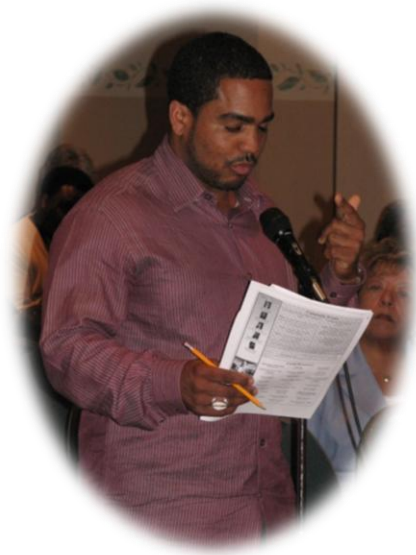


Structural Issues Impacting Black Male Employment Opportunities in Metro Milwaukee



Community Relations – Social Development Commission
Dave Celata, Policy & Research Division
June 2010

Acknowledgements

This report results from a community driven coalition known as the Bridge of Hope. This initiative relies on the participation and contributions of volunteers from a number of sectors. Participants represent nonprofit organizations, public institutions, the faith-based community, academic institutions, for-profit businesses, and the general public. The Social Development Commission and the Bridge of Hope's leadership thank the individuals that have contributed to this coalition and its efforts to understand and address the needs of our community.

While certainly not an exhaustive list, The Social Development Commission would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance with understanding black male joblessness in our community:

Steve Adams	James Hall	Greg Miller
Penny Adrian	Rain Harris	Cindy Muhar
Dr. Martha Barry	Robert Harris	Steve Nichols
Brenda Bell-White	Shawn Hayes	Ammar Nsoroma
Deborah Blanks	Julietta Henry	Dr. David Pate
Melanie Brooks	Rhonda Hill	Shirley Senaya
Maebe Brown	Albert Holmes	Andre Sherard
Nicole Carver	Dan Idzikowski	Mary Virtue
Khalil Coleman	Tim John	Marilyn Walczak
Kathlene Darrington	Chad Johnson	Christopher Walton
Rosa Dominguez	Jimmy V. Johnson	Dr. Lenard Wells
Ella Dunbar	Lynda Jones	Greg Williams
Pam Fendt	Joseph Kellam	Lisa Williams
Damira Grady	Jason Latimore	Maurice Williams
Mary Gute Witte	Dr. Marc Levine	
Amy Hagedorn	Michael Lowrey	

The Social Development Commission would also like to thank the Ford Foundation, the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, and the National Community Action Partnership for their assistance with this project.

A Call to Action

The Social Development Commission issues this report to enhance the community's understanding of black male joblessness by adding a community perspective to existing research. This perspective shows that our current systems are not meeting the needs of black males. These outcomes are not felt by unemployed black men alone; the entire region loses when human potential is not realized. Lost potential weakens our families, our communities, and our economy. A systematic restructuring is needed.



(SDC GED Graduate)

We urge all community stakeholders including elected officials, business leaders, faith-based groups, civic leaders, and community members to get serious about reducing Metro Milwaukee's high rate of black male joblessness. An effective approach will not simply inject more resources into existing systems. At the same time, public, private, and domestic systems need to be restructured to produce better results for black males. Until that restructuring occurs, our community will fail to provide one of our nation's most basic principles: equal opportunity for all.

We invite all members of the community to read this report for a better understanding of the causes of, and solutions to, black male joblessness. But going beyond that, we call all members of the community to action. This report does not intend to be a final, definitive word. Instead, it seeks to move the dialogue forward towards solutions. Our hope is that this report informs community members, stimulates conversation, assists in the evolution of ideas, and engages community members with this issue.

Thank you for your interest in this topic. We look forward to working with all sectors of the community in making Metro Milwaukee a more equitable, just and economically vibrant region.

Handwritten signature of Deborah Blanks in black ink.

Deborah Blanks, CEO

Handwritten signature of Fred Royal Jr. in black ink.

Fred Royal, Board Chair

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Executive Summary

This report is issued to stakeholders in Metro Milwaukee by the Community Relations – Social Development Commission (SDC). It seeks to enhance current research on the issue of black male employment by blending in the unique findings of a community-based research initiative. This initiative seeks to fill gaps in the current literature on black male employment by providing community member input—information that is currently lacking. This format is used to provide readers with a more complete understanding of the issue.

The major takeaway from this report is that systematic changes are needed in Metro Milwaukee if the community is to address its high rate of black male joblessness. To help the Milwaukee community restructure and improve its systems to yield better results for black males, this report concludes with a series of policy and programmatic recommendations that are based on the thoughts and ideas of community members. Justification for these recommendations is provided throughout the succeeding sections, with more detailed descriptions of each recommendation provided at the end of this report.

Policy & Programmatic Recommendations

- (1) Barriers to employment such as child support payments, driver's license revocations, and public transportation should be restructured to stimulate employment among black males.
- (2) Programs should be expanded to assist families develop positive relationships.
- (3) Educational and workforce development programs must be better structured to help black males connect to high growth employment sectors.
- (4) All entities should conduct black male impact studies to determine how their organization impacts black males and their employment prospects.
- (5) Disparate impacts caused by the criminal justice system should be eliminated.
- (6) The spatial mismatch between neighborhoods of color and employment hotspots must be connected through improvements to public transportation and economic development in the central city.
- (7) Community dialogues should be developed and expanded to help reduce the negative impact socialization has on our perceptions of black males.
- (8) Transitional jobs programs should be expanded to help ex-offenders re-enter the community and non-offenders bridge the gap between permanent jobs.
- (9) Social services must be better integrated and coordinated in the community.

A Guiding Principle: Maximum Feasible Participation

Branded into the ethos of SDC is the concept of “maximum feasible participation”. SDC is the designated Community Action Agency for Milwaukee County, which makes the agency part of a national movement to address poverty at the local level with the aid of community participation.

SDC seeks participation from *all* community members in its decision making processes, including representation from racial and ethnic minorities, low-income neighborhoods, civic and business organizations, public institutions, faith-based organizations and community-based organizations—all of which are represented on SDC’s Board of Commissioners and other decision making bodies.

With these principles in mind, SDC regularly collects input from community members to help guide its policies and programs. This input is collected through community needs assessments, door-to-door surveys, focus groups, client interviews, roundtable discussions, community dialogues, symposiums, and public hearings.

This report presents information collected through a community-based research project on the issue of black male joblessness. This research project uses maximum feasible participation as a guiding principle. A great deal of information contained within this report comes directly from community members as a result of a public hearing, roundtable discussions and a comprehensive community needs assessment. This community-based data is preceded by more academically based research. In the end, this report seeks to provide a useful blend of academic and community-based information which offers a more comprehensive understanding of black male joblessness in the Metro Milwaukee area.

The Bridge of Hope Coalition and the Antiracism Committee

As mentioned in the Acknowledgements Section, this report is the result of a community partnership known as the Bridge of Hope. This volunteer based association consists of representatives from all sectors of the community.

The history of the Bridge of Hope Coalition begins in 2006, when SDC held a community dialogue on social issues impacting Milwaukee’s youth. This event was held in partnership with other community-based organizations and solicited a number of solutions to the issues faced by Milwaukee’s youth. The dialogue produced a great deal of information from those individuals dealing firsthand with social problems in our community.

Building on the momentum of the 2006 Community Dialogue, SDC held its 1st Symposium on Poverty in 2007. This symposium called all sectors of the community together to discuss poverty in Milwaukee—with a focus on root causes and potential solutions. Over 350 people attended the first symposium and their feedback identified three main drivers of poverty in Milwaukee: job opportunities, education and racism. This feedback led SDC to organize the Bridge of Hope Coalition—a community initiative to research these issues, propose solutions and advocate for change.

The Bridge of Hope Coalition was organized into three committees to examine job opportunities, education and racism. Led by community volunteers, these committees spent their first year researching their respective issue. This research culminated in a preliminary report, which was presented to attendees at SDC's 2nd Symposium on Poverty in 2008.

In this current report, the Bridge of Hope's Antiracism Committee discusses the issue of black male joblessness in Greater Milwaukee. The intent of this report is twofold. First, this report communicates the community's voice on this issue. Second, based on the community's viewpoint, this report provides policy and programmatic recommendations to reduce black male joblessness in Metro Milwaukee.

We know there's a storm in Milwaukee every day...a storm of unemployment and poverty, frustration and depression. We know we cannot solve everything by having a conversation; but we do not believe we can solve anything until we do have a conversation. So we want to start that dialogue.

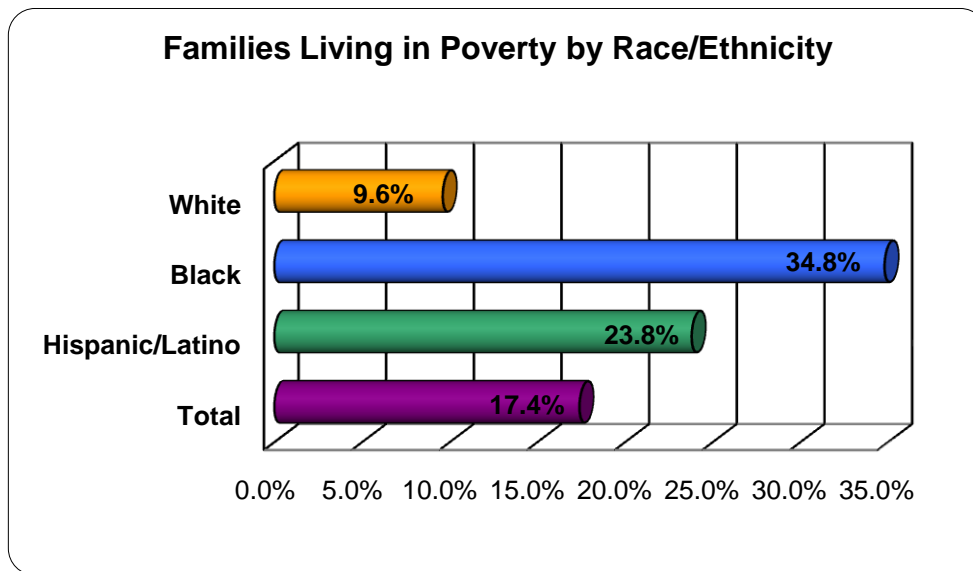
—SDC Chief Executive Officer Deborah Blanks

Race and Poverty in Metro Milwaukee

Over the course of its first year, the Antiracism Committee investigated the issue of race in Milwaukee from a number of angles. Specifically, the committee analyzed racial disparities in education, health, housing, employment, transportation, and crime. This research, which is outlined in this section, gave the committee a better understanding of the relationship between race and poverty in Milwaukee. It is presented here as a preface to a more detailed discussion on black male joblessness.

According to the most recent information released by the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 24.4% of residents in the city of Milwaukee live in poverty. Additionally, Milwaukee has a wide disparity in poverty levels between whites and people of color. According to Graph 1, the percentage of black residents living in poverty is approximately 2.5 times higher than the percentage of white residents living in poverty.

Graph 1: Milwaukee County Families Living in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity¹



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008²

Table 1 presents data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey on the median household incomes of different races and ethnicities in Milwaukee County. The median income for Hispanic/Latino households in

¹ Due to relatively small sample sizes, Native American and Asian households were excluded from this analysis. This exclusion is not intended to discount the poverty faced by these groups.

² Page numbers are given on citations when available. Citations that do not include page numbers result from web-based data queries.

Milwaukee County is 80% of the overall median, while black households have incomes that are 61% of the overall household median.

Table 1: Milwaukee County Household Incomes by Race/Ethnicity in 2008

Race	Median Household Income
White (non-Hispanic)	\$52,950
Black	\$27,468
Hispanic or Latino	\$36,032
Average Household	\$45,091

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008

Intuitively, the racial disparities in poverty and income have cyclical relationships with other quality of life indicators. Below is a list of various racial disparities with a connection to a population's poverty and income rates:

- Black residents represent 6% of Wisconsin's total population, but comprise 45% of the Department of Correction's inmates (WI Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System, 2008, p. 8).
- White students graduate from Milwaukee Public Schools at a rate of 77%; black students graduate at a rate of 65% (MPS District Report Card, 2009, p. 58).
- Black fourth graders in Wisconsin have the lowest reading scores in the country (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2010).
- Six percent of white households in the city of Milwaukee receive food stamps, compared to 27% of black households (American Community Survey, 2008).
- Black Milwaukeeans comprise 38.3% of the city's population and 75.2% of the city's homicide victims (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2008).
- The black infant mortality rate (19.4 per 1000) in the city of Milwaukee is over 3.5 times higher than the white infant mortality rate (5.3 per 1000) (Fetal Infant Mortality Review, 2004, p. 2).

Many of the above disparities are well above the national averages. As bleak as these numbers are, the region appears to have the desire to change. According to a 2006 Public Policy Forum survey on Milwaukee race relations, respondents generally holds negative views on the state of race relations in the region and most respondents do not believe regional leaders can improve race

relations (Public Policy Forum, 2006, p. 1). At the same time, the study also shows that an increasing number of area residents believe that improving race relations is very important (Public Policy Forum, 2006, p.2)—suggesting that the community does have a desire to change, even if its capacity to do so still needs to develop.

