

Milwaukee County Building Bridges Small Business Grant Awardees

- **Cactus Club**, an artist-run, queer-owned arts and performance venue located at 2469 South Wentworth Avenue in the City of Milwaukee's Bay View neighborhood, is advancing the first phase of its long-planned Accessibility Initiative: installing a front entrance ramp to make the over 140-year-old building fully accessible to all patrons, staff, and artists. The project includes a 20+ foot ramp with concrete construction, powder-coated railings, a new ADAcompliant front door with push button, and a distinctive rock-and-tile mosaic by local artist Kate Klingbeil. Cactus Club has long fundraised for this project, including hosting a benefit concert featuring music legend Jack White. The Building Bridges grant will help push Cactus Club over the edge to complete their renovations. In preparation, the club is also upgrading its water main from one to six inches to support future sprinkler installation, which is part of a second phase that will improve bathroom, stage, and greenroom accessibility. These improvements will not only meet universal design standards but also serve as a visible commitment to inclusion in creating a welcoming, inspiring, and functional space for the diverse community that Cactus Club serves.
- **The Amani Place**, a brick-and-mortar event space located on North 35th Street and West St. Paul Avenue in the City of Milwaukee, is creating a space for the community to come together. Owner Briana Redmond will use the Building Bridges grant to expand their outdoor area by planting trees, improving landscaping, and building a deck for outdoor events. To help increase foot traffic, Amani Place will also design and install branded signage with lights to enhance the street appeal. Finally, a majority of this grant will be used to renovate ADA-accessible restrooms with new tiling, ventilation, and modern fixtures.
- **Redacted Escape Rooms**, founded by two industry veterans with nine years of combined experience, is bringing a cutting-edge escape room experience to the City of West Allis. Unlike traditional escape rooms with simple combination locks, Redacted Escape Rooms will offer games and experiences that will feature technology like magnet sensors, RFID chips, electromagnets, and solenoids to create interactive puzzles that react in real time and keep players engaged. With the Building Bridges grant, Redacted Escape Rooms will purchase and install a prominent sign to attract customers from the shared parking lot with nearby high-traffic businesses like Target and Piggly Wiggly, increasing visibility and helping establish their presence in the community. Redacted Escape Rooms is located at 10236 West National Avenue in West Allis.

- **Brim Cafe and Catering**, which opened in 2014 as a catering business, is now expanding to a new location in the City of Milwaukee. The Building Bridges grant will help the owners design and build a new café that will feature breakfast and lunch menus with weekly specials, as well as include espresso and smoothie bars. They have already made a name for themselves by being the preferred caterer for the Milwaukee War Memorial Center, Medical College of Wisconsin, Birch, and many more. Their main café location is located in the Honey Creek Corporate Center at 125 S. 84th Street in Milwaukee, and they also have locations at 330 Eats at 330 E. State Street in Milwaukee, and Brim Cafe & Catering at Schlitz Park at 1555 N. River Center Drive in Milwaukee. The new Brim Cafe will be located at 620-640 West Lincoln Avenue, right across the street from Kosciuszko Park.
- **Plant Joy Deli** is an expansion of their current vegan meal delivery service, which will become the flagship location for their plant-based food movement in the City of Wauwatosa. This 100% vegan commercial kitchen will supply fresh and frozen “heat and eat” meals, homemade vegan meats and cheeses, daily specials, and catering six days a week. Fresh deli items and daily specials will drive in-store traffic and help promote the new deli. The marketplace will offer local vegan goods from Wisconsin vendors. Through the Building Bridges grant, Plant Joy Deli will upgrade their kitchen with better drainage, a three-compartment sink, mop sink, ice machine, air fryers, and more. They will also work on interior and facade improvements, including new paint, flooring, woodwork, counters, and electric signage on the front to increase curb appeal. Plant Joy Deli will be located at 6108 West Bluemound Road in Wauwatosa.
- **Cloud 9 Workshop** is a City of Milwaukee-based community art studio where children and families can make, create, and connect. The Building Bridges grant will fund updates to the building after the owner, Elizabeth-Kelcey Kalumbula, purchased it following eight years of renting. These improvements will include all new flooring, improved plumbing and electrical, new windows, roofing, and a new signage. The Cloud 9 Workshop is looking to improve the customer experience with better air flow and lighting that will help the business remain competitive in the market. They have become a staple in their neighborhood, and with this grant, will be able to continue giving back. Cloud 9 Workshop is located at 5205 West North Avenue in the Uptown neighborhood near Washington Park.
- **Twelve29 Lounge**, located at 1229 Milwaukee Avenue in the City of South Milwaukee, is undergoing a full transformation from two smaller businesses into one open-concept lounge. The 100-plus-year-old building has been completely gutted

