

COWS, with the City of Milwaukee and other partners, is working to implement Milwaukee Energy Efficiency (Me2), a program that will allow property owners to implement energy efficiency measures with immediate savings and no upfront costs. Participants will pay for the cost of building improvements over time on a city bill. The long-term goal of the program is to retrofit all buildings in the City of Milwaukee in which there are opportunities for cost-effective improvements. A program at that scale will create thousands of jobs, and we want to ensure those are family-wage jobs with opportunities for advancement.

This case study is current as of April 2010. For more information, visit [www.cows.org/me2](http://www.cows.org/me2). You can also contact James Irwin at [jirwin@cows.org](mailto:jirwin@cows.org).

## TIMELINE

COWS convened the first Me2 stakeholder meeting in summer 2007. Labor, community, and business leaders, and state and local officials, gave general support to move ahead with the program. We partnered with the City of Milwaukee's Office of Environmental Sustainability and, in spring 2008, began regular meetings with the local energy utility and Focus on Energy (the statewide energy efficiency program, funded by state law from utility revenues). Focus on Energy developed and ran a small pilot project in 2009-2010 that tested a neighborhood organizing model for retrofits, though based on grants instead of repayments tailored to efficiency savings. In May 2009, the Wisconsin Legislature amended a statute to allow local governments to bill for PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) programs in the same way they bill for other services. Me2 will use this mechanism for repayments. We have been working with the city and local labor and community groups to negotiate a Community Workforce Agreement that would create labor standards for all work done under this project. It is initially funded by the city's Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant allocation under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and the city has applied for additional federal funding. The city is committed to launching the program in summer 2010.

## REGION

City of Milwaukee

## OBJECTIVE

Retrofit Milwaukee's building stock, resulting in energy savings, good green jobs for city residents, and emissions reductions.

## PARTNERS/ALLIES

COWS has partnered with the City of Milwaukee in planning and advocating for the program. Labor, community, and environmental organizations have been deeply involved, as part of the Milwaukee Emerald Cities Collaborative. Throughout, COWS has been working with the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP). WRTP is a workforce intermediary with a long-standing relationship with labor unions. WRTP works with workers, unions, employers, workforce investment boards, technical colleges, caseworkers, and community organizations to connect unemployed workers with the skills they need to succeed in family-wage jobs, and to connect private sector organizations with this diverse and qualified workforce. Job-training for Me2 will likely go through WRTP.

## CONSTITUENTS

Milwaukeeans looking for jobs and career advancement; community members looking for neighborhood stability and improvement; owners and occupants of buildings in the city looking for reduced energy bills and building benefits; citizens seeking to reduce energy-related emissions.

## WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF CAPITAL/FINANCING?

Initial financing for the program, about \$1 million, will come from the city's formula Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant allocation under ARRA. Milwaukee, along with Madison and Racine, has also applied for competitive Retrofit Ramp-Up funds from the Department of Energy. Financing for the program will be secured once the repayment mechanism is in place. Private and additional public moneys are possible, and the program will use existing rebates from Focus on Energy.

## WHAT IS THE PAYBACK MECHANISM?

Repayment will occur on either a city municipal services charge (a government bill) or special assessment charge (another government bill).

## JOB TRAINING/CREATION

A community workforce agreement governing job training standards and career pathways is being developed with the city, labor unions, and WRTP. COWS and allies worked to ensure that specific labor provisions were built into the city's Retrofit Ramp-Up grant application.

## CHALLENGES

- Securing enough funding to be able to achieve the scale of Me2's goals..
- Structuring a residential retrofit program that will be appealing to unions and minority/emerging contractors and provide career pathways.

## RESOURCES

For more information, visit [www.cows.org/me2](http://www.cows.org/me2).