



**WRTP | BIG STEP**  
**PAVING THE WAY**

# **IMPACT REPORT 2021**

---

**HEADQUARTERS:**  
3841 W WISCONSIN AVE  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53208

(414) 342-9787

[MILWAUKEE@WRTP.ORG](mailto:MILWAUKEE@WRTP.ORG)

# PAVING THE WAY

The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP) was created in the 1990s to renew Milwaukee's traditional industrial base after the recovery of manufacturing, retirement of an aging workforce, and diversification of the regional economy created a growing skills shortage. Since combining with the Building Industry Group Skilled Trades Employment Program (BIG STEP) to form WRTP | BIG STEP, we have emerged as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit workforce intermediary in the construction, industrial, and adjacent emerging sectors that is dedicated to connecting people to family-sustaining jobs.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FROM PRESIDENT &amp; CEO LINDSAY BLUMER</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2021 HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL DASHBOARD</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>MILWAUKEE</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>MADISON</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>RACINE</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>DONOR &amp; GRANT HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FROM THE BOARD</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>RECOGNITIONS &amp; RETIREMENTS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>EMPLOYERS</b>	<b>16</b>

## THANK YOU TO OUR ASSOCIATIONS:

Plumbing Mechanical & Sheet Metal Contractors' Alliance (PMC/SMACCA) • National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) • Associated General Contractors of Greater Milwaukee (AGC-GM) • Associated General Contractors of Wisconsin (AGC-WI) • Allied Construction Employers Association • Milwaukee Area Labor Council • Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council • Wisconsin AFL-CIO • Building & Construction Trades Council of South Central Wisconsin • Wisconsin Building Trades Council • Building Advantage – Construction Labor Management Council (CLMC)

## THANK YOU TO OUR UNION PARTNERS:

Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local 5: Tilesetters & Terrazzo • Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers District Council of WI • Operative Plasterers & Cement Masons Local 599 • IBEW Local 2150 • IBEW Local 494 • IBEW Local 159 • Ironworkers Local 8 • Ironworkers Local 383 • LiUNA! Local 113 • North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters, Millwrights, & Piledrivers • Operating Engineers Local 139 • International Union of Painters & Allied Trades IUPAT DC7 • UA Plumbers Local 75 • Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 118 • SMART Local 18 • SMART Local 565 • Steamfitters UA Local 601 • United Steelworkers District 7 • International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers District 10 • United Auto Workers Region 4 • Communications Workers of America Local 4603 • Boilermakers Local 696 • Baker's, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers, & Grain Millers Local 244

## LETTER FROM PRESIDENT & CEO, LINDSAY BLUMER

I want to thank everyone for welcoming me into the WRTP | BIG STEP family—the board and staff, our community and industry partners, workforce collaborators, investors, union partners, and all the future apprentices that have supported me since joining in January 2021. At our back we have the winds of a country investing in its future workforce with tremendous voracity and optimism, and in our sights, a new focus on using local talent, resources, and advocacy so that on every level—locally, regionally and nationally—we can meet the demand and leverage our impact to spur growth far into the future.

We have tremendous opportunity to not only connect more future apprentices to quality career pathways with family-sustaining wages, but we also have the chance to recognize, reward, and build more high road employers—and provide the tools to both sides of the workforce ecosystem so that regional economies and families benefit. This is the work of an intermediary.

Intermediaries are not the in-between. We run through the nexus of workforce training and programming, federal and state labor policies, talent pipeline development, labor market data, DEI initiatives, economic bellwethers, and social supportive services to make the experience of the job-seekers—the future apprentice—one that is holistic and human-centered.

To build the tools and networks capable of this work, we need a myriad of resources. This includes data, partnerships, the trust of residents and community members, and employer commitments rooted in equity—all of which help inform, shape, and strengthen the work we do. Our arsenal has grown in leaps and bounds, thanks to intentional engagement and partnership with neighborhood-based

organizations like Near West Side Partners; employers like Miron Construction, who actively engaged us on how to better connect to and use minority-led businesses; and the City of Racine, which saw the value in securing funding so that future apprentices engaged in pre-apprenticeship training could receive a stipend. There are also the monetary resources, and we could not do what we do without the financial commitment of our union industry partners, new funding partners like the United Way, and long-standing philanthropic investors like Bader Philanthropies.

