

Strengthening Employment Opportunities in Allied Drive

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Allied Area Task Force Subcommittee

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Allied Task Force Employment Subcommittee Report

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Background

The Allied Area Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy recommendations from November 2007, identified a need for improved economic development for the Allied neighborhood. The report highlighted the need to provide greater access to reliable jobs that pay a living wage. It recommended that the City work with other public and private partners to help Allied residents overcome the major barriers to stable employment. Initial strategies were outlined as follows:

- Cooperation with business to identify employment opportunities
- Promote pre-employment, training and job coaching opportunities
- Ensure access to affordable stable quality childcare
- Collaboration with Madison Schools (and Verona per the Task Force edit) in relation to their role in childcare and parenting, training and support
- Improve access from the neighborhood to employment and support centers
- Building redevelopment to be a source of employment for neighborhood
- Commercial/retail development in the Madison Plaza to support neighborhood-serving small businesses and employment opportunities

Introduction

In 2005 the Allied Area Task Force was created to make recommendations to the Mayor and Common Council regarding a focused set of strategies to strengthen the Allied area neighborhood. Shortly after forming, the Task Force voted on the top three areas of concentration for in-depth study and discussion. These three areas were 1) Housing, 2) Safety and 3) Employment. In late 2007, the Task Force appointed a subcommittee to study the issue of employment and make recommendations to improve the quality of life in the Allied neighborhood.

The subcommittee held a series of meetings focused on problem identification, review of existing resources, identification of a model employment system, and development of recommendations to strengthen and enhance employment efforts in the Allied area.

This report is a summary of the subcommittees work with primary emphasis on recommendations that will help strengthen adult employment efforts in the Allied neighborhood leading to economic self-sufficiency and neighborhood stability.

Problem Identification

The Allied neighborhood has a disproportionate number of people who have been chronically unemployed and underemployed, and face a number of barriers to employment. There is a need to recognize that individuals' employability will fall on a continuum of need, some of which will require extensive support to move people into higher level of employability. Any employment model needs to address ways to meet this continuum. Individuals' barriers to employment vary from minor to substantial from singular to multiple and from short term to chronic. A list of barriers to employability follows:

Barriers:

- Domestic violence
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol and other drug abuse issues
- Background information specifically criminal backgrounds
- Lack of or poor work ethic
- Lack of childcare
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Transportation
- Limited or no work history
- Little education
- Lack of hard and soft skills
- Personal crisis
- Lack of confidence or fear to try new things
- Lack of basic funds or items, such as clothing or personal hygiene items to attend job
- Need for instant gratification...unwilling to start a job with lower pay
- Health issues
- Overloaded with daily tasks...lack of time to attend training
- Immediacy of job and income...cannot afford time for training
- Language
- Citizenship

A summary of barriers, referral supports and goal is included as Attachment A.

Summary of Existing Neighborhood Employment Resources

The subcommittee reviewed current programs serving the Allied neighborhood whose specific goal was to ready individuals for employment, connect individuals to employment and ensure that long-term employment is sustained.

There are several significant employment efforts in the Allied neighborhood including the Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), the Allied Employment Partnership Program, a collaboration between Urban League of Greater Madison, Madison Apprenticeship Program (MAP) and the YWCA, and the Skilled Trades Apprenticeship Readiness Training program (START). Other programs also participate including Madison Urban Ministry's Journey Home Project, MATC and Children's Services Society Support Specialist. The Allied Neighborhood Association has hosted employment fairs and resume skill building workshops. Additionally other neighborhood

service providers provide support in such things as transportation assistance, resume/application writing assistance, funds to obtain ID cards, job search help, W-2 application and case management, childcare support, health services, GED, ESL and substance abuse support.

Further detail for the major Allied site based employment programs is as follows:

ECI

Funding for ECI is provided by Dane County and has been in the Allied neighborhood since 2006. The program is targeted to pregnant women and/or parents with at least one child under the age of three at the time of enrollment. It focuses on health and building healthy relationships in the family and in the community and on employment and education.

Since program inception, 125 families have been served. Within these 125 families, 73 persons have received employment services. 57 of these individuals have obtained employment. 1/3 of the participants speak only Spanish and are employed in jobs with an average wage of \$6.81/hour. The remaining individuals are employed in jobs with an average wage of \$9.42/hour. The average job retention is 7 months. The annual program budget is approximately \$400,000.

