



“Reimagining Employ Milwaukee’s Digital Presence to Increase Access to Employment Opportunities”
Employ Milwaukee
City of Milwaukee, WI

PROJECT CONTEXT

In the 1970s, the City of Milwaukee was a hub of Black wealth. Sustained by the manufacturing industry, with companies that sold everything from durable goods to auto parts, the City was ripe with job opportunities for these Milwaukeeans. However, over the next decades, these manufacturing jobs all but evaporated, bringing poverty rates to the City that reach over 25%. The City now has a staggering Black-white economic divide, ranking as the least equal for unemployment in all metros nationally. Over 17% of Black Milwaukeeans were unemployed compared to just over 4% for white Milwaukeeans. And only two-thirds of Black males of prime working-age were employed, the 3rd lowest rate of all US cities. With the COVID-19 pandemic's economic fallouts, the structural racial inequality and struggling economic conditions in Black Milwaukee may only have worsened.

The key to closing this widening gap is giving individuals more workforce development opportunities and access to job prospects. Employ Milwaukee, the local workforce development board serving Milwaukee County, functions to do just this – developing solutions that promote regional economic growth and employment opportunities for all job seekers. Employ Milwaukee is the local Workforce Development Board serving Milwaukee County, WI. Employ Milwaukee is one of 11 Workforce Development Boards in the State of Wisconsin, serving the largest and most economically and racially diverse area of the state. By convening leaders from business and industry, economic and workforce development, education and training as well as community partners and policy makers, Employ Milwaukee’s vision is to develop workforce solutions that promote regional economic growth and employment opportunity for all job seekers. Employ Milwaukee’s goals are to connect job seekers to employment opportunities, to provide education and training options in high-growth, high-demand sectors, and to provide a skilled and sustainable workforce to attract, retain and grow diverse businesses to the region. As a Workforce Development Board, Employ Milwaukee oversees the public workforce system in Milwaukee County, which is comprised of three (3) comprehensive and affiliate American Job Centers, as well as a large network of community- and faith-based organizations, training providers, technical colleges, universities, industry associations, employers and other key stakeholders.

Employ Milwaukee is specifically dedicated to addressing the racial, economic inequities and disparities that exist in the City, prioritizing partnerships, especially those with employers and the business community, that are ready to address opportunities around equity in the economy; pursuing additional funding for employment and skill training programs for disenfranchised workers, especially programs that incorporate trauma-informed care and other relevant support services; advancing racial equity through postsecondary training policies, including career pathways and stackable credentials of value; removing barriers to correctional education and training connected to re-entry populations; employing apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs to advance racial equity; and implementing upskilling policies for adults with



foundational skills gaps. These resources and programs function out of Employ Milwaukee’s in-person American Job Centers. Unfortunately, the social distance guidelines and in-person restrictions resulting from the public health crisis have significantly limited who and when these services can be accessed. Employ Milwaukee must now adapt and realign their service model to fit a virtual world to reach and be accessible by all Milwaukeeans at an especially critical time.

To support these efforts, Employ Milwaukee will partner with FUSE Corps to host an Executive Fellow for one year who will develop a robust strategic plan for launching Employ Milwaukee’s digital and virtual programming, complementing their in-person services. The Executive Fellow will conduct in-depth national research of digital and virtual workforce development models, platforms, toolkits, services, and best practices; form a comprehensive landscape assessment of the City, focusing on job seeker and employer user experience with current programming; lay out the specifics of the transformation, and support the design and initial implementation of the digital overhaul. With the Executive Fellow's support, Employee Milwaukee envisions that all of its programs, resources, and services will be available at the click of a button – bolstering access and equity to workforce development opportunities for all Milwaukeeans.

PROJECT SUMMARY & POTENTIAL DELIVERABLES

The following provides a general overview of the proposed Executive Fellowship project. This summary and the potential deliverables will be collaboratively revisited by the host agency, the Executive Fellow, and FUSE staff during the first few months of the Executive Fellowship, after which a revised scope of work will be developed and agreed upon by the FUSE Executive Fellow and the host agency.

Starting May 3, 2021, it is proposed that the FUSE Executive Fellow will first conduct a comprehensive landscape assessment of digital/virtual workforce development models, platforms, toolkits, services, and best practices. This will include researching and compiling an inventory of existing projects in this space being implemented by Employ Milwaukee, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, universities, and other government institutions. The Executive Fellow will also work to quickly build deep relationships with a wide range of critical stakeholders, including staff across Employ Milwaukee, business institutions (local employers), local nonprofits in the workforce space, and community members or community-based organizations that utilize Employ Milwaukee’s services. During an initial listening tour with these stakeholders, the Executive Fellow will uncover current gaps in programming, the needs and desires of each group in regard to virtual resources and tools, and each user’s experience with the current programming. These conversations will be critical for the Executive Fellow to better understand varying stakeholders’ perspectives, priorities, and concerns, as well as, barriers to implementation of the digital programming.

