

INDUSTRY & INCLUSION

MANUFACTURING

WORKFORCE

STRATEGIES

BUILDING AN

INCLUSIVE FUTURE

How community-embedded
workforce organizations center
racial equity, credentialing,
and training to create stronger
neighborhoods

June 2021





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Shellie McKinney

Human Resources Business Partner, Rexnord 20

Martha Barry

Chief Racial Justice Officer, YWCA 22

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

In 2020, The Century Foundation (TCF) and the Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA) collaborated to create a national program to examine educational strategies and community-driven workforce models that connect diverse communities to opportunities in manufacturing, and to identify the policy change needed to scale those efforts. The Inclusion and Industry 4.0 (I&I) Project brought together leading practitioner organizations to understand and lift up best practices and challenges, and extract lessons for policymakers to expand support for community-based manufacturing training. I&I represents a critical component of TCF and UMA's goal to promote the development of effective workforce and education strategies targeting an inclusive future in manufacturing.

The I&I program builds on an earlier collaboration starting in 2017 when UMA joined TCF on their [High Wage America campaign](#), which published nine policy research reports and held conversations with hundreds of stakeholders across the industrial Midwest. The initiative, one of a new generation of high impact TCF policy research efforts to address inequality, attracted multiple 2020 presidential contenders (Senators Sherrod Brown and Kirsten Gillibrand, and now-President Joe Biden) to its events, and national media attention for its recommendations. High Wage America research concluded that tackling inclusion, alongside a move to more advanced production, would determine the fate of American manufacturing.

Manufacturing has one of the most aged workforces in the economy and currently faces a recruitment and skill-building challenge. These come on top of the fourth industrial revolution as manufacturers are redesigning production and products to take advantage of automation, artificial intelligence, and the internet

of things — demanding new skills at every level of production. To address these challenges, manufacturing companies and workforce development partners are developing new approaches to adult skill development that takes into account barriers to accessing, committing to, and completing long-term training programs. These same organizations are also going through their own learning and growing in order to better support Generation Z talent — individuals born between 1997 and 2012 — who as students experienced drastic economic, cultural, and technological shifts which have impacted K-12 learning, personal values, and ideas about meaningful, sustainable work.

Luckily, an exciting generation of workforce intermediaries is providing diverse workers new opportunities to attain skills in advanced manufacturing. These intermediaries served as our I&I cohort members, and focus on serving adults and adolescents, primarily those of color. Despite the loss of manufacturing in all of our cohort cities, these communities have long counted on the many remaining manufacturing jobs as a source



of middle-class income, especially for those workers who don't have a college degree. But a generation of

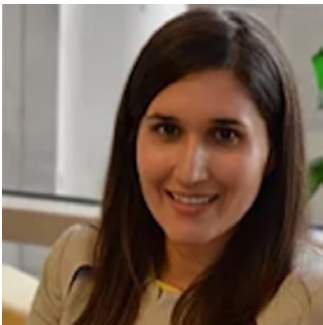
Industry & Inclusion 4.0 Cohort Members



Guy Loudon
Executive Vice President
Jane Addams Resource
Corporation
Chicago, IL and Baltimore,
MD



Catrina Crane
Director of Workforce
Development & Business
Solutions
Menomonee Valley
Partners
Milwaukee, WI



Jacqui Mieksztyn
Talent & Workforce
Strategist
Lightweight Innovations
For Tomorrow
Detroit, MI



Lizabeth Stuck
Head of Engagement &
Workforce Development
Manufacturing x Digital
Chicago, IL



Autumn Russell
Vice President, Diversity
and Inclusion, Early
College, Early Career
Manufacturing Advocacy
and Growth Network
Cleveland, OH



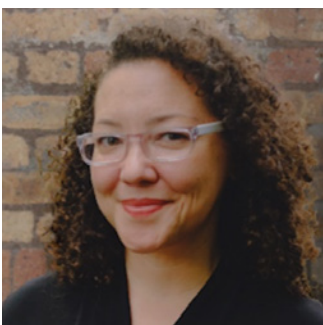
Michael Garamoni
Manager, Workforce
Development
Manufacturing x Digital
Chicago, IL



Brittany Becker
Program Manager
Manufacturing Advocacy
and Growth Network
Cleveland, OH



Stephen Tucker
President/CEO
Northland Workforce
Training Center
Buffalo, NY



Erica Staley
Executive Director
Manufacturing
Renaissance
Chicago, IL



Rhandi Berth
Chief Innovations Officer
Wisconsin Regional
Training Partnership
| Building Industry
Group & Skilled Trades
Employment Program
Milwaukee, WI

parents who experienced job loss from that industrial decline — particularly in urban communities of color — have served as a cautionary tale for current youth and young adults. As a result, many younger workers and their families today do not view manufacturing jobs as a viable pathway, and thus have not encouraged them to develop the skills needed to enter and advance in manufacturing careers. However, the rebound in manufacturing over the past eight years, means that good-paying jobs in manufacturing could once again make a big difference for urban communities of color, and others who need well-paying work — but only if comprehensive programs are in place to make the connections between communities, training programs, and these good jobs.

