



2009 ANNUAL REPORT EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

Background

COMMISSONERS:

- George Williams, Chair
- Michael Bardnt, Vice Chair
- Renee Taylor
- Genyne Edwards
- Ivan Gamboa
- Ray Vahey
- Chris Her-Xiong

Sub-Committee Structure

- Accountability in City Programs and Services
- Community Engagement
- Paid Sick Leave Ordinance

A strategy session, facilitated by Mayor Tom Barrett in June of 2008, highlighted the need to revitalize and reinvigorate the City of Milwaukee's Equal Rights Commission (ERC). The Commission had since 1994 become the point of contact for residents to file concerns or complaints of discrimination in housing or employment.

However, over the years the functional responsibilities of the Commission had been somewhat diluted for several reasons. The City of Milwaukee developed the Commission on a historical parallel track with both state and federal initiatives. What was once unique to Milwaukee became part of a larger umbrella of state and federal departments. In addition to the City's ERC, the State of Wisconsin Equal Rights Division (ERD) and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provide city residents with resources that include intake and investigation of complaints in the area of housing and employment. Both agencies have statewide authority to remedy discriminatory employment and housing practices – something the ERC was unable to offer outside of the jurisdiction of the City.

In 2009 the City adopted a new

model for the Commission by shifting from a complaint investigation model to one that relies on oversight and accountability of city services and community collaboration and partnerships with private, non-profit, and academic institutions for prevention, education and training purposes. This model recognized the importance of the City's role in promoting racial, social and economic equity by relying on three important principles:

Elimination of duplicative services provided by other federal and state agencies in the areas of employment and housing discrimination. The ERC should limit its investigative and enforcement activities to discriminatory employment and housing practices not addressed within the jurisdiction of federal and state agencies. (Note: In 2007, the Common Council amended Chapter 109 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances to include gender identity or expression, past or present membership in military service, and familial status as protected categories).

The City should establish an internal accountability structure to effectively assess, monitor,

and influence how programs and services are designed, administered, and delivered in ways that address the equal rights needs of Milwaukee residents; and

The City should partner with other community stakeholders to facilitate, coordinate, and/or implement awareness, prevention, and education strategies to address the City's equal rights challenges and ensure residents are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the laws.

When the Equal Rights Commission was reestablished, the City recognized its unique position to assume a leadership role in promoting equal rights, equity and a social fabric free of discrimination. This objective assumed that each department, agency and unit of the city government should support and promote social and economic equity for all residents of the city. This in turn means that they will be responsible for structuring their programs, activities and services in a manner that assures the equal rights of all who live and work in the City. This charge is consistent with the City's vision of "a Milwaukee where opportunity is abundant and accessible to all."

Chapter 109 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances establishes the authority and role of the ERC.

EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION MISSION

Under Chapter 109 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, the ERC is responsible for monitoring the employment, contracting and program activities of the City of Milwaukee; preparing and providing timely reports to the Mayor and Common Council on efforts to promote equal rights and opportunities; promoting positive community relations; and eliminating discrimination and inequities in city government and the city as a whole. Activities identified by the Commission in relation to meeting its goals and objectives included the following;

Establishing an accountability structure to ensure all city

departments consider and address equal rights issues and needs in policy formation, resource allocation and delivery of services.

Documenting, monitoring, and recognizing City of Milwaukee programs, initiatives and services impacting equal rights issues, needs and accomplishments.

Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with community based organizations, private, and educational organizations to achieve prevention, education and training objectives.

Forging partnerships and

alliances with key community stakeholders to facilitate discussion on Milwaukee's equal rights climate as well as identify and address impediments to the city's socioeconomic growth.

Enhancing the formal referral and follow-up complaint mechanisms with state, federal, and other community agencies.

Working with community groups to plan, conduct and facilitate educational programs, raising the awareness of equal rights issues and educate residents about related services and programs.

Enforcing provisions of the Paid Sick Leave Ordinance (PSLO).

2009 ACTIVITIES

The first meeting of the new Equal Rights Commission was held on February 10, 2009. At that meeting, all Commissioners were sworn in and Commissioner George Williams was elected Chair and Commissioner Michael Barndt was elected Vice Chair.

Over the course of the first couple of meetings, the Commission was briefed by representatives from the City Attorney's Office and the City Clerk's Office relative to Wisconsin Public Meetings and Open Records Laws as well as the City's Lobbying Ordinance.

