL FUNDING ATTRACTED

In addition to coordinating significant local funds, the alliance has attracted nearly \$3 million in new federal funds for workforce development. The two largest grants were from the U.S. Department of Labor: a Pathways Out of Poverty grant (\$1,200,000) and a Green Jobs Innovation Fund grant (\$910,000). An additional \$600,000 in federal funding has come through the Corporation for National and Community Service's Social Innovation Fund, which provided the incentive that led to the large increase in pooled funding in 2011.

The workforce partnership in health care, the Milwaukee Area Health Alliance, also played a supportive role in helping the Workforce Investment Board and YWCA attract \$15 million to fund its Health Care Training Institute. The alliance and the Helen Bader Foundation spurred the creation of MAHA by funding the YWCA and Milwaukee Area Health Education Center to partner in convening health care employers. The alliance's contribution funded MAHA's employer coordinator role and helped to bring critical employers to the table in the proposal to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The alliance helped to attract these kinds of federal funding in large measure by leveraging local private and public resources, creating or strengthening functioning partnerships in targeted industries, and participating in consortia coordinated by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Jobs for the Future, which manages the National Fund. The alliance also attracted \$300,000 in private-sector funding from National Fund foundation partners and an additional \$1 million worth of Microsoft products from the company's foundation. The local funders' commitments to collaborate and to match outside funding were instrumental in attracting all this support.

ORGANIZING COLLABORATION: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Milwaukee's Workforce Funding Alliance has four leadership levels—co-chairs, an executive committee

(now the board of directors), the Leadership Council, and the Capacity and Performance Committee—as well as a consultant for day-to-day management.

THREE CO-CHAIRS

At the most intensely involved level, the Workforce Funding Alliance now has three co-chairs who serve as the lead strategists and conveners. Initially, Kathryn Dunn of the Helen Bader Foundation chaired the alliance, and she not only convened the group but devoted up to 70 percent of her time to the project during its start-up phase. After this start-up phase, the alliance developed the co-chair structure to capitalize on growing leadership and address any perception that it was the agent of one organization. The group selected a corporate foundation head, Gil Llanas of Northwestern Mutual Foundation, to fill the first co-chair team. This reduced the demands on Dunn and helped manage the level of activity that growth required from funding leaders.

From early on, the Workforce Funding Alliance's co-chairs took a very hands-on approach to governance, serving as a weekly (and sometimes a daily) advisory team for the project's contracted manager, Karen Gotzler, executive director of Urban Strategies. While the co-chairs' time commitment was high, they found this level of involvement to be crucial for partnership-building efforts during the first years of the alliance. Building funder-to-funder relationships and trust, along with the process of setting mutual goals, were especially critical in the early stages.

In 2011, the alliance added a third co-chair to address another priority: expanding the role of the public-sector partners. Community Development Grants Administration Director Steven Mahan is well positioned to represent Mayor Barrett's administration in the collaborative and to understand the needs (and limitations of) the major city agencies involved in the alliance. The addition of a public sector co-chair has augmented the WFA's ability to build strong public-private partnerships and manage related decisions comprehensively and quickly. The public-sector co-chair also serves as a resource for trust-building, which is critical in bridging differences between the public and private sectors.

MILWAUKEE STRENGTH: PUBLIC-PRIVATE FUNDER COLLABORATION

Among collaboratives participating in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, the Workforce Funding Alliance has achieved one of the highest levels of collaboration between private foundations and public agencies and policymakers at the city level. Mayor Tom Barrett has been engaged from the beginning of the alliance, and he has encouraged the deep participation of several major agency heads in its Leadership Council. In addition to the Mayor's Office, these agencies include the Workforce Investment Board, the Community Development Grant Administration, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, and the Municipal Court. These relationships are significant in a number of ways.

The city-run Workforce Investment Board is by far the largest contributor of aligned funds, public or private, with over \$17 million in aligned spending in the first years of the alliance. The WIB's CEO, Donald Sykes, was an important thought partner in the alliance's early designs and agreed from the start to target industry sectors and invest in key workforce partnerships in tandem with the alliance. This level of collaboration has required hard work to ensure that the WIB and the alliance resolve challenges that arise in setting shared direction, distinguishing roles, and providing both parties with recognition for contributions to major efforts.

Another significant city-level partnership is with the Community Development Grant Administration, which had aligned over \$2.3 million for workforce development through the WFA by September 2011. This partnership has deepened still further since then, with the CDGA acting as a fiscal agent for the alliance's Pathways Out of Poverty and Green Jobs Innovation Fund grants. The partnership deepened still further when CDGA Director Steven Mahan became a third co-chair for the alliance.

The creation of a public-sector co-chair position is one example of how the alliance is adapting to enhance collaboration with the city. A second structural change was to institutionalize its already strong public-private collaboration in its bylaws. In spring 2012, the alliance met with the mayor's chief of staff, along with the presidents of Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, asking them to make appointments to the board as a function of the alliance's bylaws. All three agree to make their organizations official board-appointing members.

The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, led by Antonio Perez, has also played multiple significant roles. Early on, Perez was one of the core leaders encouraging Mayor Barrett and his administration to pursue a significant reorganization of the workforce system, and he was very involved in establishing the WFA. As of September 2011, the Housing Authority had aligned an even larger amount (\$2.7 million) to WFA goals than had the CDGA.

The city's Department of Public Works, represented by Preston Cole, plays yet another role, not as a major donor but as a manager of the alliance's Urban Forestry workforce partnership (see *Appendix I*). The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District represents an additional example of the alliance's close collaboration with the public sector. It has counted nearly \$2.2 million in aligned workforce funding since the alliance's inception, and like the Department of Public Works, it plays a role in the workforce partnerships. The services director of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, Jeffrey Spence, and its workforce development director, Peter Coffaro, have sought to establish work experience and training roles in the district's operations in partnership with W RTP-BIG STEP. The sewerage district differs from other partners in that it is a regional government agency rather than a city department, and it serves as a direct employer as well as a funder.

Milwaukee's Municipal Court, represented by Kristine Hinrichs, plays another unique role. While its aligned funding has been less than that of other large agencies, Hinrichs has been a dynamic leader on the crosscutting issue of workforce transportation. Given the pervasive lack of valid driver's licenses among Milwaukee's working-age black adults, the Municipal Court, along with other partners, established a Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability to address the issue.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The alliance's board of directors (initially called the executive committee) is made up of the co-chairs and nominated members of WFA Leadership Council. It has the authority to act between Leadership Council meetings if needed. For the first two years of the alliance, the executive committee met nearly every other week to support intensive early capacity building. It now meets once per month at the offices of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, where Dunn is vice president of community investment. Other members of the board include Donald Sykes (the city Workforce Investment Board), Mahan, Llanas (appointed member), Mary Anne Martiny (Harley-Davidson Foundation), Jerry Roberts (Helen Bader Foundation), Shannon Reed (United Way), and Perez (the Housing Authority).

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Leadership Council includes the entire membership of the WFA. It serves as the primary forum for building consensus on alliance strategies. It also is the primary place for funders to coordinate their workforce funding strategies. In this monthly forum, which rotates its location among various funders' facilities (e.g., the United Way, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Helen Bader Foundation), the funders share information about who and what they are funding. They also hear and discuss presentations by groups seeking the alliance's

assistance and determine which roles the various funders might take in newly proposed initiatives. The Leadership Council frequently brings in expert speakers to spark dialogue about critical issues, such as black male unemployment, ex-offender jobs, and labor market information.

Members of the Leadership Council are required to:

- > Align a portion of grantmaking toward the sectors and/or priorities of the alliance;
- > Attend monthly meetings with other funders to review progress and plan future coordinated efforts;
- > Participate in discussions on strengthening the workforce development system;
- > Share information on grantees and their programs and projects;
- > Share information on grantee outcomes for reporting; and
- > Consider leveraging grantmaking with other alliance participants for greater community impact.

Even members with lower financial investments may play an important role as content experts or policy partners. For example, Kristine Hinrichs, the Municipal Court's chief court administrator, led the alliance's work on renewing driver's licenses through its Center on Driver's License Recovery and Employability. This was significant even though the Municipal Court



could not contribute funds after the first two years. Similarly, the president of Milwaukee Area Technical College, Michael Burke, participates to link the alliance with the college.

COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS: THE CAPACITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

The Leadership Council created a number of committees and working groups to help the most interested members tackle important issues and industry sectors in the first years of the alliance. These included a Policy and Research Committee and working groups for the industry sectors the alliance would eventually decide to target: health care, construction, and manufacturing. The WFA also targeted green occupations as these grew in importance for Milwaukee.

Two committees remained very active in 2011, when they were combined: the Capacity and Performance Committee. Part of this group had focused on developing a common use of performance metrics among workforce partners. This would enable the WFA to evaluate workforce efforts and how the city is faring on the WFA's goals overall. The other part of the new committee had focused on building capacity among the nonprofit partners involved in the WFA's workforce partnerships. The combined committee meets every two months at the Harley-Davidson Foundation, under the leadership of Harley-Davidson Foundation manager Mary Anne Martiny.

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Building the Workforce Funding Alliance has required deep involvement from private and public funding leaders, yet those funders overwhelmingly cite highly skilled and dedicated day-to-day management capacity as critical to their own successful involvement. They sourced that management capacity from Urban Strategies, particularly its executive director, Karen Gotzler, to serve as the backbone organization for the alliance of funders.

Urban Strategies is a widely respected and highly networked consulting firm, and its executives, Gotzler and James Milner, were thought leaders in the alliance's formation. They had deep experience and trusted relationships with most of the stakeholders through 20 or more years of economic, workforce, and community development projects, and they provided the complex management and facilitation skills that were critical to building new relationships and turning strategic alliance decisions into action.

Because the alliance relied heavily upon and appreciated Urban Strategies' expertise from the beginning, members found little reason to consider hiring a full-time staff early in the alliance's work. As the Workforce Funding Alliance has developed a 501(c)(3) structure as an independent nonprofit, it has revisited the idea of hiring a full-time employee to staff the backbone roles. This topic is under consideration.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT: ACCOUNTING FOR COMPLEXITY

Since 2009, the WFA's financial structure has been complex and collaborative in a variety of ways as it has adapted to the landscape of Milwaukee's donor organizations.

Initially, the Helen Bader Foundation's expertise and financial commitment made it a clear choice for leading the alliance. However, the foundation faced legal restrictions on accepting funding from other sources. The core planning team turned to Deborah Fugenschuh at the Donors Forum of Wisconsin to act as the convening partner and as the fiscal sponsor to manage multiple donor contributions. Nationally, as more private foundations have explored pooling or aligning their money, many have turned to regional associations of grantmakers like the Donors Forum to pool resources.

The Donors Forum could collect most of the pooled funds, but it, too, has limitations. The JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the Harley-Davidson Foundation, and other key corporate foundations face restrictions against giving to membership organizations like the forum. Thus, these funders directed their giving through Urban Strategies as a nonprofit corporation.

The alliance adopted yet another funding mechanism when it became a participant in the federally funded Pathways Out of Poverty grant. The city became the prime custodian of that funding, providing fiscal administration for the programs the grant supported. These centered on green industries (primarily green building trades and forestry), which overlapped with and helped to sustain the related alliance's workforce partnerships in those sectors.

When the alliance won a federal Social Innovation Fund grant from the Corporation for National Community Service (through the National Fund), it created a formal funding pool to collect the required dollar-for-dollar match. It developed this separate pool with specialized accounting in part to document the required private matching funds and also to ensure the match did not include other federal funds. Having leveraged multiple large public funding sources by this stage, the alliance needed to take care to distinguish sources in its accounting. This remains challenging, given the highly integrated nature of the work on the ground.

