

# **CORD and our Auto Community: Building the Pipeline for College and Career Readiness In both K-12 and Adults**

## I. Overview

This is a proposal for building the workforce, consistent with economic development of new and expansion of existing businesses in the Rock County region. It is essentially a two-pronged approach that recognizes the Obama Administration's initiative through the Department of Education for College and Career Readiness for students in K-12. The second prong is the development of Adult Career Pathways, consistent with the Departments of Labor and Commerce recognition that high school drop outs, persons with basic skills and below, as well as persons just below college level abilities, need a chance at postsecondary education in the form of a coherent, sequenced group of educational and work activities to move them farther along the pathway to become a middle class wage earner.

## II. Category One-College and Career Readiness-K-12 (long term)

This initiative recognizes the importance of literacy instruction early in a child's life. It includes literacy coaches in those elementary schools where achievement tests in third grade are below state and/or national standards. The six elementary schools in the county with the lowest reading scores on the Wisconsin Skills and Knowledge Test will be included.

The second component of career readiness is the inclusion of career coaches in middle schools, starting in the sixth grade. Career Coaches are persons employed by the two-year college in the district who have business and industry experience and spend consistent, structured time with students doing career exploration at the middle school level and follow those students into high school. While the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction revised its counselor program to include more career emphasis, counselors readily admit they still do not have adequate time to do quality career advising. Career coaches are increasingly being used in high schools. Several states, including Virginia and West Virginia, use career coaches in the high schools, and North Central Technical College employs career coaches who are in the high schools in their district weekly.

Our region already has a group of seven school district superintendents called Stateline Career and Technical Academy (SCTEA) that meet regularly to discuss career and technical education issues. Both University of Wisconsin-Rock County and Blackhawk Technical College attend the meetings. The goal is to combine resources to create Centers of Excellence in the county in different occupational areas. SCTEA is the recipient of Department of Labor money through the WIRED Youth Services sector as well as minimal private funds. The WIRED funding is due to expire June 30, 2010. This proposal seeks to expand services rendered by Blackhawk Technical College to the high schools, including career coaches, additional college-level career and technical instruction through Youth Apprenticeships and Youth Options, further alignment of curriculum and dual credit, expansion of Compass Placement Testing and subsequent counseling services, and teaching the Student Success course in the high schools for college credit.

III. Category Two- Adult Career Pathways (long term)

In order to address unemployment in our county, particularly in Beloit (17 %), we need to build an Adult Career Pathway that addresses basic literacy skills. The experience of Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) in responding to the massive dislocation of employees suggests that there are large numbers of persons who need literacy assistance. The college does not have services to address persons whose skills fall below the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. This is done by not-for-profit agencies. One of the other proposals for the Montgomery Team seeks to build capacity for teaching literacy in the region.

However, Blackhawk Technical College can work with the Community Action Program to offer basic skills instruction to persons above the fourth grade reading level. A large number of persons who were recently dislocated from production employment in the county tested at the adult basic skills level. Our basic skills classes doubled in number over the past two years. This means at least 300 persons needed this type of assistance. Once people rise to the GED level, they can begin a new form of programming recently developed by BTC called Refresher Academies. These are essentially basic skills plus occupational skills learning communities (15 in a group) to learn computer skills, communications skills, and Student Success. This is a one-semester experience. Students then progress to career and technical education. This year, BTC was privileged to receive a Congressional allocation from Senator Herb Kohl to assist dislocated workers in the amount of \$951,000. This money served 120 students (approx. \$8,000 cost per student), including those in the Refresher Academies, students who were already enrolled in one of three IT programs to progress to a two-year degree, and students who successfully completed a one-year diploma in Laboratory Technician Assistant and chose to continue on to a two-year Clinical Laboratory Technician. Both IT and the Clinical Laboratory Technician programs prepare students for high demand, high salary jobs. Many of the students in these Kohl-financed programs were on the waiting list of dislocated workers at the Job Center waiting for training vouchers.

IV. Unmet Financial Need-Blackhawk Technical College Students

One of the primary reasons students do not progress beyond basic skills or GED instruction is they have to work full time and cannot afford to go to school. Sometimes, they try to work full time (over 35 hours/week) and be a successful student. They usually end up dropping out. While low- or no income students who are taking college level courses are eligible for the Pell Grant (\$5,550 annual), the annual cost of attending postsecondary school is \$14,039 (2010-2011, WTCS State Board). This includes limited shelter costs, no utilities, groceries, etc. If students have others to support, they cannot get by on this amount. Thus, this academic year, students at BTC amassed \$4.6 million in loan debt. There were 1,344 students who took out loans. During the last academic year, the loan debt was \$3.7 million. It is clear that students need some form of additional financial assistance. For dislocated workers, what is essentially happening to them is that they will run into further financial problems when the loans come due, six months after graduation. Additional financial assistance for students is needed so that they do not have to amass debt in order to get a two-year degree. Financial literacy counseling will be included in this proposal.

**BUDGET-ANNUAL PROJECT COSTS (Except Unmet Financial Need)**

**A. Category One – K-12 Initiative**

Salary and benefits

Project Manager (\$65,000 + benefits)	91,000
Career Coaches (5 schools x 20/year x 10 coaches x\$25)	25,000
Third Grade Literacy Coaches (\$50,000 x 6 schools)	420,000
Compass Test Administration (1500 x \$10)	15,000
Instruction (part time/full time): Student Success/CNA/Culinary(2 F/T + 1 P/T)	250,000
Tuition + material fees: Youth Apprenticeships (CNA) 100 students/yr/\$750	75,000
Tuition + material fees: Youth Options (WLD/Health Sciences (300 students/yr. x \$750)	225,000
<b><u>Sub-total</u></b>	<b>1,101,000</b>

**B. Category Two – Adult Career Pathway**

Salary and Benefits (annual) Adult Literacy coaches (3 x 85,000)	255,000
Basic Skills Instruction (2 instructors x 50 students)	170,000
GED Instruction (2 instructors x 50 students)	170,000
Refresher Academy Instruction plus summer career/technical	250,000
Transition Job Project: Stipend to employers (20 students x \$10/hr/student x 15 hrs/week 30 weeks x 10 employers)	1,050,000
<b><u>Sub-total</u></b>	<b>1,895,000</b>

**C. Unmet Financial Need (Two-Year Associate Degree)**

\$5,000 @ student x 400 students x **two** years

4,000,000

Financial Counselor (20/wk x 20 students x 30 wks  
x 2 years x \$35/hr.)

42,000

**Sub-total**

4,042,000

---

**TOTAL**

**\$7,038,000**