The Department of Administration, Budget and Management Division was also invited to make a presentation about the City of Milwaukee Budget Process and the Mayor's Accountability in Management Program.

In March of 2009, the Commission formed three sub-committees to formulate and drive the agenda for the first year.

Accountability Sub-Committee

Charged with identifying the extent to which City programs and services are designed and delivered in a manner consistent with the equal rights objectives of Chapter 109.

Community Engagement Sub-Committee

Charged with identifying ways to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote and support equal rights initiatives.

Paid Sick Leave Ordinance Sub-Committee

Charged with developing administrative rules for the enforcement of the Paid Sick Leave Ordinance.

City of Milwaukee Best Practices

A key charge of the Equal Rights Commission in 2009 was to assess and report on the progress of the City of Milwaukee in meeting the leadership objectives of supporting and promoting social and economic equity for all residents while delivering services.

The Commission recognizes that this requires a conscious effort to structure programs, activities and services in a manner that assures the equal rights of all who live and work in the City.

Throughout 2009 key City departments, including the Department of City Development, Department of Neighborhood Services, the Milwaukee Health Department, and the Department of Administration presented briefings to the ERC highlighting their programs and services in relation to the overall charge of the Commission. These briefings were very

instrumental in educating the members of the Commission relative to the programs, activities and services provided.

In addition, in December of 2009, all departments were asked to complete a survey identifying activities, programs or policies carried out by the departments that supported the City's mission to promote racial, social and economic equity for all residents.

In conjunction with this survey, Departments were asked to provide the following information: a description of the activity, program or policy; a statement describing the challenge or disparity the department was trying to address or remedy and a statement of how the challenge or disparity was identified; a description of the measures of success for the activity, program or policy; a description of how staff was trained to deal with the disparity or challenge; and a list of internal (other city

agencies) and external (community agencies, businesses, educational institutions, etc.) the department works with in addressing the disparity.

Departments were informed that the information collected would be used by the ERC to prepare a progress report outlining the City's efforts and successes in meeting the equal rights objectives established within the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances. The ERC viewed this charge as an opportunity to recognize the positive work of city departments and to encourage others to emulate these "best practices." The Commission used six benchmarks to assess and classify the best practices identified in Appendix A of this report.

Best Practice Benchmarks

Community Collaboration

Quality of Life Strategies

Evaluation System (Metrics)

Advocacy Resulting in System-wide Changes

Creative Re-structuring

Focused Efforts

Equal Rights Resource Webpage

In order to achieve the objective of establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with other community based organizations and promote and support learning opportunities in the area of equal rights, the Commission decided early on to develop a resource webpage that would serve as a single information resource for Milwaukee residents about agencies, programs and services available in the community.

During 2009, the ERC reached

out to the over 130 local agencies and sought their approval to be included on the resource webpage. The information provided includes a brief description of each agency, contact information and a link to their website. In addition to all of the aforementioned agencies included on the website, the Commission added 34 City of Milwaukee programs that directly address equal rights needs and are available to the public.

Each of the agencies or city

Program was assigned a category designation that best describes the type of service provided. Appendix B includes an excerpt from the webpage.

The website is set up to be easily accessible and searchable either by category or alphabetically. The ERC Resource Webpage is scheduled to be launched by the end of July 2010.

Resource WebPage Sample Categories

AAO Awareness, Advocacy, Organizing

LA-Legal Assistance

ED-Educational Services

FR-Faith and Religion

H- Health

IL-Immigrations and Language

JT-Job Training

G-Gender

RE-Race and Ethnicity

Paid Sick Leave Ordinance

The Paid Sick Leave Ordinance (PSLO) was enacted by the citizens of the City of Milwaukee pursuant to Wisconsin's direct legislation statute. In 2008, a coalition of groups circulated petitions seeking to have the ordinance enacted or placed on the November 4, 2008 ballot. When the petitioners filed the required number of signed petitions, the Milwaukee Common Council was advised that it was required to pass the ordinance, without altering it, or place it on the November 4th ballot. The Common Council chose not to enact the ordinance but was required to submit it to a referendum by the voters. On November 4, 2008, the voters of the City of Milwaukee approved the referendum. Pursuant to Wisconsin's direct legislation statute, the Common Council and Mayor cannot amend or repeal the ordinance for two years.

