



October 16, 2008

Mayor Gary Becker
And Common Council
Racine, WI 53403

Your Honor and Aldermen:

I respectfully request to appear before the appropriate committee to discuss our request to apply to the United Way of Racine County to request \$8,000 for a “Racine Promise Study”. The Finance Department has been contacted for coordination, and the grant control number is 2008-039.

Last Spring Aldermen Wisneski and Holding, and City Administrator, Ben Hughes began investigating “Kalamazoo Promise”, a scholarship program created in 2005 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The “Kalamazoo Promise” scholarship program provides four years of tuition and fees at any public college or university in Michigan for students who have attended Kalamazoo Public Schools. The “Kalamazoo Promise” is unique in its scope and basis. While most other scholarship programs are based on merit or need, the “Kalamazoo Promise” is based only on location. The program seeks to remove the financial barriers to enrolling in college for those students who have attended Kalamazoo schools and lived within its boundaries for at least the four years of high school.

The impact “Racine Promise” would have on our community is tremendous:

1. Since all students are eligible for the reimbursement of tuition and fees regardless of financial means, the program also seeks to transform the school district by focusing on ensuring that all students are prepared for a postsecondary education.
2. The direct contribution of the scholarship program lowers the cost of postsecondary education, thereby increasing incentives for high school graduation, college attendance, and college completion.
3. Among its broader outcome, it is anticipated that this program will lead to a more educated workforce, higher overall earnings for graduates, greater disposable income for local families, and improvements in the local economy and housing market.
4. An impetus for regional economic development. Economic experts hope that the scholarship will entice more middle class families, who would otherwise sacrifice income to save for college tuition, to stay in or move to the area. Local business, public relations, and real estate experts can use the Promise as a tool to attract businesses to relocate and invest in Racine.
5. The potential increase in available jobs would also serve to attract new residents to the area, but more importantly it would provide income for existing residents as well.



6. Even surrounding areas that would not benefit directly from the scholarships would foresee economic growth in commerce and entertainment industries.

There is no match requirement.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Embry, MBA
Grants Facilitator