

impact report

HIRE Education Employment Initiative

Evaluating our first 8 months of results

United Way of Dane County has a long history of investing in programs that help individuals get prepared for, secure and retain employment. As we transitioned into our impact business model 10 years ago, we aligned job training into our Safety Agenda for Change “There is a reduction in violence towards individuals and families”, as we understood the value of jobs to the stability and health of families and the community. During the recent recession and its recovery, we evaluated whether our training and employment programs are having the optimal impact.

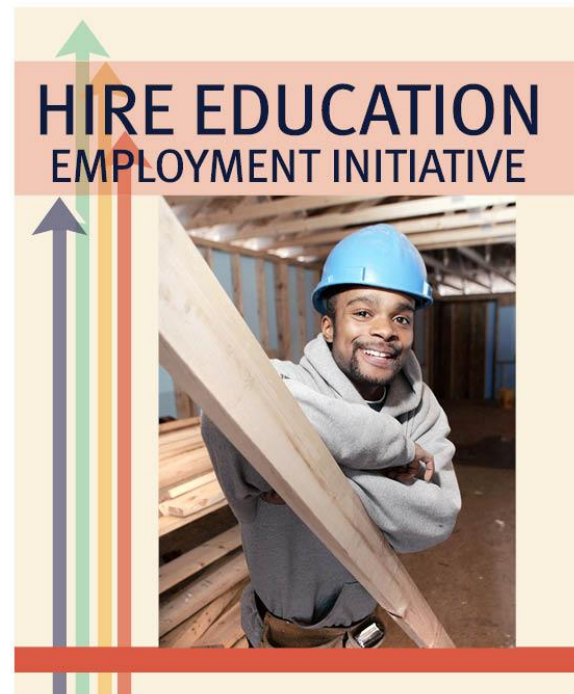
Census data from 2008-12 estimates that 21,441 adults do not have a high school diploma. We further learned that individuals without a high school degree have a much harder time finding employment and that impacts our community. This intersected with our drop out recovery strategy from our Achievement Connections Mobilization Plan.

We also know that the consequences of lost jobs, especially long-term unemployment, have implications for all of our Agenda for Change areas. Loss of employment has contributed to home foreclosures. It also has an impact on our Health agenda on behavioral health services and impacts access to employer-sponsored health plans. It has an impact on our Education agenda as parents struggle to find employment and their focus is not always on getting their kids to school and often youth

have to find employment to help support the family. This was reemphasized at our Board discussion in November 2013 on Born Learning recognizing the impact parental stress has on their children.

Creating the HIRE Education Employment Initiative

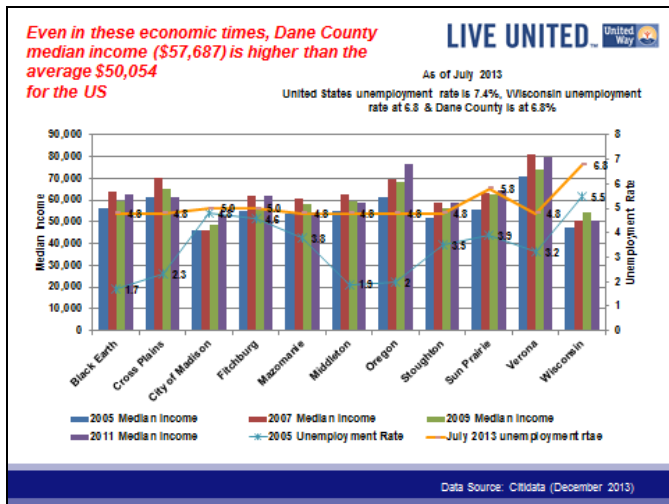
In 2013, the Safe Communities, Strong Neighborhoods (SCSN) team invested \$525,951 in 11 programs that aligned with our outcome to help people get and maintain employment. Most of these programs focused on helping individuals develop the basic skills needed for the workplace, such as securing a high school degree (or its equivalency) or improving skills in math or literacy. Yet the trend in employment training and research on workforce preparation shows a move towards getting non-high school graduates into training more directly tied to the employment they seek or industry specific training.