In January of 2010 the Milwaukee Fair Housing Council (MFHC) presented a briefing to the Equal Rights Commission in relation to their role in promoting fair housing throughout the state and combating illegal housing discrimination. The Commission and the Fair Housing Council agreed to coordinate and schedule fair housing training for City of Milwaukee employees and to formalize a referral mechanism for housing discrimination complaints.

Two training sessions were held in May of 2010 and approximately 45 employees participated.

The Ordinance delegated the enforcement of its provisions to the Equal Rights Commission. As a result, the Commission was charged, among other things, with developing and adopting rules to establish the standards and procedures for the implementation and enforcement of the PSLO. While the Commission was aware of a motion by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Association of Commerce for a temporary injunction, it was important for the City to start working on the administrative rules given the uncertainty of the legal proceedings. The ERC adopted a draft of the PSLO Administrative Rules on April 1, 2009. A public comment period, which included two public hearings, followed from April 2, 2009 to April 24, 2009 to allow employers, employees and other interested parties to provide feedback about the rules prior to their final adoption.

In 2010 the Commission will continue scheduling briefings with all City departments in an effort to understand how programs and services are structured in a way to address the equal rights needs of the community. In addition, the Commission will start working with specific community agencies to identify ways to recognize accomplishments and best practices, facilitate community discussions relating to equal rights and equal opportunities within the City of Milwaukee, and identify opportunities to sponsor or participate in informational and educational programs

On June 12, 2009, a Milwaukee County Circuit Court issued a permanent injunction prohibiting the implementation and enforcement of the Paid Sick Leave Ordinance. The Court found that portions of the Ordinance were unconstitutional and that it was unlawfully enacted.

After months of careful review of the feedback received during the public comment period and making some substantive changes to the administrative rules, the Commission adopted the final rules at its meeting on May 19, 2010. The adopted rules can be found at www.milwaukee.gov/der/erc.

addressing equal rights issues and the laws prohibiting discrimination.

Throughout the first six months of 2010, representatives from the Department of Employee Relations have facilitated five educational/training sessions for approximately 100 individuals entering the labor market after having served criminal convictions or individuals who were to be released early after being convicted of non-violent crimes. The sessions include practical information about applying for jobs when criminal convictions are part of their background, information about the state's Fair Employment Act and the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of arrest and/or conviction record, and general assistance in resume writing and interviewing.

The Wisconsin State Court of Appeals has sent the PSLO case to the Wisconsin Supreme Court for hearing. The two issues to be reviewed are: whether or not the City complied with Wisconsin State Statute §9.20(6) and second whether the two year ban on amending or repealing an ordinance that has been adopted as imposed by State Statute §9.20(8) is valid in light of the injunction that has been issued. The injunction against the PSLO is still in place and will be while the Wisconsin Supreme Court hears the case.

Appendix A

EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION CITY OF MILWAUKEE BEST PRACTICES

City departments and affiliated agencies must assume a primary leadership role in supporting and promoting social and economic equity for all residents while delivering services. In 2009, the Equal Rights Commission identified benchmarks to assess the extent to which City of Milwaukee programs and services are furthering the equal rights needs of the residents of this community. This initiative is consistent with the accountability objectives delineated under Chapter 109 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

The benchmarks identified and described below served as the basis for identifying best practices within the City and its departments. They reflect strategic principles and values that will help the City and the entire community establish a climate of equal rights and equal opportunities.

Programs and services selected and summarized below have been assigned to a specific benchmark because they contribute to an illustration of that particular benchmark, however they often fit within other categories. Over the next several years, the ERC anticipates greater opportunity to be more proactive in representing equal rights objectives, recognizing the exemplary work of specific programs and encouraging additional efforts of others.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Program/service/initiative coordinated and provided for by a partnership between a City of Milwaukee department and a community agency.

√ **Supportive Housing Initiative - DCD**

<http://supportivehousingmilwaukee.org/>

√ **Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative - DCD**

<http://www.mkedcd.org/housing/nidc/HealthyNeighborhoods.html>

QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES

Program/service/initiative designed to assess quality of life indicators in the community, identify problems and recommend and implement solutions.