THE NEW 501(C)(3): CONSOLIDATION OF FISCAL MANAGEMENT

This complex fiscal management emerged from the effort to meet the highly varied needs of different kinds of donor—federal, private, and corporate. While it was a decision born of necessity when the WFA was forming, the separation between the Helen Bader Foundation's leadership role and the Donors Forum's financial management role had an unintended but important side benefit. It reassured potential members that the alliance was not overly dominated by the Helen Bader Foundation, the Donors Forum, or any single entity.

On the other hand, the complexity made it difficult and time consuming for executive leadership to track and report on the total funds available and how they were being used. The proliferation of major pools of funding was a key consideration prompting the WFA to begin establishing a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The new legal status creates a more flexible collection point for pooled funding, and also helps consolidate the donations and financial statements, allowing for much more efficient and secure oversight.



SEEDING AND NURTURING WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

The deep engagement of employer groups in workforce development strategies is a core concept of the Workforce Funding Alliance and the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. It holds that organizing employers in groups, which they term workforce partnerships, is the most successful way for workforce development funders and providers to design initiatives that respond to the labor market. This, in turn, improves the partners' success at gaining the commitment of employers to partner in workforce development efforts and place low-income workers in jobs.

In addition to workforce development organizations and agencies, workforce partnerships are comprised of employers who share common labor pools and workforce issues and typically represent one industry sector, such as health care, manufacturing, or automotive maintenance. Together, the WFA and the workforce partnerships it supports share two common missions: to better meet the demands of Milwaukee employers and to increase low-wage workers' opportunities for employment or career advancement.

Research suggests that sector strategies that organize groups of employers with similar workforce needs have a positive impact on job-placement outcomes. According to a 2009 study of the impact of a sectoral employment approach, participants in sector-focused training programs had significantly higher earnings, were more likely to work, and were more likely to have jobs that offered benefits than control group members (Maguire et al. 2009).

Like the funding collaborative concept, each workforce partnership can adapt the concept to its local environment and employers. Although each workforce partnership is a sustainable group that helps the funders collaboratively shape investments over time, their forms vary widely, based on employers' needs and the level of current organization in a sector. Workforce partnerships

can range from an industry sector association, to an affinity group in a chamber of commerce, to the sector-based advisory group of a workforce provider. The Milwaukee WFA primarily relies on sector-based employer advisory groups organized by a workforce provider: WRTP-BIG STEP, Wisconsin Community Services, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, and the Milwaukee Area Health Alliance. It also uses the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association for one partnership. (See *Appendix III for a list of employers engaged in workforce partnerships through 2011.*)

HOW THE ALLIANCE RELATES TO THE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

The alliance supports workforce partnerships in three ways.

- > The funders concentrate the bulk of their aligned funding—over \$16 million per year—in support of the workforce partnerships. This is where the alliance has the most direct impact on workers and job seekers in the community.
- > The alliance has organized and financially supported organizational assessments and follow-on capacity building, worth over \$300,000 for the workforce partnerships.
- > The alliance convenes a monthly Peer Exchange through which the workforce partnership managers share effective practices, coordinate services, and provide feedback to the WFA on improving its strategies.

While most workforce providers value employer engagement, making it a reality almost always requires an arduous realignment of their business practices. The difficulty of doing this is often exacerbated by the requirements of funding sources as well as ingrained habits and institutional

structures. The National Fund aims to help workforce systems overcome those difficulties by supporting three-way exchanges among workforce funders, providers, and employers.

LEVERAGING A MATURE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY

Milwaukee has applied the workforce partnership concept in multiple ways, many of which are influenced by the city's mature field of workforce-oriented nonprofit organizations. To organize its workforce partnerships, the alliance has turned to numerous nonprofit organizations that emerged from Milwaukee's long history of local workforce initiatives. In several cases, this history stretches back to the early twentieth century (see *Appendix IV, Precedents: A Brief History of Milwaukee's Collaborative Efforts*).

WRTP-BIG STEP is an often-cited example of a nonprofit workforce partnership, and it predates the National Fund for Workforce Solutions itself. Yet the WFA has tapped even longer-standing organizations—Wisconsin Community Services, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, and Northcott Neighborhood House—to manage workforce partnerships. The more recent charge of these organizations as they lead alliance-funded workforce partnerships is to utilize or develop more fully their own employer leadership groups to influence alliance investments.

Where the alliance has used industry associations or public entities (rather than nonprofit organizations) to manage workforce partnerships, those too have long histories. The Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association scholarship program has been operating for 20 years. And the urban forestry workforce partnership is managed by the city Department of Public Works, which has been running its own urban forestry training program for 25 years.³

Even the Milwaukee Area Health Alliance, which was formed after the WFA's inception, is a partnership of two decades-old organizations.

MILWAUKEE'S WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

The number of workforce partnerships supported by the WFA has grown since its inception and is likely to continue growing as the alliance and employers identify ways that new ones could help meet their goals. By 2012, the WFA had begun work with eight workforce partnerships:

- > WRTP-BIG STEP;
- > Milwaukee Area Healthcare Alliance, a collaboration of the YWCA of Greater Milwaukee and Milwaukee Area Health Education Center;
- > Milwaukee Community Service Corps;
- > Urban Forestry;
- > Foundation of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association;
- > Wisconsin Community Services;
- > Milwaukee Builds, a collaboration of the Milwaukee Christian Center and Northcott Neighborhood House; and
- > Riverworks Center, which joined as a workforce partnership in 2012.

In some cases, the WFA has two or more workforce partnerships operating in similar sectors. For example, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps is the lead organization for its own Building Trades Workforce Partnership, while Wisconsin Community Services operates a workforce partnership that includes construction-related workforce development and follows the employer lead of the Home Builders Association in its training. In the case of WRTP-BIG STEP, one organization represents more than one workforce partnership in the sense that it convenes distinct employer groups to inform its programs in construction and manufacturing.

For descriptions of WFA's first six workforce partnerships, see Appendix I and the National Fund for Workforce Solutions website: www.nfwsolutions.org.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

The workforce partnerships and the programs they develop with employers generate the alliance's most direct impact on workers and jobseekers. Participant outcomes are the bottom-line measure of impact for the WFA's philanthropic and public-sector members. Employers, too, see job placements and retention as critical benefits for their investments of effort, time, and money.

Table 2 (on page 13) summarizes "Dashboard Indicators" on participant outcomes that the alliance collects on each workforce partnership and reports out quarterly. Many additional low-skilled workers have benefited from system improvements like the driver's license recovery program. However, the alliance particularly seeks to demonstrate the direct impacts of the core workforce partnership model on job outcomes. Accordingly, this dashboard enables funders to see in one place the alliance's overall impact with its pooled funds: over 3,000 individuals served, over 1,700 enrolled in training, and over 750 placed in jobs by participating in WFA-funded initiatives over 27 months.

In addition to quantifying the WFA's overall impact, this dashboard enables its leaders to make some comparison of the impacts in various industries by

various workforce partnerships and to make some interpretations of the "system" of workforce providers in Milwaukee. For instance, W RTP's outsized numbers served is due to its position in the labor market and to its service model, providing extensive assessment, career-guidance, and job-placement assistance. A large number of these participants do not enter training programs because they find work without training, do not meet qualifications, or make informed career decisions not to enter the trades. W RTP's total numbers also reflect its strong reputation in the city and in its two primary sectors, construction and manufacturing.

The dashboard also gives the WFA information about the impact of the economy on outcomes across workforce providers and sectors versus looking at outcomes of only one or two grant recipients. The recession beginning in 2009 heavily influenced job placement numbers, and the nature of that impact was reflected to WFA members through these periodic dashboard updates. For instance, the hard-hit construction sector showed a large impact on workforce placements, particularly given the significance of W RTP-BIG STEP in participant volume, as well as the construction focus of the Milwaukee Builds, Milwaukee Community Service Corps, and Wisconsin Community Services workforce partnerships.

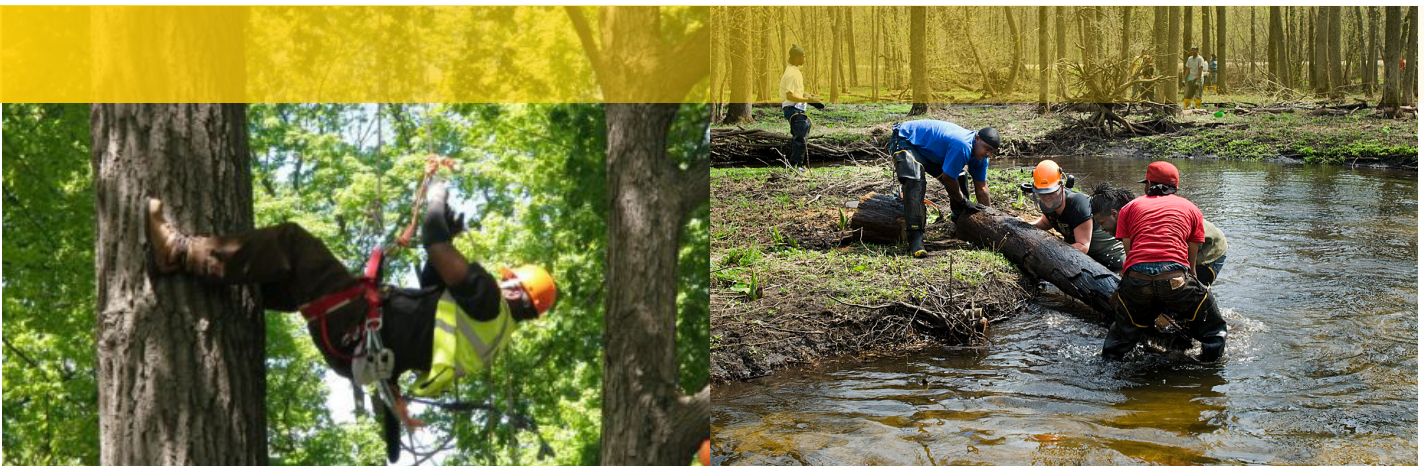


TABLE 2.
INDIVIDUALS SERVED:
DASHBOARD INDICATORS OF MILWAUKEE FUNDING ALLIANCE PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES,
OCTOBER 1, 2009 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

PARTICIPANTS DATA	MILWAUKEE AREA HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE	WRTP	MILWAUKEE BUILDS	WISCONSIN AUTOMOBILE & TRUCK DEALERS ASSOCIATION	WISCONSIN COMMUNITY SERVICES	URBAN FORESTRY	MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY SERVICE CORPS	TOTAL IMPACT
JOBSEEKERS								
Jobseekers served	937	3,086	115	118	84	37	104	4,481
Enrolled in training	359	1,704	115	80	79	34	100	2,471
Job placements	131	787	71	20	24	21	35	1,089
Jobs at <\$9.99	43	26	5	0	4	0	5	83
Jobs at \$10-\$14.99	67	233	8	6	4	11	2	331
Jobs at \$15-\$19.99	3	144	2	14	2	0	0	165
Jobs at \$20 or more	2	284	1	0	0	0	0	287
Six-month retention	66	191	38	n/a	9	14	15	333
Education or industry credentials earned	333	1,081	91	6	86	18	56	1,671
INCUMBENT WORKERS								
Workers served	54	691	n/a	10	n/a	1	n/a	756
Enrolled in training	54	620	n/a	7	n/a	1	n/a	682
Job promotions	3	37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	40
Education or industry credentials earned	36	620	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	657

Source: Urban Strategies

EMPLOYER PRACTICES AND INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Among the important benefits of the workforce partnership model is the improved ability of employers to communicate their labor needs and to collectively contribute to efforts to meet those needs. The alliance and the National Fund for Workforce Solutions seek to both help employers work together on common issues with educators and to influence the considerable resources that they wield in training their own employees.⁴

By hosting the National Fund's *Breakthroughs in Health Care* conference in Milwaukee, for example, the alliance exposed several Milwaukee health care employers to valuable workforce development models from around the country. As one hospital executive said about that conference, "Some of those meetings for NFWS taught us a ton!" Based on the hospitals' interest, the Milwaukee Area Healthcare Alliance modeled many of its features after an early National Fund grantee, the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare.

