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W-2 in 2001:
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at Welfare Reform

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SITE VISIT REPORT

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SITE VISIT REPORT

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The Forum is especially grateful to the many speakers who participated in our program, as well as to the federal site visitors for their thoughtful questions and lively participation.

Overview and Impressions

BACKGROUND

Starting in the 1980s, the state of Wisconsin has put a great deal of effort into designing and testing new strategies to assist welfare clients to obtain employment. These experiments grew out of bipartisan frustration with the ineffectiveness of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) in assisting clients to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Despite a lack of political consensus on how to restructure the AFDC program, the experience gained from these experiments shaped the debate over welfare reform in Wisconsin and resulted in a program that is widely recognized as the leading example of welfare reform for the nation.

Bipartisan legislation authorizing the new program was enacted in late 1995, despite vocal opposition from some Democrats who opposed what came to be known as the “work first” philosophy that strongly emphasized moving directly from welfare to work. Passed just prior to the enactment of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), Wisconsin Works (W-2, after the federal income tax form) was implemented statewide in September 1997. In the nearly four years of implementation, the state has succeeded in reducing its welfare case loads by 50 percent, culminating in more than a 90 percent caseload reduction over ten years.

Administration

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has responsibility for the administration of W-2, as well as child care subsidy programs, child support enforcement and food stamps. DWD contracts with county social service agencies, private agencies, and tribes to provide services that include the following:

- An initial determination of eligibility for W-2 and other assistance programs.
- An assessment of the type of W-2 placement that would best serve the applicant.
- General employment-related services, such as a job search.
- Education and training services.
- Additional assessment and counseling services, such as disability assessments, substance abuse counseling, and occupational counseling.

Wisconsin’s counties, which are independent entities that operate separately from the state government, have historically administered the state’s welfare programs and continue to play the primary role in the implementation of W-2 throughout Wisconsin. However, the W-2 legislation specified that the counties would need to earn the right to administer W-2 programs based on past performance or by winning a competitive bid. While the vast majority of the state’s county human services agencies were chosen to be the W-2 agency, five counties in the state, including Milwaukee County, were not awarded W-2 service provider contracts.

Privatization in Milwaukee

The Milwaukee County Department of Human Services chose not to submit a bid to become the agency to administer W-2. Consequently, Milwaukee County was divided into six service regions configured so that each had an equal distribution of low-income people. The DWD awarded contracts to five private agencies—four nonprofit and one for-profit—to administer W-2 (one agency was awarded two regions). The agencies awarded contracts for the regions were as follows:

- Region 1—YW Works/Milwaukee Works (a subsidiary of the YWCA)
- Region 2—the United Migrant Opportunity Service (UMOS)
- Region 3—the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of Greater Milwaukee (OIC-GM)
- Regions 4 and 5—Employment Solutions of Milwaukee (a subsidiary of Goodwill Industries)
- Region 6—Maximus Corporation

These local W-2 agencies are “one-stop” centers for cash assistance, employment, and job training, as well as enrollment assistance for supportive services, such as Medicaid/BadgerCare, child care, and food stamps. Because public employees must determine eligibility for the supportive services, each W-2 agency has co-located county eligibility workers and W-2 financial employment planners (FEPs) to work together to ensure that families are receiving the full range of services for which they are eligible.

KEY STATE POLICIES

To be eligible for cash benefits under W-2, applicants must have a family income at or below 115 percent of the

federal poverty level (\$17,306 for a family of four) and have assets below \$2,500. The cash “grant” is a flat amount based on this income level, regardless of the number of children in the family. In addition, the state no longer uses “deprivation requirements” (for example, a prerequisite that the family must have an absent, unemployed or incapacitated parent) as a condition of eligibility. However, there are specific work requirements associated with participation in W-2 that can result in financial or other sanctions for noncompliance.

Upon enrollment, W-2 participants are assigned to either an unsubsidized or a subsidized “job” placement, depending upon the individual’s level of preparedness for employment:

- **Unsubsidized employment** is for individuals who were deemed to be “job ready.” They do not receive cash benefits; however, they are eligible to receive services to find or retain a job, increase their skills, and overcome employment barriers such as substance abuse or mental health problems.
- **Trial jobs** are for individuals who lack the work experience necessary to obtain an unsubsidized job. A trial job provides work experience and training for which the participant earns at least the federal minimum wage. The employer provides additional supervision and training in exchange for a subsidy of up to \$300 per month per participant working full-time.
- **Community service jobs (CSJ)** provide work experience and training with the expectation that participants will eventually move into trial jobs or unsubsidized employment. In return for a monthly cash grant of \$673, clients must participate in up to 30 hours per week in work training positions and up to 10 hours per week in education and job training.
- **Transitional placements** are for individuals with the most serious barriers to work (for example, a history of drug abuse, domestic violence, or a family member with a severe disability). Transitional placements provide work practice and training for participants who are unable to perform independent, self-sustaining work or work associated with community service or trial jobs. In exchange for a monthly cash grant of \$628 the average W-2 transitional placement participant engages in up to 28 hours per week of work practice and up to 12 hours of education and training.

Time Limits, Sanctions and Extensions

While federal rules place a lifetime limit of 60 months on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance, Wisconsin is one of many states that have adopted a different approach in implementing the time-limit requirements. W-2 allows participants to remain at each of the

placement levels for up to 24 months, allowing some individuals to continue receiving benefits beyond 24 months if he or she is elevated to the next level, such as moving from a transitional placement to a community service job. While it is possible that an individual could spend an additional two years at a trial job, such placements are seldom available. Generally, most families will spend only two years on W-2, with the exception of those experiencing a particular hardship or barrier to employment.

The TANF statute also specifies that states may continue to provide benefits beyond 60 months for individuals with special circumstances, up to 20 percent of the TANF caseload. In Wisconsin, when the 24-month clock runs out and no other placement is appropriate, the DWD may determine that the individual’s circumstances or the condition of the labor market merits an extension. Extensions can be granted for up to six months and are recommended at the discretion of the FEP who is managing the case for that family. Extensions are generally not available to participants who have been sanctioned. The DWD reports that all of the requests for extensions that have come forward thus far have been approved.

