



PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Policy. Prevention. Innovation.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ADVOCATES PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE

The Public Policy Institute works to promote and implement evidence-based policies that will prevent and reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for individuals and families in Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin.

The Public Policy Institute, a division of Community Advocates, was founded in 2008 to prevent and end the poverty that so often brings people through our doors at Community Advocates seeking help.

The Public Policy Institute analyzes and advocates for policy changes; we convene and coordinate coalitions; and we distribute funds to community-based programs while offering them training and technical assistance to increase impact.

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2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

Community Advocates formed the Public Policy Institute (PPI) in 2008 to address the root causes of poverty so that we could prevent clients from ever needing our services. For the past decade, we've focused on reducing poverty by improving economic and employment opportunities; aiding access to health care; and preventing violence, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and tobacco use among Milwaukee's youth, families, and adults.

As you know, to effectively address the root causes of any social issue we must understand how we got to where we are. This philosophy was especially meaningful to us in 2018 as we celebrated our 10th anniversary and recommitted our efforts to reduce disparities and enhance well-being throughout our community with an event held at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

The event, attended by more than 100 community partners and friends, was headlined by Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, and local historian Reggie Jackson, Head Griot of America's Black Holocaust Museum. It served as the formal kickoff of PPI's new **Healthy Housing Initiative**, an effort to improve housing and public health in Milwaukee and beyond. Milwaukee's housing crisis is a product of both historical and contemporary policies and practices that are both a symptom and driver of poverty and racial segregation. The initiative is now well underway and we are actively pushing for change. The initiative



The Public Policy Institute celebrated our tenth anniversary in April with a housing-focused discussion and reception at the Milwaukee Public Museum's Streets of Old Milwaukee. Special guest Reggie Jackson, Community Advocates CEO Andi Elliott, keynote speaker Richard Rothstein, Public Policy Institute Deputy Director Kari Lerch, Senior Fellow David Riemer, Community Advocates Board President Sheree Dallas-Branch, and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett headlined the evening.

Our Sponsors

A big thank you goes out to those who attended and supported our 10th anniversary celebration, including Partner Sponsor **Employ Milwaukee**; Contributing Sponsors **Aurora Health Care, Center for Self-Sufficiency, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, the Medical College of Wisconsin, and United Community Center**; plus Media Sponsor **Shepherd Express**. We value your contributions!

has formed an advisory committee, conducted focus groups, and is homing in on its policy priorities.

PPI Policy Research and Advocacy

Throughout 2018, PPI's policy team, led by Deputy Director Kari Lerch, along with Senior Fellow David Riemer, Mike Bare, Julie Kerssick, and Conor Williams, continued to have impact at both the state and federal levels on issues close to our mission.

Rewarding Work

Over the course of the year, we continued our strategic focus on advancing the five individual policies detailed in our **Working Our Way Out of Poverty** proposal, which, if enacted together, would cut poverty in half.

Locally, members of our **Transitional Jobs Project** continued advocating for the expansion of subsidized jobs. The Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative, facilitated by PPI's Conor Williams, held a celebration in December to thank Eloise Anderson, then the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children



Andi Elliott and Kari Lerch presented PPI's founding director David Riemer with Community Advocates' Founder's Award and artwork to recognize his innovative and distinguished leadership to eliminate poverty.

and Families, for her support, as well as to recognize the state's transitional jobs programs, which have placed more than 6,000 job seekers in unsubsidized employment since 2010.

Additional accomplishments included:

- » Consulted with Senator Ron Wyden's (D-OR) staff on the **ELEVATE Act**, which would create large-scale subsidized employment across America. Sen. Wyden is the Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, and his staff's interest in our work was a significant factor in the decision to help develop the legislation.
- » Enactment of the **Hire Heroes Act** to expand transitional jobs programs to veterans, authored by state Representatives Cody Horlacher (R-Mukwonago) and Daniel Riemer (D-Milwaukee). PPI staff provided technical assistance to the bill's authors in their design of the program and legislative language. This bill was signed into law by then-Gov. Walker on April 4, 2018.
- » PPI's Senior Advocate Julie Kerksick co-authored an article in The Russell Sage Foundation's *Journal of the Social Sciences*, "**Working to Reduce Poverty: A National Subsidized Employment Proposal.**"
- » Participated in efforts involving the **2018 Farm Bill** to stop deep cuts to the SNAP program, which provides substantial food assistance to millions of individuals and families in our country.