The alliance has also helped another employer group, the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association workforce partnership, to advocate for systems change across the education and training pipeline. The WATDA workforce partnership is committed to greater integration across secondary and postsecondary education institutions and the automotive industry. It supports the development of career pipelines by using its position as both a funder and a functional unit of the association. By virtue of intimately knowing the needs of the automotive industry and having the ability to leverage its own and others' funding streams, the WATDA workforce partnership can make crucial inroads with secondary and postsecondary institutions.

The partnership supports the statewide Automotive Youth Education System to offer automotive career opportunities to high school students in two Milwaukee public schools. Both Pulaski High School and Bradley Technical High School serve primarily low-income students.



SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATIONS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to generating participant outcomes and increasing the impact and amount of donor contributions, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance seeks to transform the local workforce development system. Many such changes are qualitative improvements in systems that have impacts of their own. The importance of both qualitative and quantitative impacts for the WFA is evident in its two primary goals:

- > Fund agencies, programs, and projects that provide career support to low-income and low-skilled people; and
- > Develop a better-coordinated workforce development system of public and private collaboration that enhances regional competitiveness (Llanas et al. 2012).

BREAKING DOWN SILOS AND MILWAUKEE'S NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

The alliance focus on collaboration has helped break down program silos among funders and resulted in more flexible, transparent funding for workforce development.⁵ When the members collaboratively identify workforce development gaps in Milwaukee, they now have a ready process for understanding all their contributions and for pooling their resources in a transparent way. The shared funding across formerly isolated silos has opened numerous leveraging opportunities and economies to invest across workforce providers.

We were invited to talk at the Donors Forum when we (the CDGA) were doing our annual allocations. We sat and listened to the other funders and then we asked, "Okay, who in this room is funding this particular program?" Almost everyone in the room raised their hand. They

were funding the exact same program, getting the exact same outcomes for the same money. That opened up the dialogue. So I have to commend the alliance and Donors Forum for bringing that to the fore. That was the impetus to start collaborating.

—Steven Mahan, *Community Development Grants Administration*

Such collaborative activities have also helped erode the historical service barrier between north and south Milwaukee. This is a particularly notable evolution because of how the divide aligns with racial segregation. With alliance encouragement, multiple organizations from both north and south Milwaukee have begun recruiting from and serving individuals city-wide.

The erosion of programmatic silos extends to larger workforce institutions, such as those at the state level. One example is the alliance's convening of the secretaries of four state agencies in 2009 to discuss workforce development initiatives. This had few precedents, even though all the agencies affect workforce development systems in important ways.

PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUE AND ACCESS

As the alliance has attracted more and larger financial contributors, it also has encouraged more organizations to coordinate their policy agendas around the city's unemployment and skills crises. It has accomplished this in part by facilitating dialogue about policy and system change on issues of concern to many funders. It has helped funders identify and refine issues more quickly and comprehensively by providing a forum for combining complimentary perspectives in ways that no one funder could generate alone. This gives the funders more influence on policy decisions at the state and local levels,

and the alliance has used its growing clarity and influence to expand and deepen dialogue with local and state policymakers to better identify workforce development issues and policy implications.

At the state policy level, alliance members have worked with Workforce Central, a funding collaborative located in Wisconsin Rapids, to pursue common interests with cabinet secretaries in both the previous Democratic and new Republican state administrations. As a result of these meetings, Kathryn Dunn had been appointed to the Governor's Council for Workforce Investment. She is the first philanthropic organization representative to serve on that body. Through such activities, the WFA educates state decision makers about the role that philanthropy can play in improving workforce development in Wisconsin. This is expected to help involve philanthropic partners more deeply, and earlier, in assessing community needs and developing action plans that affect policy changes.

The alliance's intensive collaboration with city agencies attests to the importance of local public policy to its work. The alliance has created a public co-chair position filled by the CDGA and has written the city mayor into its bylaws as part of its efforts to institutionalize close public-private relationships.

DRIVER'S LICENSING AND EX-OFFENDER CORRECTIONS POLICY

The alliance has worked with public officials, legislators, and other stakeholder organizations to alleviate a number of specific barriers that hinder disadvantaged groups from entering, or reentering, the workforce. These efforts have included advocacy for driver education programs, the restoration of revoked driver's licenses, and workforce reentry programs for ex-offenders (Goldberg 2011). Partnerships with Wisconsin Community Services and the Municipal Court have been instrumental in bringing about these transformations.

The Workforce Funding Alliance also influences policy through public education. For example, in October 2011 it held a public policy forum on proposed

legislation that would have allowed employers to discriminate unfairly against jobseekers with criminal records. Panelists included a state senator, a local employment attorney, and the director of Wisconsin Community Services, a 100-year-old organization working on prisoner reentry. Over 60 individuals attended, including representatives of public and private workforce development funders, community-based organizations, and employer associations.⁶

WISCONSIN SEASONAL WORKFORCE COALITION

The alliance's funding of the Wisconsin Seasonal Workforce Coalition is an example of a non-sector-based initiative that has implications for both employer practice and system change. This coalition, led by BuySeasons, includes over 25 employers—many of whom experience seasonal demand—and over 40 community-based organizations. The goal of the program is to link seasonal employment opportunities to year-round and, eventually, permanent jobs. It achieves this by helping participants build work histories and by verifying their histories with a "certificate of re-hire." The CBO partners provide recruiting, referral, and orientation services, as well as pre-employment training in some cases for those who are almost job ready.

The Seasonal Workforce Coalition fills an important community need, for both jobseekers and employers, and it works with populations, such as ex-offenders, that are historically hard to serve. Although the coalition targets career development through linked seasonal employment, advancement within a specific industry is a less explicit goal than in a typical workforce partnership. Nevertheless, this is an important systems innovation and new link in the continuum of Milwaukee's workforce services.⁷

COMMON METRICS AND RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

For both the WFA and the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, the collection of performance data is a

critical systems-change priority. They see measurable outcomes as essential to ensuring that the less tangible improvements in collaboration and systems change are on the right track.

The WFA has taken this priority beyond the requirements of the National Fund, charging its Capacity Building and Performance Management Committee with developing the use of shared performance metrics among the alliance's workforce partners, ideally as a pilot for all workforce providers in the city. The common metrics will improve the ability of alliance and other Milwaukee leaders to compare and combine impact data across many organizations. This will enable them to evaluate the effects of various workforce efforts better and determine how the city is doing on its employment and poverty-reduction goals overall.

The Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board is a key partner in this arena as it begins to build capacity among the workforce partnership agencies. The WIB is Milwaukee's most experienced user of "Efforts to Outcomes" software and the primary licensee. It is helping to build the capacity of partner organizations to collect and manage performance data and transition to a common data system, such as the ETO software. This effort is in support of the WFA's Results-based Accountability framework.

CREATING A RESULTS-BASED CULTURE

The goal of spreading ETO services community-wide is to create a "results-based" culture for nonprofits and funders. In addition to developing systems to measure impacts in a standardized way across the system, the WFA sees its role as making those results accessible and actionable. As Figure 1 indicates, the WFA is working diligently on tools to communicate its impacts.

The framework in Figure 1 (on page 18) supports the WFA's Results by Accountability tools, brought to WFA by consultant Phyllis Rozansky with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Rozansky worked with both the WFA board and Urban Strategies to develop the WFA's three core strategies, a process that is still under development but shows great promise. The alliance's three core strategies and related results are: aligned public and private investments; outcomes

of workforce partnerships; and advocacy for systems change. Outcome indicators for the first two of these lend themselves well to quantitative measures.

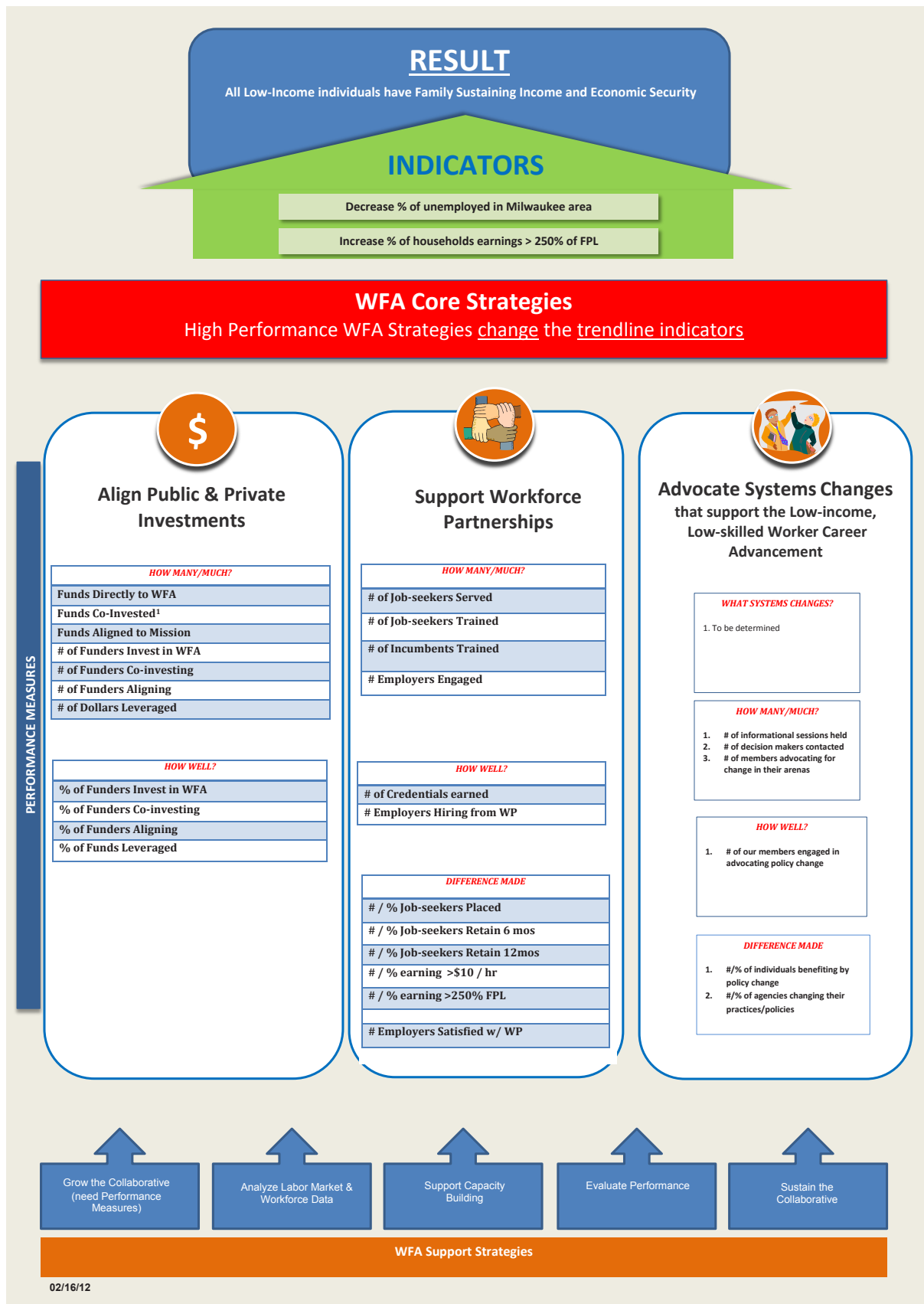
CAPACITY BUILDING

One outstanding feature of Milwaukee's Workforce Funding Alliance is that it builds capacity among existing training providers; it does not just fund more providers or services. It achieves this in a variety of indirect ways through funder collaboration, stakeholder communication, and peer learning.

