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**Employ Milwaukee Awarded
$1 Million for Milwaukee Re-entry Alliance**

MILWAUKEE – Employ Milwaukee has been awarded a $1 million Community Impact Grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health for its project, the Milwaukee Re-entry Alliance, which aims to improve community re-entry for criminal justice-involved individuals.

Incarceration influences a myriad of factors that shape and affect the health of incarcerated individuals and their families, and it compounds socio-economic inequities that reverberate through the entire community. Generationally, incarceration erodes the family structure, and at a minimum compromises access to education, employment, and housing by removing a central family member from contributing to the economic stability it takes to create a safe and enriching environment for a child.

Through this project, Employ Milwaukee will address the widespread negative health effects of incarceration by establishing a better coordinated re-entry system. Ultimately, the project aims to increase employability and job retention among the re-entry population, reduce the rate of recidivism, and improve the health outcomes of returning citizens by more intentionally addressing the social determinants of health that impact well-being and life expectancy.

The “re-entry system” for returning citizens currently involves an often poorly or uncoordinated patchwork of disconnected services. To maximize the health of our returning citizens, their families and communities, these services must be contiguous and well-coordinated, and must include plans for physical and mental health, safety, as well as those factors that contribute to “post-release” stabilization, such as employment, housing and other positive activities. A holistic approach includes traditional ongoing and preventative health care, a keen awareness for the trauma often experienced with incarceration and release, and an individualized plan predicated on delivering the right dosage of services, to the right person, at the right time. This project aims to achieve this by connecting a wide range of professionals and key players within the re-entry field, including case managers, workforce development experts and corrections system staff and administration, along with returning citizens.

“Research has demonstrated that returning citizens experience higher rates of suicide and dramatically shorter life expectancy. This project will support our efforts to impact environmental and system change by developing a research-driven and participant-informed approach to aligning programming and service delivery among re-entry service providers to coordinate a human-centered system that welcomes returning citizens, meets them where they are, and makes navigation of the system and its operators easier,” said Willie C. Wade, President and CEO, Employ Milwaukee.

The project will be implemented over the next five years in collaboration with partners, including the Center for Self-Sufficiency, Community Advocates, Project Return, the State of Wisconsin’s Department of Corrections, Milwaukee Community Justice Council, Milwaukee County’s Office of African American Affairs, and Dr. David J. Pate, chair of the department of Social Work at UW-Milwaukee’s Helen Bader School of Social Welfare.

This project is one of four 2018 Community Impact Grants funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The projects were selected for their potential to create conditions, systems and policy solutions that lead to equitable and sustainable improvements in health.

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