



July 15, 2021

District 2 – President Cavalier Johnson  
Cavalier.Johnson2@milwaukee.gov  
City Hall  
200 E. Wells Street  
Room 205  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

District 10 — Alderman Michael J. Murphy  
mmurph@milwaukee.gov  
City Hall  
200 E. Wells Street  
Room 205  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear President Johnson and Alderman Murphy,

Community Advocates is writing to strongly recommend approval of the workforce development initiatives proposed by Employ Milwaukee for funding consideration by the Common Council through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). It is our understanding that the Finance and Personnel Committee will consider this item at their July 21, 2021 meeting.

Community Advocates is represented by Julie Kerksick of our Public Policy Institute on the City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity. Julie has worked on the Task Force and the Jobs and Equity work group for nearly two years. The proposed initiatives from Employ Milwaukee are a perfect fit for our recommendations. We need to get from talking about Clean Energy Jobs and the need to provide living wage employment to thousands of Milwaukee residents to taking action at a larger scale. The ARPA funds allow the city to invest money NOW to help with energy retrofits of Milwaukee's older housing, accelerate the removal of lead laterals and toxic paint in old homes, and invest in existing innovations that are underway in our city and county.

Employ Milwaukee's initiatives invest in and prioritize youth of color, fund wages and skill training, and ensure work experience is high quality and linked to employers and pathways in in-demand fields. The initiatives will help build a talent pipeline to quality jobs while mitigating/addressing ongoing public health hazards in the city; expand access to credentials with labor market value rapidly and at scale, especially for workers of color; invest in subsidized, transitional employment with career pathways; and break down the digital divide to ensure equitable access to equipment, training and jobs. Extensive wraparound supportive services are layered with all programming.

Employ Milwaukee has the experience, capacity, and systems to manage large scale projects and the ability to report on impact and outcomes by aldermanic district, demographics, credentials, job placement, wages, and more. Most of the funding will go directly to City Residents in the form of wages, supportive services, and occupational skill training, building wealth within neighborhoods. Employ Milwaukee will also distribute funding to community- and faith-based organizations for service delivery to ensure the programming is delivered using a community-focused, human-centered approach. A wide variety of local training providers will be engaged for upskilling opportunities.

This is a critical opportunity. Please support these proposed investments. We are working with Employ Milwaukee, city, county, and community partners to make sure these funds have impact on every part of our city—but especially the neighborhoods and people who have been chronically left behind in economic recoveries.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact Julie Kerksick ([jkerksick@communityadvocates.net](mailto:jkerksick@communityadvocates.net)) if you have any questions about our support for the Employ Milwaukee initiatives.

Sincerely,

Andi Elliott  
Chief Executive Officer