In 2021, we decided to better tell our story and reflect on the return on investment of these financial partners by committing to put \$5M worth of workforce development value back into our communities with impactful partnerships and leveraging the portfolio of generous supporters and donors. While the quantitative goal is easy to measure and report, it's the qualitative one that I'm most excited about. How can we simplify complex systems? How can we inculcate DEI in meaningful ways that doesn't just drive numbers but changes cultures? How do we leverage the labor market to empower workers so they have not only quality career pathways but also quality work environments? Clearly there is much work to be done, and with your support, WRTP | BIG STEP is ready to tackle the biggest of these challenges. While the "how" is dynamic and ever-changing, the "why" is clear: everyone deserves a pathway to a good career, economic security, and safe work environments that embrace them for who they are. We're here for it. Always.



*Lindsay Blumer*

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS CHEERS TO CAREERS



On September 30, 2021, WRTP hosted its first Cheers to Careers event at Bottle House 42. Sponsored by Duwe Metal and Walbec Group, the event raised \$76,500 in support of our mission “to ensure that more families have access to the security of a middle-class life and the satisfaction of a quality career with a high road employer.”

Six celebrity bartenders consulted with professional mixologists to develop a signature craft cocktail that they hosted at their personal station while guests sampled each of the drinks created and voted on their favorite. We were grateful to all the attendees, sponsors, and celebrity bartenders who made the investment that night to help WRTP | BIG STEP advance the work we do in ways that ensure every future apprentice who comes through our doors knows the next steps they must take to make their dream a reality.

Thanks to celebrity bartenders and their employer sponsors:

**Melissa Gaglione, Owner, Safety4Her**  
“High Fizz”

**Dustin Godsey, Chief Marketing Officer, Milwaukee Bucks**  
“Gin in Six”

**Nadiyah Groves, Milwaukee Director, Office of Governor Tony Evers**  
“Sweet Home Milwaukee”

**Elmer Moore, Executive Director of Scale Up Milwaukee, Greater Milwaukee Committee**  
“Moore of Everything!”

**Mike Stern, Senior Project Manager, Findorff**  
“The Original Craftsman”

**Matt Waltz, Vice President of Partnerships, CAEL**  
“teCAELa”

**Winning Cocktail: Melissa Gaglione’s “High Fizz”**  
**Highest Revenue Generator: Dustin Godsey**



# ORGANIZATIONAL DASHBOARD

WRTP | BIG STEP is proud to secure an annual investment from our construction trade unions to support our work toward equity and diversity in their industries. This investment model and relationship not only helps develop a skilled pipeline of future apprentices, but it also means WRTP | BIG STEP can better compete for grants and contracts that expand and deepen our work and reach. Thank you to our contributing unions. Here's a snapshot of how our work is building your future workforce.

We would like to extend a special thank-you to those construction trade unions who brought on participants as new apprentices in 2021. This is how we build a workforce that looks like the communities in which we live, work, and play.

Our work is rooted in connecting future apprentices to careers with family-sustaining wages.

