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*Joint Committee on Finance*

# 2023-2025 Budget Motion Request

Date: 5/28/25

Legislator: Rep. Donovan

Staff Contact: Stephan Gieschen (9161)

Legislator's JFC Designee: Rep. Zimmerman

Statement of Motion Intent:

To allocate \$2,000,000 in the 2025-2027 biennial budget to the Earn & Learn Summer Youth Employment Program to expand subsidized employment opportunities for youth and young adults ages 14-24 in Milwaukee.

Agency: N/A

Summary:

The Earn & Learn Summer Youth Employment Program, a partnership between the City of Milwaukee and Employ Milwaukee since 2007, provides meaningful work experiences and career exploration for young adults ages 14-24 in Milwaukee County. The program supports violence prevention, economic mobility, and addresses workforce shortages by placing participants in 20-hour-per-week jobs for seven weeks at local businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations. In addition to wages, participants receive job readiness training, including communication, time management, conflict resolution, and financial literacy.

In 2024, Earn & Learn served 622 participants (154 funded by the current \$422,400 state allocation), with 92% completing the seven-week program at an average wage of \$12.21 per hour. Over 18 years, the program has served over 41,000 youth and partnered with more than 200 private employers, filling critical workforce gaps. Despite high demand (over 3,000 youth annually start registration), funding constraints reduced participation in 2024 by nearly half compared to 2021-23, when federal ARPA funds supported higher enrollment.

This increase in annual state funding from \$422,400 to \$1,000,000 would support approximately 450 additional participants per year. The City of Milwaukee has consistently invested in the program, and Employ Milwaukee actively pursues employer partnerships to leverage state funds,

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with 93 work sites in 2024, over 60 of which were community, faith-based, or nonprofit organizations.

This item was not included in the Governor's 2025-2027 budget recommendations, but it builds on the state's prior investments in youth employment and responds to the demonstrated community need and employer demand.

Fiscal Impact:

**\$1,000,000** in 2025-26

**\$1,000,000** in 2026-27

**\$2,000,000** total over the biennium

Funding Source (if applicable): GPR

Support/Opposition:

Rep. Donovan

City of Milwaukee