

# 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 MENTORS** **Applications due: Monday, July 24, 2006**

You are invited to apply to be a mentor to an AOP apprentice organizer  
from within the disability community!  
Support the movement for social justice by mentoring a developing organizer!

### **What is the Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project (AOP)?**

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 and providing the apprentices with in-depth training as well as basic salary and a small wellness stipend. *AOP apprentices work within a community-based organization under the regular supervision of a mentor who has community organizing, or related, experience.* During the apprenticeship, apprentices also come together on a monthly basis for two-day intensive trainings on various themes and skills of organizing.

### **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 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.

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 mentoring organizations as they carry out grassroots organizing campaigns.

This collaborative project offers a powerful and unique opportunity for selected mentors to apply their organizing expertise, building the disability movement throughout the state. We anticipate a highly rewarding experience for mentors, who will benefit from the contributions of a paid apprentice organizer to the organizing work of the placement organization, the support of Citizen Action and the vast potential for personal and professional development.

AOP, WCDD and Citizen Action are currently seeking applications from individuals interested in joining us in this project as a mentor. Those selected for this position, along with their apprentice, will participate in AOP's 7-month apprenticeship program, while also receiving support from Citizen Action in planning and carrying out a grassroots organizing campaign.

### **Dates and Location:**

The program runs from October 2006 through April 2007. This year's AOP apprentice cohort will include 3 apprentices from within the disability community, joining up to 5 additional apprentices. Each of the 3 apprentices within the pilot project will be placed in a community organization based in the Milwaukee, Green Bay or Eau Claire area. Monthly group apprentice trainings will take place at various locations around the state and require travel.

### **Pilot Project Mentor Eligibility:**

We are recruiting mentors who:

- Have organizing experience (preferably 3-5 years). Advocacy, and/or other relevant experience will also be considered.
- Are currently working in an effective community organization with a clear commitment to social justice.
- Are willing and available to attend the majority of AOP's monthly trainings, and an orientation session.
- Have had success supervising and developing leaders and/or organizing staff, and can make the time in their schedule to fulfill mentoring responsibilities (see below), and develop the skills of a new organizer.
- Understand and can communicate organizing skills, or demonstrate a willingness and ability to learn such skills and then make use of them in the organizing work done with an apprentice.
- Have developed and carried out, or would be capable of doing so with the guidance of Citizen Action, a strategic organizing project/campaign.
- Have an understanding of disability issues. Candidates with a disability or with family members with a disability are encouraged to apply.

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

### **The Role and Responsibilities of Mentors within the Pilot:**

The following 5 areas of responsibility will be required of mentors within the pilot:

**1) Providing direct supervision and support to an organizer apprentice.** The mentor/apprentice relationship is a vital part of the apprentices' training experience. Although apprentices will receive support from other individuals within the project, it's expected that AOP mentors are most connected to the apprentice on a day-to-day basis. Because mentors play such a critical role in the project, we highly value, and ask for, each mentor's full participation in engaging their apprentice.

Apprentices within the pilot will **work half time** and should participate as full staff members of their placement organizations. ***Mentoring requires substantial time and creativity to ensure that the apprentice has a meaningful learning experience.*** Apprentices are not to be assigned only office and menial tasks – apprentices are there specifically to gain organizing experience.

Mentors are expected to provide ongoing supervision, & should conduct *at least* one individual meeting per week with the apprentice. The purpose of this weekly meeting is to provide mentor/apprentice teams an opportunity to discuss such topics as work goals and campaign challenges facing the apprentice. AOP also sees this as an opportunity for mentors to share insight based on his/her own experiences as an organizer or in related work.

**2) Be engaged, along with your apprentice, in organizing.** AOP mentors are selected based on their ability to participate, their organizing experience and the level of support they can offer the apprentices in their development as organizers. To ensure that AOP apprentices are afforded the greatest opportunity to learn from the experience of their mentor, we ask that mentors engage directly with their apprentice on the organizing campaign that the apprentice is assigned.

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 will serve as a local organizing resource to mentors and apprentices.

It's expected that Citizen Action staff, the mentor and apprentice will work together on creating a campaign plan, and reviewing both campaign strategies and on-the-ground organizing activities. Citizen Action will function in an advisory capacity within this relationship. Group organizing meetings, with a special emphasis on the apprentices' role and experience within the organizing campaign/project, will take place. Mentors will be expected to participate.

