

Establishing the Framework





**Engaging, empowering, and
employing people who are blind
and visually impaired since 1981**



Our Mission

Bestwork Industries for the Blind, Inc. is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people who are blind by providing training and employment opportunities in a supportive work environment.

Our Vision

To transform from a small, self-sustaining manufacturing agency into a full-scale social enterprise with diversified lines of business, comprehensive training, and vocational rehabilitation services.

Message from our President & CEO

Over the past few years, the journey here at Bestwork has been remarkable. Reflecting on our experiences, I can proudly acknowledge the significant strides we have made.

Fiscal Year 2024 established the framework for our future by focusing our strategic priorities on Growth, Workforce Development, and Communications, including Fundraising. Some notable achievements to highlight include:

- Year-end revenue. The year concluded with significant achievements, boasting a revenue of \$20.2 million, nearly double that of two years ago.
- We also welcomed 16 new employees who are blind or visually impaired (BVI), doubling our recruiting efforts from two years ago.
- Our expansion efforts are evident with eight textile sub-lines of business, and our focus on new ventures like Bestwork Supply Center that has yielded nearly \$500K in sales, a significant increase from \$30K in our inaugural year.
- Another bright spot was our first major Document Scanning and Digital Imaging (DS/DI) project for the OceanFirst Foundation, digitizing 23 boxes of documents.
- We secured additional growth space by finalizing our Lease Agreement for Suite 100, acquiring 13,000 square feet next door.
- Our Montclair satellite facility continues to thrive, employing four BVI individuals performing Kitting-Packaging-Light Assembly (KPLA) operations.
- Additionally, our partnership with Salus at Drexel University marks the beginning of establishing blindness and low vision services on our campus in Cherry Hill.

Achievements and Awards

Bestwork's achievements have been recognized beyond financial metrics. We garnered awards such as NJMEP's 2024 'Made in Manufacturing Day' South Jersey Honor Roll, and we were named to the Philadelphia 100 list. Notable too, is our success in expanding our footprint in New Jersey through satellite facilities, such as our Montclair location, and reaching a historic \$250K in grants and donations.



JON KATZ

President & CEO

Message from our President & CEO Cont'd

Building for the Future

As we look towards FY2025, our focus on Strategic Growth, Expansion, and Transformation remains steadfast. Our priority is deepening our commitment to BVI employment by expanding our lines of business, leveraging the new Suite 100 facility for growth, and launching an AI initiative to maintain our market competitiveness.

We are also set to launch our inaugural major fundraising initiative, 'Dining in the Dark', to further our mission. Mark your calendars for October 2, 2025, at the Adventure Aquarium in Camden.

A Note of Thanks

I express my deepest gratitude to our passionate team whose dedication has been the backbone of our success. I also thank the Board for their unwavering support and trust in our vision.

I also want to Thank YOU for your continued trust and confidence in Bestwork.

Exciting developments are on the horizon, and I look forward to sharing future successes with you.



Jon Katz

President & CEO

Bestwork Industries for the Blind

16

New BVI employees

\$20.2M

Achieving a total revenue

15x

Bestwork Supply Center
sales increase

Message from our Board Chair



JOHN "JACK" D. SHAW
Chairman of the Board

In Fiscal Year 2024, Bestwork seized the opportunity to accelerate its vision for growth and diversification, setting a new trajectory for the future. Since Jon Katz assumed leadership in July 2021, we've embarked on a transformative journey, implementing significant organizational changes that have borne remarkable results.

Jon and his team have cultivated a thriving environment, launching innovative, knowledge-based business lines. This initiative simultaneously

creates new employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and delivers high-quality, competitive products and services to our customers. Our commitment to strengthening our textile and apparel offerings has been unwavering, and we're further expanding our diverse product portfolio.

Moreover, Bestwork has experienced a substantial increase in community recognition. We've revamped our online presence with a new website, and our advertising efforts across print, digital, and radio platforms have been robust. Participation in various speaking engagements has further amplified our reach. Hosting local legislative and industry leaders has been instrumental in extending our influence and advancing our mission. I'm looking forward to our next initiatives as we work to expand our services. This coming year we plan to launch our Blindness and Low Vision Services Center. This will lead us into new opportunities for the blind and low vision community in training and rehabilitation.

