



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2022

Laying the Foundation

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Fiscal Year 2022 was a transformative year for Bestwork. Our new President & CEO, Jon Katz, began the implementation of his vision to achieve our strategic goals that call for the execution of an operational paradigm shift, creation of a person-centered organizational culture, and developing robust community engagement and a strong culture of philanthropy.

Jon has attracted extraordinary talent to form a strong, experienced leadership team. Under his leadership, he is fostering a new culture and an environment of success. Characterized by positive leadership, commitment of necessary tools and resources, application of best practices and data-driven decisions, and a participative team approach to management and oversight, Bestwork is growing and evolving from a small, textile operation into a more diversified, high performing organization.

We are already seeing the growth of new lines-of-business in differing market segments. The emphasis on operational excellence is driving increased efficiency, while our continuing focus on customer service is building trust and corporate credibility.

Bestwork is investing in our most important asset — human capital. We are offering extensive training, job coaching, upskilling, professional development, and upward mobility opportunities for our blind and visually impaired employees.

Finally, we have relaunched and revitalized our Board Fundraising Committee that is committed to major donor cultivation in support of our strategic initiatives.

The groundwork has been laid for continuing the transformation in FY 2023. We are very excited about what lies ahead.



John D. Shaw
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



MISSION

Bestwork Industries for the Blind, Inc. is a private not-for-profit corporation dedicated to improving the quality of life for people who are blind by providing training and employment opportunities in a supportive work environment.

TOP

*Chairman of the Board,
John D. "Jack" Shaw, on
the floor at Bestwork.*

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

The focus for 2022 was to lay the foundation for growth and diversification, supporting the shift from a self-sustaining manufacturing facility to a full-service social enterprise.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) recertified Bestwork as a place of competitive, integrated employment (CIE), which allows CBVI to refer clients to the agency for jobs. We launched our e-Commerce site, BestworkSupplyCenter.com, we secured kitting, packaging and light-assembly work, and we began three new military apparel programs, all of which are creating jobs, upskilling, and upward mobility opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired (BVI). Eight of our BVI employees received training to become certified in document scanning and digital imaging, which will open the door to an entirely new line of business.

We are also deeply invested in the professional development of our workforce. We are offering new jobs and further training employees who wish to broaden their talents. We created two new customer service roles to support BestworkSupplyCenter, both operated by BVI employees. We trained two employees in the art of recruiting to help Bestwork's hiring efforts, established two new Team Lead positions in kitting and document scanning, and filled a BVI warehouse specialist position. We also hired an accounting manager who is visually impaired.

Bestwork's brand recognition is also growing. Our extensive, aggressive outreach program is gaining us notoriety in the community and attracting increased philanthropic support to our program through grants and donations. And, if that's not enough, we are creating the framework for the establishment of a Sight Center that will provide low vision, assistive technology, and vocational rehabilitation services to a largely underserved community in South Jersey.

I am immensely proud of my staff and the exceptional employees of Bestwork. And I am extremely enthusiastic about Bestwork's tremendous future as we enter our breakout year in 2023!



Jon Katz
PRESIDENT & CEO

TOP

Jon Katz, in his second year as President & CEO of Bestwork, on the production floor.

RIGHT

Employee Wilfredo Martinez sewing tool bags for the General Services Administration (GSA).



GROWING AND DIVERSIFYING OPERATIONS
WITH TWO NEW LINES OF BUSINESS

Kitting line provides new job opportunities for Bestwork employees

Bestwork started a new line of business, kitting, after being awarded a contract by DLA-Troop Support (DLA-TS) for the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Achievement Medal Set. The set is presented to Air Force personnel in recognition for outstanding achievement(s) and includes a case, two achievement medals (large and mini), an achievement ribbon medal, and achievement lapel pin.

The kitting line consists of five employees who are blind or visually impaired who were trained to pack, sort, and assemble the sets for shipping and delivery. Kitting is the process of organizing separate items and packaging them into a single grouping. It is a technique where individual but related products are packaged and shipped together as a single bundle. Kitting is often used in manufacturing and assembly operations to consolidate inventory and simplify the shipping process. Some examples are medical and first aid kits, tool kits, brake kits, hygiene kits and personal protection equipment kits, just to name a few.