Dr. Lenard Wells presenting his research on racial bias in hiring practices in Metro Milwaukee at SDC's June 2009 public hearing



Dr. Marc Levine presenting his research on black male joblessness in Metro Milwaukee at SDC's June 2009 public hearing

The Need for Racially Conscious Policies

In 2008, with funding and assistance from the Ford Foundation, SDC and the Antiracism Committee adopted an evidenced-based model developed by the Aspen Institute as a guide to its work. The Racial Equity Theory of Change (RETOC) model was developed by the Aspen Roundtable on Community Change to assist community groups addressing issues of race. The RETOC model is a “step-by-step guide designed to help community groups define the necessary interim steps and early outcomes required to reduce racial disparities in neighborhoods and regions in the long-term.” (The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2006, p. 1)

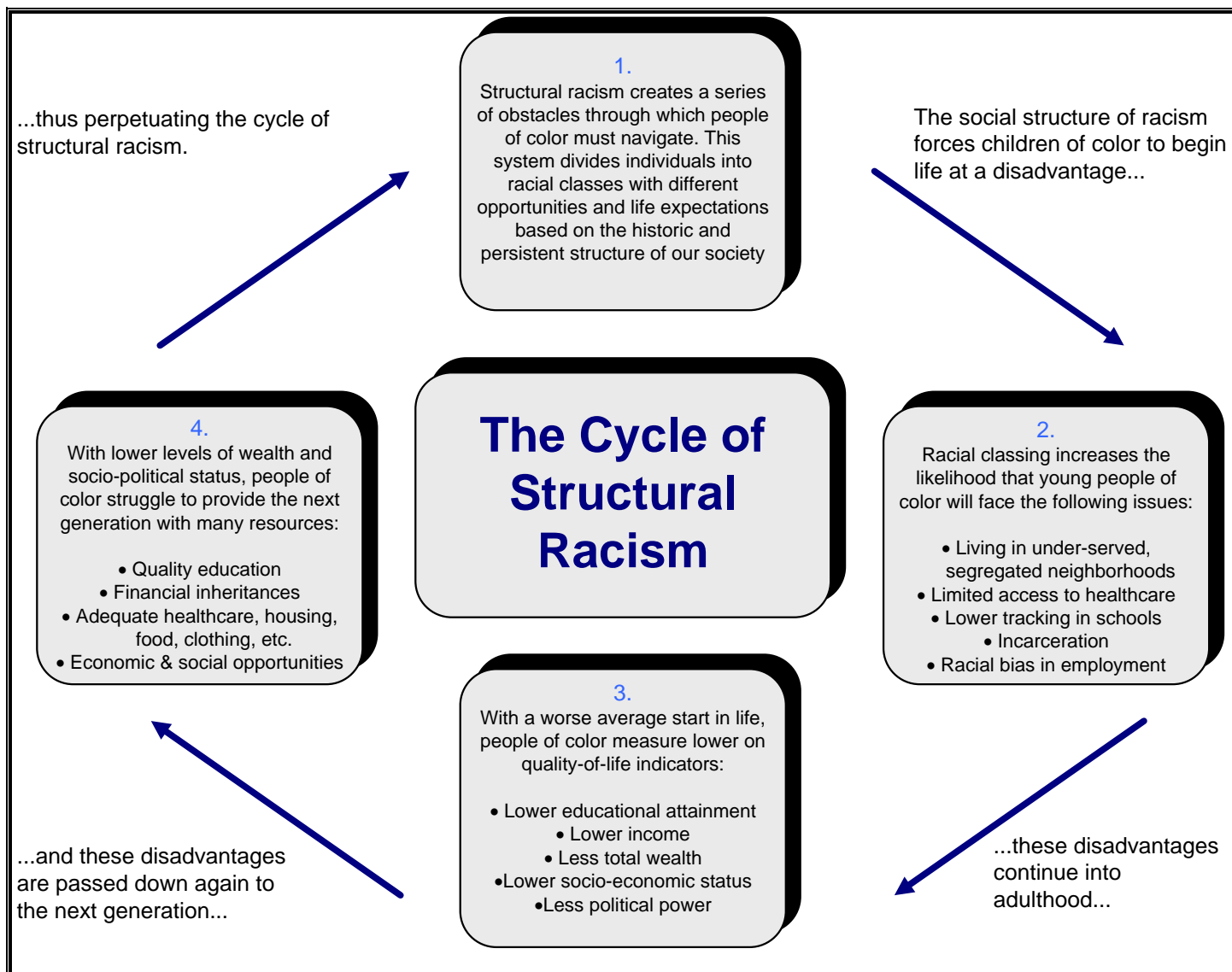
The model further suggests viewing racism through a structural lens. The Aspen Institute uses the following definition of structural racism as a reference point for the RETOC model:

[Structural racism] describes the many mechanisms that perpetuate the link between race and well-being in America. It looks critically at the socioeconomic, political, cultural, geographic, and historical contexts in which people of color are located, and demonstrates how and why those contexts affect individual and family outcomes. For those in the community building and social justice fields, the structural racism framework specifically highlights the ways in which racialized institutional, political and cultural forces can counteract or undermine efforts to improve distressed communities, reduce poverty, and promote equity. (The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2004, p. 35)

A 2008 Catholic Charities report echoes the need to address racism whenever discussing poverty. This report states that “poverty and racism are so intertwined that it is impossible to fully separate them. Racism, in both its individual and institutional forms, is a cause of poverty and at the same time, an additional barrier for people of color seeking to escape poverty.” (Catholic Charities, 2008, p. 1)

To better understand the structural racism concept, SDC developed the following flow chart to visually conceptualize the cycle of structural racism in our society and its impact on people of color.

Figure 1: The Cycle of Structural Racism



Source: The Social Development Commission, 2008

As part of the RETOC model, the Aspen Institute suggests identifying one specific racial disparity of particular importance to the community. By focusing on one disparity, a group can better form measurable outcomes to structure and evaluate its work. With this approach, the Antiracism Committee analyzed its research on race in Milwaukee to identify a specific racial disparity. Looking over its research, committee members were struck both intellectually and emotionally, by the fact that Milwaukee possesses the largest racial disparity in male joblessness in the country. The committee had its issue.

But why talk about race instead of discussing jobs for all? The high rate of black male joblessness is driven in part by Milwaukee's job deficit. Simply put, with more jobs there would most likely be a lower rate of black male joblessness. However, the job deficit can only account for part of the problem—Milwaukee suffers from the highest racial disparity in male joblessness in the nation (Levine, 2008, p. 2). This disparity suggests that it is more than a lack of jobs driving Milwaukee's black male joblessness. The epicenter of this issue is racial. After all, if race were not part of the equation, then the joblessness rate should be equal for white and black males. Consequently, a response to this issue must approach the problem from a racially conscious perspective—otherwise we are only addressing a portion of the problem.

The disparity in male joblessness suggests that race continues to play a significant role in determining one's employment prospects. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that this disparity does not necessarily derive from deliberate acts of active, individual racism. Instead, these results stem in part from the structure of various social institutions, policies, and behaviors that yield other racially centered disparities.

Certainly it should be noted that structural racism stands as one of several factors contributing to poverty in Metro Milwaukee. Other factors such as education, job opportunities, affordable housing, transportation, and cost of living also contribute to poverty. Moreover, persons of all races and ethnicities suffer from poverty and should be assisted. However, at an individual level, poverty is not identical. Instead, some individuals need affordable housing while others do not; some individuals need health insurance while others do not; some individuals need childcare while others do not. Despite the fact that some individuals in poverty have access to affordable housing, health insurance, or childcare does not justify ignoring these root causes of poverty for other individuals. Similarly, even though not everyone in poverty is a person of color, failing to incorporate race-conscious policies ignores a key characteristic with a significant correlation to poverty.

The following sections provide detailed arguments in support of adopting racially conscious policies in regards to black male joblessness. These sections discuss the impact social structures have on black males and their ability to connect to jobs.



Community members discuss various policies and solutions to black male joblessness at SDC's 3rd Annual Poverty Symposium in September 2009



A Social & Economic Profile of the Black Male

In 2008, the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University published a report on the “African American Male Initiative.” This report presents a fairly comprehensive profile of African American males in today's society. This section pulls heavily from the Kirwan Institute report in order to provide a better understanding of what it means to be a black male in America. The intent of this section is not to assign generalizations to all black males. Instead, this section seeks to discuss the larger macro-level forces that impact the lives of black males and influence the rate of black male joblessness.

The Kirwan research initiative begins with a literature review of current academic research on black males. According to the Kirwan report, research focuses on four staples: education, psychological issues, politics and economics, and demographic and statistical data. In addition to these four staples, more emergent research looks at a number of other areas: the identity construction of black males, the community/environment/geography link with black male developmental outcomes, the impact of homelessness, the role of “other fathers” or “social fathers”, and the influence of music on the racial identity and academic achievement of black males.

Despite the presence of research on black males in the academic literature, the Kirwan report highlights the fact that much of the literature focuses on the cultural and individual deficits of black males, rather than structural and institutional issues faced by black males. One of the central points of the Kirwan report is that academic research needs to shift its perspective when analyzing black males. Instead of focusing solely on assigning individual deficits, a more comprehensive approach would consider outcomes for black males within the context of social and economic structures.

To address gaps in the academic literature, the Kirwan research initiative organized a national advisory board and began a national mapping project of the black male. This mapping project sought to (1) bridge gaps in the research literature, (2) identify initiatives and policies that are helpful to black males, and (3) identify successful outcomes.

One of the first findings from Kirwan's national mapping project was a spatial isolation faced by black males—who are often separated from opportunities geographically, socially, and economically. The following section discusses this isolation.

The Spatial Mismatch Issue: A Community in Isolation

The acuteness of the racial disparity in male employment creates a number of problems for Milwaukee, its residents and the region. These problems have a messy, cyclical relationship with joblessness—serving as both causes of black male joblessness and consequences of black male joblessness.

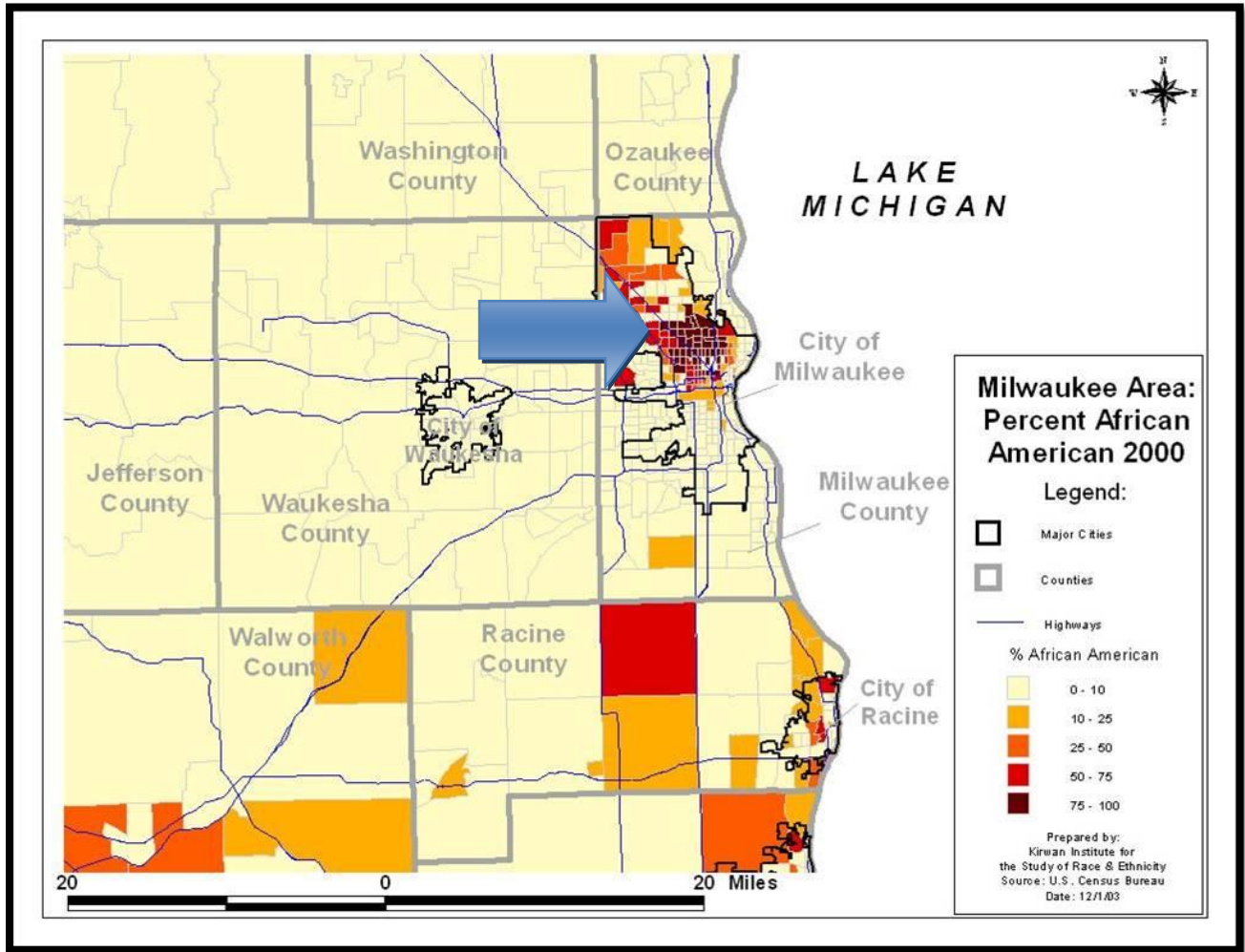
First, studies demonstrate that high levels of joblessness are connected with high violent crime rates for urban neighborhoods (Almgren et al, 1993). In a city like Milwaukee, when joblessness is concentrated in the black community, increases in the violent crime rate concentrate in the black community—a fact supported by empirical evidence (Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission, 2008, p. 2). In a city suffering from severe hyper-segregation, this phenomenon creates black neighborhoods with limited economic activity and limited job opportunities. This problem exasperates itself through the observed relationship between crime rates and urban flight (Cullen and Levitt, 1999). For each 10% increase in crime reported, a city's population decreases by 1% (Cullen and Levitt, 1999, p. 159). More problematic still is that these outmigrates are typically the most mobile and affluent residents (Cullen and Levitt, 1999, p. 160). This pattern creates a vacuum, which removes economic activity from inner city neighborhoods. Furthermore, the Public Policy Forum's 2006 race relations survey indicates that Milwaukee suffers from self-segregation. A majority of whites surveyed believe it is "common sense" for whites to avoid non-white neighborhoods (Public Policy Forum, 2006, p. 7)—further reducing the economic activity in neighborhoods of color.