Strengths of the program include a holistic assessment process, linkages with other neighborhood service providers, a small caseload of ~50 families per year/per \$400,000 budget, a team approach that includes social workers plus employment specialists and post job case management.

Allied Employment Partnership Program

The Allied Employment Partnership Program is a two-year pilot project funded by the City of Madison at \$ 70,000 per year. The goal of the program is to provide assessment, job training and placement into living wage jobs. In 2007, 21 individuals were provided job training and 10 obtained employment. Evaluation of the program will continue in 2008.

The Allied Partnership program is designed as a one-stop neighborhood based employment shop offering assessment, job training, job placement and upward mobility through a variety of partner programs. It offers post job case management throughout the first year of employment and has a job developer component that works with area businesses to develop jobs with training and upward mobility.

Urban League of Greater Madison (ULGM)

ULGM provides, marketing, outreach, intake and assessment for participation in the Partnership program. Referrals are made to an ULGM job-training program, Madison Apprenticeship Program or the YWCA training programs. ULGM Job Developer works with area employers to identify jobs appropriate for program participants. ULGM links participants with jobs and provides post job case management for up to one year.

Madison Apprenticeship Program (MAP)

MAP provides a 12-week life skills course to prepare individuals for job placement. The program focuses on personal development and preparation for self-sufficiency. MAP provides outreach and job placement assistance.

YWCA

The YWCA provides job training to Allied residents through one of several training programs. Individuals can choose from a Trades readiness program, a Roads Construction program, a Printing apprenticeship program or Job Options and Displaced Homemakers program. The YWCA provides outreach and job placement assistance.

START

The START program offers preparation for apprenticeship testing on site in the neighborhood. In 2007, the City of Madison provided \$75,000, with 40% targeted to the Allied neighborhood. 29 Allied residents enrolled in the program. 4 individuals had completed the course. As of the end of 2007, none had passed the test.

The START program offers an opportunity for high paying jobs in the trades. Flexible program hours and site based programming are strengths of the program. Individuals may need referral to a GED program prior to engaging in the START program. Partnerships need to be created between START and contractors to create job opportunities for individuals who pass the test so an incentive exists to remain in the course.

Model Employment Program Components

After closely reviewing the existing employment programs, identifying program strengths and opportunities for enhancements the subcommittee identified trademarks of a successful employment model. The model needs to include three critical components for long-term employment:

- ✓ preparation
- ✓ placement
- ✓ follow up

Within these three components the program should have the ability to be community based, relationship-centered, have strong collaboration between existing services, have low staff/participant ratios, have a developed employer network, have an upward job mobility emphasis, and have access to discretionary resources to assist with such needs as transportation, rental assistance, food, and child care to assist with emergencies.

Successful implementation strategies for a successful model includes:

1. One initial point of contact or several points of initial contact that are closely coordinated where a comprehensive employment assessment is done looking at employment and educational history, what barriers exist to successful employment such as psycho-social needs, drug, alcohol and personal issues. This service needs to be available at different times to accommodate a participants varied schedule.
2. Resources within the network that provide wrap around services that are comprehensive and offer family support, flexible accessibility to staff, quick crisis management response, and problem solving support.
3. A strong commitment to working with employers to access jobs and to provide ongoing job support and assistance in problem solving job issues, ability to bridge client's expectations of employers and employers expectations of clients, and a planned mechanism for upward job mobility.
4. Strong linkages to job training and educational programs geared for the community job market

5. Opportunity for participant input to program development, and a good outcomes evaluation mechanism

Recommendations

- 1. Create an Allied Employment Coalition that includes the Allied Employment Partnership, START, ECI and other employment agencies operating in Allied now and in the future, that functions as a cohesive and seamless continuum of services that clearly delineates each partner's role and capacity, and includes all direct employment functions in the neighborhood.**
- 2. Continue or expand City, County and private financial support for Allied employment and employment-related programs.**
- 3. Create Job Opportunities in Allied within the City's Redevelopment Effort**
- 4. Develop New Public-Private Partnerships**

In order to effectively implement these recommendations, the subcommittee has prepared the following strategies for implementation for each recommendation:

- 1. Create an Allied Employment Coalition that includes the Allied Employment Partnership, START, ECI and other employment agencies operating in Allied now and in the future, that functions as a cohesive and seamless continuum of services that clearly delineates each partner's role and capacity, and includes all direct employment functions in the neighborhood.**

Strategies to Accomplish Objective

- A. Strengthen and Coordinate the Allied Employment Coalition
 - Ensure the Coalition includes resources at all points on the continuum including pre-employment skill development, education and training services, job search and placement assistance with an emphasis on upward mobility potential, employment case management and human services liaison.
 - Develop the Coalition to have 1 or 2 intake access points with strong employment referral and case management capacity.
 - Ensure the Coalition intake process consists of a holistic assessment that looks at barriers, strengths, employment/career goals, and referrals to needed support services.
 - Develop a mechanism for the partners in the Coalition to share information, coordinate services and continue to build the program.
 - Market the Coalition services and process to neighborhood service providers, neighborhood residents, areas businesses, and the community
 - Enhance Job Development Strategies
 - Develop a coordinated approach to job development to eliminate competition among employment agencies for available job opportunities and to reduce employer contacts

- Develop a PR tool to present to potential employers to provide a consistent message on what the Employment Partnership can deliver in exchange for a job opportunity for a participant.
- Develop marketing strategies, highlighting existing successful employer partnerships
- Develop on-going relationships with area businesses, not just contact when asking for job slots.

B. Develop Linkage with Workforce Development System

- Connect neighborhood employment services to labor market information, high wage industries, additional training resources, etc.
- Ensure neighborhood employment services are connected to skills attainment / career pathways model.
- Explore possibility of Workforce Development Board (WDB) serving as coordinator and/or intermediary in ensuring coordination of neighborhood services, connection of those resources to employers, and brokering workforce services to employers, workers, and jobseekers (e.g., community advancement intermediary).

C. Actively pursue removal of existing employment barriers

- Work with Madison Metro and others to overcome transportation barriers to employment.
- Assess the feasibility of an employment transportation model that recruits a geographic cluster of employers willing to hire Allied residents and creates a focused transportation solution (such as a Metro express bus route) that connects residents to business locations.
- Continue pursuit of housing stability (quality, affordability) for all Allied community residents.
- Support personal development and educational offerings
- Promote collaboration with service providers to assist with appropriate referrals for mental and physical health support
- Support the development of the Time Bank
- Support linkages with financial literacy opportunities.

2. Continue or expand City, County and private financial support for Allied employment and employment-related programs.

Strategies to Accomplish Objective

- Ensure Coalition programs are adequately funded to maintain small case loads (15 people) that can offer intensive support both to the employee and to the employer to quickly resolve job issues, offer family support and maintain flexible hours for easy access and quick crisis management response.
- Advocate for continued or additional funding for support and wrap around services
- Pursue additional funding / support for high quality, reliable child-care for Allied residents.
- Pursue additional support for financial literacy opportunities for Allied residents.

3. Create Job Opportunities in Allied within the City's Redevelopment Effort

Strategies to Accomplish Objective

- Identify job opportunities within the demolition and construction phases of development, develop ways to link residents to these jobs and begin training to prepare residents for these jobs.
- Identify job opportunities within the property management and maintenance of the new City properties, develop ways to link residents to these jobs and begin training to prepare residents for these jobs.

4. Develop New Public-Private Partnerships

Strategies to Accomplish Objective

- Bring together City of Madison, City of Fitchburg and County officials and targeted businesses to develop a model where participants can learn basic work skills on the job at an entry-level job such as Target or McDonalds and then once successful move to a higher-level job.
- Explore the possibility of an Employer Recognition Program for excellence in supporting job development for the Coalition.
- Explore ways to provide training on non-discriminatory hiring practices, especially as it pertains to hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure coordination between the City of Madison, City of Fitchburg, Dane County, Chambers of Commerce and other economic development staff on projects or other efforts that affect Allied residents.
- Support the growth of neighborhood businesses that create job opportunities for lower income Allied residents including Madison Plaza, live-work units, and childcare.
- Explore partnerships with educational institutions such as the University of Wisconsin, MATC or Edgewood to assist in the development of a business such as a restaurant, coffee shop or barber shop, that offers training opportunities for Allied residents, particularly those with criminal backgrounds.