TOP

Bestwork employees working on the new kitting line, assembling medal sets for the U.S. Air Force.

RIGHT

Fully assembled U.S. Air Force Achievement Medal sets completed by the kitting line.



Bestwork launches Bestwork Supply Center, an e-Commerce store

In addition to kitting, Bestwork recently launched another new line of business, Bestwork Supply Center, an e-Commerce store serving New Jersey businesses and beyond.

The online store – BestworkSupplyCenter.com – features more than 50,000 items, including office and breakroom products, janitorial and sanitation supplies, furniture, tools, safety products, and more. Pricing is competitive with some of those big-name stores, and we offer customers free shipping and next-day delivery.

Purchases support the training and employment of people who are blind or visually impaired, which is the mission of Bestwork. In fact, our e-Commerce site's customer service team is operated by two people with visual impairments!



TOP

Pictured here is David Levin, one of Bestwork Supply Center's Customer Service representatives.

RIGHT

Alfonso Harrell works with David Levin for Bestwork Supply Center. Together, they provide excellent customer service for customers.



2022 SNAPSHOT

121

EMPLOYEES

Bestwork's workforce grew from 106 employees to 121.

82

PERCENT

Eighty-two percent of Bestwork employees are BVI and working on AbilityOne contracts.

9

NEW CONTRACTS

Bestwork was awarded nine contracts in 2022.

336,741

TOTAL PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED

198,288

Military
Garments

102,817

General Service
Administration
Products

28,898

Commercial
Garments

6,738

ACCSES NJ
Products

RIGHT

Bestwork employee William "Ike" Holden pictured here is adding pull cords into the Navy fleece jacket.

BOTTOM

Anthony Rodriguez works on the Navy fleece jack line, performing one of the most complex operations—sewing multiple panels to complete the front and back portions of the jacket.





ABOVE

*Bestwork employee and
Agency Advocate Arlene Still
works on the ECWCS line.*

**Arlene will receive
education and training
on public policy,
and will represent
Bestwork and serve as
an empowered voice
within the disability
community.**

2022 HIGHLIGHT

Employee Arlene Still Named as Bestwork's First Agency Advocate

This is a position held through National Industries for the Blind's (NIB) Advocates for Leadership and Employment Program. Over a two-year period, Arlene and fellow Advocates from NIB associated agencies will receive education and training on public policy, interacting with legislators, communication strategies, and relevant issues impacting people who are blind. At the conclusion of training, Arlene will represent Bestwork and serve as an empowered voice within the disability community. This is a cause near and dear to her heart, especially after losing her vision in 2007.

Arlene began working at Bestwork in 2016 after learning about the organization during a ride Access Link. She is a trained Machine/Sewing Operator, and has worked on various textile and apparel lines such as the Black Fleece for the Navy and the Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (ECWCS) base layer for the Army. She now works on the ECWCS line, trimming excess threads from garments after sewing, using scissors, nippers, or automatic trimming machines.

Arlene enjoys the freedom working provides. Prior to her vision loss, she owned and operated PR Plumbing and Heating in Lawnside, NJ, a venture she ran with her son. After she lost her vision, she left the business. Arlene held additional roles including an Office Manager with Plumb Right Plumbing and Heating and worked as a Customer Service Representative for Commerce Bank.

She also has a profound love of learning. Arlene earned an associate degree as a Chemical Lab Technician from Burlington County College and an associate degree in Alcohol & Drug Counseling from Camden County College. She resides in Lawnside, NJ and is an active member in her faith community, and enjoys jogging, walking, going out to eat, and socializing with friends.

BELOW

Warren Walker, seated and smiling at his work station.



2022 HIGHLIGHT

Bestwork Employee Wins National Award for Job Excellence

Bestwork employee Warren Walker received national recognition for winning National Industries for the Blind's (NIB) 2022 Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year. He is the first Bestwork employee to win this award.

The prestigious award recognizes the outstanding work and achievements of people who are blind working at NIB-associated agencies across the nation. It is named after Dr. Peter J. Salmon, a man who greatly impacted the passage of the Wagner-O'Day Act, and was instrumental in the formation of NIB.

"I'm extremely honored to have been selected for this award," said Warren. "To be recognized with so many other incredible honorees is extremely humbling. I'm thankful to my family and Bestwork for their never-ending support."