With these accomplishments paving the way, Fiscal Year 2025 is poised to be a pivotal time for Bestwork. We eagerly anticipate the promising developments on the horizon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Shaw'.

Jack Shaw

Chairman of the Board

Bestwork Industries for the Blind

Bestwork Leadership

Board of Directors

John D. Shaw

Chairman

Louis J. Jablonski, Jr.

Vice-Chairman

Julie Natale Fenton

Treasurer

Kenneth Saunders

Secretary

Linda Carney

Interim Secretary

Claire Allamby

MaryAnn Ragone DeLambily

James R. Howe

Jim Kehoe

Warren Pross

A. Richard Ross, Jr.

Alfred X. Zarroli

Advisory Board

Jeffrey Gans

John L. Hughes, Jr.

Dr. Ranjoo Prasad

Tess Nasehi

Dr. Fabiana Perla

Leadership Team

Jon Katz

President & CEO

Tom Black

VP of Products & Business Services

Greg Pereira

Sr. Director of Finance, Accounting, & Operations

Lauren Scarpa

Director of Communication & Marketing

Maurice Tyndell

Director of Workforce Development & Government Affairs

Bridgette Matison

Executive Coordinator



Bestwork At a Glance



491,978

Total products distributed in 2024

389,073 Military Garments

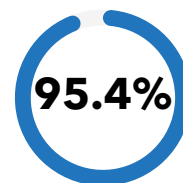
76,874 General Service Administration Products

17,292 Commercial Garments

8,739 ACCSES NJ Products

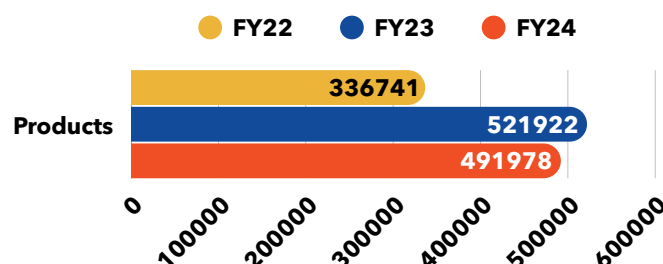
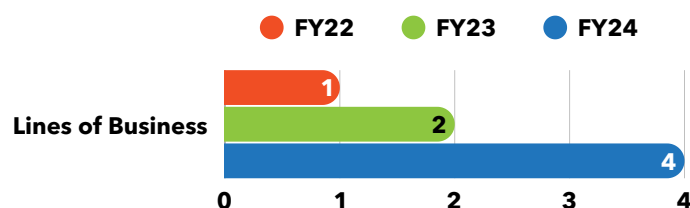
2 New contracts awarded in 2024

Coast Guard (TShirt & Fleece)
Air Force Fitness Pants



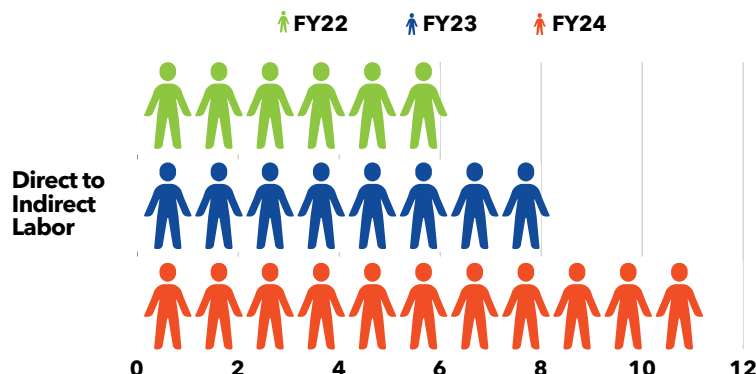
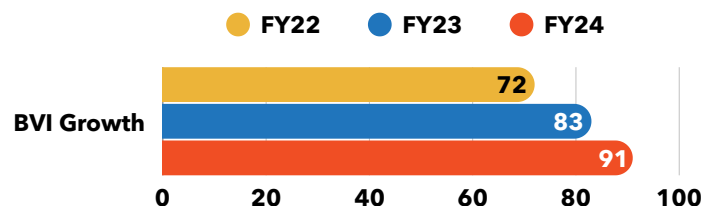
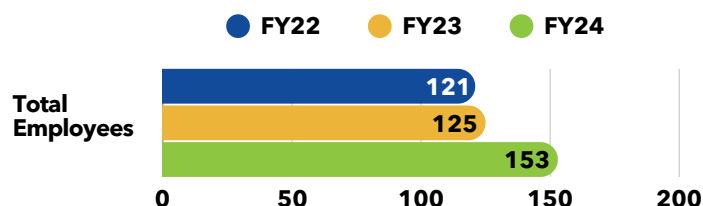
On-time shipping and delivery