A Look at Income Stability in Dane County

To provide an economic backdrop to this discussion, it is worth noting that the Dane County median income of \$57,687 (down from \$60,519¹ in 2011) is much higher than the state average of \$50,395 (down from \$51,598 in 2011) and the US average of \$50,054 (down from \$51,914 in 2011), largely because of a highly educated population and a high percentage of jobs in higher education, the government sector, and well-paying service industries.

In evaluating how the economy has impacted our unemployment rate, we see the Dane County unemployment rate still high at 6.8% as of July 2013 compared to 5% as of August 2012. The state of Wisconsin ranks with us at 6.8% and the United States rate is at 7.4%². As of November 2013, the Wisconsin Workforce Development WORKnet states that the unemployment rate for Madison (only) is 4.1%.



Even before the recent recession, the labor market had begun to change.

- 1) Employers and particularly those in healthcare, biotechnology and logistics need skilled employees but not necessarily those with 4-year college degrees.
- 2) Dane County has been producing 400-500 dropouts annually. They are ill-prepared for family sustaining 21st century jobs.

¹ US Census Quickfacts 2006-2010

² Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Bureau of Workforce Information – July 2013

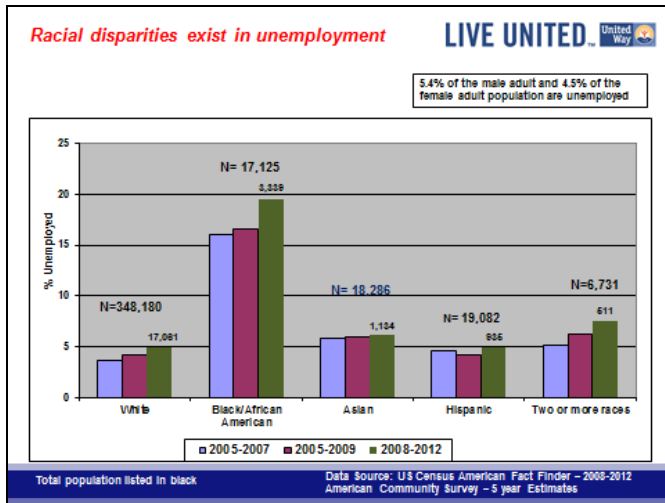
- 3) The recession has hurt those with low skills the most. In particular the highest unemployment rates coincide with the demographics of our highest dropout rates.
- 4) The low-wage jobs that we had 30 years ago now require more technical skills but on the upside, they are more likely to have health and retirement benefits.

Changing labor market

According to Center on Wisconsin Strategies (COWS)³, in December of 2007 Wisconsin had 2.88 million jobs. However, in July of 2012 the state only had 2.72 million jobs, a loss of 245,900. We are seeing more on-demand structure in the low-wage jobs which make the predictability of income and work hours harder for individuals and families.

- Experts predict that in 2015 70% of population will be employed. By 2020 only 60% of the population will be in the workforce, a reduction primarily as a result of the aging of the population.
- African American Males have the lowest employment rate of all demographic populations and the lowest graduation rates.
- Workers with a four-year college degree earn a median wage of \$22.91 an hour (\$47,600); however someone with just a high school degree earns only \$10.35 an hour or slightly over \$21,500 which is below the Federal Poverty Level for a family of 4. People with an associate degree earn \$18 an hour³ (\$37,386).
- A 4-year college degree is not required to get employment in 21st century jobs. An associate degree and advanced certification and using career ladder training are becoming more of the trend in today's economy.

³The State of Working Wisconsin 2012 Center on Wisconsin Strategies



Changing trends regarding employee preparation

1. Our workforce development partners and emerging research tell us that we need a different approach to how we help people become prepared for employment. It needs to be just-in-time training for the industries and positions that are available. As the public and private sector get better at predicting their growth trends and employee numbers, we need to give people the basic education and skill sets that will be necessary to get these jobs. Further, we can support collaboration on career ladder training to help people get better jobs within their industries.
2. Employer training methods are changing. With the use of technology, trainings can be provided simultaneously in multiple locations, making it faster and more efficient to train greater numbers of people. New technology also allows the development of more customized modes and modules of training: industries can identify the skill sets needed by current or future employees; colleges can develop the training to get into the jobs; technology can be used to make that training available in a variety of formats for different types of learners.
3. Within career ladders, an employee can go on to additional training for their next job, allowing for 'stackable' credentials that can be used to pursue new employment if they

lose their jobs or seek to advance in their careers.

