



Department of Public Works  
Operations Division

**Karen Dettmer, P.E.**  
Commissioner of Public Works

**Danielle A. Rodriguez, M.B.A.**  
Director of Operations

April 6, 2022

Alderman Khalif Rainey  
Common Council  
City Hall Room 205

Re: DPW Commercial Driver's License Training Initiatives (211915)

Dear Alderman Rainey,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a summary of the Department of Public Works (DPW) Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training initiatives.

#### History

DPW recognized that requiring a CDL for application to certain positions was a barrier to recruiting qualified local candidates. As a result, in mid-2020, DPW and DER changed the minimum requirement for entry-level laboring positions (City Laborer, Sanitation Laborer and Urban Forestry Laborer). Prior to this change a CDL was required at the time of application to qualify for these positions. Currently the CDL is required within 6 months of hire and DPW supports staff in the permit and testing process. Additionally, we are also revisiting the timeframe in which a CDL is required in the event a good employee is unable to pass the required testing within 6 months.

#### Inclusive Hiring Model

DPW Operations has embraced an inclusive hiring model that hires candidates and progresses them to higher levels of pay through in-house training, development, and support with CDL licensing. Some examples of such career progressions for positions that lead to CDL positions already in place are:

- a. Urban Forestry Laborer to Urban Forestry Arborist Apprentice to Urban Forestry Specialist
- b. Sanitation Laborer to Operations Driver Worker (ODW)
- c. City Laborer to Operations Driver Worker (ODW)
- d. Operations Driver Worker to Special Equipment Operator
- e. Fleet Maintenance Technician to Vehicle Service Technician



### Barrier Mitigation

Recognizing that the CDL is not the only barrier and the fact many qualified candidates simply do not have a standard license, DPW is tackling this additional barrier. We are in the process of submitting a grant to the State of Wisconsin for a program that is precisely what Alderman Rainey has suggested. We are requesting funds to hire 30 Milwaukee residents, provide driver's license recovery services through local non-profit partner Wisconsin Community Services (WCS) and pre-apprenticeship construction course work; and CDL training through local non-profit Employ Milwaukee. Participants would be hired as City employees in the Construction Trainee position and given field experience doing construction work in DPW Infrastructure sections.

### Our Vision

DPW Operations' future vision includes providing a more comprehensive training program which will both aide in recruiting City employees and support them in working toward a CDL. DPW currently has a formal training program housed in our Fleet Services Section. The training facility includes equipment training personnel who are certified by the State of Wisconsin to teach and administer the CDL testing process. The DPW driver training section has worked with many individuals to help them get their CDL, from former WCS program participants to MPS students who were part of a construction internship. This program has the material, space, trucks, program, and federal/state level credentials to provide CDL training - right now we do not have enough training staff to fully support the growing demand and need. Our driver training program has currently reached its maximum capacity in CDL training and specialized equipment training for DPW's own positions and equipment. We agree that there is a large pool of potential DPW employees in the City of Milwaukee who do not have access, nor the resources, to go through private CDL training. We are committed to finding a way to break down barriers for potential employees to develop and grow City staff in various promotional opportunities. In order to meet our commitment, our CDL training program would require funding for additional staff to provide the actual training. Funding which we continue to actively seek.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this summary of our in-house CDL training initiatives and vision for the future. We are eager to be an active part of the discussion and to be included in the city-wide initiatives to enhance and expand the CDL pipeline.

Sincerely,



Danielle Rodriguez, M.B.A.  
Director of Operations

DR: nw

c: Sharon Robinson