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Workforce Leaders of 12 Urban Midwest Workforce Development Boards Gather to Sign Agreement Creating an Unprecedented Partnership and Begin Regional Strategic Planning

*--Employ Milwaukee to lead the workforce consortium **Midwest Urban Strategies**--*

MILWAUKEE – Today, workforce leaders from across the Midwest, along with the U.S. Department of Labor, are convening in Milwaukee to sign an agreement creating the Midwest Urban Strategies Consortium. This groundbreaking initiative is the first of its kind in the country made up of urban workforce development boards, created as a regional mechanism to drive economic growth. Employ Milwaukee is the administrative lead and will work in partnership with workforce boards in the following cities: Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; Columbus, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Gary, Indiana; Indianapolis, Indiana; Kansas City, Missouri; Minneapolis, Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri; and Wichita, Kansas. The signing of the agreement is taking place at Bader Philanthropies, located at 233 North Water Street, Fourth Floor, Milwaukee, 53202.

“Milwaukee continually demonstrates innovative workforce development. I’m incredibly proud we are leading this newly created regional consortium. This will provide a tremendous opportunity for all of our urban partners to learn from each other and share ideas,” said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. “I would like to thank the leadership of all of the Midwest Urban Strategies partner cities for their commitment to regional workforce development, and Christine Quinn from the U.S. Department of Labor for her support of this initiative.”

Midwest Urban Strategies is leading the charge in creating a supply and demand model with a regional approach and talent development strategies such as Registered Apprenticeship, a major area of focus for the current administration. Job seekers interested in Registered Apprenticeships and other career pathways leading to fulfilling careers and greater financial stability will benefit from this joint effort.



“The Department of Labor is championing regional collaboration at the highest level. I’m impressed with the unprecedented collaboration between these cities and their workforce development boards in the formation of Midwest Urban Strategies,” said Christine Quinn, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region 5 – Chicago. “The Midwest Urban Strategies Consortium exemplifies workforce innovation around a supply and demand model that will help cultivate a new dynamic for talent development and employer engagement through the official workforce system.”

The agreement being signed states the shared mission of the group and outlines each member’s responsibilities to employers and job seekers, including specific outcome driven objectives and activities. The U.S. Department of Labor is also an active member, providing technical assistance and guidance on national and regional workforce priorities. Under Employ Milwaukee’s leadership, smaller cities will benefit from lessons learned in large cities. Likewise, large cities will be able to take successful programs from mid-sized cities and bring them to scale. All of the member cities will benefit from sharing best practices for building responsive relationships with employers and meeting labor market demands.

“It is a tremendous honor for us to be selected by our peers to lead this groundbreaking consortium. All of our cities share similar challenges. By creating this partnership, we are stronger together than we are apart,” said Earl Buford, Employ Milwaukee President and CEO. “We are building a model that is national in its nature, and local in approach, and answering the call of policy makers and funders to develop smart efficiencies and shared resources to operationalize a sustainable workforce system to respond to the needs of employers on a regional level.”

By leveraging each city’s strengths in training and employer engagement, to sharing resources and funding, to identifying and applying best practices that serve the entire region collectively, the members of Midwest Urban Strategies will bring the comprehensive force of their workforce partners to the table to build a stronger economy and greater business success in their markets. Meanwhile, residents of each urban area will have access to greater opportunity through self- and family-sustaining careers in sectors such as health care, financial services, information technology, advanced manufacturing, construction, and emerging sectors.

Support for Midwest Urban Strategies continues to grow. The Department of Labor has funded three of the consortium’s initiatives. Additionally, the group is leveraging other public, private and philanthropic funding. Bader Philanthropies, Inc. is supporting the build up of Employ Milwaukee’s capacity to effectively administer and fundraise for the consortium, recognizing the tremendous opportunity such a regional leadership position brings to Milwaukee’s growth. JPMorgan Chase is providing resources to MUS to shore up capacity, aid in intra-city communication and coordination, and to bring training and technical assistance to enhance sector-based partnerships with employers.



“The collaboration exhibited by Midwest Urban Strategies is critical to the stability of our regional economy,” said Whitney Smith, Executive Director- Midwest, Global Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase. “Our investment will help the group develop an educated and skilled regional workforce focused on sector-based employers, which is essential for the region’s future growth.”

“Workforce development is a key program area for Bader Philanthropies. Our long-term relationship with Employ Milwaukee has resulted in innovative policies, partnerships, and trainings that are moving the needle on talent development. We are pleased to be supporting the local implementation of the Midwest Urban Strategies programming, and proud of Employ Milwaukee for serving as the lead organization in this creative initiative,” Jerry C. Roberts, Program Officer of Bader Philanthropies.

About Employ Milwaukee

Employ Milwaukee is a federally legislated Workforce Board serving Workforce Development Area #2, Milwaukee County. It serves as the lead agency for the coordination, planning and administration of employment and training services for youth and adults, and creates linkages to employers across industries. In partnership with leaders from government, private industry, labor, education and community and faith based organizations, Employ Milwaukee develops workforce solutions that meet and anticipate regional economic development needs. For employers it offers specialized training programs and innovative human resource services to provide the skilled workers they need to remain competitive and contribute to a robust economy. For job seekers, it provides the resources to keep pace with today’s job market.

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