

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families 2012 Annual Report

Introduction from the Executive Director WCCF: Staying the Course for Kids

Organizations like WCCF are inevitably divided by our desire to be working on positive, proactive changes to improve outcomes for children and families and the need to defend against proposals that will harm them. For example, 2011 Act 10 and the 2011-13 budget bill shifted most of the decision-making authority over health care and early education from the Legislature to the administrative branch, so we spent a lot of 2012 trying to convince the Department of Health Services and the Department of Children and Families not to make some of the changes they sought that we knew were likely to do more harm than good. This was a tough task in an environment where policy-makers were looking to cut public investments wherever they could, and identifying new sources of revenue was not a priority.

The economy did not help our efforts much either. Under normal circumstances, the recession that seized the national economy in 2008 would be a distant memory by now. Unfortunately, we have not yet come close to digging out from the economic rubble. Too many families are still struggling, so the need is great; but budgets remained squeezed, making it difficult to advocate for the kinds of investments in children and families we know are necessary. Again, this is made more difficult by a political atmosphere dominated by those who remain convinced—in spite of the preponderance of evidence to the contrary—that the path to recovery should be paved with tax cuts.

But as always, we can't spend much time either basking in our occasional victories or wallowing in defeat. There is always more work to do, both proactive and defensive. The troubling fact is that we've lost some ground in recent years. Consider these numbers:

- Nearly a quarter of a million Wisconsin children lived in poverty in 2012, a number significantly higher than before the recession.
- Over two-thirds of all children under 6 have all parents in the workforce, yet the majority of early childhood programs lack the capacity to offer well-educated teachers, small group sizes and a developmentally appropriate curriculum, all of which are known to produce better outcomes for young kids.
- Nearly 5,000 Wisconsin children were abused or neglected in 2012.
- There is an enormous degree of racial disproportionality in many public programs and in outcomes for children of color. Wisconsin's levels of disproportionality are some of the worst in the nation.

Facts like these are our call to action. Our projects may evolve over time as conditions in the state change, but our mission remains constant: to provide the best research, public outreach, and

policy advocacy we can to improve outcomes for the state's children and families. Political contexts and economic fluctuations will never change that.

2012: The Year in Review

Budget and Taxes

One of the Budget Project's biggest successes in 2012 was in derailing constitutional restrictions on fiscal policy choices. We led the successful opposition to two proposed constitutional amendments, including one that would have restricted spending choices for future legislators by requiring the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The concerns we raised about that amendment became the principal arguments used in the floor debate.

WCCF was also the lead organization in the Better Choices Coalition, a gathering of organizations working to promote the idea of a balanced approach to state budget challenges that includes new sources of revenue in addition to carefully targeted spending cuts, in contrast to the cuts-only approach applied in the most recent budget.

Along the way, the Budget Project launched a new website, which greatly enhanced our ability to disseminate our analyses and publications. Over the course of 2012, the Budget Project produced about 20 issue briefs, fact sheets, and other publications, and dozens of blog posts on topics related to taxes and budget in Wisconsin.

Race to Equity

One of our most exciting developments of 2012 was the launch of the Race to Equity project, with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The central goal of the project is to explore, measure, and analyze the extent and pattern of racial disparities on key well-being and outcome measures between African Americans and whites living in Dane County. Our long-term aspiration is to use this data and analysis as a foundation for advancing collective action towards solutions.

Over the course of the year, Race to Equity project staff began collecting data on over 40 indicators of well-being, and began building a library of relevant resources on the causes of and contributors to racial disparities, as well as research on best practices and evidence-based strategies for narrowing these disparities. The groundwork was laid for engaging key community members, policymakers, civic leaders, academics, and others in working together to reduce racial disparities in Madison and Dane County.

