

# Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project

1442 N. Farwell Ave, Ste 100, Milwaukee, WI 53202; 608-444-4992; wisaop@earthlink.net

## **Application Form and Information for AOP/WCDD APPRENTICES Applications due: Monday, July 31, 2006**

You are invited to apply to be a Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project (AOP), Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) apprentice organizer through a paid seven-month work/learning experience that will introduce you to the field of community organizing!

### **What is the Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project?**

The goal of the Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project (AOP) is to increase the number, diversity and skills of trained organizers working in the state for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice. We achieve this goal through an apprenticeship-style training program for new organizers, matching apprentices with experienced organizers working in community organizations and providing apprentices with in-depth training. *Apprentices work for a seven month period under the regular supervision of a mentor who has community organizing experience.* Apprentices and mentors from around the state convene on a monthly basis for two-day intensive trainings on various themes and skills of organizing. We provide our apprentices a basic salary and ensure they receive a wellness benefit.

### **AOP/Citizen Action/WCDD Pilot Project:**

AOP apprentices have previously been placed with organizations in the greater Madison and Milwaukee areas. This year, we will be expanding to the Green Bay and Eau Claire regions as a part of a pilot training/organizing project being conducted by AOP, Citizen Action of Wisconsin Education Fund (Citizen Action) and The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD).

Citizen Action organizes people to make Wisconsin a better place to live and work, bringing together more than 60,000 individual members and over 100 diverse coalition partners. The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities was established to advocate on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities, foster welcoming and inclusive communities, and improve the disability service system.

The short term goals of this project are: 1) to provide an opportunity for individuals with disabilities or family members of individuals with disabilities to develop the basic skills necessary to work as grassroots organizers, and 2) to support these apprentices and their placement organizations as they carry out grassroots organizing campaigns.

AOP, WCDD and Citizen Action are currently seeking applications from individuals interested in becoming AOP organizer apprentices within this pilot project. These individuals will participate in the seven-month, paid AOP apprenticeship program (described above), while receiving additional support from Citizen Action in their on-the-ground organizing. After the apprenticeship is over, WCDD will expect a commitment from pilot project apprentices of an additional 17 months to work with local disability groups in developing advocacy and organizing activities.

### **What is a community organizer?**

Community organizers work with communities to help them come together to gain the power, skills, relationships and organization they need to bring about positive changes for themselves and others. Community organizers work with a variety of communities and on a range of issues, which may include: increased funding and better accommodations for people with disabilities, low-wage work issues; disproportionate minority confinement; environmental justice; neighborhood safety and accountability of elected officials; school-related concerns; and, civil rights of individuals with disabilities, immigrants, people of color, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBTIQ) youth and adults, people returning from prisons, or others.

### **Eligibility**

Successful applicants will show a clear interest in and commitment to learning the skills of community organizing. An apprentice is someone age 18 or older who has little or no experience as a paid organizer, but has demonstrated leadership skills or other related experience. Examples of such experience include volunteering on political or issue campaigns, chairing or leading groups within an organized body such as a church, neighborhood association or school, and advocating for change that would benefit one's own or another community. *For this particular project individuals must either have a disability or be a parent or family member of an individual with a disability.*

AOP focuses on supporting and developing organizers of color, women, organizers from low-income neighborhoods, and/or other marginalized groups. Apprentice organizers are members of the communities in which they wish to organize and preference will be given to individuals from oppressed minority groups. ***Apprentices must be able to make a half time commitment (20 hours work per week) to the seven-month program, along with an additional 17-month commitment to be involved with disability community organizing.***

### **What are the expectations of an AOP apprentice?**

AOP apprentices within this project will **work 20 hours per week** in a community organization under the supervision of mentors/supervisors. They will develop work plans and goals with their mentor(s), participate as full staff members of their placement organizations and are accountable to their organizations as well as to AOP. **Apprentices are required to participate in, and must be able to travel to, all AOP training and orientation sessions, which each last two days and take place monthly in various locations around the state.** Training and orientation dates will be discussed at the time of hire.

Mentors, AOP staff and Citizen Action staff will communicate regularly and partner closely in the interest of developing the organizing skills of the apprentice and also guiding the apprentice in their campaign on the ground.