Customer Satisfaction Rating



Upward Mobility & Blind Labor

Bestwork's main priority is to offer training and employment to the blind and visually impaired (BVI) community, with opportunities for upward mobility.



Bestwork Supply Center

Bestwork Supply Center, operated by Bestwork Industries for the Blind, is the one-stop shop for all your office and breakroom needs, from cleaning and janitorial supplies to safety items, tools, equipment, and more. Bestwork Supply Center offers customers more than 40,000+ affordable, high-quality products with free shipping and fast delivery.

During FY24, Bestwork Supply Center has seen immense growth in sales and revenue and Preferred Partners, and secured a COPARS contract with the US Navy.

4.6 ★★★★★
on TrustPilot



Total Sales

\$453,864.36

FY24

\$29,620.82

FY23

15x

Increase in sales



COPARS Contractor-Operated Parts Store (Offsite)

COPARS is a Contractor Operated Parts Store that Bestwork manages for the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) Lakehurst. This AbilityOne solution allows NAWCAD's Lakehurst Branches and Divisions to easily purchase parts and other equipment to support the mission needs of NAWCAD Lakehurst; to provide full spectrum lifecycle responsibility for Aviation Support Equipment and Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment. Megan Moose, Bestwork's e-Commerce Manager, works closely with NAWCAD's contracting activity and federal employees in fulfilling orders through her research to find special equipment and from working with industry partners supporting this initiative.

Preferred Partners

Our Preferred Partner Program offers an easy, streamlined purchasing process for all your business and office supply needs. We secured our first two Preferred Partners in FY24. In FY25, we look forward to growing these relationships and expanding the program. Thank you for your continued support!



**Center for
Vocational
Rehabilitation**

CVR's Mission is to promote social independence, quality of life and maximum vocational potential for all persons with special needs.



**Career Opportunity
Development, Inc.
(CODI)**

CODI is committed to enriching the lives of differently abled individuals through employment, housing, and economic independence.

Employee of the Year

Carmella Smith

“

It really feels so good. I truly didn't expect it. Being relatively new to Bestwork, I thought that maybe in the future I'd win but certainly not in the first two years of me being here. I feel really special and appreciated. Thank you.

”

Carmella Smith's story is one of extraordinary resilience and determination, which in part, has earned her the well-deserved title of Employee of the Year at Bestwork.

Born in Paterson, New Jersey, Carmella is one of eight children. She faced challenges that her siblings did not. She was born with eye issues that stemmed from juvenile arthritis. At only a few years old, she was diagnosed with Still's Disease, which is a rare systemic inflammatory condition that primarily affects adults. The combination of arthritis and Still's Disease caused her to become totally blind by the age of seven.

At age 9, Carmella moved to Philadelphia to attend Overbrook School for the Blind, a school that serves students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. Here, she found a community that embraced her enthusiasm and tenacity. She really enjoyed her time there... For the first time, she was surrounded by people just like her who could understand her struggles. She participated in activities like skating and cheerleading, and she excelled as a track star. She attended Overbrook from 4th to 10th grade.

