



**Employ Milwaukee**

# **2023 IMPACT REPORT**

*DRIVING GENERATIONAL IMPACT*



# Dear Partners,

2023 has been a year of growth at Employ Milwaukee. In the dynamic world of workforce development, our unwavering goal is to support the changing needs of Milwaukee to create a flourishing community and impact that reverberates through generations. At Employ Milwaukee, we firmly believe that empowering all individuals at all stages of life is the key to creating a sustainable, thriving workforce ecosystem.

We dedicate ourselves to understanding the unique needs, aspirations, and challenges faced by different generations, and tailoring our programs and services accordingly. Employ Milwaukee recognizes that learning is a lifelong journey, and we create avenues for individuals at any stage of their careers to access educational resources, acquire new skills, and stay relevant in a rapidly evolving world.

Additionally, we partner with businesses to address their talent needs, ensuring they have access to a skilled and capable workforce. By bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, Employ Milwaukee contributes to the economic vitality of our region.

Over the past year, Employ Milwaukee expanded two pivotal programs that provide broad generational reach: Camp RISE and Work Wise.

Camp RISE, in its second year, welcomed 250 boys and girls ages 10–13 to the six-week program designed to provide career exploration, skill building, and leadership. The young participants also gained their first paid work experience learning the value of work and obtaining insight into financial literacy. By investing in their development, we are nurturing the next generation of leaders, innovators, and contributors to our city's growth.

Work Wise, our local Wisconsin Senior Employment (WISE) program serving Milwaukee County, provides employment training for individuals aged 55 and older who are low-income and unemployed. This initiative offers subsidized, part-time work experiences through community service, allowing participants to acquire the skills necessary for permanent employment. Work Wise also provides participants with supportive services that are customized to the needs of older workers, such as free annual physicals and social supports.

Employ Milwaukee's Work Wise program was so successful in 2023 that funding was expanded to implement a broader and deeper 2024 program.

Employ Milwaukee also creates generational impact by holistically serving the families in our community. As a partner of FlexRide Milwaukee, we contributed to the 2023 launch of FlexRide for Working Parents, a service extension on Milwaukee's North Side, providing free, reliable rides for parents and kids to and from home, daycare, and work. This service addresses the need for convenient, affordable childcare and family-sustaining jobs at quality employers, emphasizing workforce solutions that cater to the entire family and employer needs.

These are just a few examples of incorporating a holistic lens and generational impact into workforce development. Employ Milwaukee considers what individuals and families need at all stages of life and is here to help create economically prosperous families and businesses, which is at the heart of a thriving community.

We extend our gratitude to all those who have contributed to our mission and journey throughout 2023. Your support and dedication have propelled us forward and enabled us to make a tangible difference in the lives of individuals across Milwaukee County. We are excited for you to explore our 2023 Impact Report that showcases the transformative work that has been accomplished this past year.

We eagerly look forward to what is ahead in 2024, where we will continue to make strides in generational impact, empower families holistically, assist businesses with their talent needs, and shape a brighter future together.

Sincerely,



**Chytania Brown**  
Employ Milwaukee  
President & CEO



**Carla Cross**  
Employ Milwaukee  
Board President



**Cavalier Johnson**  
Mayor of Milwaukee

# Our Impact

Our **mission** is to connect job seekers to employment opportunities in high-growth, high-demand sectors in order to build a strong, skilled and sustainable workforce.

Through planning, coordinating and collaborating with businesses, partners and community stakeholders, our **vision** is to develop workforce solutions that promote regional economic growth and employment opportunity for all job seekers.



## 11,606

Individuals Served

## 918

Individuals Placed in Employment

## \$18.77

Average Wage

## 1,300

Individuals Trained

## 31

Programs







The background image shows three young people in an outdoor setting. On the left, a girl in a pink shirt and black shorts walks. In the center, a girl in a yellow 'CAMP RISE' t-shirt, blue jeans, and a blue bucket hat walks with a pink bag. On the right, a boy in a yellow 'CAMP RISE' t-shirt and dark pants sits on a blue bench reading a book. The scene is outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

# Summer Youth Employment Programming

Employ Milwaukee has provided Summer Youth Employment Programming for Milwaukee kids since 2007. With the introduction of Camp RISE in 2022, Employ Milwaukee now offers youth ages 10 through 24 opportunities to **earn** money while they **learn** essential skills that will help them succeed in the workforce and be future leaders of their communities. Employ Milwaukee Summer Youth Employment Programming consists of Camp RISE for youth 10-13 and Earn & Learn for youth 14-24. When we invest in young people, we invest in the future of our city.



# CAMP RISE

Camp RISE is a free enrichment and career exploration program that was developed as a positive outlet and safe space for youth in Milwaukee to experience opportunities that allow for growth, empowerment, and future success. Camp RISE six-week programming is designed with three focus areas to give participants a holistic experience for long-lasting impact: Career & Interest Exploration, Life Skills & Enrichment and Community Enhancement.

