

“There are not a lot of funding opportunities that are tailored to student-equity of voice. This grant gave us an opportunity to focus on the students, and our young men appreciated that. **Students need to be the drivers.**”

– Nate Deans, Jr., BLMA

SUCCESS STORY

Critical Mentoring & College/Career READINESS



Capacity Building Grants

In 2023, Milwaukee Succeeds awarded \$400,000 in Partner Capacity Building Grants to five local youth-serving organizations: Community Schools Partnership at the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County, the Department of Black and Latino Male Achievement at Milwaukee Public Schools, Mentor Greater Milwaukee, SKY Schools, and Teach for America Milwaukee.

The funding, informed by discussions with Milwaukee Succeeds' youth ambassadors and the larger Youth Forward MKE Coalition, is intended to **expand the work of coalition partners and fuel their innovative youth-centered programming.** Each of the projects will be highlighted in their own success story.

About BLMA

The Department of Black & Latino Male Achievement (BLMA) works collaboratively to improve the outcomes of Black and Latino male students within Milwaukee Public Schools by challenging systems, structures, and spaces of oppression, and seeks to create conditions that promote greater success.

With their Capacity Building Grant, BLMA set out to break down barriers with three different projects that impacted over 200 students.



About the Initiatives

● CRITICAL MENTORING

BLMA started a **critical mentoring project** that would train high school students to be ambassadors with middle school students. Students were able to make connections and see a fraternity of brotherhood, with the older students discussing what it meant to be successful in high school.

● COLLEGE TOURS

22 youth traveled to North Carolina to **tour multiple college campuses** to better understand what the college experience would be like for them. Described as a phenomenal opportunity that helped solidify the importance of education, the students toured Historically Black Colleges and Universities across North Carolina, including an opportunity to connect with BLMA graduates now attending school there.

● DUAL ENROLLMENT

Students participated in **dual enrollment courses** at Marquette University and attended professional development opportunities like Data Day and Black Lives Matter Week of Action. BLMA staff were also able to partake in professional development opportunities, such as the Black Male Summit and beginning initial conversations about creating a teacher pipeline program.

Partners



WHAT WORKED

Stipends

Students who attended the dual enrollment courses or other professional development opportunities were awarded stipends for their time. Once students realized that they would be compensated, they became more passionate about the work and opportunities.

College Tour

Students were heavily impacted by the college tours and really understood the importance of post-secondary education.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Scaling and Developing Standard Procedures

Coordinating transportation to get students to and from events, developing processes to prepay for activities and other expenses related to the college tours and professional development opportunities, and garnering district support were all issues that could be improved for next iteration of the grant.



Witnessing students feeling heard and valued is not just rewarding – it's a testament to the transformative power of youth leadership and the profound impact it has on shaping their experiences and opportunities.

- Maria Hamidu, Milwaukee Succeeds