ANNUAL REPORT

Check out our 2022 stories of impact and discover how we’re reshaping systems in Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Succeeds centers community voice to create change. From a unique survey of early childhood educators to a one-of-a-kind youth ambassadorship, we’re leveraging the power of people to drive our work forward.
In 2022, we learned what it means to operate as a truth-seeking organization. It means partnering authentically with others who are committed to the same outcomes and consistently exercising inclusivity as we engage with and learn from youth and community. As part of this learning journey, we became an organization that proudly shares power, resources and decision-making for the betterment of our community.

This may not seem revolutionary, but for us, keeping our children, youth and families at the center of our work and prioritizing racial equity defines the truth we seek. Yet in this work, we can never be satisfied—even as we celebrate some incredible wins with our community partners.

Thanks to the wonderful work of our ECE Coalition, for instance, we’ve gained invaluable insights into the effects of Child Care Counts funding (page 4) and helped our partners secure a $5 million Workforce Innovation Grant to help bolster the ECE workforce (page 5). On the high school success side, youth remain at the center of our work—from our Youth Ambassadors, who helped us launch our Youth Forward MKE Coalition (page 6) to the ongoing implementation of last year’s Design Your Future projects (page 11).

I am grateful for the steadfast commitment of our partners and the trust of our Coalitions, and I’m confident that together we’ll continue to create the change we hope to see in our community.
Child Care Counts

Milwaukee Succeeds Uses Data on Federal Funding to Drive Change

This spring, the ECE Coalition conducted a survey of all child care providers in the city, asking what impact Child Care Counts had on their programs – and what needs still remain. Now our Coalition is using their findings to advocate for continued investment in the industry.

What is Child Care Counts?
Wisconsin developed Child Care Counts to allocate federal COVID relief dollars to child care providers to help them stay open, keep staff employed and provide quality care. The ECE Coalition advocated for and informed the investment – and is dedicated to understanding how it was used.

How was the funding used?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83%</td>
<td>Cleaning Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>Classroom Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Rent/Mortgage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>PPE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What needs still exist?

- Staff Compensation/Benefits
- Recruitment/Retention
- Building Infrastructure
- Supplies/Materials/Equipment

"[Child Care Counts] had a large impact on helping me to stay open and keep running from day to day." – Milwaukee ECE Provider

At a time when 40% of the city’s providers would have closed without financial assistance, Child Care Counts represented a lifeline for the industry. In order to understand the full effect of this investment, the Milwaukee Succeeds-led Early Childhood Education (ECE) Coalition embarked on a citywide survey of child care providers. Their results, released this spring in a report titled Making Every Dollar Count, have provided a unique look at the industry and its ongoing needs, as well as providing fuel for statewide advocacy efforts.

The data showed that providers primarily used the funds for everyday expenses – cleaning and classroom supplies, utilities, rent and PPE. With the funds designated for staffing needs, they awarded one-time bonuses and pay raises and invested in staff trainings. Even with the funds, however, concerns remain regarding staff pay, recruitment, infrastructure and supplies.

These findings were widely shared across the state, making their way to advocates, state and local policymakers, providers and beyond. The Coalition has even used the data to inform the 2023-25 budget priorities of the statewide Raising Wisconsin ECE Coalition, specifically advocating for the continuation of Child Care Counts once federal funds run out.

Workforce Innovation Grant

ECE Coalition Organizes Local Partners Around Workforce Training

The health of Milwaukee’s workforce is inextricably linked to the health of the child care sector. The shortage of accessible, affordable ECE options – driven by difficulties in retention and recruitment of early educators, which almost 80% of Milwaukee’s providers are experiencing – means that fewer parents can seek work outside the home.

The ECE Coalition and several cross-sector partners are piloting a solution, the ECE Workforce Project, powered by a $5 million Workforce Innovation Grant from the state Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. The grant recognizes innovative ideas which empower businesses to find workers and help workers secure living wage careers.

Through free, accelerated coursework at MATC, students will be able to earn stackable, portable credits. The Workforce Advancement Initiative at Employ Milwaukee will remove barriers to completion with an earn-as-you-learn program that pays up to $12/hour for 29 hours/week. The Social Development Commission will lend their expertise to provide wrap-around services and case management to address other obstacles, such as transportation and child care.

Participants will receive free career counseling from the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, as well as entry-level training from 4C for Children. Hands-on, paid training at United Community Center and COA Youth & Family Centers will round out the curriculum, providing real-world teaching experience.

Finally, after earning their credentials, participants will be able to step into full-time roles at COA, UCC and other local providers. Ultimately, the project will serve 105 trainees over three years.
What does it mean to be a Youth Forward MKE Ambassador? For our 2022 cohort – consisting of four youth from across the city – it’s meant a year of professional development, deep dives into data, research, networking and learning what it means to uplift youth voice. Deh Nee, Delonta Henderson, Amaya Bauldwin and Kaylee Marsh began their tenure as Ambassadors in December 2021, four months before the official launch of the Youth Forward MKE Coalition.

“I came here because I felt like there was nothing really changing,” said Amaya. “But when I heard about this opportunity, I knew I had to get on to it because they were actually willing to hear us out and put our voices onto a platform.”

The four youth, along with Milwaukee Succeeds staff and adult co-leads, set the groundwork for how the Coalition would operate and what it would prioritize. Each Ambassador brought their own unique experiences – such as participation in the Design Your Future Fellowship – which allowed them to see things differently than the adults at the table and propose creative solutions.

To guide them on this journey, staff created a comprehensive professional development series, which kicked into high gear this summer. The Ambassadors explored facilitation and content creation with internal staff, vulnerability and coping with Heal Black Man, mind/body exercises with MISPIBO, yoga with Agape Yogastry, gardening/food justice with Cosecha a Mesa, and data analysis with Perrynorm Analytics.