√ **Residential Rental Inspection Pilot Program - DNS**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/DNS/RR>

EVALUATION SYSTEM (METRICS)

Program/service/initiative implemented based on measurable indicators of success and changes that have taken place in the community.

√ **Ready to Read with Books 2 Go - MPL**

http://www.mpl.org/file/kids_childcare_index.htm

√ **Empowering Families Program - MHD**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/EmpoweringFamiliesof23827.htm>

ADVOCACY RESULTING IN SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGES

Program/service/initiative implemented as a result of changes in legislation, the allocation of resources, or significant change in policy pursued and/or implemented by the City and other community partners.

√ **Center for Driver License and Employability Activities - Muni Court**

<http://www.justice-2000.org/drivers.html>

√ **Milwaukee Foreclosure Partnership Initiative - DCD**

<http://milwaukeehousinghelp.org/>

CREATIVE RESTRUCTURING

Program/service/initiative resulting from budget or resource allocation process that recognizes/addresses the needs of residents in particular those with the greater needs.

√ **Vacant Building Registration Program - DNS**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/DNS/VBR>

√ **Milwaukee Center for Health Equity – MHD**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/wche>

FOCUSED EFFORTS

Program/service/initiative designed to address needs of a particular group of individuals in the community or to address disparities by contributing to a reduction in the difference between groups.

√ **Diversity in Urban Forestry Program - DPW**

√ **Earn and Learn Program - DCD**

√ **Landlord Tenant Training Program -DNS**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/Landlordtraining>

√ **Targeted Investment Neighborhood Initiative - DCD/NIDC**

<http://www.mkedcd.org/housing/nidc/TINs.html>

√ **Residence Preference Program - DOA/DPW**

http://www.mpw.net/services/bids_home

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION BEST PRACTICES

Supportive Housing Initiative – Department of City Development

A series of investigative articles published by the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel in 2006 revealed that a significant number of individuals with mental illness were living in squalid conditions. A City-County Special Needs Housing Action Team (SNHAT), appointed by Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Scott Walker, recommended that the two governments work together to promote the development of “supportive housing” to better provide for the housing needs of these vulnerable residents. Supportive housing combines affordable housing units with on-site services that assist individuals to successfully live independently. The SNHAT also recommended formation of the Commission to monitor the community’s progress in developing supportive housing.

A City/County Commission on Supportive Housing was created by the Milwaukee Common Council and Milwaukee County Board in 2007, with the mission of creating a community infrastructure to “provide safe, affordable and accessible housing options with supportive services for persons with mental illness or other special needs.” The Department of City Development provides staff support to the Commission, and also works with supportive housing developers to secure appropriate sites and financing for these projects. Also cooperating in this effort are Milwaukee County’s Behavioral Health Division, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Housing Authority, Mercy Housing Lakefront, Cardinal Capital Group, Heartland Alliance, Our Space, Inc., Guest House of Milwaukee, St. Ben’s Meal Program, United Methodist Children’s Services, Center for Veterans Issues, and the Milwaukee Continuum of Care.

Through 2009, the Commission engaged in advocacy on behalf of several supportive housing projects and related legislation. The Commission advocated for the continuation of 2009 levels of funding for supportive housing activity in the 2010 Milwaukee County budget. This effort was successful. The Commission also advocated for proposed state legislation that requires that health insurance policies provide coverage for mental health services at a level comparable to coverage for physical health services.

Since the Commission was formed, three new supportive housing facilities have been constructed in Milwaukee, with a combined capacity 72 units. Another 91-unit building is now under construction, and groundbreaking is expected by mid-2010 for four additional supportive developments.

Healthy Neighborhood Initiative – Department of City Development

This initiative provides funding for the Department of City Development to cooperate with local neighborhood organizations and foundations to promote investment in some of Milwaukee's neighborhoods. Funds are available for various projects including general home improvements and small scale neighborhood projects. Working with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, this initiative focuses on a neighborhood's positive attributes and works to engage neighbors and homeowners to invest in their neighborhoods and position them as good places to live. Each Healthy Neighborhood designs its own program to promote the neighborhood, engage residents around positive actions, improve neighborhood appearance and encourage homeowners to buy in the neighborhood.

QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES BEST PRACTICES

Residential Rental Inspection Pilot Program –Department of Neighborhood Services

Understanding that overcrowding and illegal units negatively impact a neighborhood and put tenants at immediate risk, the Department of Neighborhood Services has implemented a five year Residential Rental Inspection Pilot Program in two areas of the City that have had higher than average percentage rate of building code complaints, code violations and illegal units. These areas also have a higher level of rental units than owner-occupied and a higher history of illegal units.

Under this program, inspectors enforce the existing housing maintenance code, the building fire code, and the zoning code. Property owners are provided with a checklist which can be used as a guide to prepare for the inspection. The checklist is a detailed list of items the inspector will be looking at. Disqualifying violations are conditions which effect the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions of persons occupying a residential unit, or other conditions that violate the provisions of the building code, building maintenance code or zoning code that indicate in their totality that the rental unit is not being properly maintained. If an inspector finds disqualifying violations, an order to correct the conditions which includes a compliance deadline is issued.

This pilot program will ensure that inspected units meet the minimum code requirements for safety and sanitation per Milwaukee ordinances. The city's dependence on a "complaints only" system has been less effective since some tenants may be conspiring with the landlord to exceed the building capacity to lower their rent. This program levels the playing field for all property owners and tenants.

EVALUATION SYSTEM (METRICS) BEST PRACTICES

Ready to Read with Books 2 Go - Milwaukee Public Library

The Ready to Read with Books2Go project is an intensive literacy development program with the goal of preparing children to be ready to read as they enter Kindergarten. The program incorporates the development of the Six Skills of early literacy in children and models ways for child care providers to incorporate Six Skills development into their daily routines. In 2009, the program trained 1,071 providers.

Milwaukee has a very high rate of children living in poverty. This program was developed because research has shown that children who live in poverty have a much higher percentage of not having basic literacy when entering formal school. This detrimentally affects success in later educational achievements such as reading levels and graduation rates and contributes to a greater likelihood of school drop-out.

The program's effectiveness is measured through an Outcome Based Evaluation (OBE) of each skill with children who have been in the Ready to Read program. The OBE provides evidence of the impact the program has had. It quantifies the many changes that are happening in peoples' lives, communicating the true significance of a program in a very concrete way. In 2009 the library worked intensively with 321 children through the Ready to Read program. The preliminary results show the majority of these children are demonstrating the Six Skills. Librarians have been trained in the Six Skills of early literacy and how to present these skills to child care teachers. Agencies working with the Milwaukee Public Library on this initiative include the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), Milwaukee Public Schools, MATC, and UW-M.

Empowering Families Program – Milwaukee Health Department

The infant mortality rate (the number of children who die before their first birthday out of every 1,000 live births) is an important indicator of a community's overall social and economic well being. Between 2004 and 2006, non-Hispanic African Americans in Milwaukee experienced a 17.84 per 1,000 infant mortality rate compared to a 6.01 rate for Hispanic residents and a 7.0 rate for non-Hispanic White residents. The rate for African Americans is 2.5 times higher than for Whites.

To help address this disparity, the Milwaukee Health Department manages two intensive home visiting programs that emphasize healthy birth outcomes. The first program, Empowering Families of Milwaukee, targets high risk pregnant women in certain zip codes. Nurses, social workers, and community health workers provide outreach and home visitation services. Visits begin in early pregnancy and continue through the child's fifth birthday. The program's goals are to improve birth outcomes, increase child health, safety and development, decrease child abuse and neglect, improve school readiness, and enhance family functioning. Since inception, the program has enrolled 398 new clients and serviced 346 infants. In 2009, 100% of the women involved in the program were receiving pre-natal care and 57% of mothers initiated breastfeeding at birth. More than 80% of the infants born to program participants scored at or above benchmark developmental levels, indicating the program's potential to overcome high risk environmental circumstances.

ADVOCACY RESULTING IN SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGES

Center for Driver License Recovery and Employability Activities – Municipal Court

The Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability ("Center") is a broad public-private partnership of Wisconsin Community Services, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the City of Milwaukee Municipal Court. The Center was founded in March of 2007 to increase the number of licensed low-income drivers in Milwaukee County and improve their ability to secure family-supporting jobs.

The direct service staff of the Center works to reduce barriers and guide clients through the license recovery process by providing direct service case management and legal services, restoring free driver's education for low-income students statewide, improving public policy to limit the use of license suspension and revocation to sanction unsafe drivers and increase the use of alternatives to suspension and revocation, and increase community education about driver's license suspensions and revocations among low-income residents.

