**COLE Work Force Development Chair Report February 2025**

The **COLE Work Force Development Committee** has three priorities:

1. Lead Outreach Workers: Train and employ people from the most affected neighborhoods on the Northside of Milwaukee to become Community Health Workers to go door to door to raise awareness about lead, help families to get children tested and help families on how to mitigate lead in their homes. Grateful that Milwaukee Health Department has provided resources for two Outreach Directors who are now doing this work, employed by COLE Lead Safe & Healthy Homes Project
2. Lead Abatement Workers: Train and employ people from the most affected neighborhoods to become lead abatement workers and supervisors. SDC’s construction training program, Absolute Advantage, did have lead abatement certified training as part of its 14 week paid construction training for which COLE helped to secure funding. This ended when SDC shut down in 2024. COLE is connecting with Revitalize Milwaukee and Habitat for Humanity which are the agencies now doing lead abatement work and some training for the Milwaukee Health Department. The hope is to connect people from the most affected communities to this training and work.
3. Lead Service Line Replacement Workers: Train and employ people from the most affected neighborhoods to become the tradespeople who replace lead service lines working for Milwaukee Water Works contractors. COLE is trying to get unions, contractors, Milwaukee Water Works and WRTP/BIG STEP to collaborate on preferential recruitment from inner city communities to get this work done with limited success. Important use of Residents Preference Program (RPP) to achieve this goal.

In addition to the workforce efforts related to lead, the COLE Workforce Development Committee is also focused on the general economic well-being of the low-income neighborhoods that suffer from high levels of childhood lead poisoning. So an immediate focus of the COLE Workforce Development Committee is helping with a **Job Fair** that is being planned for February 12th from 12 noon – 3 PM at Hephatha Lutheran Church, 1720 W Locust St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53206.

The communities that suffer most from lead poisoning also suffer from high rates of joblessness and poverty and are isolated from economic opportunities. The community of COLE workers and volunteers are connected to low-income families and households with people who need work, who need jobs. The Job Fair is an effort to get these job seekers connected with employers and work.

**Chair:** Conor Williams: **Contact at**: cwilliams@communityadvocates.net