



**Appendix A**

**EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION CITY OF MILWAUKEE BEST PRACTICES**

City departments and affiliated agencies must assume a primary leadership role in supporting and promoting social and economic equity for all residents while delivering services. In 2009, the Equal Rights Commission identified benchmarks to assess the extent to which City of Milwaukee programs and services are furthering the equal rights needs of the residents of this community. This initiative is consistent with the accountability objectives delineated under Chapter 109 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

The benchmarks identified and described below served as the basis for identifying best practices within the City and its departments. They reflect strategic principles and values that will help the City and the entire community establish a climate of equal rights and equal opportunities.

Programs and services selected and summarized below have been assigned to a specific benchmark because they contribute to an illustration of that particular benchmark, however they often fit within other categories. Over the next several years, the ERC anticipates greater opportunity to be more proactive in representing equal rights objectives, recognizing the exemplary work of specific programs and encouraging additional efforts of others.

*COMMUNITY COLLABORATION* Program/service/initiative coordinated and provided for by a partnership between a City of Milwaukee department and a community agency.

√ **Supportive Housing Initiative - DCD**  
<http://supportivehousingmilwaukee.org/>

√ **Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative - DCD**  
<http://www.mkedcd.org/housing/nidc/HealthyNeighborhoods.html>

*QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES* Program/service/initiative designed to assess quality of life indicators in the community, identify problems and recommend and implement solutions.

√ **Residential Rental Inspection Pilot Program - DNS**  
<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/DNS/RR/>

*EVALUATION SYSTEM (METRICS)* Program/service/initiative implemented based on measurable indicators of success and changes that have taken place in the community.

√ **Ready to Read with Books 2 Go - MPL**  
[http://www.mpl.org/file/kids\\_childcare\\_index.htm](http://www.mpl.org/file/kids_childcare_index.htm)

√ **Empowering Families Program - MHD**  
<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/EmpoweringFamiliesof23827.htm>

*ADVOCACY RESULTING IN SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGES* Program/service/initiative implemented as a result of changes in legislation, the allocation of resources, or significant change in policy pursued and/or implemented by the City and other community partners.

√ **Center for Driver License and Employability Activities - Muni Court**  
<http://www.justice-2000.org/drivers.html>

√ **Milwaukee Foreclosure Partnership Initiative - DCD**  
<http://milwaukeehousinghelp.org/>

## CREATIVE RESTRUCTURING

*Program/service/initiative resulting from budget or resource allocation process that recognizes/addresses the needs of residents in particular those with the greater needs.*

√ **Vacant Building Registration Program - DNS**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/DNS/VBR>

√ **Milwaukee Center for Health Equity – MHD**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/wche>

## FOCUSED EFFORTS

*Program/service/initiative designed to address needs of a particular group of individuals in the community or to address disparities by contributing to a reduction in the difference between groups.*

√ **Diversity in Urban Forestry Program – DPW**

√ **Earn and Learn Program - DCD**

√ **Landlord Tenant Training Program –DNS**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/Landlordtraining>

√ **Targeted Investment Neighborhood Initiative – DCD/NIDC**

<http://www.mkedcd.org/housing/nidc/TINs.html>

√ **Residence Preference Program – DOA/DPW**

[http://www.mpw.net/services/bids\\_home](http://www.mpw.net/services/bids_home)

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION BEST PRACTICES

### **Supportive Housing Initiative – Department of City Development**

A series of investigative articles published by the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel in 2006 revealed that a significant number of individuals with mental illness were living in squalid conditions. A City-County Special Needs Housing Action Team (SNHAT), appointed by Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Scott Walker, recommended that the two governments work together to promote the development of “supportive housing” to better provide for the housing needs of these vulnerable residents. Supportive housing combines affordable housing units with on-site services that assist individuals to successfully live independently. The SNHAT also recommended formation of the Commission to monitor the community’s progress in developing supportive housing.