KEY



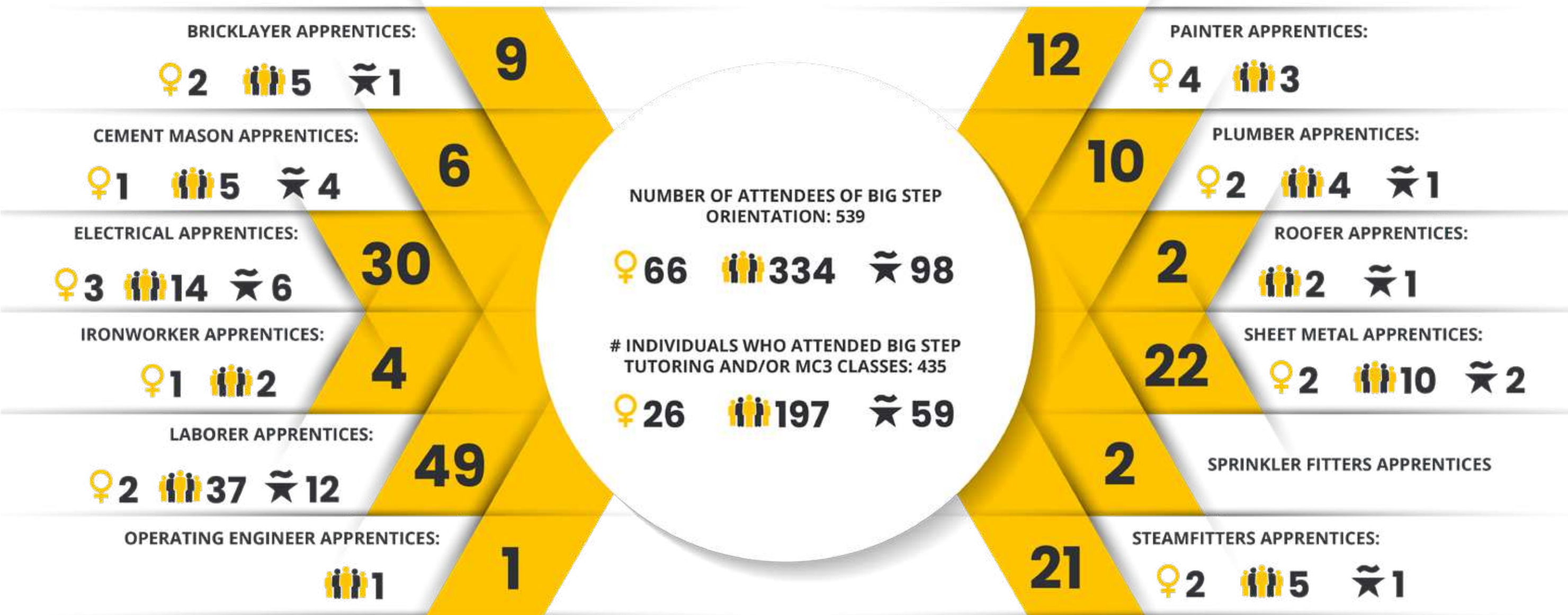
WOMEN



PEOPLE OF COLOR



HISPANIC



Please see back cover for a list of employers who have hired WRTP | BIG STEP talent.

