

## Milwaukee Area Technical College

### REENTRY EDUCATION ACCESS PROGRAM

#### Postsecondary Education & Training for Reentry Individuals

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) proposes to create and successfully launch a one-stop career center specifically aimed at increasing job readiness and reducing recidivism of re-entry individuals in Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties. Strategically, this postsecondary education and training initiative will focus on strategies that will aid ex-offenders in gaining access to career exploration, academic assessment, education and training, student support, as well as employment. MATC's project, *Reentry Education Access Program (REAP)*, designed to enhance the overall educational experience of the target audience, is modeled after the college's Military Education Support Office (Veterans), a one-stop program infrastructure and other collaborative partnerships across the nation. In addition, MATC has been selected this year as an experiment site for the U.S. Department of Education's Second Chance Pell Grant program.

#### Wisconsin's Largest Technical College

Founded in 1912, the college has grown to be one of the nation's largest community colleges with four campuses across the Milwaukee area (Milwaukee, West Allis, Oak Creek and Mequon). It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, serves 38,302 students per year, and offers 200 degrees, diplomas, certificates, and apprenticeships, plus nearly 400 transfer options leading to bachelor's degrees. A large Pre-College education program enables individuals to complete high school and prepare for college-level studies.

Moreover, Milwaukee Area Technical College is a minority-majority college. Being the state's most diverse post-secondary institution, 58% of the student body is comprised of minorities; 32% African American; 17% Hispanic; 6% Asian-American/Pacific Islanders, and 1% American Indian students. Eighty-two percent (82%) of MATC's students live in Milwaukee County.

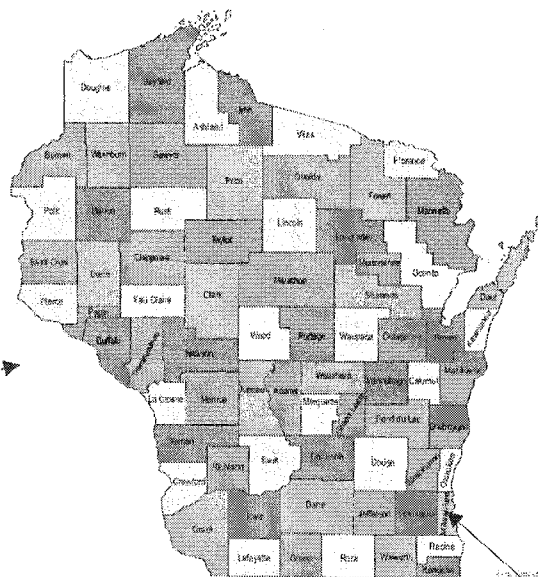
Economically disadvantaged students number 19,468 (50.8%) which is 21.1% of the statewide economically disadvantaged population in postsecondary education. Academically disadvantaged students totaled 11,950(31.2%) of the enrollees, which is 16.7% of the statewide academically population in postsecondary education. Other at-risk categories included Limited

English Proficiency students at 3,551(9.3%); displaced homemakers totaling 115 (0.3%); single parents at 2,553 (6.7%); and, *incarcerated students whose enrollments were 251 (0.7%)*.<sup>1</sup>

### Challenges of Prisoner Reentry

According to a recent study of the Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) Pilot Project, more than 22,000 individuals are incarcerated in 37 state institutions across Wisconsin. A disproportionate number are people of color; and, each year thousands return to the community after incarceration. For example, in 2014, more than 8,000 individuals were released and over 2,000 of those returned to the City of Milwaukee.<sup>2</sup> That is the equivalent of nearly 40 people per week returning to our community. The vast majority of incarcerated individuals in Wisconsin will eventually return to the community.<sup>3</sup>

*8,725 incarcerated individuals released across Wisconsin*



*2,043 of those released, returned to Milwaukee*

In addition, the transition needs of this population are very complex. From *immediate* (e.g., housing, food, clothing, etc.) to *ongoing* (e.g., life skills, vocational training, employment, etc.), returning home is challenging. Many who are released from prison have significant educational and employment deficits such as a lack of a high school diploma, GED, training and poor, if any, work history. To further substantiate this, researchers have found that only about half of those individuals have earned a high school degree or equivalent and more than half were previously fired from a job and many depended on illegal income prior to incarceration.<sup>4</sup>