The innovative leaders of the eight I&I cohort members prove that with the right program models in place, a variety of un- and under-employed adults of all ages are able obtain the necessary skills to gain employment into a rewarding career in manufacturing, with further opportunities for skills advancement and wage progression. Through 2020, cohort members, TCF, and UMA worked collaboratively through virtual roundtable discussions, seminars, and interviews to explore policies and programs, questions of scale and sustainability, and promising practices. From this work many takeaway

lessons about education, training models, employer engagement, and supportive service strategies were organized, documented, and shared.¹ Moreover, this collective research will position these organizations as national leaders who can spark replication in other communities, and provide policymakers with a road map of how to make such replication and expansion possible.

How to use the research

TCF and UMA have packaged lessons learned from the Industry and Inclusion 4.0 Project into two publications: *Industry & Inclusion: Manufacturing workforce strategies building an inclusive future*, and *Industry & Inclusion: A Blueprint for Action*, this research report and blueprint for action. This report is a journalistic set of profiles of our cohort organizations and the people who power them. *Industry & Inclusion: A Blueprint for Action* is a set of conclusions and insights based on the common themes of: Learning, Racial Equity, Economic Justice, Pathways to Ownership, Relational Innovations, and Creating Strong Partnerships. These publications highlight barriers and opportunities at the intersection of workforce and economic development, place a spotlight on leading members of the cohort, document learnings from the cohort's interactions, and organize research and public policy recommendations.

The scaling of successful workforce programs like those highlighted in these publications will be aided by complementary public policies. TCF, UMA, and the I&I cohort are promoting a greater priority on inclusion throughout federal manufacturing programs, such as Manufacturing USA and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and national workforce development programs, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). TCF's *Industry & Inclusion: A Blueprint for Action* includes an analysis of ways in which federal workforce and higher education policies can be reformed to facilitate the scaling of I&I cohort members and similar program models. In addition,



¹ See Appendices.

Industry & Inclusion: A Blueprint for Action includes state and regional action areas, including how to invest federal and state dollars and how to structure higher education involvement in non-degree credential programs in manufacturing.

This report includes a summary of the interactions and discussions between cohort members, UMA, and TCF; reflections on connections within those discussions; and a collection of technical descriptions and personal profiles that share the stories and backgrounds of program leaders and stakeholders with whom they work. *Industry & Inclusion: Manufacturing workforce strategies building an inclusive future* will help similar workforce development organizations gain insights to improve upon existing practices and provide guidance and connections to help make the leap to new beneficial practices. Together, *Industry & Inclusion: Manufacturing workforce strategies building an inclusive future* and *Industry & Inclusion: A Blueprint for Action* are meant to be used by many different stakeholders who are advocating for new, continued, or expanded support for community-embedded, innovative workforce development organizations that are training current and future manufacturing talent.



SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

The goal of the I&I program was to create an opportunity for program leaders to tell the story of their work from their perspective, create a space to discuss what is and isn't working in current strategies, and identify challenges and discuss solutions to increase impact. To achieve this, TCF and UMA organized a new cohort of urban, community-based organizations that have built workforce development programs to help create new education and career pathways for women, communities of color, people with conviction histories, veterans, and other marginalized communities. TCF and UMA's original research plan for the cohort included in-person discussions, facility visits, and national gatherings. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all activities shifted to virtual gatherings and discussions. The pandemic provided an unexpected backdrop that amplified the importance of the project. Yet, the economic shutdown due to social distancing guidelines, combined with a spike in demand for personal protection equipment and the shutdown of global supply chains, increased awareness of the importance of local factories as places where both essential products are made and where frontline workers work. Also during the I&I cohort, police officers in three different cities murdered George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Rayshard Brooks — three Black people, three among far too many before and after them — further amplifying the importance of taking action to include racial equity and inclusion in economic development and workforce strategies. While it is hard to fully grasp how collective learning may have been impacted by these historic moments, it is important to acknowledge they created an immediate shared learning experience that brought participants together in unanticipated ways.

How the project was done

TCF and UMA reorganized our original learning program into all online interactions between cohort members, project conveners, an advisory board, and other



Abbie Langston
Senior Associate,
PolicyLink



Emily Stover DeRocco
Founder & CEO, E3
Engage Educate Employ



Livia Lam
Senior Vice President at
Strategies 360



Bernadine Hawes
Senior Research Analyst,
Community Marketing
Concepts, Inc.



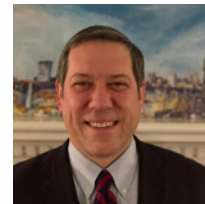
Héctor Huezco
Senior Workforce Equity
Coordinator, Jobs to
Move America



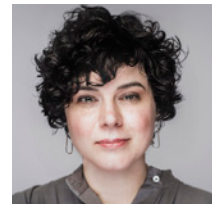
Montez King
Executive Director, NIMS



Chauncy Lennon
Vice President, The
Future of Learning and
Work, Lumina Foundation



Jason R. Drake, Ph.D.
Director of Education and
Workforce Development,
Dan T. Moore Company



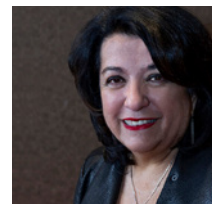
Sarah Krasley
CEO, Shimmy
Technologies



Dan Swinney
Founder, Manufacturing
Renaissance



Keenan D. Grenell, Ph.D.
Executive Director,
Manufacturing Diversity
Institute



Teresa Córdova
Director of the Great
Cities Institute (GCI),
University of Illinois at
Chicago



Elmer Moore Jr.
Executive Director, Scale
Up Milwaukee



Linda Fowler
President, Regionerate
LLC



William B. Bonvillian
Senior Director for
Special Projects, MIT's
Office of Digital Learning

national experts. The research team used contemporary approaches to knowledge transfer to identify the impactful ways these eight models have been able to seed and scale programs in their own communities while strengthening local manufacturing ecosystems.

