



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

Joe Parisi
County Executive

December 5, 2022
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Dane County Awards \$55,000 for 2022 Partners in Equity – Racial Equity & Social Justice Grant Recipients to Six Organizations

Six local agencies have been selected to receive the Tamara D. Grigsby Office of Equity and Inclusion's 2022 Partners in Equity (PIE) Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Grants, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced today. The grants are intended to address systemic racial inequities in one of the following areas as it relates to criminal justice: health (including pandemic health related responses), education, employment, and criminal justice.

"Through the PIE Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Grant Program, Dane County and partnering local organizations can help address racial inequities and work to ensure opportunity for all in our community," said County Executive Joe Parisi. "Congratulations to this year's recipients."

"I appreciate the work of this committee that partners with organizations in Dane County to increase access and opportunities to help improve the lives of all Dane County residents. The PIE Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Grant Program is an intentional commitment that hopes to support the amazing work of many of our local organizations in their efforts to fight against the systemic racial disparities that are faced," said Brenda González, Office of Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee member.

The 2022 PIE-RESJ Grant recipients include:

Centro Hispano – BECAS Scholarship Program (\$15,000)

The BECAS Scholarship Program at Centro Hispano is a community-wide effort (donors, students, Centro, and other partners) that aims to reduce the most significant barrier to higher education for Latinx students—financial need. The Centro BECAS scholarship program helps youth and families with a history of engagement with Centro make these transitions and overcome barriers through family wrap-around and scholarship support. The program prioritizes those who have demonstrated community leadership potential and profound commitment to engage and give back to the community, living Centro's values of interdependence and collective action. Once selected, students are supported with an annual stipend towards their educational expenses.

Midwest Mujeres – Be Bold and Network Program (\$5,000)

Through their online mentorship program, Midwest Mujeres connect, guide, and mentor Latinas and other Black and Brown women on business opportunities, online education, and presentation skills, so they can succeed in the workforce. Midwest Mujeres Collective is an online mentorship program for women of color that addresses systemic

racial inequities through education, in addition to addressing mental health and employment. Twenty-five percent (25%) of this project is dedicated to criminal justice for re-entry work for women who were formerly incarcerated. They also will provide and work with participants to address wellness in the workplace. This program offers a mentoring/coaching roadmap to help women of color (mentees) in Dane County reach their individual short- and longer-term career goals.

Simpson Street Free Press – SSFP (\$10,000)

The Dane County PIE grant will help address the ongoing education crisis caused by the pandemic. New SSFP projects in 2023 will deliver access and opportunity for more local kids. Students will receive individualized language arts instruction through a fascinating and fun writing-for-publication process. Students undertake STEM projects that build literacy skills and bolster academic confidence. Students will conduct research in authentic 21st century newsrooms. Students acquire transferable academic strategies, encounter predictable connections to the school day, work in teams, and practice job skills. Student reporters inspire young readers across Dane County. The SSFP approach to academics supports local schools.

Worker Justice – Construction Project (\$10,000)

The project is governed by Worker Justice Wisconsin (WJW), and is the grassroots organizing division of the Construction Council on Racial and Economic Justice (CCOREJustice). The CCOREJustice was established in June 2022 with the Building Trades Council of South Central Wisconsin and several trade unions to eliminate the practice of misclassifying workers as independent contractors in Dane County. Large contractor companies misclassify construction employees to avoid paying payroll taxes, benefits, and workers' compensation insurance, which may lead to unsafe working conditions and wage disparities. WJW and their partners work to assist individual workers harmed by misclassification. The project is geared to help workers who have suffered the consequences of misclassification and to prevent misclassification of workers.

WRPT Big Step Project – Connects to Construction Careers (\$10,000)

The program intentionally targets and serves justice-involved individuals within Dane County to prepare them for and directly connect them to employment opportunities within the skilled trades. This program is different from other programs because it is designed to address the unique needs and challenges of the re-entry population, as well as to provide solutions to the employment barriers. This includes individual assessments (cognitive, behavioral, career, academic), supportive remediation services, skills training, career coaching, and direct connections to employers looking to hire. Through community partnerships and guest speakers, the participants will have the opportunity to transparently voice their needs as well as develop concrete plans on how to resolve these needs.

YWCA, Warner Park, Elver Park, Meadowood – Restorative Justice Practices for Youth (\$5,000)

Through the creation of the youth circle keeper of practice and having young people trained to co-facilitate the circle process with a YWCA Madison Restorative Justice coordinator, youth referred (either by law enforcement or community member) will be able to meaningfully engage with peers in their community to build relationships, share their perspectives, and repair harm. Allowing youth to lead the healing and support process for each other is a powerful and developmentally appropriate way to shift power dynamics that exist between youth and caring adults. This creative approach to communication centers every voice equally and works to reduce the impact of existing hierarchy and power structures. By providing training and education to community/neighborhood center staff, community members, and parents/families, the YWCA can create a Restorative community of support for youth. Restorative Justice practices will be seeded in youth's homes, schools, and throughout their community in order to center their developmental, emotional, and social needs in ways that build relationships and opportunities for growth without punishment, exclusion, and the reliance on police.

To learn more about the Office of Equity and Inclusion and its mission, please visit: <https://oei-exec.countyofdane.com/>.

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