A City/County Commission on Supportive Housing was created by the Milwaukee Common Council and Milwaukee County Board in 2007, with the mission of creating a community infrastructure to “provide safe, affordable and accessible housing options with supportive services for persons with mental illness or other special needs.” The Department of City Development provides staff support to the Commission, and also works with supportive housing developers to secure appropriate sites and financing for these projects. Also cooperating in this effort are Milwaukee County’s Behavioral Health Division, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Housing Authority, Mercy Housing Lakefront, Cardinal Capital Group, Heartland Alliance, Our Space, Inc., Guest House of Milwaukee, St. Ben’s Meal Program, United Methodist Children’s Services, Center for Veterans Issues, and the Milwaukee Continuum of Care.

Through 2009, the Commission engaged in advocacy on behalf of several supportive housing projects and related legislation. The Commission advocated for the continuation of 2009 levels of funding for supportive housing activity in the 2010 Milwaukee County budget. This effort was successful. The Commission also advocated for proposed state legislation that requires that health insurance policies provide coverage for mental health services at a level comparable to coverage for physical health services.

Since the Commission was formed, three new supportive housing facilities have been constructed in Milwaukee, with a combined capacity 72 units. Another 91-unit building is now under construction, and groundbreaking is expected by mid-2010 for four additional supportive developments.

## **Healthy Neighborhood Initiative – Department of City Development**

This initiative provides funding for the Department of City Development to cooperate with local neighborhood organizations and foundations to promote investment in some of Milwaukee's neighborhoods. Funds are available for various projects including general home improvements and small scale neighborhood projects. Working with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, this initiative focuses on a neighborhood's positive attributes and works to engage neighbors and homeowners to invest in their neighborhoods and position them as good places to live. Each Healthy Neighborhood designs its own program to promote the neighborhood, engage residents around positive actions, improve neighborhood appearance and encourage homeowners to buy in the neighborhood.

## **QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES BEST PRACTICES**

### **Residential Rental Inspection Pilot Program –Department of Neighborhood Services**

Understanding that overcrowding and illegal units negatively impact a neighborhood and put tenants at immediate risk, the Department of Neighborhood Services has implemented a five year Residential Rental Inspection Pilot Program in two areas of the City that have had higher than average percentage rate of building code complaints, code violations and illegal units. These areas also have a higher level of rental units than owner-occupied and a higher history of illegal units.

Under this program, inspectors enforce the existing housing maintenance code, the building fire code, and the zoning code. Property owners are provided with a checklist which can be used as a guide to prepare for the inspection. The checklist is a detailed list of items the inspector will be looking at. Disqualifying violations are conditions which effect the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions of persons occupying a residential unit, or other conditions that violate the provisions of the building code, building maintenance code or zoning code that indicate in their totality that the rental unit is not being properly maintained. If an inspector finds disqualifying violations, an order to correct the conditions which includes a compliance deadline is issued.

This pilot program will ensure that inspected units meet the minimum code requirements for safety and sanitation per Milwaukee ordinances. The city's dependence on a "complaints only" system has been less effective since some tenants may be conspiring with the landlord to exceed the building capacity to lower their rent. This program levels the playing field for all property owners and tenants.

## **EVALUATION SYSTEM (METRICS) BEST PRACTICES**

### **Ready to Read with Books 2 Go – Milwaukee Public Library**

The Ready to Read with Books2Go project is an intensive literacy development program with the goal of preparing children to be ready to read as they enter Kindergarten. The program incorporates the development of the Six Skills of early literacy in children and models ways for child care providers to incorporate Six Skills development into their daily routines. In 2009, the program trained 1,071 providers.

Milwaukee has a very high rate of children living in poverty. This program was developed because research has shown that children who live in poverty have a much higher percentage of not having basic literacy when entering formal school. This detrimentally affects success in later educational achievements such as reading levels and graduation rates and contributes to a greater likelihood of school drop-out.