4. Despite all the new trends in training, there are still a large number of people who need to learn basic life skills (i.e. work ethic, communication) as well as basic math and literacy skills.

Perspectives from employment specialists and employers

1. The **Dane County Job Center** informed us that they have seen a shift in the type of client seeking their services. Their clients now include more people who have not had a work history (i.e. young workers, stay-at-home parents reentering the workplace), dislocated workers (i.e. a person who has been terminated or laid off as a result of permanent closure of or substantial layoff at a plant or facility), and those who have never had to seek services through the Job Center, notably people who previously were high income earners.
2. The **Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin** told us:
 - \$2.5 million is being spent on training annually.
 - Employers want workers who have critical thinking, problem solving and social skills (as important as basic skills).
 - Workers need more complex skills than just math and reading, but those are a prerequisite.
 - More companies are using proprietary software that is not translatable to jobs in other companies.
 - Many people grew up in a company and have outdated certifications and/or not the right educational background to move to a new industry or company.
 - The number of people retiring from the workforce exceeds the number of emerging workers – there will not be enough workforce members for the demand.
3. **Employers** indicate that they are looking for soft and interpersonal skills, including communication skills and ethics, work history, basic computer training and basic

work habits. Employers find that some people in the job market today have the soft skills but not the work ethic, work history etc. When asked the critical skill sets people will need to find employment over the next 10 years, respondents from our community engagements replied the following.

- Basic level education and emotional intelligence
- Fundamental literacy; the ability to communicate through writing
- Working knowledge of math and how to problem solve
- Strong work ethic
- Computer basics and language
- Knowledge of internet and email
- Cultural competency
- Ability to prioritize

The New GED Test

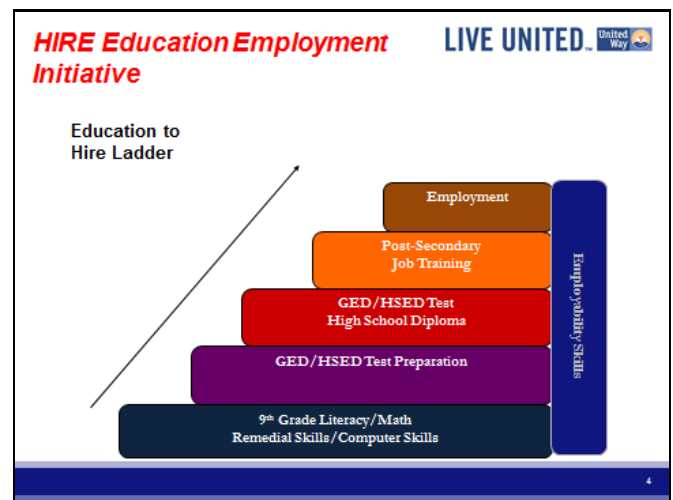
As of January of 2014, the GED test was changed to align with the Common Core Standards adopted by the State of Wisconsin. Individuals who began taking the GED tests as of 2002 will now need to take the more rigorous and computer-based test. This new assessment will continue to provide adults the opportunity to earn a high school credential, but it goes further by measuring career- and college-readiness skills that are the focus of today's curriculum and tomorrow's success. This new exam will cover four content areas; literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. Each area will measure core knowledge and skills that are essential for career and college readiness. Evidence suggests that test-takers who demonstrate fluency with the skills measured in the new assessments will be better prepared for what they plan to do with their lives. According to DPI, a GED graduate will no longer hold just a high school equivalency credential, but a roadmap for life's success.

With the new test, the testing site setting will also see a change. Testing sites will now be required to have 17 or 19 inch monitors, the speed of the computers will increase, cameras will be installed on all monitors and test proctors will be located within the room to ensure fidelity of testing. Testing fees are anticipated to

remain at \$120. To further assist and remove barriers for individuals wanting to get their degree, we were able to secure funding to help cover these testing costs for participants who can't afford to pay the test fee.

The HIRE Education Employment Model – How we are making a difference

After a year and a half of research, listening to experts in employment, people seeking work, employers and our partner agencies, the SCSN team has begun to work on what we are calling a HIRE Education Employment model to help non-high school graduates navigate their way through the various and complex systems needed to get the job they desire. Our model targets individuals ages 17+ who do not have a high school diploma and are seeking to find employment.