A major accomplishment in this arena has been the development of a systematic way to conduct organizational assessments and build the capacity of workforce partnerships. The Capacity Building and Performance Management Committee committed more than \$300,000 for the assessment process and "post assessment" activities to address capacity building needs. Four assessments have been completed and presented to the Leadership Council and the workforce partnership organizations. Based on the results, these organizations can then request capacity building funding from the individual members of the WFA and several have done so.

Based on its assessment process experiences, the Capacity Building and Performance Management Committee has begun exploring more cost-effective technical assistance strategies for common areas of need, such as human resources management and information technology. These will likely include jointly funded, shared services.⁸

FIGURE 1.
RESULT AND INDICATORS WITH STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Source: Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance

ORIGINS AND CONTEXT

The model for the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance emerged from the intersection of national and local initiatives. It was created in the midst of a national dialogue about the effectiveness of public and private efforts to help unemployed workers enter better careers while simultaneously meeting the changing needs of employers. It was also driven by Milwaukee's urgent social and economic problems deriving from decades of growing unemployment.

A NATIONAL AND LOCAL DIALOGUE

At the start of the 21st century, national organizations—including the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, Jobs for the Future, the National Association of Manufacturers, and others—were coming together to support new private-public workforce intermediaries that were emerging at the local level in places like Boston, Baltimore, and Milwaukee. National funders, including the Annie E. Casey, Ford, and Rockefeller foundations, began to promote two ideas that would be central to the National Fund for Workforce Solutions: local funders collaboratives focused on workforce development (e.g., SkillWorks in Boston), and workforce intermediaries to help employer groups better direct workforce training efforts to meet demand (e.g., W RTP).

These funders began pooling resources for what would become the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, an organization that would offer matching grants from this pool to encourage local funder alliances to commit resources to workforce development. The national matching funds promoted the concepts that had emerged from their investments in workforce development over the prior decade. The concepts included:

- > Local leadership from the local funding community, local business, government, and workforce development institutions;

- > A dual-customer, workforce partnership model that addresses the needs of both employers and residents;
- > Employer involvement in designing and implementing sectoral workforce partnerships and in adopting effective employer practices;
- > A strategy to promote career advancement for low-skilled workers;
- > Significant ongoing funding support (more than 80 percent of funding coming from local sources); and
- > The potential to influence state and regional workforce policy for better outcomes at lower costs (Goldberg 2011).

THE URGENCY FOR NEW STRATEGIES: MILWAUKEE'S CONCENTRATED UNEMPLOYMENT

Milwaukee's entrenched problems with unemployment, racial inequality, and inner-city poverty have motivated many community initiatives over the course of three decades. Stagnation in employment growth, in particular, along with the steady loss of manufacturing jobs, had been exacerbating employment problems since the late 1970s. Throughout the 1970s, '80s and '90s, the loss of a number of hallmark Milwaukee companies particularly reduced job opportunities for residents with less than a college degree. This increased the urgency of finding ways to revitalize the business community while also reducing the social problems caused by growing unemployment.

Like many industrial regions, long-standing racial divides added to the complexity of addressing unemployment and poverty in Milwaukee. A large minority population has become concentrated in the inner city—65 percent of inner-city residents are minorities, compared to 10 percent for the region as a whole, making Milwaukee the nation's third most racially segregated city. Only 11 percent of black workers in the region work in exurban counties.

SETTING THE STAGE: MILWAUKEE'S PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM REFORM

In 2004, mayoral candidate Tom Barrett won election with jobs as a centerpiece of his campaign, promising to be Milwaukee's "jobs mayor." During his first term, some administration and foundation leaders advocated for furthering that promise by reorganizing the Milwaukee County Private Industry Council into a more effective city-led Workforce Investment Board. Advocates suggested that the mayor needed all of the "tools" for his jobs agenda in his toolbox, including the funding associated with the Workforce Investment Board. The local and state political environment supported the mayor's goal and made it possible for the transition to occur with little political battle.

In 2006, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Center for Workforce Development strengthened the case for improved workforce development collaboration. A center report by Sammis White and Jennifer Rikkenbach (2006) found that over 100 organizations were involved in workforce development in Milwaukee County alone, each with its own overhead costs.

At the same time, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development launched Growing Regional Opportunity in Wisconsin (GROW), a regional workforce initiative that granted \$110,000 to the Regional Workforce Alliance to create a workforce report for the seven-county Milwaukee region. In July 2006, the Barrett Administration contracted with Urban Strategies to analyze Milwaukee's public and philanthropic workforce funding and research the potential for a regional workforce collaborative. This analysis would serve as part of the larger seven-county report (Milner, Gotzler, & Roch 2007).

In public funding, the report found a system fragmented by divided federal funding streams, as well as an overwhelming majority of public funding dedicated to Wisconsin Works (TANF) programming. It also found that 89 percent of public workforce development funding was allocated to basic job training and job placement for disadvantaged populations, 10 percent to occupation-specific training, and 1 percent to business development and support.

In contrast, 71 percent of private funder respondents did not fund basic workforce readiness training, and 80 percent identified K-12 education as a top workforce development priority. Importantly, over 20 percent of these respondents said they would be likely to coordinate their funding with a southeastern Wisconsin office of workforce development.

Mayor Barrett commissioned a second study that same year to more deeply explore the potential for a city-led WIB. For this he recruited Donald Sykes, who had formerly served as executive director of the Social Development Commission in Milwaukee and as director of the Administration for Children and Families in the Clinton Administration. Sykes had also contributed to the GROW Report, and he worked with Urban Strategies to develop his recommendations, using some findings in the earlier report to advocate for changes. His recommendations were released in February 2007 (Sykes 2007).

Sykes' recommendations emphasized the public funders and a WIA-oriented approach, yet they also paralleled the National Fund model in many ways. For example, Sykes recommended better coordination of publicly funded workforce agencies, attracting complementary public and private funding, and using employment sector intermediaries, including WRTP, to enhance employer engagement.

With the GROW and Sykes reports in hand, Mayor Barrett organized a retreat to envision what a new WIB and workforce system would look like. Attendees included the mayor, Daniel Bader, Perez, Sykes, and Dunn, as well as PIC-supported organizations, leading employers, and others who later became deeply involved in the alliance. The meeting set the stage for envisioning what an effective workforce system would look like in Milwaukee and for gathering leaders concerned with workforce development.

The governor moved the PIC to city control in July 2007, and renamed it as the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board. The mayor appointed Bader as chair and Sykes as executive director. The Helen Bader Foundation provided \$75,000 for the city to hire Sykes and committed to give the city \$500,000 over the next three years to design better programs for small businesses (Pabst 2007).

THE FIRST NATIONAL FUND APPLICATION: DIFFICULT STRATEGY DECISIONS

In 2007, the National Fund began planning to extend its model to cities around the country. The implementation partner, Jobs for the Future, encouraged promising leadership groups in Milwaukee and other cities to apply for funding. A natural connecting point for Milwaukee was Eric Parker, executive director of W RTP-BIG STEP, given that organization's history. JFF and the Annie E. Casey Foundation had worked with Parker for years, and he had been part of the national funders' ongoing dialogue about effective workforce intermediaries.

Parker reached out to several Milwaukee leaders, including Milner at Urban Strategies and Sykes as the new WIB director, inviting them to visit and examine the models operating in San Francisco, Boston, Baltimore, and elsewhere. Impressed by what they learned on those visits, they convened several Milwaukee foundation and workforce leaders—Dunn, Gotzler, Jane Moore, and others—to plan for a Milwaukee-area funding collaborative and an application for support from the National Fund.

At the point of designing that application, the Milwaukee planning group faced a difficult strategy decision. On the one hand, the city had generated significant momentum for reorganizing the public system under a city WIB, and it had invested heavily in launching that effort. On the other hand, the National Fund application emphasized private foundation leadership, and the recent GROW report had revealed strong interest in the model among private foundations. There was shared enthusiasm for better aligning private and public workforce resources, but the group faced a choice about whether the design should emphasize public or private funder leadership. The city ultimately submitted the public-sector/WIB-oriented design to the National Fund.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT: COMMITMENT TO THE COLLABORATIVE

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions rejected Milwaukee's first application for support. Application reviewers were concerned that the proposal did not present strong enough leadership from private foundations, which was critical to the National Fund model. However, this disappointment renewed the commitment of the core team, as well as leading to a stronger membership development effort.

During follow-on meetings of Milwaukee's leaders with JFF, Bader, Moore, and Mayor Barrett made commitments to support a second application. The city and the two foundations contributed \$5,000 each to a research and planning process to position Milwaukee for a second National Fund application. Urban Strategies, in partnership with the foundation leaders, used these grants to interview other local funders about their priorities and gain their support for a workforce funding collaborative. This research and recruiting process inventoried Milwaukee foundations' workforce development-related programs in more detail. It also used the earlier research on workforce funding (particularly the GROW report and the Center for Workforce Development's inventory of workforce development organizations) as organizing tools, demonstrating the complexities and inefficiencies that funders could help address by collaborating.

The core team members from the Helen Bader Foundation, the city, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, and Urban Strategies used their networks to reach out to potential funders. They also enlisted the Donors Forum of Wisconsin and Deborah Fugenschuh to help them reach out to a broad range of private foundations, among them the Manpower Foundation and Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation's Cecelia Gore. Gore's buy-in to the model added important momentum because of her role as the head of a small but high-profile private foundation and as one of the few African-American foundation leaders in the community.

The results of the research and recruiting efforts catalyzed support for deeper collaboration. As one funder put it, “Seeing the overlaps in funding in black and white made many of us think, ‘Oh, my God, we need to rethink how we fund workforce development together.’ ”

As a result of the process, the expanded and energized group of funders resolved that whether or not the National Fund approved the second application, they would establish a funding collaborative. Several of the Workforce Funding Alliance founders cite that resolution—to begin a collaborative with or without national support—as the decisive moment of the alliance’s creation.

REORGANIZING THE ELEMENTS

As more private foundations came on board, a key question arose: Who would lead from the private foundation world? The Greater Milwaukee Foundation was the largest community foundation, but it had not focused on workforce development. The group of funders asked Dunn, program officer for economic and workforce development at the Helen Bader Foundation, to lead the effort. They based that decision on her deep experience in workforce and economic development, as well as the foundation’s frequent leadership and investments in these areas.

However, the Helen Bader Foundation’s leadership posed a practical challenge in that its bylaws did not allow it to accept donations from other funders. Thus, the leaders designed the organizational structure in which Dunn would provide executive leadership, while the Donors Forum of Wisconsin would play the role of convener and fiscal agent for most of the private funds.

Although private foundations took greater leadership in the new design of the Workforce Funding Alliance, public funders remained major stakeholders. Mayor Barrett supported the second application and authorized the leaders of several key agencies to help design and guide city collaboration, including the Housing Authority, the WIB, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, and the City of Milwaukee Municipal Courts. In fact, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions would cite the mayor’s commitment—including his participation in National

Fund site visits—as a strong reason for supporting Milwaukee’s second application.