Warren lost his vision in 2002, which ended his 20-year career as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), but it led him to Bestwork, the largest employer for people who are blind or visually impaired in New Jersey. He celebrated his 20th Anniversary at the agency in September 2022.

As a husband and father, Warren was driven to provide for his family regardless if he had vision or not. He began working as a sewing operator after completing Bestwork's training program. He learned to operate a sewing machine and sew military garments the agency manufactures for the Department of Defense. After 13 years, Warren's finger dexterity diminished so he transitioned to a packing role and has held this role ever since.



“

I'm extremely honored to have been selected for this award... I'm thankful to my family and Bestwork for their never-ending support.

”

—WARREN WALKER

9

“

I'm proud of the work I do and I'm honored to work with an incredible group of people.

”

—STEVEN FISHER

Warren became the person Bestwork staff and his colleagues could depend on, often listening and providing helpful guidance or words of wisdom. He rose among the plant staff as the 'voice of the people,' volunteering to serve on the Employee Relations and Safety Committees, and was appointed chair of the Quality Work Environment (QWE) for several years. These committees discuss employee concerns and provide actionable solutions for resolution.

“This is a tremendous honor for Warren,” said President and CEO Jon Katz. “Warren’s journey to this moment has not been an easy one, but it demonstrates grace through resilience. He is a shining example of hard work and dedication, not just to the agency, but also to his colleagues. And to be recognized for his achievements on a national level is exciting. We can’t wait to celebrate with him.”

This is also a big honor for Bestwork, as it is the first time anyone from the agency has won.

Warren was celebrated during the Focus Forward NIB/NAEPB Training Conference and Expo in October 2022.

2022 HIGHLIGHT

Steven Fisher Honored as Bestwork’s Employee of the Year

People lose their sight for a variety of reasons. In Bestwork employee Steven Fisher’s case, it was due to gun violence. Thankfully, he survived, but the impact of the shot damaged his optic nerves and his sight was gone.



ABOVE

*2022 Employee of the Year
Steven Fisher works on the
Navy Physical Fitness Pant.*

After receiving mobility, vocational, and life skills training at the Joseph Kohn Training Center, Steven was eager to get back to work. For two years, he searched for work with no luck. In 2016 his dream of a career materialized after his caseworker told him about a job opening at Bestwork. Steven immediately contacted the agency and was hired. He's been here ever since.

During Steven's tenure, he's worked as a sewing machine operator, a packer, and a paper converter. He is currently working on one of Bestwork's newest textile apparel lines, the Navy Physical Fitness Running Pant.

His professionalism and impeccable attendance make him one of Bestwork's most dependable employees. He's also a member of Bestwork's Quality Work Environment (QWE) initiative, where he helps address employee concerns.