The following maps illustrate the geographic and economic segregation that continues to exist in Metro Milwaukee. Map 1 shows the concentration of black residents in the metro region. The arrow highlights a vein running through the near north and far northwest sides of the city.

One of the most troubling matters as it relates to black male joblessness in Milwaukee is the pervasive level of education needed for community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, parents, legislators, employers, educators, and criminal justice officials to address why this problem is exacerbated.

—Gregory Williams

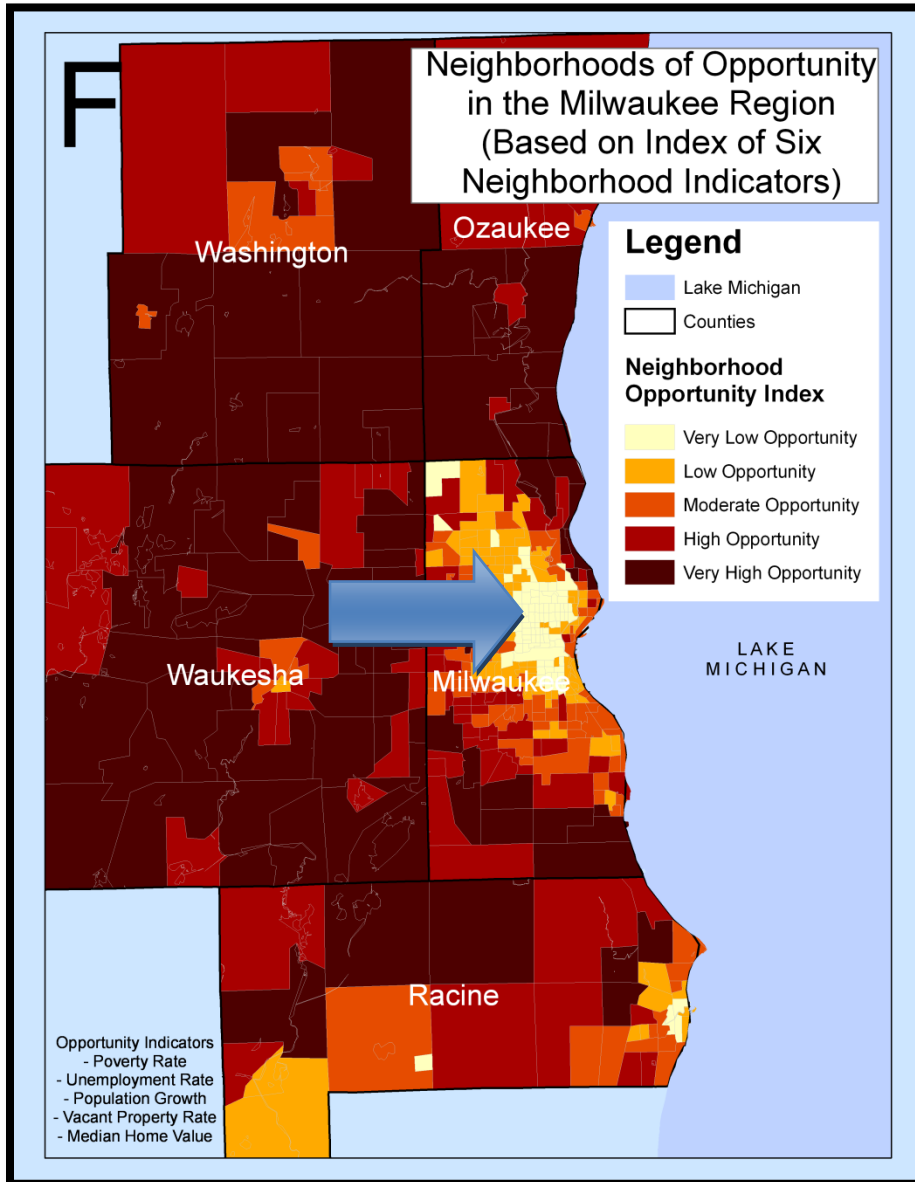
Map 1: Metro Milwaukee Concentration of Black Households



Source: Dr. John A. Powell, The Ohio State University, 2007

Map 2 illustrates neighborhoods of opportunity in the Metro Milwaukee region. Opportunity is defined by an index of multiple indicators: the poverty rate, the unemployment rate, population growth, vacant property rate, and median home value. Comparing Map 2 with Map 1 highlights the inverse relationship between Milwaukee's black population centers and areas of social and economic opportunity. In fact, the heavily concentrated black neighborhoods on Milwaukee's near north and far northwest sides appear as barren deserts of opportunity.

Map 2: Neighborhoods of Opportunity in Metro Milwaukee



Source: Dr. John A. Powell, The Ohio State University, 2007

This geographic segregation creates social and economic segregation within the region. Maps 1 and 2 highlight the “spatial mismatch” discussed by Michael Stoll in his work, “Job Sprawl, Spatial Mismatch, and African-American Employment Disadvantage.” As Stoll states:

The confinement of black households to geographically isolated inner-city neighborhoods has been linked to relatively poor employment outcomes, among other factors...despite moderately increasing rates of residential mobility to the suburbs over the past

few decades, black residential locations have remained fairly centralized and concentrated in older urban neighborhoods of the nation's metropolitan areas, but employment has continuously decentralized toward metropolitan area suburbs and exurbs (Stoll, 2005 p. 1).

In addition to stimulating violent crime and decreased economic activity, high rates of joblessness also result in family instability and increased rates of poverty for women and children. The impact of male joblessness on family instability and poverty rates is clear after analyzing US Census Bureau data from the American Community Survey's "Selected Characteristics of People at Specified Levels of Poverty in the Past 12 Months" table. The total poverty rate for family households³ in Milwaukee County in 2008 was 15.7%. This rate dropped significantly to 5.2% for married-couple families but rose substantially to 36.2% for female households with no husband present. For black households this issue is particularly significant with 43.5% of black female-headed households living in poverty. While there has been erosion in the black nuclear family due to the stress of high unemployment and poverty rates, there has been a dearth of resources available in the black community to combat this issue—including educational opportunities and effective levels of social services.

The Socialization of Black Males

The preceding section on the spatial, social and economic isolation of the black community begs one very important question: why has the isolation of the black community had an acute impact on black males? True, black females lag behind other demographic groups in terms of employment, household income, and other measures of opportunity. However, joblessness and unemployment rates for black males are an extreme outlier.

A partial answer to the extreme rate of black male joblessness lies in the socialization process. Returning to the Kirwan report, a consensus of academic literature finds that social institutions create a number of problems for black males at a young age—resulting in a trend of social marginalization. Issues begin within the structure of educational institutions where teacher-student cultural differences, racial disparities in suspension rates, and discriminatory practices push young black males away from mainstream education and onto a special education track. As a result, differences in educational outcomes arise. Citing the Kirwan report, "Often, the negative perceptions of black males held by school personnel and other students do not remain unnoticed by black males.

³ Family households are defined as households where 2+ members are related by birth, marriage or adoption

Consequently, black males may resist these stereotypes by disidentifying with school or displaying defiant behavior.” (The Kirwan Institute, 2008, p. 25)

The socialization of black males is not limited to educational institutions. Instead, black males are bombarded on a daily basis with a barrage of what society thinks of the black male. Black males are labeled with largely negative and anti-social characteristics in the media, while at the same time other demographic groups learn to view black males in a negative light.

Academic research also suggests that family structure and the growth in single-female-headed households discussed on the previous page negatively impacts black males. The Kirwan Report, citing research conducted by Gordon, et al (1994) states that, “The high rate of father-absence in black families was identified as one of the primary factors contributing to the catastrophic outcomes of black males. More importantly, previous research conveyed that the impact of father-absence was far-reaching, spanning from education to incarceration, and its detrimental effects were long-lasting, impacting even the adult lives of men” (The Kirwan Report, 2008, p. 35).

The tragedy is that these outcomes result not through inherent defects in black males, but rather through the socialization many black males receive. Another tragedy is that the perceptions and labels placed on black males are taught to everyone. Consequently, other demographic groups are also socialized to view black males in a negative light—with detrimental consequences.

The Criminal Justice System

The social construction of the black male discussed in the preceding sections can partially explain the significant racial disparities observed in the criminal justice system. Black male joblessness and black male incarceration rates possess a cyclical relationship—with both variables building on each other. Thus, to understand black male joblessness it is useful to be familiar with the connection between race and the criminal justice system and the influence of that connection on employment.

Racial disparities in incarceration rates are a national trend. However, in Wisconsin the gap in incarceration rates between whites and blacks is particularly alarming. According to a 2008 report issued by Governor Jim Doyle’s Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System, blacks comprise 6% of the state’s total population, but represent 45% of the adult population in the state’s Department of Correction’s facilities (WI

Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System, 2008, p. 8).

According to a 2008 report issued by The Sentencing Project on racial disparities in the criminal justice system:

Illegitimate or unwarranted racial disparity in the criminal justice system results from the dissimilar treatment of similarly situated people based on race. In some instances this may involve overt racial bias, while in others it may reflect the influence of factors that are only indirectly associated with race...Structural racism, derived from the longstanding differential treatment of those with characteristics highly correlated with race (e.g., poverty) can cause or aggravate racial disparity as well. (The Sentencing Project, 2008, p. 1)

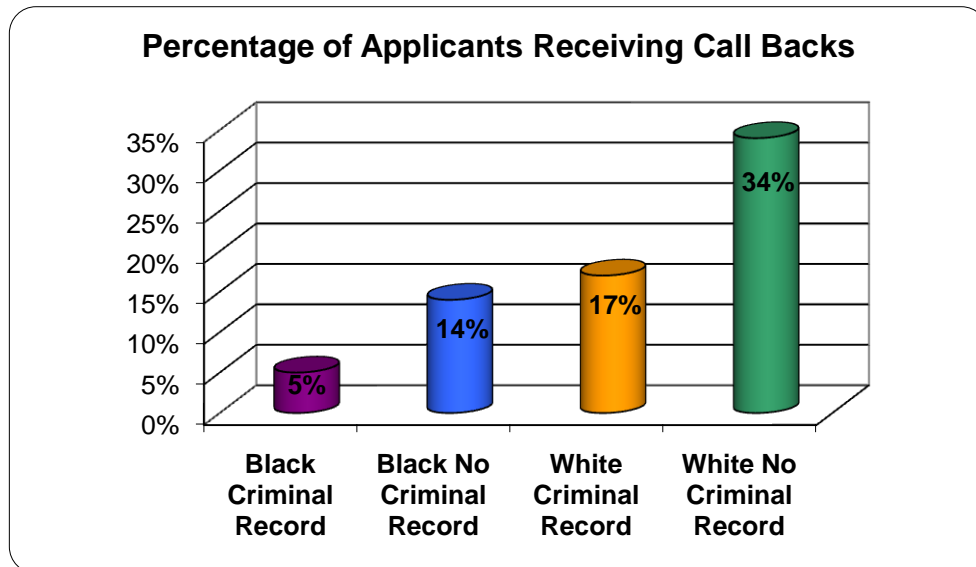
The high incarceration rates of black males influence black male joblessness in multiple waves. The first wave occurs when the incarcerated are removed from the employment sector. At the same time, when individuals are in the criminal justice system, they are losing employment experience and thus losing ground to their unincarcerated peers.

The second wave occurs after offenders are released into the community and they seek employment. Dr. Devah Pager conducted an “experimental audit” in 2003 on hiring patterns in Milwaukee in which matched pairs of males applied for the same entry-level positions with actual employers. These pairs differed only in regards to criminal background and race. Dr. Pager found an acute racial bias against black males both with and without a criminal background. Graph 3 presents the “call backs” applicants received for interviews by race and criminal background.

The under-skilled and undereducated experience the current economic downturn in ways that highlight our challenges in job creation and job retention. The impact on black male unemployment is staggering.

–Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett

Graph 2: Percentage of Applicants Called Back by Race and Criminal Background



Source: Dr. Devah Pager, 2003, p. 22.

According to Dr. Pager's study, white applicants with a criminal record are over 3 times more likely to receive a call back than their black counterparts. Interestingly, white applicants that disclosed a criminal background received a higher percentage of call backs than black applicants with no criminal background. The impact of this phenomenon is significant for black male joblessness. Dr. Pager's observations suggest that not only does a criminal offense have a disparate impact on black males (perhaps attributable to the socialized fear employers have of the "angry black male") but that racism in hiring practices persists. These findings will be explored further in a succeeding section on SDC's public hearing on black male joblessness. At that public hearing, Dr. Lenard Wells presented his continuation of Dr. Pager's study. Additionally, multiple witnesses from the community discussed their criminal background and the influence of that background on their attempts to gain employment.

The Resiliency of Black Males

As previously stated, the information presented in these sections sought to provide an understanding of the larger, macro-level forces that impact the lives of black males and their employment prospects. Certainly it should be stated that a significant number of black males are able to overcome the influences of socialization and the barriers created by the spatial mismatch issue as well as avoid incarceration in the criminal justice system. The ability of many black

males to earn an education, gain employment, and provide for their families should be acknowledged and commended—especially in light of the barriers and stumbling blocks these men overcame.

At the same time, the fact that some black males have overcome these barriers does not justify the existence of these barriers nor does this fact discount the issues faced by unemployed black males. The fact remains that the presence of these barriers and stumbling blocks is unjustified and they should be removed from our community.

Black Male Employment in Metro Milwaukee

Researchers differ on the definition of joblessness. Some academics define joblessness broadly to include any individual of working age that is not in the current workforce. This broad definition includes the incarcerated, those suffering from mental health issues, individuals on Social Security Insurance, etc. Other academics narrow the definition of joblessness to exclude these groups. Also, academics differ on defining “working age”. However, despite these differences in definitions, the underlying point remains: black male employment is a serious problem in the Metro Milwaukee area.