# MILWAUKEE

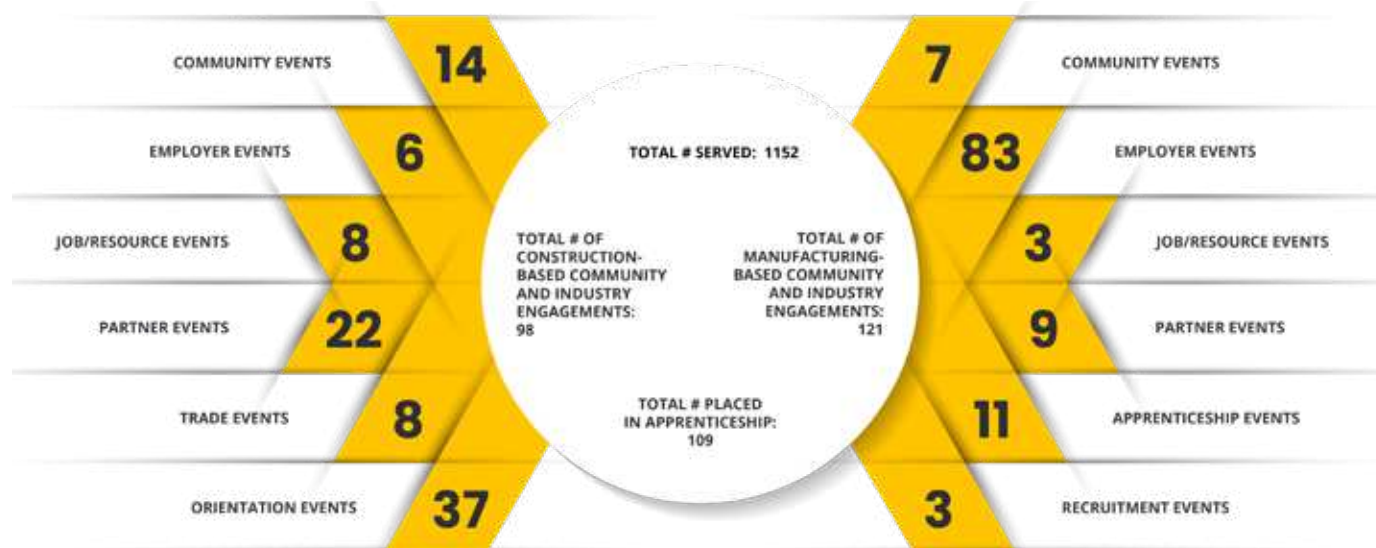
## EVENT HIGHLIGHT: VISIT FROM LABOR SECRETARY MARTY WALSH

In May 2021, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh visited WRTP as part of his effort to advance public support and awareness of the Biden Administration's workforce development efforts, especially in relation to infrastructure. We were honored to host Secretary Walsh, Governor Tony Evers, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, Senator Tammy Baldwin, and Congresswoman Gwen Moore for a roundtable conversation with WRTP participants on how our programming—and quality, industry-led skills training programs like it— can transform lives. It was an emotional and celebratory day, as the six young women talked about their journeys, the barriers they have overcome, and the opportunities that have opened up to them as a result of our services and partnership network. Video footage from the event was so powerful and compelling that it was featured as part of the Biden Administration's effort to advance the JOBS bill.



### CONSTRUCTION

### MANUFACTURING



## SUCCESS STORY

*Stanek Tool has said she is a fantastic employee and they want more employees like her.*

### KATELYN BREWSTER MILWAUKEE WRTP | BIG STEP INDUSTRIAL APPRENTICE

Katelyn Brewster is a Tool & Die apprentice sponsored by WRTP | BIG STEP's Industrial Apprenticeship committee. Her journey to apprenticeship was a somewhat circuitous path. Katelyn's experience started in high school, where she took up welding and participated in SKILLS USA, a partnership of students, teachers, and industry that provides educational programs, events, and competitions supporting career and technical education in the nation's classrooms. After Katelyn and her team earned a few top finishes in the state, she knew her future career satisfaction would be found in the industrial trades.



While Katelyn explored going to Marquette University for an engineering degree, she decided against it because she did not want the heavy debt it would require.

Upon graduation Katelyn became a carpenter apprentice, but she only stayed in the program for six months, as she knew her heart was in the industrial area of building and engineering. She reached out to her brother-in-law, a tool

& die journeyman, who told her that she should go for an apprenticeship in tool & die. Katelyn was able to find employment and an employer who would sponsor her as a tool & die registered apprentice, and while she worked for a few years attending classes, she eventually stalled in the on-the-job learning component of her apprenticeship, as she ran into challenges identifying co-workers who were able to teach her. Her brother-in-law advised that she explore finding another employer who would work with her on completing her apprenticeship. Stanek Tool was very interested in Katelyn and her experience, so they hired her. Through their connection to the International Association of Machinists, Stanek Tools found its way to WRTP | BIG STEP's Industrial Apprenticeship Committee, and inquired if it could serve in the capacity of Katelyn's apprenticeship sponsor.

Though it took some time, Katelyn is now continuing her Tool & Die Apprenticeship, and her co-workers are training her on the job. Stanek Tool has said she is a fantastic employee and they want more employees like her. WRTP is proud to help all apprentices—especially women like Katelyn as they find their way to Journeyworker.



# MADISON

## EVENT HIGHLIGHT: YOUTH SUMMER CONSTRUCTION CAREER FAIR

The Madison team hosted a Youth Summer Construction Career Fair on July 27 & July 28, 2021. WRTP | BIG STEP coordinated the career fair to introduce youth to family-sustaining careers within the construction industry and as a solution for the labor shortage expected due to a shrinking workforce pool and retirements. We welcomed twelve (12) union trades and twelve (12) employers to highlight the career pathways within the union building trades to ninety-eight (98) students.