To encourage compliance with W-2 program requirements, participants receiving cash benefits through CSJs or transitional placements may be sanctioned \$5.15 for every hour they miss work or fail to participate in a required activity without good cause. Additional sanctions may be imposed on participants who commit fraud in obtaining or increasing the value of their benefits. An exception is made for individuals caring for a newborn under the age of three months; such individuals are not required to work outside the home, are not subject to sanctions, and are permitted to receive a \$673 monthly cash grant during that time. In December 2000, the statewide average number of participants being sanctioned was 21 percent, while in Milwaukee the average was 23.5 percent. If one excludes Milwaukee from the statewide average for sanctions, the contrast is more dramatic: 13 percent for the balance of the state versus Milwaukee’s 23.5 percent.

Supportive Services

Because the income eligibility requirements for W-2 are limited to those earning less than 115 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), most W-2 participants are also eligible for health coverage through Medicaid/BadgerCare, food stamp benefits, and child care subsidies. Despite the “one-stop” model that has been implemented at all of the W-2 agencies throughout Wisconsin, the federal law that delinked eligibility for AFDC cash assistance from Medicaid eligibility resulted in a sharp decline in enrollment in the two years following the implementation of W-2. However, since the 1999 approval of BadgerCare, Wisconsin’s State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medicaid Section

1115 waiver, significantly increased outreach activities have brought enrollment back up to pre-W-2 levels, and enrollment growth is projected to continue.

As with other states, Wisconsin experienced a major enrollment decline in its food stamp program—more than 45 percent between 1995 and 1999. In response, Wisconsin has made a commitment to ensuring that families who are eligible for food stamps are enrolled and remain enrolled in the program. The state has stepped up its outreach activities and recently implemented the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system which will improve accuracy and eliminate mailing delays. Since July 1999, the number of recipients has been slowly increasing by an average of 0.8 percent per month.

Wisconsin Shares, the state's child care subsidy program, was designed to streamline and increase funding for child care services. The subsidies are available to low-income families who need child care in order to participate in W-2 employment, job search, or education/training activities. Families with incomes below 185 percent of the FPL are eligible and may continue receiving the subsidy as long as their gross monthly income stays below 200 percent of the FPL.

Finally, W-2 contains a unique child support component that has been the subject of great interest and evaluation at the national level. Among most mothers participating in W-2, any child support paid on behalf of her children is "passed through," or paid, directly and is disregarded in the calculation of W-2 cash payments. Most other states keep money collected for child support as an offset to welfare costs, leaving the family with no additional income. Preliminary research is showing that fathers in Wisconsin are more likely to pay child support because they know that their children are directly benefitting from the payments.

W-2 EXPERIENCE TO DATE

Although every state saw a major reduction in its TANF caseload upon implementation of the new law, the decline in Wisconsin was steeper than most. Statewide, DWD projected that in September 1997 there would be 50,100 participants in W-2. Instead there were 22,761 participants (a 45 percent decline). By September 2000 there were 11,171 participants (a 51 percent decline from September 1997). In Milwaukee County there were 16,425 participants in September 1997 and 8,578 in September 2000, a decline of 48 percent. Caseloads have leveled off in the past year—as of May 2001, there were 8,500 W-2 cases open in Milwaukee and 11,382 in the state overall.

In terms of statewide placements, 30 percent of W-2 participants were in unsubsidized placements during July 2000. Of the 70 percent in subsidized placements, less than

1 percent were in trial jobs, 19 percent were in transitional placements, 23 percent were in community service placement jobs, and 28 percent were custodial parents of infants.

To date, there is not a great deal of information available about wage levels and the overall economic status of W-2 leavers; however there is a great deal of interest and encouragement from researchers and the advocate community for the DWD to collect and make this type of data available.

PROGRAM

The site visit for 18 federal policymakers to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, ran from August 6 through 8, 2001. It took place as W-2 was entering a new phase of implementation and during the most significant period of change seen by Milwaukee since the program's enactment. Close monitoring of the program's implementation by researchers, evaluators, and auditors had highlighted both successes and areas for improvement, and a new cadre of state agency leadership was responding to the challenge of improving the program in mid-stream. The site visit explored the many circumstances and events that led to this dramatic change as the program matured over four years.

Among the goals of the visit were the following:

- To gain an understanding of how Wisconsin implemented PRWORA and how it used the new flexibility to change the focus of the traditional welfare system in its largest city.
- To better understand the current and emerging challenges facing Wisconsin and Milwaukee.
- To better understand the experiences of clients in obtaining services and how they are faring under W-2.
- To see the impact of welfare reform on safety net providers.
- To understand the changing needs of low-income families in Wisconsin.
- To learn how the state of Wisconsin and Milwaukee's W-2 providers proposed to adapt their programs to respond to unmet or newly identified needs.

On the afternoon of August 6, their first day in Milwaukee, site visitors focused on the history and background of welfare reform in Wisconsin, first from the perspective of three of the key researchers in the field and then from the perspective of the current state administration. In addition, participants heard about the specific aspects of W-2 in Milwaukee and the contrasting elements of the program in the rural parts of the state. A representative of Wisconsin's Legislative Audit Bureau also described the findings from

a series of audits conducted over the previous 18 months that focused on several elements and problem areas of W-2, with particular emphasis on the privatized model in Milwaukee.

During dinner that evening, the group heard comments from one of the key players in the welfare reform debate in Wisconsin, who provided a historical context—dating back to the socialist movement of the mid-1800s—for the work first philosophy on which the W-2 program is based.

The second day began with a visit to one of the five W-2 agencies operating under private contracts in Milwaukee. Site visitors were given a tour of YW Works and met with representatives from each of the components of the agency. The presentations included an overview of the CARES information system, a lively description of the agency's fatherhood initiative and an explanation of how YW Works has utilized its Welfare-to-Work dollars. The tour provided an opportunity to interact with several "customers" who were attending the agency's two-week Academy of Excellence seminar and to hear from a panel of customers at various points on their roads to self-sufficiency.

Site visitors then traveled to Hope House, an innovative and integrated extended stay shelter for families as well as individuals. Staff members from Hope House provided a tour of the facility, which includes an adult education classroom, a food pantry, and a health clinic, in addition to the residential area. Then, site visitors split into several small groups for lunch and conversations with staff and residents of Hope House. After lunch, a panel of housing advocates and landlords discussed the risks and difficulties associated with ensuring that low-income families have stable housing.

The afternoon panels, which were held at the headquarters hotel, included a wide range of presentations from members of the advocate community and representatives of Milwaukee's employer and union communities. The initial panel focused on the overall impact of W-2 on families and discussed the barriers that hinder progress toward achieving and sustaining self-sufficiency. Next, a panel of representatives from the advocate community discussed the availability of supportive services—including BadgerCare, food stamps, and child care subsidies—that play an integral role in the lives of many W-2 families. Finally, the employer panel included a discussion of the concerns and new developments in establishing partnerships with employers who may or may not be willing to hire W-2 participants.