Two major studies have been conducted on the issue of black male joblessness in Milwaukee in recent years. The first study by Dr. Marc Levine at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee’s Center for Economic Development finds that Milwaukee has one of the highest rates of black male joblessness in the United States—with 47.1% of black males not having a job in 2008 (Levine, 2009, p. 2). This statistic ranks Milwaukee 5th in the nation for black male joblessness out of the nation’s major metropolitan areas. Additionally, Milwaukee has one of the better white male joblessness rates in the nation. This contrast yields the nation’s largest racial disparity in male joblessness.

Dr. Levine’s research breaks down the statistics further to analyze joblessness over time and within narrower demographics. Milwaukee’s black male joblessness rate has remained relatively consistent over the past decade—with only subtle fluctuations occurring mostly within the data’s margin of error. The rate is also consistent throughout the region. Table 2 presents joblessness rates in Metro Milwaukee by location.

Table 2: 2008 Metropolitan Milwaukee Male Joblessness by Race and Location

Age	Black City	Black Suburbs	White City	White Suburbs	Hispanic City	Hispanic Suburbs
All Working Age	47.4%	44.7%	23.1%	16.4%	24.2%	17.0%
Young Adults	70.1%	64.0%	36.8%	35.2%	53.0%	23.8%
Prime Working Age	36.2%	36.2%	16.0%	8.2%	14.6%	11.5%

All working age = 16-64; Young adults = 16-24; Prime working age = 25-54

Source: Dr. Marc Levine, 2008, p. 6

In 2008, the black male joblessness rate was 47.4% in Milwaukee's inner-city. This rate drops to only 44.7% in Milwaukee's suburbs. For those black males of prime working age (25-54), the rate is equal between the inner city and suburbs, resting at 36.2% in both locations.

Jobs are particularly difficult to find for young black males in Milwaukee. According to the data presented in Table 3 those black males age 16-24, 69.6% are jobless. This statistic can be explained to a limited degree by the fact that young black males may be in educational programs. However, Table 3 shows that the jobless rate for young white males age 16-24 is 35.6%--nearly half the jobless rate of their black counterparts.

Table 3: 2008 Metropolitan Milwaukee Male Joblessness by Race and Age

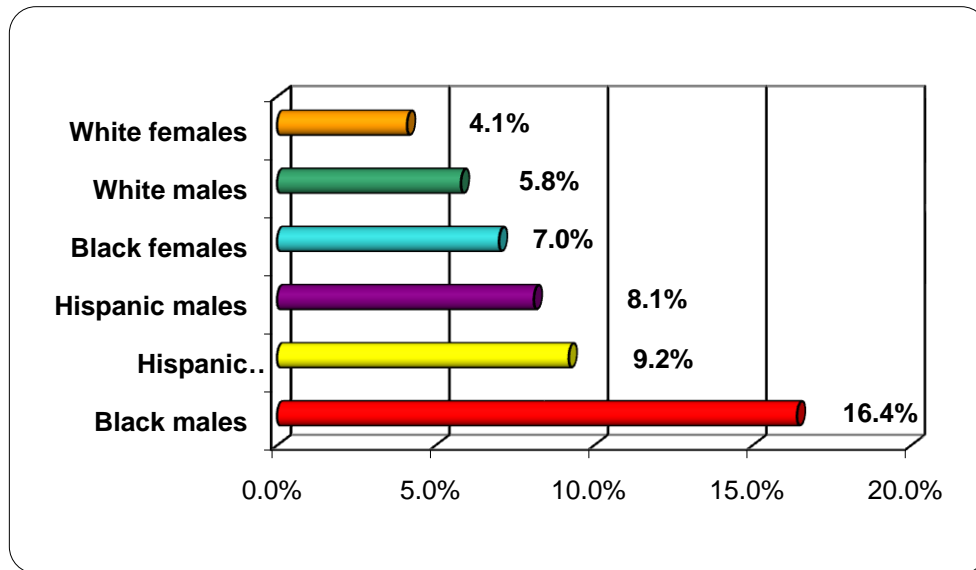
Age Category	Black		White		Hispanic	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
16-24	64.5%	69.6%	37.8%	35.6%	44.4%	43.2%
25-54	43.2%	36.2%	10.4%	10.9%	15.7%	13.8%
55-64	61.8%	53.2%	28.4%	27.2%	25.6%	33.7%

Source: Dr. Marc Levine, 2008, p. 5

The second local study on black male employment was conducted by researchers at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Employment and Training Institute (ETI). ETI researchers did not use the term joblessness in their study. Instead, this study used a narrower statistic and the term unemployed. However, despite the fact that the exact numbers vary, ETI researchers also depict a grave picture for black males in Metro Milwaukee.

According to ETI research, black males have by far the highest rate of unemployment in the metropolitan region as detailed in Graph 3.

Graph 3: 2008 Metropolitan Milwaukee Unemployment Rates by Race and Gender



Source: UW Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2009, p.1

Graph 3 highlights the anomaly that is black male unemployment. While the joblessness rate is higher among racial and ethnic minority groups compared to white workers, the rate for black males is significantly higher than any other group⁴.

ETI research also confirms the findings of Dr. Levine's work regarding employment trends among young black males. Table 4 highlights the fact that teenage black males struggle to find employment and gain early employment opportunities.

I think we need to continue the process and help better educate and alert the community of the need to employ men of color.

—Andre Sherard

⁴ These statistics suggest that there is some sort of economic, social, and/or cultural forces hindering the employment of black males. This idea will be more comprehensively discussed in this report under the section entitled "Black Male Joblessness: The People's Perspective" which explores experiences, thoughts and suggestions documented from within the Milwaukee community to better understand the causes of black male joblessness.

Table 4: 2008 Metropolitan Milwaukee Last Employment Held by Unemployed African Americans by Age Group

Last Employment Held by Unemployed African American Males (ACS 2008)	16-19	20-24	25-54	55-64	Total
Worked within the last 12 months	145	722	3082	105	4,054
Last worked, 1-5 years ago	616	829	878	162	2,485
Last worked over 5 years ago, or never worked	151	503	485	260	1,399

Source: UW Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2009, p. 2

Finally, ETI research highlights the economic trend our nation has witnessed over the past few decades: a standard high school education is no longer sufficient to secure employment. Employment rates vary dramatically among individuals with different educational backgrounds; those with post-high school educations have a much higher propensity to be employed as Table 5 illustrates.

Table 5: 2008 Metropolitan Milwaukee African American Male Employment by Educational Attainment

Highest Level of Education Completed by African American Males	% Employed	% Unemployed
4-year college bachelor's degree or more	96%	4%
Some college/associate degree	93%	7%
4-year high school diploma	82%	18%
GED/HSED	85%	15%
High school non-completer (including those still in school)	60%	40%

Source: UW Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2009, p. 1

A Local History of Black Male Employment

Currently, Metro Milwaukee has the nation's 5th highest rate of black male joblessness (Levine, 2009, p. 2). In order to better understand how the community arrived at this point, it is helpful to review the history of black male employment in Metro Milwaukee and the national trends that impact this issue.

Milwaukee's early population growth and employment history

Incorporated as a city in 1846, Milwaukee's population was fueled by multiple waves of European immigrants for the city's first 75-100 years. These European immigrants, predominately German, Polish, Irish and later Italian, provided much needed labor for Milwaukee's booming industrial economy. Tens of thousands of immigrants were attracted to Milwaukee by the city's abundant jobs and economic growth. During this period Milwaukee experienced a population boom.

Early Milwaukee remained a predominately white community. The US Census Bureau presents the racial and ethnic breakdown of Milwaukee's population in a table entitled "Wisconsin – Race and Hispanic Origin for Selected Cities and Other Places: Earliest Census to 1990." According to the US Census Bureau, only 1.5% of Milwaukee's pre-World War II (1940) population was black. However, the increased demand on the industrial sector created by World War II, and its subsequent economic boom, attracted one final wave of migrants to the city. A steady and significant black migration rose from rural southern states. By 1960, Milwaukee's black population had grown to 8.4% of the city's total population. In 2008 the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimated the black population of Milwaukee to be 38.3% of the city's total population.

Black male employment trends in Milwaukee

As discussed above, the black population of Milwaukee exploded during World War II and the booming economic years that succeeded the war. For many industrious black families, Milwaukee presented itself as a long awaited opportunity at gainful employment and economic success. One should take a moment to meditate on this idea: *black families came to Milwaukee to work*. A lack of personal responsibility and cultural factors are often cited as driving forces that explain the racial disparity in joblessness. Analyzing the historical data puts this point of view into question.

Joe William Trotter explores the motivations behind Milwaukee's black migration in his 2007 work *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat*. Trotter's work compares the socio-economic opportunities in the mostly rural South versus the socio-economic opportunities in Milwaukee's industrial economy. According to data provided by Trotter, southern farmhands could earn 75 cents to \$1.00 per day. In Milwaukee's factories, laborers could earn \$3.67-\$4.79 per day (Trotter, 1985, p. 47). This economic incentive attracted highly motivated workers—workers that moved thousands of miles for an opportunity at economic success.

2009 research conducted by historians David McCarthy and James Oberly suggests that, "Southern blacks were fortunate in that there were many jobs to

be had in these industrial cities of the North; the migration, which occurred primarily before, during, and after World War Two, found many blacks working to help with the war effort” (McCarthy and Oberly, 2009 p. 10) McCarthy and Oberly’s work also finds that during the World War II period, black workers were able to slowly move upward on the socio-economic ladder—eventually forming a modest black middle class.

However, the economic development of black families was stunted. During World War II, black males and white males were employed at virtually the same rate. By 1960, black males residing in Milwaukee’s central city were three times more likely to be unemployed (Braun, 2001, p. 26). Since 1960 these disparities have further eroded to the significant black male joblessness rates found in Metro Milwaukee today. The following section discusses some of the social forces at play during this time period.

The Black Community in Milwaukee (1960-1980)

As discussed above, the black population of Milwaukee exploded in the mid-20th century. This demographic trend significantly impacted the community, neighborhoods in which black migrants settled, and Milwaukee’s public and private institutions. In the 1950s tensions developed in Milwaukee’s inner core⁵ between the city’s burgeoning black community and the predominately white police force. These tensions resulted in social unrest and a series of incidents between inner core residents and the Milwaukee Police Department.

In response to these incidents, Mayor Frank Zeidler organized the “Mayor’s Study Committee on Social Problems in the Inner Core Area of the City.” This committee consisted of major community stakeholders and it studied the inner core area, identified social issues, and proposed solutions for improving neighborhood conditions. This committee’s Final Report was released on April 15, 1960 (The Zeidler Report, 1960) and provides readers with an extremely insightful understanding of life in black neighborhoods at that time and the perceptions the authors held of low-income black families.

The Zeidler Report includes a number of findings that describe the conditions of the inner core area in which black residents were concentrated in 1960. These findings are summarized below:

- (1) The area was densely populated with an aging housing stock that did not adequately meet the needs of the population.

⁵ The term inner core was used frequently in the mid-20th century to refer to Milwaukee’s central-city—specifically the near north side neighborhood.

- (2) The inner core traditionally received the most recent wave of migrant families moving to Milwaukee. The Zeidler Report notes that “as the number of these families increased, their behavior patterns became more noticeable and in many instances disturbing.”
- (3) The inner core accounted for 37,800 or 90% of the city's non-white population
- (4) Higher rates of infant mortality and tuberculosis mortality occurred in the inner core compared to the city as a whole.
- (5) The inner core accounted for 13.7% of the city's 1959 population but 51.6% of the city's cases receiving Aid to Dependent Children and 39.3% of the cases receiving General (financial) Assistance.
- (6) The report identified a significant issue with “problem families and individuals” and highlighted that approximately 50% of the work done by social and welfare agencies in the inner core went to 6% of the area's families.
- (7) The largest number of fathers were employed as semi-skilled and unskilled laborers.
- (8) New migrants lacked the “manpower needs” to thrive in a industrialized economy and also required “acculturation”—a term used during this period that refers to the contemporary concept of “soft skills”.
- (9) The report states that the inner core had sufficient educational resources. A passage that is insightful to the mindset of its authors reads, “There are numerous opportunities for college education and scholarship assistance available to minority group members within and outside the state; their use is a matter of motivation. Motivation for education by low economic groups is often non-existent and for this and other reasons, many youths in the inner core area are not entering college.”
- (10) At the time, the area had the following commercial facilities listed in the report: 7 movie theaters, 5 billiard parlors, 12 bowling alleys, 354 taverns, and 3 club bars.
- (11) The report states that the need for social services in the inner core outpaced the provision of social services in the area—specifically for youth.

(The Zeidler Report, 1960 p. 7-20)

The Zeidler Report included a number of recommendations for addressing the issues listed above in the inner core. Unfortunately, 50 years later, the community is still in need of implementing many of these same recommendations, which are summarized below:

- (1) Acculturation: This period term refers to assisting individuals with the development of soft skills to function in an urban, industrialized economy.
- (2) Education and Employment: In 1960 the main focus within these two areas centered on educating youth in high skilled trades and providing summer employment opportunities.
- (3) Community Facilities and Programs: Again, the report focuses on providing diverse leisure activities for youth.
- (4) Housing: In 1960 the inner core is suffering from increased blight, "panic selling", and a lack of credit opportunities for black families. These factors created an unstable housing market that negatively impacted the area.
- (5) Problem Families and Individuals: Again, the report is concerned with this phenomenon of "problem families" negatively impacting the neighborhood. Proposed ideas include treatment for alcoholism, the use of birth control, increasing the financial incentives for social workers, use early termination of parental rights, and financial education for those that "do not have the inherent ability to adequately manage their financial affairs."
- (6) Law Enforcement: The report concludes its recommendations by calling for improvements in police-community relations, eliminating the presence of "professional gamblers, pimps, procurers, and narcotic paddlers", and improving the conditions in taverns, bowling alleys, and billiard parlors that lend themselves to "concerted community action" (rioting).

