

**Executive Director
Milwaukee Succeeds
Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Milwaukee, Wisconsin**



Milwaukee Succeeds and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation has partnered with Spano Pratt Executive Search to identify the Executive Director. For a confidential conversation and to learn more about this opportunity please contact Jamie Pratt.

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Organization

Milwaukee Succeeds was launched by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation in 2011 as a way to unite the community around a common goal: bringing about lasting change to the way education works for children in Milwaukee. In 2019 they began to re-envision the work, and moved focus from direct service programming to long-term, systemic change. The events of 2020 made it clearer than ever — it was time to change.

Before the strategic shift in 2019, Milwaukee Succeeds focused on 11 different areas of educational importance. These priorities ranged from pre-school readiness to college completion. Although the goals had good intention, they knew they could have more of an impact if energy was focused on select areas of achievement. While still steadfast in the mission — to improve education for every child in every school, cradle to career — they narrowed the vision to two key areas: [Early Childhood Education](#) and [High School Success](#).

While Milwaukee Succeeds focuses on two specific areas of importance, there are principles and guidelines they follow to ensure our work is both ethical and effective. In order to advance equity in schools, they believe that students, parents and caregivers **MUST** be at the center of decision making. They also believe that systemic racism **MUST** be at the forefront of all our conversations. Anti-racism, creating space for community voice, and changing systems of traditional power are the sustaining principles of this mission.



Milwaukee Succeeds unites the community around a shared vision of success for every child, in every school, cradle to career. They achieve that vision by collaborating with partners on local and national levels.

Milwaukee Succeeds uses **collective impact** to approach systems change. This means:

1. Have a common agenda for change-making
2. Use the same methods of data collection as our partners
3. Take on different work to achieve a unified goal
4. Engage with partners to maintain trust and motivation
5. Have backbone staff to support the whole network

In partnership with nearly 70 other communities in the national [StriveTogether](#) network, the approach is racially centered, data driven, and guided by lived experience. The work at Milwaukee Succeeds is rooted in data, using community data and systems indicators to inform decision making. The goal is to continuously improve the ways they develop data-informed strategies and measure impact.



In 2021, Milwaukee Succeeds launched a new leadership structure, designed to share power and promote change in Milwaukee's education systems. The Leadership Table & Funders Collaborative use their influence to accelerate improvements, while the Early Childhood Education and High School Success Coalitions work to determine priorities, develop strategies, and bring about change!

The Milwaukee Succeeds Leadership Table is comprised of 22 cross-sector leaders from Milwaukee's Education community. This dynamic group champions the work of Milwaukee Succeeds by making connections that advance priority areas, removing barriers to education equity, and leveraging collective lanes of influence.

Position Profile

Milwaukee Succeeds is a broad-based, community collaboration that aims to improve educational outcomes for every child in Milwaukee, in every school, cradle to career. Using a data-driven process that focuses resources on high-impact strategies, Milwaukee Succeeds will begin to move the needle on what works for kids, and better position our children and our community for a successful future.

The Executive Director is responsible for strategically leading Milwaukee Succeeds in increasing the “social return on investment” the community realizes when investing resources in the success of children. The incumbent establishes and maintains a collective impact framework that engages community stakeholders in the acceleration of systems transformation using evidence-based practices and the continuous improvement process. This position enlists community leaders and the general public in adopting and driving the organization’s shared vision, mission and goals to aim to improve educational outcomes for every child in Milwaukee, in every school, cradle to career.

As a member of the Foundation’s Leadership Team (LT), the Executive Director of Milwaukee Succeeds serves as a member of GMF Leadership Team and contributes to advancing the strategic priorities of the Foundation. This position reports to and works closely with the CEO and other LT members to facilitate deeper engagement and co-investment with the Foundation’s long-term priorities and initiatives.

Key Deliverables

The key accountabilities of the Executive Director:

Strategic Development/Systems Change/Collective Impact

- Formulates and oversees execution of a comprehensive, effective Cradle to Career strategy that uses evidence-based drivers.
- Utilizes collective impact to shape and drive community efforts for positive change.
- Navigates through ambiguity, chartering a clear path for the community.
- Leverages opportunities for cross-functional, win-win solutions.
- Ensures that the strategy incorporates key aspects of the collective impact model (e.g., evidence-based practices, scaled growth, systemic change for sustainable results).

Leadership

- Supports the Milwaukee Succeeds Leadership Table.
- Serves as a thought leader.
- Aligns differing agendas and resources behind a common strategy.
- Leads a team of 10+ employees and team culture where all members are valued and role clarity is a priority.
- Supervises assigned department personnel. Includes the following responsibilities, but are not limited to hiring, training, scheduling, evaluating, and ensuring accuracy, timeliness, and the completion of all work performed by direct reports.

Racial Equity and Inclusion

- Ensures that racial equity centers the work and accountability for results.
- Integrates multiple disciplines to assess, obtain, develop, maintain and nurture corporate and social partnerships.
- Ensures the organizational environment is respectful, inclusive, establishes a sense of belonging and is culturally responsive in practice.

