

Back to Work: An Online Community Engagement Initiative

Need

Dislocated auto workers in the Janesville/Beloit area, and in auto communities throughout the country, need access to jobs, supportive services, and the community they lost when their workplaces shut down. Moreover, dislocated workers must increase their digital literacy to successfully compete for 21st century jobs.

Goal

Our goal is to build easy-to-use online hubs that use social media and tools to provide comprehensive access to local jobs, resources and community networks.

Objectives

1. Build an online hub that provides comprehensive, up-to-date, easy-to-use access to local services and programs available to support dislocated workers.
2. Build an online hub that provides comprehensive, up-to-date, easy-to-use access to jobs, job providers, job training opportunities, entrepreneurship support, and job preparation resources.
3. Build an online hub that provides users a way to participate in a local social network and exploit social networking tools to restore communal ties, access informal support and knowledge, and share stories so that dislocated workers feel less isolated.
4. Convene and engage the local community in all aspects of creating the hub and its content.
5. Train the community, especially dislocated workers, to make and share user-generated content and participate in the hub and social networks, thereby creating genuine stake and use of the hub while building digital proficiency.
6. Raise the digital literacy level of the dislocated worker population by engaging them in all aspects of this project.
7. Use the national PBS broadcast of *As Goes Janesville* as an opportunity to focus attention on our initiative.
8. Sustain the initiative's impact by designing "plug 'n play" elements that can be reused to address other needs and by sharing a thorough evaluation of each phase to improve the model and make replication easy.

Progress to Date

- We've built a national coalition to lead this effort:

PBS Stations: Expertise in convening communities through station outreach, trusted brand, broadcast and promotion of the national broadcast of *As Goes Janesville*, a film that follows the community of Janesville as it reinvents and recovers in the wake of losing GM.

One Economy: Expertise in convening communities, advocating for broadband access for underserved communities, training people to use digital tools, and building online hubs.

Workforce Boards: Expertise in providing communities with job-related resources. We are speaking soon with Ron Painter, CEO of the National Association of Workforce Boards to obtain a partnership commitment and assistance in forging coalitions with local workforce boards.

United Way Chapters: Expertise in connecting communities to all local supportive services. We are speaking with various leaders within United Way in order to obtain a partnership commitment.

Monster: Expertise in building online hubs with a jobs focus and providing the most comprehensive jobs databases available. Monster is committed to our project.

- Our coalition has collaborated in designing a full proposal, budget, and three-phase timeline that pilots the project in Rock County, expands to the midwest, and expands further to the rest of the country.
- We've established a close working relationship with CORD (Collaborative Organizations Responding to Dislocations), a community-based coalition of organizations in Rock County addressing the needs of dislocated workers.
- We've raised funds from the Independent Television Service and the MacArthur Foundation for the documentary *As Goes Janesville*, a film that will focus the nation's attention on the challenges auto communities face, and our initiative.
- We've obtained a national broadcast commitment from PBS to air *As Goes Janesville* in 2012.
- We have involved our congressional delegation in the development of this initiative.
- We've obtained a meeting with the Joyce Foundation to discuss funding of our initiative.
- We are preparing approaches to roughly a dozen additional foundations, including the Ford Foundation, which recently announced a major commitment.

Barriers

- Funding
- potentially, regulatory barriers that may prevent workforce boards from fully participating
- perception that Monster is less a partner, more a for-profit business seeking foundation and government money

Request for Federal Assistance

- guidance with regard to appropriate agencies that may offer funding
- liaison to other communities with similar needs
- liaison to other workforce boards in communities with similar needs
- endorsement and promotion so that our initiative receives national attention
- partnership in sharing our initiative with policy makers
- assistance in easing regulatory barriers that might prevent workforce board participation
- assistance in easing regulatory barriers that might prevent Monster participation

Budget and Funding

• Phase 1 (Rock County Pilot)	\$ 775,000
• Phase 2 (7 total communities)	\$1,040,000
• Phase 3 (75 total communities)	<u>\$2,015,000</u>
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$3,830,000

- As Goes Janesville was developed with a \$50,000 discretionary grant from PBS, which has committed to airing the film nationally in prime time. The MacArthur Foundation has approved a grant for production funding. Addition funding is being considered by the Independent Television Services and an anonymous family foundation.
- Our engagement partner, One Economy, is working to seek production and engagement funding from several foundations, including WalMart and Toyota.
- Our engagement partners are collaborating to gain support from the United States Department of Labor and The Joyce Foundation. As part of our effort to win federal funding, we are working with the Wisconsin congressional delegation to show support from the congressional leaders with oversight over federal agencies interested in our engagement effort.
- Monster has retained a firm to help us navigate federal funding and its requirements. One Economy is also contributing the services of its development team.
- Some of the other private foundations we intend to approach very soon include the Kresge Foundation, the Park Foundation, the American Legacy Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kaufman Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Public Welfare Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the John Templeton Foundation, the Marshfield Area Community Foundation, the Ecolab Foundation, the Johnson Controls Foundation, Inc, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National Council on Economic Education, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Ford Foundation. We also plan to investigate potential underwriting or corporate support from Citicorp, FedEx, BP, EDS, Mutual of America Life Insurance Company and Johnson & Johnson.