

## **Preliminary Assessment of 2007 Client Outcomes for the Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability**

Prepared by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, January 2008.

In April 2007 the Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability (CDLRE) began providing assistance on a referral basis to Milwaukee County residents with suspended and revoked driver's licenses. Partners in the Center program include Justice 2000, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), the Milwaukee Bar Association, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, and the City of Milwaukee Municipal Court. The Center operates out of the MATC downtown campus, with residents referred to the CDLRE by a network of over 25 community agencies, courts, and government offices.

The Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability contracted with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute to provide an independent assessment of the client outcomes for the period from April through December 2007. This report focuses on clients who completed the CDLRE program in 2007. This population is analyzed to determine the characteristics of the population, numbers gaining their driving privileges, and numbers addressing barriers toward their license recovery. For this assessment, data files from the CDLRE were provided to the university researchers including the recorded license status of closed client cases, utilizing online DOT databases.

### **Background on the CDLRE Program**

The Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability currently provides services for qualifying Milwaukee County residents referred by a network of government and non-profit agencies. Eligibility qualifications include: persons with a suspended or revoked license, at least 18 years of age, living in Milwaukee County, with income at 200% of poverty or below, having no pending Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) offenses, and having no damage judgments over \$5,000.

**The emphasis of the CDLRE services model is on personal responsibility with clients empowered to redress their licensing problems.** Clients are provided advice on the steps required to restore or obtain their driving privileges and offered tools needed to maintain a clear license in the future. Case managers and legal staff provide training to clients on how to work through the court systems, identify deadlines and action steps required, and monitor each client's progress. A triage approach is used to accept and assign clients for the program.

1. Residents facing only one obstacle to license recovery and with a manageable challenge are assigned to **"fast-track" services** where clients are expected to largely address their own issues after receiving limited training and direction while a case manager continued to follow-up with the client.

2. Residents with more complex cases were provided CDLRE **case management services** and received training on how to redress their driving problems, assistance identifying options for meeting fine and fee requirements, referrals for needed services, and monitoring of their case progress.
3. Residents with more serious legal problems including multiple court cases and court jurisdictions, running demerit point suspensions, habitual traffic offender (HTO) status, and recent revocations receive **case management services combined with legal assistance**.

Services to clients are completed and cases are closed once an individual attains driving privileges or meets (or stops attempting to meet) the action steps recommended in the client's recovery plan. Given the number of Milwaukee County residents needing services, once clients complete or leave the CDLRE program, it is expected that they will have acquired the knowledge and skills needed to maintain their driver's license and CDLRE services are not provided to former clients for new problems that arise.

Given the limited resources of the CDLRE and the volume of residents needing help, some residents are given "advice only" services and do not receive ongoing case management services.

4. Residents with very serious problems deemed to require more intensive services and financial resources than are currently available through the CDLRE program resources are provided "**advice only**" services but not enrolled as clients. These individuals receive a review of their driving records (accessed through the online state Department of Transportation abstract) and are provided with an **individual recovery plan** that they can use to pursue license restoration.
5. Additionally, several hundred residents attending the Fatherhood Summit in October 2007 were each provided an "**advice only**" **assessment and individual recovery plan**, based on their driving record and current license status.

As of December 31, 2007, the Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability had initiated services to 1,426 Milwaukee County residents, including:

- 454 clients who completed their services between April and December 2007.
- 245 clients accepted into the program with active cases as of December 31, 2007.
- 727 Milwaukee County residents provided "advice only" services based on a review of their driver's license record but were not enrolled as clients in the CDLRE program.

## **Findings**

A total of 454 Milwaukee County residents were served as clients of the Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability from April 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007 and completed their services by the end of 2007. This group is referred to as the "CDLRE Class of 2007" for purposes of analysis. This population is the focus of this assessment report.