To promote financial literacy, increase youth buy-in, and directly invest in the community, campers earn weekly stipends up to \$200 for their participation in Camp RISE. This earn-and-learn approach is innovative for this age group: paid workforce experience for youth 10-13 does not yet exist in other workforce-related programs as federal funding for youth payments begin at 14 years-old.

Camp RISE 2023 was a year of improvement; the program expanded to girls, the number of counselors doubled, and the amount of workforce-related field trips and hands-on activities increased. Through Camp RISE, youth begin on Employ Milwaukee's opportunity pathway in Summer Youth Employment Programming experience and career exploration.

256

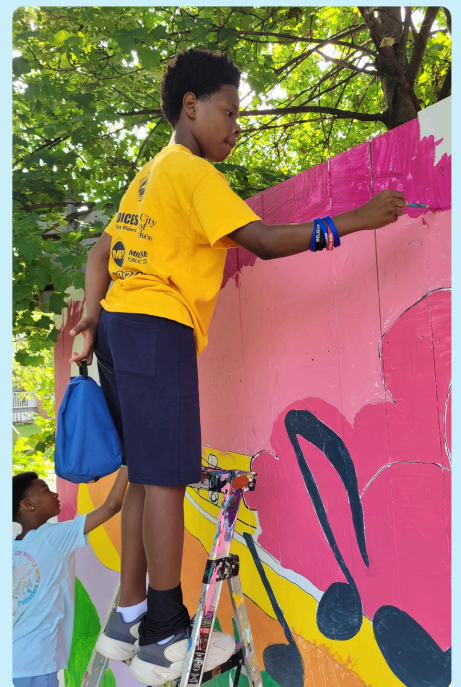
Youth Served

97%

Youth of Color

\$244,080

Earned by Campers



# Earn & Learn

The Earn & Learn Summer Youth Employment Program is a mainstay in the Milwaukee community. Since beginning in 2007, Earn & Learn has connected over 40,000 Milwaukee youth to a paid job experience. Earn & Learn is a key factor in strengthening the community and local economy by matching youth 14-24 with authentic work experiences with local businesses, nonprofits, and community and faith-based organizations. Employ Milwaukee subsidizes their wages throughout the summer, and offers participants not only a paycheck, but a launch pad for their future: participants develop positive work habits, have an increased motivation to pursue their education, and discover new career aspirations and interests.

In a turbulent time for youth in our community, Employ Milwaukee's Summer Youth Employment Programming offers young people structure, learning experiences, and hope for a better future.

In 2023, Earn & Learn participants collectively worked over **116,000** hours.

# \$1,417,073

total earned by participants

## 941

Total Program  
Completions

## 97%

Employer Worksites

## \$12.21

2023 Wage

# WIOA Youth Services

## Building Futures High School Youth

Building Futures meets high school students where they are at on their career journey. Building Futures provides services tailored to each participant to step on a path to self-sufficiency and prepares them for employment opportunities in high-demand occupations. Services include: guided career planning, work experience, training, supportive services, tutoring, financial literacy education and much more. Through Building Futures, Employ Milwaukee ensures that jobs are available for participants and local jobs are being filled with quality candidates that are intentional about their career path.

## WIOA Opportunity Youth

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Opportunity Youth program recognizes that, when a youth or young adult is both not in school and not employed, a dangerous disconnection can develop. We offer individualized support to help 16- to 24-year-olds get back on the path to self-sufficiency through the development of job skills and career pathway planning for in-demand occupations. Services include skills and interest assessments, setting education and employment goals, dropout recovery strategies, placement in paid and unpaid work experience, occupational skills training, and financial literacy.



Jaymel came into the program as a high school graduate looking for employment and training opportunities. He came in with work experience, but wanted to find a career opportunity that would allow him to grow and increase wage. After reviewing the different training opportunities, he decided on Commercial Driver License (CDL) training. Jaymel successfully completed the training with support from his Career Planner during training. He first attained his CDL permit and then his license by passing the road exam. By using the job leads provided by the training provider, Jaymel found a position as a semi-truck driver for Superior Health Linens and later attained a job with JB Hunt where he continues to be employed. He has completed follow-up services through the program and continues to be employed as a driver.



The program changed my life around. I went from having a regular-time job to having a long-term stable career that I can support myself and my future family... I recommend this program to everyone especially those who struggle to make a living and would want to get into the field of their desires.



# Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

Employ Milwaukee is the designated administrator of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs in Milwaukee County and oversees the workforce system that provides job seekers and workers with services to successfully meet the skill requirements of local employers. WIOA Title I B encompasses two programs: WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker and Building Futures (formerly known as WIOA Youth).

## WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker

In 2023, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker career services consistently included workforce preparation activities, such as workshops led by experts in resume development and interviewing techniques, financial literacy services, and coordination with programs such as English language acquisition or adult basic education. A variety of training services, including occupational skills training, on-the-job training, job readiness training, and customized training, provide options that meet the individual's needs and learning style.





# Business Solutions

Employ Milwaukee's Business Services team works closely with businesses to understand their needs and provide a wide variety of talent solutions tailored specifically to the needs of each business. Our goal is for businesses in Southeastern Wisconsin to thrive, whether it's a small family-owned business, large company with specific staffing needs, or a new employer considering a move to our area.



**Scan to see the services we offer to businesses.**





91222

24187

23597





# Success Stories

*Impacting Youth to Older Adults*



“ I am joyful. I am smart. I am brilliant. ”

Donovan, age 13, was a participant in Camp RISE 2023. He quickly became a leader of his group, and made an impression on his counselors and fellow campers alike by always showing up with an eagerness to try new things and a smile on his face. This summer, Donovan learned about the power of affirmations and positive self-talk, as well as finding a new career interest during a field trip to Jones Island.



“ I'm in the Union now. I have a carpentry job. I recommend this program to so many people. Don't give up. ”

Enrique's journey through the Cream City YouthBuild program exemplifies its impact on young individuals pursuing fulfilling careers. After completing the Construction track, Enrique emerged as a confident professional with real-world experience, certifications, and skills, now working in carpentry and advocating for the program as a transformative force in personal and professional development.



Scan to see read our success stories.

“ This program truly opened a door for myself and made a difference in my life. ”



Bianca's journey began with Earn & Learn in 2010, a decision motivated by the desire to earn money before college. Unbeknownst to her, a placement at the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee would lead to a career that makes a significant impact on her community. Now, in 2024, Bianca reflects on five promotions that catapulted her journey from uncertainty to confidence. She credits Employ Milwaukee's program for opening doors that shaped her into a person who not only found her path but continues to contribute meaningfully to the YMCA and the lives of those around her.

“ I like the dedication Employ Milwaukee has for the community. I want to do this until I can't work anywhere. ”

Employ Milwaukee's Work Wise program has been instrumental in empowering Milwaukee's 55+ community, as demonstrated by the experiences of Verna and Shirley. Facing employment challenges, Shirley enrolled in the Work Wise program with a determination to enhance her skills, leading her to different worksites and ultimately securing a position at Employ Milwaukee. Verna, referred to the program while volunteering, received hands-on clerical training and secured an Administrative Assistant position. She is now actively contributing to the Work Wise program and embodying its commitment to transforming lives and building a resilient workforce in Milwaukee.



# Reentry Programming

Employ Milwaukee's Reentry department is determined to break down barriers and change the culture for justice-involved individuals, their families, and the community. Our Reentry program works collaboratively with returning citizens, employers, and local institutions and jails to create programming and services that allow justice-involved individuals the skills and opportunities to find a job, with the ultimate goals to enhance public safety, increase employment, and reduce recidivism.

One strategy that came to life in 2023 is the Milwaukee Bucks Community Reintegration Center Rotational Program. This employment training program is a collaboration that sparked after an employee for the Milwaukee Bucks attended Employ Milwaukee's Reentry Simulation, a workshop lead by JustDane that community members are invited to attend to simulate the experience of reentering the community after incarceration. Simulation participants are given profiles of returning citizens and are tasked with basic needs upon reentry, such as finding housing, employment, and parole requirements. Upon attending the event, the Bucks representative was able to fully experience the immense struggles and stress of returning to the community and wanted to be part of a solution. He connected with Employ Milwaukee's Reentry Manager, and they set to work to create a rotational employment training program for individuals on work release from the Milwaukee County Reintegration Center (formerly Milwaukee House of Corrections). In its pilot year, the rotational program employed five individuals who were able to rotate through multiple departments within the Milwaukee Bucks and Fiserv Forum, earning a living wage and learning new skills. As well as receiving on-the-job training, program participants also attend career enhancement sessions that cover diverse topics, including resume building, interviewing skills, public speaking, financial and physical wellness, and personal branding. The holistic approach aims to equip participants with essential skills and support for successful reintegration into the workforce.

The pilot year of Milwaukee Bucks Community Reintegration Center Rotational Program was such a success that it is currently underway for its second year with plans to double in size and support more individuals facing the daunting task of reentry. For any interested employers that would like to begin the relationship building process through pre-release connection for post release employment opportunities, Employ Milwaukee is open to developmental conversations.