The program's effectiveness is measured through an Outcome Based Evaluation (OBE) of each skill with children who have been in the Ready to Read program. The OBE provides evidence of the impact the program has had. It quantifies the many changes that are happening in peoples' lives, communicating the true significance of a program in a very concrete way. In 2009 the library worked intensively with 321 children through the Ready to Read program. The preliminary results show the majority of these children are demonstrating the Six Skills. Librarians have been trained in the Six Skills of early literacy and how to present these skills to child care teachers. Agencies working with the Milwaukee Public Library on this initiative include the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), Milwaukee Public Schools, MATC, and UW-M.

### **Empowering Families Program – Milwaukee Health Department**

The infant mortality rate (the number of children who die before their first birthday out of every 1,000 live births) is an important indicator of a community's overall social and economic well being. Between 2004 and 2006, non-Hispanic African Americans in Milwaukee experienced a 17.84 per 1,000 infant mortality rate compared to a 6.01 rate for Hispanic residents and a 7.0 rate for non-Hispanic White residents. The rate for African Americans is 2.5 times higher than for Whites.

To help address this disparity, the Milwaukee Health Department manages two intensive home visiting programs that emphasize healthy birth outcomes. The first program, Empowering Families of Milwaukee, targets high risk pregnant women in certain zip codes. Nurses, social workers, and community health workers provide outreach and home visitation services. Visits begin in early pregnancy and continue through the child's fifth birthday. The program's goals are to improve birth outcomes, increase child health, safety and development, decrease child abuse and neglect, improve school readiness, and enhance family functioning. Since inception, the program has enrolled 398 new clients and serviced 346 infants. In 2009, 100% of the women involved in the program were receiving pre-natal care and 57% of mothers initiated breastfeeding at birth. More than 80% of the infants born to program participants scored at or above benchmark developmental levels, indicating the program's potential to overcome high risk environmental circumstances.

## **ADVOCACY RESULTING IN SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGES**

### **Center for Driver License Recovery and Employability Activities – Municipal Court**

The Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability ("Center") is a broad public-private partnership of Wisconsin Community Services, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the City of Milwaukee Municipal Court. The Center was founded in March of 2007 to increase the number of licensed low-income drivers in Milwaukee County and improve their ability to secure family-supporting jobs.

The direct service staff of the Center works to reduce barriers and guide clients through the license recovery process by providing direct service case management and legal services, restoring free driver's education for low-income students statewide, improving public policy to limit the use of license suspension and revocation to sanction unsafe drivers and increase the use of alternatives to suspension and revocation, and increase community education about driver's license suspensions and revocations among low-income residents.

In 2009, the Center provided 1,484 persons with case management (59% of all clients). Fifty-six percent of all case-managed clients (582 persons of 1,040 case closures) recovered their driver's licenses in an average of five months. The remaining 41% of the 2,520 total clients were given a license recovery plan and advice, but not case-managed, as their cases required assistance beyond the Center's capacity and/or control or the client was seen through an "Advice Only" community event.

The Center's work resulted in two major public policy victories in 2009 and another in early 2010:

- In April of 2009, Wisconsin passed Wisconsin Act 8 to become the 38<sup>th</sup> state to opt out of the ineffective federal law that mandates a minimum six-month suspension of a driver's license for any drug conviction. This single change will eliminate 11,000 mostly low-income drivers each year from being suspended for a non-safety related reason.
- In May of 2009, the Center contributed to the effort that resulted in Wisconsin Act 17, which requires all Wisconsin courts to release license suspension and allow monthly installment payments to persons who meet the statutory definition of living in poverty.
- In January of 2010, the Center succeeded in its multi-year work to end the mandatory license revocation on a fourth Operating While Suspended (OWS) conviction with Wisconsin Act 102, which allows judges to decide whether to impose a revocation based on the individual driving record. This change will eliminate more than 8,000 license revocations each year that are due to poverty rather than unsafe driving.