We could not have hosted this event without the generous sponsorship of our partners, including Walbec Group, Findorff, Boldt Company, Roofers & Waterproofers Local 11, Steamfitters Local 601, Plumbers Local 75, Elevator Constructors Local 132, IUPAT DC 7, Electricians Local 159, Laborers Local 464, Carpenters Local 314, Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, JP Cullen, InterCon Construction, Common Links Construction, and Harker Heating.



## SUCCESS STORY

### YAPHET GRAHAM SOUTHCENTRAL WRTP | BIG STEP TRAINING GRAD

In early 2021, COVID-19 ravaged Yaphet Graham's industry. He was left jobless and had to move from North Carolina to his former home of Wisconsin. He was also forced to leave his five-year-old son with his mother, but despite the agonizing decision, Yaphet knew he would succeed. In Wisconsin, Yaphet was on the cusp of being hired by Amazon when he realized he couldn't ignore his inner voice telling him to look into WRTP | BIG STEP. He now calls this decision one of the best he's made.

Although Yaphet had spent 20 years in foodservice, including management, he had no prior experience in construction. That didn't stop him from quickly forging a new path to become a plumber with WRTP | BIG STEP, completing hand and power tool training, learning construction math, and attaining OSHA 30 and First Aid CPR AED certifications. He graduated from WRTP | BIG STEP in June 2021 and has since been accepted into Plumbers Union Local 75 in Milwaukee. He has also secured an apprenticeship position with Horner Plumbing as a Laborer, set to begin in fall 2022.

Yaphet gave a heartfelt round of applause to the WRTP | BIG STEP South Central staff and trainers for their invaluable guidance. Yaphet urges others not to be afraid to bet on themselves; his own experience has changed his life and— even more importantly to Yaphet—his son's life.



*"Don't be afraid to bet on yourself because this experience has changed my life."*

# RACINE

## EVENT HIGHLIGHT: HORLICK LOFTS TOUR WITH LT. GOVERNOR MANDELA BARNES

In June 2021, Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes visited the Horlick Lofts project in Racine to meet with Mayor Cory Mason, CG Schmidt, Arteaga Construction, and developer Josh Jeffers. Also in attendance were Residency Works Program (RWP) certified workers who have utilized the City's RWP certification to skill-up and find employment in the construction industry. RWP is designed to promote the use of city residents as part of a contractor's or developer's workforce on certain city-funded construction and private development



Carlos Mateo, RWP Carpenter Apprentice, CG Schmidt



Mayor Cory Mason and Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes at the Horlick Lofts

## SUCCESS STORY

### TERELLUS BOLTON SOUTHEAST WRTP | BIG STEP TRAINING GRAD

Terellus's story began when he was a young man. Watching his father work hard to support him and his family, he knew that he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps. Like many of us, Terellus's journey wasn't the straight line he imagined for himself, and after dissatisfying dead-end jobs and involvement with the justice system, he knew he had to roll up his sleeves and commit to something better that would make him and his father proud.

It was advice from a good friend, Ms. Charnele Evans, that encouraged Terellus to call WRTP | BIG STEP. Charnele, a graduate of WRTP | BIG STEP, was enjoying her new career doing electrician work at the Racine Horlick - Belle City Square project.

After an introduction to staff at SE WRTP | BIG STEP in May of 2021, Terellus enrolled in WRTP | BIG STEP's roadbuilding construction training, where he learned industrial math and blueprint reading, completed First Aid & CPR courses, and completed hands-on learning using the Multi-Core Curriculum, an industry-recognized credential.

Terellus graduated in June, and in September, he began working for Walbec Construction as a Laborer Apprentice making \$25.75 an hour. He states that all those things before are just "history" and he is focused and excited about the future. Terellus wants to complete his Registered Apprenticeship, become a Journeyman, and eventually become a Heavy Equipment Operator.