The third day opened with a visit to FaithWorks, a residential alcohol and drug treatment center that provides a nine-month self-sufficiency program currently funded by a Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work grant. The program is directed at fathers of children associated with W-2 and places emphasis on complying with child support requirements and participating in their children's lives. The tour was

followed by a panel discussion of the role of the faith community in serving low-income families.

Later, the group participated in a panel discussion with the heads of each of the privatized W-2 agencies in Milwaukee. The discussion enabled participants to raise broad-based issues about the administration of the program and to hear about successes and challenges the agencies have faced. The closing panel featured a presentation by the secretary of the Department of Workforce Development, who laid out the state's plans and priorities for the future of W-2.

IMPRESSIONS

Overall Impressions

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W-2 in Wisconsin, which has had enormous success in reducing caseloads, in addition to many other successes and challenges, continues to evolve but remains controversial, particularly in Milwaukee.

The effect of W-2 and its work first philosophy on reducing the cash assistance caseload was immediate and continuous. The welfare caseload in Wisconsin was reduced by more than 90 percent over ten years, a more significant decline than in any other state. However, critics of the system assert that many participants have been encouraged toward employment too quickly and have not had access to education and training services that might have helped them eventually move out of poverty.

In the course of measuring the success of welfare reform in Wisconsin, there has been some confusion over the definition of the state's W-2 caseload. The significant declines recognize only those who have moved off of cash assistance completely. The data do not take into account the number of individuals still receiving case management and other supportive services in the absence of a cash grant. And this caseload has been steadily increasing over the past several months. Also of concern are the "child-only" cases, which are similarly not included in the state's highly publicized caseload counts.

Nonetheless, after four years of implementation, Wisconsin remains a leader in innovation. The privatized Milwaukee system provides an interesting and evolving model that is a contrast to the vast majority of states that rely primarily on county or state government employees to deliver services. As evaluations of the program reveal additional areas for improvement, the state continues to work with the W-2 agencies and the community to identify new strategies for serving the ever-changing population.

In addition, Wisconsin and the Milwaukee W-2 agencies have taken advantage of the flexible nature of multiple financing streams (for example, TANF, Welfare-to-Work, caseload reduction credits, and high-performance bonuses) to fund innovative services to assist participants. For example, W-2 agencies and community providers, including faith-based organizations, have blended several funding sources to provide services to noncustodial parents, an activity not formerly permitted under the old AFDC program.

■

The successful caseload reductions in the W-2 program are the result of a work first philosophy that assigns highest priority on moving individuals from welfare into work.

W-2 agencies separate individuals applying for cash assistance into three groups. The first group comprises those who could be considered “job ready”; they are moved directly into employment and off of cash assistance. Individuals the agencies determine not to be job ready are assigned to a trial job or other transitional placement that includes a reduced cash grant. These placements typically last between six months and two years. Finally, the third group consists of individuals who have been identified as having significant barriers that prevent them from working for the foreseeable future and therefore receive the maximum cash grant of \$673.

The initial implementation of W-2 was conducted with a “lite touch,” meaning that individuals applying for assistance were to be provided only the services they requested. Critics assert that the “lite touch” meant that if a client did not ask for a specific service, such as food stamps or job training, the W-2 agency did not offer it. This controversial policy was later revised and W-2 agencies have committed to help ensure that individuals receive the full set of supportive services that can help them achieve and sustain self-sufficiency.

The work requirements for subsidized jobs and community service placements are quite stringent, including significant limits on the amount of time a W-2 participant can devote to education and training. These policies were established in an effort to simulate a typical work environment in which, for example, the birth of a baby does not mean that the parent gets a raise and expenditures for clothing and other work-related expenses are not usually covered by the employer. The work first philosophy is reinforced by other DWD policies as well, such as the flat monthly grant and the state policy not to use an earned income disregard that would effectively enable workers to keep more of their earnings before losing their cash assistance. Wisconsin is one of a few states that supplement

the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) with a state-funded EITC as an added work incentive.

■

Administration of Milwaukee’s welfare system has been transformed through a decision to contract with private entities to act as the W-2 agencies in the county.

The decision to contract with private agencies has been very controversial in Wisconsin, particularly in Milwaukee. These private agencies were given great flexibility to build an innovative and comprehensive “one-stop” system, based upon existing infrastructures, to provide individuals with an opportunity to apply for and simultaneously be enrolled in every program for which they are eligible. In addition to enrolling families in W-2 or related case management services, the one-stop centers house co-located county workers responsible for enrolling families in Medicaid/BadgerCare and food stamps. This integrated approach enables participants to have quicker access to the services necessary to find and support work.

While W-2 policies are uniform statewide, the initial contract specifications were loose and provided room for significant variation in the way Milwaukee W-2 agencies administered their programs. Even today, some agencies impose sanctions at a greater rate than others, and some agencies are known for being better at conducting job readiness assessments and following up with case management services. In addition, critics have raised concerns about the challenges—such as continuity and quality of services—that W-2 participants face when they move from one regional service area in Milwaukee to another. These inconsistencies appear to be, in part, a result of the state’s strategy of delegating much of the decision making to the local level. In fact, there have been questions about financial mismanagement and inconsistent customer service practices. In response, the latest round of W-2 contracts under negotiation will include more specific financial accountability and quality assurance measures.

■

Many employers, especially those with a need for a highly skilled workforce, are wary of working with W-2 training and workforce centers.

Some success has been made in connecting with corporations in need of relatively unskilled labor, but there has been less success with the companies that have the skilled jobs that provide better wages and benefits. In general, the connection between public programs and the employer community is not a natural one and the state and the W-2

agencies have not targeted many resources toward this effort to date. In turn, many employers are concerned that the W-2 agencies do not understand the needs of the companies and do not have the expertise necessary to provide workers with needed technical skills.

■
Little public attention is being paid to the consequences of clients' exhausting their lifetime limits for cash assistance.

W-2 puts a 24-month limit on cash assistance for each of the three subsidized job placements, and federal rules impose a lifetime limit of 60 months. An evaluation by the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau found that, as of June 2000, over 1,500 participants had reached the state's 24-month limit for one of the three subsidized employment placements. The evaluation also found that it is likely that no more than 100 people will exhaust their 60-month lifetime limit in the coming months. The state has noted that, of those who have applied for extensions to the time limits, 60 percent cite health problems that will continue to prevent them from working, requiring the state to closely monitor the status of the long-term participant population and address the situation.