Staff began to form an informal "kitchen cabinet" of influential and experienced leaders who offered to provide assistance with access to key players and strategic advice on building public awareness and political will. In addition, we began to reach out to a wider circle of potential allies and advisors through an informal questionnaire designed to capture perspectives on the causes of and solutions to the county's most consequential race disparities. All of this work helped set the stage for preparation of the project's centerpiece public product: a comprehensive Baseline Report on racial disparities in Dane County, to be published in 2013.

In November, Race to Equity was asked to serve as lead partner with the Dane County YWCA in conducting their annual Racial Justice Conference in 2013. This partnership allowed the Project to disseminate its findings to a larger audience and create collaborations with other local non-profits.

Early Care and Education

As always, WCCF provided crucial information and analysis for a wide range of stakeholders in the realm of early care and education. We produced several publications, including two progress reports on implementation of YoungStar and a research brief on YoungStar based on the results of a telephone survey of providers in Milwaukee.

WCCF also continued to play a leadership role in the Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition in its efforts to provide a unified voice for quality early learning across the state, and provided ongoing policy research and analysis to the Partnership for Wisconsin's Economic Success, a business group focused on the economic benefits of investing in early learning and development.

In addition, WCCF played a key role in the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, leading to a successful federal Race to the Top grant that will help Wisconsin build a strong early childhood system. WCCF was also represented on a state team that launched an early childhood longitudinal data system. We helped develop training for early childhood anti-obesity efforts, and also contributed to efforts to establish a statewide system for credit for prior learning for early care and education practitioners.

Health Care

The Council's health care work during 2012 revolved around preventing harmful changes to BadgerCare and encouraging the best possible implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in Wisconsin. WCCF led a coalition effort that helped head off a number of the proposed cost-cutting changes to the state's BadgerCare health care coverage for low-income children and adults. Although we didn't win all of those battles, we generally succeeded in ensuring that policymakers and the public were aware of how those proposals would increase the number of uninsured Wisconsinites and the amount of uncompensated care.

We also helped launch a broader network of health care advocates and providers working with state and federal officials on issues relating to ACA implementation.

KIDS COUNT

The data we gather and organize through our KIDS COUNT project remained central to everything we do at WCCF, and helped inform the work of other advocates across the state. As happens every year, staff conducted a thorough review of KIDS COUNT county indicators and updated the KIDS COUNT Data Center. We developed and distributed a wide range of KIDS COUNT products over the course of the year, including county-based snapshots of child and family well-being for Dane, Outagamie, Calumet, Winnebago, Marathon, Brown, Racine, and La

Crosse counties; data and presentations for KIDS COUNT Community Conversations in La Crosse, Appleton, Racine, and Wausau; a KIDS COUNT poster presenting a graphic overview of the well-being of children in Milwaukee; and *WisKids Count Data Snapshots on Trends in Juvenile Justice* for 11 counties.

In addition, our Advocacy Camp was a big success once again, as dozens of new and experienced advocates joined us for the daylong workshop, which included a visit by each participant to his or her own state representative and senator.

Juvenile Justice

WCCF continued to play a key role statewide on juvenile justice policy and implementation of best practices. Staff continued its leadership on the Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission including training of ten additional counties in implementing evidenced-based practices in local jurisdictions; working with the Department of Children and Families and the Office of Justice Assistance to identify needed training for county-based juvenile justice practitioners; and ongoing focus on developing successful community-based programs for youthful offenders and status offenders. Over the course of the year, we also produced an updated data brief on the use of Juvenile Detention in Wisconsin, and a snapshot of state and county juvenile justice expenditures based on data reported by the Department of Corrections pursuant to 2011 Act 32.

And behind the scenes, WCCF continued to work, as it has for several years now, toward passage of legislation that would return 17-year-olds to the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

Child Safety

In 2012 our child safety work centered around improving the child welfare system. Staff continued its leadership of the Department of Children and Family's Child Welfare Advisory Committee, providing important feedback to the Department on child welfare issues. In addition, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA) we launched an initiative to inform and support members of the legislature about Child Welfare issues. Through this initiative, named Partners for Children, members of the legislature have begun focusing on ways to improve our support of youth aging out of the foster care system without a permanent family.