The research methods implemented over the course of the 12-month program include: roundtable discussions between all cohort organization stakeholders (industry leaders, trainees, education partners); webinars featuring cohort members, advisors, and subject matter experts; and one-on-one interviews with program leaders and stakeholders from their region. Qualitative analysis was done of these discussions to connect themes across conversations, cities, and programs. Through analysis of the findings, we extracted lessons from the field and identified barriers to success. We designed research questions in each of the structured discussions to capture the strategy behind how cohort members work



with communities and businesses to create career pathways for workers, particularly in communities of color and low-income populations, who currently are not well-connected to the manufacturing sector.

Within the larger conversation about workforce development and ecosystem engagement, we asked questions dedicated to more focused elements, such as the effects of different credentialing models — such as apprenticeships, higher education programs, or competency-based credentials — and relationships with educational institutions on program design and outcomes. We included other questions to better understand the continuing impact of Industry 4.0 technologies, such as automation, cybersecurity, and the internet of things, on the requirements in the manufacturing workforce, and how these are changing the skills required for manufacturing jobs. Within each discussion we intentionally left time and space open to allow more organic sharing and reflection.

While we based observations on qualitative research, we made conclusions in the context of the data these programs provided on job placement, wages, and credential attainment. TCF and UMA developed a standard data request for each organization participating in the cohort to organize data on demographics of participants, data on training completion and credential attainment, and job placement and retention, among other topics like funding sources and key partnerships. .

To help guide and ground the research, TCF and UMA organized an advisory board to provide a deeper knowledge of workforce development models. Our advisory board was made up of national workforce development thought leaders from academia, the private sector, nonprofits, and government. The advisory board provided a much-needed national framework to the local conversations with the eight cohort members.

REFLECTIONS

Given that each cohort organization participated in a three-hour roundtable group discussion, a series of one-on-one interviews, and monthly gatherings, it is impossible to fully share all the stories and moments of learning that informed TCF and UMA's insights and reflections. This process yielded shared experiences and pain-points across multiple organizations, despite working in different cities, with different stakeholders, and within different regional histories.

Many discrete discussions ran through the collection of stories and backgrounds of the cohort members. Individual organizations talked about the process and difficulty of finding skilled trainers to provide technical instruction who also have the social awareness to work with BIPOC communities, individuals who have little to no work experience, and those who live in neighborhoods that have experienced high amounts of trauma.

Each cohort organization approaches this process in their own way. Some have been able to successfully recruit diverse teachers from industry to work full time within their companies, such as Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC). Other organizations have built relationships with education partners that have developed train-the-trainer style programs to help teachers better understand their students' experiences, which is a strategy Northland Workforce Training Center (NWTTC) and Manufacturing Renaissance (MR) have created. Finding capable teachers echoes part of another ongoing conversation: it is important to find the right people for the right position. This goes for many different roles within the education-to-career pathway support network: roles which include technical trainers, mentors, career coaches, employer recruitment and support, program marketing, and program advocates. These conversations also touch on the idea that the whole ecosystem needs to fill these roles rather than one individual organization having all of them under one roof.



Having many partnerships within a regional ecosystem — that contribute to the well-being and support of current and future employees *and* manufacturing businesses — was talked about by all cohort members. There is no one way to build these relationships, nor is there just one perfect combination of partners. For example, Lightweight Innovations For Tomorrow (LIFT) and Manufacturing x Digital (MxD) have built connections to technology developers through their non-workforce development work as Manufacturing USA Institutes. They have been able to turn those connections into partnerships which have opened new possibilities for teaching high school students about cutting-edge technologies. Many organizations discussed working on ways to strengthen their regional connections to the education and workforce development networks. Even though both networks are on the education continuum, they tend to operate very differently, leading cohort members to develop separate ways to build partnerships with individual groups.

The most consistent relationships that all organizations have are with networks of manufacturers and of social service providers. Yet again, there are unique ways

to manage these network relationships. Some have created fee-for-service incumbent training programs to bring manufacturers to the table — for example, JARC and Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership / Building Industry Group & Skilled Trades Employment Program (WRTP | BIG STEP) — and others rely on placing newly skilled workers in manufacturing businesses to build interest for ongoing programs, as is the case with MR. Creating relationships with social service providers often depends on building trust with individuals at each organization and providing education and insights about why the communities they serve should be pursuing careers in manufacturing.

