

# La Crosse Area Family Policy Board

*“Systems and providers aligned for better outcomes”*



Monthly Meeting: Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

***Preparing for our biennial  
Legislative Meeting Part 2***



# Today's Discussion Items

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**Agenda**

**Issue Areas**

**Contributors**

**Input**



**La Crosse Area Family Policy Board  
Biennial Legislative Advocacy Meeting**  
Discussion Timeframes

**2021  
AGENDA**

# Agenda:

	<u>Minutes</u>	<u>Presenters</u>
A. Welcome	5 (12:00pm)	<i>Ann Kappauf, Executive Director</i> <i>Jason Witt, Director</i>
- Overview of Family Policy Board - Objective of Today's Meeting		<i>New Horizons Shelter &amp; Outreach Centers</i> <i>La Crosse County Human Services</i>
B. Introduction of State Legislators	10 (12:05pm)	
C. Review of 2021-23 State Budget Priorities (By Issue Area)		
1. Housing	10 (12:15pm)	<i>Hetti Brown, Director</i> <i>Couleecap, Inc.</i>
2. Mental Health	8 (12:25pm)	<i>Tita Yutuc, President/CEO</i> <i>Family &amp; Children's Center</i>
3. Early Childhood	8 (12:33pm)	<i>Jodi Widuch, Executive Director</i> <i>The Parenting Place</i>
4. Child Welfare	8 (12:41pm)	<i>Tracy Puent, Family &amp; Children's Services Manager</i> <i>Megan Devore, Corporation Counsel</i> <i>La Crosse County Human Services</i> <i>La Crosse County</i>
5. Youth Justice	8 (12:49pm)	<i>Phil Stegemann, Youth Justice Supervisor</i> <i>La Crosse County Human Services</i>
D. Wrap Up	3 (12:57pm)	
<i>Total minutes</i>	60	



# Issue

## Areas:

Other?

1. Housing
  2. Mental Health
  3. Prevention
- 
4. Youth
  5. Local Government Funding Reform



# Contributors:



**Housing**



**Mental Health**



**Prevention**



**Other**

**For each issues area let's identify:**

- **Lead Presenter**
- **Co-presenter**
- **Other contributors (perspective, data, ect.)**



# Contributors:

Issue Area	Lead Presenter	Co-Presenter	Other Contributors
1. Housing	Hetti Brown	Potential Catholic Charities (Dawn)	
2. Mental Health	Tita Yutuc	Jason Witt ; Curt or Ami ; Better Together	Potential present Yrbs data on Better Together website (potential Diana)
3. Prevention	Parenting Place	Ann K ; Tita; Vie	
4. Youth	Darrell	Bridget	
5. Local Government Funding Reform	Jason		



# Input



**Housing**



**Mental Health**



**Prevention**



**Other**

**For each issues area :**

- **What are you seeing?**
- **Data that would be useful?**
- **Other ideas?**



**La Crosse Area**

**Family Policy Board**

*"Systems and providers aligned for better outcomes"*

***Thank You!***





**La Crosse Area  
Family Policy Board**

*“Systems and providers aligned for better outcomes”*

2023-25 State Budget:

**Priorities Areas for Advocacy & Presenters**

- I. Housing *Hetti Brown, Director, Couleecap, Inc.*
- II. Mental Health *Tita Yutuc, President / CEO, Family & Children’s Center*
- III. Early Childhood *Jodi Widuch, Executive Director, The Parenting Place*
- IV. Child Welfare *Tracy Puent, Family & Children’s Services Manager, LCHSD*  
*Megan Devore, Corporation Counsel, La Crosse County*
- V. Youth Justice *Phil Stegemann, Youth Justice Supervisor, LCHSD*



# *Purpose of the La Crosse Area Family Policy Board*

*Aligning the human services system and provider agencies for better outcomes*

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**Purpose:** **Agencies** servicing children, youth and families advising the Human Services Department and advancing “**4 Cs**” for a more aligned and effective community human services system.

