

# Mayor Barrett: WRTP/BIG STEP welcomes Mayor Barrett to highlight successful partnership

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MILWAUKEE – Mayor Barrett visited WRTP/BIG STEP on Thursday to meet with and provide support to new carpenter apprentices who are completing readiness training and looking forward to working on the Milwaukee Bucks development in Downtown Milwaukee.

This apprenticeship class represents a commitment by various partners to provide training for City residents in gaining the needed skills for family-sustaining careers. The visit also highlights the multiple partners that lead to this success.

“The positive momentum in the heart of the City is continuing, and as part of that we are expanding training opportunities and good-paying, family-supporting jobs for our residents,” Mayor Barrett said. “These apprenticeships are part of the ongoing effort to provide career pathways to even greater opportunities, while placing these individuals on a road to success by connecting them with major construction projects. I’m looking forward to seeing the results of these partnerships as we are committed to moving our City forward.”

The Milwaukee Bucks development is a catalyst for economic growth in Downtown Milwaukee and job opportunities for residents.

“This arena project is as much about creating meaningful and long-lasting

employment for the citizens of Milwaukee who need it most as it is about creating a world-class venue for the people of Wisconsin to enjoy,” Bucks President Peter Feigin said. “As part of our development agreement we made a commitment to partner with the city and county on workforce development initiatives that will truly make a difference for jobseekers in Wisconsin. We’re thrilled to see so many great Milwaukee organizations bringing forth innovative ideas such as this to help build a stronger workforce in the city.”

The program is rooted in the partnership between Wall-Tech, one of contractors working on the Bucks Arena, and the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters who are providing workforce for the development. The need for more skilled carpenters is driven by the growth in local construction and specifically the rapid boom in Downtown Milwaukee.

“We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Mayor Barrett to meet the new apprentices who are learning what it takes to be a carpenter, and excited to showcase the great partnerships that it takes to develop a highly-skilled workforce while opening doors to family-sustaining careers to low-income Milwaukeeans,” said Mike Fabishak, Co-Chair, and WRTP/BIG STEP Board of Directors and President of AGC of Greater Milwaukee.

“From the inception of the Arena Project, the Milwaukee Bucks have shown a tremendous commitment to creating jobs and opportunities for Milwaukee area residents,” said Earl Buford, President and CEO, Employ Milwaukee. “This class of students is an example of workforce partners collaborating to provide a skilled and educated workforce for local companies, and is a testament to the success of WRTP/BIG STEP’s national pre-apprenticeship model connecting individuals to careers in the trades. I would like to thank all of our industry partners and employers for their continued support in building our workforce.”

WRTP/BIG STEP is leading the way as a nationally-recognized non-profit which links economically disadvantaged Milwaukeeans to pathways in apprenticeships in family sustaining careers. The model is driven by the collaborative relationships WRTP/BIG STEP builds between private industry which allows them to identify vital current and future needs for strong business growth. By coordinating these economic needs with the best interests of the public and community at large the entire region grows economically and strategically.

Last year alone, WRTP/BIG STEP:

- Placed more than 726 individuals into employment.
- Of those entering careers in construction, the average entry wage was \$21.03.
- 42% of those served came from a household income ranging from less than \$3,000 to not more than \$9,001.

WRTP/BIG STEP, in partnership with the following organizations, provided this focused and intensive training:

- Wall-Tech
- North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters
- Milwaukee Bucks
- Employ Milwaukee
- Milwaukee Area Building Trades Council
- ResCare
- Additional private foundations, along with local, state and federal resources

“Wall-Tech is proud to be partnering with WRTP/BIG STEP in recruiting qualified candidates for apprenticeships in the construction trades,” said Pete Braun, President of Wall-Tech. “We do more than provide jobs and construct buildings – we help build careers. As an employee ownership-driven company, we take great pride in our work and look forward to adding to our employee family.”

“Developing partnerships between employers and unions opens the door to meeting the skills and demands of today’s industry,” said Shelia Cochran, Co-Chair, WRTP/BIG STEP Board of Directors. “With the support of our public and private partners, we have been able to develop programs that are worker-centered. We identify potential workers through our vast community networks, assess their current skill sets, and upgrade their skills to meet today’s construction needs.”