How the model works

- Collaborative model with 8 agencies coming together-- Literacy Network, Centro Hispano, Madison College, Madison area Urban Ministry, Omega School, Urban League, Vera Court, and the YWCA are collaborating to ensure that all participants receive an Individualized Hiring Plan (IHP) that outlines the steps needed to achieve their education and employment goals.
- We are training people for these industries: Customer Service/Hospitality,

Food/Restaurant, Health Care, Manufacturing, Road Construction, Skilled Trades

- Each step on the HIRE Education Employment ladder provides participants with the various skill sets they will need to find and maintain employment.
- Participants can enter this initiative through any of the partner agencies.
- Once the initial intake has been completed, then staff from the Literacy Network will help participants develop an Individualized Hiring Plan (IHP) which will outline the other steps that participants need to reach their goals.
- Each of the partner agencies tracks and monitors progress of the participants to ensure that they are reaching their goals through the use of a shared database. This encourages each agency to see and make referrals to programs as needed for the participant's growth.
- Community volunteers will assist in tutoring, mentoring and coaching the HIRE Education participants at each step in the process.

Communicating with Employers

- Currently our method of communicating to employers has been through presentations and engagements by staff at United Way of Dane County, our HIREindane.com website. We heavily rely on our partner agencies to use their connections with employers to connect the HIRE participants to employment opportunities. As United Way continues to connect with employers who are seeking to hire employees, we pass this information on to our HIRE Education partner agencies to connect with the employer and make referrals as appropriate.

Why the HIRE Education Employment Initiative matters to Dane County

- The number of people currently looking for employment is huge.

- Without adequate education to get employment, residents are unable to provide for themselves and their families.
- Participants model the importance of education to our children.
- We help the community understand the importance of education and its role in finding and maintaining employment.
- This work aligns perfectly as a continuum of services for drop-out recovery that is a part of our Achievement Connections work.
- This work will complement the employment strategy for our Journey Home participants, people who have recently returned home from prison.
- Increases diversity in the workforce for Dane County.
- When individuals have jobs earning sufficient wages, they are less stressed, able to provide for themselves and their families and are less apt to engage in criminal activities that affect our community safety.

Benefits of HIRE

Organizing the non-profits to work collaboratively and with a common mission will have several benefits for Dane County.

For Individuals

1. Assessments identify participants' ability to read and do math
2. Provides a simplified entrance to getting help for HSED/GED and finding employment
3. Community programming by the non-profits is connected to making the learning path simplified and better understood

For Employers

1. Improves the ability to hire employees with the skill sets or certifications they need for their industry
2. Provides opportunity to partner and work together to build our future workforce
3. Provides greater access for employers to reach non-traditional employment channels

After only 8 months since the launch of HIRE
227 individuals have received their GED/HSED, 62
found employment



For Community

1. More people in the workforce improves the quality of living for Dane County
2. Centralized marketing can create stronger interest and demand for participants and employers
3. A focused initiative provides greater understanding of the scope and dimension of employment and skill problems and the strategies that are in place to address these issues

Initial Results

The HIRE Education Employment Initiative launched in April of 2013. Our 2013 goal was to have 10% or 200 of the 2,000 individuals in Dane County who had started taking their GED tests in 2002 actually complete their exams before the tests changed.

We are excited to report the following:

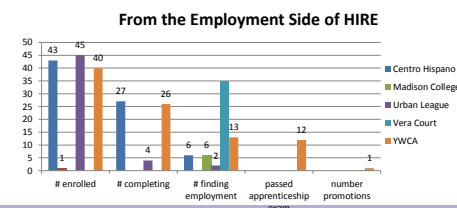
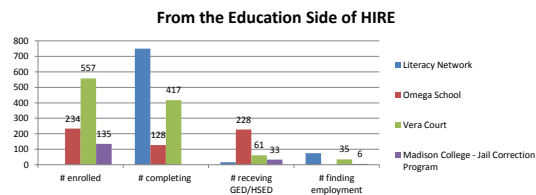
- 227 individuals received their GED/HSED
- 62 found employment
- 12 passed their apprenticeship test
- 1 person received a promotion

Industries for which we are specifically training our participants:

- Customer Service/Hospitality
- Food/Restaurant
- Health Care
- Manufacturing
- Road Construction
- Skilled Trades

Industries where HIRE participants have found employment (in alphabetical order):

- Automotive
- Construction
- Customer Service/Hospitality
- Insurance
- Manufacturing
- Restaurant/Food



Data Source: HIRE Partner Agencies

Establishing our goals

Since our focus for 2013 was primarily to ensure at least 200 individuals received their GED/HSED and to create a baseline, we had not looked into other goals for this initiative. Now that we have 8 months of experience under our belt, we are now able to evaluate additional goals and determine leading measures for this initiative.

