

# Millennial Task Force member ideas generated in meetings

\* Note: this is a working document that summarizes thoughts and ideas that Millennial Task Force members have generated during meetings so far. Many of the items below highlight issues in Milwaukee that are real and perceived. Document last updated: 7/21/2020

## General Comments

- Consider recommendations for two separate groups: younger Millennials (apprenticeships and internships, etc.) and older Millennials (promotions, etc.)
- Brain drain issue is a regional metro issue with the city of Milwaukee a big component
- Attraction of new people and talent to Milwaukee is equally as important as retention
- Task Force interested in addressing 6 key opportunity gap areas: education, employment, entrepreneurship, criminal justice, health, and wealth disparity
- If possible, will try to impact upcoming 2021 Budget hearings
- Interested in identifying and building upon existing initiatives and programs such as UWM's Upward Bound, rather than reinventing them
- Three different age groups to address: 15-23 (pre-college), 23-30 (early workforce, no kids), and 30-38 (with families)
- Both private and public funding is needed

## Reasons Millennials and Gen Z leave Milwaukee

Task Force members highlighted that they perceive that Milwaukee's weaknesses in the following areas contribute to regional brain drain:

- **Preconditions** contributing to regional brain drain: poverty, poor educational systems, segregation, poor cultural scenes, poor infrastructure, and crime (poor public safety)
- **Segregation:** Milwaukee is a tale of two cities; belief that City government exacerbates problem by highlighting and catering to handful of neighborhoods (east side and downtown) but not whole city
- **Identity:** city lacks cohesive positive identity
  - Disparities in identities of neighborhoods creates lack of cohesive identity
  - Narrative often negative related to preconditions and outcomes for people of color
- **Pushback from government** against community, grassroots ideas
  - E.g. City government's needless objections to Milwaukee "People's Flag"
- **Belief that pipelines, internships** often don't lead to opportunities
  - Young talent not getting enough exposure to various fields and industries
  - Frontline jobs have too much turnover because they are not invested positions
- Youth Council members during 5/6/20 meeting noted they want to eventually leave Milwaukee in part because of:
  - Racism in white-majority areas
  - Lack of Historically Black Colleges and Universities
  - City's unrecognized potential
  - Lack of leadership that is willing to be outspoken about inequality in the city
  - Unsafe conditions for young and black people
  - Unfair treatment from MPD and history of police brutality

## Reasons Millennials and Gen Z stay in Milwaukee

Task Force members highlighted that they perceive that Milwaukee's strengths in the following areas contribute to residents staying in the area:

- Milwaukee is friendly for entrepreneurship, startups, young professionals
- Good place for entrepreneurs to test their businesses and for young professionals to move to the top
- City is urban, a good size for young professionals and small enough for new startups to try ventures, test operations, and seize new pathways

- City is big enough for people to market themselves and make impact, yet small enough to minimize risks, with more access to opportunities than, for instance, Chicago, which is far riskier
- Milwaukee has relatively lower student debt than other cities
- Youth Council members noted during 5/6/20 meeting that Milwaukee is strong in these areas:
  - Diversity
  - Sense of community: likely to know neighbors, sense of togetherness even in unsafe environments

## **Opportunities**

### **Apprenticeships**

- Apprenticeships offer a valuable opportunity for young professionals, but young people are generally trained to go to college because they lack awareness on what apprenticeships offer
- Offer on-the-job paid training, and similar average wages in Wisconsin compared to professions earned with a college degree
- Overlooked, misunderstood, have stigma of not being as valuable as traditional pathways
- College graduates tend to leave Milwaukee whereas those in trades stay for job opportunities here

### **Tech Industry**

- Tremendous opportunities for new jobs in Milwaukee's tech sector
- Tech Hub Coalition
  - Coalition seeks 70,000 new tech jobs in Milwaukee (double jobs from 2017 to 2025)
  - Goals: Build Milwaukee's tech image; leverage cross-industry partnerships to support startups; grow jobs in existing companies; support freelancers; retain top regional talent; accelerate reskilling of population
  - Working with local universities to provide virtual internships; collaborating with MPS on providing access to tech
  - Coalition more top heavy with big corporations and needs more inclusion with smaller firms