(The Zeidler Report, 1960 p. 20-30)

Another helpful document for understanding this time period and its impact on the community today is "The People of the Inner Core – North" (O'Reilly et al, 1965). In this work, the authors use demographic data as well as in-depth interviews with 391 black community members to outline the social and economic issues facing black families in Milwaukee's inner core area.

Passages from this work provide a disturbing reminder that Milwaukee has struggled to adequately address the needs of its black families. As an example, O'Reilly et al open their work with the following passage:

Although the crises of mass transportation, physical deterioration of neighborhoods, and the flight to suburbia tend to monopolize the attention...segregation makes an important contribution to the social problems associated with minority status in American society. But segregation is not only a problem for members of the segregated minority. Setting Negroes apart blocks necessary communication between them and

white people who, whether they want to be or not, are members of the same community. (O'Reilly et al, 1965, p. 1).

"The People of the Inner Core – North" highlights the historical legacy of the social and economic issues faced by many of Milwaukee's black families today. The work's central findings could be used to discuss contemporary issues in Metro Milwaukee. According to O'Reilly et al, the following facts were true for Milwaukee in 1965:

- (1) Milwaukee suffered from severe hyper-segregation with black households heavily concentrated on Milwaukee's north side
- (2) A significant racial disparity in male employment existed throughout the metropolitan area
- (3) Predominately black neighborhoods suffered from poor neighborhood conditions and an aging housing stock
- (4) A gaping disparity in educational outcomes existed between white students and black students in Milwaukee Public Schools

(O'Reilly et al, 1965, p. 39)

In 1970, SDC and the Milwaukee Urban League released a report entitled "Black Powerlessness in Milwaukee Institutions and Decision-Making Structure." This report had six research questions:

- (1) What is the magnitude of Black representation in major policy-making institutions?
- (2) How do the three general sectors studied (public, private and voluntary) compare in magnitude of Black representation?
- (3) What is the amount of duplication in positions held by Blacks and how does possible duplication of the same persons holding many positions influence their effectiveness?
- (4) To what degree have Blacks been successful in achieving representation within institutions having the most direct relation to their living space?
- (5) Are Blacks more likely to be appointed or elected to positions in the public sector?
- (6) How are Blacks involved in [the] making of specific decisions?

(SDC and the Milwaukee Urban League, 1970, p. 4)

By analyzing Census Bureau data and surveying metropolitan area institutions, SDC and the Milwaukee Urban League concluded the report with the following statements:

- (1) Blacks had a higher probability of being appointed to a high position than either being elected to, or hired for the position.

- (2) Blacks struggled to spread their individual influence over a significantly large range of decisions compared to other groups in society.
- (3) Black participation and representation is inversely related to the historical longevity, level of allocated resources, and level of influence of an institution or decision-making body.

(SDC and the Milwaukee Urban League, 1970, p. 25)

Not surprisingly, the trends discussed in this section continued during the succeeding decades. SDC reports from that time period highlight the social and economic struggles of Milwaukee's black community. In February 1979, SDC released a community service bulletin entitled "Poverty: A Milwaukee Profile." This report included a number of highlights that are relevant to understanding the history behind black male joblessness:

- (1) 33% of black households in Milwaukee County lived in poverty compared to 10% of white households.
- (2) 20% of inner city Milwaukee residents were unemployed.
- (3) The unemployment rate for minority youth was 53.7%.
- (4) Poor education kept many minority people from obtaining adequate employment.
- (5) Economic and racial discrimination forced many low-income people to live in substandard, overcrowded housing.

(The Social Development Commission, 1979, p. 1-4)

Employment Trends

Data suggests that the trends witnessed in Metro Milwaukee's black male joblessness rate are a reflection of larger socio-economic forces. Consequently, in order to adequately address black male joblessness in Metro Milwaukee, it is necessary to understand some larger macro-level forces.

National young black male employment (1960-Today)

According to 2004 research conducted for the Alternative Schools Network (ASN) of Chicago, the employment/population (E/P) ratio for black males has experienced a slow and steady deterioration since 1954. The E/P ratio of young black males (16-24) in 1954 was 52%, which was actually 2.4 percentage points higher than young white males. In the early years of the 21st century, the E/P ratio for young black males has fallen below 20% (Alternative School Network, 2004, p. 6).

Data analysis in the ASN report highlights that young black male E/P ratios varied significantly over the course of the past 50 years. While such variation is true for all demographics—due to economic cycles—the variation found in young black male E/P ratios is particularly acute and quite sensitive to economic cycles. In years of economic boom, young black males are hired at above average rates; in years of economic bust, young black males are laid off at above average rates. This phenomenon suggests that young black males are the “last ones hired, first ones fired”.

Despite the cyclical relationship between young black male E/P ratios and economic cycles, there has been a historical downward trend in the ratio over the past 50 years. Researchers for the ASN report recognize that a portion of this downward trend can be attributed to the general increase in school enrollment and educational attainment. However, the E/P ratio for young black males has dropped off at a steeper rate compared to the E/P ratio for young white males—despite the fact that young white males tend to have higher rates of school enrollment and educational attainment. In 2003 the E/P ratio for young black males was 20 percentage points below the E/P ratio for their white contemporaries (Alternative Schools Network, 2004, p. 7).

Year-round Unemployment of older males age 20-64

An increased rate in year-round unemployment among black males is an issue of growing concern. According to the ASN report, year-round unemployment rates are highest among males residing in the central city and individuals who failed to graduate from high school. Nationally, for black males residing in central cities in 2002, over 27% were idle all year, compared to 13% of black males residing in suburbs and exurbs (Alternative Schools Network, 2004, p. 12-19).

The report contributes a portion of this difference to the disparity in educational attainment between black males in the central city compared to black males in suburbs and exurbs. Forty-four percent of black males without a high school diploma/GED were idle in 2002 versus 26% of black males with a high school diploma/GED and 13% of black males with a college degree. Further analysis indicates that educational attainment is significantly connected to year-round unemployment independent of geography—i.e. that disparities exist in black male unemployment within each geographic area based on educational attainment (Alternative Schools Network, 2004, p. 12-19).

At the same time, according to the ASN report, not all year-round unemployment can be contributed to educational attainment. The spatial differences between central city neighborhoods and suburban/exurban neighborhoods do appear to impact unemployment rates. Black males without

a high school diploma/GED have a higher rate of year-round unemployment in all geographic regions than their better educated counterparts. However, black males without a high school diploma/GED living in suburbs and exurbs have a lower rate of unemployment (33.2%) compared to their counterparts in the central city (44.4%). Similar disparities exist within all other educational groupings. These findings indicate that a combination of education, location, and perhaps other factors impact year-round black male unemployment (Alternative Schools Network, 2004, p. 23-24).

Local Employment Trends

This section details major employment trends in the Metro Milwaukee area and forecasts employment growth by sector into the future. These trends and forecasts provide a grim prediction for black male employment for the immediate future.

In 2009, the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Employment and Training Institute (ETI) issued a report entitled "Understanding the Unemployed Workforce in Milwaukee County." This study was commissioned by the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

The ETI report analyses the employment history of 48,131 Milwaukee County workers who were recently laid off and have received unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. Key findings of the report are summarized below:

1. Male workers make up two-thirds of those recently unemployed and receiving UI benefits.
2. Of those making at least \$10,000 in either of the final two quarters of employment (a good indicator of living wage employment) 57% were in the manufacturing sector and 24% were in the construction sector.
3. 67% of workers residing in Milwaukee County suburbs received UI benefits over \$300 compared with 48% of workers residing in the City of Milwaukee.
4. Of those workers that had exhausted their UI benefits, 95% were from the City of Milwaukee and 5% were from Milwaukee County suburbs⁶.
5. While unemployment was recorded throughout Milwaukee County, unemployment was concentrated in the most impoverished zip codes found in Milwaukee's inner-city.
6. A significant subpopulation of UI recipients were ex-offenders. 6,822 ex-offenders received UI benefits in the 2nd Quarter of 2009—91% of which were males.

(Employment & Training Institute, 2009, p. 1-5)

⁶ The City of Milwaukee makes up 63% of the population of Milwaukee County.

Multiple studies are cited below to provide a picture of employment trends in the Metro Milwaukee area. Data from these studies are grouped into two categories: employment sectors with the weakest growth and employment sectors experiencing the strongest growth.

Struggling Sectors: Manufacturing and Construction

The Metro Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) tabulates monthly economic data for 20 sectors in the Metro Milwaukee region. In March 2010, data on activity in the construction, mining and natural resources sector fell by 15.1% in a year-over-year comparison—the largest sector drop in the region. For the same period, manufacturing activity in the region fell by 8.1%. Of the ten largest employment sectors in Metro Milwaukee, only the education & health services, leisure and hospitality, and government sectors posted employment growths (MMAC, 2010, p. 5).

In 2006 the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (Wisconsin DWD) issued employment estimates and ten year projections for the Metro Milwaukee area. According to this study, employment in production (manufacturing) sectors will remain relatively flat over the ten year period from 2006-2016 with only about 2,000 jobs being added to this sector regionally—a growth rate of 2.1% (Wisconsin DWD, 2006, p. 18). Within the production sector, there is projected to be significant decreases in positions for equipment operators and assemblers. Most of the employment growth within the production sector is isolated to higher skilled positions. The construction and extraction sector is projected to experience a modest increase of 2,870 positions (9.7%), in employment opportunities (Wisconsin DWD, 2006, p. 15). This growth is fairly even across the sub-sectors under construction and extraction.

Growing Sectors: Education, Health, Social Services, and Sciences

While manufacturing and construction sectors are struggling to grow in the Metro Milwaukee area, other employment sectors are experiencing—and will continue to experience—significant growth. Returning to the MMAC's monthly economic indicators survey, the leisure and hospitality sector experienced the greatest employment growth at a rate of 3.5%. Also experiencing strong growth was the education and health services sector (1.6%) and the government sector (0.6%) (MMAC, 2010, p. 5). While these growth rates are modest, they need to be analyzed in the greater economy—the current economic climate is poor for employment and any positive growth is a significant statement.

According to employment projection figures from Wisconsin DWD's Metro Milwaukee study, the following employment sectors will experience significant growth in employment by 2016.

Table 6: High Growth Employment Sectors in Metro Milwaukee

Employment Sector	Number of Positions Added by 2016	Growth Rate by 2016
Healthcare Support	6,400	25.0%
Healthcare Provision	9,520	22.1%
Community & Social Services	2,800	21.6%
Life, Physical, and Social Science	1,000	13.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	8,230	11.7%

Source: Wisconsin DWD, 2006, p. 5-10

The Impact of Employment Sector Trends on Those that are Black AND Male

In 2000, the US Census Bureau issued a report entitled “Changes in Workplace Segregation in the United States between 1990 and 2000: Evidence from Matched Employer-Employee Data.” The central finding of this report was that national employment sectors continue to be highly segregated based on employment, race, and gender. These findings are supported by analyzing various employment sectors by race and gender. According to national data tabulated in a 2009 US Bureau of Labor Statistics report entitled “Household Data Annual Averages”, females account for 89.4% of the healthcare support sector and 74.6% of the healthcare provision sector while black workers are underrepresented in most of the occupations within these two sectors. Regarding the community and social services sector, black workers are well-represented at 19.8% of all workers. However, this sector is dominated by females at 62.9% of all workers. Males do account for the majority of workers in the life, physical and social science sector at 53.2% of all workers. However, black workers are significantly under-represented in this sector and account for only 6.0% of all workers.

The key takeaway from this analysis is that the fastest growing employment sectors over the next few years are among the sectors with low representation from those that are black and male.

Black Male Joblessness: The People's Perspective

Nobody has figured out what to do with the African American male besides incarcerate him, enslave him, denigrate him, make him less than a man.

–Lamont Harris

To better understand why Milwaukee has a high rate of black male joblessness, the Antiracism Committee has conducted an ongoing, multi-pronged qualitative research project in the community. This project has involved the hosting of a public hearing, facilitating roundtable discussions with community members, and incorporating questions on black male joblessness into SDC's 2009-2010 Community Needs Assessment.

The Antiracism Committee has designed this research to center on the idea that if you are to truly understand an issue, the best source of information on that issue comes from the individuals dealing with it on a daily basis. This research project seeks to supplement the academic research discussed in previous sections of this report in order to enhance our common understanding of black male joblessness and the potential solutions to this issue.



**Community member
testifying at SDC's June
2009 public hearing**

2009-2010 Community Needs Assessment

In the fall of 2009, SDC partnered with researchers at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Center for Urban Initiatives and Research (CUIR) to begin a comprehensive community needs assessment. While this project documented a number of social and economic needs for all demographic groups in the community, a number of the results are pertinent to black male joblessness.

The research project consisted of four goals:

- (1) Identify and quantify the incidence or prevalence of individual need.
- (2) Identify gaps in human service provision.
- (3) Identify barriers to self-sufficiency.
- (4) Identify strategies for overcoming barriers to self-sufficiency.

CUIR researchers designed a multi-pronged research model that focused on accessing community needs by surveying and interviewing individual community members. This design avoids prescribing causes and solutions to poverty. Instead, the data produced from this research provides a detailed understanding of the community's needs from the perspective of the community itself.