Healthy Workers

In addition to making work pay, we are also focusing on the connection between employment and health. Throughout 2018, we continued to implement our five-year **Healthy Workers, Healthy Wisconsin** project, which integrates health care and trauma-healing services into employment programs so marginalized job seekers can find good jobs and thrive in the workplace. More than 120 participants have been able to access comprehensive health care and trauma-informed services, which complement the employment services they are receiving.



The City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance honored Milwaukee Common Council members Michael Murphy and Cavalier Johnson for their leadership on reducing the amount of cigarette smoke and e-cigarette vapor in Milwaukee's indoor spaces.

We also kept a watchful eye on changes to health care at the national and state levels as part of our **Effective ACA Implementation Project** and leadership in the Wisconsin Health Matters coalition. PPI's Research and Program Coordinator Mike Bare monitored the state's BadgerCare waiver proposal, called attention to the need to protect pre-existing conditions coverage, and advocated for expanded state and federal resources for health enrollment assistance.

A Thriving Community

The **Milwaukee Reentry Council** aims to cut recidivism in half. That's a big challenge, but the council, facilitated by PPI's Conor Williams and funded by a federal Smart Reentry Grant, has implemented innovative programs to help returning citizens find work, support, and meaning after incarceration. The council has launched peer mentors for men returning to the community, Welcome Home ceremonies, and ongoing Circles of Support to allow returned citizens and community members to participate in monthly restorative justice-style gatherings.

In addition, the council and partners from the nonprofit, faith, and law enforcement communities organized the Southeast Wisconsin Reentry Employment Expo to connect employers with work-ready returned citizens. The expo, held at the Cousins Center, was intended to answer some of the questions employers have about hiring returned citizens and the support they need to be successful on the job. WUWM covered the expo and its participants in a number of stories highlighting the needs and successes of both employers and job seekers in the local economy.

PPI's Prevention Activities

Our prevention professionals continued to work with an array of human services professionals, community members, and youth workers to prevent substance misuse and develop strategies to create communities that support the health and wellbeing of all residents.



PPI's Julie Kerksick and Conor Williams work closely on projects to remove barriers to success in the workplace, such as Transitional Jobs, Smart Reentry, and Healthy Workers, Healthy Wisconsin.

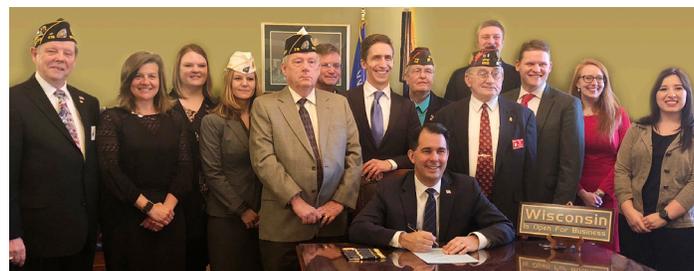
Highlights of 2018 include:

Real Talk for Youth

The **Milwaukee County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (MCSAP)**, coordinated by Kasaundra Brown, sponsored its second annual Youth Summit at Neu-Life Community Development, which focused on the real-world consequences of smoking marijuana while you're young, such as failing a drug test for work, jeopardizing scholarship money and participation in sports, getting in trouble with the law, and, most importantly, interfering with your brain development and athletic ability.

Staying Strong

Through MCSAP, we were pleased to award youth-serving organizations with **Stay Strong Milwaukee** funding provided by Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division. All of our 2018 Stay Strong Milwaukee partners are implementing evidence-based programs and/or practices specifically targeted toward their youth. Our 2018 grantees are Diverse & Resilient, Neighborhood House, The Parenting Network, Pathfinders, Running Rebels Community Organization, United Community Center, and West Allis-West Milwaukee Family Resource Center.



Kari Lerch attended the signing of the Hire Heroes Act into law by then-Gov. Scott Walker to expand Transitional Jobs to veterans.

The City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance is distributing window clings for businesses to remind customers that smoke-free spaces are also vape-free spaces.