Recidivism studies show that without intervention to address *immediate* and *ongoing* needs, two-thirds of those released will return to prison within three years.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Milwaukee Area Technical College Institutional Research Report, Fall 2015

<sup>2</sup> *Integrated Reentry & Employment Strategies (IRES) Pilot Project (Overview, 2016, p. 1)*

<sup>3</sup> A. Solomon, et al; *Life After Lockup: Improving Reentry from Jail to the Community*, May 2008

<sup>4</sup> Holzer, Raphael, Stoll; *Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders*, May 2003

<sup>5</sup> Prison Fellowship (*Needs of Ex-Prisoners, 2015*) <http://www.prisonfellowship.org/site>

Although there are more than 30 organizations throughout the Milwaukee community that comprise the Milwaukee Reentry Network (MRN) and provide critical intervention services (e.g., shelter, food, restorative justice, medical, case management, transitional jobs, etc.), there is not a centralized program for ex-offenders that can lend itself to direct access to education and training as well as comprehensive student support.<sup>6</sup> Improved outcomes for ex-offenders can be realized by better coordination of these programs and services. For example, MATC's long-standing relationship with Employ Milwaukee, a workforce development board, resonates notable outcomes and effective coordination in the Windows to Work program for our target population. The MATC's *REAP* initiative draws on evidence-based strategies that respond to the gap.

### Success of Working with At-Risk Students at MATC

Higher education has become increasingly competitive and all students, likewise, have become more demanding and want to be better informed about services and support they expect to receive. However, more than 70 percent of community college students enter systems under-prepared to do college-level work; and the majority of these are first-generation college students, low-income, and/or are from underrepresented groups, such as minority and/or reentry.<sup>7</sup>

The same holds true for MATC students who represent subsets of committed but at-risk learners, including reentry; and, often times, these special populations lag in academic performance. Recent data runs from Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) show that the MATC served 38,302 students in 2015; and, of that number, 19,917 (52%) were economically disadvantaged - 26% of the statewide economically disadvantaged population. Academically disadvantaged students totaled 14,938 (39%) of the enrollees, which is 24% of the statewide academically population; and, students with disabilities measured in at 1,915 (5%) – 12% of the statewide number. Other at-risk categories included Limited English Proficiency students at 3,064 (8%); displaced homemakers totaling 1,915 (5%); single parents at 3,830 (10%); and, *incarcerated students whose enrollments were 383 (1%)*.<sup>8</sup> In addition, WTCS reports show that 1,264 (3.3%) students were enrolled in non-traditional occupations and nearly 8,000 individuals were first-generation students.<sup>9</sup> Mounting research confirms the need for academic programs and specialized support services to target groups who are challenged in attaining their educational/occupational goals, and MATC has a proven track record of providing professional assistance that aids in student success.

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<sup>6</sup> Milwaukee Reentry Programs; 2014, <http://www.wi-cwi.org/pdf/res>

<sup>7</sup> California Community Colleges (*Advancing Student Success 2014*)  
<http://www.californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/StudentSuccessInitiative.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> WTCS 2015 (*Total Disadvantaged and Disabled Client Counts*) CLI406 retrieved on October 2016; WTCS 2015 (*Data Element Summary*) CLI227 retrieved on October 2016

<sup>9</sup> WTCS 2015 (*Perkins 5P1 Participation in Non-Traditional Programs*) retrieved on June 2016

## Reentry Programs at MATC

Over the past two years, MATC has successfully served more than 460 incarcerated students. For example, the college trained 56 reentry individuals in a CNC Program under the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Blueprint for Prosperity grant. During that same period, the college had 184 completers in skill core manufacturing and hospitality services training through contracted services by a local faith-based MRN. In both cases, students earned college credits, were able to continue in career pathways or in the example of the DWD project, 64% found employment with 52% employed in the field of study. Other students moved on to enroll in additional courses here at the college.