The Center continues to work with courts for an expansion of alternatives to a full fine payment for the release of a license suspension, including community service, tax intercept, and payment plans. To date, the Center's direct service staff appeared in over 100 municipal and circuit courts around the State of Wisconsin on behalf of its clients.

### **Milwaukee Foreclosure Partnership Initiative MFPI – Department of City Development**

High rates of home mortgage foreclosure are devastating lives and damaging Milwaukee neighborhoods. While there are instances of foreclosure throughout the city, bank ownership of property is far more prevalent in central city census tracts, particularly on Milwaukee's north side. The MFPI was developed in 2008 as a comprehensive local response to the foreclosure crisis in the City. A three-pronged approach identified by individuals representing government, the real estate industry, the financial industry, home-buyer counseling agencies, and neighborhood organizations, was developed emphasizing the following objectives: work with homeowners facing foreclosure and their lenders to prevent the loss of homes, increase home-buyer counseling efforts to improve levels of financial literacy among low-income home buyers, and provide resources to stabilize neighborhoods experiencing high rates of foreclosure.

The Department of City Development operates several programs that provide resources to homeowners to purchase and renovate foreclosed properties. A mediation program, facilitated through Marquette Law School, is one of the components of the MFPI and it is designed to reduce the adversarial nature of a foreclosure proceeding and work to reach a sustainable conclusion for homeowners. Since 2008, hundreds of people facing foreclosure have turned to the Initiative's mediation program. More than sixty Milwaukee families have been able to save their homes, and over two-hundred are in the mediation process.

Since the work began in 2008, MFPI has spawned the following major programmatic initiatives:

- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which provides loans and grants to both owner-occupants and landlords who wish to buy and renovate foreclosed properties. NSP also has developed a land bank, through which the City of Milwaukee takes control of selected foreclosed properties and holds them for future redevelopment.
- Milwaukee Home Ownership Consortium, a confederation of homebuyer counseling agencies, real estate industry representatives, and mortgage lenders providing homebuyer counseling and financial literacy education.
- Milwaukee Foreclosure Mediation Program, which provides mediation services to homeowners facing foreclosure, with the aim of modifying mortgage terms so that the owner can retain his or her home.

To date, Milwaukee has succeeded in obtaining more than \$34 million in federal funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to implement Neighborhood Stabilization Program strategies. The Department of City Development manages these programs. Cooperating with the department are the Department of Neighborhood Services, Milwaukee County Cooperative Extension, Select Milwaukee, Inc., Housing Resources, Inc., Marquette University Law School, Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin, Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, and many local non-profit housing counseling agencies.

## **CREATIVE RESTRUCTURING BEST PRACTICES**

### **Vacant Building Registration Program – Department of Neighborhood Services**

For many years, Milwaukee's code allowed an owner to keep a building vacant and boarded as long as it was reasonably well maintained. However, a boarded building sends a negative signal about a community. These buildings can attract criminal activity. Often the buildings must be re-boarded at city expense and can make it difficult for neighbors next door to get fire insurance. The presence of a boarded building can bring down the value of other properties in the area.

Effective January 1, 2010, the City's new Vacant Building Registration (VBR) ordinance Chapter 200-33-64 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances (MCO) took effect. The new VBR ordinance requires owner(s) of residential and commercial property left vacant for 30 days or more to register the property with the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) and take steps toward assuring the property is secure, properly maintained and not creating a hazard for the surrounding community. Following reasonable notice, a DNS inspector will conduct an interior and exterior inspection of the vacant building to determine compliance with this ordinance. A minimum of one inspection will be conducted during the initial registration period and each subsequent rental period. Owners are required to provide access to the interior of the building for these inspections. Maintenance is required after registration is filed.