The Milwaukee Interfaith Conference presented the Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative with its Rev. Huerbert Huebschmann Urban Ministry Award in December.



PPI's Kasaundra Brown supported drug take-back drives to dispose of unwanted medication safely and securely.

Smoke-Free = Vape-Free

The **City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance** (CoMTFA), coordinated by Anneke Mohr, advocated for local smoke-free laws to include e-cigarettes, which have emerged as an increasingly popular product among Wisconsin youth. The coalition educated the Milwaukee Common Council members on youth access to e-cigarettes and potential health and safety effects of secondhand exposure to e-cigarettes. On June 20, 2018, the council voted 14-0 to add e-cigarettes to the local youth access ordinance and the city's smoke-free ordinance. As a result, e-cigarette use is no longer allowed indoors in workplaces, bars, and restaurants in Milwaukee.

Cleaner Outdoor Spaces

CoMTFA also advocated for more tobacco-free outdoor spaces this year. In 2018, with support from community partners, Milwaukee Pride decided to no longer accept tobacco funding. CoMTFA is currently

Youth Transform into Leaders

PPI Contract Monitor **Jan Buchler** loves visiting MBFI partners' staff and their youth to observe the direct impact of positive youth development programs on young people. In a recent visit to Walker's Point Youth and Family Center, where the Teen Self-Nurturing Program was being implemented as a "leadership development group" for 12 ninth-grade girls, Jan was struck by the girls' engagement and maturity, and heard positive feedback from the principal about them. Jan was even more surprised to learn that the girls in the group had been identified as challenging students who were creating disruptions in their school. She noted that nurturing the girls' leadership abilities, instead of focusing on their disruptive activities, transformed their identities and their behavior. "Sometimes relatively simple things can create magic, like nurturing youth who have great untapped capacity to be leaders," Jan wrote in a blog post.

exploring opportunities to promote additional smoke-free outdoor events, festivals, and parks throughout Milwaukee.

Safe Disposal of Drugs

In April 2018, MCSAP helped to sponsor two drug take-back drives, one at Hayat Pharmacy on North Avenue in Milwaukee, and another at Summit Place in West Allis, to enable community members to get rid of their unwanted medication easily and safely. It also promoted the 24/7 safe drop boxes found throughout Milwaukee County, drew attention to the secure mail-back envelopes distributed at City of Milwaukee fire stations, and provided medication lock boxes and drug disposal pouches for community members and partners.

Connecting with Golden Eagles Fans

During select Marquette University men's basketball games, MCSAP members offered Dose of Reality information and resources to basketball fans and students.

Supporting Coalitions

PPI's Jazzmyne Adams coordinates the **Southeast Region of the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth (AWY)**, which supports substance abuse prevention coalitions in eight counties: Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha. In 2018, the Southeast AWY hosted its second and third youth summits in East Troy for young people from the Northeast and Southeast regions of the state; organized a Partners in Substance Abuse Training in May; hosted a Substance Abuse Prevention



MCSAP members and local students had a "real talk" about the marijuana's negative impact on young people at the Second Annual MCSAP Youth Summit in March 2018.

Skills Training; and organized the Milwaukee area's Governor's Faith-Based Summit on Opioids at the Tripoli Shrine Center.

Broadening Our Focus in the City

The **53206 Drug-Free Communities Project**, coordinated by John Eshun, works to reduce youth substance use in Milwaukee's 53206 zip code. Previously, the 53206 DFC focused on preventing youth alcohol and tobacco use, but thanks to federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act dollars awarded to it in 2018, this project will also address opioid prevention within the coalition as well. The 53206 DFC also received SAMHSA STOP Act funding for alcohol prevention, which is being coordinated by Amanda Clark, a Public Ally. Amanda has been implementing the "Talk, They Hear You" campaign in three schools and two libraries, as well as building relationships with partners in the 53206 neighborhoods and regularly updating the project's Facebook page.