1. The Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability successfully targeted a very high-risk population.

The 454 clients completing services in 2007 had the following demographics:

- All clients served had incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level.
- 93% of the clients were minorities (including 81% African Americans and 8% Hispanics). African American males comprised the largest group served.
- 90% of the clients had household incomes considered "extremely low" according to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development standards (see below).
- Two-thirds (68%) of the clients were males – the population most affected by driver's license problems in Milwaukee County.
- 26% of the clients had not completed high school and another 12% had a GED or High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) only.
- At least 16% of the clients had served time in state prisons, according to state Department of Corrections records.

2. The client population faced multiple challenges toward obtaining their driving privileges.

- 96% of the clients faced financial requirements, including court fines, filing and reinstatement fees, and other costs, which impeded their access to a valid driver's license.
- 94% of the clients owed fines totaling \$107,186, with court cases before 36 different municipal and county courts.
- 71% of the clients owed fees, including court filing and license reinstatement fees.
- 38% of the clients did not have a previous driver's license and were required to take their driving test (i.e., written and/or road test) in order to obtain their license after clearing up other impediments.

- 35% of the clients were required to obtain SR-22 proof of liability insurance, an expensive hurdle for low-income drivers.

3. Success rates for the first group of clients served by the program in 2007 (the CDLRE Class of 2007) were very high, with 51% of clients obtaining their driving privileges and success rates of 40% or better for many of the hardest-to-serve populations. These recovery success rates are very high compared to the experience of other programs, both local and national, serving high-risk low-income clients. Typically, programs serving these types of clients have success rates of 4% to 9%, or lower. (See note below.<sup>1</sup>)

- For 146 clients provided “fast track service,” 64% took the necessary steps and were able to obtain full driving privileges.
- For 124 clients with serious impediments to license recovery and requiring both case management and legal services, 51% obtained their driving privileges.
- For 184 clients receiving case management (without legal services) for multiple license impediments, 40% resolved all necessary issues and obtained a clear driver’s license.

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<sup>1</sup> A review of other programs serving very low-income, incarcerated, and/or welfare populations in Milwaukee County have typically shown success rates of 4% to 9% or less. For example, the percentage of Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County clients receiving training through the Workforce Investment Act who were still working for the same employer one year later was **9%**. The percentage of WIA clients with records of state incarceration that held any employment in each of the next 8 quarters after leaving job training programs was **9%**. The percentage of WIA clients from the welfare rolls who showed earnings at or above the poverty level in their first quarter after exiting job training programs was **9%** and that percentage dropped to **4%** for the clients showing earnings above poverty for the next seven quarters. The percentage of Milwaukee County adults released from state correctional facilities holding a valid driver’s license after release was **7%**.

See John Pawasarat and Lois M. Quinn, **The EARN (Early Assessment and Retention Network) Model for Effectively Targeting WIA and TANF Resources to Participants** (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2007); Pawasarat, **Barriers to Employment: Prison Time** (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2007).

**Recovery Success Rates by Type of Service Provided  
(Clients Completing Services in 2007)**

<b>Referral Source</b>	<b>Number Obtaining Driving Privileges</b>	<b>Number Not Obtaining Privileges</b>	<b>Total Served</b>	<b>Recovery Success Rate</b>
Case management services with legal	63	61	124	51%
Case management services (without legal)	73	111	184	40%
Fast-track only services	94	52	146	64%
<b>TOTAL Clients Completing Service in 2007</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>51%</b>

4. Success rates were notable for subpopulations considered most difficult-to-serve. African American males, the largest single group served, showed a 47% recovery success rate, as did 45% of Hispanic males. African American females had recovery success rates of 61% and Hispanic females had recovery success rates of 62%.
5. Nearly half of the clients served were in their twenties. This age group showed a 42% recovery success rate. The best recovery success rates were seen in older clients ages 50 and above.
6. Those clients with more education showed better success in completing the requirements of their recovery plans and restoring or obtaining their driving privileges. A total of 172 clients had not completed high school or had a GED/High School Equivalency Diploma only, and 41% of these clients obtained driving privileges. Nearly half (49%) of clients who graduated from high school but had no college or technical school training obtained driving privileges, while clients with college (including MATC) showed recovery success rates of above 60%.
7. Clients with a history of incarceration in state correctional facilities showed a 44% success rate, with many of these clients seeking out the program on their own. This 44% recovery rate is notable given the level of problems faced, including the potential for drug convictions and damage judgments to limit any access to immediate license recovery. In Milwaukee County ex-offenders show extremely low rates of licensed drivers. (In Milwaukee County the percentage of adults who have been released from state correctional facilities and who hold a valid driver's license without recent suspensions and revocations is 7%.)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Pawasarat, **Barriers to Employment: Prison Time** (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2007).