Utilizing the analysis, the Executive Fellow will work with internal and external stakeholders to develop a robust strategic plan for building out and launching Employ Milwaukee’s digital/virtual programming. The fellow will lay out the specifics of the transformation, planning how to phase each action, outlining other short and long-term goals, and priority areas. The plan will identify technologies and strategies for integrating all programs, services, and resources into a digital platform. This will include architecting new processes and presenting tangible recommendations for current programming to be tweaked so it is easily accessible online. The plan will also need to



account for financial limitations, assess the financial resources that are needed, and determining how to measure outcomes and assess/track progress toward goals.

In the next phase, the Executive Fellow will create a thorough and holistic implementation framework. The framework will establish a shared vision for the initiative, clear roles of internal and external stakeholders, and articulate roll-out timetables. The Executive Fellow will work to initiate activities that are most urgent and are considered low-hanging fruit. This will include modeling out a funding strategy covering the next 3 years to secure support from local business and philanthropic organizations. The Executive Fellow will also design and manage a Request for Proposal (RFP) for IT experts, to support their design and initial implementation of the digital overhaul, including a transformation of the Employ Milwaukee website. During the implementation, the Executive Fellow will gather feedback from stakeholders to ensure the design is meeting the needs of all stakeholders. Through this rapid migration to an additional digital service model, Employ Milwaukee will ensure that every Milwaukeean, especially Black Milwaukeeans, have readily available access to employment opportunities and resources.

- *Conduct a thorough review of the landscape* – Conduct a deep landscape analysis, collating all relevant programming, services, policies, and processes of Employ Milwaukee and beyond; connect with businesses, individuals, and community-based organizations to understand stakeholder needs, gaps in resources, and access issues; research national digital/virtual workforce development models, platforms, toolkits, services, and best practices, focusing on the digital investments made in the last few months in response to the pandemic; additional innovative partnership and technology linkages should be identified. (Ex. [Aunt Bertha](#))
- *Develop recommendations and form a comprehensive strategic plan* – Outline short and long-term goals and priority areas, in close consultation with key stakeholders; connect the dots between existing digital technologies for programs and new opportunities; architect new processes and present tangible recommendations for current programming to be tweaked to fit a digital setting; collate relevant data and metrics, setting benchmarks for tracking progress
- *Engage stakeholders and catalyze buy-in* – Demonstrate cross-cultural agility and successfully engage with all relevant stakeholders; solicit feedback from major stakeholders on strategic plan; identify barriers to implementing any recommendations; incorporate input from stakeholders to build consensus and ensure that the strategy is supported and successful
- *Develop implementation framework and support roll out of recommendations* – Develop a shared vision and goal for the plan; establish framework with clear roles of internal and external stakeholders; oversee implementation of strategies considered most urgent; model out a funding strategy covering the next 3 years to secure finances for the project; manage a Request for Proposal (RFP) for IT experts; begin transformation of all services to the digital platform; create the necessary internal and external systems to ensure proposed strategies are sustainable and can successfully be implemented

KEY STAKEHOLDERS



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- **Project Supervisor – Julie Cayo, AICP, Vice President of Strategic Planning and Performance, Employ Milwaukee**
 - **Executive Sponsor – Chytania Brown, President and CEO, Employ Milwaukee**
 - **Additional Stakeholder – Aaron Szopinski, Policy Director, Mayor’s Office**

QUALIFICATIONS

- At least 15 years of professional experience in a relevant field. Familiarity with technology architecture implementation, new technologies, and UX/UI design preferred.
- Some experience working in the nonprofit sector a major plus.
- Ability to get up to speed quickly about the integration and application of multiple technologies to improve the lives of citizens across diverse populations
- Robust record of success with project or program management
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills with an ease in public presentations
- Experience in identifying best practices, understanding data and evidence and using it to support a business case, making a persuasive argument to support recommendations
- Persistent in obtaining information and creatively resourceful in identifying solutions to complex problems
- Strong community engagement skills possessing cross-cultural agility, ability to relate to a wide variety of diverse audiences with strong emotional intelligence and empathy
- Strategic decision-maker who is effective at mapping out program and policy impact
- Ability to synthesize complex information into clear and concise recommendations
- Ability to sustain progress and facilitate change management within potentially ambiguous environments
- Self-motivated, goal-oriented, entrepreneurial leader who can also be an independent worker
- Understands the need for solutions to support all people in a community regardless of race, religion, gender, immigration status, or ethnicity

FUSE Corps is an equal opportunity employer with a core value of incorporating diverse perspectives into our work at every level. We encourage candidates from all backgrounds to apply for this position.