

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS PARTNERS WITH USCM VICE PRESIDENT AND TRENTON MAYOR DOUGLAS PALMER AND MAYORS NATIONALLY TO CREATE JOBS, HELP THE UNEMPLOYED, INCREASE MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PAINTING TRADE AND IMPROVE HOUSING

Sherwin Williams is pleased to submit its first application to the USCM Public Private Partnership Awards. The program Sherwin Williams created was specifically designed for mayors based on discussions and meetings with mayors during the past several Annual and Winter Meetings. Though we are partnering with Mayor Palmer on this application, we have piloted this program with several USCM members over the past few years and have waited to apply until we truly believed we could meet the “excellent” criteria and had the results to validate the claim.

The program Sherwin Williams created is called “Homework.” The goal of the program is to create a trained job force from the previously unemployed/underemployed while at the same time improving housing conditions to the most needy neighborhoods or populations of the city. In meeting the goals of the program we have also tackled several other systemic challenges to urban city life: lack of participation of minorities and women in the painting trades, increasing efforts to make the city lead-safe, offering an opportunity to recent parolees, increasing the tax-base of the city and creating a holistic continuum of training to the trainees that practically guarantees a skilled job at the conclusion of the training of the city.

The Sherwin-Williams HomeWork Program is a workforce development and housing improvement effort in which it has partnered with Mayor Douglas Palmer in Trenton to provide professional painter training and lead-safe property maintenance assistance to low-income residents living in public housing. The course is designed not only to teach students how to become a professional painter, but to assist graduates with finding employment through Sherwin Williams’ relationship with 100 percent of the painting contractors in the city. Additionally, we invite the painters union to participate to insure that all city stakeholders are involved in the program. The 10-15 day hands-on course is designed to teach life skills, as well as information concerning environmental and community issues such as lead-safe

work practices and healthy homes techniques. Sherwin-Williams provides the instructors (retirees with at least 30 years of experience in the paint business), materials (each graduate is given a complete set of painters whites and painters tool belt and supplies upon graduation) and equipment for the training sessions. The sessions are held at city or Sherwin Williams locations that are on public transportation routes and held at a time (10am-2pm) so that trainees do not have to choose between their family obligations and job training. In addition, Sherwin Williams caters lunch in everyday of the training to lessen the burden on the trainees.

The City of Trenton, N.J. has experienced extraordinary success in its first year with its HomeWork Program by targeting unemployed and homeless individuals. In the belief that small classes (no more than 20 students per class) are better able to meet the needs of the trainees, Trenton and Sherwin Williams have completed the first two of its scheduled classes with 32 residents graduating. According to Mayor Palmer, Trenton was an ideal partner for Sherwin-Williams given the city's extensive redevelopment efforts and need for qualified workers. Sherwin-Williams partnered with the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training to bring the program to Trenton, where participants plied their new-found trade on the Reading Senior Center. One trainee, Gregory Perry, praised the program calling it one that could change his life and the lives of others who are looking for quality employment opportunities. "It's a great opportunity for a person to restart his or her life," said Perry.

Nationally, over 300 no-skill or low-skilled adults have been trained to be professional painters in 10 cities. The Homework program proves that this program is replicable nationwide, for example in Washington, D.C. 100% of the graduates have secured good paying jobs upon graduation. In San Francisco, the Mayor proclaimed "Sherwin Williams day" and invited the over 150 families that have been touched by this program to city Hall for a reception honoring them for their good work and discipline. In Baltimore, previous offenders are being trained. Thus, Homework is making a real difference in chronically unemployed/underemployed people's lives.