At just 17 years old, in 1980, Carmella (Lovitt, at the time) won a gold medal for the 60-meter dash at the Arnhem Paralympic Summer Games held in the Netherlands, setting a world record. In the USA, longer distance track runners used wire cables on the track to help guide their strides; however, internationally, this isn't the case - Carmella followed the sound of her guide's voice (they typically run in front at a distance) for her races keeping her on track. Luckily, the 60-meter is a straight dash and she did not need a guide.

Back in New Jersey, Carmella enrolled in public school, Kennedy High School, for 11th and 12th grade and received her diploma. She then took a few community college courses; however, she ultimately decided that wasn't the path for her. Her mother's teachings instilled in her a passion for learning, which she pursued through attending different local communication programs, where she acquired transcription, typing, and writing skills.

Employee of the Year Cont'd

At age 20, she returned to Philadelphia, got married – her husband at the time was also totally blind – became a stay-at-home mom, and devoted herself to raising her son and daughter until they were teenagers.

Carmella's career path took her through various roles, including phone sales, which she found unfulfilling. However, her perseverance led her to InspiraTec in Philadelphia. There, she honed her telecommunication skills, working with the Pennsylvania Utility Commission. As the only person who was blind on her team, Carmella thrived, proving her ability to excel in communication and customer service. After 18 years in the field, Carmella sought a new direction.

She spent time caring for her grandson before learning about an agency that employs people who are blind through a colleague on her transportation to work. She called Bestwork the next day, came in for an interview, and was immediately hired. Carmella was also reunited with a handful of friends she knew from her Overbrook days, who were also employed at Bestwork.

Her long-held passion for sewing found a home at Bestwork, where she started in January 2023. Initially working on bar tacking on the Navy fleece line and sewing with a single needle, she is now surging the lining in the physical fitness pants for the Navy. Her journey through various roles at Bestwork, including packing, showcases her adaptability and dedication.

Outside of work, Carmella enjoys listening to audiobooks and playing board games like Scrabble, Monopoly, and Backgammon. She spends lots of time with her daughter, son, and grandson.

Carmella Smith embodies the spirit of perseverance and passion that we celebrate at Bestwork. Her story is a testament to overcoming adversity and thriving in the face of challenges. As she looks to the future, Carmella envisions a relaxed and fulfilling life, enriched by her experiences and contributions. We are proud to honor her as our Employee of the Year and look forward to her continued inspiration and leadership.



Employee Celebrations

Employee Appreciation Day Summer Picnic



In August, Bestwork celebrated its annual Employee Appreciation Day with a Summer Picnic! With nearly 200 attendees, the day included a catered lunch from Dad's Deli & Catering and The Gourmet Vendor Inc. and dessert from Mr. Softee NJ.

In addition to our employees, members of our Board and Advisory board attended along with some special VIPs, including Jimmy from Jimmy and the Parrots who performed!

We want to thank our sponsors - Ocean State Innovations, Antex Knitting Mills, ECI Software Solutions, Grande Solutions Staffing LLC, Essendant, The Zallie Community Foundation, Walmart of Lumberton, and Sam's Club of Williamstown. We also wish to thank SSE Party Rentals for making sure our tents stayed grounded (despite the wind)!

To everyone who helped make our Employee Appreciation Day a success, we THANK YOU!

Holiday Party

We hosted our annual Holiday Party at the DoubleTree Suites in Mount Laurel in December, with more than 200 people in attendance! The room was filled with our employees, members of our Board, and some very special guests that included the members of the Varsaci family. We also received a very generous donation from NJMEP presented by Pete Connolly. During the festivities, we introduced three new annual awards.

PARK AVENUE
LIMOUSINE



Belinda S. Moore Partner of the Year

Named in her honor, Belinda - Bestwork's President & CEO before Jon - was in attendance and helped present the new award to Park Avenue Limousine for their longstanding transportation partnership with Bestwork.

NJMEP
Helping New Jersey Manufacture Success



Strategic Growth Award

Presented to NJMEP for their incredible support that led to advances in automation, diversification in lines of business, and upward mobility opportunities for Bestwork.

bestwork
INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND



CEO Cup

Presented to the production line that continuously meets and exceeds their expected goals and deadlines during the year. The winners were the Medals Team, part of our Kitting, Packaging, and Light Assembly line!