Telephone and Door-to-Door Surveys

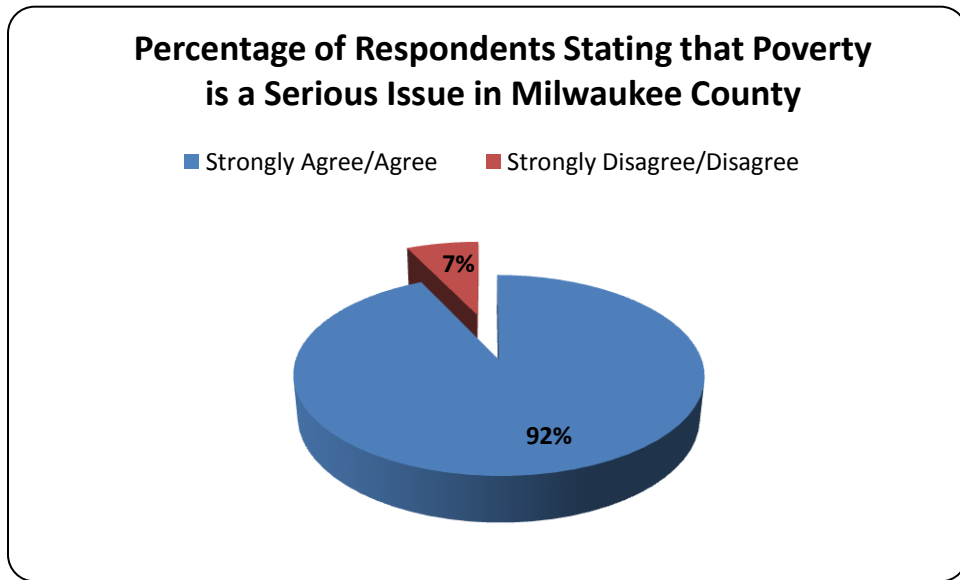
In the succeeding sections, data has been extracted from the telephone survey and door-to-door survey components of the 2009-2010 Community Needs Assessment that is relevant to our discussion of black male joblessness. This information is a useful starting point for understanding the community's views on black male joblessness.

The telephone survey used random digit dialing to contact Milwaukee County residents. 562 surveys were completed. However, the final data set was randomly adjusted according to gender and race/ethnicity to mirror the county's population. The final analysis includes data from 420 surveys. The door-to-door survey was administered by a partnership between CUIR researchers and Safe and Sound's Community Partners Program. These surveys targeted the City of Milwaukee's defined Neighborhood Strategic Planning (NSP) neighborhoods. These 18 neighborhoods were identified by criteria from the US Department of Housing & Urban Development as neighborhoods of the highest need in the area. The door-to-door component documented responses from 514 households throughout the 18 NSP neighborhoods and maximized the degree of randomization by limiting surveys to 1 resident per household and 5 households per block.

The Importance of Addressing Poverty

The overwhelming majority of respondents to both the telephone and door-to-door surveys viewed poverty as a serious issue of concern for Milwaukee County as illustrated in Graph 4.

Graph 4: Respondents' Views on the Seriousness of Poverty



Source: SDC 2009-2010 Community Needs Assessment, Telephone Survey Component, p. 12

Respondents also stated concerns that these problems are worsening. Seventy-six percent of respondents to the telephone survey perceive that poverty in Milwaukee County has increased over the past three years. Comparing these perceptions to data from the US Census Bureau is not an option at this time due to the lag time associated with data on official poverty measurements. However, given the recession and high rates of joblessness witnessed in 2009, these perceptions most likely correspond to reality.

Table 7: Perceived Changes in Poverty in Milwaukee County in Past Three Years

Response	Count	Percentage
Increased	319	76%
Stayed the Same	81	19%
Decreased	7	2%
Don't Know / No Answer / Missing	13	3%
Total	420	100%

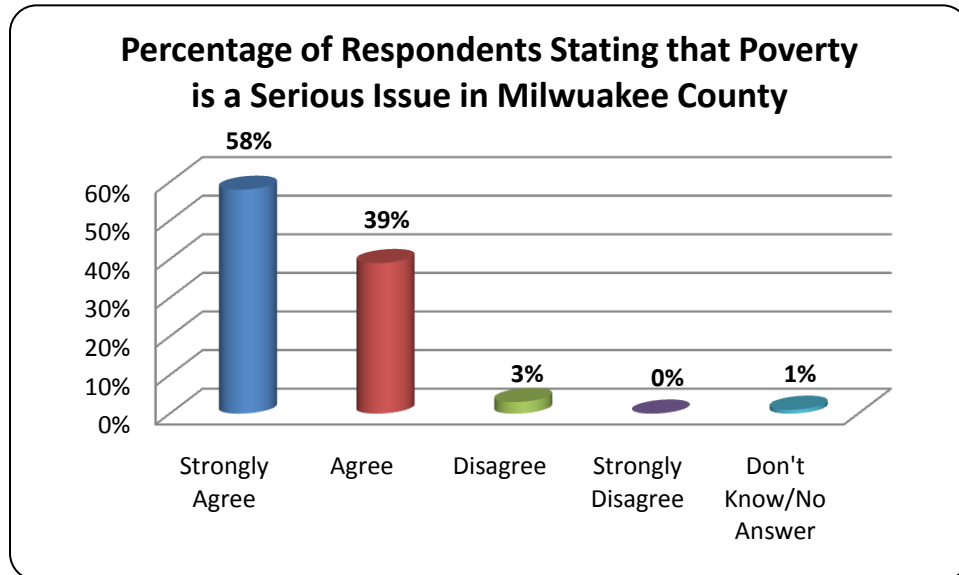
Source: SDC Community Needs Assessment, Telephone Survey Component, 2010, p. 12

Employment in Milwaukee: A Well Understood Need

It is well understood that Milwaukee's job deficit is a serious issue in the community. This understanding was overwhelmingly echoed by telephone survey respondents. Ninety-seven percent of respondents believed that

employment is a serious issue in Milwaukee County, with only 3% of respondents disagreeing and no respondents strongly disagreeing.

Graph 5: Respondents' Views on the Seriousness of Employment



Source: SDC Community Needs Assessment, Telephone Survey Component, 2010, p. 14

The view that more needs to be done to stimulate employment in Milwaukee County is universal across all racial and ethnic groups—with approximately 80% of each racial and ethnic group stating that more needs to be done on employment issues. Moreover, when asked what strategies should be used to reduce poverty in Milwaukee County, employment-related strategies were the number one response.

Employment is essential to getting out of poverty, as shown in Table 8. The data below highlights the connections between living in poverty, employment and disabilities. However, it is interesting to note that 1 out of 4 people in poverty are the “working poor”—those that are working and still living in poverty; another 1 out of 4 people in poverty are disabled; 12% of people in poverty are retirees.

Table 8: Percentage of Respondents Living in Poverty by Employment Status

Response	Living in Poverty	NOT in Poverty
Employed – Full Time	19%	38%
Employed – Part Time	6%	9%
Unemployed	37%	13%
Unable to Work due to Disability / Other Condition	26%	7%
Retired	12%	33%
Total	100%	100%

Source: SDC Community Needs Assessment, Telephone Survey Component, 2010, p. 27

Perhaps not surprisingly, those who are not employed are nearly twice as likely as the employed to identify employment-related strategies as a means to overcome poverty (64% versus 37%, respectively). Looking to those respondents that are unemployed, there is no significant difference between the unemployed who are looking for work in terms of poverty status. Seventy-three percent of those in poverty reported being unemployed but looking for work, compared to 67% of those who are not in poverty. These findings seem to dispel any notion that those who are in poverty and unemployed are any less likely than those not in poverty to put forth an effort to work.

Barriers to Getting out of Poverty

Respondents to the 2010 Community Needs Assessment identified a number of barriers faced by low-income individuals attempting to get out of poverty in Milwaukee. Many of these barriers are relevant to black male employment.

Poor Neighborhood Conditions: 87% of respondents stated that poor neighborhood conditions likely barred individuals from moving out of poverty. An earlier section of this report highlights the well-defined isolation faced by families of color in Milwaukee's aging central city neighborhoods. These two points taken together suggest that families of color—including black males—face a barrier to self-sustaining employment just by residing in Milwaukee's central city.

Racial Injustice and Discrimination: 74% of all respondents stated that racial injustice and discrimination were likely barriers to getting out of poverty. Within specific racial groups, 90% of black respondents stated that racial injustice and discrimination barred individuals from getting out of poverty while 77% of Hispanics/Latinos supported this statement and 69% of white respondents supported this statement. Despite the differences between races on this issue,

the overwhelming majority of respondents from each racial group believe that race continues to play a determining factor in an individual's ability to get out of poverty. Interestingly, there is only a marginal difference in the percentage of respondents currently employed (70%) that support this statement compared to the percentage of respondents currently unemployed (79%) that support this statement.

Transportation: 73% of those respondents living in poverty view transportation as an important barrier to getting out of poverty compared to 47% of respondents not living in poverty. Black households (67%) view transportation as a greater barrier than white households (44%). These differences suggest that the community does not have a common understanding of the role that transportation plays in employment and getting out of poverty.

Education: An overwhelming majority of respondents from all racial and ethnic backgrounds believe a lack of education creates a barrier to getting out of poverty including 99% of black households, 90% of white households, and 85% of Hispanic/Latino households. Those who are currently unemployed (94%) agree with this view at a higher rate than those that are currently employed (87%).

Community Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to the telephone and door-to-door components, an intense survey of community stakeholders was performed. Stakeholders were defined as individuals or organizational representatives whose experiences and/or positions in the community would provide an informative view of social and economic issues in Metro Milwaukee.

A total of 514 stakeholders were identified by both SDC and CUIR staff. Survey formats varied and included in-person, mail, and online surveys. A total of 182 surveys were completed (35 in-person surveys, 34 mail surveys, and 113 online surveys) for an effective response rate of 35%. Almost half of those surveyed (46%) reported to belong to the non-profit sector, and 16% reported to work in government. Twelve percent reported to work in education. See Table 9 below for a detailed breakdown of respondents by sector.

Table 9: Percentage of Respondents Working by Sector

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Non-profit	82	46%
Government	27	15%
Education	22	12%
Business / For-profit	16	9%
Foundation / Philanthropy	12	7%
Legal / Judiciary	9	5%
Health	5	3%
Media	4	2%
Faith-based	3	2%
Total	180	100%

Source: SDC Community Needs Assessment, Community Stakeholder Component, 2010, p. 4

One open-ended question regarding black male joblessness was asked of respondents: “Black male joblessness is an area of particular interest for SDC. With this in mind, what do you think could be done to help reduce this problem?”

159 respondents gave valid responses to the question and the complete set of coded responses is listed in Table 10. The top three most frequently mentioned recommendations for reducing black male joblessness focus on job training and skills, education, and jobs/employment.

Table 10: Recommendations about how to Reduce Black Male Joblessness

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Job training/skills	58	36%
Education	54	34%
Jobs/employment	39	25%
Increase private sector involvement	29	18%
Improve character/attitudes	20	13%
Reentry/felon programming/criminal justice system	20	13%
Transportation/transit	15	9%
Youth programming/outreach	13	8%
Reduce discrimination/racism or improve diversity	13	8%
Focus efforts (city of Milwaukee, neighborhoods, concentrated areas of poverty)	12	8%

Source: SDC Community Needs Assessment, Community Stakeholder Component, 2010, p. 13

Over one-third of those surveyed gave job training and skills as a recommendation for reducing black male joblessness (36%). Recommendations in this category include offering more job training for (unemployed) black males, providing more opportunities for vocational or technical training (or apprenticeships), and providing programs for developing “soft skills” such as interviewing, workplace conduct, etc.

Encourage apprenticeships, job shadowing opportunities, after school programs and any other ways that young black males can acquire job skills that will increase their chances at being successful in the workplace.

–Stakeholder Survey Respondent

Education was the next most frequently mentioned theme for reducing black male joblessness, offered by 34% of respondents. Within this theme were rather vague statements about the quality of schools and education in general, but also included more specific recommendations for providing more/improved adult education opportunities and improving high school graduation rates of young black males. Furthermore, there were many respondents who tied education and jobs skills development together.

Partner with schools to keep youth & young men connected to the educational system. Provide tangible skill training (either in school-based or out of school programs) such as construction, woodworking, job shadowing, surveying/drafting, etc.

–Stakeholder Survey Respondent

The third most common theme was jobs and employment, given by one quarter of the respondents that answered this question. The most popular recommendation within this theme was creating jobs (including transitional jobs).

Another theme that arose from this question is worth mentioning: 13% of respondents suggested that there needs to be a better re-entry program for felons to rejoin the workforce. These respondents noted how having a felony is often an immediate disqualification for a job. Respondents suggested that there needs to be improved programming for felons reentering society to be linked

with appropriate jobs. Other responses within this category also questioned the fairness of the criminal justice system, which respondents thought “institutionalized” black men with criminal lifestyles, and did not allow for rehabilitation.

Other Themes from the Stakeholder Survey Related to Black Male Joblessness

While education and employment issues were consistently mentioned top themes, other themes were also consistently mentioned without being among the top three responses. These other themes include: (1) transportation/transit, (2) hopelessness, and (3) coordinated/strategic service delivery. (SDC Community Needs Assessment, Community Stakeholder Component, 2010, p. 16)

First, many respondents noted that the jobs available within the region (especially in the suburbs) were not ideally linked via transit with available workers (in the central city). Many central city workers – especially those who live in poverty – cannot afford to buy a car and rely on public transportation. Without adequate transit links, workers cannot get to available jobs. Several respondents said they viewed the transit system as lacking in this respect. For respondents, improving the region’s transit system would thus help reduce the problem of poverty in general, but also the phenomenon of black male unemployment. Also within this theme was the idea of driver’s license policy reforms. Respondents asserted that a disproportionate percentage of black males did not have or have had their driver’s licenses revoked, and therefore limited their ability to get to work. Some said that while efforts in Milwaukee Municipal Court improved this situation, more needed to be done.

Second, “hopelessness” was perceived by stakeholders as both a major problem and a barrier for people in poverty. Several stakeholders addressed the effect of poverty on one’s psyche and the need for programs to address this fact. Respondents said that people in poverty don’t have the same outlook on life as people outside of poverty. People in poverty do not think that “hard work” will be rewarded, or that things will “get better.” Rather, people in poverty think that their futures are bleak and that it is virtually impossible to escape poverty. According to several respondents, this attitude can often lead to several other problems, such as homelessness, violence, and/or drug use.