## **Possible Recommendations**

### **Expose young people to non-traditional career pathways**

- Schools and higher education should provide young people opportunities to learn about variety of career pathways that they could pursue in Milwaukee
  - Conversation should be diverse and inclusive of many sectors, pathways, and talent pools
  - E.g. Atlanta's resource guide – local institutions should as part of curriculum teach about Milwaukee and its resources, either as a class or particular assignment

### **Incentivize young people to stay in Milwaukee for college**

- Data suggests Milwaukee universities may not be their first option
  - Many 18-19 year olds move away from Milwaukee and go to Madison
- There should be more pre-college programs to recruit and support students
  - Need more connections with high schools and local colleges
- Free or discounted tuition for enrolling in universities within same state of residence
  - Should be more scholarships and city pool discounted rate for local students
  - Tuition should be discounted for out-of state students as well
  - Minnesota has tuition reciprocity with Wisconsin
- Students desire higher wages to pay off debt
- There should be HBC in Milwaukee
- Milwaukee's colleges may have label of being community colleges, which may be stigma
- Improve the college experience, implement curriculums to teach students about Milwaukee possibilities, and expose them to the city

### **Assist and expand startups, apprenticeships, and internships**

- Give more assistance and incentives to small startups as opposed to big companies - startups are challenging and take time to be successful
- Apprenticeships should be more heavily promoted, formalized
- Pathways and talent pipelines should improve: internships should lead to future job opportunities
  - City's Direct Connect MKE app, for workforce development, allows talent to make connections; should be championed by all
  - ERG career development program to provide mentorship to City employees

### **City's positive stories need to be better promoted**

- Organizations can help develop a more positive narrative for the city
  - At a minimum, need more awareness of city's opportunities and assets
  - Milwaukee needs an identity based on authentic pride and making a difference
- City government should help promote a positive narrative, rather than catching up to a negative one
  - Create media kit for the DNC
  - Could direct VISIT Milwaukee and others to promote city, perhaps with incentive
  - Policymakers should create policy to promote and assist all its communities, small businesses and startups
- Lack of pride and good narrative may be reason why students leave Milwaukee for college
- Companies must brand better, attract better, and improve identities
  - Historic companies that are no longer in touch with younger generations should help startups
  - Bottom-up approach needed: e.g. Sherman Phoenix development success
- Branding campaigns are generally unsuccessful: often misdirected use of funds (but there is still value in seeking to change city's narrative)
  - E.g. State of Wisconsin \$7 million branding on Chicago CTA lines
  - Madison is growing without initiatives: UW Madison is integrated into urban fabric, although there is still population loss
  - \$50 million needed to effectively target a market

### **City should better market its programs**

- Many people have no awareness about programs that are offered, and often they are too siloed

### **Implement anti-racism solutions**

- Civil unrest pertaining to systematic brutality, racism, discrimination, inequality, and social injustice (which extends beyond the police and public safety) extend into workforce and should be focus item for Task Force
- Recommendations should be inclusive of everyone and be intentional to aid groups who have been systematically disenfranchised – should address racial justice and mirror what the City is doing
- More support for the Office of African American Affairs
- Modify police training
  - Ensure that Health Department's Blueprint for Peace is incorporated in police training
  - Police brutality is an issue highlighted by City youths

### **Extend work VISAs for immigrants**

- Target foreign-born people to move to and stay in Milwaukee
- Immigrant population has helped kept Milwaukee's overall population afloat

### **Incentivize homeowners**

- Incentivize first-time homebuying and residence in particular areas of the city

**Expand economic development tools**

- Measures are needed to retain upwardly mobile people, who are most likely group to leave the city
- Expand capacity and resources for Business Improvement Districts (BID) to improve commercial corridors
- Grow Tax Incremental Financings (TIF), which help expand property tax base and fund site improvements that would not otherwise occur
- Successful BIDs and TIDs should allocate funds to underperforming BIDs and TIDs
- Implement anti-displacement measures and programs for childhood development or tax credits for childcare

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