



# FIVE STAR BUSINESS CENTER

Akyaa Smith, among other things, is an entrepreneur, certified child care professional, and community-based residential facilitator. She has owned everything from a beauty supply store to a 4-star child care business and lived a life full of unimaginable pain, joy, and gratitude. She credits her mom with her journey. "My mom is now 25 years sober and is the Director of one of my day cares. She is one of the best things that happened to me because without her struggles, where would I be?"

Formerly an educational training center that provided vocational training and certification opportunities for those interested in child and adult care, **Five Star**, with WWBIC's help, became **Five Star Business Center**.

"With WWBIC's help, I realized that this was more than a training center-- I was creating a business center. WWBIC helped me align what God was telling me all along: it was a puzzle... I was finished with half of the puzzle but did not know how to put the other half together. WWBIC helped me put the puzzle together."

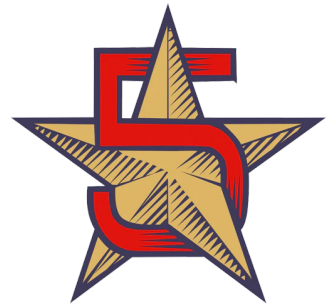
Her own extensive experience combined with WWBIC and Black Business Boost's business training, the SPARC growth accelerator scholarship, one-on-one business strategy coaching, and one-on-one coaching led Smith to turn what was an educational training center into the holistic business center she had envisioned in her dreams. Now, **Five Star Business Center** not only offers educational training and opportunities for certification in health care but is also a non-profit community resource center and 'business incubator' for young entrepreneurs. It connects them to resources such as WWBIC and provides a virtual mailbox and physical co-working space in which they can test their ideas without having to commit to rent.

“WWBIC helped me align what God was telling me all along: it was a puzzle... WWBIC helped me put the puzzle together!”

"We welcome everyone. I want to help all people— people who have been mistreated or over-looked. I am safe for them. WWBIC not only gave me a chance, but also everyone who comes to **Five Star**. I want everyone to win. All I have to do is get up, make it to **Five Star**, and I find peace there."



<https://fivestartrainingmke.com/>



Five Star Site

**Owner:**  
Akyaa  
Smith

**Business  
Location:**  
Milwaukee

**Employees  
at Business:**  
2

**WWBIC Support:**  
Black Business Boost



**Black Business Boost**

*Training and Lending Program  
to Strengthen and Expand  
Black Business Ventures*

# WWBIC

WWBIC is a leading innovative economic development corporation "Putting Dreams to Work" since 1987 by assisting micro-enterprise and small businesses throughout our 72 counties in Wisconsin. WWBIC opens the doors of opportunity by providing underserved individuals who are interested in starting, strengthening, or expanding businesses with access to critical resources such as responsible financial products and quality business and personal financial training. WWBIC serves all individuals with a focus on those who face barriers in accessing business financing and training support, including women, people of color, veterans, and lower-wealth individuals.

In 2022, WWBIC served **5,233 clients** while approving **\$10,613,333** in capital and closing **\$8,511,667** in small business loans. WWBIC supported nearly 100 Kiva (crowd-sourced) loans totaling \$720,000 and provided \$240,000 of forgivable loans to 25 businesses through Community Development Block Grant support. WWBIC's clients started, strengthened or expanded **2,162 businesses** creating or retaining **5,019 jobs**. All of this work is made possible by the WWBIC team and volunteers who provided 24,495 counseling and training hours.

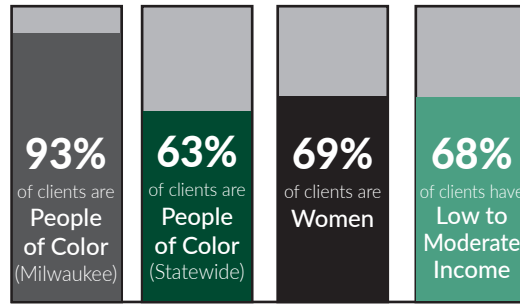
During the health and economic crisis, WWBIC was a front-line economic first responder and leveraged millions of dollars in additional COVID-related resources for small businesses including **\$4.86 million** in pass-through grants, **\$2.7 million** in SBA Paycheck Protection Act (PPP) funds, and **\$2.2 million** in state and local forgivable loan funds. At the same time, \$18.4 million (2020: \$4.3 million; 2021: \$5.9 million; 2022: \$8.2 million) was dispersed in WWBIC's loan portfolio serving over 5,000 unduplicated individuals annually with financial products and technical assistance.