In 2009, the Center provided 1,484 persons with case management (59% of all clients). Fifty-six percent of all case-managed clients (582 persons of 1,040 case closures) recovered their driver's licenses in an average of five months. The remaining 41% of the 2,520 total clients were given a license recovery plan and advice, but not case-managed, as their cases required assistance beyond the Center's capacity and/or control or the client was seen through an "Advice Only" community event.

The Center's work resulted in two major public policy victories in 2009 and another in early 2010:

- In April of 2009, Wisconsin passed Wisconsin Act 8 to become the 38th state to opt out of the ineffective federal law that mandates a minimum six-month suspension of a driver's license for any drug conviction. This single change will eliminate 11,000 mostly low-income drivers each year from being suspended for a non-safety related reason.
- In May of 2009, the Center contributed to the effort that resulted in Wisconsin Act 17, which requires all Wisconsin courts to release license suspension and allow monthly installment payments to persons who meet the statutory definition of living in poverty.
- In January of 2010, the Center succeeded in its multi-year work to end the mandatory license revocation on a fourth Operating While Suspended (OWS) conviction with Wisconsin Act 102, which allows judges to decide whether to impose a revocation based on the individual driving record. This change will eliminate more than 8,000 license revocations each year that are due to poverty rather than unsafe driving.

The Center continues to work with courts for an expansion of alternatives to a full fine payment for the release of a license suspension, including community service, tax intercept, and payment plans. To date, the Center's direct service staff appeared in over 100 municipal and circuit courts around the State of Wisconsin on behalf of its clients.

Milwaukee Foreclosure Partnership Initiative MFPI – Department of City Development

High rates of home mortgage foreclosure are devastating lives and damaging Milwaukee neighborhoods. While there are instances of foreclosure throughout the city, bank ownership of property is far more prevalent in central city census tracts, particularly on Milwaukee's north side. The MFPI was developed in 2008 as a comprehensive local response to the foreclosure crisis in the City. A three-pronged approach identified by individuals representing government, the real estate industry, the financial industry, home-buyer counseling agencies, and neighborhood organizations, was developed emphasizing the following objectives: work with homeowners facing foreclosure and their lenders to prevent the loss of homes, increase home-buyer counseling efforts to improve levels of financial literacy among low-income home buyers, and provide resources to stabilize neighborhoods experiencing high rates of foreclosure.

The Department of City Development operates several programs that provide resources to homeowners to purchase and renovate foreclosed properties. A mediation program, facilitated through Marquette Law School, is one of the components of the MFPI and it is designed to reduce the adversarial nature of a foreclosure proceeding and work to reach a sustainable conclusion for homeowners. Since 2008, hundreds of people facing foreclosure have turned to the Initiative's mediation program. More than sixty Milwaukee families have been able to save their homes, and over two-hundred are in the mediation process.

Since the work began in 2008, MFPI has spawned the following major programmatic initiatives:

- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which provides loans and grants to both owner-occupants and landlords who wish to buy and renovate foreclosed properties. NSP also has developed a land bank, through which the City of Milwaukee takes control of selected foreclosed properties and holds them for future redevelopment.
- Milwaukee Home Ownership Consortium, a confederation of homebuyer counseling agencies, real estate industry representatives, and mortgage lenders providing homebuyer counseling and financial literacy education.
- Milwaukee Foreclosure Mediation Program, which provides mediation services to homeowners facing foreclosure, with the aim of modifying mortgage terms so that the owner can retain his or her home.

To date, Milwaukee has succeeded in obtaining more than \$34 million in federal funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to implement Neighborhood Stabilization Program strategies. The Department of City Development manages these programs. Cooperating with the department are the Department of Neighborhood Services, Milwaukee County Cooperative Extension, Select Milwaukee, Inc., Housing Resources, Inc., Marquette University Law School, Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin, Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, and many local non-profit housing counseling agencies.

CREATIVE RESTRUCTURING BEST PRACTICES

Vacant Building Registration Program – Department of Neighborhood Services

For many years, Milwaukee's code allowed an owner to keep a building vacant and boarded as long as it was reasonably well maintained. However, a boarded building sends a negative signal about a community. These buildings can attract criminal activity. Often the buildings must be re-boarded at city expense and can make it difficult for neighbors next door to get fire insurance. The presence of a boarded building can bring down the value of other properties in the area.

