

Dane County TimeBank: An Overview

The Dane County TimeBank is a network of individuals and organizations in Dane County working to increase efficiency, opportunity and resource sharing through mutually beneficial exchange -- building community ties and community self-sufficiency.

TimeBank members are a caring and interconnected community of people who help each other by sharing our abilities, talents, and experiences. By both giving and receiving, we learn to appreciate the value of each and every member and also come to believe in the value of our own contributions. **Instead of separating our community into those who need and those who provide, we recognize that we all have needs and gifts to share.** When members provide a service for other members, one TimeBank Hour is earned for each hour spent providing the service. Members can then exchange each TimeBank Hour earned for an hour of service from someone else.



The Dane County TimeBank (DCTB), with a focus on equality and community building, strives to encourage all members' strengths and involvement. TimeBank Member Coordinators take great care in matching individuals for the success and benefit of all involved in each exchange. **We believe through these exchanges members build positive relationships and we broaden support networks within the community.** Things that may not be as accessible due to financial situations, insurance, qualifying factors, etc. become accessible to everyone through timebanking.

Since its launch in October 2005 the Dane County TimeBank – the first of its kind in Wisconsin – has grown rapidly and is recognized as a leader in the international TimeBanking movement. The Dane County TimeBank has hosted the 2007 and 2009 International TimeBanking Conferences. **In an era of declining government funding, TimeBanking provides a practical tool to mobilize the resources of citizens in a community in a way that enables people from diverse backgrounds to know and help each other, reweaving community and building trust and skills.**

TimeBanks exist to promote exchanges that honor five core values:

Assets

We are all assets.

Every human being has something to contribute.

Redefining Work

Some work is beyond price.

Work has to be redefined to value whatever it takes to raise healthy children, build strong families, revitalize neighborhoods, make democracy work, advance social justice, and make the planet sustainable. That kind of work needs to be honored, recorded and rewarded.

Reciprocity

Helping works better as a two-way street.

The question: "How can I help you?" needs to change so we ask: "How can we help each other build the world we both will live in?"

Social Networks

We need each other.

Networks are stronger than individuals. People helping each other reweave communities of support, strength & trust. Community is built upon sinking roots, building trust, creating networks. Special relationships are built on commitment.

Respect

Every human being matters.

Respect underlies freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and everything we value. Respect supplies the heart and soul of democracy. When respect is denied to anyone, we all are injured. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be at some future point.

The DCTB began as a pilot project in partnership with the Northside Planning Council with financial support from a City of Madison's Neighborhood Leadership and Capacity Building grant. Since 2005, the **Dane County TimeBank has rapidly expanded throughout the county and has added special projects such as the TimeBank's Youth Court program, the TimeBank Store, the Community Justice and Homecoming Project, and support and empowerment of the developmental disabilities community.** A primary objective of the service exchange model is to empower residents from all walks of life to create positive changes in their own communities. **The TimeBank is a leadership development tool for youth, a provider of resources for individual community members, a pool of resources and springboard to address community concerns, and an organizing tool.**

An explicit goal of the Dane County TimeBank is to provide a mechanism to facilitate the sharing and exchange of resources among organizations that are often put in a position of competing for limited resources. **This approach reduces strain on municipal budgets and human service providers, provides opportunities for restorative justice, and offers a chance for everyone to work together to address community needs.** The Dane County TimeBank partners with local organizations to develop programs to meet local needs. The TimeBank has attracted funding from Dane County Human Services, Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance and Community Shares of Wisconsin to support a paid staff of three.

For more information see <http://danecountytimebank.org>