A SIGNIFICANT LOSS

While revising the National Fund proposal, Milwaukee’s leadership group experienced a heavy emotional and practical blow from the accidental death of Eric Parker. Parker had been a close friend and ally of many on the core team and a thought leader in the proposed alliance design. He also was executive director of WRTP-BIG STEP, which was central to the workforce partnership strategy. His enthusiasm for the project inspired the team members to redouble their efforts to see his vision implemented.

THE SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

In June 2008, the team submitted a successful proposal to the National Fund, and it was funded that fall. The WFA would be supported through a combination of cash and in-kind funds from the National Fund, the Helen Bader Foundation, and others within the first six months of operation. The initial civic leadership group committed in that successful proposal included the Donors Forum of Wisconsin as a convener and planned investments from the group members (see *table 3 on page 23*).

The proposal highlighted WRTP-BIG STEP as the alliance’s construction intermediary, and it would continue to receive support from the WIB, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Helen Bader Foundation, and others. It would provide access to training for low-income residents, as well as develop a program to offer affordable health insurance to low-wage workers in certain sectors. The alliance also proposed to create a health care intermediary.

“JUST THE LIFT-OFF”

Winning funding from the National Fund was a tremendous boost to getting the alliance off the ground. Nevertheless, alliance leaders treated it as a successful lift-off that would need their full organizing power in order for it to progress. The core leaders continued to organize their peers, backed by a larger group of foundations that signed on. And now they were armed with national financial resources to match

TABLE 3.
WORKFORCE FUNDING ALLIANCE INVESTMENTS, 2008

AGENCY	AMOUNT	PRIMARY PURPOSES
Milwaukee Community Development Grants Administration	\$1,750,000	Occupational training
Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee	\$2,250,000	Occupational training and case management
Greater Milwaukee Foundation	\$372,000	Occupational training and supportive services
City of Milwaukee Municipal Court	\$75,000	Supportive services and policy advocacy
Manpower Foundation	\$45,000	Occupational training
Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Inc.	\$600,000	Occupational training; on-the-job training; job-readiness, job-placement, and supportive services
Helen Bader Foundation	\$671,000	Capacity building, job readiness, supportive services
Milwaukee 7 Regional Workforce Alliance WIRED	\$37,500	Occupational training and capacity building
Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation	\$200,000	Supportive services and capacity building

Source: Urban Strategies

what they could raise from local funders. The group had also gained useful credibility and press stemming from the national endorsement.

The funding group's organizing efforts gained fuel from a report by Ryan Horton (2008) of the Public Policy Forum, funded by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and the Joyce Foundation. Horton's research stressed that Wisconsin's workforce development efforts relied much more heavily on federal funding than did its neighbors. The research by the forum, a nonprofit that facilitates public policy discussion and action in southeastern Wisconsin, also corroborated that the state's myriad job training programs are not organized effectively. This posed serious risks to workforce development in Wisconsin, given a 39 percent decline in federal funding over the prior two decades, and that federal funding limited the range of the state's workforce development activities.

WFA members and the Public Policy Forum convened a series of large and small public meetings to publicize these findings. They advocated for the report's recommendations, which were largely in line with the thinking of the alliance: diversify the sources of funding for workforce development; gain greater flexibility in funding to meet future training demand; and increase funding from the state, employers, and private foundations (Horton 2008).

Several other funders had expressed interest in participating even before the application went to the National Fund. By the end of the year, several more funders joined, including the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, Northwestern Mutual Foundation, Faye McBeath Foundation, Froedtert Hospital, the Harley-Davidson Foundation, and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare. (See *Appendix II for funders who invested in the first year.*)

LESSONS LEARNED

The story of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance offers valuable lessons for implementing and sustaining collaborative solutions to complex social and economic issues. Some of these lessons have parallels to those learned by other funding collaboratives across the country as they adapt the National Fund for Workforce Solutions model. Others make unique additions to our shared understanding, based on how Milwaukee has gone about this highly collaborative work. Yet every lesson emerges from innovation and experimentation on the local level combined with a valuable exchange with peer collaboratives and learning in a national movement. Some of the most important lessons might be summed up in four strategies:

- > Organize relationships and communities;
- > Learn as partners;
- > Capitalize on diversity; and
- > Invest in synergy.

ORGANIZE RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITIES

TREAT THE FUNDING ALLIANCE AS COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

In many ways, the process of building the Workforce Funding Alliance has been one of community organizing as its leaders use a number of strategies to recruit funders and other stakeholders. Among these were: leveraging leaders' existing relationships; commissioning and promoting supportive research; meeting individually with potential members about their priorities; educating the relevant community about key issues; using the momentum of government and other large initiatives; recruiting high-level champions; connecting and building trust among allies; attracting additional funding; and cultivating a shared language and vision.

BUILD ON EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

The groundwork for attracting foundations and other stakeholders to the alliance started long before its leaders had envisioned its creation. The WFA's core leaders called on relationships built during many efforts to jointly address unemployment in Milwaukee. Those included the Casey Jobs Initiative, WRTP, the Initiative for a Competitive Milwaukee, and WIRED, among many others. Key early leaders had developed trust and respect during several of these initiatives, and they used those relationships to cast a wide net of valuable additional relationships.

BUILD ON THE SUPPORT OF RESPECTED CHAMPIONS

Daniel Bader and Kathryn Dunn of the Helen Bader Foundation, in particular, were widely respected in the community for their longstanding commitment to workforce development. Both had a reputation for technical expertise and nonpartisan bridge-building. That, as well as their financial commitment, opened doors to many other local and state leaders. In past initiatives, as in the WFA, the Helen Bader Foundation had been first to the table with a commitment of funding, and it often convened meetings of the philanthropic and business leadership communities. Previously, the foundation had played a leading role in the Initiative for a Competitive Milwaukee, and more recently Mayor Tom Barrett had asked Bader to chair the city's first Workforce Investment Board.

One reason we were successful is that we were able to use the relationships that we had built from previous initiatives.

—Daniel Bader, The Helen Bader Foundation

METHODICALLY EXTEND THE NETWORKS

The founding partners of Urban Strategies, Karen Gotzler and James Milner, were critical to extending the WFA's initial relationships. They leveraged their own extensive networks and widely recognized expertise in economic, workforce, and community development. During the planning and early recruiting stages, Gotzler, along with Dunn of the Helen Bader

Foundation, reached out to many eventual alliance members through one-on-one meetings, opening many of those doors with Urban Strategies' years of established trust. The Donors Forum also became an ally in reaching out to funders and helped forge foundation connections. The members of the founding group had connections with nearly all the public funders, but some of the Donors Forum's private funder members were outside their networks.

Once we did an inventory and found out who was funding what, then we visited all the funders. So our role was being a dot-connector. Lunch meeting introductions helped, and we hope to continue that role of bringing new funders to the table.

—Deborah Fugenschuh, *The Donors Forum*

LEARN AS PARTNERS

USE RESEARCH TO MAKE THE CASE TO FUNDERS

To make the case for funders and other stakeholders to join the alliance, the WFA's core leaders drew upon persuasive research about the workforce system, and they commissioned additional research to fill gaps in existing research. The independent research reports by the University of Wisconsin-Michigan's Center for Workforce Development and the Public Policy Forum were valuable organizing tools. These reports argued that: the county had a bewildering array of over 100 workforce development service providers; they were operating with little coordination between them; and public funding for workforce services in Wisconsin was organized poorly and highly vulnerable to declining federal support. These points highlighted critical weaknesses in Milwaukee's systems to address skills gaps and unemployment.

Because improvements in *private* funding for workforce development were beyond the scope of the reports, the alliance commissioned additional research, interviews, surveys, and outreach to foundations with the help of Urban Strategies. This helped the leaders understand the roles of Milwaukee foundations in workforce development, the priorities

of each stakeholder, and ways to help the funders meet challenges they faced as a group.

EDUCATE THE LARGER WORKFORCE AND POLICY COMMUNITY

To leverage the power of the reports and research, the alliance promoted findings and supportive recommendations through the Public Policy Forum and events targeted to a broad community audience. The Helen Bader Foundation also convened a series of smaller meetings to engage foundations and workforce providers in dialogue about the implications of the findings. Alliance leaders used the Center for Workforce Development report—particularly its list of workforce development providers—to inform their one-on-one recruiting conversations with foundations and their early meetings with larger groups of stakeholders.

INVEST IN NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL RELATIONSHIPS

By developing state and national recognition for the W RTP-BIG STEP model, Eric Parker had created relationships with numerous national thought leaders, including Robert Giloth at the Casey Foundation and staff of the AFL-CIO and other important labor organizations. Parker invited other Milwaukee leaders into those conversations, which promoted dialogue between Milwaukee and national leaders in the design of the city's model and influenced the National Fund design itself. Parker's relationship with Geri Scott at Jobs for the Future also made it possible to engage in frank dialogue with the National Fund about the challenges in Milwaukee's first application and to do the crucial work of addressing them for the second application.

VISIT AND HOST NATIONAL RESOURCES AND MODELS

James Milner, Donald Sykes, Kathryn Dunn, and others, along with Parker, met with Casey, Ford, and Hitachi foundation leaders in visits to several funders collaboratives around the country, bringing what they learned back to planning meetings with other Milwaukee leaders. They had several meetings with Giloth to talk about models, and the Helen

Bader Foundation and Parker brought Jobs for the Future staff to Milwaukee for several presentations to other funders. With the national models in mind, these players began mobilizing new stakeholder relationships and organizers (e.g., Gotzler) and leading the research and planning in ways that could fit the National Fund grant opportunity.

The WFA also exposed local leaders to national models by hosting visits to Milwaukee. In a critical early example, the Workforce Funding Alliance organizers hosted the National Fund's *Breakthroughs in Health Care* conference, held in Milwaukee in 2010. They used this event to attract employers to the collaborative and to build enthusiasm among them for the workforce partnership model through interactions with peer employers from around the country. "Some of those meetings for NFWS taught us a ton," according to Clare Reardon of Froedtert Hospital about the best-practice role models she and other employers encountered at the conference. The Milwaukee Area Healthcare Alliance modeled many of its initial features after the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare, which was featured at the conference.

PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE LEARNING NETWORK

The Workforce Funding Alliance leveraged the network of National Fund sites well beyond the start up. WFA leaders regularly volunteered to host or play leadership roles in gatherings of their peers in other cities. The site director hosted and organized the second peer learning meeting of Midwest funding collaboratives and helped organize two others. The WFA hosted a 2010 national conference and a 2011 conference of Green Jobs Innovation Grant recipients, which included many National Fund sites. Hosting such events enabled the WFA to recruit many more Milwaukee leaders, exposed Milwaukee leaders to national models, and showcased Milwaukee's work nationally at a relatively low cost.

FOCUS ON OUTCOMES TO HIGHLIGHT THE LIMITS OF SILOED WORK

Although each organization had its own motivations for joining the alliance, one goal that united most funders was to create a more effective system for

getting people jobs. A sentiment that summed up many of the one-on-one meetings was, "Right now, I don't know what I get for my money, I don't understand the public workforce development system, and I'm not sure if the training we fund is for jobs that exist."

The WFA helped isolated funders see where multiple streams of workforce funding were going, including the extent and type of programs that were being funded. They could also see how problems were being exacerbated by the lack of coordination among foundations and the public systems.