Third, many respondents mentioned the benefits of coordinated/strategic service delivery. Many encouraged SDC to “coordinate” service delivery with other organizations (since people in poverty often receive other kinds of assistance), and offering “comprehensive” assistance to people in poverty (i.e. services which address the entire spectrum of problems facing people in poverty). For example, a few respondents mentioned that simple welfare

benefits are not enough. People in poverty need a wide spectrum of personalized programming to escape poverty, including everything from educational help to better healthcare and family counseling.

June 18, 2009 Public Hearing

Since I've been in Wisconsin, that's all I heard was talk. That's all we consistently do is talk...we need to stand up and do something about it.

-Larry Apata

SDC is the designated Community Action Agency for Milwaukee County, which grants the agency a quasi-governmental status—empowering SDC to hold public hearings pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute. SDC called an open public hearing on June 18, 2009 at Heart Love Place Ministries to solicit public testimony on black male joblessness in Metro Milwaukee. Nearly 200 individuals attended the hearing and testimony was collected from 45 residents, public officials and community activists. The majority of attendees were people of color and the majority of witnesses were black males. After analyzing the testimony, a number of themes began to emerge. These themes are detailed below.

We need access to the resources, to the opportunities to create our own businesses just like the white community has that allows them to create businesses.

-Craig Saley

A Desire for Action

The people of Milwaukee are tired of talk. Some community members lack faith in the ability of social service agencies to impact this issue and in the desire of civic leaders to address the needs of black males. Overlapping testimonies, one finds phrases such as “take action”, “do something” and “make that change ourselves”. At the same time a number of witnesses made direct challenges—some bordering on desperate pleas—to community leaders to stop talking about the issue and to “start doing something, anything that could help Milwaukee’s black men.”

I am an ex-offender. I have also done five years in the US Navy...I'm pretty educated in the medical and nursing skills. Due to my conviction, I do have to change a few plans of study...I will not be able to receive my nursing.

—Neil Curtis

The Criminal Justice System & Enforcement of Anti-Discriminatory Laws

The most dominant theme of the public hearing was the impact of a criminal background on one's future employment opportunities. This issue was framed by Dr. Lenard Wells and the presentation of his doctoral research. Dr. Wells extended a study conducted by Dr. Devah Pager on hiring practices in Milwaukee.

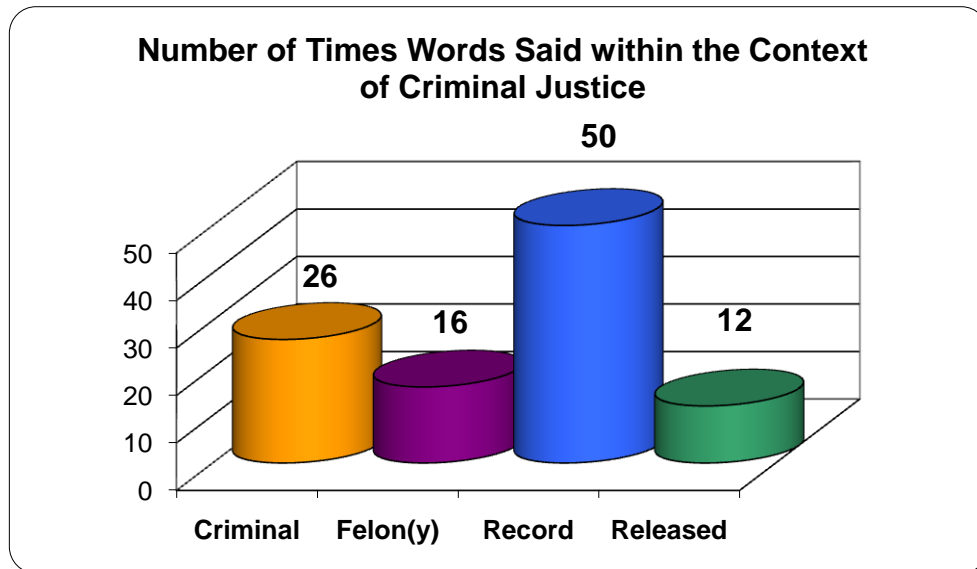
Dr. Wells' research confirmed Dr. Pager's previous findings: in Milwaukee, when a white man with a criminal background and a black man without a criminal background apply for the same job, the white man has a better chance of being hired than the black man...a significantly better chance.

This pattern does not hold true for the inverse situation—i.e. black men with criminal backgrounds are by far the least likely to be hired for a job. Dr. Wells' findings were confirmed by a long line of ex-offenders who testified at the hearing. Graph 6 presents the frequency with which words were said by witnesses at the public hearing in the context of criminal justice.

The recession is taking a toll on most Americans and has resulted in job losses not seen in almost 25 years, but black men have felt its effects particularly hard. To address this crisis, we must address the root causes of black men's difficulties in the labor market, including high rates of incarceration, limited education, child support arrearages and discrimination.

—US Representative Gwen Moore

Graph 6: Frequency with Which Words were Said in Public Hearing Testimony Transcript



SDC Public Hearing on Black Male Joblessness Transcript, 2009

The experiences shared by these witnesses all centered on the negative impact their criminal background has had on their current and future career goals. In addition to the permanent problems created by criminal backgrounds, the hearing also highlighted calls for reforms in the accessibility of Wisconsin's Consolidated Court Automation Programs⁷ data and better enforcement of anti-discrimination laws—multiple witnesses suggested that changing and enforcing policies would help decrease the black male joblessness rate.

I'd like to propose a relatively different paradigm for this community. We don't have enough jobs and I also don't think we have enough businesses...I think we ought to consider cooperatives.

—Peter Goldberg

The Job Deficit, Job Creation and Economic Development

Throughout the public hearing, the situation was plain and simple: Milwaukee needs more jobs.

⁷ The Wisconsin CCAP program provides accessible information to members of the public on an individual's criminal background.

Milwaukee is not producing a sufficient number of jobs. We have a jobs shortage...there's a gap of somewhere between 50,000 and 80,000 jobs.

-Dr. Marc Levine

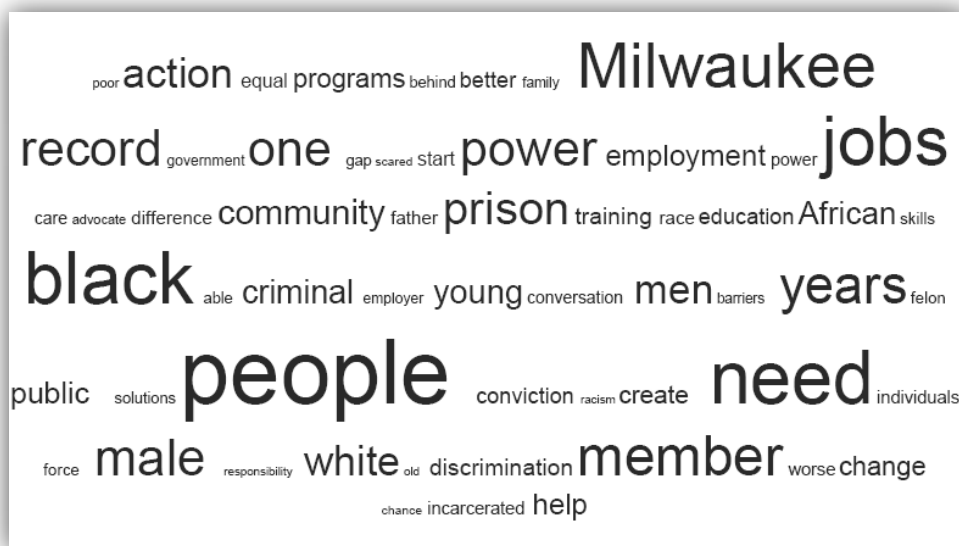
One of the best documented issues in Milwaukee is the spatial mismatch between regional employment centers and the central city. This issue is often cited when discussing the need for improvements to Milwaukee's public transit system. The argument being, that if the public transit system was expanded, central city residents could better access jobs in suburban communities. However, within the 107 page transcript of the public hearing the word transit only appears once.

Another strategy for reducing this spatial mismatch would be to stimulate economic development within Milwaukee's central city—thereby making jobs more accessible to residents in those neighborhoods. Multiple witnesses expressed a desire to see more jobs created within Milwaukee's predominately black neighborhoods and the development of more black-owned businesses.

Word Cloud of the Public Hearing Transcript

The diagram below displays the most popular words from the public hearing's transcript. The size of the word indicates the frequency with which it was said.

Figure 2: Public Hearing Transcript Word Cloud



Source: SDC Public Hearing on Black Male Joblessness Transcript, 2009

When analyzing this word cloud, a clear and concise sentence emerges from the five most frequently said words: **Milwaukee black people need jobs.**

September 2009 Community Roundtable Discussions

For the past three years, SDC has hosted a Symposium on Poverty to discuss issues facing Milwaukee's low-income families, explore programmatic and policy solutions to address those issues, and engage attendees in community initiatives.

In September 2009, SDC held its 3rd Annual Poverty Symposium, which was attended by 400 community members. These attendees represented all sectors and all social and economic demographics. At this event, the Antiracism Committee organized a panel discussion of young black males to share their personal experiences and ideas regarding employment in Milwaukee for black men. This panel discussion was used as a launching point for open roundtable discussions on black male joblessness in Milwaukee.

Based on the emerging themes from the June 2009 public hearing, the Antiracism Committee organized the roundtable discussions into four areas to provide a context to the discussions: civil rights, community outreach, policies & solutions, and outreach to civic leadership. Roundtable participants self-selected into one of two tracks, in which they discussed two of the four issue areas. Roundtable facilitators received training from a professional facilitator (and committee member) at the University of Wisconsin's Milwaukee County Extension. Below is an overview of what was discussed and proposed during those discussions.

Track One: Civil Rights and Outreach to Civic Leadership

Civil Rights: Facilitators for the civil rights roundtables proposed three questions to participants:

1. In what ways can we more effectively support and strengthen civil rights laws regarding equitable hiring practices?
2. Can you identify critical partners to assist us in our efforts?
3. What roles are appropriate for the SDC to take regarding civil rights as they affect black male unemployment? What can SDC do?

Conversations centered on educating community members on their rights and advocating for public policies that would reduce discrimination in the hiring

process. Multiple roundtable participants called for establishing better relationships between employers and advocacy groups.

Roundtable participants specifically named the following organizations as having a significant role in this issue:

- City of Milwaukee
- Milwaukee County
- Metro Milwaukee Association of Commerce
- WE Energies
- Milwaukee Public Schools
- Equal Employment Opportunity Council
- American Civil Liberties Union
- Milwaukee Area Workforce
- Investment Board
- NAACP
- Marquette University
- MICAH
- Immigration Officials
- Urban League
- Weed & Seed
- Safe & Sound
- Journey House
- Milwaukee Courier
- Milwaukee Times
- Milwaukee
- Journal-Sentinel Community Brainstorming
- Northwestern Mutual
- Allen Bradley
- Quarles & Brady
- Second Harvest
- Faith Community
- Universities/Colleges
- Human Resources Management Association

Roundtable participants stated that a coordinating body needed to help connect community members with organizations that could assist with issues of racial discrimination in employment and hiring.

Outreach to Civic Leadership: Facilitators for the outreach to civic leadership roundtables focused on two topics: developing common ground with civic leadership and identifying potential partners in the community. Civic leaders are defined as community leaders in business, political, faith-based and civic organizations.

Developing Common Ground: In-depth discussions occurred on where common ground exists in the community and how these commonalities could be developed as springboards for action. Participants highlighted the fact that most people want a sense of community and belonging, a skilled and educated workforce (especially among emerging generations) and a better world for future generations.

From these commonalities, roundtable conversations explored methods for growing this common ground. Ideas proposed by participants included presenting the issue of black male joblessness from the perspective of civic leaders—i.e. highlighting the negative social and economic impact of having high rates of black male joblessness.

Identifying Potential Partners: Participants identified four strategies for better engaging civic leaders with the issue of black male joblessness.

Potential Strategy #1: Develop a relationship with a sizable business to create an example of a good, civically engaged business.

Potential Strategy #2: Develop or expand an internship program or a service learning program for youth at area businesses.

Potential Strategy #3: Educate civic leaders on national best practices and what other employers do in the area of workforce development. Part of this education could be to have employers travel to other cities to see best practices in action.

Potential Strategy #4: Develop/enhance tax incentives for internship programs and employment “that sticks”—i.e. connect incentives to results.

Track Two: Community Outreach and Policies & Solutions

Community Outreach: Facilitators for the community outreach roundtable posed three questions to participants: what solutions and responses can come from within the community, what strategies are and are not effective, and who are some potential partners in the community.

Community Solutions and Responses: Roundtable discussions centered on the idea that Metro Milwaukee needs greater community education on the issue of race. Specifically, roundtable participants proposed conducting advocacy and training sessions in both Milwaukee area schools and civic organizations. Training sessions would focus on the relationship between race and poverty and the implications this relationship has on the issue of black male joblessness. Other suggestions for community education initiatives included focusing on the family system and the role parents take in educating their children on the issue of race, helping the community personalize and embrace diversity, and teaching disempowered communities about their political options.

Effective and ineffective strategies: Effective strategies included community collaboration, organizing initiatives through the faith-based community, and incorporating mandated race and diversity components in public school systems. Ineffective strategies included dividing initiatives into silos, a lack of collaboration between organizations and an absence of diversity training in schools and other organizations.

Potential partners: Below is a list of groups and specific partners mentioned in roundtable discussions:

- Faith based organizations
 - Word of Hope
 - Greater New Birth
 - Eastbrook Church
 - Elmbrook Church
 - Holy Cathedral
- Grass Roots Organizations
- Milwaukee Aldermen
- State legislators
- Project Respect
- SDC Community Directory
- Reproductive Justice Collective
- African-American Alliance of Children and Families

Policies & Solutions: The facilitators for the policies and solutions roundtables adopted a free-flowing model—developing an open discussion on the racial barriers to employment and potential solutions from within the community. These open-ended discussions yielded three main topics of conversation.