The Ambassadors put their new skills into practice by leading and facilitating quarterly Coalition meetings, presenting at a Leadership Table meeting, and even speaking at a citywide Youth Voice Summit, hosted by MENTOR Greater Milwaukee. The summit was funded in part by a Violence Prevention Grant from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, which was allocated by the Ambassadors.

Just because the year is over, though, doesn’t mean the Ambassadors’ work has come to an end. In fact, most have agreed to continue on as co-leads, weighing in on the future of the Coalition and helping guide another group of Ambassadors toward success.

From Learning to Leading
Explore a year in the life of a Youth Forward MKE Ambassador

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Systems Change Designation

Milwaukee Succeeds is Shifting Outcomes and Narrowing Equity Gaps

Systems don’t change overnight. This work takes time. It takes partners who are in it for the long haul, data that accurately reflects our community and its challenges, and a concerted effort to center community voice.

For over a decade, Milwaukee Succeeds has worked to put these crucial elements in place. This summer, following an intensive review process, we received word that we’re on the right track. StriveTogether, our national partner and funder, officially designated Milwaukee Succeeds as a Systems Change organization, meaning our work is making a difference.

One major element that contributed to this designation is our ongoing effort to align partners from multiple sectors in pursuit of a common goal. Nowhere is this more evident than in our Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Youth Forward MKE Coalitions.

National Association for the Education of Young Children, participated in a focus group during the review process, where she shared her experiences surrounding the ECE Coalition.

“What stands out to me is the way in which Milwaukee Succeeds provided the platform for the Coalition to have a unified voice to advocate for early childhood education and early childhood educators,” she said. “I believe that the empowered Coalition members have seen the outcomes of their advocacy and will continue to raise their voices for the betterment of the early childhood field.”

Deh Nee, a 2022 Youth Forward MKE Ambassador, provided a youth perspective during these focus groups, sharing how Milwaukee Succeeds is utilizing youth voice to advance our work.

“It feels very supportive,” he said. “Knowing that a lot of people are listening and working alongside you that have the same goals, it will make you feel like you can accomplish it. Because teamwork makes the dream work.”

Our intentional use of data and community voice also contributed to the designation, which only 20 communities have achieved. The successful data-informed advocacy surrounding American Rescue Plan Act funding, the Parents Advocating for Child Care Fellowship, and the ECE Coalition’s mental health trainings were all listed as shining examples of our work, as were the Design Your Future Fellowship and the youth-directed Violence Prevention Grant.

Thank you to all the partners who have helped us get this far – and who continue to change systems in Milwaukee!

“The work Milwaukee Succeeds has done in pursuit of shifting outcomes and narrowing equity gaps for youth and families is remarkable, and there is potential for this work to grow in scale and impact.”

- StriveTogether Systems Change Assessment

Check out the full Systems Change Assessment here.
2022 FISCAL IMPACT

Investments in Milwaukee Succeeds’ work help us leverage more public and private resources to advance equitable outcomes across the city.

Thank you to our funders!

These dedicated funders invest in our core operations, systems strategies and anti-racist practices in order to build a better future for our kids.

2022 was a year of inspiring stories – stories of community, of progress and of hope. There have been so many stories, in fact, that it would be impossible to fit them all inside these pages!

In every single story, though, one thing is clear: We could not have done this work alone. It is a collaborative effort across this city, this state and this country, and it has the potential to change countless lives.

Thank you to all the people and partners who have lent their time, talents, resources and voices to our pursuit of progress. Your contributions are invaluable – and our future looks bright because of you.

During the height of the pandemic, mental health emerged as a critical need, both for young children and educators. The ECE Coalition combined forces with their community partners to tackle the problem head on. After raising the necessary funds, they identified Wellpoint to deliver trainings on trauma, stress and regulation – first to providers and later to families. Surveys show that both groups found the trainings incredibly beneficial when it came to supporting their children’s mental and emotional well-being.

In 2021, we brought 58 young people together to answer the question “How would you improve high school for Black male youth?” This year, David Emmanuelle Castillo of Equitable Systems Consultants took their ideas and ran with them, emerging with three comprehensive proposals.

Proposal 1, which aims to make mental health a standard practice in schools, was officially launched this fall with pilot programs at North Division and Pathways High Schools.

Why is early childhood education so important for Milwaukee?

Leaders from across sectors joined in to answer that question in April in honor of NAEYC’s Week of the Young Child. The celebration shines a spotlight on the needs of children and families while emphasizing the importance of ECE in meeting those needs. Our partners lifted up the economic, developmental and social benefits of ECE and stressed the importance of collaboration and continued investment in the industry.

2022 Bright Spots

From providing mental health trainings to hundreds of early educators and families to pushing forward with our Design Your Future proposals, we made 2022 a year of partnership and progress.

2022 Revenue for Backbone Operations (By Source)

$5 Million in new funding committed from state government to support partners in ECE workforce development.

$780,000 from local and national philanthropy to support partners working on childcare accreditation, youth leadership and mental health in childcare settings.

$812,500 of outgoing funds directed to Black and Brown-led vendors and nonprofits.

$141,250 in National Philanthropy

$71,853 in Other Sources

$780,000 Local Philanthropy

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Mental Health Regulation Trainings

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Design Your Future Implementation

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Week of the Young Child Celebration

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Investing in Change

2022 Revenue Breakdown | Funder Recognition

IN BRIEF

Check out some of our top stories, then read more online! milwaukeesucceeds.org/blog

Watch the video now.

Read more about the future of Design Your Future.

Check out the Success Story.

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