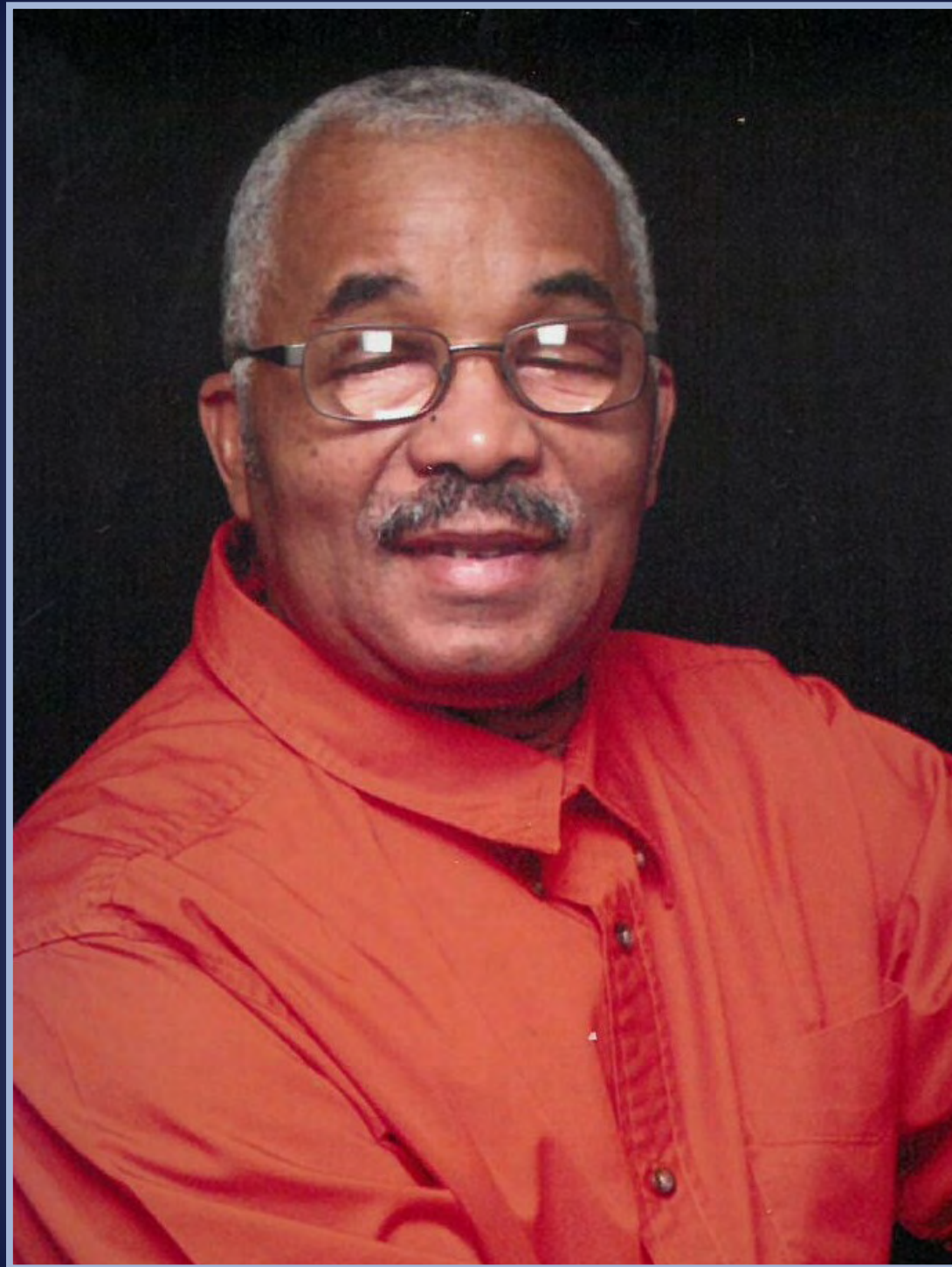
Steven received the utmost honor in December 2022 when he was named Bestwork's Employee of the Year. He accepted the award during the agency's holiday party surrounded by his peers and his mother, who attended as a surprise. "I thoroughly enjoy working at Bestwork," said Steven. "I'm proud of the work I do and I'm honored to work with an incredible group of people."

Steven has a zest for life that's unparalleled. He knows his purpose, sets goals for himself – both personally and professionally – and works to achieve those goals every single day.

From tragedy to triumph, Steven Fisher is one remarkable young man and Bestwork is grateful to have him as an employee.

In Memoriam

GONE, BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN



Mosie White

MARCH 2022

In memory of Mosie White, and in recognition of his 37 years of service at Bestwork.



Warren Walker

NOVEMBER 2022

In memory of Warren Walker, and in recognition of his 20 years of service at Bestwork.

SUPPORTERS

Bestwork has a dedicated community of partners. Thank you for your continued support.

Individuals

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Claire Allamby ^B | Matthew Heyse | Jon Katz | Ardyth Shaw |
| Christopher Crowe | James ^B and Janis Howe | Jim Kehoe ^B | John (Jack) Shaw ^B |
| Dawn Clarke | | Warren ^B and Isabel Pross | Pamela Shropshire |
| Basel Daramna | Louis ^B and Mary Jablonski | A. Richard Ross, Jr. ^B | Alfred Zarroli ^B |
| Julie Natale Fenton ^B | Brian Katz ^B | Kenneth Saunders ^B | |

^B Board of Directors

Please note we endeavor to maintain complete and accurate records. If you notice an error or omission please contact the Director of Communication and Marketing at 856-424-2510 x219

TOP

Paper room workers Rodney Watkins and Julio Miranda are a team, partnering up on all projects.