Programs at MATC such as Blueprint for Prosperity, Right Path , Second Chance Pell, and Adult Education and Family Literacy provide a wide array of academia, support services and success measures as indicated in attachments: Table 1, Summary of MATC Programs Targeting Incarcerated Individuals or Their Children; and, Table 2. Number of Incarcerated Students Served by MATC.

Hence, MATC understands the value of combining *career and technical with academic training* in a reentry education program. While the college is a leader in aligning academic programs with local labor markets and jobs, the *REAP* initiative notes the alignment of academic programs and jobs that do not have criminal history restrictions, such as manufacturing, construction, culinary to name a few. By offering education and training in a context of *career pathways*, the focus will be on providing a “seamless system of career exploration, preparation and skill upgrades linked to academic credits and credentials, available with multiple entry and exit points”, (Jacobs and Warford 2007)<sup>10</sup>. At MATC, Pre-College education programs are often embedded into in career pathways.

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<sup>10</sup> J. Jacobs, L. Warford (2007) *Career Pathways as a Systemic Framework: Rethinking Education for Student Success in College & Careers*

## Reentry Education Access Program (REAP) – A Thumbnail Sketch

An overview of this *one-stop career center* shows that the *REAP* program utilizes research of high-demand occupations in the Milwaukee area that identify the most, average annual job openings, skills needed and current jobs available. Data show that ex-offenders are less likely to

### **MATC's REAP Initiative**

- One stop career center for ex-offenders
- Career & Education Assessment
- Career Exploration
- Advising
- Advanced Standing
- Career Pathways
- Flexibility of Program Schedules
- Recruitment Strategy
- Expanding Strategic Partnerships to provide Housing, Transportation, Food
- Robust Case Management Approach
- Job Seeking/Job Keeping Skills
- Comprehensive Student Support Services
- Connecting to Community Services

recidivate when their earnings are above minimum wage.<sup>11</sup> Next, the program compares existing MATC academic programs with high-demand, high-wage jobs and develop a framework for frequent and regular opportunities for *career and education assessment, career exploration and advising*. The framework for these processes also incorporates, as applicable, *advanced standing* course credits such as Credit for Prior Learning and Experience, Spanish Retroactive Credits, Credit by Examination and Transfer Credit.

MATC boasts of *flexibility in program schedules*, as evidenced by the aforementioned CNC training that was held during a 3<sup>rd</sup>-shift timeframe; therefore, reentry individuals may be offered enrollment in online, accelerated, weekend, day or evening classes.

As a student *recruitment strategy*, *REAP* will become a member of the Milwaukee Reentry Network and collaborate with them as well as Wisconsin Department of Corrections' Correctional Centers for referrals. *REAP* will develop structured community messages, student

orientation, and application processes to ensure that all are informed of college services for ex-offenders and enrollment is easier to understand and more convenient. Referrals and word-of-mouth have proven to be more successful for recruitment of ex-offenders. Plus, building upon both community and government collaboration and *strategic partnerships* with workforce and other reentry professionals – a responsibility led by the *REAP* manager, can positively impact student outcomes.

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<sup>11</sup> *Integrated Reentry & Employment Strategies (IRES) Pilot Project, Relationship Between Employment & Recidivism*, 2016, p. 2)

### Three-Tiered Approach

The REAP infrastructure has three distinct components – Training and student support services for incarcerated individuals and targeted student support services for individuals who are on probation or parole.

**Tier One**, incarcerated individuals, will be trained within the State Prison systems at Dodge, Waupun, and Taycheedah Correctional Institutions. Certified technical college instructors will provide classroom and lab instruction for eligible incarcerated individuals.

**Tier Two** will be recruited from the Correctional Centers and have the choice of four academic programs that run for approximately 14-16 weeks each (Manufacturing, Construction, Culinary, General Education Studies). Students will participate in training with other incarcerated individuals as a cohort and will have access to comprehensive academic and student support services. In reference to security measures, staff members who provide *REAP* services will conduct them at the training site (e.g, classroom/building areas). As more programs become available, as mentioned in the college’s research of high-demand occupations, those offerings will be made to the Department of Corrections as possible career pathways for incarcerated individuals.