After the program, the party went into full swing with a gift exchange, a festive holiday attire contest, and some games where employees won gift cards. We are extremely thankful to everyone who attended, volunteered, and made the day truly special!

Incentive Program

Bestwork implemented an Incentive Program for our employees to reward those who have excelled in their work duties and production goals. Each month, Bestwork celebrates the achievements of our staff and crowns our Employee of the Month and our Production Line of the Month. At the end of the year, we choose an Employee of the Year and CEO Cup - Production Line of the Year.

Employee of the Month



October
Artie Ellis



November
Michael Bubb



December
Ruth Swain



January
Carl Strang



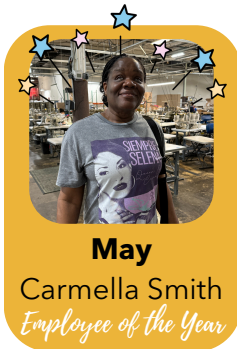
February
Kenny Poole



March
Charles Banks



April
David Nieves



May
Carmella Smith
Employee of the Year



June
David Levin



July
William Holden



August
Wilfredo Martinez



September
U'Thant Smith

Production Line of the Month



October
ECWCS



November
Navy Pants



December
Army FREE TShirt



January
Navy Flight
Deck Jersey



February
Navy Parka Liner



March
GSA/Non-Military



April
Packaging



May
Medals



June
Medals



July
Medals
CEO Cup



August
Navy Pants



September
Air Force Pants

Our Supporters

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

Individuals

Claire Allamby*
Mark Benfer
Linda Carney*
MaryAnn* & Robert DeLambily
Ashley Donecker
Julie Natale Fenton*
Daniel Galasso
James Howe**
John Hughes**
Janet Indiveri
Louis Jablonski*
Jon Katz
Jim Kehoe*
Cheryl May

Susan Moorman
Warren Pross*
Richard Riviello
Sandra Roff
A. Richard Ross, Jr.*
Judith A. Sames
John Shaw*
Jennifer Shropshire
Pamela Shropshire
Edith Waddington
Alfred Zarroli

* *Board of Directors*

** *Advisory Board*

Organizations

1st Colonial Community Bank
Antex Knitting Mills
Cherry Hill Township
ECi Software Solutions
Essendant
Fund for the NJ Blind, Inc.
Grande Staffing Solutions LLC
Milliken & Company
National Industries for the Blind (NIB)
New Jersey Economic Development
Authority

Ocean State Innovations
Sam's Club (Williamstown)
South Jersey Gas
Walmart (Cinnaminson)
Walmart (Deptford)
Walmart (Lumberton)

Supporters Cont'd



Lions Clubs

Allentown Lions Club
Atco Lions International Club
Deptford Township Lions Club
Gloucester City Lions Club

Gloucester Township Lions Club
Greater Wildwood Lions Club
Haddonfield Lions Club
Hammonton Lions Club

Foundations

American Water Charitable Foundation
Carl & Anne Fravel Foundation
Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation
Harriet G. Fredericks Foundation
Helon A. Parkhill Foundation
Lillian Schenck Foundation
OceanFirst Foundation
PSEG Foundation

Readers Digest Partners for Sight Foundation
TD Charitable Foundation
The Scholler Foundation
W.G. Broughton Foundation
WSFS CARES Foundation
Zallie Community Foundation

In-Kind

Budo Full Range Martial Arts, Inc.
DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel Mt. Laurel

Please note we endeavor to maintain complete and accurate records. If you notice an error or omission, please contact the Senior Fundraising, Grants, and Marketing Specialist at 856-424-2510 x214



In Memoriam

Bestwork extends its deepest condolences to family and friends of three cherished members of the Bestwork "Family." They will be deeply missed for their enthusiasm, passion, and warming hearts.



Ken Saunders



Joyce Albrecht



Don Green

Community Support

Generosity from our partners reflects a commitment to improving the quality of life of others, and we are truly appreciative. Your support helps sustain Bestwork's activities and mission to improve the quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired.