*Like many of us, Terellus's journey wasn't the straight line he imagined for himself.*

## DONOR & GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

### ENTRY-LEVEL ROAD CONSTRUCTION

A Wisconsin Department of Transportation “Transportation Alliance for New Solutions” (TrANS) contract recipient, WRTP is funded and charged with developing new roadbuilding crews in the Southeast Region to ensure contractors have the talent necessary to advance projects safely and timely. TrANS is a talent pipeline and diversification tool that helps develop a new generation of skilled laborers for roadbuilding construction projects. A collaborative effort that combines the strengths of industry, labor, community-based organizations, and the State of Wisconsin, TrANS is one of WRTP’s signature programs. We are proud to have been selected by the state to help continue to ensure that our construction industry is comprised of talent that reflects our communities.



#### 2021 TrANS Stats

- 79 Milwaukee and SE Region residents completed their road construction training.
- 31 began their construction industry career with 3 entering their Registered Apprenticeship.
- 26 employers, including 22 union employers, sourced new hires from our TrANS road construction talent pipeline.
- The average hourly wage for a new hire was \$19.14.

### STRIVE

2021 was the first year WRTP | BIG STEP partnered with some its union partners to submit a grant application for support from the United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County under their Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement initiative. The award has meant we can work more deeply and intentionally with these unions to establish referral systems and support resources for people who reside in some of Milwaukee’s economically depressed neighborhoods and who want to connect to the promise and opportunity of a quality career in our construction skilled trades.



Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County

Thanks to:

- Operating Engineers Local 139
- International Union of Painters & Allied Trades IUPAT DC 7
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local Lodge 107
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2150
- Laborers International Union of North America Local No. 113

## FROM THE BOARD

To our industry and community partners, investors, and friends:

2021 was a historic year for WRTP | BIG STEP, as we welcomed our first female President and CEO, Lindsay Blumer, and first female Chief Operating Officer, Toni White. As a team, they have been presented unprecedented times, as the organization, much like the world, had to adjust operations and work from the dormancy of COVID into the different world that is emerging in its wake. Along with senior staff leadership, they have overseen new branding, a new website, new services and grants, a new annual fundraising event, and new partnerships—all while learning more about our industries and their stakeholders.

In all of that newness, we’ve also found that many things don’t change. Like years past, WRTP | BIG STEP has welcomed various dignitaries and politicians, but we are here for the future apprentices whom we are looking to serve and connect to high road employers. Their desire to establish a good life for their families and a solid, invigorating career pathway for themselves fuels our work and commitment to the mission, and every year we are humbled that they are entrusting us to help them achieve that future.

Our commitment to diversity and equity in our industries demands that we roll up our sleeves and engage at every level—in workplaces, neighborhoods, and union halls—and we are proud that WRTP | BIG STEP has long been on the forefront of doing intentional outreach, coaching, mentorship, and planning to build opportunities that mean every family can connect to regional prosperity. We are grateful to our investors for their belief and commitment, which allow us to continue to change lives in some of our state’s most diverse regions.

## RECOGNITIONS & RETIREMENTS

The WRTP staff would like to reflect on the service and leadership of its Board of Directors and extend a thank-you and best wishes to those who have transitioned from the board this year. Intentionally comprised of leaders in our industries from both the labor and management perspectives, our work and vision are always focused on supporting jobseekers and high road employers alike.

### RETIREMENTS:

Ross Winklbauer: WRTP, Treasurer; Retired  
Sub-District Director for the United Steelworkers District 2

Pat Stiff: WRTP, Co-Chair; Retired  
Vice President at WEC Energy Group



**THANK YOU TO ALL THE EMPLOYERS WHO HELPED BEGIN A NEW JOURNEY FOR OUR PARTICIPANTS  
BY HIRING WRTP | BIG STEP TALENT.**

