



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor Tom Barrett Announces Willie Wade as President and CEO of Employ Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE – Today, Mayor Tom Barrett announced he will submit Willie Wade’s name to Employ Milwaukee’s Board of Directors succeed Earl Buford as President and CEO of Employ Milwaukee. Wade joined Employ Milwaukee in January of 2016 and currently serves as Chief Marketing Officer. Prior to Employ Milwaukee, Wade served as the 7th District Alderman for the City of Milwaukee. Employ Milwaukee is the largest of eleven workforce development boards in the state, serving Workforce Development Area (WDA) #2, covering Milwaukee County.

“Willie Wade’s passionate leadership and commitment to connecting people to lifelong employment is unparalleled,” said Mayor Barrett. “Willie is a proven change maker which he demonstrated in his time as an Alderman and in his current role at Employ Milwaukee. I am pleased with Willie’s ability to get things done.”

In his current role, Wade collaborates with stakeholders at all levels to strengthen and streamline the workforce system. Working closely with companies, job seekers, community- and faith-based organizations, education partners, developers, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations, Wade is a champion of workforce innovation and job creation throughout the Milwaukee area. He oversees the Coordinating Council, a 25-member group of training and social service providers, ensuring workforce efficiency and access to workforce resources. He recently launched the innovative Mobile Workforce Connections initiative, which reaches individuals in the communities in which they live.

While a member of Milwaukee's Common Council he served on 15 different boards and committees, having a tremendous impact on Milwaukee's economic growth, quality of life issues, and neighborhood improvement.

Highlighted accomplishments during Wade's tenure at Employ Milwaukee include:

- Willie Wade served on the Board of Directors for 11 years, and on staff for the past two-and-a-half years, for a total of 13 ½ years of workforce experience.
- Since joining Employ Milwaukee, Wade has pushed the organization to innovate the ways it interacts with community members.
- Wade champions public and private collaboration, his greatest strength being that of a convener and consummate problem solver to benefit the greater community.
- Wade understands that workforce development cannot advance through just one organization, but that it takes collective energy and the creativity of public and private entities.
- Rebranded Employ Milwaukee to better connect to constituencies. Oversaw organization name change and rebrand to Employ Milwaukee, including the new name, logo, tagline, website development, social media strategy, brand standards and a bilingual marketing campaign.
- Continuum of Care: Wade and his team work closely with the Continuum of Care, working to end homelessness in Milwaukee by connecting individuals to education, training, employment opportunities and resources. Wade's staff participate in ongoing speaking engagements to educate community groups on available services. Wade has also dedicated a staff member to recruit and educate citizens every Thursday at the Central City Churches Food Program.
- Southside Community Outreach
 - Wade is conducting strategic engagement with southside community leaders to develop a plan to engage residents from Milwaukee's Hispanic community, ensuring access for all residents to workforce services and resources.
 - These efforts are strategic, thoughtful and thorough, and will include outreach to residents where they gather providing a connection to workforce support and access to employment opportunities. Targeted efforts will include young Hispanic professionals and the faith-based community.
- Serving the Ex-Offender Population

- Appointed to the statewide Corrections Facilities Planning Committee by Governor Scott Walker. Wade was appointed to a statewide taskforce to develop ways to deliver services to incarcerated individuals prior to their release, including skills training and access to resources.
- Milwaukee Reentry Network Co-Chair. The Milwaukee Reentry Network is a partnership made up of the Center for Self-Sufficiency, Wisconsin Department of Children & Families, Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Employ Milwaukee, U. S. Probation Office, Eastern District of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Community Services and the YWCA. Working together, these organizations have made the commitment to address the needs of the community to ensure former offenders are successfully transitioned back into society.
- Engaging the Faith-Based Community
 - With a strong understanding that the relationship between a pastor and their congregation is a trusting and personal one, Wade and his staff hold weekly meetings with members of the faith-based community to develop tactics to engage the community.
- New way of connecting individuals to the workforce system: Mobile Workforce Connections
 - Knowing how hard it might be to take the first step and walk through the door of a job center, Wade developed Mobile Workforce Connections to reach individuals who are currently not connected to the workforce system. In its first months, the team has connected with more than 2,100 individuals.
 - Community Relations team members attend and host events where people gather to connect Milwaukee County job seekers to employment and training opportunities. This allows job seekers to directly engage with Employ Milwaukee within their own community including barbershops, malls, MPS events, and church gatherings amongst other venues.
- Developing workforce system efficiency: Community Workforce Partnership
 - The Community Workforce Partnership (CWP) is a formal network of community-based organizations that provides specialized services often needed to address barriers to employment for Milwaukee residents, including

lack of transportation, childcare, education, employability skills, re-entry, and income support.

- Wade is a key member of this group, which also includes: Central City Churches, WRTP/BIG STEP, Milwaukee Christian Center, Milwaukee JobsWork, Northcott Neighborhood House, Social Development Commission, Wisconsin Community Services, Journey House, Literacy Services of Wisconsin, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Community Service Corps, Milwaukee Urban League, Riverworks, UMOS, YWCA of Greater Milwaukee.

- Employ Milwaukee’s Coordinating Council:
 - Employ Milwaukee’s core “supply side” delivery mechanism is the Coordinating Council, a 25 plus member association of local workforce system service providers. The Council is designed as an advisory body comprised primarily of major organizations that provide workforce development and related services and funding. Its mission is to collaborate to improve employer access to skilled workers by communicating employer needs identified by our Industry Advisory Boards, remediating system wide barriers, exchanging best practices, and collaborating on funding opportunities. Working Groups include such cooperative efforts as the Milwaukee Re-Entry Network, the Milwaukee Job Ride Collaborative, and the Driver’s License Recovery Initiative. Its primary focus is to address the needs of the worker in their efforts to insure alignment with the employers needs for a skilled workforce.

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