Investing in relationships with social services, employers, and the larger ecosystem illustrates another key point: organizations often have to do a lot of work beyond skills training. One instance includes coaching employers to learn new practices and implement policies that correct for discrimination against BIPOC and women, one of the most often cited extra tasks. Some of this coaching is done one-on-one, in subtle ways, like Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network's (MAGNET) intern coach who helps employers understand and communicate expectations with their trainees. Whereas Menomonee Valley Partners (MVP) works with external partners to develop race and gender equity training programs for employers. JARC is launching a group discussion forum for many business leaders to come together to discuss race, equity, and inclusion barriers and strategies for change. This work outside of training illustrates gaps within the ecosystem. Many organizations have developed an informal process of taking on extra work, uncovering why it is needed, then finding new organizations to bring into the ecosystem to fill the gap. When this is not possible the next step is often to communicate the importance of doing the “new work” and then seek funding to cover the costs associated with it.

The day-to-day operations, program offerings, and service networks of each organization illustrate the effort it takes for a trainee to transition from no employment, or underemployment, to full time employment. Sometimes the effort is about planning new strategies

for childcare, overcoming family and peer pressure, or covering rent and transportation costs. In other cases the effort is fighting against racist and inequitable employer practices. Each cohort leader shared, in their own way, their empathy and awareness of what it takes to commit to, what for many, is a very new and life-changing experience of learning skills needed to work in manufacturing. This awareness translates into many different strategies, all of which help make this big transition easier. As mentioned previously, all organizations have built social service networks in part to help with easing this major life transition and reducing the effort needed to solve problems associated with creating new childcare options, transportation, and even clothing. Organizations have implemented strategies internally as well. MR and MAGNET, for example, have created mentor programs to connect a trainee with someone who has shared life experiences to help guide them through the process and acknowledge their effort. NWTC and JARC offer career coaching to help individuals ease the transition into employment, preparing them before they start their career for how to navigate on-the-job conflicts and how to advocate for themselves. And, MVP created a women in manufacturing program to connect young women to professionals in careers in manufacturing to help build bridges that previous generations did not benefit from.

The following Profile Library section provides more information on these individual organizations for further study and to help uncover more connections and relationships across the I&I cohort members. *Industry & Inclusion: Manufacturing workforce strategies building an inclusive future* provides both deeper explanations as to how these themes were discussed and provides recommendations to change policies in response.

MVP PROFILE

Introduction

As part of the Industry & Inclusion 4.0 Project, UMA interviewed cohort members and their partners to gather background information and details about how they create and deliver programs. From these discussions UMA generated Organizational Profiles for each of the eight cohort members. These Organizational Profiles are divided into two parts:

Technical Descriptions: snapshots of each workforce development organization which include a brief description of their history, an overview of how their signature programs operate, self-identified keys to success, recent outcomes, and their future plans for scaling the impact of their programs.

Personal Profiles: stakeholder interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships that exist between the workforce development organization and the communities and employers they serve. These include trainees, industry employers, and partners in education.

Each Organizational Profile is meant to shed light on how each cohort member successfully navigated the process of designing and implementing an innovative workforce development solution for their region and for people they support. As a collection, these eight Organizational Profiles highlight the importance of: building partnerships and ecosystems, navigating stakeholder engagement, remaining open to ongoing improvements and learning, and understanding both employers' needs and the needs of the current and future workforce.

In the Personal Profiles you will find individual meaningful experiences of: how people's lives were changed by the training programs, how after graduating trainees return to give back to the next generation, and mentorships

between intergenerational workers that share a culture and background. And like the Technical Descriptions, the collection of Personal Profiles highlight important themes. For example, the need for: committing to ongoing dialogue with the community to understand their needs, cultural awareness within manufacturing companies, and a broader definition and understanding of impact and outcomes.

The Organizational Profiles provide a glimpse into the inherent complexity of preparing a new workforce for an ever-changing industry. What UMA found compelling through these discussions is that each cohort member has become an expert in discrete topics like recruiting the right people, building an ecosystem, and supporting the transition of workers. Even though no two organizations operate in the same way, they have all come to understand key important principles: leverage what makes one's region unique; bring partners of all kinds to the table to develop ideas and get feedback; create a culture of learning and education as a lifelong process, within their own organizations and within the manufacturing businesses they work with; and new programs require social innovation — a change in behavior — on the part of trainers, trainees, employers, and funders.

Please visit urbanmfg.org/project/industry-and-inclusion-national-cohort to read our research, commentary, and the seven other cohort member profiles.

MENOMONEE VALLEY PARTNERS [MVP]

MVP envisions a thriving Valley with a well-balanced mix of industrial, recreational, and entertainment uses that strengthen Milwaukee.