Most of us were dissatisfied because we saw how much money and effort had been invested in solving these problems, but we were essentially in the same place as 30 years ago . . . and in some ways worse. Through the alliance, we learned what we could do to fill the gaps that the public funding couldn't address.

—Gil Llanas, Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance (retired)

CAPITALIZE ON DIVERSITY

INNOVATE TO FIT THE FUNDERS' ENVIRONMENT

Some of the Workforce Funding Alliance's most important contributions to the National Fund for Workforce Solutions model relate to funding strategies shaped by Milwaukee's funder environment.

Milwaukee funders' experience with pooled funding led many of them to insist on an aligned funding model: They adopted common goals but maintained control of their grantmaking toward those goals. Early on, many National Fund leaders were concerned that aligned funding would water down the level of collaboration. In practice, however, it had major benefits over pooled funding in Milwaukee and could be more sustainable in some environments.

Even the early planning for this aligned funding approach helped generate insights that might not have arisen with a pooled model. For example, the inventory of workforce grantmaking was designed to show the need for funding alignment even if funders were averse to a pooled approach. The inventory became a powerful tool for helping all funders

understand their peers' investments in workforce development. This galvanized funders around the need to better coordinate their investments, and it also led to an ongoing effort to map the city's workforce resources.

Another unusual factor in Milwaukee was the diversity and depth of the public funders at the table. Among National Fund collaboratives, the alliance has achieved one of the highest levels of funding aligned between diverse public and private funders. Mayor Barrett has encouraged the deep participation of several major agency heads and pushed for significant funding or other contributions from the WIB, the Community Development Grants Administration, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, the Department of Public Works, the Municipal Court, and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

USE PRIVATE FUNDING TO ADDRESS THE GAPS AND RESTRICTIONS OF PUBLIC FUNDING

A critical task of this type of alliance among funders is to clarify the differing roles that each partner will play. This is particularly true when private partners join with public partners, like a WIB, which plays a coordinating role for a region's workforce development resources. The fact that both the WFA and the WIB play coordinating roles (albeit with differing strengths) makes it doubly important to distinguish roles properly. The WFA, the WIB, and other public funders have worked hard to identify and communicate how private funding can complement public funders' roles and fill gaps resulting from restrictions on public funders.

RECOGNIZE THE INCENTIVES DRIVING DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

Some funders joined the WFA just when they were beginning to identify unemployment as a target issue. For example, very early on, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation made a strategic decision to focus on unemployment but did not know where to begin investing. JPMorgan Chase's program officer, Gwen Dansby, trusted Karen Gotzler as a source of intelligence for entering this field and went to her for answers. The alliance also offered workforce funders

both valuable connections and information about strategies.

Other members came to the WFA with a number of workforce initiatives in their portfolio but lacking a picture of how their organization and its activities fit in the larger system. Gil Llanas recalls one of those first meetings to introduce the research and the WFA concept to Northwestern Mutual Foundation:

We were already giving to several workforce development groups at the time, including WRTP, the Milwaukee Christian Center, and others. When Karen Gotzler visited to explain what they'd learned (in the inventory of workforce programs), what the WFA would do, and the Helen Bader Foundation's leadership, it was a very simple decision for us.

The Workforce Funding Alliance helped Llanas identify a bigger picture of workforce giving and where Northwestern Mutual could make an important difference.

Still others had participated in a wide variety of workforce development initiatives and had made those issues central to their work. The Helen Bader Foundation had made economic and workforce development the centerpiece of the foundation's work for years. Don Bader had chaired Milwaukee's first Workforce Investment Board, which was created to address system-wide workforce development issues.

"The alliance was all about reforming the public workforce system and addressing the declines in funding" says Kathryn Dunn, the first Workforce Funding Alliance chair and the Helen Bader Foundation's lead staff in the alliance. "We took this on because we saw the need to leverage remaining funding with others to get more results."

APPEAL TO EMPLOYERS WITH LOGIC AND RELATIONSHIPS

The alliance quickly recruited an important employer organization, based on existing relationships and the power of the WFA's argument for collaboration. The Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association had created its own foundation 20 years earlier to fund scholarships for students studying to earn an auto technician degree. That foundation's director, Gary Beier, had worked with the Helen Bader

Foundation for several years, having been a grantee for automotive work with high school students. The focus on employer needs and partnerships and the ability to address broader issues facing the workforce appealed to this employer group, as well as to others. “When Kathryn introduced me to Karen Gotzler and I heard the focus of alliance, it was a no brainer,” Beier recalls. Not only did the WATDA Foundation become a funding member, it served as one of the first workforce partnerships, in auto maintenance.

INVEST IN SYNERGY

INVEST IN TRUST AMONG ALLIES

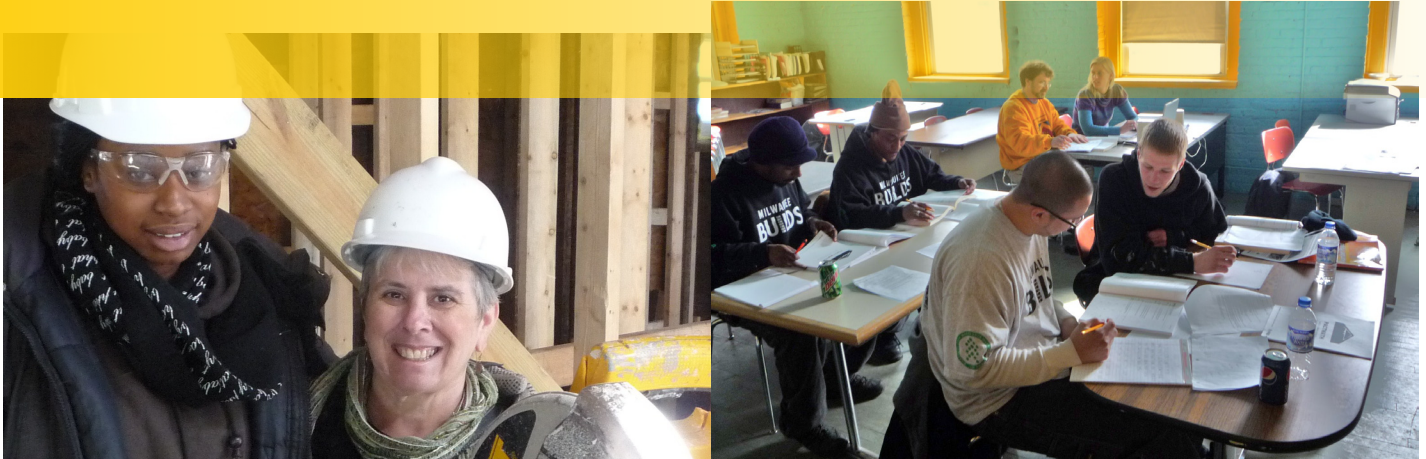
To build a basis for both the pooled and the aligned funding strategies, the Workforce Funding Alliance has invested in creating trust and a common language and vision among its members. Early surveys and interviews indicated that many funders had divergent definitions of core concepts, including workforce development itself, and they mostly operated separately. The alliance has sought to build trust through a common understanding of core concepts and dialogue about issues that all funders care about. Sustaining trust is an ongoing task and requires constant nurturing. Urban Strategies’ facilitation has been valuable for nurturing these relationships with and among funders.

MAKE HOPE CONTAGIOUS

The WFA’s initial one-on-one conversations with foundation representatives brought many of them to the table, and once several funders came together, their enthusiasm was mutually infectious. They started hearing the same frustrations and the same sense of opportunity to be more strategic about private and public funder collaboration. It became increasingly clear that they could be more effective and cover more of the bases that needed to be covered. Once engaged in that dialogue, the members of the initial funders group became convinced that they wanted to form the collaborative even if the National Fund turned down their second proposal.

ENSURE “GLUE MONEY” TO INITIATE AND SUSTAIN COLLABORATION

Though the early adopters determined to build a funding alliance whether or not the proposal to the National Fund succeeded, that national support was significant to their success. It was particularly important in their coming together in the first place. The national matching funds rallied the core leaders to invest in the up-front research and planning that became crucial to recruiting other participants. And the national funding provided a tangible incentive for new recruits to come to the table. The alliance particularly needed that incentive as it built the shared enthusiasm for collaboration.



Beyond convening funders, the national grants provided crucial support to sustain the organizing effort. To convert the early enthusiasm to a practical reality, the group needed planning, research, convening, administration, and the ability to implement decisions. “To succeed, there has to be a central rallying point for the partners, and the funding from the National Fund helped pay for that,” says Gotzler. “Frankly, workforce development is not the only priority for most of the private funders, and they need help to stay involved.”

KEEP PRIVATE FUNDERS AT THE TABLE

Private foundations and public funders face different incentives to continue contributing to workforce development in the region. In most cases, public funders are specifically required to address workforce development services to low-income people, and they face increasing pressures to partner and leverage resources with private donors. However, as Perez frequently reminds the partners, “The private funders don’t have to do this work. The public sector has mandates on how they spend their money. But philanthropists are there only because they want to be. They could just as easily say, ‘I don’t want to do this anymore,’ and walk away.”

Several of the WFA’s private (as well as public) funders credit Urban Strategies with playing critical facilitation and implementation roles that allowed them to participate. Many private foundations manage multiple initiatives but have few staff members and cannot dedicate large amounts of time to the operation of a workforce funding collaborative. Targeted outreach, demonstrating value, making critical links, and minimizing time burdens were among the approaches that mattered most in this regard. So far, no funders who have joined the alliance have indicated that it has been unsuccessful. The one funder that has reduced engagement (the Jane Bradley Petit Foundation) did so because it no longer has a full-time program officer.

BUILD ON THE LESSONS OF PREVIOUS COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

Milwaukee’s persistent efforts to address poverty and unemployment over decades were a source of valuable learning that informed the Workforce Funding Alliance’s organizing strategies. Those efforts also created relationships that contributed to the alliance’s strategies. For example, the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City developed a sector approach to organizing employers and created a significant precedent for collaboration with industry sector representatives. Its hospital employer group continued after the ICIC initiative ended in Milwaukee and formed a relationship among hospital leaders who are engaged with the WFA.

Alliance leaders also learned from the ICIC’s challenges. For example, WFA leaders made a point of keeping a low profile until they could prove their effectiveness to those who were disappointed by the ICIC’s disappearance. Perhaps most important, the ICIC experience drilled the importance of a sustainable local funding model into WFA leaders’ thinking about strategy.

The Department of Labor-funded WIRED initiative was another valuable attempt to address workforce issues in a collaborative regional model. The temporary nature of the WIRED funding and the difficulty of regional action may have caused it to focus on “low hanging fruit” to generate consensus and actionable decisions rather than the toughest problems of Milwaukee’s long-term unemployed. Thus, WIRED highlighted the need to build long-term support for working with harder-to-serve low-income individuals. The regional WIRED efforts also led city leaders to see problems with the workforce system that would need to be addressed before they could take leadership in regional efforts.