**Recovery Success Rates by Client Demographics  
(Clients Completing Services in 2007)**

<b>Client Demographics</b>	<b>Number Served</b>	<b>Recovery Success Rate</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity and Gender</b>		
African American Males	256	47%
African American Females	110	61%
Hispanic Males	22	45%
Hispanic Females	13	62%
White Males	23	52%
White Females	9	44%
Other and Mixed Race Males	10	70%
Other and Mixed Race Females	11	9%
<b>Age Group</b>		
Teens	9	44%
20s	215	42%
30s	125	54%
40s	74	57%
50s and older	31	84%
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Less Than High School	116	41%
GED/HSED	56	41%
High School Graduate	122	49%
Attended College	140	62%
College Graduate	10	70%
<b>Household Income</b>		
Extremely Low Income	412	50%
Very Low Income	33	58%
<b>Number in Household</b>		
One	134	51%
Two	109	52%
Three	85	52%
Four	69	48%
Five or more	54	52%
<b>State Corrections Status</b>		
Formerly Incarcerated in State Facility	77	44%

8. Most clients faced multiple barriers to license restoration (or obtaining a license). The vast majority of clients (87%) faced at least two categories of legal barriers to license restoration, and half (50%) had three or more categories of legal barriers. As expected, recovery success rates were lower for clients with multiple areas of concern to be addressed (as well as for clients with multiple court cases requiring resolution).

**Recovery Success Rates by Types of Steps Required to Obtain Driving Privileges  
(Clients Completing Services in 2007)**

<b><u>Major Problem Areas</u></b>	<b><u>Number Served</u></b>	<b><u>Recovery Success Rate</u></b>
Fees Required	428	50%
Nonpayment of Fines	322	49%
Required to Take Written and/or Driving Test	172	24%
Required to Obtain SR 22 Insurance	160	38%
Demerit Points	34	53%
Damage Judgments	29	28%
Drug Conviction	24	38%
AODA Assessment	14	50%
Habitual Traffic Offender	2	50%
<b><u>Number of Major Problem Areas</u></b>		
One	56	70%
Two	166	67%
Three	146	39%
Four	60	25%
Five or More	23	22%

9. One of the challenging areas for service delivery is the population of clients who did not have a driver's license and were **required to take their written and road tests** after clearing up outstanding fines, fee requirements, and other impediments. For this population, the success rate was still 24% -- where nearly a fourth of the population cleared up their driving and outstanding fine records and obtained a probationary driver's license.
10. Income impediments continue to be major barriers for drivers in Milwaukee County facing fines for traffic infractions, parking violations (meter and overnight), and escalating charges for unpaid tickets and civil forfeitures. Clients completing service in 2007 owed over \$100,000 in fines and additional monies in reinstatement and court fees. One important feature of the CDLRE program is offering community service alternatives for clients unable to meet the financial cost of outstanding fines and fees.
11. The **CDLRE Class of 2007 performed 3,340 hours of community service** in 2007 (or an average of 16 hours of service per client seeking work credits as an alternative to meeting financial obligations). In all, 137 of the clients successfully recovering their licenses participated in community service work, as did 73 of the clients who left the program without yet obtaining their driving privileges.