Keeping the Community Safe

The **Wisconsin Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Success grant** enables us to intensify our focus on reducing prescription drug misuse and abuse among individuals ages 12 to 25. Our partners in Milwaukee County are the Cudahy Health Department, Greendale Health Department, Greenfield Health Department, MCSAP, Oak Creek Health Department, Safe & Sound 27th Street, Volition Franklin, West Allis-West Milwaukee Community Coalition, and West Allis West Milwaukee Heroin/Opioid Task Force. Their 2018 activities included

sponsoring drug take-back events, offering Senior Safety Talks at senior living centers and churches, providing opportunities for students to take the Dose of Reality pledge, sponsoring public service announcements before movie screenings, educating patients on questions they should ask their health care providers about medications, sponsoring and promoting secure drug drop

boxes, distributing medication lock boxes and drug disposal pouches, and promoting prevention awareness throughout the community.

A Brighter Future for Our Youth

Community Advocates Public Policy Institute administers outreach activities, training, and technical assistance for community-based prevention agencies through our state contract for the **Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative (MBFI)**, which brings together networks and programs to work collaboratively on building a strong community prevention system in Milwaukee for youth ages 12-21. We are extremely proud of outcomes achieved during the past three-year grant cycle by our 10 subcontracted partners. In 2018 alone, nearly 2,500 youth were served among MBFI-funded programs that focused on addressing youth prevention work in AODA, teen pregnancy, child abuse, and violence.

Although 2018 served as the final year of our current three-year MBFI contract, we are pleased to announce that the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families has selected Community Advocates Public Policy Institute as one of the Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative grantees going forward under a new program design. PPI will be focusing on trauma-informed, strength-based youth substance abuse prevention activities in Milwaukee with our partners Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee, Milwaukee Christian Center, Neu-Life Community Development, The Parenting Network, Pathfinders, PEARLS for Teen Girls, and United Community Center. The new model will utilize evidence-based curricula, including One-to-One Mentoring, Botvin LifeSkills Training, and The Strengthening Families Program 10-14.



The Southeastern Region of AWY organized a Partners in Substance Abuse Training in Brookfield, attended by Coordinator of the Northeast Region of AWY Phil Duket; PPI's Jazmyne Adams, who coordinates the Southeast AWY; keynote speaker Mark Yarbrough; PPI Deputy Director Kari Lerch; and Annie Short, Executive Director of the Northeastern Wisconsin Area Health Education Center.

Training the Next Generation of Leaders

To increase the skills and capacity of Southeast Wisconsin's prevention and behavioral health workforce, PPI has expanded our training opportunities for human services professionals, educators, and community members. Throughout 2018, Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator Jeremy Triblett provided training to more than 300 individuals on youth mental health, suicide prevention, and substance abuse prevention for coalition builders.

Although PPI offers learning opportunities around the community, an exciting expansion to our work in 2018 was the development and launch of our own Training Center on Brown Deer Road, providing an easily accessible home base for our trainings of groups large and small. The state-of-the-art center has enough space for up to 100 training attendees, and also has technology to conduct web-based meetings and trainings. The training center is now available for other groups to rent as well. Contact Kari Lerch at 414-270-2950 or klerch@communityadvocates.net if you're interested in holding an event in our space.

Let's Keep in Touch!

As you can see, the Public Policy Institute's team is constantly working in the community to build bridges and amplify our work. To stay connected, check out our newly updated website at ppi.communityadvocates.net, like us on Facebook, connect with us on Twitter and LinkedIn, and sign up for PPI's quarterly e-newsletter, monthly Community Advocates e-newsletter, bimonthly Milwaukee Prevention Journal, and training announcements. You'll find all of these links, plus a full event calendar, on our website.

Amanda Clark, a Public Ally working at the Public Policy Institute, attended PPI's Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training.

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THANK YOU

We are grateful for our generous 2018 funders who make our work possible.

2018 Major Revenue Sources

FEDERAL

- » Department of Health & Human Services, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration

STATE OF WISCONSIN

- » Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
- » Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- » Wisconsin Department of Justice

MILWAUKEE COUNTY

- » Department of Health & Human Services – Behavioral Health Division & Delinquency and Court Services

CITY OF MILWAUKEE

- » City of Milwaukee Health Department

PUBLIC, PRIVATE & CORPORATE CONTRACTS

- » Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
- » Argosy Foundation
- » Joseph and Vera Zilber Charitable Foundation, Inc.
- » Charles R. O'Malley Charitable Trust
- » The Brico Fund
- » Annie E. Casey Foundation
- » Greater Milwaukee Foundation Fund for Lake Michigan



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