Since Bestwork began its transformation from a small, self-sustaining textile manufacturing agency to a full-scale social enterprise, fundraising efforts have grown immensely, and will continue to do so.

Here's a snapshot of gifts from funders we received this fiscal year.



**1st Colonial
Community Bank**
\$4,000



**Allentown Lions Club
Foundation**
\$500



**American Water
Charitable Foundation**
\$2,500



**Haddonfield Lions
Foundation**
\$500



**OceanFirst
Foundation**
\$6,000

Total Grants & Donations

\$199,806

FY24

\$261,165

FY23

\$133,315

FY22

We are grateful for your support!

Dancing in the Dark



Lion Joe Murphy, a self-described dance fanatic, came up with the idea for his Club to provide specialized dance classes after a guest speaker at a Lions meeting told them about her two blind sons and how she wanted them to enjoy life, to thrive. From there, Dance Haddonfield partnered with the Haddonfield Lions Club and Bestwork to create a dance program for the blind and visually impaired. LaPierre Dance studio owner and nonprofit Dance for A Better U founder, Gene LaPierre offered to teach the classes for free. Transportation was also provided for free for our employees. Bestwork employees that participated in the program include: Teresa Barber, James Bennett, Lorraine Carter, Angela Green, Maria Hernandez, Evange Laughton, Cordell Lee, Isaac Osei-Tawiah, Michelle Owens, Carmella Smith, Arlene Still, Eugene Strickland, and James Woodson.

Awards & Accomplishments

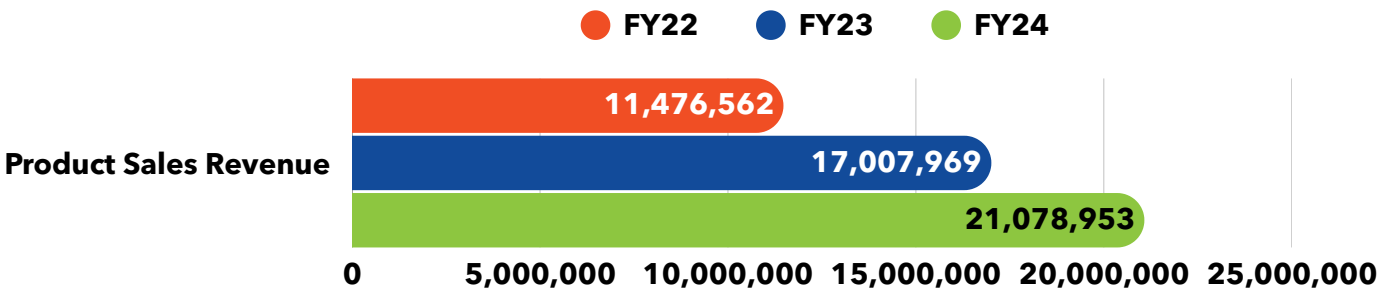
We are proud to receive the following awards in FY24.



Minerva Perez

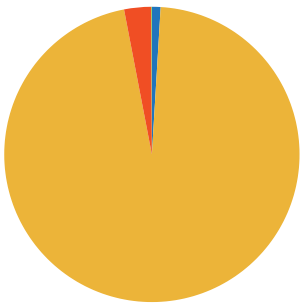


Financial Overview FY2023/2024



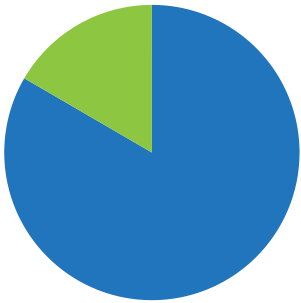
Support and Revenues

Grants and Donations	\$199,806	0.9%
Product Sales	\$20,242,336	96%
Investment Income	\$619,869	2.9%
Other Income	\$16,942	0.2%
Total	\$21,078,953	