**3) Help monitor the apprentice's progress as a developing organizer.** AOP closely tracks the skills development and experience of our apprentices. In addition to AOP's direct contact with the apprentices and Citizen Action staff regarding how the apprentice is progressing, mentor feedback is highly valued. Mentors are required to complete brief, periodic, reports for AOP on the apprentice's development as an organizer, and should be available to communicate with AOP's Executive Director about such issues.

**4) Join your apprentice in becoming a part of the AOP community.** We encourage mentors to join the apprentices in all AOP activities. **We require all apprentices to attend a program orientation, and mentors within the pilot are also asked to attend at least half (4) of the monthly trainings.** We also ask mentors to attend apprentice graduation at the end of the program. This requirement may be adjusted by AOP on an individual basis, requiring greater or less frequent attendance of a mentor. The learning needs of the apprentice, the mentor's level of experience in the field of organizing and AOP's goal of building a stronger organizing culture in Wisconsin will inform this requirement. Training dates are provided to apprentices and mentors upon acceptance into the program.

### **How Will Apprentices and Mentors Be Selected?**

AOP, Citizen Action & WCDD are recruiting apprentices, ages 18 and older, through a variety of community and grassroots networks with a primary emphasis on recruiting from communities of color, low-income and other marginalized groups. Apprentices within the pilot must be either a parent of a child with a disability or an individual with a disability. We are looking for apprentice candidates who have little or no experience as a paid community organizer but have proven leadership skills or other related experience. We are interested in apprentice applicants who are committed to creating progressive social change and who demonstrate a passion for justice.

An initial group of mentor and apprentice candidates will be reviewed and identified through a written application and in-person interview process. Mentors who have been selected for participation in the project will then have an opportunity to participate in the final stages of apprentice interviews. Final placement decisions will be by mutual agreement between potential mentors and apprentices.

### **Organizing Skills AOP Mentors Will Assist in Teaching Their Apprentice:**

- 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 a mentor:**

Please complete the following written application and send it to:

wisaop@earthlink.net - - - **OR** - - - AOP, 1442 N. Farwell Ave, Ste 100, Milwaukee, WI 53202

**Deadline for applications is Monday, July 24, 2006. I**

Interviews will take place following the receipt of applications.

Please contact Rachel Crites at 608-444-4992, or [wisaop@earthlink.net](mailto:wisaop@earthlink.net) with questions.

# AOP Mentor Application

**Name:**

**Organization:**

**Phone:**

**Address:**

**E-Mail:**

*Please use additional sheets as needed to respond fully.*

1) Briefly describe your experience as an organizer and as a mentor/supervisor/trainer of organizers. If you do not have direct organizing experience, but feel you have related and/or relevant experience, we are also interested in knowing about this.

2) Briefly describe your organization's mission and constituencies.

3) What do you see as important elements of good community organizing? If you are not sure, please indicate this and share with us your opinion on what key elements are necessary to create social change and, in particular, greater social justice for marginalized communities.

4) It takes substantial time and creativity to build a mentoring relationship between a mentor and apprentice in which the apprentice can learn organizing skills. How would you structure the relationship in order to provide the opportunity for the apprentice to learn those skills and to avoid him/her being assigned only menial tasks?

5) Realistically, how much time would you be able to spend each week to support an apprentice?  
Also, are there any additional adjustments in your schedule or work arrangements that you could make which would allow you to be more available to an apprentice?

6) What would you want the apprentice to learn and how would you help him/her learn those things during the apprenticeship?

7) Describe the campaign(s)/project(s) on which an apprentice would work and what activities he/she would participate in. Please provide as much detail in your response as possible.

8) Please provide the names and contact information for 2 people familiar with your organizing or related work whom we can contact as references.

9) Please attach a resume.

**Please return this completed form to: Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project, AOP  
1442 N. Farwell Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53202  
-OR-  
E-mail: [wisaop@earthlink.net](mailto:wisaop@earthlink.net)**

Deadline for applications to be received by AOP is: Monday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

***Thank you for completing this application. Providing solid mentorship to an apprentice is a commitment of time and energy and your willingness to invest in the future of new organizers is greatly appreciated!***

If you would like more information or have questions/concerns, call: 608-444-4992.