Organizing support will be provided to apprentices and mentors within the pilot by Citizen Action staff. In addition, Citizen Action has organizers based in Milwaukee, Eau Claire and Green Bay who are available to serve as a local organizing resource to pilot project mentors and apprentices. As well as meeting individually with their mentor within the placement organization, apprentices within the pilot are expected to participate in group organizing meetings that include the apprentice, mentor, Citizen Action staff and possibly AOP.

AOP staff also communicates regularly with each apprentice in an effort to track his/her experience in the program, as well as to support his/her development as an organizer. All apprentices are required to complete brief, periodic reports to AOP.

All participants must be willing and able to interact positively with a wide array of oppressed minority groups. Apprentices may be working in their own communities throughout their apprenticeship, but will be challenged to expand their cultural competency during trainings and at other points throughout the seven month apprenticeship.

**Times and Locations:**

The apprenticeship will run from October 2006 through April 2007. An effort is made to place apprentices in mentoring organizations according to their interests. Mentoring organizations participating in the pilot project will be located in the Green Bay, Eau Claire and Milwaukee areas. This year, one apprentice position is available within each of these communities. Final decisions on placement within a mentoring organization will be made by the apprentice, mentor, AOP and WCDD.

**Salary and Benefits:**

AOP will offer salaries to up to 3 apprentices within the pilot project 2006/2007. These apprentices will be paid \$700 (gross salary) per month for the seven months and will join a cohort of up to 5 other AOP apprentices.

**Skills AOP apprentices can learn:**

- Working with community members and leaders in an organizing process
- Involving new communities and individuals in organizing
- Identifying, supporting and encouraging new community leadership
- Recognizing, researching and developing a community issue
- How to do a power analysis in the community
- 1-1 community outreach
- Planning and evaluating small and large meetings
- Listening and research skills to identify the concerns, conditions, and issues affecting the community in which they work
- Confronting oppressions: racism, sexism, homophobia, disabilities discrimination, etc.
- Holding, elected officials, self and others accountable to one's constituency, community, organization, and colleagues
- Connecting your own organizing work to the "big picture" struggles for social justice.

**How to apply to be an apprentice with AOP:**

Please complete the following written application and send it to:

[wisaop@earthlink.net](mailto:wisaop@earthlink.net) - - - OR - - -AOP, 1442 N. Farwell Ave, Ste 100, Milwaukee, WI 53202

**Deadline for applications is: Monday, July 31, 2006**

Interviews will take place following the receipt of applications. If you have questions, please contact Rachel Crites at 608-444-4992, or at [wisaop@earthlink.net](mailto:wisaop@earthlink.net).

## AOP Apprentice Application

**Name:**

**Phone:**

**Address:**

**E-mail:**

Use additional space as needed to respond.

1) What skills and knowledge do you hope to gain as an apprentice with AOP/WCDD?

2) What does community organizing mean to you? Why do you want to be a community organizer?

3) Are there particular communities, people, or kinds of organizing efforts that most interest you as a potential community organizer? If so, what is your experience with these communities (personal or professional)? Are there communities that you don't want to organize with? If so, why?

4) Please describe yourself, your skills and relevant experiences. AOP apprentices do not need to have prior organizing experience, however, if you have work, volunteer, or other life experiences that might be valuable in organizing work, please include them. Include any computer skills, experience in public speaking, running meetings, and leading group.

5) Are there obstacles that might prevent you from participating full-time in the seven-month apprenticeship? If so, what are they?

6) What questions and concerns do you have about the field of community organizing or about AOP?

7) Please attach a brief resume outlining key work, educational or volunteer experiences and **three references from groups you've had work or leadership experience within. Include contact information (with phone and e-mail information when possible).**

Thank you for your interest in community organizing and for completing this application. Please return this completed form to:

**Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project**  
**1442 N. Farwell Ave, Ste 100, Milwaukee, WI 53202**  
**OR E-mail: [wisaop@earthlink.net](mailto:wisaop@earthlink.net)**

If you would like more information or have questions, please call Rachel Crites at 608-444-4992.

**Deadline for applications to be received by AOP is Monday, July 31, 2006.**