12. In part as a result of the community service option, the program was notably successful with clients with extremely low income levels, where clients showed a 50% recovery success rate. (These “extremely low” income levels, as defined by HUD, are established by household size, i.e., annual income of less than \$13,350 for a single person, income of less than \$19,050 for a household of 4, income of less than \$23,000 income for a household of 7).
13. Complicating the delivery of services and the ability of clients to redress their licensing problems were the number of different municipal and county courts where CDLRE clients had court cases. The largest number of individual court cases (760 out of a 1,069 total, or 71%) were in the City of Milwaukee Municipal Court. Another 154 cases (14% of the total) were in Milwaukee County Circuit Court. At the same time, clients had 155 other cases in 20 different municipal courts and 14 other county circuit courts.
14. Twenty sources referred clients in the CDLRE Class of 2007 for services. The largest sources of referrals (after self-referrals) were Milwaukee Area Technical College, UMOS, Wisconsin Community Services, and New Concepts Self Development Center. Recovery success rates are shown below for each referral source.

**Recovery Success Rates by Referring Agency  
(Clients Completing Services in 2007)**

<b><u>Referral Source</u></b>	<b><u>Number Obtaining Driving Privileges</u></b>	<b><u>Number Not Obtaining Privileges</u></b>	<b><u>Total Served</u></b>	<b><u>Recovery Success Rate</u></b>
Self-referral	91	72	163	56%
Milwaukee Area Technical College	30	39	69	44%
UMOS (W2 Agency)	18	23	41	44%
Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.	8	25	33	24%
New Concepts Self Development Center	12	15	27	44%
State Public Defender's Office	8	10	18	44%
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Justice 2000 Court Alt	9	7	16	56%
Milwaukee Urban League	7	8	15	47%
Policy Studies Inc (W2 Agency)	11	2	13	85%
City of Milwaukee Constituent Services (Mayor)	8	4	12	67%
Maximus (W2 Agency)	7	5	12	58%
Milwaukee County District Attorney	6	2	8	75%
YWCA (W2 Agency)	4	3	7	57%
Repairers of the Breach	3	2	5	60%
Esperanza Unida	2	2	4	50%
Guest House	3	1	4	75%
Justice 2000 Pretrial Programs	1	2	3	33%
Project Return	1	1	2	50%
WRTP - Big Step	0	1	1	0%
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Br. III	1	0	1	100%
<b>TOTAL Clients Completing Service in 2007</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>51%</b>

## **Individuals Receiving “Advice Only” Services in 2007**

The CDLRE staff review each referral’s driving record using online screens of driver’s abstracts made available from the state Department of Transportation in order to determine the level of services to be provided (i.e., case management and legal services, case management, or fast-track services), identify any factors making the referral ineligible for services, and identify individuals appropriate for “advice only” services.

In 2007 a total of 727 Milwaukee County residents were given technical assistance in identifying the dimensions of their licensing problems, along with a recovery plan for redressing obstacles to obtaining driving privileges. These included 459 residents whose license problems were deemed too severe for service under the program’s present structure and funding levels (including individuals with legal prohibitions or time limits preventing license restoration) and 268 residents who received advice and individual recovery plans developed for them during the Fatherhood Summit.

### **Individuals Receiving “Advice Only” Services in 2007**

<b><u>Referral Source</u></b>	<b><u>Females</u></b>	<b><u>Males</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
*Fatherhood Summit	10	256	268
Self	40	122	162
MATC	9	34	43
Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.	3	36	39
UMOS (W2 Agency)	24	13	37
New Concepts Self Development Center	4	24	28
State Public Defender's Office	3	19	22
Policy Studies Inc (W2 Agency)	6	14	21
Maximus (W2 Agency)	5	13	19
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Justice 2000 Court Alt	2	12	14
City of Milwaukee Constituent Services (Mayor)	2	10	12
Milwaukee County District Attorney	2	9	11
Milwaukee Urban League	1	8	9
Esperanza Unida	0	9	9
Guest House	0	9	9
Milwaukee Careers Cooperative	2	4	6
WRTP - Big Step	0	4	4
Project Return	0	4	4
YWCA (W2 Agency)	2	0	2
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Br. II	0	2	2
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Br. III	1	1	2
Riverworks Development Corporation	1	0	1
Justice 2000 Pretrial Programs	0	1	1
Agape Community Center	0	1	1
Tramont Corporation	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL Residents Receiving “Advice Only” Services</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>727#</b>

\* Due to the volume of participants, individuals attending the Fatherhood Summit received individual assessments and license recovery plans, but were not enrolled as clients in the CDLRE program.

