



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON
**children
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count



Dear Friends,

Growth in an organization is characterized both by new beginnings and careful pruning of those initiatives that have played an important part in the organization's development, but have served their purpose. Because 2006 marked the 125th anniversary of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, it offered an opportunity to look back on an organization with a rich history of growth and refinement.

WCCF has grown from its original roots as a voluntary advisory body to the Governor and legislature in the latter part of the 19th century to a private, nonprofit organization with 16 staff with combined policy expertise in health, childhood development, workforce development and supports, early education, and tax and budget. We fiercely protect our independence, which is made possible by the wise guidance of our diverse board of directors and the support we receive from private foundations and individual supporters throughout Wisconsin, all of whom believe that children need a well-informed voice that can speak to their needs with strength and credibility.

In 2006, WCCF continued to thrive and grow. We realized important policy victories, such as the defeat of TABOR, an ill-formed policy that would have put a strangle-hold on education, health care and social services and negatively affected thousands of Wisconsin children. We unveiled new initiatives, with the introduction of Ready, Set, Grow—focused on the early stages of childhood—and Justice for Wisconsin Youth—focused on the needs of children in their adolescent years. We were a partner in the development of a new health care plan that offers the promise of health care coverage to all children in Wisconsin. And, we made important inroads in learning more and educating others about what it will take for Wisconsin to provide more effective pathways for the 400,000 low-skilled adults—many of them parents and most of them low-income—to get the job skills training they need for family-supporting employment.

We also said good-bye to an initiative that played a prominent and effective role in helping teachers, parents, early educators, social workers and policy-makers throughout Wisconsin understand the importance of a child's early years: the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour. While the bus will no longer roll, the nine-year-old Tour was an essential basis for helping us foster our ongoing work in understanding how our state policies need to change to better reflect the growing body of research on adolescent brain development and promoting high quality early education and care, based on the critical role brain development plays in the early years of a child's life.

Finally, we moved our offices, created a new look and logo and launched a new website, all measures that reflect positive growth and change for WCCF. Thank you to new and old friends alike for your support over the past year and for your steadfast belief that WCCF continues to be an important voice in making every kid count.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charity Eleson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charity Eleson



2006 marked the end of the first quarter of the Council's second century of existence. And an eventful quarter-century it was!

During that span, longtime WCCF Executive Director Anne Arnesen, with the help of dedicated staff and board members, built WCCF into one of the nation's premier child advocacy agencies before passing the torch at the beginning of 2004 to current Executive Director Charity Eleson. Along the way, the organization's name was changed from the Council on Human Concerns to our current moniker in order to better reflect this strengthened emphasis on kids. We launched the Kids Count initiative, the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour and the Wisconsin Budget Project. During those 25 years, we also stacked up an impressive list of policy victories, including: the creation of Youth Aids in 1982; various improvements in the child welfare system; and making sure that a range of work supports, such as subsidized childcare and health care coverage, accompanied the transition from AFDC to W-2. More recently, we scored successes in helping beat back ill-advised proposals to change the state's ban on concealed weapons, expanding community-based 4-year-old kindergarten in communities throughout Wisconsin and defeating the drive to pass the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights (TABOR), which would have deprived state and local governments of the flexibility needed to fund crucial services.

As the Council prepared to celebrate its quasiquicentennial—yes, that's a real word meaning 125th anniversary—another major change took place. We moved our offices from our longtime home across the street from the State Capitol at 16 N. Carroll—initially on the fourth floor, and since 1999 on the sixth floor—to a roomy new suite on West Washington Avenue. The new space represents a major upgrade in many ways. It not only offers an adequately-sized conference room and a comfortable break room, but the chances of somebody being electrocuted while using the restroom have been reduced dramatically in comparison to the old location, where the probability of such a mishap eventually taking place was statistically significant.

Sadly, 2006 was also the final full year of the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour, which since 1999 has brought information about early childhood brain development to communities around the state. While we've said good-bye to the Bus Tour, one of the most successful public education initiatives in the Council's history, we also continued our commitment to keeping pace with new developments in early childhood and adolescent brain development and incorporating that important new research into the trainings we continue to deliver for early childhood providers, social workers and parents.

As always, the Council was active on a wide range of child and family issues during 2006. Our “multi-issue” orientation has long been what sets the Council apart from so many other advocacy groups in Wisconsin. Following is a brief summary of some of our work in key issue areas over the course of the year.