1901 Inc. (formerly H&H Industries Inc.)  
A to Z Quality Fencing  
A-1 Excavating  
Advantage Refrigeration Industrial Inc.  
Air Temperature Services Inc.  
Aldridge Electric  
Alpine Plumbing  
American Asphalt  
American Sewer & Water  
American Sewer Services  
Arndorfer Construction  
Arteaga Construction Inc.  
AWS  
Badger Scaffold  
Balance Technologies Inc.  
Bassett Mechanical  
Bauer & Raether Builders Inc.  
Belonger Corporation Inc.  
Berghammer Construction Corporation  
Berglund Construction Co.  
Blair Fire Protection LLC  
Bonduelle USA Inc.  
Brandenberg Construction  
Braun Thyssenkrupp Elevator Madison  
Butters-Fetting Co. Inc.  
C.D. Smith Construction  
Capitol Underground  
Cargill Inc.  
Cattel Construction  
Common Links Construction LLC  
Conditioned Air Design Inc.  
Cornerstone Pavers  
CornerStone One Plumbing  
Creative Business Interiors  
CS&E  
Current Electric Co.  
Curtin Concrete Construction  
Dairyland Energy Solutions Inc.  
Dane County  
Dave Jones (Plumbing Contractor)  
Def Con  
Dickenschrauf Plumbing, Heating, & Cooling  
Dillett Mechanical Service Inc.  
Doral Corporation  
Edge Electric  
Electric Construction Inc.  
Emergency Fire & Water Restoration  
Empress Surfaces Floor covering  
Faith Technologies

First Electric  
Forward Electric  
General Heating & Air Conditioning  
Great Lakes Mechanical  
H & H Mechanical Contractors  
Handeland Flooring  
Harker Heating & Cooling Inc.  
Helm Manufacturing  
Helms Construction  
Hetzel-Sanfilippo Inc.  
Honeywell Inc.  
Horner Plumbing Co.  
Hunt and Collins Inc.  
Hunzinger Construction Company  
Hurt Electric  
Illingworth-Kilgust Mechanical  
Israel Heating & Cooling & Plumbing  
J&A Pohl  
J.F. Ahern Company  
J.H. Findorff & Son Inc.  
J.H. Hassinger Inc.  
Jahn & Sons  
JM Brennan Inc.  
Joe DeBelak Plumbing & Heating Company Inc.  
Johnson Controls  
Just Mechanical  
Klein-Dickert Co. Inc.  
KMI Construction  
Komatsu Mining Corp  
Kotze Construction Co. Inc.  
Krantz Electric  
Langer Roofing & Sheet Metal Inc.  
Leas Silter  
Lee Mechanical  
Lee Plumbing, Heating, Cooling & Electric  
Lemberg Electric Co.  
Livesey Painting Company  
M.A. Mortenson Company  
Martin Petersen Company  
Mattox Plumbing LLC  
Mavid Construction  
McHoes & Sons  
METCO  
Michael's Construction  
Mid City Corporation  
Middleton Construction Inc.  
Milwaukee Fire Department  
Milwaukee Ironworks  
Miron Construction

Monona Plumbing and Fire Protection Inc.  
Murawski Construction  
Nicholson Construction Company  
Nickels Electric  
Northcott Neighborhood House  
Northern Concrete Construction  
P L Freeman Company  
Parisi Construction Co.  
Payne & Dolan  
Pieper Electric Inc.  
Pieper Mechanical Inc.  
Preferred Electric  
Pro Electric Inc.  
ProAxis  
Rexnord Corporation  
Rockwell Automation  
Roman Electric  
S and C Trucking, LLC  
S&S Plumbing  
Sanchez Painting & Decorating Inc.  
Sargenian's Floor Coverings  
Schneider National Carriers Inc.  
Schranz Roofing  
SPE Inc.  
Staff Electric Company Inc.  
State Contractors Inc.  
State of Wisconsin  
Statz & Harrop Inc.  
Stoiber Electric Co. Inc.  
Superior Masonry Builders  
Superior Scapes  
T.V. John & Son  
Terra Engineering and Construction  
Thomas A. Mason Company Inc.  
Total Mechanical Inc.  
Trane Company  
Trierweiler Construction & Supply Co. Inc.  
Veit & Company Inc.  
VJS/Voss-Jorgensen-Schueler  
Walbec Group  
Walsh Masonry  
Walt Corporation  
Wellenstein & Sons Inc.  
Westphal & Co. Inc.  
White Glove  
Wisconsin Fire  
Zenith Tech Inc.