# The total includes 4 individuals with missing data for gender.

**Active Client Cases as of December 31, 2007**

As of December 31, 2007, the Center was serving 245 active client cases. Of these active cases, 90 (37%) are receiving case management and legal services, 104 (42%) are receiving case management (without legal services), and 51 (21%) are receiving “fast-track” services. The agencies and governmental units referring these clients are shown below.

**Referral Sources for Current Active Client Cases (as of December 31, 2007)**

<b><u>Referral Source</u></b>	<b><u>Females</u></b>	<b><u>Males</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Self	23	33	56
Milwaukee Area Technical College	11	14	25
UMOS (W2 Agency)	14	11	25
Maximus (W2 Agency)	10	10	20
New Concepts Self Development Center	4	15	19
Policy Studies Inc (W2 Agency)	6	7	13
City of Milwaukee Constituent Services (Mayor)	9	3	12
State Public Defender's Office	0	11	11
Milwaukee Urban League	0	10	10
Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.	2	8	10
Milwaukee County District Attorney	1	7	8
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Justice 2000 Court Alt	2	6	8
Fatherhood Summit	1	3	4
WRTP - Big Step	0	3	3
Esperanza Unida	0	3	3
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Br. I	2	1	3
Guest House	0	3	3
Outlying Courts	1	2	3
Milwaukee Careers Cooperative	1	1	2
YWCA (W2 Agency)	2	0	2
Milwaukee Municipal Court - Br. III	0	2	2
Centro Legal	1	0	1
Justice 2000 Pretrial Programs	0	1	1
Project Return	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL – Active Cases as of December 31, 2007</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>245</b>

## Conclusion

Driver's license restoration and recovery efforts in Milwaukee County are extremely challenging given the depth of the problems faced. It is estimated that more than 89,000 residents have received license suspensions and revocations, and that for the majority of these residents the suspensions and revocations were imposed for failure to pay fines and civil forfeitures rather than for bad driving. Many low-income residents, particularly those of working age, have continued to drive without a valid driver's license, or, in the case of unpaid parking tickets, without a valid vehicle registration. Untangling the consequences of unpaid fines and unlawful driving often involves hundreds of dollars and a variety of city and suburban municipal courts and county courts.

As noted in a January 20, 2008 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* editorial, many practices contributing to driver's license suspension and revocation problems continue. Residents who clear up their current license problems may quickly face new fines and costs requiring timely response in order to not lose their driving privileges again.

The first year of operation of the Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability showed a sound processing system for prioritizing the high level of need for such services in Milwaukee County and high success rates in driver's license restoration. Further tracking of clients will be used to gauge the extent to which clients who completed services in 2007 continue to maintain their driving privileges and to identify further impediments to maintaining driving privileges for the working age population.

Future research will be conducted on the continuing license status of clients served by the Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability once state driver's license, suspensions and revocation, and reinstatement files are secured from the Department of Transportation. This research will examine the extent to which clients served by the CDLRE are better able to address ongoing challenges, given the counseling and training they received from the CDLRE in clearing up their license, and will identify which client groups appear most successful in retaining their driving privileges. Residents given "advice only" recovery plan services will also be tracked to identify those who subsequently obtained their driving privileges.

A third phase of the project evaluation will examine the employment experience of clients completing the CDLRE program and compare this employment experience to that of unserved populations and to Milwaukee County resident populations with similar demographics. Finally, qualitative methodologies will be used to help identify those referrals most likely to benefit from CDLRE services and to describe in greater detail barriers most problematic for license restoration and maintenance of driving privileges for clients after leaving the program.

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