Features of W-2

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The unique statewide management information system called CARES (Client Assistance for Re-Employment and Economic Support) is a double-edged sword.

CARES provides valuable information for tracking individual cases across programs and evaluating the effectiveness of the W-2 approach. The system is one of only a few information systems in the country that allows eligibility information for all of the state's public programs to be centrally located and comparable. However, it is extremely cumbersome to use and can be a barrier between the client and the case worker during the intake process. With more than 400 screens, the system requires very specific data entry techniques and does not provide space for the case worker, or FEP, to include important narrative information about the individual's life circumstances.

■
W-2's unique "pass-through" child support component has been the subject of great interest and evaluation at the national level.

In most cases, W-2 "passes through" child support payments to mothers participating in the program and disre-

gards the payments in the calculation of their W-2 cash payments. Research has indicated that Wisconsin's fathers are more likely to pay child support through this system because of the direct benefits to their children. In most states, child support paid on behalf of children receiving cash assistance is kept by the government to offset welfare costs, and the family receives little or no additional income.

■
The shortage of and delay in access to emergency funds for housing and temporary needs such as car repairs appear to create a significant barrier for W-2 participants trying to establish and maintain self-sufficiency.

Tight restrictions on the use of emergency funds amplify the increasing shortage of affordable housing and the difficulty many former AFDC or W-2 participants have in making rent or other household payments. Many families have moved from a consistent welfare check to a sometimes erratic pay check, creating new challenges for making ends meet. And while there are emergency funds available for such situations, the private W-2 agencies have expressed frustration with the difficulty they have in meeting immediate needs. In addition, the sometimes six-to-eight-week delay in the initial distribution of the (monthly) W-2 grants has been a source of great frustration for the Milwaukee W-2 agencies—who do not have the ability to speed up or change the payment mechanism—and clearly hinders their ability to serve their customers.

Unintended Consequences?

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It appears that many jobs held by former W-2 clients are low-wage or part-time positions with limited benefits and few opportunities for career advancement.

In implementing the work first philosophy in W-2, a large part of the AFDC caseload was quickly determined to be job-ready and effectively "diverted" off of the cash assistance roles. Little emphasis was placed on education or job training to help individuals find positions that would offer the possibility of career and economic advancement. However, Wisconsin has taken important steps to complement the work first philosophy by implementing two key income and work supports—a state EITC and a significant child care subsidy—that have helped at least stem families' further descent into poverty.

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The use of food pantries as a consistent source of food rather than as an emergency fallback has increased substantially, although no direct link has been proven between this increase and the W-2 program.

In addition to significant declines in food stamps enrollment from 1996 to 1999, many local food pantries and shelters report a much stronger pattern of repeat customers today than they saw before W-2 was implemented. Whereas individuals previously came only periodically, today families rely on the ability to do their “grocery shopping” at local food pantries on a monthly or even a weekly basis. This increase in demand could be an illustration of the current status of welfare “leavers”—families who have left the W-2 roles in favor of employment—who often have unstable incomes and may have lost or severed ties to supportive services, such as food stamps, in the process of moving from welfare into work.

■
As caseloads have dwindled, there is growing awareness that many of the W-2 participants that are still in the system are struggling with significant barriers such as substance abuse, mental health issues, or domestic violence.

Often referred to as “the hardest to serve,” these individuals comprise the majority of today’s W-2 caseload. Many have been cycling in and out of the system without having these barriers identified or addressed, and they are most likely to be approaching their individual 60-month lifetime limits on benefits. Advocates and researchers have criticized the W-2 agencies for not training the FEPs and other intake workers to be better at assessing their clients for major barriers. Both the DWD and the Milwaukee W-2 agencies have indicated a greater focus on improving the assessment process in the future.

■
To date, there has not been a great deal of emphasis or research on the effect of W-2, as a work program, on children.

The work first philosophy, by definition, focuses on the worker and not on the child. Consequently, the state’s W-2 caseload counts and corresponding reductions count only individuals who have left the program and do not include “child-only” cases. In fact, the state’s administrative structure physically separates addressing the needs of workers (the Department of Workforce Development) from child welfare services (the Department of Health and

Family Services), which affects the state’s ability to measure the long-term effects of W-2 on families in a comprehensive way.

While the state enacted several policies to remove financial and other disincentives to marriage early on in the welfare reform process, the DWD does not currently have a specific policy or program targeted at promoting marriage and family formation. However, although the primary emphasis of W-2 is promoting work and job preparation, many of the privatized W-2 agencies in Milwaukee have started “fatherhood initiatives” and have targeted efforts at promoting involvement of noncustodial parents and stepping up child support enforcement.

■
The lack of affordable housing in Milwaukee remains a major obstacle to achieving economic self sufficiency.

In Wisconsin there is a paucity of affordable housing for low-income working families. This problem has been articulated by advocates, W-2 agencies, and W-2 participants, who may spend over half of their income for rent. The lack of stable housing has negative affects on employability, children, and the community. There is limited housing assistance, which is usually administered by local nonprofit agencies and community development organizations that often have to navigate multiple layers of government bureaucracy to access funding. Currently, no state-wide policy exists to address housing issues, and federal programs have been limited in their effectiveness. However, recent research findings have resulted in new discussion of this issue in Wisconsin.

Supportive Services

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Large decreases in food stamps and Medicaid early in W-2 are being addressed under Wisconsin’s current policy of ensuring that, if eligible, people are enrolled in the programs.

The transition from AFDC to TANF after the passage of the welfare reform law did not place a high priority on maintaining the eligibility links to the realm of support services that used to be automatic. Making the required systems changes to accomplish the delinking was a difficult transition for many states, but Wisconsin has had success in reaching out to Medicaid-eligible families, bringing their enrollment numbers back up to pre-W-2 levels. Difficulties with enrollment in Wisconsin’s food stamps program have begun to be addressed, but stringent federal rules and complex recertification requirements continue to be a problem.

■

Wisconsin has maintained a commitment to ensuring access to child care subsidies through the “Wisconsin Shares” program.

Wisconsin Shares consolidated several different child care subsidy programs by streamlining eligibility requirements and benefit levels and increasing overall funding levels. Participation in the program since implementation of W-2 has increased by more than 80 percent, indicating both a need and successful promotion of the program. In fact, the DWD has spent more money on child care subsidies than cash assistance, with amounts quadrupling since 1996. The program has continued to grow and the state legislature has repeatedly been faced with finding additional funding to sustain the increased need, funding which could be in jeopardy in the downturn economy. However, the Legislative Audit Bureau reported that, despite the success of subsidized child care, many families choose not to use it for reasons ranging from transportation to concerns about quality.

