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Radio Flyer, Duke Realty, Edward Jones top Best Places to Work in Illinois awards



Amy Bastuga, chief people officer of Radio Flyer in Chicago, celebrates winning first in the Small Company division at the Best Places to Work in Illinois awards ceremony. The company also took third in a new category, Best Places to Work for Women.

What makes a great workplace? Judging from the top companies in the Daily Herald Business Ledger's annual Best Places to Work in Illinois awards, it's a combination of employee engagement, generous benefits and the ability for employees to have fun.

A total of 69 businesses were honored at the 2019 Best Places to Work in Illinois event hosted by the Business Ledger and its sponsoring partners. More than 300 people gathered at the Abbington Distinctive Banquets in Glen Ellyn to find out what rank their company came in, as well as celebrate the honor of making the list.

The Best Places to Work in Illinois is a combination survey, study and awards ceremony that identifies the best places of employment in Illinois. Companies receiving the award apply best business practices and embrace high standards, advancing their business and distinguishing them from competitors.

2019 Best Places to Work in Illinois winners

SMALL COMPANIES (19-99 Employees)

- Radio Flyer, Chicago
- The Salem Group, Oakbrook Terrace
- Balasa Dinverno Foltz LLC, Itasca
- 3Points, LLC, Lombard
- Talman Consultants, LLC, Chicago
- GForce Life Sciences, Chicago
- Lextech Global Services, Downers Grove
- BCDVideo, Buffalo Grove
- TransTech IT Staffing, Itasca
- KRD - Kutchins, Robbins & Diamond, Ltd., Schaumburg
- Adage Technologies, Chicago
- Synergy Builders, West Chicago
- Paragon Micro, Inc., Lake Zurich
- Weiss & Company LLP, Glenview
- American Bottoms, Sauget
- R.J Augustine & Associates, CPAs, Schaumburg
- Edlong, Elk Grove Village
- Meeting Tomorrow, Chicago
- Tiger Plumbing, Heating, Air Conditioning, & Electrical Services, Collinsville
- Mother Network Guardians LLC, Itasca
- IOR Global Services, Northbrook
- Common Sense Solutions Inc., Darien
- Resource Brokerage, LLC, Schaumburg
- MichaelSilver, Skokie
- Optimal Design, Arlington Heights
- Crestwood Associates LLC, Mount Prospect
- TradeTec Skyline, Lombard
- Systemax, Springfield
- First Bankers Trust Services, Inc., Quincy
- Ion Exhibits, Itasca

MEDIUM-SIZED COMPANIES (100-499 Employees)

- Duke Realty, Indianapolis, Ind.
- ARCO/Murray Design-Build, Downers Grove
- Hanson Professional Services Inc., Springfield
- Porte Brown LLC, Elk Grove Village
- MassMutual Midwest, Indianapolis, Ind.
- Mueller & Co., LLP, Elgin
- Omron Automation-Americas, Hoffman Estates
- CompTIA, Downers Grove
- University of Illinois Community Credit Union, Champaign
- Clarity Insights, Chicago
- Wiley Education Services, Maitland, Fla.
- LaSalle Network, Chicago
- Wabash General Hospital District, Mount Carmel
- CSC Corptax, Buffalo Grove
- Domino Amjet, Inc., Gurnee
- Sterling Federal Bank, Sterling
- Sevan Multi-Site Solutions, LLC., Downers Grove
- OSG USA, Inc., Toyokawa, Japan
- Call One Inc., Chicago
- Millennium Trust Company, Oak Brook
- Dieterich Bank, Effingham

LARGE COMPANIES (500-plus Employees)

- Edward Jones, St. Louis, Mo.
- Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, Chicago
- Pariveda Solutions, Dallas, Tx.
- Insperty
- Collaborative Solutions
- Goldberg Segalla
- Ryan, LLC
- Burns & McDonnell
- Total Quality Logistics
- First Merchants Bank
- First Busey Corporation
- Pekin Insurance
- UGN, Inc.
- Littelfuse, Inc.
- National Futures Association
- Redwood Logistics
- NOW Health Group, Inc.
- Next College Student Athlete (NCSA)

Best Companies Group of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, administers the program, conducting the surveys, compiling the data and eventually setting the company rankings. Its president, Peter Burke, told the audience that the companies earning the award have created a workplace culture that encourages employee engagement and "makes employees love to come to work."

While employee satisfaction nationwide averages 41%, the companies honored in the program averaged 90%.

"That is not normal, that is awesome," he said.

"There are 1,000 paths to get there," Burke added. "But all the companies here have figured out their paths to success."

Of the 30 companies named in the Small Business category of fewer than 100 employees, Radio Flyer of Chicago earned the No. 1 honor for a fifth straight year. The manufacturer of the iconic red toy wagon also placed third in the new category Best Places to Work for Women.

As a brand that consumers grew up with, they are proud to continue to be part of growing families, dedicate themselves to bringing smiles to children and promoting active play. Chief People Officer Amy Bastuga told the audience that the company culture is one where people work with respect and can contribute to the company success has been nurtured in the family-owned company for the past 100 years.

She also noted that, as a Best Places to Work company, all the winners should help others in creating employee-friendly work environments.

"Not everybody can get to say 'I like my job,'" Bastuga said. "But if you guys share your stories ... then we all have an opportunity change one person's mind so that other people can be here in this room tonight."

Duke Realty, an Indianapolis-based company that has a significant presence in the Chicago area, was the top company among the 21 named in the Mid-Sized Companies category of 100 to 499 employees.

Duke is an owner, developer and manager of industrial properties across the country and includes bulk warehouses and modern, efficient distribution centers. Employees cited the company's mentor/training workshops, great health benefits and a flexible work schedule as reasons the company is a great place to work. In addition, the company rewards its staff in programs like the Power of Green Core Values Award, which is given to an associate each quarter, who was nominated by a manager or peer for demonstrating Duke Realty values of responsibility, respect and resourcefulness while at work and in the community.

"We have an open-door team policy," said Duke Realty's Tracey Born-Bachmann as she outlined company policies such as extended maternity and paternity leaves. "I've been here 15 years and I hope to be here another 15."

Edward Jones, the nation's largest financial services firm, was No. 1 of the 18 companies in the Large Companies category of 500 or more employees. With more than 13,500 U.S. locations, including Chicago and the suburbs, the St. Louis-based firm serves nearly 7 million investors. Edward Jones is known for sharing 24% of profits with employees, rewarding top achievers with an all-expense-paid trip, and providing contests and giveaways throughout the year.

"We are a partnership, and not a corporate structure," said Mark Farina, an Edward Jones financial adviser, who also noted that the company philosophy has been those who share the work should also share the profits.

Detailed profiles of the top companies and other honorees will be published in a special section of the Daily Herald Business Ledger on June 24. Sponsoring partners for the 2019 event are B. Gunther & Co., Focus Capital Advisors, Millennium Trust Co., and Shaker Recruitment Marketing. Marketing partners are the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, MRA-The Management Association, and Small Business Advocacy Council.