**Scan to explore our  
reentry services.**

# Skillful Transitions

Employ Milwaukee's Skillful Transitions program launched with a dual purpose: 1) to help businesses who lost a part of their workforce due to the pandemic and faced economic hardship, and 2) assist those who were not working, or had an uneven work history prior to the pandemic. The intention of the two-year program was to serve 500 individuals. By the end of the program's term, the Skillful Transitions program greatly exceeded its original goal – serving 1,135 Milwaukee County residents, over double the original goal.

Skillful Transitions Worker Advancement Initiative (WAI) program was made possible by a grant from the American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. Skillful Transitions offered opportunities to individuals for paid work experiences with local employers, and skills training for high-demand jobs.

With Skillful Transitions, businesses were reimbursed 75% of a new hire's wages for four to six months, depending on the amount of training hours needed for the occupation and considering the individual's past work experience and skill level. Businesses made the hiring decision and used their own system to train participants with the new skills necessary for successful, long-term employment with their company. Training new workers impacts productivity, but Employ Milwaukee's OJT (On the Job Training) staff helps a business save money and time, increase employee retainment, and promotes teamwork – a great experience for both the business and the new hire. OJT is a workforce resource for businesses that are making new, full-time hires in high-demand, high-growth sectors.

Skillful Transitions specialized in serving underrepresented populations including long-term unemployed, justice-involved individuals, racial/ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, individuals who are low-income, veterans, victims of human trafficking/domestic violence/sexual assault, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, such as immigrants. Within its two years of operation, Skillful Transitions served Milwaukee County in providing:

743

Training Completions

1,121

Career Services

226

Supportive Services

# Milwaukee Healthcare Workforce Initiative

The Milwaukee Healthcare Workforce Initiative (MHWI) is a targeted effort to establish a robust talent pipeline for healthcare careers in Milwaukee, strategically addressing the surge in staffing shortages faced by hospitals nationwide, particularly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MHWI stands out by actively addressing unemployment disparities among people of color in Milwaukee, offering a no-cost employment training program that includes job shadowing, an introduction to hospital operations, and an overview of healthcare career paths. In collaboration with Advocate Aurora Health, the initiative guarantees job interviews for program completers, thus not only opening doors for individuals interested in healthcare but also contributing to the establishment of a robust and diverse healthcare workforce for Wisconsin.

## Program Goals:

- » **Align** the skills of job seekers through industry training to fill available healthcare jobs.
- » Increase **diversity** within the healthcare sector.
- » Provide **career pathways** to individuals seeking career opportunities and advancement.
- » Support **economic development** through workforce and health education within the community.

## Program Impact:

191 Served

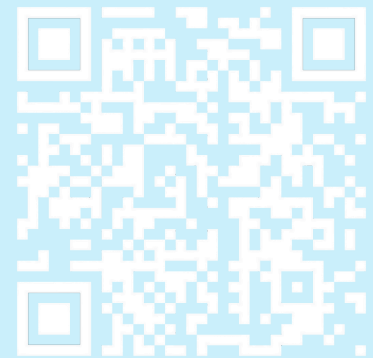
110 Trained



# Community Engagement

Employ Milwaukee's Community Engagement team plays a crucial role in facilitating collaboration and support within the community. Through strategic collaborations, establishment of satellite locations in neighborhoods, and facilitation of onboarding to partner services and skill development programs, the team ensures that Employ Milwaukee continues to be a vital link between the community and opportunities for professional growth.

The Coordinating Council advises Employ Milwaukee from a job seeker-centered perspective and is comprised of community-based workforce service providers that serve job seekers through specialized services often needed to address barriers to employment such as transportation, childcare, education, essential skills, reentry and income support. In September 2023, the Coordinating Council in partnership with the Community Engagement team, led a Workforce Summit to inform community-based and faith-based organizations about trending careers, paid programs and educational opportunities from local experts.



**Scan to connect with us.**

## Employ Milwaukee's Annual Luncheon: *Remembering the Past, Building the Present, Impacting the Future*

October of 2023 Employ Milwaukee's Community Engagement team hosted the second annual Fundraiser Luncheon centered around the theme Remembering the Past, Building the Present, Impacting the Future.

Attendees represented a diverse spectrum of workforce development stakeholders, including community leaders, local employers, service providers, and educators, gathered to support initiatives aimed at enhancing job skills, fostering career growth, and bridging the gap between employers and potential employees.

With participants engaging in networking and collaboration, the luncheon became an opportunity for forging partnerships committed to building upon past achievements, enhancing present opportunities, and ultimately impacting the future trajectory of workforce development in Milwaukee.

# Looking Forward

# \$12,148,227

has been awarded to Employ Milwaukee by the U.S. Department of Labor to serve 1,400 individuals over the next five years in quality jobs across the industries of construction, transportation, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and hospitality. Implementation is currently underway for 2024. Stay tuned on our website and social media channels for more information about these exciting opportunities!



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# Thank You



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digitally.