Milwaukee, WI

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Brief Introduction, History, & Background

Menomonee Valley Partners (MVP) is a business improvement district (BID)¹ whose mission is to revitalize and sustain the Menomonee River Valley — 1,200 acres in the center of Milwaukee. In the early 1900s Milwaukee was known as the “Machine Shop of the World” and the Menomonee River Valley was its engine. By the late 1900s manufacturing businesses had left the valley, leaving abandoned buildings and brownfields, creating an eyesore and leaving residents who live closest to the valley with fewer job opportunities. Since its founding in 1999 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, MVP has served as a lead convener and coordinator of public and private stakeholders who are contributing to the redevelopment of the valley. The initial focus was on building infrastructure — including new roads, bridges, and 1,000,000-plus square feet of green buildings — to attract manufacturing companies back to the valley, as well as cleaning up 300 acres of brownfields, and developing more than 60 acres of new trails and park space to improve wildlife habitat and water quality and to attract Milwaukee residents. Over their 20-plus year history MVP has taken on many different roles and responsibilities: they work to remove barriers to private sector redevelopment; they lead the creation of new amenities like public park space, bike, and pedestrian trails for employees and neighbors; they advocate and raise funds for new infrastructure projects, environmental restoration, and quality of life improvements; and they recruit new businesses while also helping existing businesses expand. As a result of MVP’s work and leadership, 52 companies have either started relocating or relocated to the Menomonee River Valley, creating over 5,200 family-supporting jobs.

As the number of businesses in the valley increased, MVP became an important member of the Milwaukee workforce development community. As a convener and organizer MVP is uniquely positioned to hear about the manufacturing business community’s need for talent, and the surrounding communities’ need for access to education and career opportunities. MVP learned that as new companies were locating in the valley, they were recruiting workers from the suburbs and other neighborhoods in Milwaukee, skipping over the residents living closest to the valley. Over their history, MVP has developed multiple programs that address equity and diversity in manufacturing and build new pathways between the businesses in the district and residents in surrounding neighborhoods.

About Career Discovery Initiative, Neighborhood Connectivity, and JobUp

MVP works with over 100 companies, all of whom have voiced that they struggle to fill positions, have high turnover, and will be losing employees to an upcoming wave of retirement. MVP is leading the development of many programs to help alleviate these



¹ “Business Improvement Districts (BID) and Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NID) are strong partners in the City’s efforts to develop strong commercial, residential and industrial areas of the City that create jobs and a higher quality of life in Milwaukee. BIDs and NIDs are funded and operated by businesses, property owners and other community members located within each district’s defined boundaries.” <https://city.milwaukee.gov/DCD/BusinessToolbox/bids>



an organization would have events — for example, a career fair at a school, a summer festival, or a church-led community gathering — MVP staff would go advocate on behalf of their businesses. In the beginning MVP acted as a liaison for businesses, providing job applications and information from different companies to residents and community organizations. Over time neighborhood organizations started to learn they are an integral part of ensuring that their residents knew where job opportunities existed. Because workforce development is a big issue, and has been that way for decades, it's complicated for organizations to get involved

issues. For example, the Career Discovery Initiative, the Neighborhood Connectivity program, and the JobUp training partnership all work to introduce young people of color to career paths in manufacturing, help individuals living near the valley find job opportunities, and address the barriers that keep incumbent workers in lower-end jobs and help them move up into skilled positions. The longest running program is the Neighborhood Connectivity Program. The neighborhoods surrounding the valley are some of the lowest income neighborhoods in the city. As development in the valley progressed, MVP surveyed those working there and found they were largely not from the surrounding areas. When interviewed, business owners identified they didn't know how to hire from the neighborhoods and when neighborhood residents were asked about why they don't seek jobs there, they said they didn't understand how to connect to the valley. Some of this was due to a physical barrier: there are only a few ways to enter from its steep hillsides. Residents were literally driving over the valley and nothing was bringing them down into it.

Thanks to MVP there are now new ways of “bringing the floor of the valley” to those neighborhoods. MVP started by creating relationships with neighborhood organizations active in the surrounding areas. Whenever

because they don't necessarily know what to focus on or what role to play. Now neighborhood organizations can work with MVP who brings employers into their neighborhoods to share opportunities directly with their residents.

MVP's Career Discovery Initiative connects neighborhood youth to career paths, mentors, and hands-on learning. The program started about seven years ago when the superintendent of a local school district spoke up at an event with manufacturing business owners in attendance about the huge divide between business and youth. MVP responded to this call to connect and organized many business owners to develop tours of facilities in the valley. The first school invited was the high school closest to the Menomonee Valley; now the Milwaukee Public School system, charter schools, and private schools participate. MVP built the initiative for kids and teachers who wanted to understand how what they're teaching and learning relates to a career. Teachers complete a survey about what they teach and MVP staff work with companies to find ways during the visit to connect what they do to what is being taught.



The tours have also impacted the companies as well. A Black female student was passionate about being an engineer, but when she was on a tour, she didn't see any women working as engineers. MVP shared this experience with the factory owner and they took the initiative to connect the student with their lead engineer, who is a woman but was out that day. This inspired MVP to create a women's mentorship program connecting women working in manufacturing in the valley to young women interested in engineering, manufacturing, real estate, and skilled trades. The tours continue to be successful with close to 40 companies participating since they began. And tours continue to spark new possibilities, such as training for teachers who want to find more ways of connecting classroom learning to skills needed in manufacturing.

JobUp is MVP's newest initiative, the idea for which came about through a collaborative effort to apply to JPMorgan Chase's Advancing Cities challenge. MVP, Havenwoods (another business improvement district), YWCA, and Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) worked together to respond to two city-wide issues: high unemployment and low numbers of people of color in higher-level positions. Their response to the challenge was informed by a third factor: a high dropout rate in technical training certifications. The theory the partners came up with was

this: if they could develop a way to increase the success rate of students completing technical education, they could help increase access to entry level jobs and increase the opportunities for workers to climb the career ladder, while also promoting lifelong learning. The solution they proposed is to provide wraparound services like transportation, child care, and health care, because when those needs aren't met one's ability to commit to and succeed in education is drastically impacted.