Criminal History: On the front end of sentencing, roundtable participants discussed the need to seriously address the racial disparities in incarceration—although no specific policies were proposed. On the back end of sentencing, participants stated a need to develop new and expand current job programs for the incarcerated and ex-offenders. In addition to job programs, participants suggested new programs to assist ex-offenders develop business opportunities and thus avoid the hiring process altogether. Public policies dealing with expunging options for ex-offenders were also discussed in roundtables.

Discrimination in Hiring: The next area that participants discussed involved policies impacting the recruitment and hiring processes of employers. Discussions highlighted a need to address stereotypes and racial profiling in hiring and the general practices of human resource departments.

Access to Jobs and Job Creation: Finally, participants proposed a number of policies to stimulate job growth among black males. Specific policies focused on establishing job quotas for non-violent offenders, making improvements to public transportation (thus reducing the spatial mismatch between employment and inner-city neighborhoods) and integrating housing near job hot spots with more affordable housing.

Central Finding: A System Not Working for Black Males

The information presented in this report makes one point perfectly clear: on average, Metro Milwaukee's public, private, and domestic systems are not meeting the needs of black males. While joblessness rates are high among all demographics—specifically racial and ethnic minorities—black male joblessness is an anomaly, an extreme outlier. For black males the community's current systems are broken.

It is not enough to call for more public resources for education, economic development, job creation, and similar initiatives. If those additional resources are injected into the community's current systems, their impact on black males may be negligible. This issue should be a concern to the entire community for two principle reasons. First, it is a matter of social justice. No group should be alienated in our community and not provided a viable opportunity at success. Second, from a pragmatic viewpoint, it behooves the community to concern itself with the issue of black male joblessness. The entire community pays a price for high rates of black male joblessness through increased costs for incarceration, increased demand on social service systems and decreased tax revenue.

Instead of simply expanding systems that do not produce results for black males, a restructuring of the systems is needed. This restructuring must adopt a race/gender conscious framework that, among other things, considers the impact on black males. In the following section, a number of policy and programmatic recommendations are given. These recommendations focus on cost-effective, evidenced based policies and programs that would yield better outcomes for black males in Metro Milwaukee.

Report after report shows the incredibly high unemployment rate of African-American men in Milwaukee. Frequent visits to neighborhoods on the north side, however, personalize what the data does not show: people are begging for jobs.

—Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker

Policy & Programmatic Recommendations

The following recommendations are clear, tangible actions that can be taken to improve Milwaukee's racial disparities in male joblessness. SDC strongly urges public officials, civic leaders, and community stakeholders to fully implement these recommendations with the buy-in and partnership of the community. This implementation should be focused on the long-term and be consistent over the changes in administration within the responsible parties.

To demonstrate SDC's commitment to reducing black male joblessness, SDC is listed as a responsible party under applicable recommendations. However, in order to create measurable outcomes in the community, all stakeholders must do their part.

Remove Barriers to Employment & Address the Spatial Mismatch

Recommendation Type: Policy & Programmatic

Responsible Party: State and local government; employers

Recommendation Description: If the objective is to increase black male employment, then it only makes sense to eliminate as many barriers and disincentives to employment as possible for black males. The recommendations below come from comments documented at SDC's June 18, 2009 public hearing. These comments came from community members—specifically a number of black males struggling to find employment.

- ⇒ **Child Support:** Multiple witnesses at the public hearing discussed the impact that child support payments have on their employment. According to witnesses, the child support rates established by courts create a disincentive to work—especially at low wage rates. This disincentive can result in increased numbers of men going to prison for failure to pay child support—exasperating the problem. The need for fathers to provide for their children is unquestionable. Children should not carry the burden. At the same time, the community needs to analyze the actual outcomes of its public policies. If the current child support system is reducing male employment and children are not receiving the resources they need, then the system needs to be reexamined. Results from local and national efforts to work with men on child support arrearages provide encouraging results. SDC supports this work and establishing a system that produces high-quality results.
- ⇒ **Driver's License Recovery:** Testimony also centered on the need to address the spatial mismatch between central city neighborhoods and

employment hotspots in the metro area. One solution to this spatial mismatch that was proposed at the hearing was expanding the area's current driver's license recovery initiatives. Due to a number of factors, numerous community members lack a valid driver's license. This simple document presents a significant barrier to employment. Several jobs require a valid driver's license while others are only accessible to those that can drive. Driver's license recovery efforts represent a cost-effective method for increasing the employability of black males. These efforts should be better funded and expanded.

- ⇒ **Economic Development in Milwaukee's Central City:** Another method for addressing the spatial mismatch is to create employment hotspots in neighborhoods of color. This method was suggested multiple times by community members at the public hearing as an efficient method for increasing rates of black male employment. A number of public and private initiatives exist to stimulate economic and community development in Milwaukee's central city. These initiatives should focus on bringing in large-scale anchors to the central city and making sure jobs are available to central city residents.
- ⇒ **Public Transportation:** While driver's license recovery is a cost-effective programmatic response to the spatial mismatch problem, it is only useful to those that can purchase, operate, and maintain their own vehicle. For black males that lack the resources and/or ability to own and maintain their own vehicle, other transportation options are needed to diversify the region's transportation portfolio. It is no secret that Metro Milwaukee needs improvements to its public transportation system. As another plea for action, SDC strongly urges elected officials at the state and local level to make the necessary investments to create a public transportation system that efficiently moves the often overlooked human components (workers) of our regional economy.

Education & Workforce Development in High Growth Industries

Recommendation Type: Programmatic

Responsible Party: Metro Milwaukee educational institutions and workforce development programs

Recommendation Description: Local and national studies find that there is a significant difference between the employment levels of college educated workers and workers that failed to receive a high school diploma or GED. These differences are not surprising considering the fact that those employment sectors with the most growth are those sectors that demand high-level skills. All demographic groups need to receive higher levels of education and workforce

training. However, if Metro Milwaukee is to address the ethical and pragmatic concerns associated with black male joblessness highlighted in this report, then any education and training effort needs to consider consciously including black males. Additionally, efforts need to be expanded to improve the representation of black males in certain high growth sectors like healthcare and education. Improving black male representation in sectors that focus on serving and improving the lives of others would enable more black males to provide services—shifting the paradigm away from black males being labeled as the problem and towards black males being the solution. Furthermore, by connecting black males with high growth employment sectors, these programs go beyond the generic goal of job creation and more education by developing market driven skills for black males.

Programs for Developing Positive Family Relationships

Recommendation Type: Programmatic

Responsible Party: SDC; Community-based organizations

Recommendation Description:

One of the major themes of SDC's 2010 Community Needs Assessment is the impact that unhealthy family relationships have on those living in poverty. The overwhelming majority of those surveyed view unhealthy family relationships as a significant barrier to getting out of poverty. These views are supported by data in this report demonstrating the negative impact male joblessness can have on all members of a family.

SDC has been working for the past few years on assisting Milwaukee families establish healthy family relationships. Through a federal grant, SDC has brought Head Start's Healthy Relationships program to the Milwaukee community with significantly positive results. SDC's program has become a national model. As a result, SDC is working to expand this program to respond to the needs of the community.

Black Male Impact Studies

Recommendation Type: Policy

Responsible Party: SDC; All public and private organizations in Metro Milwaukee

Recommendation Description: The major takeaway from this report should be that our community's current public, private and domestic systems are failing

black males. In order to address these failings, it is recommended that public and private entities conduct impact studies on how their policies and programs affect black males. Impact studies would be used to either 1) verify that existing or proposed institutions have a benign impact on black males or 2) restructure the existing or proposed institution so that it does not yield negative outcomes for black males.

Black male impact studies should not be confused with traditional forms of affirmative action. These impact studies would not mandate quotas, a point system, or an “all things equal” preference for black males. Instead, systems would be set up to avoid the disparate impact that currently affects black males—thus yielding more just and equitable outcomes in our community.

For the modest, upfront costs associated with studying the impact that our community's individual systems have on black males, the community would be able to avoid the structural pitfalls that have in part created Metro Milwaukee's high rates of black male joblessness.

All black male impact studies should include the following components:

- (1) Research the historical relationship between black males and the institution.
- (2) Analyze whether or not the institution creates a disparate impact on black males compared to other demographic groups.
- (3) Conduct an environmental scan on how the institution's relationship with black males compares to other analogous institutions in the metro area and nationally
- (4) Propose and implement action steps to restructure the institution to remove any structural pitfalls that yield unfair outcomes for black males.

Help Black Males Define Themselves

Recommendation Type: Programmatic

Responsible Party: All public and private schools in Metro Milwaukee, faith-based and civic organizations

Recommendation Description: The Kirwan Institute's report highlights the effect of improper socialization on how black males view themselves and how the rest of the community views black males. The process of socialization is complex and difficult to unpack. There is no way to fully insulate individuals from our culture at-large (nor would this insulation be necessarily desirable). At the same time, it would be overly ambitious for the Milwaukee community to directly dismantle

our society's culture, the media and related institutions. Instead, a strategy that would yield greater results would be to provide young black males—at the formative years of their lives—with the skills to better interpret the negative portrayals of black males in our culture. This strategy would enable young black males to better define their personalities for themselves.

A Community Dialogue Series on Black Males

Recommendation Type: Programmatic

Responsible Party: All public and private schools in Metro Milwaukee, faith-based and civic organizations

Recommendation Description: The findings of the Kirwan Institute's report are not limited to the self-perceptions of black males. Instead, the report also highlights the need for all demographic groups to reexamine their views towards black males as well as the general social construction of the black male. To combat negative stereotypes, SDC recommends the creation of a community dialogue initiative that focuses on the black male and how socialization may impact the quality of life experienced by black males—including their employment prospects. These community dialogues should target all racial and ethnic groups in each age group. As a useful component to these dialogues, a community education initiative discussing the positive historical contributions of the black community should be included. This historical understanding will help all groups better appreciate the contributions of the black community and the potential found in all black males.

Remove All Disparate Impacts from the Criminal Justice System

Recommendation Type: Policy & Programmatic

Responsible Party: The State of Wisconsin

Recommendation Description: One of the clearest themes from SDC's June 18, 2009 public hearing was that a criminal background places a disparate burden on men of color compared to their white counterparts. This point was articulated by both Dr. Lenard Wells in the presentation of his research as well as the line of ex-offenders who spoke about the barrier to employment created by their criminal records. From an ethical standpoint, one's skin color should not be a determining factor in one's quality of life. However, the findings from both SDC's public hearing and research conducted by the Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System indicates that skin color is a determining factor in the employment prospects of ex-offenders. From a

pragmatic standpoint, it is counterproductive to reform someone if their record precludes them from obtaining employment and becoming self-sufficient after release.

SDC supports the initiative created by Governor Jim Doyle and the Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System. Moreover, SDC echoes the major recommendations stated in the Commission's final report—including but not limited to:

- ⇒ Conduct a baseline study of racial disparities at the county level using existing data.
- ⇒ Enhancing data tracking across all agencies to ensure data consistency and reliability, sharing of information between agencies and tracking arrest and conviction trends based on race.
- ⇒ Provide training and resources to local organizations in regards to cultural competency and racial disparities—including best practices in law enforcement.
- ⇒ Analyze the impact of “zero tolerance” rules in school systems and take action steps to avoid any racial disparities created by such policies.
- ⇒ Increase the probability of a successful reentry by offering supportive services (especially mental health services), access to resources for education and housing (when appropriate), workforce development programs and employment placement.
- ⇒ Provide resources for state and local collaboration—including the organization of community panels that engage community members.
- ⇒ Reform the system used for sentencing, including the use of community-based sentencing alternatives.

Some of these recommendations have been implemented. SDC supports these efforts and urge the Governor's Office and the State of Wisconsin to fully implement the Commission's recommendations. In addition to reducing the racial disparity in incarceration, the state needs to examine employer hiring practices and expand its monitoring of discrimination.

Transitional Jobs

Recommendation Type: Programmatic

Responsible Party: Federal, state and local governments in partnership with metro area employers

Recommendation Description: For many black males, the lack of employment opportunities at certain stages of life and/or the lack of social safety nets

available to low-income males exasperates the joblessness rate. This need was explicably stated in the major stakeholder survey of SDC's 2010 Community Needs Assessment. Transitional employment coupled with case management services provide much needed resources to black males as they seek permanent employment.

Transitional job programs place individuals in job slots with employers for a specified period of time (typically 6-12 months). To maximize their efficiency, successful programs assist individuals with any needed supportive services and placement into permanent employment. Most programs pay a modest hourly wage and require that participants be in a targeted demographic (ex-offender, long term unemployed, etc.).

The benefits of transitional jobs to the individual are clear. Unemployed participants are placed in a paid position, they are able to develop a continuum of employment, and receive the self-satisfaction that comes from working. At the same time the benefits to the community are equally clear. The establishment of a social safety net ensures that fewer community members become unemployed, the impact of which is not isolated to the individual. Transitional jobs also allow the community to benefit from the safety net by placing individuals in productive work within the community.

Currently the state of Wisconsin has dedicated funding to implement a pilot transitional employment program through the Department of Children and Families. This program represents a significant move in the right direction.

Integration and Coordination of Services

Recommendation Type: Policy & Programmatic

Responsible Party: SDC; Public and community based organizations

Recommendation Description: Multiple respondents to the stakeholder component of SDC's 2010 Community Needs Assessment called for better coordination of services within the community. Service integration is a central objective of SDC. As an organization, SDC has moved towards a service integration model that connects customers with all internal programs as well as other services and resources in the community. This model provides SDC customers with one-on-one case management and assessment, direct access to state and federal programs, and information on other resources in the community. This model will create efficiencies in Milwaukee's social service delivery system. SDC takes responsibility for implementing this recommendation along with partners in the community.

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