Effective January 1, 2010, the City's new Vacant Building Registration (VBR) ordinance Chapter 200-33-64 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances (MCO) took effect. The new VBR ordinance requires owner(s) of residential and commercial property left vacant for 30 days or more to register the property with the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) and take steps toward assuring the property is secure, properly maintained and not creating a hazard for the surrounding community. Following reasonable notice, a DNS inspector will conduct an interior and exterior inspection of the vacant building to determine compliance with this ordinance. A minimum of one inspection will be conducted during the initial registration period and each subsequent rental period. Owners are required to provide access to the interior of the building for these inspections. Maintenance is required after registration is filed.

Each vacant building registration certificate is issued and remains valid for 6 months from the date of issuance. There is no fee for the first 6 month registration period. If the building remains vacant longer than 6 months, the owner must renew their vacant building registration and pay a renewal fee of \$250. One of the components of this new process is an inspection fee structure that rewards owners for maintaining their property and a disincentive for owners that fail to do the right thing. After the original registration, each subsequent registration renewal will cost \$250 provided the owner has properly maintained the property and there are no outstanding code violations. Properties with outstanding code violations will be subject to an escalating renewal fee of \$500. Registration fees for properties in violation of the requirements of this ordinance at subsequent renewals will be charged a fee in increasing increments of \$250 up to \$1000. This new approach provides a solution to the vacant property issue.

Milwaukee Center for Health Equity – Milwaukee Health Department

The MHD has been moving towards utilizing an “outcomes based model”, which means taking the data that they have and making it available to the public to prevent disease and enhance the quality of life for Milwaukee residents. Over time, the department has tried to build systems and put systems into place that allow that outcomes data to be delivered to the public.

The MHD realizes that there are negative health outcomes that stem from underlying social economic factors, lack of formal education, low income, poor housing, and limited transportation. Milwaukee is the 17th largest city in the nation but ranks 7th worst in infant mortality; 7th worst in teen pregnancy; and 2nd worst for sexually transmitted diseases. In addition to these statistics, Milwaukee has some of the nation’s worst poverty, child poverty, violence, unemployment and high school drop-out rates. These conditions must be addressed in order to achieve health and reduce health inequities in the City of Milwaukee.

The Center for Health Equity in Milwaukee was founded through a partnership with Columbia-St. Mary’s. It is anticipated that the Milwaukee Center for Health Equity will find a home in the new School of Public Health at the University of Wisconsin. This center will change the model that the MHD has been working with and will focus on the notion that everyone has an equal opportunity to be healthy.

The Center for Health Equity is dedicated to improving the social and economic factors that strongly influence our public health within the City of Milwaukee as well as throughout the state of Wisconsin. The Center will concentrate on improving the health of the population through three main strategies: improving understanding of how socioeconomic conditions affect people’s health, encouraging and supporting changes in public policy to improve the health of everyone in our community, and building community involvement in policymaking .

In focusing on these areas, the MHD hopes to achieve “health equity” ; a society where all people have an equal chance to be healthy. In addition, every future grant that the MHD writes will include a notion of health equity that encompasses equal rights and equal access for all, written right into the grant. The MHD will then have researchers and statisticians begin to build a model that will track the outcomes for the next five to seven years to determine the impact of equal rights, equal access and equity in terms of the health care that people receive.

FOCUSED EFFORTS BEST PRACTICES

Diversity in Urban Forestry Program -Department of Public Works

The purpose of *Strengthening Diversity in Urban Forestry Service Delivery* is to increase the diversity and relevancy of urban forestry within the minority community and to engage people of color in the green economy. This initiative provides comprehensive career training targeted at low-income Milwaukee residents and aims to link successful participants with the urban forestry industry. *Strengthening Diversity in Urban Forestry Service Delivery* links workforce development and urban forestry to improve diversity and connect those that need jobs to the expanding green economy.

The Program will recruit and train up to 40 low-income Milwaukee residents to prepare them for green jobs in urban forestry. The City will conduct a 7 ½-month training program for entry-level hires. The City’s Forestry Program is nationally-recognized among the urban forestry profession for its level of excellence, quality urban forest management and highly trained and skilled staff. A hallmark of the city’s program is a comprehensive skills-development program for entry-level employees that trains and

produces skilled, work-ready arborists. This program serves as the training model for *Strengthening Diversity in Urban Forestry Service Delivery*.