The proposal wasn't chosen as an Advancing Cities winner, but the partners believed this strategy was worth pursuing and found local funders who provided capital to pilot the initiative.

While the JobUp program is still very new, a coordinator has been hired and is working between all the partners. Further, MATC is offering free tuition for qualifying students either coming directly out of high school or with six or fewer credits (the primary funding source for the program is a federal Pell Grant for low-income students). MATC and MVP are working together to understand what are the hard-to-fill positions for companies, while also understanding what students want to learn. And, MVP is working with employers to hire workers, train apprentices, and collaborate with community partners to develop a network of wraparound services for students.

“Fifteen years ago, and even 10 years ago, if I had different companies in a room together, I got so much resistance to talking about collaborative solutions because they saw each other as competitors. Whereas now, they all see their purpose, and how, if we don't work together, we won't solve some of those deep workforce challenges that many of them have. So now we're working together, people are sharing solutions.”

-Catrina Crane, Director of Workforce Development & Business Solutions



make it easier for more companies to get engaged and become part of the dialogue.

Corey Zetts, MVP's Executive Director, identifies sharing lessons learned and partnerships as keys to success. MVP has been able to get feedback from individual businesses about how their workforce programs are or aren't working. This willingness to engage and be part of the process makes it much easier to work collaboratively with all partners.

Partners that are willing and able to look at the whole picture also make a difference. MVP has been able to bring together environmentalists, industry leaders, health care advocates, and city agencies to work together and understand their roles and responsibilities to move the larger Menomonee River Valley redevelopment forward. MVP has seen the same success in their workforce development programs by getting employers, educators, and residents to understand the issues that exist within the current system and how everyone needs to be engaged to build a new system that is equitable and accessible.

Outcomes

MVP measures outcomes based on how well they are breaking down barriers that exist between the valley's manufacturing district (predominantly white in leadership positions) and the residents of the surrounding areas (predominantly African American and Latinx neighborhoods). MVP tracks the number of valley businesses and neighborhood residents participating in community-based job fair events and neighborhood tours; the number of businesses investing in MVP tools that reduce barriers to employment; and the number of valley employees and neighborhood youth participating in Career Discovery Initiative programs. In 2019 more than 300 students from over ten local high schools and middle schools toured valley businesses, spoke with

Keys to Success

Catrina Crane, Director of Workforce Development & Business Solutions at MVP, said that one key to success is having businesses who are willing to pilot programs. In just the past few years, MVP has seen companies become more willing to look within their own walls to say: "We see that there's a need for change, but how do we make that change?" Employers are not as rigid as they were a decade ago and they want to be a part of the solution. MVP and partners have found ways to model collaboration and an openness to try new things, to see what works and what doesn't, knowing that you need employers to make something like this work.

Companies are also opening up about their own internal issues, especially ingrained bias and racist policies. Historically these conversations have been hard for companies to have and individuals have been afraid to talk about their own bias. Having a few companies willing to do the work has led MVP to explore how to support those conversations across more companies. In fact, it's also led MVP and YWCA to develop ways for employers and workers to talk about these issues and develop training for companies. MVP is in the process of creating a "circle" where individuals from various businesses can come to speak about some of these challenges or concerns. The purpose is to create a space for individuals to learn, reflect, and bounce ideas off of each other. MVP believes these new strategies will

professionals, and learned how their current interests connect to meaningful careers in the valley. The Young Women in STEM program brought more than 50 students to meet with valley employees in the trades, engineering, manufacturing, and other careers with low female representation. And MVP collaborated with Near West Side Partners and Layton Boulevard West Neighbors on Neighborhood Job Recruitment events in each neighborhood. By bringing the job recruitment event and opportunities directly to the neighborhoods, the organizations helped to connect valley companies and residents in a new model of job fair.

Just as important, but harder to measure, is how well MVP and partners can increase awareness of the systemic issues that impact companies and residents and then create change. For example, through the JobUp program, outcomes will be measured on how well students are supported. This has led to organizing teachers and employers to discuss what a new apprenticeship model could look like, building a model that is responsive to both the needs of the worker and the needs of the company. A student's ability to complete higher education without debt is also an important outcome. Working with students in high school to earn college credit and then getting them into the MATC Milwaukee Promise program to continue their education creates a pathway for debt-free education.

Another example of hard-to-measure outcomes relates to trust. A new worker isn't going to trust an employer who says they have opportunity for upward mobility when the employer's policies tie promotions to seniority. MVP is learning how to work with companies to adjust these strategies, a practice which negatively impacts the newer, mostly people of color workforce that is just now accessing jobs in manufacturing. MVP is collaborating with the YWCA to develop training programs to help companies understand and incorporate new strategies, particularly around race and gender, that promote based

on an employee's ability to be respectful, a good teacher, and someone who supports other workers. MVP is also developing strategies to uncover talent in the incumbent workforce that could benefit from more education — both in new technology and in managerial skill sets to help them move up in positions and become culturally competent leaders. If the incumbent worker doesn't have a college degree, they can benefit from the MATC Promise program. This benefits the employer because they don't have to pay for their employees' training, but it does require them to find ways of being supportive and flexible to help their employees get to and be successful in the classroom. Both sides build trust in this situation: an employer shows support by making adjustments to expectations and providing time to learn, and employees show they are committed by bringing new knowledge back to their employer.