The Future of W-2

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The state Department of Workforce Development has embarked on a new stage in W-2 by making a commitment to change or refine many policies.

In response to the April 2001 evaluation conducted by the Wisconsin’s Legislative Audit Bureau, the DWD developed an advisory panel to consider and respond to the evaluation findings. The advisory panel’s recommendations for changes to the Milwaukee W-2 program were submitted in mid-July and include emphasis on improving the quality of services, increasing options for education and training, and better use of assessment tools during the intake process.

The secretary of the DWD presented four goals for the future of W-2 in Milwaukee and Wisconsin:

- Retention and advancement—While the DWD acknowledges that W-2 alone cannot lift people out of poverty, the state has made a renewed commitment to place greater emphasis on providing support services and giving individuals the tools and experience they need to advance in the workforce. Education and training combined with work will represent the new work first philosophy.
- Serving the hardest to serve—The DWD will be holding the W-2 agencies accountable for taking additional steps to help remove barriers to employment. The initial assessments will be more comprehensive

and designed to flesh out problems at the front end. At the back end, the new W-2 contracts will include additional performance measures designed to help ensure customer service.

- Rethinking service delivery—The W-2 agencies are widening the focus beyond simply moving individuals from welfare to work. The future of W-2 will include a broader approach to workforce development in the long term. New strategic partnerships are being formed with the employer and business communities.
- Preserving the core of the program—The state is determined that the success of W-2 and its work first philosophy not be overlooked. The state will continue to take an individualized approach to each customer and focus on all aspects of her or his situation in determining the best course of action.

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Wisconsin’s success in welfare reform continues to be dependent on the success of implementation in Milwaukee, where 80 percent of the W-2 participants reside.

As the largest urban area in the state, Milwaukee will continue to have the most difficult task. Continued refinements and cooperation between the DWD and the W-2 agencies in Milwaukee are integral to the program’s success and maturity.

■

In the face of a deteriorating state budget and a slowly rising caseload, W-2 may be facing its most significant funding challenges in the near future.

An underlying message conveyed by all of the Wisconsin presenters was the importance of sustained federal funding during the TANF reauthorization process. Throughout the summer, there was intense debate in the state legislature over the new biennial budget and the impending economic downturn. Funding for W-2 cash benefits was sustained, but funding for ancillary services, such as assessments and screening for substance abuse, was reduced by approximately 5 percent. Those funds will be reinvested to supplement the child care program.

August 6–8, 2001/Milwaukee

Agenda

Monday, August 6, 2001

Noon Registration/Check-in at headquarters hotel, Milwaukee [*Hotel Metro*]

12:15 pm Buffet lunch available, followed by discussion panels [*Ballroom, Hotel Metro*]

1:00 pm OVERVIEW OF W-2: MILWAUKEE AND BEYOND

Rebecca J. Swartz, *Research Fellow/Director*, Hudson Institute, Madison Office

Thomas J. Corbett, Ph.D., *Professor Emeritus*, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Thomas Kaplan, *Senior Scientist*, Institute of Research on Poverty,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Reactors: **Dick Buschmann**, *Administrator*, Financial Assistance Division,
Milwaukee County Department of Human Services

Deb Hughes, *W-2 Project Manager*, Southwest Consortium,
Department of Social Services

Phyllis Bermingham, *Director*, Marathon County Department of
Employment and Training

- What are the key milestones in the history of welfare reform in Wisconsin?
- What are the essential elements of the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program?
- How does Milwaukee's population and employment base differ from that of the rest of the state?
- How does W-2 in Milwaukee differ, in structure and experience, from W-2 in "out state" Wisconsin?
- What are the biggest challenges and successes in implementing W-2 in the rural areas of the state?
- What factors contributed to the decision to encourage the privatization of W-2 in Milwaukee?
- What have been the biggest successes and challenges in W-2 implementation? What are the key elements for ensuring the continued progress of welfare reform in Milwaukee and Wisconsin?

3:00 pm Break/Check-in

3:30 pm THE STATE PERSPECTIVE: THE ROAD TO W-2

Mary Rowin, *Deputy Administrator*, Division of Workforce Solutions,
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Madison

- What are the greatest strengths and weaknesses of Wisconsin's welfare reform effort?
- How has the client population changed over the course of the past few years? Who is on the W-2 roles today?
- What were the key elements of the initial W-2 provider contracts in Milwaukee?

- What elements of the W-2 provider contracts have been added, removed, or modified since the implementation of W-2?
- How has the Department of Workforce Development interacted, either directly or via the Milwaukee W-2 agencies, with community-based and faith-based organizations in the course of providing services to W-2 clients?

4:15 pm W-2 UNDER A MICROSCOPE: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Paul Stuiber, *Director*, Program Evaluation Division, Legislative Audit Bureau, State of Wisconsin

- What are the key findings from the series of audits of the W-2 program in Milwaukee?
- How do the successes and problems of the W-2 agencies in Milwaukee contrast with other W-2 providers in the state?
- How can the problems be resolved? Has the Department of Workforce Development already taken steps to correct them?

5:00 pm Adjournment

5:45 pm Departure for reception (walking from Hotel Metro)

6:00 pm Reception [*Milwaukee Grain Exchange Building, 225 East Michigan Street*]

7:15 pm Federal participants' departure for dinner

7:30 pm Dinner for federal participants, preceded by informal remarks [*Coquette Café, 316 North Milwaukee Street, between East St. Paul Avenue and East Buffalo Street*]

UNDERSTANDING HOW WISCONSIN WORKS:
FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WISCONSIN AND MILWAUKEE

David R. Riemer, *Director*, Department of Administration, City of Milwaukee

Tuesday, August 7, 2001

7:30 am Breakfast available [*Ballroom, Hotel Metro*]

8:30 am Bus departure for YW Works

8:45 am W-2 AGENCIES: THE "ONE-STOP" MODEL [*YW Works/Milwaukee Works*]

Nancy Jones, *Director of Workforce Development*, YW Works

Keith Garland, *Director of Operations*, YW Works

Ann-Marie Bernard, *Customer Service Manager*, YW Works

Charlotte Mayfield, *Staff Training Manager*, YW Works

Steve Jonas, *Welfare to Work Program Manager*, YW Works

Rev. LeHavre Buck, *Fatherhood Program Coordinator*, YW Works

- How are the responsibilities divided within a W-2 agency?
- What are the objectives of W-2 in Wisconsin and how have they evolved over time? What are the steps taken at YW Works to accomplish these objectives?
- How do W-2 agencies ensure that clients receive the package of supportive services in addition to W-2 benefits?