Each vacant building registration certificate is issued and remains valid for 6 months from the date of issuance. There is no fee for the first 6 month registration period. If the building remains vacant longer than 6 months, the owner must renew their vacant building registration and pay a renewal fee of \$250. One of the components of this new process is an inspection fee structure that rewards owners for maintaining their property and a disincentive for owners that fail to do the right thing. After the original registration, each subsequent registration renewal will cost \$250 provided the owner has properly maintained the property and there are no outstanding code violations. Properties with outstanding code violations will be subject to an escalating renewal fee of \$500. Registration fees for properties in violation of the requirements of this ordinance at subsequent renewals will be charged a fee in increasing increments of \$250 up to \$1000. This new approach provides a solution to the vacant property issue.

### **Milwaukee Center for Health Equity – Milwaukee Health Department**

The MHD has been moving towards utilizing an “outcomes based model”, which means taking the data that they have and making it available to the public to prevent disease and enhance the quality of life for Milwaukee residents. Over time, the department has tried to build systems and put systems into place that allow that outcomes data to be delivered to the public.

The MHD realizes that there are negative health outcomes that stem from underlying social economic factors, lack of formal education, low income, poor housing, and limited transportation. Milwaukee is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest city in the nation but ranks 7<sup>th</sup> worst in infant mortality; 7<sup>th</sup> worst in teen pregnancy; and 2<sup>nd</sup> worst for sexually transmitted diseases. In addition to these statistics, Milwaukee has some of the nation’s worst poverty, child poverty, violence, unemployment and high school drop-out rates. These conditions must be addressed in order to achieve health and reduce health inequities in the City of Milwaukee.

The Center for Health Equity in Milwaukee was founded through a partnership with Columbia-St. Mary’s. It is anticipated that the Milwaukee Center for Health Equity will find a home in the new School of Public Health at the University of Wisconsin. This center will change the model that the MHD has been working with and will focus on the notion that everyone has an equal opportunity to be healthy.

The Center for Health Equity is dedicated to improving the social and economic factors that strongly influence our public health within the City of Milwaukee as well as throughout the state of Wisconsin. The Center will concentrate on improving the health of the population through three main strategies: improving understanding of how socioeconomic conditions affect people’s health, encouraging and supporting changes in public policy to improve the health of everyone in our community, and building community involvement in policymaking .

In focusing on these areas, the MHD hopes to achieve “health equity” ; a society where all people have an equal chance to be healthy. In addition, every future grant that the MHD writes will include a notion of health equity that encompasses equal rights and equal access for all, written right into the grant. The MHD will then have researchers and statisticians begin to build a model that will track the outcomes for the next five to seven years to determine the impact of equal rights, equal access and equity in terms of the health care that people receive.

## **FOCUSED EFFORTS BEST PRACTICES**

### **Diversity in Urban Forestry Program -Department of Public Works**

The purpose of *Strengthening Diversity in Urban Forestry Service Delivery* is to increase the diversity and relevancy of urban forestry within the minority community and to engage people of color in the green economy. This initiative provides comprehensive career training targeted at low-income Milwaukee residents and aims to link successful participants with the urban forestry industry. *Strengthening Diversity in Urban Forestry Service Delivery* links workforce development and urban forestry to improve diversity and connect those that need jobs to the expanding green economy.

The Program will recruit and train up to 40 low-income Milwaukee residents to prepare them for green jobs in urban forestry. The City will conduct a 7 ½-month training program for entry-level hires. The City’s Forestry Program is nationally-recognized among the urban forestry profession for its level of excellence, quality urban forest management and highly trained and skilled staff. A hallmark of the city’s program is a comprehensive skills-development program for entry-level employees that trains and

produces skilled, work-ready arborists. This program serves as the training model for *Strengthening Diversity in Urban Forestry Service Delivery*.

### **Targeted Investment Neighborhood Initiative – Department of City Development**

The Targeted Investment Neighborhood (TIN) initiative is designed to sustain and increase owner-occupancy, provide high quality affordable rental housing, strengthen property values, and improve the physical appearance and quality of life of neighborhoods. TINs focus resources for three years on a small area, generally six to twelve city blocks. NIDC's TIN program works with residents to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood. NIDC's Community Outreach Coordinator is a liaison between the neighborhood and City departments. Staff also provides assistance with community-building and outreach.