**Tier Three**, those on probation or parole, will be recruited from the Department of Corrections parole and Probation staff, Milwaukee Reentry Network, and the general community. Students may be enrolled in a variety of programs from Pre-College to postsecondary, full or part-time, and in need of comprehensive academic and student support services. MATC will promote the access to the REAP program both college- and community-wide.

#### Tier One

- Incarcerated individuals trained at Correctional Institutions-Career Exploration and Preparation

#### Tier Two

- Incarcerated individuals from Correctional Centers, Cohort Training , REAP Classroom Academic & Comprehensive Student Support-Career Pathways and Skill Upgrades

#### Tier Three

- Ex-offenders from Parole, Probation, MRN; Enrolled in any Pre-College, Postsecondary Program, REAP Center Academic & Comprehensive Student Support-Career Exploration, Preparation, Skill Upgrades

## Comprehensive Student Support- A Case Management Approach

The *REAP* infrastructure includes a robust *case management approach* that provides more direction in overcoming challenges. For reentry students, the mere connection with an individual whose primary role is to aid in student support and success bolsters their confidence.

The case management approach

- Specifies timely and frequent contacts
- Works with the student on attendance practices and time management
- Establishes academic milestones and momentum points
- Determines hours for participation in tutorial support services
- Addresses soft/cognitive skill development (e.g., on campus, in class, on-the-job, etc.)
- Refers to employment services for job seeking and job keeping skills tailored to their needs during training;
- Fosters self-efficacy and how to access resources both in and outside college;
- Identifies barriers that may prevent students from reaching their primary milestone.

Successful course completion and employment can make a strong contribution to reducing recidivism. In addition, case managers promote free, on-site self-help workshops from financial literacy to relationship building to stress management and encourage participation in college-wide events and student activities.

Without exception, the college's comprehensive *student support services* outweigh many and have attributed to the notable success of hundreds of students annually.

Reentry individuals will have access to and be directly referred by their *REAP* team (case managers, counselor, and advisor) to college staff who will assist them areas such as

- Counseling (academic, AODA, crisis)
- Advising
- Academic Support Centers (tutoring, computer production)
- Math Center, Science Center, Writing Center, group tutoring
- Supplemental Instruction,
- Structured Learning Assistance and Online Tutoring
- MATC JobShop
- Student Accommodation Services for students with disabilities;
- Test Monitoring
- Child Care Services
- Office of Bilingual Education
- One-stop Veteran Services
- Department of Multicultural Affairs
- Men of Color Initiative
- Non-Traditional Occupations Services

- Legal Services
- Food Stamp Employment & Training Program
- Driver's License Recovery and Traffic Safety (Court-ordered Classes)
- On-site Food Bank
- Emergency Student Funds.

*REAP* team members are knowledgeable of *area social service agencies* and their referral processes; thus, the project will ensure that they are updated and current in MRN network and other organizations for cross referrals. These include, but are not limited to:

- Treatment alternatives
- Diversion programs
- Independent living
- Pre-trial screening
- Residential services

### Evaluation Process

With input from MATC's Office of Institutional Research, each component of the *REAP* initiative will incorporate systematic methods of formative and summative assessment to measure levels of student engagement as well as the effectiveness of individual program activities.

The College will collect and analyze data from sources such as Client Reporting, student satisfaction surveys, meetings with program staff to review support services data, meetings with internal and external referral sources, individual files, internal audit processes, case management records and early intervention system reports.

All evaluation information is presented to and reviewed by the President's Cabinet, Provost's Cabinet, *REAP* team members and other Student Services Division staff.

### Program Deliverables

The Reentry Education Access Program will launch in the fall of 2017 under the direction of the *REAP* manager. Working with college's Office of Institutional Research and in consultation with academic deans of the School of Pre-College, School of Business, School of Health, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the School of Technical and Applied Sciences, the *REAP* manager will identify the top high-demand, high-wage jobs that do not have criminal history restrictions.