to pursue major structural work, as well as the full replacement of plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems. Renovations include new windows, doors, insulation, drywall, flooring, lighting, bar installation, furniture, and décor, along with updated security and signage. The Building Bridges grant will also cover professional-grade bar equipment, glassware, and shelving to complete the space. These improvements will create an elegant, yet affordable destination for cocktails, mocktails, and community gatherings, with the goal of making Twelve29 a premier local social hub.

- **Kismet Activations (Spirit of '85)** is a brand-new restaurant and bar located in the City of Milwaukee's Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District at 2213 North MLK Jr. Drive. They are working to bring together cultures and generations to enjoy a shared history between both the Native American and the African American communities through music, food, and entertainment. The Building Bridges grant will go towards a front marquee, upper-level bar, back bar, and lighting accents throughout the building. Owners Julie Lukas and Paul Burgess are hoping to create a welcoming addition in this vibrant community.
- **Uplifting Mansion** is a historic building located at 3121 West Wisconsin Avenue in the City of Milwaukee that is enhancing accessibility and expanding event capabilities with the construction of an ADA-compliant deck and ramp system. Through the Building Bridges grant, this investment will make the first floor fully accessible to all guests, aligning with the organization's mission to foster inclusive entrepreneurship and community programming. The project will also create three new outdoor event spaces, streamline vendor and catering access, and seamless indoor-outdoor flow for weddings, corporate events, and neighborhood gatherings. By increasing their versatility and attracting a wider range of bookings, the deck and ramp will generate new revenue streams to sustain affordable workspace for social entrepreneurs and mission-driven businesses, while preserving and celebrating Milwaukee's historic architecture.
- **All Goods** is a vintage clothing store based in Milwaukee County that specializes in curated vintage apparel. Ali Acevado, the owner of All Goods, purchased and is renovating an old, vacant laundromat on Greenfield Avenue in the City of West Allis, where he will move his business in the coming months. The City of West Allis is supporting the project with a low-interest loan. The Building Bridges grant will be used for the building's renovations, including structural and foundation work, electrical, plumbing, and more. The Building Bridges grant will help activate a

vacant, blighted building in a key commercial corridor to create jobs and generate local economic activity.

- **Allah Mode, LLC**, a small business offering holistic wellness services, recently moved into a new brick-and-mortar space at 1942 N Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Drive. Their services include sound therapy, reiki, yoga workshops, practitioner certification classes, as well as retail products such as handmade jewelry and wellness products. Owner Melissa Blue Mohammed has also contracted with the City of Milwaukee Office of Community Wellness and Safety to offer free trainings, community events, summer camp, and 1-on-1 services to referred clients who have recently been exposed to violence. Renovations to the new space have included HVAC systems improvements, electrical wiring, drywall, flooring, custom shelving, acoustic wall panels, ceiling clouds for sound quality, and a privacy fence in the backyard to facilitate outdoor programming. The Building Bridges grant will help complete the final phase of buildout.
- **Tootsie's Tea**, a Native, Hispanic, woman-owned business, specializes in flavorful, small-batch loose leaf tea made with locally grown and global ingredients. In addition to retail tea blends and accessories, they offer tea blending workshops, host tastings, and fulfill wholesale orders for cafés, offices, and wellness programs like diabetes prevention. Their new space at 2406 W. Clybourn Avenue will utilize a previously vacant space in the neighborhood, as well as combine their production, packaging, and kitchen space with administrative offices, along with additional room for a new storefront and workshop space. Owner Lizz Tsosie Stachura plans to use the Building Bridges grant to finalize needed renovations to the building that will help the company create a welcoming space and foster a vibrant commercial corridor in a previous industrial area.
- **IV Generations Holdings LLC** is a high-end event venue and creative studio space set to launch in a beautifully reimagined historic warehouse at 4930 N. 32nd Street in Milwaukee's Old North neighborhood. The new event space branded as “V on 32nd” will transform a former industrial structure into an upscale, technologically advanced event hall that is uniquely positioned to offer elegant event rentals for weddings, corporate functions, private concerts, and community events, alongside creative studio spaces for recording artists, podcasters, and content creators. The Building Bridges grant will provide needed support to start interior renovations, carry out tree removal and site clearing efforts, and launch large-scale renovations needed to complete the project.