Financial Statements

2012 Statement of Activities

Income

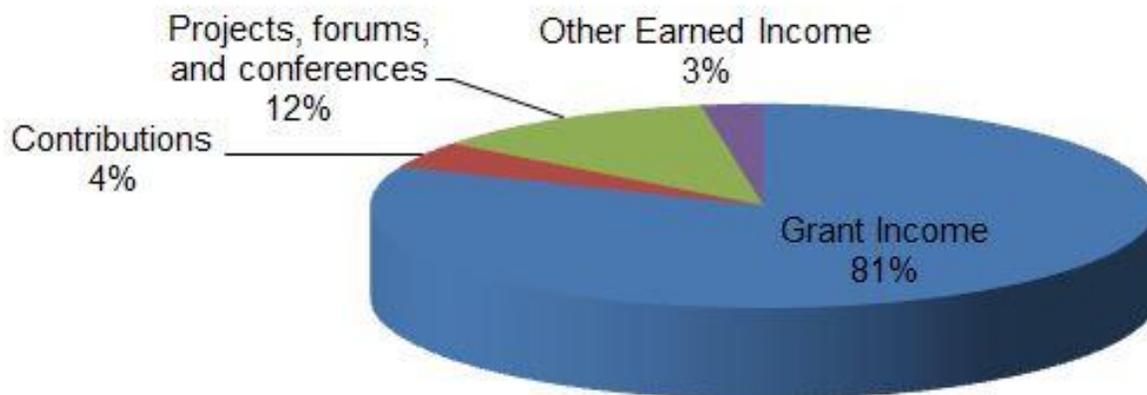
Grant Income	1,110,479
Contributions	57,518
Projects, forums, and conferences	164,105
Other Earned Income	35,045
Total Income	1,367,147

Expense

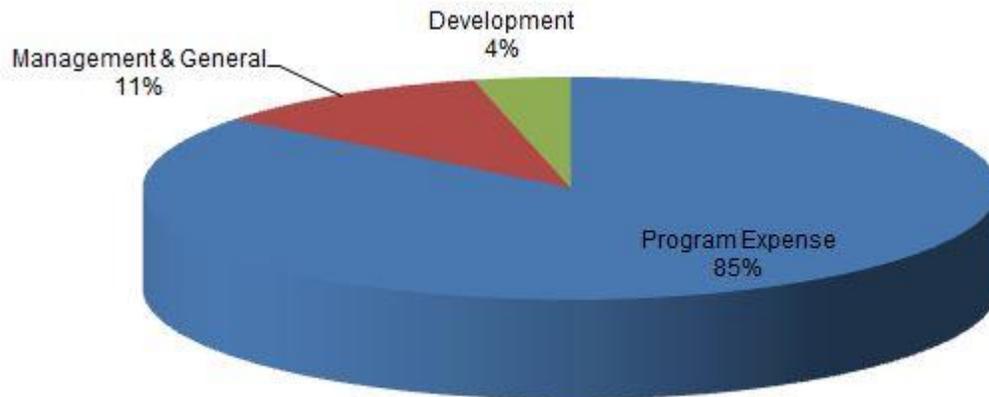
Program Expense	839,097
Management & General	104,887
Development	35,966
Total Expense	979,950

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	387,197
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2012 Income



2012 Expenses



2012 Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Current Assets	
Cash	400,121
Receivables	29,394
Promises to give	305,697
Prepaid expenses	25,225
Equipment - net	2,293
Unemployment reserve fund	13,052
Investments	256,519
Total Assets	1,032,301

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	59,003
Provision for UC claims	19,736
Accrued vacation and related liabilities	17,880
Total Liabilities	96,619
Net Assets	
Total unrestricted net assets	352,602
Temporarily restricted	583,080
Total Net Assets	935,682
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,032,301

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