Early in 2014, the Safe Communities, Strong Neighborhood Community Solutions Team will use several pieces of data to help us determine our goals including the unemployment rates by race ethnicity, gender, educational attainment and poverty rates. We will make a recommendation to the Board in April.

Major Learnings

Since the launch of HIRE Education Employment Initiative in April of 2013, we have had some really good things going on a few things that we need to work on.

Focus

We can't provide training for every industry or job opportunity that is available in Dane County. We are receiving some requests from employers in areas where our partner agencies are not currently providing training. However, what we are finding is that we can't be all things to everyone and success is greater with employers in the industries where we are providing training. This then forces us to focus on the following industries: Health Care, Road

Construction, Customer Service, Restaurant/Bakery and Skilled Trades. As we continue to increase the number of employers learning about the work we are doing and to hire the participants of HIRE, we need to maintain our focus on the industries where we can provide support.

Through the agencies that we are investing in, we are providing training for those industries that will have need now and forecasted to have needs in the near future. As part of our strategic planning for 2014, we will take another look at the data on which industries will be hiring that was provided our Board of Directors by State of Wisconsin Labor Economist Dennis Winters at our October 2012 Board meeting. We will use this information to determine if we will bring any additional industry trainings into our portfolio through our 2015 investments.

Software

To help the partner agencies collaborate more effectively, we purchased software that could be customized to meet the needs of our partner agencies to seamlessly track and monitor progress of each of the HIRE Education Employment Initiative participants as they move between the partner agencies and achieve their benchmarks and goals.

- Customized the software to meet the needs of each of our partner agencies
- trained the partner agencies to consistently use the software and allow time to get their information into the system
- time to tweak the software as needed to ensure we are getting the best information in and out of the system
- have begun to build reports from the information in the software and create a dashboard of leading indicators.

As we move forward we will need achieve consistent use of this software by all partners. We also need to ensure that this software works as effectively as possible for all partners in this collaborative, understanding that it may not be able to replace or eliminate the need for their own agency-based software, but complement what their agencies are currently using as a case management tool.

Collaboration

As often as this particular word is used in the non-profit world, it is not an action that is done with ease. However, having monthly accountability meetings with the partner agencies of HIRE has helped to give agencies an opportunity to talk about and work through issues with the software and their own recording of data. In 2014, these monthly meetings will focus more on tracking progress, reaching outcomes, and providing technical assistance to ensure that we all are on the same page and moving forward as a collaboration. Quarterly meetings with the partner agencies and the Safe Communities, Strong Neighborhood CST will be held to strategize around issues, identify and track leading measures, monitor progress and determine any changes in the model implementation. This should help strengthen the collaboration as a whole.

Target Population

When we began this initiative, we were primarily focusing on helping individuals who had begun taking the GED test in 2002 and had not completed those exams to be able to complete the exams under the old rules which ended in 2013. Now that we are exploring other indicators of success and other outcomes for this initiative, part of our focus will be on other target populations. We will evaluate information provided in the Race to Equity Report that was released by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families in October 2013. This report highlights various disparities for African American's living in Dane County which includes disparities in education and income. This information supports our focus of the HIRE Education Employment initiative on people of color and may help determine if a more specific goal should be set.

The Safe Communities, Strong Neighborhood CST will review all of the information and data referenced in this document as we set our goals for the HIRE Education Employment Initiative for 2014 and beyond.

How can you help?

Here are the ways that you could become involved with this work:

- Become a mentor to the participants who are part of the HIRE Education Employment partnership
- Become a tutor and help people prepare to take their GED exams
- Volunteer to do mock interviewing, resume writing or help provide training
- Provide internships for the HIRE participants to allow them exposure and learn more about your business industry
- Hire participants from the HIRE Education Employment Initiative

To learn more about the HIRE Education Employment Initiative contact:
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(608) 246-4350 or visit our website at
www.HIREindane.com