- **Mimosa**, a community-driven breakfast and brunch concept that first opened in 2017, is known for locally sourced ingredients, scratch-made dishes, and impactful community giving. Owner Apostoli Evreniadis is now relocating his original restaurant location to a new, larger space at 7228 South 27th Street in Oak Creek, which will double seating capacity and add a 200-person banquet room. Building Bridges grant funding will help provide new exterior signage to attract guests, signal the move to the community, and launch this next chapter with strong visibility and impact.
- **HoneyBee Sage Wellness & Apothecary Cafe** is an herbal beverage cafe that combines the unique concept of an apothecary, tea cafe, and alcohol-free craft cocktail lounge. They have been nominated as “the best customer service experience” on King Drive, nationally praised by the *Wine Enthusiast* for their alcohol-free cocktails, and praised regionally for their commitment to supporting the alcohol-free movement. The community-centered wellness business in Milwaukee’s Bronzeville neighborhood is now expanding to a second location at 207 E. Buffalo Street in the Third Ward. This will create a new gathering place where residents can learn, connect, and access wellness resources in an inclusive and supportive environment. The Building Bridges grant will help support renovations, equipment, and other costs of opening the new location.
- **Kennedys Circle of Wellness** provides mental health and wellness services to the Milwaukee community. Dr. Sha’Juan Kennedy, clinical director and founder of the organization, is dedicated to holistic healing, economic empowerment, and community restoration. Their new project involves the transformation of a commercial property at 909 W. Burleigh Street into a community wellness center focused on yoga, group mental health sessions, and holistic healing services. This new center will serve as a safe, trauma-informed space for residents to participate in wellness practices that support emotional regulation, community connection, and overall mental health—particularly for those impacted by chronic stress, trauma, or systemic inequity. The Building Bridges grant will help fund renovations for the building, including buildout of the space, plumbing and electrical work, HVAC, and other expenses to create a new, healing space in the community.
- **Nail Studio Aesthetics**, a full-service beauty salon dedicated to enhancing natural beauty through expert care and personalized services. Nail Studio Aesthetics is also an academy providing classes and services to teach and certify new aspiring beauty artists. Nail Studio Aesthetics is relocating and renovating a new salon space at 1901 S. 26th Street, to create a modern, functional and welcoming environment.

Funds from the Building Bridges grant will help support renovation costs such as flooring, plumbing, paint and other renovation work.

- **Ni Burmese LLC** at 2140 S. Kinnickinnic Avenue, one of the only authentic Burmese restaurants in the region, serves as both a cultural hub for the local Burmese community and a destination for anyone seeking diverse, flavorful cuisine. Their mission is to create a warm, inclusive environment where everyone can experience Burmese hospitality and traditional dishes made from family recipes. Building Bridges grant funds will support critical updates, repairs, and maintenance to the restaurant and kitchen space.
- **TMTea Boba**, a take-out beverage shop launching soon at 3174 S. 27th Street, will offer plant-based boba tea, fresh fruit smoothies, flavored milk teas, and specialty drinks, with a focus on high-quality ingredients and creative flavors. While they have completed major construction on the new location, the Building Bridges grant will provide additional funding for construction work and equipment to complete the project and start providing boba and specialty drinks for customers.
- **Julie Mae's Southern Cooking** offers Southern cooking in a fast-food setting. Their location at 7604 W. Burleigh Street, in a former Pizza Hut building, is set to open soon as a southern style food take-out restaurant. Renovations to the space include signage and painting of the building, new stainless steel exhaust hoods, tile flooring, and new restaurant equipment. The Building Bridges grant will help cover this work to complete the project, activate an empty storefront, and bring a new dining option to the neighborhood.