Juvenile Justice and Adolescent Brain Development

The Council was very active on juvenile justice issues in 2006, particularly with regard to changing state policy on treatment of 17-year-olds as adults in the correctional system. Early in the year, we released a report, “Rethinking the Juvenile in Juvenile Justice,” which received front page coverage in the Wisconsin State Journal. The report helped launch our Justice for Wisconsin Youth campaign, aimed at returning 17-year-olds to the juvenile system. We continued our public education efforts throughout the year with a major conference attended by 450 social workers, teachers, youth advocates and attorneys; meetings with legislators and Department of Corrections officials on this issue; and numerous presentations making the connection between adolescent brain development and its implications for justice policy, including workshops at the State Public Defenders Conference, the Governor’s Juvenile Justice Commission and the National Juvenile Defenders Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. We hope and expect that these efforts have laid the groundwork for policy changes that will improve outcomes for adolescents, including new policies that will correct the mistake that was made when Wisconsin moved 17-year-olds into the adult justice system.

Early Education

In July 2006, the Council issued “Early Education Matters: Lessons Learned,” a final report on the two-year, Joyce Foundation-funded Early Education Matters (EEM) project. WCCF’s partners in EEM were the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), UW-Extension and the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), with the Council serving as lead agency. The main objective of EEM was to promote implementation of 4-year-old kindergarten programs that employ a community-based collaborative approach. The report generated substantial media coverage, including a major article in the Capital Times and a spot on the WMTV Channel 15 news. By the end of the two-year initiative, the number of collaborative 4-year-old kindergarten sites increased from 51 to 143, with the number of school districts offering collaborative 4-K increasing from 13 to 33.

During this year, we also made a transition to expand the focus of our early education work to include policy changes that will improve outcomes for children birth to five, regardless of what early childhood setting they’re in. As part of that effort, we convened a group of organizations similarly committed to improving outcomes for young children and established the Early Learning Coalition (ELC). In conjunction with the creation of the ELC, we launched a campaign —Ready, Set, Grow: Early Learning Matters—to help keep parents, child care providers, child care administrators and early education teachers apprised of the most recent research and new policy developments in early care and education. A new “Ready, Set, Grow” website was unveiled in conjunction with the campaign’s launch. The Early Learning Coalition, compris-





ing a much larger group of partners—12 of them—than EEM, focused accordingly on a broader set of policy goals. In addition to promoting community-based 4K options, the coalition also set its sights on improving opportunities for professional development and technical assistance for teachers and providers working with young children, maintaining Wisconsin’s commitment to funding child care tuition assistance for low-income working families, maintaining funding for 4K, and establishing a child care quality improvement standard.

Health Care

Building on our 2005 proposal to extend health care coverage to all children, WCCF partnered with the Department of Health and Family Services and other organizations to develop Governor Jim Doyle’s BadgerCare Plus proposal. WCCF was invited to sit on key advisory committees related to BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid, and we partnered with DHFS and ABC for Health in sponsoring statewide listening sessions to learn more about the challenges families in different circumstances faced in acquiring and maintaining health care coverage for themselves and their children. BadgerCare Plus became a focus of intense Council activity during the second half of the year, as staff worked with the media and local partners to grow support for the proposal. We provided important analysis for a variety of groups working on health care reform, and worked with key constituencies to help them understand the elements of the plan. At the federal level, we monitored developments in Congress pertaining to reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which provides some of the funding for BadgerCare.



Economic Security

WCCF continued to play a significant statewide role in the development and monitoring of policy related to workforce development and economic supports. The Council was invited to serve on the Policy and Program Operations Work Group of the Department of Workforce Development’s (DWD) W-2 Contract and Implementation Committee, as well as Maximus’ Children’s Services Network.



After months of study and analysis, in the spring of 2006 the Council published a report in cooperation with the Bay Area Workforce Development Board, “Toward a Better Design: New Economy Challenges Require a Better W-2 Program in the Bay Area.” This report was the product of a collaborative initiative between the two organizations called the Bay Area Task Force on Low-Wage Work. The report called for improved career pathway development for participants in the W-2 program and more extensive integration of services offered by W-2 and Workforce Investment Act providers that would lead to greater job skill training opportunities for participants. The report received substantial media coverage, and led to discussions with a variety of key players, such as the technical colleges, about how to improve the workforce system. WCCF and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) presented to the Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructors and deans of the technical colleges on approaches to better engage ABE students in post-secondary programs at technical colleges through improving linkages between ABE programs and certificate or degree programs, and by developing ABE programs that are “contextualized” for occupational skill development. Another publication, released later in the year, focused on improving performance measures used to gauge the success of W-2.

Taxes and Revenue

Building on its efforts of the previous year, the Council spent a great deal of energy in 2006 battling against the so-called Taxpayers' Bill of Rights, or TABOR, a proposed amendment to the state Constitution that would have hamstrung state and local governments' ability to fund crucial services. During the first few months of 2006, WCCF staff produced a variety of publications on TABOR, collaborated with several other groups to host community forums on how TABOR would affect schools, health care, social services and post-secondary education, and made numerous media appearances, both print and broadcast, on the topic. In addition, the Council met with members of the legislature and the Governor's staff to discuss the potential impact of TABOR. Much of the Council's outreach on TABOR was conducted through the WCCF-organized THINK (TABOR Hurts Investments in Kids) Coalition. These efforts were rewarded with the defeat of TABOR in the spring of 2006. At a celebratory event hosted by the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), WCCF received a special "mouse that roared" award in recognition of our work against TABOR. We're not sure about the "mouse" part, but with the help of our supporters and allies statewide, we are certain that our roar about the hazards of TABOR was heard loud and clear.