**Communication -**

*Sharing of information with agencies on current programming, new initiatives, concerns and issues involving families and children in the county.*

**Coordination -**

*Finding ways to best compliment and **work in tandem** with other human services agencies in assisting individuals .*

**Collaboration -**

*Fostering **partnerships** to impact outcomes, advance service integration, and influence public policy*

**Connectedness -**

*Fostering **relationships** and understanding how agencies and initiatives fit into the broader community human services system and its challenges*

# AREAS OF FOCUS

## **Juvenile Justice & “At-Risk” Youth**

*Attic Correctional Services*  
*Big Brothers Big Sisters*  
*Boys & Girls Club*  
*Essential Health Clinic*  
*La Crosse County Human Services*  
*La Crosse County Health Department*  
*La Crosse Police Department*  
*Neighborhood City Church*  
*School District of La Crosse*  
*YWCA*

*Great Rivers United Way*  
*La Crosse Community Foundation*

## **Child Protection & Safe Environment**

*Bikers Against Child Abuse*  
*Gundersen Health System*  
*La Crosse County Human Services*  
*La Crosse County Health Department*  
*The Parenting Place*  
*YWCA*

*Great Rivers United Way*  
*La Crosse Community Foundation*



## **Mental Health & Substance Abuse**

*AMS of Wisconsin*  
*Coulee Council on Addictions*  
*Garrison Counseling*  
*Great Rivers 2-1-1*  
*Gundersen Health System*  
*La Crosse County Human Services*  
*La Crosse County Health Department*  
*La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium*  
*Mayo Clinic Health System*  
*YWCA*

*Great Rivers United Way*  
*La Crosse Community Foundation*

## **Income Supports & Basic Needs**

*Catholic Charities*  
*Consumer Credit Counseling*  
*Couleecap*  
*Great Rivers 2-1-1*  
*La Crosse County Human Services*  
*La Crosse County Health Department*  
*Neighborhood City Church*  
*New Horizons*  
*Workforce Connections*  
*Workforce Development*  
*YWCA*

*Great Rivers United Way*  
*La Crosse Community Foundation*



# La Crosse Area Family Policy Board

*"Systems and providers aligned for better outcomes"*



## **PREPARATION FOR** **Biennial Legislative Advocacy Meeting**

*March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

# Introduction of State Legislators

*Senator Brad Pfaff*

*Representative Jill Billings*

*Representative Steve Doyle*



# Review of 2021-23 State Budget Priorities

## (By Issue Area)



# Housing:

*Availability, Affordability, Stability*



# Housing Challenges Families Face

Rising cost of housing;  
wages not keeping up

Low vacancy rates

Affordable housing is also  
substandard housing

Low vacancy rate = harder  
time for  
people with  
barriers





As of May 2021, there were **25 families with children identified as homeless** on the housing prioritization list for our region and **seven families** were in staying in shelter through Salvation Army.

**197 students** were identified as homeless in all La Crosse County schools in the 2019-20 school year. **102 students** reported living “doubled up” and **23 students** reported as “unaccompanied”.

Strong link between **domestic violence and homelessness**, making families vulnerable when housing is not accessible or affordable:

- Approx. 80% of homeless mothers with kids have previously experienced domestic abuse.
- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence notes that 21% of homeless students reported being forced into sexual activity.
- Over a 2-year period, New Horizons provided emergency shelter to 375 women, children and men for a total of 16,866 nights. Note: persons are considered homeless when living in our shelter.

- Inform state and local government on housing insecurity experienced by children and youth.
- Increase the availability of affordable housing for families with children.
- Increase housing stability and prevent family homelessness.

## Housing Policy Priorities

Governor's budget recommendations that related to three priority areas of the Family Policy Board.

## Data to make decisions

- Require DPI to issue a report to the legislature on the number of homeless children and youth identified in the public school system

## Increase availability and access to housing

- Pilot program that prioritizes homeless children and their families on the housing voucher waiting list
- \$2 million to create a Housing Quality Standards Grant
- \$600,000 to support housing navigation

## Increase stability and prevent homelessness

- \$5 million for the Housing Assistance Program
- \$1 million/yr. for the Homelessness Prevention Program
- \$500,000 TANF/yr. for the Homeless Case Management Services Grant
- \$500,000 to create a new shelter diversion program
- \$700,000/yr. for the State Shelter Subsidy Grant
- \$4,153,800 annual funding increase for Emergency Assistance (W2) program, expanding eligibility and serve (includes homeless stability and prevention funding)

## Current Status

- All previously stated provisions were stripped out.
- Housing Assistance Program - \$1.2M increase vs. \$5M
- Continuing to fund work requirements for persons who are homeless prior to receiving housing
- 2019 JFC reserve for 7 initiatives recommended by the Interagency Council on Homelessness - \$5.5M will lapse to General Fund on 6/30 if not DOA not authorized to use

