The workforce faces major challenges. Unemployment in the city of Milwaukee (12.3% in March 2010) is at its highest level in the last 20 years. (Rates below from DWD as of 4/21/2010, not seasonally adjusted)

Unemployment is not just a Milwaukee problem. In the city of Waukesha unemployment (11.4% in Feb. and March 2010) also hit a 20-year high.

In spite of rising unemployment, the number of laid-off workers receiving weekly unemployment insurance dropped by 5,464 from February to mid-April, when 48,937 received UI.

Wisconsin Shares: Given increasing unemployment and tighter program enforcement, the number of Milwaukee County families receiving Shares child care subsidies in March 2010 (N=13,836) was down by 1,045 from last September.

Firm plant closings and mass layoffs: In March 2010, three firms reported anticipated plant closings affecting 386 workers: Super Steel in Milwaukee (284 workers), Best Buy, 8875 N. 76th in Milwaukee (62 workers), and Bluemound Restaurant Corp in Greenfield (37 workers).

One in 5 Milwaukee County residents is using a government safety net. 205,798 on FoodShare, BadgerCare Plus reaches 203,387, 7,005 families receive W-2 cash aid.

Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development. (4/21/2010).