- How does the CARES computer system assist or create barriers for the W-2 agencies with case management and quality assurance?
- What steps are being taken to encourage a stronger role for fathers in W-2 families?

10:30 am Bus departure for Hope House

11:00 am Tour of Hope House
Kenneth Schmidt, *Director*, Hope House

11:30 am Lunch in small groups with Hope House caseworkers, followed by panel discussion [*Hope House*]

12:15 pm HOMELESSNESS: W-2'S UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES?
Ann Laatsch, *Housing Programs Coordinator*, Community Advocates
Kenneth Schmidt (see title above)
Tim A. Ballering, *President*, Affordable Rentals
Michael S. Brever, *Executive Director*, Tri-Corp Housing Inc.

- What are the most common issues facing women who need emergency shelter?
- What types of situations are the most common causes of homelessness?
- What are the difficulties encountered by former AFDC fraud offenders in procuring housing?
- What are the expectations for guests of a facility like Hope House?
- What changes to W-2 are needed to address the housing problem that has emerged?
- How can community organizations and the W-2 agencies work more effectively together to address this problem?

1:15 pm Bus departure for Hotel Metro

1:30 pm QUESTIONING THE ASSUMPTIONS THAT BUILT W-2
[*Ballroom, Hotel Metro*]
Kathleen Mulligan-Hansel, Ph.D., *Working Families Project Coordinator*,
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
Pamela Fendt, *Policy Analyst*, Center for Economic Development,
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

- What types of structural or environmental barriers have hampered the implementation of an effective safety net in Wisconsin?
- What new approaches to education and training might improve employment and wage outcomes for W-2 participants?
- What changes could be made to improve access to supportive services for W-2 "leavers" and other low-income families, especially as time limits approach?
- What are the most significant unmet needs that should be addressed in the process of TANF reauthorization, both nationally and on a state-specific basis?

2:15 pm COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS: REACHING OUT AT GROUND LEVEL
Ann DeLeo, *Consultant*, Legal Action of Wisconsin
Jon Janowski, *Director of Advocacy*, Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee
Tanya Atkinson, *Director*, Milwaukee Office, Wisconsin Council on
Children and Families

Jean Verber, *Administrative Coordinator*, Women and Poverty Public Education Initiative

- What role does the advocate community play in advising the state on public policy? Is there a formal means of collaboration?
- How has W-2 hurt or helped enrollment of eligible individuals in other public programs? What are the trends in participation?
- What have been the experiences of food pantries since the implementation of W-2?
- How do clients view support programs like Medicaid and BadgerCare now that eligibility is no longer tied to cash assistance?
- How can the Food Stamp program be improved, both nationally and locally, to better serve W-2 clients?
- How are the child care needs of W-2 clients being addressed?
- What should the state and the W-2 agencies be doing to facilitate enrollment in SSI?
- What are the biggest concerns and unmet needs for women outside of the W-2 context —housing, substance abuse, domestic violence, connecting with other supportive services?
- What should be the priorities for policymakers in the federal TANF reauthorization process?

3:45 pm Break

4:00 pm BETTER SKILLS FOR BETTER JOBS: THE EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION

Robert H. Milbourne, *President*, Greater Milwaukee Committee

Joel Rogers, Ph.D., *Professor*, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Eric Parker, Ph.D., *Executive Director*, Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership

Reactor: Phil Neunfeldt, *Secretary-Treasurer*, Wisconsin AFL-CIO

- What was the role of employers and unions in designing and implementing W-2?
- Were education and training key elements of the W-2 process?
- What is the current relationship between W-2 agencies and employers and what are the areas for improvement?
- What factors does the employer community consider in determining when it is appropriate to target W-2 clients in their hiring process?
- What changes are needed in order to make the connection to jobs with greater earning potential and benefits? What is the best way to assist W-2 clients and low-income families in becoming self-sufficient?

5:00 pm Adjournment

5:45 pm Departure for dinner (walking from Hotel Metro)

6:00 pm Dinner [*Tula's, 117 East Wells Street between Water Street and Broadway*]

Wednesday, August 8, 2001

7:30 am Breakfast available [*Atrium, Hotel Metro*]

8:30 am Bus departure for FaithWorks

- 8:45 am Welcome/Tour of FaithWorks [*FaithWorks*]
Linda Zick, *Director of Clinical Services*, FaithWorks
- 9:15 am EXPLORING FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES [*Conference Room, FaithWorks*]
Jeff Figgatt, Psy.D., *Executive Director*, FaithWorks
Barbara White, *Program Manager*, Urban-Suburban Community Outreach Project, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee
Rev. Charles McClellan, *Pastor and Executive Director*, Holy Cathedral, Church of God in Christ
Paula Simon, *Executive Director*, Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations
- What situations and roles have been most effective for faith-based organizations in providing services to W-2 clients?
 - What are some examples of successful initiatives in Milwaukee?
 - What are the primary concerns about state interactions with religious institutions, and what is the best way to address these concerns?
- 10:15 am Bus departure for Hotel Metro
- 10:30 am MILWAUKEE W-2 DIRECTORS: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF AN EVOLVING PROGRAM
[*Ballroom, Hotel Metro*]
Jerome Stepaniak, *W-2 Director/Vice President*, Welfare Reform Division, Maximus Corporation
Rita Renner, *Vice President of Operations*, YW Works/Milwaukee Works
E. Mona Garland, *W-2 Director*, Opportunities Industrialization Centers of Greater Milwaukee
Tina Koehn, *W-2 Administrator*, United Migrant Opportunity Services
George Gerharz, *President*, George Gerharz and Associates, LLC, and *Executive Manager*, Allied Community Solutions, LLC
- What have been the biggest successes and challenges in coordination among the Milwaukee W-2 agencies?
 - What were the initial challenges in coordinating with the county employees administering the other public programs? What areas for improvement have been identified?
 - How have the W-2 agencies made changes in order to better address the needs of the current caseload population—the “hardest to serve”?
 - How can the “assessment” process be improved to better detect problems such as domestic violence and substance abuse?
 - How are the W-2 agencies addressing the impending time limits? How do the agencies determine when an extension is warranted?
 - How can the W-2 agencies facilitate increased stability with housing for W-2 clients?
 - What improvements are needed in the next round of contracts with the Department of Workforce Development?
 - What are the pros and cons to modifying or removing the regional structure that is in place in Milwaukee?
- 12:15 pm Break/Check-Out