Targeted Investment Neighborhood Initiative – Department of City Development

The Targeted Investment Neighborhood (TIN) initiative is designed to sustain and increase owner-occupancy, provide high quality affordable rental housing, strengthen property values, and improve the physical appearance and quality of life of neighborhoods. TINs focus resources for three years on a small area, generally six to twelve city blocks. NIDC's TIN program works with residents to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood. NIDC's Community Outreach Coordinator is a liaison between the neighborhood and City departments. Staff also provides assistance with community-building and outreach.

Residents of TIN areas are eligible to use three loan and grant programs to fix up their properties: the Home Rehabilitation loan program, the Buy in Your Neighborhood Program, and the Rental Rehabilitation program. DCD works with TIN clients to structure financing packages and payment plans, determine the scope of required renovation work, and monitor the quality of the work. TINs combat the disparity in home owner-occupancy rates, which are generally lower in low-income neighborhoods, and provide credit to low-income home owners who seek to improve the quality of their properties. The program works in cooperation with the Dept. of Neighborhood Services, Milwaukee Police Department, and a non-profit TIN sponsoring partner.

Earn and Learn Program – Department of City Development

Earn & Learn is a youth employment program operated by the Department of City Development and Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB). Earn & Learn works with City government, non-profit organizations, and private sector employers to create part-time summer job opportunities for youth aged 14 to 21. Federal and City funds are used to pay the wages of participants. In 2009, Earn & Learn created 3,000 job slots. Most jobs were held by low-income youth residing within central city census tracts. The majority of the participants were minority youth.

Earn & Learn introduces participants to the reality of holding a job. Participants are required to go through an application and interview process prior to placement, and youth workers receive work-readiness skills training provided by MAWIB. Earn & Learn is intended to address the disparity in rates of employment between white and minority residents of Milwaukee, and it also seeks to lower the high rate of youth unemployment, particularly among central city youth.

DCD is responsible for two specific aspects of Earn & Learn: recruiting private-sector employers to create job slots for youth and operating the Summer Youth Internship Program (SYIP). The SYIP provides employment to about 150 youth in City departments throughout the summer as well as educational activities for participants, including financial literacy, a college fair, and health and fitness education. Local colleges, including UW-Milwaukee, Marquette University, Milwaukee Area Technical College and Milwaukee School of Engineering, and M&I Bank, assist to organize these educational experiences.

Landlord Tenant Training Program (DNS) – Department of Neighborhood Services

The Department of Neighborhood Services supports the City goals of building safe and healthy neighborhoods by protecting the value of investments in neighborhoods and properties while enforcing the building codes. Recognizing the role of education and outreach in ensuring that residents understand the rights and responsibilities, the Department holds training sessions, attends various community programs, and facilitates talks at crime prevention meetings and block watch meetings.

Over the years DNS has modified components of the Landlord Training Program to include sessions and manuals in Spanish. In addition they developed a large print manual to assist those individuals with a visual impairment the ability to obtain the materials developed for this program. In October of 2009, The Landlord Training Program collaborated with UW-Milwaukee Housing Office to present a program emphasizing the specific issues of renting to student. Members of the Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee Fire Department, UW-Milwaukee Coast, DNS Commissioner Art Dahlberg, Atty. Tristan Pettit President of the Apartment Owners Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, Milwaukee Metropolitan Fair Housing Council, Pountain Partners, LLC, and others pro bono their time.

Residence Preference Program (RPP): DOA/DPW

Effective in 2010, the Mayor and the Common Council amended Chapter 309 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances to ensure a greater participation of city residents in City development projects. Developers are now required to ensure that 40% of worker hours required for construction of the project be performed by unemployed or underemployed residents. In addition, the RPP residence boundary was expanded to include the entire City of Milwaukee. In accordance with Chapter 309 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, residents preference hiring is required for all construction contracting activities of the Department of Public Works. The 40% participation is required except in special cases where the Commissioner of Public Works determines there is sufficient reason to impose lesser levels of participation. The Commissioner of Public Works may also increase the percentage of resident worker participation to more than 40% on specific construction contracts and other contracts. This change requires contractors and subcontractors to give fair consideration to all segments of the population including women and minorities.