Philanthropic and Public Sector Investment

- Fund development experience essential--individual, institutional, public sector.
- Garner sustainable financial support by gaining & maintaining credibility in the community.
- Leads and manages an effective fund/resource development process.

Financial Oversight

- Allocates funding using cost benefit analysis to ensure an effective return on investment.
- Develops and manages annual budget.

Non-Essential Duties

- Serves on appropriate local and national, boards, community task forces and committees.
- Performs other duties (or functions) as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will have a blend of professional experience and personal attributes. Some of the most important have been identified as:

Education & Experience. Bachelor's degree in education, business, public policy non-profit/government management or related field. A minimum of ten years of experience in leadership roles. Demonstrated experience building multi-disciplined teams across all levels. Data awareness and knowledge of a continuous improvement model a plus. Must have a passion for, experience with, and a foundational understanding of collective impact methodology. Familiarity and competency around leading nonprofit organizations a plus. As an education-focused collective impact partnership, it is essential that the ideal candidate have proven experience and familiarity with the education landscape in Milwaukee. Fund development experience preferred. Must be a seasoned, adept networker who is able to build relationships.

- *Leadership Skills.* Possesses self-confidence and a unique perspective to navigate through ambiguity. Must be able to independently make strategic decisions, generate innovative ideas and solutions, and multitask due to a wide variety of tasks and constantly changing priorities. Demonstrated experience building and leading teams, including hiring, developing, and when necessary, transitioning talent. A big picture thinker, effective in strategic planning, able to articulate vision and implement direction to both internal and external stakeholders. Passionate and committed to the mission. While self-confident, must have a humble leadership style that inspires confidence and creates trust. Must have the ability to rally people around a cause. Able to diplomatically manage multiple and complex priorities in a variety of settings. A values-driven leader with a high level of integrity. Action-oriented and innovative approach to leading an organization. One who rolls up their sleeves and gets out of their office.
- *Interpersonal & Communication Skills.* The Executive Director must have well-developed communication skills, both oral and written, in order to engage at multiple levels in a variety of organizations. A visionary that is adept at communicating the future direction to diverse audiences. Must be a good listener. Able to effectively develop and manage relationships with a diverse array of partners that play different and divergent roles in organizations and the community. Possess strong conflict resolution skills. Able to build strong working relationships with Milwaukee Succeed's Leadership Table, staff, business leaders, public sector leaders at city, county and state, community organizations, funders, and volunteers. An experienced public speaker with the capacity to engage, inspire and motivate. One who models a deep respect for others. Self-aware, energetic, intellectually curious, and inspiring. Able to communicate a complex concept simply and concisely.
- *Business Acumen.* Must possess the business and financial skills to effectively lead a nonprofit organization. Familiarity with operational processes and procedures. Experience in budget preparation, financial management and internal controls. Critical decision-making and analytical skills are essential. A proven background in establishing, communicating and implementing plans to reach organizational goals is required. Able to identify gaps and opportunities to improve ROI. Ability to think on one's feet and process information quickly while problem solving.

- *Organizational Effectiveness.*
Skilled at building consensus and achieving buy-in across constituents with diverse views. Adept at skillfully managing a variety of dynamics and personalities. Self-motivated, driven and proactive. Able to manage conflict by bringing all parties to an agreed upon solution and then hold all accountable.

- *Equity-Mindedness.*
Possesses and demonstrates a strong appreciation and understanding of the core principles and practices of diversity, inclusion, equity and racial justice. Is willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the actions and behaviors of the organization (including its staff, key stakeholders and partners), as well critically reassess their own and the organization's practices. Is also race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of unjust and exclusionary practices in American institutions and society.

Location: Milwaukee, WI

In Milwaukee, you'll find urban living and a Midwest ambiance combine to provide an ideal work-life balance for modern living. Short commute times, big city amenities, diverse and affordable neighborhoods, below average cost of living, an abundance of natural resources and a nationally recognized education system all come together during an unprecedented time of opportunity and growth. The Milwaukee Region is made up of five counties in southeastern Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, Washington and Racine – that have a combined population of nearly 1.8 million people.

Known as the City of Festivals, Milwaukee hosts its world-famous [Summerfest](#) music festival each summer on Milwaukee's lakefront. The 11-day celebration of great music and food attracts more than 800,000 attendees. Milwaukee's diverse ethnic heritage is celebrated with major ethnic festivals each summer, including Festa Italiana, [German Fest](#), [Irish Fest](#), [Mexican Fiesta](#), [Polish Fest](#), [Indian Summer](#) and [Bastille Days](#). Each of these three-day events attract tens of thousands of revelers who come to celebrate the unique music, foods and cultures of the people who call the Milwaukee Region home.

Milwaukee is among a handful of medium-size cities that features an opera company, ballet and a symphony (which recently moved into its brand-new home in a historic movie theater that has been renovated). It also has a vibrant music scene with venues of all sizes that can accommodate everything from emerging acts to today's rock stars.



To see how Milwaukee Succeeds is working, please watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdLMGmq4FQI>
To learn more about Milwaukee Succeeds, please visit the website: <https://www.milwaukeesucceeds.org/>

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