12:45 pm Lunch, followed by closing panel [*Ballroom, Hotel Metro*]

1:15 pm W-2 IN 2002: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Jennifer Reinert, *Secretary*, Department of Workforce Development,
State of Wisconsin

Mary Rowin (see title above)

Eric Baker, *Deputy Administrator*, Division of Workforce Solutions,
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Madison

- What have been the key accomplishments of W-2?
- How have Department of Workforce Development and the W-2 agencies addressed the changing needs of the client population?
- What are the Department of Workforce Development's priorities in continuing to implement W-2?
- What improvements need to be made in the structure of the program?
What options are being considered?
- How will the future of W-2 differ from the past? Will education and training play a larger role?
- How will the state address problems like housing, substance abuse, and enrollment declines in the food stamp program?
- What are the most significant challenges that should be addressed during the reauthorization of TANF?

2:30 pm Adjournment/Bus departure for Milwaukee Airport

Federal and Foundation Participants

Vee Burke

Specialist in Income Maintenance
Domestic Social Policy Division
Congressional Research Service
Library of Congress

Katie Burns

Program Analyst
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Management and
Budget
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Joanne E. Cianci

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U.S. Office of Management and Budget

Sheila Dacey

Welfare Analyst
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Dagny Wolf

Program Coordinator

Biographical Sketches— Speakers and Panelists

Tanya Atkinson is director of the Milwaukee Office of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families as well as an adjunct professor of social work at Carroll College. Before joining the council, where she focuses on the areas of welfare, child welfare, early childhood brain development and community mobilizing, she worked as a legislative aide and policy analyst in the Wisconsin legislature.

Eric Baker is one of two deputy administrators in the Division of Workforce Solutions in Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development.

Tim A. Ballering is president of Affordable Rentals. Previously, he was president of the Apartment Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc., a nonprofit trade organization representing rental-housing owners in Milwaukee and surrounding areas.

Phyllis Bermingham is director of the Marathon County Department of Employment and Training. In Marathon County, the W-2 program is operated out of this department's Job Center in partnership with other community agencies. She was previously cofounder and, for ten years, executive director of a comprehensive women's center in Wausau, Wisconsin.

Ann-Marie Bernard is the customer service manager of YW Works. During the more than five years she has been with the YWCA, she has been a financial employment planner, internal trainer, and manager of the Call Center. Bernard was instrumental in developing and training the Call Center Team. Before joining the staff of the YWCA, Bernard taught at elementary schools in Puerto Rico and St. Lucia.

Michael S. Brever is executive director of Tri-Corp Housing Inc., where he has worked since 1998. As executive director, Brever has numerous responsibilities, including supervising the activities of three divisions of Tri-Corp that were formerly independent nonprofit corporations (South Community Organization, Housing with Help, and Southeast Affordable Housing). Brever was previously executive director of South Community Organization, Inc.

Rev. LeHavre Buck is the fatherhood program coordinator for YW Works. As coordinator, he provides services to W-2, WtW (nonconstodial parents and their male children), and

members of the community who are in need of assistance. He also writes a weekly column on fatherhood for the *Milwaukee Times* and the *Milwaukee Community Journal*.

Dick Buschmann is the administrator of the Financial Assistance Division for the Milwaukee County Department of Human Services. He served as the executive vice president to the Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County during the development of the W-2 implementation plan for Milwaukee County.

Thomas J. Corbett, Ph.D., has emeritus status at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he recently stepped down as associate director of the Institute for Research on Poverty and as a member of the faculty in the School of Social Work. His professional experience includes extensive work on poverty and social policy issues at all levels of government. His scholarly work has focused on the evolution of current welfare programs and attempts to reform them, topics on which he has written numerous papers and articles. He also collaborates extensively with state welfare officials in a number of states through the Welfare Peer Assistance Network, which he developed and facilitates.

Ann Deleo is a consultant to Legal Action of Wisconsin.

Pamela Fendt is a policy analyst at the Center for Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. She was appointed to the W-2 Monitoring Task Force of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors as the academic research representative in 1997. In addition, she seeks to interpret W-2 data and policy development for local advocates such as the Milwaukee-based Coalition to Save Our Children and for local, state, and national policymakers.

Jeffrey E. Figgatt, PsyD, is the executive director of Faith Works Milwaukee, Inc. Previously he was a member of the industrial/organization psychology firm Humver, Mundie & McClary, consulting with a wide range of clients in the areas of executive assessment and selection, leadership development, and succession planning.

Keith Garland is director of operations for YW Works, which houses the W-2, employment and training, and food

stamp programs, among others. Garland has been involved in the start-up of various welfare reform programs over the past six years. He has been a manager and director of case management units in charge of implementing welfare reform initiatives, staff training, program design and development, and employment readiness and training.

E. Mona Garland is W-2 director of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of Greater Milwaukee. Among the positions she has held in her more than 10 years of experience in the human services field are economic support supervisor for Kenosha County Department of Social Services and regional administrator with the State Public Defenders Office. She has served on various volunteer boards and in November 1999 received the Wisconsin Employment and Training annual award for professional excellence in employment and training administration.

George Gerharz is president of George Gerharz and Associates, LLC, and executive manager of Allied Community Solutions, LLC. He provides services to nonprofit and for-profit organizations as a consultant and works with numerous organizations, including Community Action Agencies community-based organizations, and welfare reform agencies. He previously was acting executive director for the Social Development Commission in Milwaukee.

Deb Hughes has been project manager for the W-2 Southwest Consortium for the past 11 years. The consortium is a regional W-2 operation in Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, and Richland Counties. It was formed in 1987 under the leadership of Grant County, the first to operate the Work Experience and Job Training pilot program and, subsequently, the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills and W-2 work programs.

Jon Janowski is director of advocacy at the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee, where he has worked for five years. The task force is a private nonprofit community organization that exists to prevent and alleviate hunger. Janowski has held positions with the secretary of state in Wisconsin and the City of Milwaukee's Common Council.

Steve Jonas is program manager for the federal Welfare to Work (WTW) initiative and was a primary strategist in its development and implementation. In addition to WTW, Jonas manages Childcare Transportation for Milwaukee County and assists other program managers with program reporting and audits.

