

News Article
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Linking Residents to Job Sites

There are jobs available in the Milwaukee area but often, they are found in outlying areas that are far away from the residents most in need of them and away from public transit facilities.

The Ways to Work Program is providing a method for those job-seeking residents to get to and from those job sites. The national Ways to Work program which is based in Milwaukee and the Social Development Commission (SDC) which administers the program in Milwaukee County met recently with businesses and community based organizations to explain the program and how it can benefit them.

The presentation was held at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation which has supported the SDC Ways to Work program for a number of years. Jeff Faulkner, President of Ways to Work, described the program which provides low-interest loans of up to \$6,000 to qualifying working families to buy a used vehicle for transportation to work. He noted that the loans are accompanied by financial education sessions and one-on-one financial counseling that helps the participant begin to build the skills to become self-reliant.

Nancy Yarbrough, a single mother of three, is a Ways to Work program participant who described at the meeting how obtaining reliable transportation from the SDC program has allowed her to get to and from her job without taking public transportation or relying on a friend for a ride. She stated she has now been able to move into a full-time, first-shift job that pays more and also allows her to take her children to school, church and family activities. She said



Jeff Faulkner, President of Ways to Work (left) and Deborah Blanks, CEO of SDC (right), with Ways to Work program participant Nancy Yarbrough.

Ways to Work has had a major impact on her life and taught her how to become self sufficient.

Ways to Work which is in 23 states including Wisconsin has nationally seen its participants increase their income by more than 40%. 90% of program users reported seeing job advancement because of their reliable transportation to their jobs. The program has also had more than two-thirds of its loan recipients start accounts with traditional banking and credit union institutions and begin to build financial assets.

The presentation by Ways to Work and SDC urged the Milwaukee area businesses and community based organizations to consider how they could benefit by encouraging qualified low and moderate income workers to learn more about the program. Financial support was also requested which could allow the Milwaukee County program to expand to serve more than the current 60 car loans for local families.

To learn more about the Ways to Work Program, visit the SDC website at www.cr-sdc.org, click on the “Programs” page and the link for “Ways to Work” or call 414-906-2822.

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