“The goal is always to learn and share. If we have an idea for a program we pilot it, learn from it, and build on its success. We can then expand it throughout the valley, but also throughout the city. We are one of seven Business Improvement Districts and we share our learnings with them. Through continued engagement with the Urban Manufacturing Alliance and the Century Foundation, other Industry and Inclusion members, and other partners, we continue to learn how we might incorporate other strategies to scale impact.”

-Corey Zetts, Executive Director

The Future [Scaling]

MVP's process of piloting then expanding throughout the valley (and then throughout the city) has already been successful, and they are focused on continuing this process. MVP will continue to find ways to increase employer and resident participation through their relationships with the other six industrial Business Improvement Districts (BID). Together, the BIDs have become a city-wide learning network which allows many different types of experimentation and understanding. This network is also benefiting MVP partners. For example, MATC and the YWCA are also scaling their

engagement with Milwaukee residents and business owners as programs grow beyond the valley.

Milwaukee is one of the most segregated cities in the nation, and MVP staff know firsthand that people are afraid to have conversations about systemic racism. MVP also knows in order to increase participation in building new workforce strategies which promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, they have to find ways to open dialogue with communities and employers. To support this, MVP is creating Valley Talks, a monthly opportunity to connect on various issues within their community, creating what MVP believes will be another bridge into opportunities.

The future of MVP workforce programs is all about seeing more Black and brown individuals in management and ownership positions at every company in the valley. This means helping existing employers have a stronger voice and understanding of their role within the community. Scaling is also based on increasing awareness of what is happening in the Menomonee Valley and in the surrounding neighborhoods. MVP wants the valley to become the greatest place to work in Milwaukee for working families. They want families to be proud of living in the neighborhood and they want to see parents promoting jobs in the valley to their children.



Shellie McKinney

Human Resources Business Partner

Rexnord

As the Human Resources Business Partner for Rexnord Industries, Shellie McKinney's strength is her love for people. When applicants come in for an interview, she puts them at ease with her mellow demeanor.

"I'm not like other HR people," said McKinney, whose office contains a disco ball, a gift from a co-worker after a discussion about McKinney's favorite music genre. It has been a fixture in her office ever since. "In HR, people can be so stiff, lacking personality, and straight-laced when interacting with the workforce. I like to show my personality, and by doing so it helps people to relax and be a little more comfortable with themselves."

When McKinney began her career in HR, she was often the only person of color on the staff, so she felt pressured to fit in. As she worked for companies with more diverse workforces, she became more comfortable being herself at work. She connects with employees by being authentic while coaching and counseling them around their issues. With applicants, she is not afraid to critique their employment search habits, even if sometimes that seems old fashioned to her colleagues.

"Some of my other supervisors will laugh at me because someone might come in with a hat on, and I'll ask them to remove their hat," laughed McKinney. Like a relative who loves her family, McKinney knows how to show love even as she is correcting applicants. "There was one young man at another company that I worked for who knew the company dress code was business casual. He was expected to wear khakis and a shirt, but said he didn't know how he was going to make it in this job, because he didn't have any casual clothes. So I took him over to the Goodwill next to our building, bought him a

couple pairs of pants and a couple of shirts. He was so happy, and I would like to think that me doing such a small thing made a lasting impact on him. I left that company so I don't know how successful he was. But I think that planting that seed may somehow grow into something down the road for him."

This type of gesture is what distinguishes McKinney. She is not afraid to spend a little money to help an applicant feel good at work, but one of her more helpful gestures did not cost her a thing. When a young applicant let her lack of a high school diploma dash her hopes of succeeding in manufacturing, McKinney became her biggest cheerleader.

"When we interviewed her, she just seemed to have so much personality and potential, way more than what we were hiring for. I felt that she possessed more than what an assembler required," recalled McKinney. The applicant was only in her late 20s, but felt too old to return to school. McKinney convinced her by sharing her own journey of going back to school at the age of 30, spending the following ten years getting her education.

"When I started telling her my story, it was like a light came on in her," described McKinney. "Some of the things that I have been through in life, I have used as encouragement for other people. So I told her, we're



going to go ahead and hire her, with the condition that she get her GED. I gave her little small goals to reach and she did that. She got her GED, enrolled in a technical school, and now she says that she will invite me to her graduation. She was just thankful to have somebody in her corner encouraging her.“

McKinney’s love for her colleagues and helping them succeed is why Rexnord loves her, disco ball and all. She believes that even if she did not have a job, she would be doing something to improve lives, one person at a time.

“The reason I really like Rexnord is because when I interviewed here four and a half years ago, I told the hiring team, the person that you’re talking to today, is the person that you will have here, next month, next year, and however long,” explained McKinney. “I’m not coming in here, trying to say the things you want me to say or act a certain way. I want you to know that if how I am now doesn’t fit into the company culture or the climate, then it’s not going to be a good fit long term. So they knew who they were hiring from the beginning.”