THE BENEFITS ARE MANY

The most fundamental lesson of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance has been that collaboration among funders and employer partners can garner considerably more benefits than the

sum of each of their independent efforts. Some of the results of the collaboration developed by the Workforce Funding Alliance are:

- > More organizations than ever are aware of one another's efforts and coordinate their activities to address the city's unemployment and skills crises.
- > Several key employer groups are more organized to communicate skills demand and to collaborate to address shared needs for entry-level workers.
- > Many employers have a forum to work with funders and training providers to help address their skills goals.
- > An alliance gathers local private funding for workforce development in ways that were difficult (and often impossible) for the public sector to do alone.
- > Local and national funder participation makes the intensive work of cross-sector coordination sustainable over the long term.
- > Collaboration among private and public funders, employers, and training providers makes the region more attractive to outside (national) funding opportunities, helping the city to attract resources.
- > Collaboration gathers a larger network and deeper information base to shape the use of large amounts of public workforce funding.
- > Collaborative private funding helps fill program gaps that federal and other public funding is restricted from filling.
- > Collaboration helps to uncover policy barriers affecting multiple organizations and to generate and advocate for new policy solutions.
- > The alliance helps build capacity among existing training providers; it does not just fund more providers or services.
- > The city gains a flexible "R&D" laboratory for innovation in workforce development.
- > Leaders have a place to contribute and share effective practices with each other and with 31 other National Fund cities around the country.



APPENDIX I.

MILWAUKEE'S WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

WISCONSIN REGIONAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP-BIG STEP

The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership-BIG STEP is a nonprofit organization that in many ways served as an early model for the National Fund's workforce partnership concept.⁹ WRTTP began as a partnership between business and labor in 1992 and began implementing workforce training services in 1996. It is one of the largest recipients of the alliance's aligned funding and represents the lion's share of participants served. It also convenes two employer-labor groups that can be considered workforce partnerships in their own right. One is in the construction and building trades; the other is in manufacturing.

From the employers' perspective, WRTTP enhances their ability to recruit and develop a more qualified workforce in construction, manufacturing, and related sectors. It is an industry-designated intermediary to create a pipeline into registered building trade and manufacturing apprenticeship programs in the Milwaukee area.

WRTTP offers trainings based on employer need. When demand for a specific trade skill is forecast to increase, these employers contact WRTTP to signal that this skill is needed, and WRTTP makes it a priority to ensure the proper training is available. WRTTP also surveys its primary employment partners twice a year to develop forecasts for trade skill demand and prioritize training modules accordingly.

From a philanthropic perspective, WRTTP addresses the barriers to gaining entry to the building trades for historically underrepresented groups, such as minorities, women, low-skill, and low-income workers, and it serves both jobseekers and incumbent workers. It helps individuals prepare for apprenticeships in

the skilled trades (e.g., carpentry, electrical, cement masonry, plumbing). It also offers certificate training programs in various manufacturing and construction disciplines (e.g., welding, road building).

WRTTP operates and participates in multiple WFA workforce partnerships because of its strong connections to the building trades, manufacturing employers, and organized labor. Its counseling, pre-apprenticeship tutoring, and training services play roles in the other construction partnerships and in the urban forestry partnership, making it a partner with many alliance provider partners, including the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, Milwaukee Christian Center Adult Build, Northcott Adult Build, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the Department of Public Works, the YWCA, and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, among others.

MILWAUKEE AREA HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

The Milwaukee Area Healthcare Alliance illustrates how an alliance of funders can facilitate training partner collaboration to leverage the strengths of each.¹⁰ When the WFA solicited proposals for the creation of a health care workforce partnership, two showed significant but potentially complementary strengths. It asked the organizations, the YWCA of Greater Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center, to consider combining the former's strengths in workforce development with the latter's deep knowledge of the health care field. MAHA, formed in 2009, is the resulting collaboration.

MAHA has reached out to a wide variety of health care employers, ranging from large hospital systems to small home care firms. It also engaged the Public Policy Forum to survey more than 500 health care

professionals about their workforce needs and current job openings. Published in April 2010, this study reported findings from 28 Milwaukee area health care providers and projected hiring needs for the following 12 to 18 months. It also revealed skills gaps and occupational demand in the health care sector, as well as valuable demographic information about the health care workforce. An important finding was that less than 4 percent of the health care providers surveyed indicated that they “currently use” the public workforce development system; 21 percent “would not use it;” and 50 percent were “unsure” if they would use it to provide for health care worker training. This study may lead to opportunities for MAHA to engage in sector outreach, and development of a health care training services portfolio may be necessary.

MAHA also illustrates how the alliance can assist workforce partnerships as they build and strengthen their relationships with employers. MAHA has improved its responsiveness to employers through its connections to various alliance members (e.g., the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee School of Nursing, Froedtert Hospital, Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, Columbia St. Mary’s, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Aurora Healthcare, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development).

In May 2011, MAHA helped the WIB launch the CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute, which provides training to jobseekers and incumbent workers in entry-level and mid-level health occupations. The YWCA serves as the operating agency for the HTI, which has funding from the federal Administration for Children and Families for recipients of Temporary Aid to Needy Families.

While MAHA focuses on serving jobseekers, the HTI creates opportunities to serve incumbent workers whose employers are seeking to advance them. Using a dual-customer strategy, MAHA provides and brokers training opportunities for prospective and incumbent health care professionals, seeks health care workforce development funding opportunities, advocates for policy and systems change, and monitors and assesses the needs of health care employers and workers. Examples of its efforts include an initiative entitled Partnerships in

Healthcare Workforce Development and a Department of Workforce Development’s Sector Strategies Initiative Implementation Grant in addition to HTI.

URBAN FORESTRY WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

The Milwaukee Department of Public Works, Division of Forestry leads the Urban Forestry Workforce Partnership.¹¹ It was created in 2009 to address the city’s goal of increasing the diversity of the urban forestry workforce by adapting the department’s proprietary in-house training program to prepare new entrants who have no knowledge of or experience in arboriculture.

The Department of Public Works operates the Urban Forestry Workforce Partnership as a paid, on-the-job training opportunity for those seeking marketable green job skills, and it offers arbor corps training according to the standards of the Tree Care Industry Association. Trainees gain qualifications to operate heavy equipment, earn a commercial driver’s license, and receive the TCIA Tree Care Professional credential. The training module creates portable, transferable qualifications as participants gain skills that qualify them to be arborists and build the background needed for some utility worker occupations. The Tree Care Industry Association validates the training curriculum and awards the industry-recognized certifications to successful completers.

The Urban Forestry Workforce Partnership models an innovative private-public sector partnership, providing an example of collaboration between workforce providers facilitated by the alliance. The Department of Public Works has developed links to numerous organizations with expertise in workforce development for low-income, lower-skilled adults. The Milwaukee Area WIB supports the partnerships’ recruitment and eligibility screening. WRTP-BIG STEP provides the initial interest and basic skills assessments, case management, and career coaching. Riverworks Development Corporation provides access to work supports.

WRTP has been a particularly critical partner, recruiting and screening potential participants as well as assisting with job placements for graduates. WRTP also provided critical assistance when the Department of Public Works ran into obstacles implementing its on-the-job model of training, which had been designed for workers already hired by the city. WRTP helped to develop an alternative “employer of record” for the on-the-job element of the programs, bringing in Triada, which WRTP owns, for the purpose of paying a training stipend.

Such links were also instrumental in connecting the partnership with private-sector employers and brokering employment placements for participants. Initially, Milwaukee intended to hire most of the trainees, but budget constraints limited the city’s ability to do so. In response, WRTP helped engage several local tree care and landscaping employers in the project. Asplundh, Cedarburg Landscape, Naturescape, American Tree Experts, Hoppe, and Crawford Landscape services each hired at least one Urban Forestry training participant in sector-related jobs.

Instruction in the Urban Forestry project is provided by experienced arborists at the Department of Public Works through an agreement with AFSCME District Council 48, the municipal union representing DPW arborists. The on-the-job training consists of a 36-week program covering tree climbing using rope and saddle, pruning, rigging, tree removal, hazard tree assessment, landscaping and irrigation, and aerial rescue. Participants do real work pruning trees on municipal property under the supervision of DPW arborists. They are registered as AFSCME members and receive the union training wage of \$12.77 per hour.

WISCONSIN AUTOMOBILE & TRUCK DEALERS ASSOCIATION

The Foundation of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association is the lead organization for the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Maintenance Workforce Partnership. The WATDA Foundation is also an important funder of the partnership. In addition to

managing this workforce partnership, Gary Beier, the foundation’s executive director, is a member of the WFA Leadership Council.

The WATDA Workforce Partnership exemplifies the level and kind of employer engagement the National Fund seeks to promote. The WATDA WP directly provides links among:

- > WATDA and the Automobile Dealers Association of Mega Milwaukee, whose members hire vehicle technicians;
- > Community college and business training partners (e.g., Milwaukee Area Technical College, Gateway Technical College, ADAMM’s Tech Train);
- > Automotive Youth Educational System sites located in southeast Wisconsin high schools; and
- > The jobseekers who receive training scholarships from the partnership.

WATDA WP actively brokers the relationships with the training partners, a role that is enhanced by its participation in the alliance’s Leadership Council.

The primary goal is to provide quality preparation and technical training opportunities to Wisconsin skill-seekers, but the partnership primarily serves low-income and low-skilled individuals through its scholarship programs and other partnerships. Over two decades, WATDA has delivered 1,204 scholarships to low-income skill-seekers to pursue technical careers across the state, and 80 participants have begun those studies as part of the workforce partnership’s activities in Milwaukee.

WATDA WP conducts significant outreach to secondary schools and technical colleges. For high school graduates, it refers scholarship students to Milwaukee Area Technical College’s TechTrain program. The partnership’s close relation with the automotive industry provides a direct link to career advancement opportunities. Thus, employer members of WATDA are funding the training opportunities through the foundation and directly recruiting new technicians from these programs.

WATDA WP convenes industry employers through Business Industry Councils that provide input on strategies performance and goals. Employer members

volunteer to participate in the partnership's activities, including program planning and review. Participating employers are also highly involved in jobseeker training and placement activities. This level of engagement is possible because WATDA WP serves a clear purpose for automotive industry employers by providing a consistent pool of qualified technicians.

WATDA is well-positioned to advocate for systems change across the education and training pipeline, and WATDA WP is committed to improving integration among the secondary and postsecondary educational institutions and the automotive industry to strengthen career pipelines for skill-seekers and jobseekers. WATDA WP supports the development of career pipelines by using its position as both a funder and functional unit of the WATDA. By knowing the needs of the automotive industry and having the ability to invest in and leverage funding streams, WATDA WP makes crucial connections to secondary and postsecondary institutions.

MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY SERVICE CORPS

Milwaukee Community Service Corps is the lead organization for one of several WFA workforce partnerships in the building trades.¹² Although MCSC collaborates and shares effective practices with construction trades workforce partnerships at Wisconsin Community Services and W RTP, it has a separate role in part because of its focus on young adults. The distinction is also in part because of relationships built over 15 years of work in the field.

MCSC partners primarily with the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee in fee-for-service projects that hire trainees as unsubsidized employees. Through these relationships, MCSC has provided opportunities for trainees to participate in community revitalization projects of the city, Milwaukee County Parks, the Housing Authority, and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. Altogether, these opportunities are valued at \$12 million based on the cost of projects that were completed by MCSC trainees. Had the projects been simply bid out to a

contractor, they likely would not have had the same commitment to training and employing people with barriers to employment.

MCSC, which started in 1996, predates the formation of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance, which added it as a reporting workforce partnership in 2010. MCSC offers several training programs in the green building trades (e.g., sustainable home construction; photo-voltaic/solar installation) as well as opportunities to earn a commercial driver's license and industry-certified credentials as a photovoltaic solar installer.

MCSC partners with private employers (e.g., Arch Electric) to provide training opportunities in home construction and solar installation. MCSC's green industry photovoltaic solar training project is a success story in this regard. Working with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, the Housing Authority, Arch Electric, and Helios Energy, MCSC participants have gained work experience and training toward the photovoltaic solar installer certification.