# The Silver Lining?



General Purpose Revenue  
COVID Relief Funding  
Other Legislative Action

# Mental Health:

*Expanding Access, Implementing “Families First”*



# Mental Health...Why This Matters

- Youth mental health is worsening. 9.7% of youth in the U.S. have severe major depression, compared to 9.2% in last year's dataset.
- Even before COVID-19, the prevalence of mental illness among adults was increasing. In 2017-2018, 19% of adults experienced a mental illness, an increase of 1.5 million people over last year's dataset.
- Suicidal ideation among adults is increasing. The percentage of adults in the U.S. who are experiencing serious thoughts of suicide increased 0.15% from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 – an additional 460,000 people from last year's dataset. WI suicide rate is higher than the national average, our rate is trending up & higher rurally
- There is still unmet need for mental health treatment among youth and adults. 60% of youth with major depression did not receive any mental health treatment in 2017-2018. Even in states with the greatest access, over 38% are not receiving the mental health services they need. Among youth with severe depression, only 27.3% received consistent treatment. 23.6% of adults with a mental illness reported an unmet need for treatment in 2017-2018. This number has not declined since 2011.



## Wisconsin Data

- **Wisconsin's Prevalence for Mental Illness was ranked at # 39- Lower numbers indicated a lower prevalence of MI. 6 measures included:**
  - *Adults w/ AMI, Adults with SUD in the past year*
  - *Adults w/ serious thoughts of suicide*
  - *Youth w/ at least one major depressive dx in the past yr.,*
  - *Youth w/ a SUD in the past yr, youth w/ a severe major depressive dx.*
- Wisconsin's behavioral health system is inadequate to meet the needs of those experiencing MH crises. Between 2013 & 2017, crisis services provided to children & adults increased by 58%

## National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

- Psychological abuse increases the trauma of physical and sexual abuse and a number of studies have demonstrated that psychological abuse independently causes long-term damage to a victim's mental health.
- 7 out of 10 psychologically abused women display symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or depression. Psychological abuse is a stronger predictor of PTSD than physical abuse among women. Victims will often experience suicidal ideation.
- During 2018, of the victims and survivors staying in our emergency shelter, 7% experienced mental health issues. Again in 2019, of those utilizing our shelter, 7% experienced mental health issues.

# Big Picture- FPB supports

- Expanding mental health treatment access, including school-based mental health and growing our mental health workforce.
- Implementing Family First Prevention Services Act to build the right supports & keep kids in families.

# Moving Forward on Mental Health

Issue Area	Information and Advocacy
<b>1. Medicaid MH &amp; Substance Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FPB agencies serve a disproportionate share of the Medicaid eligible population.</li><li>• The budget proposal to provide a 40% increase in Medicaid MH and substance abuse rates will move payment closer to reimbursement of costs &amp; improve the capacity of providers to serve Medicaid eligible children &amp; families.</li></ul>
<b>2. Growing our MH Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The proposed budget sustains this program at its current funding level of \$500,000 annually. With a continuing shortage in the behavioral health services providers and demand for services increasing significantly especially in the last year.</li><li>• The FPB supports expanding this important investment in the development of our mental health workforce to \$1 million annually.</li></ul>
<b>3. School Based Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School-based mental health services emerged as an even more valuable resource during the pandemic as providers shifted to telehealth services and continued to collaborate with staff and teachers to address increased levels of anxiety and depression among students.</li><li>• The proposed increase in this important grant program to \$10 million annually will enable additional schools to participate while providing some sustaining resources for established programs.</li></ul>

## *Moving Forward on Mental Health*

Issue Area	Information and Advocacy
<b>4. FFPSA- Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support of proposal to increase FC rates &amp; Kinship care rates w/ other supports for these caregivers will expand placement options and increase stability for children.</li><li>• In-Home Prevention Services- Support of proposal to provide \$24 Million over the biennium to expand community-based services across the state</li><li>• Youth in FC- support of budget initiative allocating \$292.5K to support access to drivers education</li><li>• Independent Living- Support of the budget proposal to expand eligibility to youth ages 16-23</li></ul>

# Early Childhood

*Investing in Early Education and Care Workforce,  
Investing in Families*





## *Early Care and Education Workforce*

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**\$10.66** is the median wage child care providers in Wisconsin

**Child Care Strong – \$140 million investment**

Lifts the wages of this vital workforce through bonus payments and per child stipends.