McKinney loves that she has a platform to build, inspire, encourage, and give hope to job applicants and employees. Though her platform is small, it provides people with a much needed second chance and opportunities for advancement that they did not know were possible. She finds it challenging to support the underdog, but knows that they just need someone to coach them with love to get to the next level.

“Sometimes we need people to take a stand for those who aren’t in a position to speak for themselves.”

Martha Barry

Chief Racial Justice Officer

YWCA

Martha Barry grew up in a small Wisconsin town of about 10,000 people. After four years of living in California, she decided to return back east in 1990 to make Milwaukee her home. She came back because she was attracted to Milwaukee's working-class roots and Midwestern character.

Resolving the underlying racism embedded in those narratives is another reason she settled in Milwaukee. For Barry, a lot can be learned about how a city views its people of color by listening to the glossy narratives it says about itself, particularly its hip areas and festivals, while telling a less than glowing narrative of the rest of the city.

Barry knows that change in Milwaukee is possible, because she is taking the journey herself. As a young white woman, she learned about race in uncomfortable ways, but it was necessary for her to understand. "I had a lot of folks of color that were way more patient with me than they had any business being," admitted Barry, "but they allowed me to start realizing the nuances of what race and racism meant. The more I knew, the more I realized how much I didn't know."

While Barry was getting her PhD and working in the HR department for a large company, she was interested in meeting white people who were on the same journey as she was – white people who were told their whole lives that race is not something they should concern themselves with, but nonetheless made it their concern to unlearn what they were taught.

"I was examining white anti-racist activists, and how they got there," recalled Barry. Her thinking is that by studying

white anti-racist activists to understand their formation process in addressing racism, it could provide examples for others. In over 14 years with the YWCA Southeast Wisconsin, where she is currently the Chief Racial Justice Officer, Barry has used that understanding to work to get more white people to be anti-racist. She creates curricula to teach professionals and institutions about the impact of racism on society and the steps they must take to be truly anti-racist. She also advises nonprofit and corporate leaders on ways to ensure that their organizations practice racial equity.

The difficulty of unlearning a socialized mindset is that our environment is built on racist principles. History is told, laws are passed, and regulations are upheld to the point where racism becomes the norm in a society. Even the city itself and the 'American dream' are constructed with this norm. Barry believes all people, and particularly white people, need to be honest about this. For industry, Barry works to encourage leaders and companies to have more conversation about race. Many are prepared to see racial bias training as the end point, but it's only the beginning.

"It's a challenge to help leaders understand that doing training, education, and awareness building is critical. But it is completely insufficient to change systems," she explained. "The YWCA is trying to get people to



understand, you can change individuals' behaviors and thinking, but if the organization is not willing to look at changing the systems, policies, and procedures that uphold its culture, it won't work." Many companies talk about supporting racial justice and equity, but they are not prepared for the discomfort that taking those positions will cause. "If you can get training in the door of your company, be prepared because it will sometimes light a spark. And are you ready for what that spark can turn into?" challenged Barry. "You've got to get people who are willing to go through that bumpiness to change racist systems."

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS



The Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA) advances place-based strategies

that create more equitable communities by building community wealth through employment, ownership, and entrepreneurship through manufacturing. We connect and convene hundreds of partners across more than 200 cities, helping them learn from one another, and act as a collaborative ecosystem builder that supports local manufacturing communities and leads a national movement. UMA then partners with the practitioners in those ecosystems to create local, regional, and national research. By documenting the voices, trends, and data emerging from manufacturing communities, we provide practitioners, policymakers, and leaders with the references they need to develop new, equitable models of economic development. From that research, we tell stories, taking the trends we observe and crafting them into rich narratives that capture how our members spark change.



The Century Foundation (TCF) is a progressive, independent think tank that conducts research, develops solutions, and drives policy change

to make people's lives better. We pursue economic, racial, and gender equity in education, health care, and work. In this pivotal moment in America, we stand with a strong and firm commitment to developing policy solutions that will help this country truly realize racial justice. Founded in 1919 by the progressive business leader Edward Filene, TCF is one of the oldest public policy research institutes in the country. TCF pursues its mission by conducting timely, nonpartisan research and policy analysis that informs citizens, guides policymakers, and reshapes what government does for the better. We are distinguished by our commitment to a thoughtful and targeted strategy to bring our work to those who can contribute to making practical affirmative change. Our experts come from academia, journalism, and public service—all with a shared commitment to advancing progressive ideas that benefit the public good.

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APPENDICES

For further learning, please consider:

Industry & Inclusion Opening Commentary

- ↳ [Racial Equity and Advancing the Future of Manufacturing](#)

Industry & Inclusion Project Webinar Takeaways & Event Recordings:

- ↳ [Pursuing Equity, Inclusion, and Industrial Rebirth in the Age of Covid 19](#)
- ↳ [Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Manufacturing Credentialing and Technology](#)
- ↳ [Creating the Future Manufacturing Workforce by Enhancing Diversity and Addressing the Skills Shortage](#)
- ↳ [Partnership and Relationship Innovation To Build Race-Conscious Advanced Manufacturing Training Programs](#)

