

Gov. Evers: Announces more than \$1 million for summer youth programming and job training in Milwaukee

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced more than \$1 million in federal funding for existing and new summer youth programming and job training opportunities in Milwaukee in collaboration with Employ Milwaukee, the city of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public Library (MPL), and Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The funds are another piece of the effort to enhance community safety in Milwaukee by ensuring youth are meaningfully engaged, making connections with mentors, and positively contributing to their communities.

“Our young people are the future of our workforce and our state, and each one brings unique perspectives and potential to everything they do,” said Gov. Evers. “Especially during a time when we are seeing a concerning increase of violence in the community, these programs will help develop this homegrown talent with paid opportunities that will help keep young people safe and engaged throughout the summer months in constructive and educational programming and mentorship.” The investment includes \$500,000 for a pilot project led by Employ Milwaukee, in partnership with the city of Milwaukee and MPS to establish an “earn-and-learn” model for 10- to 15-year-olds based on a concept recommended by the Voices of the Elders (VOTE), who have a mission to connect Black kids with skills and resources to improve community outcomes. The program is designed to provide proactive, early support through work-based learning and enrichment activities and mentorship. MPS is providing \$200,000 to cover transportation and other supports for the youth participants.

“We are investing in the future of young people, setting a course that includes opportunity and responsibility,” Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson said. “By joining this partnership, Governor Evers is, again, demonstrating a commitment to the young people of Milwaukee by adding stability and hope to the lives of the participants.”

Additionally, the investment includes \$135,224 in supplemental funding to provide competitive wages for full enrollment in a successful program operated by Employ Milwaukee in collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club. This year, the program will serve 225 youth including “lead” youth workers. The supplemental funding will support wages of \$12.21 per hour for the youth workers and \$13.21 per hour for the youth leads. Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek said the funding will support competitive wages in an existing program targeted to youth ages 14 and up as well as the new pilot program focused on youth ages 10 to 15.

“DWD applauds the partnership among the city of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public Schools, and Employ Milwaukee, which will create ‘earn-and-learn’ job opportunities for up to 200 youth aged 10 and up this summer,” DWD Secretary-designee Pechacek said. “Beyond building skills and creating leadership opportunities, these programs are preparing youth for future employers.”

“Workforce readiness is multigenerational and the earlier we can prepare and expose our youngsters to constructive employment and life skills training, the greater the chances of long term, enhanced quality of life for them,” said Chytania Brown, CEO of Employ Milwaukee, a regional workforce development board. “I applaud Governor Evers for his support of this visionary workforce development endeavor.”

The governor is also allocating \$400,000 to the MPL’s Connected Learning for Teens program. MPL’s Connected Learning program provides a space for teens outside of school to engage in reading, creative development, and other learning activities. In addition to providing “makerspaces” that expose youth to in-demand career pathways, MPL’s Connected Learning program provides paid internships to Milwaukee teens. The funding will help support three year-round teen interns, five summer teen facilitators, and three part-time substitute and Saturday year-round facilitators. Teen interns will participate in career exploration and financial literacy activities, design and host events for their peers focused on building STEM and career skills, and consult on program design and marketing for other MPL teen programs.

Dr. Keith P. Posley, superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools, said the district is grateful for the partnership with Employ Milwaukee on the pilot.

“We are excited about this pilot program that will help students learn fundamental leadership and the value of community,” said Dr. Posley. “These opportunities are paramount as we work to provide our young people with the skills necessary to be successful.”

Earl Ingram Jr. founder and chairman of the board of VOTE, said his group conceived the early job training pilot as part of its efforts to address the lack of male involvement in the lives of young boys aged 10 to 15. The group includes many older residents born and raised in Milwaukee.

“We know what’s missing in their lives: a lack of male involvement,” said Ingram. “We pledge to provide that missing link: how can a boy ever understand the importance of manhood if he’s never witnessed it. Voices of The Elders is honored to take our rightful place as a visible part of our community.”

This allocation builds on the governor’s previous investments of nearly \$100 million in violence prevention and community safety, including:

- [\\$45 million](#) for violence prevention efforts and support for crime victims, including more than \$8 million for the city of Milwaukee’s Office of Violence Prevention (OVP);
- [\\$50 million](#) for local and tribal law enforcement agencies, as well as to help alleviate the pandemic-related backlog of criminal cases through additional public defender and assistant district attorney support; and
- [\\$2.2 million](#) to help the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) take immediate steps to address crime and violence.



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