- \$250 base payments for regulatory or quality requirements
- \$150 p/month bonus payments serving at least 25% infants
- Per child monthly stipends for YoungStar 3, 4 and 5 Star programs

Our ask...continue to support these investments.

## **1. Lack of regulated child care slots in La Crosse County**

92 regulated child care businesses

- 49 Group Centers (including School Age Programs)
- 43 Family (one of whom is temporarily closed)

## **2. Parents are staying home instead of working**

## **3. \$1 billion economic impact**

# Investing in Early Education and Care Workforce....

**Why is this  
important to our  
community?**



# *Investing in Wisconsin's Families*

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## **Families First Prevention Services Act**

- Re-design of the child welfare system
- Reduce out-of-home care
- \$12 million annual budget, increase prevention efforts and investments

## **\$7.5 million to expand Family Support Services**

- Family Resource Centers

## **Our ask-**

- **Support \$12 million investment in evidence-based in-home prevention and family support services from the Families First Prevention Services**
- **Support the addition of \$7.5 million to expand Family Support Services**



1. Addresses significant gap in home visiting services  
Of the 6,148 children under the age of 5, 1,007 were living in poverty.

Collective capacity = 520

2. Provides financial resource for program expansion  
Parents as Teachers  
Healthy Families

3. Family Resource Centers economic impact,  
- \$4.93 return for every dollar invested

## Investing in Families....

**Why is this important to our community?**

# Child Welfare:

*Supporting System Transformation, Child Support Investments*





## Child Welfare

*Supporting System Transformation, Child Support Investments*

### INVESTEMENTS IN CHILD WELFARE

**Wisconsin's Child Welfare System Transformation:** *"We will strengthen all Wisconsin families to support their children because children belong with their families."*

- Family First Prevention Services Act: In February 2018, the federal government passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The focus of the FFPSA is to keep families intact by reducing the number of children in foster care and building more family-based environments for children who cannot remain safely in their homes. Wisconsin must be in compliance by October 1, 2021 or significant federal funding will be lost.
  - o Investments in providing in-home services to families through evidence-based prevention services and other family supports
  - o Increased focus on keeping families together and reduce use of out-of-home care
  - o Continued support for the Targeted Safety Support Funds (TSSF) program
  - o Increased support for relative caregivers and foster care providers
  - o Support for county child welfare agencies in delivering services and supports to children and families that assist in keeping families together

### INCREASED FUNDING FOR CHILD SUPPORT

# Youth Justice:

*Return 17 year-olds, Support Strategic System Change*





# Youth Justice

*Return 17 year-olds, Support Strategic Systems Change*

Issue Area	Information and Advocacy
<b>1. Return of 17 year-olds to the Youth Justice System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The FPB supports this proposal</li><li>• Wisconsin is 1 of only 3 states left in the US where the adult system has jurisdiction over 17 year-olds</li><li>• Aligns with philosophy and best practice</li><li>• Requires financial support, which is provided in the proposal</li><li>• La Crosse Co. prosecutes on average 40 17 year-olds / year - resources are needed to support this increase in referrals</li></ul>
<b>2. Transfer the Responsibility for Series Juvenile Offender (SJO) cases to Counties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More time and discussion is needed before counties could support this proposal</li><li>• La Crosse County does not have many SJO clients</li><li>• Agree with overall philosophy</li><li>• Need time and resources to support the complex needs/high risk supervision that is necessary for these particular youth (i.e. high end placement costs - likely out of state, significant wrap around services, extended period of supervision)</li></ul>



## Youth Justice

*Return 17 year-olds, Support Strategic Systems Change*

Issue Area	Information and Advocacy
<b>3. Elimination of 365 / 180 programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The FPB opposes this proposal</li><li>• Options will be necessary to fill the gap left by Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake closure</li><li>• Even when SRCCCY's are up and running, local options to serve youth should be supported</li></ul>
<b>4. Youth Justice Systems Improvement Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• La Crosse County aligns with generalizing these pots of funding</li><li>• Important to ensure this funding supports ongoing programming and efforts, rather than only focusing on innovation efforts</li></ul>

Questions?