Nancy Jones, director of workforce development, YWCA of Greater Milwaukee, has over 15 years of operations and

systems development experience, including the development of employment preparation programs for low-income unskilled workers. During her tenure at the YWCA, Jones has developed intake, assessment, and behavioral change programming for customers, enabling them to make choices and positive changes in their lives.

Thomas Kaplan is associate director and senior scientist at the Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the principal Wisconsin researcher for the Rockefeller Institute of Government's study of state welfare reform capacity and has served as principal investigator for research projects on social policy and population trends in Wisconsin and on the evaluation of welfare reform programs. For 15 years he held positions in Wisconsin state government, including deputy budget director, planning director, and director of Medicaid HMO programs in the state Department of Health and Social Services.

Tina Koehn is W-2 administrator for the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), where she is also administrator of the Milwaukee Workforce Development program. She has over 18 years of experience in employment, training, and workforce development. Before joining UMOS, she helped set up Milwaukee's first two One-Stop Job Centers in a collaborative agency partnership facilitated by the Private Industry Council.

Ann Laatsch is the housing programs coordinator for Community Advocates, where she has worked since 1992. During the transition from AFDC to W-2, she led a team that ran the area's only W-2 information and advocacy hotline. In addition to her responsibilities as housing coordinator, she has also developed training programs for advocates and administered housing programs for people with AIDS/HIV.

Charlotte Mayfield is staff training manager for the YWCA of Greater Milwaukee. Mayfield came to the YWCA with 15 years of human services experience and has utilized the state's computer-based information management system, CARES, since its inception. She is currently responsible for ensuring policy and CARES competency for YWCA staff.

Charles McClellan is pastor and executive director, Holy Cathedral, Church of God in Christ.

Robert H. Milbourne is president of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, a civic group of business, labor, and education leaders formed in the late 1940s to improve the economic and cultural base of Milwaukee. Milbourne joined the committee in 1985 after a career in business and in Wisconsin state government, where he worked from

1970 to 1979 under Democratic and Republican administrations as a budget and tax policy advisor. He has also served on many boards, commissions, task forces, and community organizations.

Kathleen Mulligan-Hansel, Ph.D., has been the Working Families project coordinator at the Institute for Wisconsin's Future since July 2000. The institute serves as a statewide policy research and community education center. She has taught courses in the politics of economic development and democracy and the political economy of women and politics. She has also conducted research on women's organizing for economic activities.

Phil Neunfeldt is secretary-treasurer and legislative director of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO as well as executive co-chair of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership. He has participated in labor, community, and political action throughout his work life and has worked with various unions to develop strategies and programs to upgrade workplace skills and address changes in technology and the economy.

Eric Parker, Ph.D., is executive director of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership and is responsible for its expansion in manufacturing and its replication in other sectors of the state economy. He also conducts research on economic restructuring and institutional innovation in numerous sectors in Wisconsin and other states.

Rita Renner is vice president of operations and customer relationship management for the YWCA of Greater Milwaukee. In the six years Renner has been with the YWCA, she has been the driving force in developing the YW Works welfare reform program. Before joining the YWCA, she co-owned several businesses in the private sector.

Jennifer Reinert was appointed secretary of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) by Gov. Tommy Thompson in September 2000. Before her appointment to her current post she served as executive assistant and deputy secretary for the DWD. Prior to that, she served for two years as administrator for the Division of Technology Management in the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

David R. Riemer was re-appointed by Mayor John O. Norquist as director of the Department of Administration for the city of Milwaukee in June 1996. He had previously held that position, serving as the department's first director, from December 1989 to September 1993. He has been one of the architects of Wisconsin's W-2 program as well as the recently launched BadgerCare health insurance program for low-income workers. He has authored works in the areas of welfare policy and health care, and has taught urban planning issues.

Joel Rogers, Ph.D., professor of law, political science, and sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, is also founder and director of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy. He has written widely on American politics and public policy, political theory, and U.S. and comparative industrial relations.

Mary C. Rowin is one of two deputy administrators in the new Division of Workforce Solutions, Department of Workforce Development. She coordinates all W-2 activities for the division, with a special focus on Milwaukee W-2. The former deputy director of the Bureau of Work Support Programs in the Division of Economic Support, she worked on W-2 policy, research and evaluation, and implementation.

Kenneth Schmidt is director of Hope House, a facility based on a settlement house model that offers emergency shelter, transitional housing as well as programs to the community-at-large. Prior to this, he held numerous positions at the Social Development Commission, one of the country's largest community action programs.

Paula Simon has been executive director of the Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations since 1997. The council speaks as the representative voice of the Jewish community on its public affairs and community relations issues. Simon, who joined the council as associate director in 1988, has been responsible for initiating a wide range of council projects, including a variety of programs in cooperation with the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Jerome Stepaniak is vice president of Maximus, where he is also project director for the Wisconsin Works project and provides oversight for overall W-2 operations. Previously, he was president of Stepaniak and Associates Consulting which specializes in assisting governments and nonprofit agencies to find solutions for complex operational and strategic issues.

Paul Stuiber is program evaluation director for the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, where he has been employed for the past 12 years. Previously, he worked for the University of Wisconsin System Administration, during which time he was responsible for evaluating the provisions of services to students with disabilities, campus child care, and affirmative action and equal employment opportunity policies.

Rebecca J. Swartz joined the Hudson Institute in early 1998 as a research fellow with the Welfare Policy Center at its field office in Madison, Wisconsin, which she now directs. Prior to joining Hudson, Swartz served as a policy analyst at the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. In this capacity, she worked on W-2.

Jean Verber has for the past six years been administrative coordinator of the Milwaukee office of Women and Poverty Public Education Initiative. In this position, she engages in research, community organizing, and educational outreach with the goal of creating linkages and dialogue between the poverty and nonpoverty community in order to influence public policy. She is also an appointed member of the Milwaukee County W-2 Monitoring Task Force and serves on the Department of Workforce Development advisory panel on W-2.

Barbara White is program manager for the Urban-Suburban Community Outreach Project of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee. The project promotes collaboration among the faith community to enhance outreach efforts to assist low income individuals and families. White has worked on various boards and committees within the Milwaukee faith and neighborhood communities for more than 23 years.

Linda Zick is director of clinical services for Faith Works Milwaukee. She has more than 20 years of experience in the mental health and chemical addictions field, assisting individuals and families as a clinical social worker and therapist. Her approach to counseling is based upon helping families find ways to develop their own coping skills to meet the challenges of life.



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