



Serving Greater Milwaukee



To Director Mario Higgins, Community Development Grants Administration,

BikerFest Mke is a Milwaukee-based nonprofit that utilizes motorcycles as a tool to create access and opportunity through mentorship, skill-building, STEM education, financial literacy, and community connection.

This year, BikerFest Mke received its fifth Proclamation from Mayor Cavalier Johnson in recognition of our continued commitment to the community. The annual BikerFest Block Party, held Saturday, May 30, 2026, in partnership with East Side BID #20, serves as the primary fundraiser supporting our youth programs, Sliders and SmARTEch.

Milwaukee's youth stand at a critical crossroads. The community continues to navigate challenges that have contributed to increased youth contact with the justice system and a lack of positive outlets for young people. Many youths express that "there's nothing to do," creating a need for structured activities that can counter reckless behavior, such as the potential rush obtained by vehicle theft and reckless driving, while providing purpose, connection, and accountability.

At the same time, Wisconsin faces a growing shortage of skilled workers in STEM and technical trades. While many traditional programs exist, gaps remain for kinesthetic learners who thrive through hands-on experiences rather than conventional classroom settings.

BikerFest Mke's programs are designed to address both needs. We provide engaging, structured experiences that keep youth positively connected while creating nontraditional pathways into STEM, skilled trades, and career exploration. Our programs are built around measurable outcomes, with participation, retention, and skill development tracked through regular evaluations. The result is increased engagement, stronger peer relationships, and positive decision-making.

In 2023, the Sliders Program was established to address a critical gap in youth programming for Milwaukee youth ages 7–16 and their families. Using the excitement of motorcycles as the entry point, youth receive safe, supervised riding instruction combined with STEM learning, social-emotional development, confidence-building, self-regulation, and discipline. Participants learn to focus, make decisions under pressure, take accountability, and manage emotions... protective factors that contribute to violence prevention and positive youth development.

Where the road to endless possibilities begins.

3267 North 1st Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin | info@bikerfestmke.org | www.bikerfestmke.org



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Many youth enter the program having never ridden a bicycle, even into their early teens. Sliders removes barriers by providing equipment, safety gear, instruction, and mentorship at little cost to families. The program operates year-round and participates in community events throughout Milwaukee and Wisconsin, strengthening family engagement and neighborhood connection.

Our primary accomplishment has been the successful launch of our two-track youth development pipeline, Sliders and SmARTEch. These programs are supported by “The Village,” a coalition of community and industry partners who provide mentorship, resources, and real-world learning opportunities. As an MSF RiderCoach and USMCA-certified Dirt Bike Coach, I oversee programming alongside industry professionals, including American Flat Track racer Cameron Smith.

In 2025 alone, our youth participated in 46 program events totaling over 330 hours of mentorship and instruction. Parents reported:

- 30% improvements in attitude, physical activity, peer interaction, and emotional control.
- 50% improvements in school performance and behavior at home.
- 100% reported a positive change in their child’s attitude and increased hope for their future.

This investment is not simply funding a program. It is strengthening families, creating safer communities, and providing Milwaukee youth with pathways to success they may not otherwise experience.

The total program budget for the upcoming cycle is \$115,495, which is attached for your review. The requested \$30,000 investment would assist us in doubling participation from 8 to 16 youth while maintaining the high standards and safety measures that define our programs.

We appreciate your consideration and welcome the opportunity to further discuss how Sliders aligns with the City’s youth development and community priorities.

Sincerely,

Venisha Simpson, Executive Director
BikerFest Mke

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