*Thank you to all who made this impact possible!*

**Five regional offices across Wisconsin:**  
**GREATER MILWAUKEE • NORTHEAST •**  
**SOUTH CENTRAL • SOUTHEAST • SOUTHWEST**

[wwbic.com](http://wwbic.com)

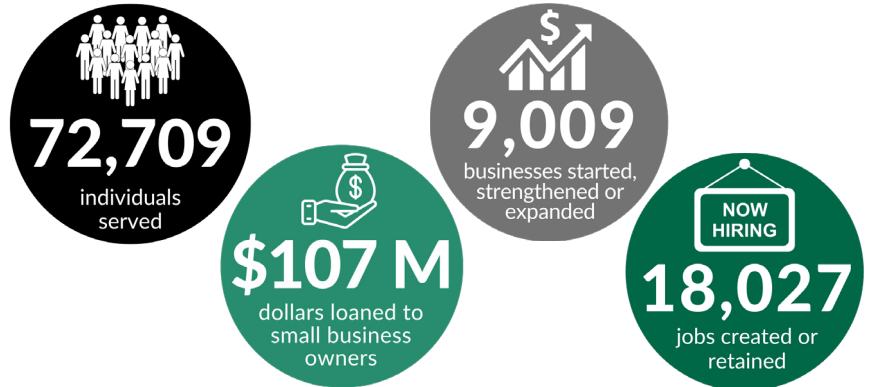
## ...by the numbers



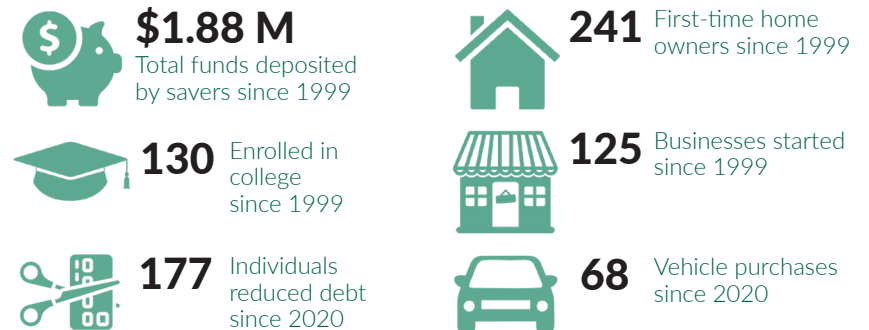
### WHO WE SERVE



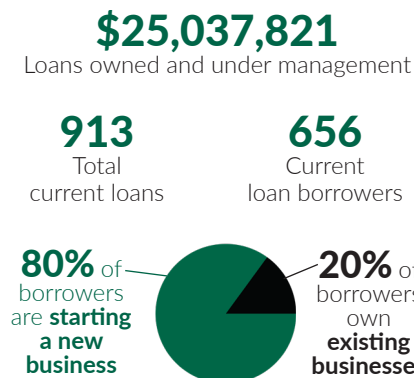
### SOCIAL PERFORMANCE Since 1987



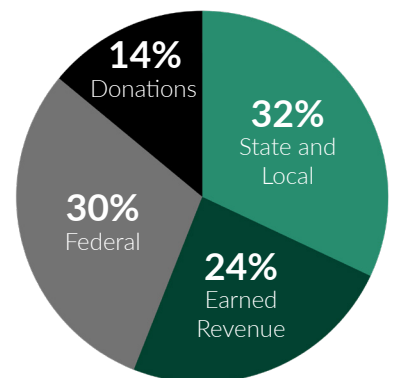
### FINANCIAL WELLNESS & MATCH SAVINGS



### PORTFOLIO SNAPSHOT



### FUNDING SOURCES



Auditor: Ritz Holman, LLP

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