BOTTOM

Bestwork employees demonstrate how the paper is cut once removed from the Ferris wheel.



Organizations

AmazonSmile	Brookwood Companies Incorporated	Haddonfield Lions	Williamstown Lions Club
American Online Giving Foundation	Gilead Sciences, Inc-American Online	Hammonton Lions Club	YKK
Berlins Lions Club		The Blackbaud Giving Foundation	

RIGHT
An automated sewing machine operated by a Bestwork employee demonstrates how tags are sewn onto Navy fleece jackets.



Foundations

Beneficial Charitable Trust	Fund for the NJ Blind, Inc	Lillan Schenck Foundation	William G. Rohrer Charitable Foundation
Carl & Anne Foundation	Harriet G. Fredericks Foundation	National Industries for the Blind (NIB) Grants	
Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation	Helon A. Parkhill Charitable Trust Grant	The Scholler Foundation	

Pro Bono Services

Compass Greater Philadelphia

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2021-2022

- John D. Shaw, Chairperson
- Louis J. Jablonski, Jr., Vice Chairman
- Brian Katz, Treasurer
- Kenneth Saunders, Secretary
- Claire Allamby
- Julie Natale Fenton
- James R. Howe
- James B. Kehoe
- Warren L. Pross
- A. Richard Ross, Jr.
- Alfred X. Zarroli

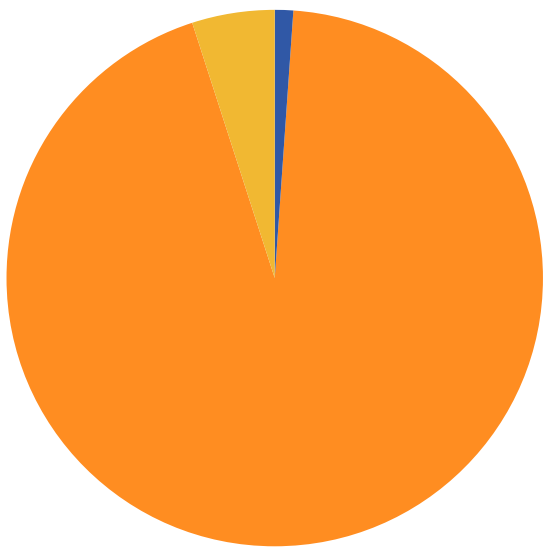
ADVISORY BOARD

- Jeffrey R. Gans, Esq.
- John L. Hughes Jr., Chairperson Emeritus

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FISCAL YEAR 2021/2022

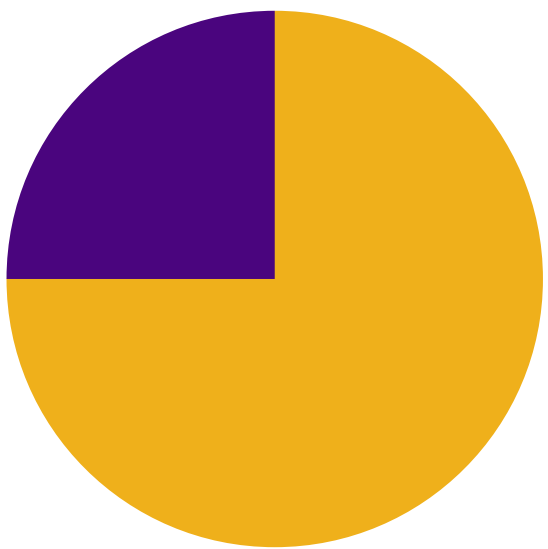
Support and Revenues

Grants and Donations	\$133,281	0.8%
Product Sales	\$11,476,562	93.8%
Investment Income	(\$18,935)	(loss)
Other Income	\$644,558	5.3%
Total	\$12,235,466	



Expenses

Program Services	\$10,097,623	75%
Administrative/ General Operations	\$3,330,476	25%
Total	\$12,950,041	



Change in Net Assets*: (\$1,192,633)

*Net assets reflect significant investment in infrastructure to support growth and diversification.



Bestwork Industries for the Blind, Inc.
1940 Olney Avenue, Suite 200
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08003
856-424-2510

bestworkindustries.org

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