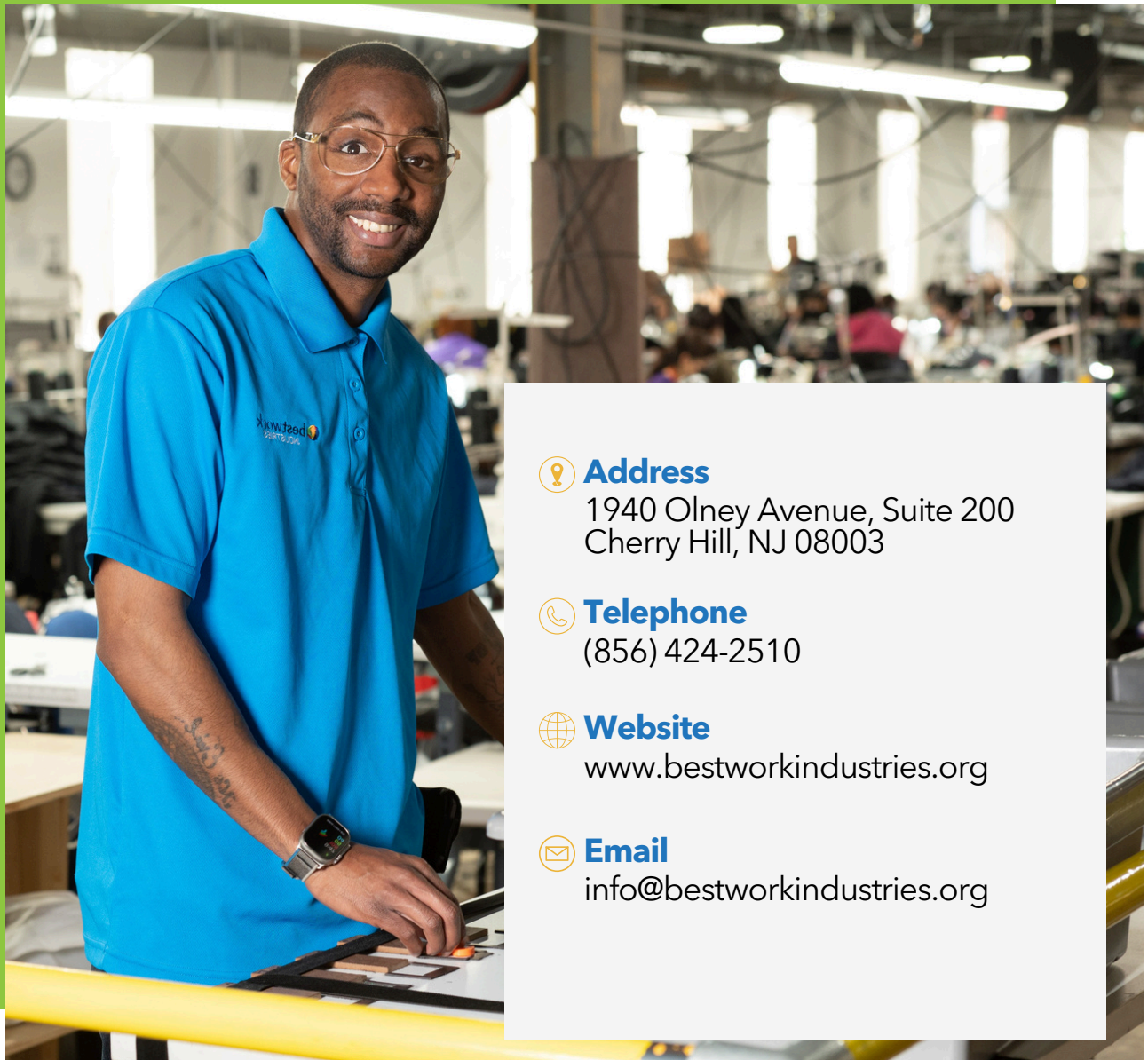
Expenses

Program Services	\$16,811,266	83.4%
Administrative/ General Operations	\$3,349,771	16.6%
Total	\$20,161,037	



Change in net assets \$867,673

Source: Consolidated Financial Statement FY 9/30/24 & 9/30/23

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Follow us on social!

@bestworkindustries



@bestwork-industries-for-the-blind-inc

Shop Our Store!

BESTWORK SUPPLY CENTER
E-COMMERCE STORE

www.BestworkSupplyCenter.com