MCSC builds relationships with public and private employers in the building trades and green-related industries. At the same time, its employer engagement strategy is oriented around seeking training opportunities for MCSC participants. For this reason, it has not narrowed its employer engagement activities to focus on a segment of the building trade industry or set of employers. The alliance's investments in MCSC are designed to address this organizational need.

WISCONSIN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Like MCSC, Wisconsin Community Services manages a construction workforce partnership that specializes in a particular worker population.¹³ This focus grows from WCS's 100-year history of serving jobseekers who have limited work history and criminal records.

WCS's construction workforce partnership started in 2009 when it drew the support of the WFA through Jobs for the Future's Pathways Out of Poverty project.

This added a sector focus, building on WCS's expertise in intake, case management, driver's license recovery, mental health counseling, and employment placement services. WCS partners with the National Association of Home Builders to provide Home Builders Institute-approved general construction skills training. WCS's relationship with HBI is crucial to ensuring the training programs lead to an industry-recognized credential.

HBI's general construction skill credential is a recognized pre-apprentice program administered by the Association of Building Contractors. The credential earned is Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training–PACT. WCS also negotiates apprentice placement of its training participants with ABC-Wisconsin.

WCS partners with local employers and the city to provide sites for four-week training that pays a training wage. Upon completion, participants exit with a credential, a four-week work history, and job-search assistance from WCS staff. The primary employer partners are Cream City Demolition, Maures Construction, the City of Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services, and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

WCS illustrates how a workforce partnership and the WFA act as a vehicle for systems and policy change. WCS monitors state and municipal policies to identify changes that could alleviate legislative barriers to employment and successful reentry into society. WCS, in partnership with the Legal Action Coalition (a network of lawyers that provide subsidized legal services), provides legal advocacy and representation on legislative issues affecting reentry of previously adjudicated individuals. WCS also fosters a close relationship with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections reentry coordinator and other key DOC officials as an avenue for direct policy advocacy.

WCS also advocates directly to city government on two issue categories—municipal contract bidding and wage determination—that affect training and employment opportunities for training participants. Through its advocacy efforts, WCS convinced the city to lower the bond insurance requirements for capital project bids of \$1 million or more, which increased the competitiveness of bids submitted by small businesses, which include larger numbers of minority contractors.

APPENDIX II.

EARLY ALIGNED FUNDING, OCTOBER 2008-SEPTEMBER 2009

FUNDER	AMOUNT
Annie E. Casey Foundation	\$255,000
Brico Fund	\$567,000
City of Milwaukee Municipal Court	\$150,000
City of Milwaukee Community Development Grant Administration	\$1,064,000
Faye McBeath Foundation	\$289,000
Greater Milwaukee Foundation	\$1,225,000
Harley-Davidson Foundation	\$542,000
Helen Bader Foundation	\$624,000
Housing Authority of Milwaukee	\$2,647,000
Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation	\$678,000
JPMorgan Chase Foundation	\$534,000
Manpower	\$45,000
Milwaukee 7 Regional Workforce Alliance WIRED	\$1,524,000
Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board	\$3,134,000
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District	\$1,295,000
Northwestern Mutual Foundation	\$220,000
Rockwell Foundation	\$900,000
United Way of Greater Milwaukee	\$2,410,000
Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Foundation	\$228,000
Zilber Family Foundation	\$2,204,000

APPENDIX III. EMPLOYERS ENGAGED IN WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH 2011

HEALTH CARE EMPLOYERS

- > Aurora Healthcare
- > Children's Hospital and Health System
- > Columbia St. Mary's Hospitals
- > Froedtert Health
- > Medical College of Wisconsin
- > Milwaukee Health Services, Inc.
- > Stowell Associates/Progressive Community Health Centers
- > Veterans Administration Medical Center
- > Wheaton Franciscan Health

SKILLED TRADE RELATED

- > American Tree Company
- > Arch Electric
- > Asplundh
- > Cedarburg Landscape
- > Crawford Landscape
- > Cream City Demolition
- > Gorman Development
- > Hoppe Tree Care
- > Hurt Electric
- > Maures Construction
- > Payne & Dolan
- > SBC Global
- > WE Energies

CITY GOVERNMENT

- > City of Milwaukee, Department of Neighborhood Services
- > City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works
- > Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District

MANUFACTURING

- > BUYSEASONS
- > Harley-Davidson
- > Masterlock
- > Milwaukee Gear

OTHERS

- > Amalga Composites
- > Bradley Center
- > David J. Frank Landscaping
- > Dunham Freight
- > Fond du Lac Mosaic Tile
- > Hulsmann Associates
- > Invetex
- > Kohl's
- > Milwaukee Tool
- > Salem Manufacturing
- > United Parcel Service

APPENDIX IV.

PRECEDENTS:

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MILWAUKEE'S COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

The Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance builds on many lessons and relationships that sprang from earlier efforts to address unemployment and poverty in the city. Each of these efforts has helped Milwaukee leaders incorporate important lessons and strategies in the WFA's design. They have also served as a launching point for innovations introduced by the WFA.

WRTP AND THE MILWAUKEE JOBS INITIATIVE

In the early 1990s, Milwaukee began developing a nationally influential model for workforce partnerships, the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership. The concept gained traction in 1992 when Governor Tommy Thompson's Commission on a Quality Workforce recommended that Milwaukee develop partnerships among business, labor, and government to help revitalize the region's economy and workforce. Labor, business, and think-tank leaders, including Eric Parker, Carl Wiegell of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, Joel Rodgers of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, and Bob Milbourne, then president of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, were highly engaged. After making the recommendations, a group of these leaders announced the formation of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership for manufacturing in the Milwaukee area.¹⁴

WRTP gained prominence for its effectiveness at bringing together business, labor unions, and community organizations to address workforce development needs in the central city. In the late 1990s, recognizing WRTP's success in engaging

employer and labor groups in training, the Annie E. Casey Foundation made it a central element of the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative.

Based on their roles in the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative, Parker and other Milwaukee leaders had developed a healthy dialogue with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Robert Giloth, who would later be a leader in the creation of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. The National Fund concept of workforce partnerships was strongly influenced by Milwaukee's WRTP, where employers engaged closely with labor and community groups to address the needs of both workers and employers.

With its strong parallels to the National Fund's workforce partnership model, WRTP played an important role in Milwaukee's application to become a site in the national initiative. To this day, it is a key workforce partnership in the Workforce Funding Alliance.

TANF AND WISCONSIN WORKS—W2

In the mid-1990s, Wisconsin played a visible role in national reorganizations of welfare and job training programs. Wisconsin became one of the first states to implement welfare reform, leading to a heavy emphasis on TANF spending in the makeup of Milwaukee's workforce development systems. The One-Stop Career Centers that served a wider population of workers in other regions became functionally synonymous with Wisconsin Works services. This meant that they focused on those with the most difficult barriers to employment.

THE INITIATIVE FOR A COMPETITIVE MILWAUKEE

In 2001, Milwaukee business and foundation leaders organized to launch an employer-centered approach to addressing the city's concentrated poverty. The leaders partnered with a national nonprofit, the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, started by Harvard Business School's Michael Porter to spur regional collaboration among employer groups to address inner-city poverty. The ICIC helped Milwaukee's business, economic development, and community leaders identify industry clusters that had the potential to employ more inner-city residents and increase the industries' regional competitiveness.

While the initiative, locally known as the Initiative for a Competitive Milwaukee, stalled in implementation, it had implications for future efforts. It extended awareness of the need, potential, and challenges for organizing employers alongside training and anti-poverty efforts. The ICM also introduced new collaborations among some groups of employers who remained connected with one another into future initiatives. For example, the human resources leaders of major hospital systems continued to meet. They later participated in Milwaukee's WIRED initiative (see *Workforce Innovations in Regional Economics—WIRED*) and have since become important to the WFA's health care workforce partnership.

Many leaders involved in the ICM would come together again in the Workforce Funding Alliance. For example, Daniel Bader and Kathryn Dunn of the Helen Bader Foundation were early conveners of employers and supported ICIC with funding and staff. Also, Milwaukee business organizations, including the Greater Milwaukee Committee, took a leadership role and garnered important employer buy-in and visibility for the ICM.

The ICM experience offered lessons that WFA organizers took to heart:

- > Create a sustainable funding model.
- > Establish strong management and leadership before expanding rapidly.
- > Start with small wins before seeking high visibility.

- > Get efforts within the city in functioning order as a precursor to regional collaboration.

MILWAUKEE 7 REGIONAL WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

In 2005, leaders in education, economic development, and workforce development from the seven-county Milwaukee region came together to pursue a state Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) grant as well as a federal WIRED grant. The partnership, called the Regional Workforce Alliance, was led by an executive leadership team from the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development Board, the City of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Private Industry Council (now the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board), and the Southeast Workforce Development Board. It brought together public- and private-sector leaders from the seven counties and established an oversight board of local elected officials to bring them into the planning. Its aims were to help these players establish a comprehensive vision for the region's workforce, overcome the pressures to promote sub-regional interests, and understand the needs for workforce system transformation. The Regional Workforce Alliance was an early member of the Workforce Funding Alliance and helped it explore collaboration across geographies, although the WFA ultimately focused on Milwaukee as a starting point.

WORKFORCE INNOVATIONS IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—WIRED

In 2006, the Regional Workforce Alliance joined forces with the M7 to act as its talent development arm under a \$5 million U.S. Department of Labor award called the WIRED initiative, or Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development. The WIRED grant was used to align workforce development with regional economic development efforts to grow, expand, and attract targeted export driver industries and emerging business clusters and to strengthen their capacity to innovate.

A key component of the WIRED initiative in southeast Wisconsin was a \$2.5 million fund to invest in innovative projects and programs that had potential to improve the quality and efficiency of the workforce development system. Because of a need to act quickly, the first round of grants went to fairly traditional projects of traditional service providers, supplementing their usual sources of funds. To encourage systemic transformation and nontraditional partnerships, the second round required evidence of collaboration across service providers and more fundamental, sustainable changes (e.g., curriculum changes).

ENDNOTES

¹ There is no single definition of the term “workforce intermediary,” but this report uses it broadly as a regional coordinator of employers, jobseekers and workers, and workforce development and training organizations.

² For other topics hosted by the WFA Leadership Council, see: <http://www.milwaukeeewa.org/Pages/contactus.aspx>.

³ Author interview with Gary Beier, February 24, 2012; author interview with Kimberly Kujoth, March 27, 2012.

⁴ This section draws upon the National Fund website: <http://nfwsolutions.org/regional-collaboratives/milwaukee-area-workforce-funding-alliance>.

⁵ This section draws heavily on a March 2012 interview with Kendra Lodewick.

⁶ For more information, see: <http://nfwsolutions.org/regional-collaboratives/milwaukee-area-workforce-funding-alliance>.

⁷ Interview with Lodewick.

⁸ For more information, see: <http://nfwsolutions.org/regional-collaboratives/milwaukee-area-workforce-funding-alliance>.

⁹ For more information, see Urban Strategies (2011) and <http://nfwsolutions.org/workforce-partnerships/wisconsin-regional-training-partnership>.

¹⁰ For more information, see Urban Strategies (2011) and <http://nfwsolutions.org/workforce-partnerships/milwaukee-area-healthcare-alliance>.

¹¹ For more information, see <http://greenways.jff.org/program/milwaukee-urban-forestry-workforce-partnership>.

¹² For more information, see Urban Strategies (2011).

¹³ For more information, see Urban Strategies (2011) and <http://nfwsolutions.org/workforce-partnerships/wisconsin-community-services>.

¹⁴ See “WRTP Timeline” for 2006, available at: <http://www.wrtp.org/history.php>.

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