Residents of TIN areas are eligible to use three loan and grant programs to fix up their properties: the Home Rehabilitation loan program, the Buy in Your Neighborhood Program, and the Rental Rehabilitation program. DCD works with TIN clients to structure financing packages and payment plans, determine the scope of required renovation work, and monitor the quality of the work. TINs combat the disparity in home owner-occupancy rates, which are generally lower in low-income neighborhoods, and provide credit to low-income home owners who seek to improve the quality of their properties. The program works in cooperation with the Dept. of Neighborhood Services, Milwaukee Police Department, and a non-profit TIN sponsoring partner.

### **Earn and Learn Program – Department of City Development**

Earn & Learn is a youth employment program operated by the Department of City Development and Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB). Earn & Learn works with City government, non-profit organizations, and private sector employers to create part-time summer job opportunities for youth aged 14 to 21. Federal and City funds are used to pay the wages of participants. In 2009, Earn & Learn created 3,000 job slots. Most jobs were held by low-income youth residing within central city census tracts. The majority of the participants were minority youth.

Earn & Learn introduces participants to the reality of holding a job. Participants are required to go through an application and interview process prior to placement, and youth workers receive work-readiness skills training provided by MAWIB. Earn & Learn is intended to address the disparity in rates of employment between white and minority residents of Milwaukee, and it also seeks to lower the high rate of youth unemployment, particularly among central city youth.

DCD is responsible for two specific aspects of Earn & Learn: recruiting private-sector employers to create job slots for youth and operating the Summer Youth Internship Program (SYIP). The SYIP provides employment to about 150 youth in City departments throughout the summer as well as educational activities for participants, including financial literacy, a college fair, and health and fitness education. Local colleges, including UW-Milwaukee, Marquette University, Milwaukee Area Technical College and Milwaukee School of Engineering, and M&I Bank, assist to organize these educational experiences.

### **Landlord Tenant Training Program (DNS) – Department of Neighborhood Services**

The Department of Neighborhood Services supports the City goals of building safe and healthy neighborhoods by protecting the value of investments in neighborhoods and properties while enforcing the building codes. Recognizing the role of education and outreach in ensuring that residents understand the rights and responsibilities, the Department holds training sessions, attends various community programs, and facilitates talks at crime prevention meetings and block watch meetings.

Over the years DNS has modified components of the Landlord Training Program to include sessions and manuals in Spanish. In addition they developed a large print manual to assist those individuals with a visual impairment the ability to obtain the materials developed for this program. In October of 2009, The Landlord Training Program collaborated with UW-Milwaukee Housing Office to present a program emphasizing the specific issues of renting to student. Members of the Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee Fire Department, UW-Milwaukee Coast, DNS Commissioner Art Dahlberg, Atty. Tristan Pettit President of the Apartment Owners Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, Milwaukee Metropolitan Fair Housing Council, Pountain Partners, LLC, and others pro bono their time.

### **Residence Preference Program (RPP): DOA/DPW**

Effective in 2010, the Mayor and the Common Council amended Chapter 309 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances to ensure a greater participation of city residents in City development projects. Developers are now required to ensure that 40% of worker hours required for construction of the project be performed by unemployed or underemployed residents. In addition, the RPP residence boundary was expanded to include the entire City of Milwaukee. In accordance with Chapter 309 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, residents preference hiring is required for all construction contracting activities of the Department of Public Works. The 40% participation is required except in special cases where the Commissioner of Public Works determines there is sufficient reason to impose lesser levels of participation. The Commissioner of Public Works may also increase the percentage of resident worker participation to more than 40% on specific construction contracts and other contracts. This change requires contractors and subcontractors to give fair consideration to all segments of the population including women and minorities.