



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES Public Policy Institute

In This Issue

[State's New Transitional Jobs
Project to Employ 4,000
Residents](#)

Resources

[Making Parity Real Symposia](#)

[Community Advocates Public
Policy Institute](#)

[Milwaukee Addiction Treatment
Initiative](#)

[Parity for Wisconsin:
Wisconsin Parity Act](#)

[Closing the Addiction
Treatment Gap
\(Open Society Institute\)](#)

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State's New Transitional Jobs Project to Employ 4,000 Residents

Riemer, Public Policy Institute Continue to Lead Efforts to Get Wisconsin Back to Work

On Monday, July 12, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Sec. Reggie Bicha [announced](#) a \$34 million Transitional Jobs Project designed to get 4,000 Wisconsin residents back into the workforce.

Through the program, made possible by federal Recovery Act dollars provided to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund, unemployed adults would be paid the minimum wage for up to 40 hours of work per week for a maximum of 1,040 hours, or six months.

Eligible participants in the Transitional Jobs Project must be between the ages of 18-64 (and parents if between the ages of 21-64); unemployed for over four weeks; ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits and W-2; and have an annual household income of less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

With sky-high unemployment rates and a shortage of private-sector jobs, the Transitional Jobs Project is desperately needed. More than 14 million Americans are currently out of work and nearly half of them have been jobless for six months or longer. In May, the unemployment rate was 8.2 percent for both [Wisconsin](#) (translating to more than 250,000 people out of work) and the [Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis area](#) (translating to nearly 64,000 people out of work), according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

PPI Takes the Lead on Transitional Jobs

Creating transitional jobs for unemployed Wisconsin residents has been an important initiative of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. David Riemer, Public Policy Institute Director, has worked closely with the offices of Sen. Spencer Coggs (D-Milwaukee) and Rep. Tamara Grigsby (D-Milwaukee) to write and implement the state's transitional jobs legislation.



Sen. Spencer Coggs Rep. Tamara Grigsby David R. Riemer

Last year, Riemer drafted language for a 2009-11 budget amendment -- inserted into the budget by Sen. Coggs -- which created the Transitional Jobs Demonstration Project authorizing up to 2,500 jobs slots, each of which could employ several individuals during the life of the project.

Riemer subsequently worked with Rep. Grigsby's staff to draft the *Wisconsin Family Jobs Act*, which was passed by the Wisconsin Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Jim Doyle in April. The Act removed the Demonstration Project's 2,500 job cap, and also increased the wage subsidy for DCF's seldom-used Trial Jobs Program for W-2 enrollees so as to make it more attractive to employers.

"Transitional jobs are a key element in ensuring that unemployed men and women can get back to work and earn the wages they need to support themselves and their families," said Riemer. "As momentum for the Transitional Jobs Project continues to build, we hope to see more and more opportunities for the currently unemployed to get back into the workforce."

"This bold initiative would not have happened without strong leadership from Sen. Spencer Coggs and Rep. Tamara Grigsby; Gov. Jim Doyle; DCF Sec. Bicha and Division of Family and Economic Security Administrator Julie Kerksick; and Department of Administration Sec. Michael L. Morgan."

The Public Policy Institute is a founding member of the Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative, which seeks to obtain state and federal programs and funding to make transitional jobs available to Wisconsin's unemployed. Other organizations currently participating in the collaborative include the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Good Jobs and Livable Neighborhoods, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, the

Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Milwaukee Community Service Corps, MICAH, Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission, the New Hope Project, Northwest Side Community Development Corporation, Policy Studies Inc., Social Development Commission, Thomas & Associates, UMOS, Milwaukee Urban League, WISDOM and the YWCA.

The organizations in Milwaukee that will receive funding through the Transitional Jobs Project are:

- Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc. -- \$5,975,700
- Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board -- \$7,847,350
- Milwaukee Careers Cooperative -- \$291,473
- Policy Studies Inc. -- \$3,104,800
- Silver Spring Neighborhood Center -- \$635,340
- Step Industries -- \$523,000
- UMOS -- \$4,530,720

Federal efforts are also underway to jumpstart employment: [federal legislation](#) cosponsored by Rep. Gwen Moore is pending in the United States House of Representatives to create or save 1,630 jobs in Milwaukee, and an additional 530 jobs in greater Milwaukee County.

The Community Advocates Public Policy Institute has clear and simple goals: To explain why so many Milwaukeeans are poor, and to develop and implement a practical strategy to reduce poverty throughout Wisconsin.

The Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI) is a collaboration among local stakeholders -- including treatment providers, public health agencies, law enforcement, faith-based agencies, advocates and members of the recovery community -- to close the addiction treatment gap in Milwaukee County and ensure that everyone who needs treatment can receive it. MATI is sponsored by a grant from the Open Society Institute, Baltimore, with additional funding from the Helen Bader Foundation, the Zilber Family Foundation and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. Visit MATI online at www.ca-mati.org. MATI is a project of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute.

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