The manager, in collaboration with the academic deans, will create a Business Council to offer input and suggestions on employer expectations and skills needed, including soft skills for



workplace success. Employers who are offender friendly and have jobs waiting for ex-offenders will be identified.

Concurrently, the manager will identify positions within the Student Services Division to provide counseling, advising, case management and employment services to reentry individuals.

The manager will select individuals from each Student Services Support area to participate in a group training sessions on effectively serving and communicating with ex-offenders.

*REAP* will provide services to 125 reentry individuals during the first year of operation; 175 during the second year and 225 in year three. These include but are not limited to career and education assessment, career exploration, advising, recruitment, case management, job seeking and job keeping skills as well as comprehensive student support services in a systemic manner.

Project funds will cover the cost of a part-time counselor who is certified in AODA as well as a licensed practitioner and 1.5 full-time case managers. The Department of Corrections will be asked to provide Public Safety Officers to monitor cohort classes at the college.

Under the *REAP* program, MATC will work in strong collaboration with the Department of Corrections and the Department of Workforce Development.

**REENTRY EDUCATION ACCESS PROGRAM  
ANNUAL BUDGET**

<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>MATC In-kind</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Total Requested</b>
Personnel (Salaries/Fringes)				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager – program oversight (\$75,000 + \$39,000)</li> </ul>		\$114,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Manager (1.5) – Case management, soft skills, referrals (\$31.00 hr + \$16.12 hr x 2080 hours)</li> </ul>		\$147,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring (\$8-\$12 per hour for 15 tutors)</li> </ul>		\$7,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Assistants (3 Part time \$26 hour + 3.90 hr x 900 hours)</li> </ul>		\$80,000	
				\$348,000
	Counselor, Advisor, Educational Assistants, Case Manager, Clerical Support	\$210,908		
Travel	Local and State Meetings	\$500		
Software	Who's Next Scheduling Software & License	\$7,000		
Supplies	Office Supplies, Materials for ExOffenders	\$5,000		
	Student Books		20,000	20,000
	Public Safety (To be provided by Dept.of Corrections) \$110,000			
Other				
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$223,408</b>		<b>\$368,000</b>

**Table 1. Summary of MATC Programs Targeting Incarcerated Individuals or Their Children**

Program Title	Program Description	Funding Source	Number of Participants or Served	Success Measures
<b>Blueprint for Prosperity</b>	CNC training to incarcerated individuals	Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant	68 participated in two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of Graduate – 56</li> <li>- Number Employed in Manufacturing – 29</li> <li>- Number Employed in other areas – 7</li> <li>- Number Continuing with Education – 6</li> </ul>
<b>Right Path Program</b>	Children of parents incarcerated or on parole/probation who have not completed high school, GED or HSED	Collaborative effort of MATC Foundation, the MATC School of Pre-College and the Creative Corrections Education Foundation (CCE)	97 served in two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 75 students registered for 502 pre-college level course sections</li> <li>- 40 students received credits or passed the course for 163 pre-college level sections (earned 111 AHS credits)</li> <li>- 4 students received High School Diplomas</li> <li>- 1 student enrolled in college level courses</li> </ul>
<b>Second Chance Pell Pilot Program</b>	U.S. Department of Education experiment to offer Pell Grant funds to eligible incarcerated individuals to take courses	US Department of Education, Pell Grant	16 currently enrolled in courses; 5 eligible, 10 waiting for records	Not available yet.
<b>AEFL Institutionalized Individual Grant</b>	Promote progression to higher levels of learning to assist inmates in attaining skills that will advance them to other educational training or employment opportunities.	AEFL Institutionalized Individual Grant	187 served in two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 144 students registered for 300 pre-college level course sections</li> <li>- 70 students received credits or passed the course for 98 pre-college level sections</li> <li>- 2 students completed GED; 14 student completed GED partially</li> <li>- 2 students enrolled in college level courses</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Number of Incarcerated Students Served by MATC**

School Year	Number of Incarcerated Students
FY2016	217
FY2015	251