

# Investing in the Early Childhood Workforce in Milwaukee, WI

## American Rescue Plan Community Profile

August 2022 | Birth to Age 5 and Ages 16–24



### American Rescue Plan Funding

Total Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in Milwaukee:  
\$394 million

Amount of Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Featured in  
This Profile: \$7 million<sup>1</sup>

- \$5.1 million to aid the early childhood education workforce
- \$1.9 million for dual-enrollment and fellowship programs to build diversity in the early childhood workforce

### Project Summary

The City of Milwaukee has approved \$7 million in funding from its American Rescue Plan Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to support and develop the city's early childhood workforce. The Milwaukee Early Childhood Education Coalition, led by [Milwaukee Succeeds](#), was instrumental in securing this investment from the City of Milwaukee.

More than \$5 million of the funds are allocated to provide salary supplements for early childhood professionals. The intent of this investment in the workforce is to reduce staff turnover rates and promote more consistent relationships between infants, toddlers, and the people who care for them. The [Wisconsin Early Childhood Association](#) will administer the investment.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to providing salary supplements to retain existing early childhood professionals, Milwaukee is investing in attracting new early childhood professionals to the field by creating new opportunities for youth, especially young men of color.

The [Milwaukee Area Technical College](#) will receive approximately \$300,000 to support a dual-enrollment program, enabling students to attend college to study early childhood education while still enrolled and completing high school. In addition, the city is investing in two fellowship programs to attract more young men of color into the early childhood education workforce:

- The Literacy Lab's [Leading Men Fellowship](#) will receive \$1.06 million to empower and equip young men of color, ages 18–24, with opportunities to pursue careers as early childhood educators. Milwaukee's investment will support 20 fellows over the course of three academic years.<sup>3</sup>
- [MKE Rising](#), sponsored by We Will All Rise, will receive \$529,500 to prepare young men of color to participate in a 10-month early childhood residency to become early childhood scholars. Milwaukee's investment in MKE Rising will fund cohorts of male educators of color serving in early childhood classrooms over the course of three academic years.<sup>4</sup>

### Age Groups Served

- Children ages 0–5 years
- Youth ages 16–24 years

### Funding Stream Used

Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

### Key Partners

- Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
- Milwaukee Area Technical College
- MKE Rising

- Leading Men Fellowship
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative

## Local Perspective

### Unique Challenges

Milwaukee's leaders have had to balance their allocations of American Rescue Plan funds across many equally important priorities while thinking ahead about the future need for more sustainable funding sources. City leaders were clear that they did not want to be the sole investors in early childhood. The Milwaukee Early Childhood Education Coalition's advocacy efforts were crucial in demonstrating to city leadership why investing Milwaukee's recovery dollars in early childhood education was important for Milwaukee and how it would help build on existing and forthcoming state investments in the sector.<sup>5</sup>

### Ensuring Accountability

The proposal containing the city's planned use of American Rescue Plan funds was approved by the City of Milwaukee Common Council and signed by the mayor. Individual grantees will be accountable for reporting their progress toward outputs and outcomes and Milwaukee Succeeds will support grantees as needed. Reports will be shared with the City of Milwaukee for programmatic accountability and for inclusion in a public dashboard.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, Milwaukee Succeeds has contracted with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative to conduct an external evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the funded initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

### Lessons Learned

The leadership of early educators who have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic has been essential in the development of and successful advocacy for this citywide investment in early education.<sup>8</sup> With support from the Milwaukee Early Childhood Education Coalition, early educators called and emailed their council representatives to tell their stories, and the proposal's legislative sponsor elevated these stories on the council floor when the proposal

was up for debate. Milwaukee's success demonstrates the importance of involving early childhood educators and workers in advocacy efforts.

## Geographic Region

Midwest United States

### Community Size

Total population (2020): 577,222<sup>9</sup>

### Racial Demographics<sup>10</sup>

- White 42.0%
- Black or African American 38.8%
- American Indian and Alaska Native 0.5%
- Asian 4.6%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander 0.0%
- Two or More Races 5.6%
- Hispanic or Latino 19.4%
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino 34.0%

### Socioeconomic Status

- Median annual household income (2020): \$43,125<sup>11</sup>
- Children living in poverty (2020): 25.5%<sup>12</sup>

### Acknowledgment

Thank you to Daria Hall, early childhood education director at Milwaukee Succeeds, for contributions to this community profile.

To view additional resources and find American Rescue Plan allocations for other communities, visit [childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan](https://childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan).

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> City of Milwaukee, Department of Administration, “American Rescue Plan Act,” 2022, <https://city.milwaukee.gov/ARPA>.

<sup>2</sup> Marina Dimitrijevic, “Committee Recommends Approval of Early Childhood Education Investment,” press release, October 15, 2021, <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/pressrelease/committee-recommends-approval-of-early-childhood-education-investment>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Daria Hall, early childhood education director at Milwaukee Succeeds, personal communication, April 22, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “QuickFacts,” Milwaukee, Wisconsin <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/milwaukeecitywisconsin/POP06021>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates,” Milwaukee County, Wisconsin [https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saie/#/?map\\_geoSelector=u18\\_c&s\\_measures=u18\\_snc&s\\_year=2020&s\\_state=55&s\\_county=55079](https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saie/#/?map_geoSelector=u18_c&s_measures=u18_snc&s_year=2020&s_state=55&s_county=55079).

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