

October 2004

Jobs With a Future: Successes to Date

What is JWF?

Created in 1996, Jobs With a Future (JWF) brings together leading stakeholders in South Central Wisconsin — including the City of Madison, Dane County, Madison Area Technical College, the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison — to build and pursue a strategic vision for workforce development in the region. Ultimately, the partners are investing together in building “jobs with a future” for all residents of the region. The partners know that such work requires both stronger shared vision among the institutions, and a stronger role for the region’s leading employers in implementing it.

First, then, JWF is a *strategic collaboration of leading institutions in the region*. JWF allows partners to pursue joint efforts to make our workforce development system more efficient and responsive to area workers and employers. To date, JWF partners have dedicated over \$1 million to this effort.

Understanding that employers need to be brought into the system, JWF partners have invested heavily in building stronger employer organization in the region. So JWF is a strategic collaboration of leading institutions, but it is also *partnerships of local employers and leading industries* — health care and manufacturing most recently — that are working with leading institutions on solving practical skill, training, recruitment, and retention problems.

From strategic discussion to on-the-ground training development, JWF is building a stronger workforce system for South Central Wisconsin.

JWF Industry Partnerships Project, 2003-04

JWF significantly expanded efforts to provide workers in health care and manufacturing with pathways to career advancement by providing infrastructure that helped the region’s Workforce Development Board secure a two-year, \$1.14 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The grant enabled JWF partners to implement the Industry Partnerships Project, which provided skills training

JWF Outcomes at a Glance, 1996-Present

- About 100 participating employers
- Nearly 1,700 area residents trained
- Over 100 courses offered on topics ranging from Phlebotomy and Leadership Development to Electrical Maintenance and Computer Programming
- More than \$1 million in public and private training investment

Some JWF Accomplishments, 1996-Present

- Developed a JWF vision statement, which provides priorities and benchmarks for regional workforce development system improvement
- Helped support multiple innovations at local technical colleges to improve training accessibility for local firms
- Developed and implemented systems for measuring the impact of workforce training on workers and employers
- Built a Retention Strategies Network to help employers improve retention and reduce turnover among frontline caregivers and customer service representatives
- Held a multicultural conference focused on attracting and retaining workers, creating an inclusive work culture, and resolving conflicts through improved cross-cultural awareness
- Helped support the Upward Mobility Project of the Dane County Job Center to help low-income workers advance
- Helped manufacturing employers to coordinate and implement pre-employment training programs
- Offered job-shadowing opportunities and held job fairs
- Sponsored numerous training courses for workers in health care and manufacturing

at no charge to hundreds of workers in the region, many of whom had little or no education beyond high school and held low-wage positions not typically associated with upward mobility. Program highlights (as of June 30, 2004) include:

- About 100 participating employers in health care and manufacturing
- 778 area residents trained, at least one-third of whom were low-wage workers (earning below \$13.15 per hour)
- 35 different training courses offered, some on multiple occasions
- 20,000 total training hours logged
- \$295,000 saved in total training costs

JWF and the Upward Mobility Project, 1999-2003

JWF partners and businesses supported the Upward Mobility Project of the Dane County Job Center from 1999 to 2003. The project identified workers with solid employment histories who were stuck in “dead-end” jobs. It connected these workers with JWF firms and other area employers offering higher wages and benefits. Program highlights include:

- 908 participating area residents
- 631 participants (69 percent) placed in new jobs
- At least 92 participants placed with JWF employer partners
- Average hours worked per week increased from 31 to 37
- Average wage increased about 20 percent, from \$8.57 to \$10.23 per hour
- The percentage of workers covered by benefits (including health insurance) rose from 15 to 51 percent

JWF and Construction and Skilled Trades, 2003-Present

In 2003, JWF partners participated in a conference called by construction unions, developers, contractors, and public-sector training institutions to begin a dialogue around the changing demographics of our regional labor force and the lack of women and people of color in the skilled trades. A major recommendation of the conference was that JWF develop a Skilled Trades Partnership that would work, in part, to increase diversity in the construction occupations. To date, we have:

- Educated the local trades on the demographic trends affecting them
- Developed a leadership team to prioritize goals and sustain the initiative, as well as separate work teams to implement the project
- Raised \$80,000 to create the Training Partnership for the Skilled Trades, a program to prepare residents to take apprenticeship exams and provide career exploration
- Developed a uniform tracking process for all applicants who take apprenticeship exams, to help us determine when individuals exit the program and why

JWF Research and Publications

JWF is also unique in that University of Wisconsin-Madison partners in the Center on Wisconsin Strategy provide research and analysis in support of the JWF vision and partnership work. Some examples of this work include:

- *Caring About Caregivers: Reducing Turnover of Frontline Health Care Workers in South Central Wisconsin* (2003)
- *Building “Jobs With a Future” in Wisconsin: Lessons from Dane County* (2000)
- *Jobs With a Future Resource Book* (1999)
- *Improving the Retention of Frontline Caregivers in Dane County* (1999)
- *Building Industry Partnerships in Dane County* (1998)
- *Dane County Labor Market Indicators* (1998)
- *Training and Skills in the Dane County Finance and Insurance Industries: Challenges and Opportunities* (1997)
- *Training and Skills in the Dane County Health Care Industry: Challenges and Opportunities* (1997)
- *Training and Skills in the Dane County Manufacturing: Challenges and Opportunities* (1997)



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