Afterschool

Throughout 2006, the Council worked to promote effective afterschool programming through its leadership role in the Wisconsin Afterschool Network (WAN), a public-private partnership co-facilitated by WCCF, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and UW-Extension. The Council led WAN's policy development efforts, and helped organize a variety of informational events, including a "Lights On Afterschool" event at the Capitol. In October, WCCF published a major paper on afterschool programs, "School's Out: Out-of-School Times Key to Children's Success." The report was covered widely in the media, and its release was coordinated with a series of meetings with newspaper editorial boards across the state. Another 2006 WCCF publication, "Mind the Gap: Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Education Demands Commitment," pointed to quality afterschool programming as one of the strategies that has proven effective at closing the educational achievement gap between white students and children of color.

Early Childhood Brain Development

The Council has long been a leader in Wisconsin on making the connection between public policy and cutting edge research on early childhood brain development. Our efforts are built on the work of top neuroscientists, some of whom we are fortunate to have at UW. 2006 marked the final full year of the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour, which since 1999 has brought information about early childhood brain development to communities around the state. During the year, we focused our work in this area on the link between brain development and poverty. The Council's brain staff presented at numerous conferences and events throughout the year, many of them as part of the Bus tour. These included the Early Childhood Conference in Eau Claire in late March, the Foster Parent Conference in early April, the Superintendent Conference in May, a multi-day swing through St. Croix County in September, and the November Early Childhood Conference in Platteville. Along the way, the Bus unveiled a new presentation in the spring, "Remember, It Doesn't Stop at Three: Brain Development in 3 to 5 Year Olds." The Better Badger Baby Bus, one of the most



successful public education initiatives in the Council’s history, rolled on for a few more months before parking permanently in early 2007. Its impact, however, will be felt for years to come.

The Council also launched a new site-based training initiative in Milwaukee, working intensively with two child care centers there, La Causa and Neighborhood House, providing training to teachers of 3- and 4-year-olds on how to integrate best practice into curriculum and teaching to promote optimal development. The initiative also included trainings that provided parents with ideas about how to use their daily interactions with their children—like grocery shopping, making breakfast and bedtime—to help the children thrive. As part of the initiative, WCCF published its first batch of a planned “Ready, Set, Grow” activity card set, “Help Me Learn More While I’m Four,” which gives teachers and parents easy-to-do activities to help children develop. WCCF also continued its leadership in the second year of the Milwaukee Brain Team, working with 30 different organizations committed to disseminating information on early childhood brain development to parents and early childhood programs throughout Milwaukee County.

Looking Ahead

Just as good football and basketball teams make adjustments between the first and second quarters of a game, the Council looks at the transition into the second quarter of its second century as an opportunity to learn from the past, both the highly successful and less successful parts. The 2006 elections brought a significant change in Wisconsin’s political landscape, and while the Council takes its nonpartisan status seriously, we will nevertheless seek to use the realignment of the State Legislature to children’s advantage in advancing our policy agenda.

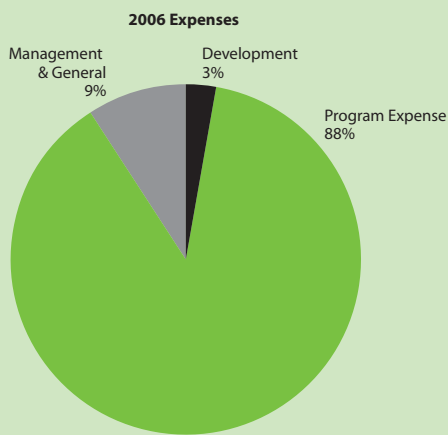
Another between-quarters adjustment has to do with clarifying and prioritizing our work. In 2006, we moved ahead with the policy priorities established by the board and staff in 2005. Those are health care coverage for all children, improving pathways for low-skilled parents to attain jobs skills that lead to decent jobs, improving the quality of and securing access to early care and education and afterschool programming, working toward a fair and progressive tax structure that provides revenues to support services to children and families, and ensuring that adolescents get fair and appropriate treatment under the law that takes into account their developmental needs and their long-term success. Our redesigned website, our publications, and our public education and outreach all reflect these clear priorities. 2007’s budget and legislative session will demonstrate how effectively we’ve been able to advance them.

In a nutshell, our supporters, old and new, can expect the same rigorous analysis and passionate advocacy from the Council during the next quarter-century as they have seen during the one that has just concluded. And, with luck, they can continue to expect that commitment for many more quasquis to come.

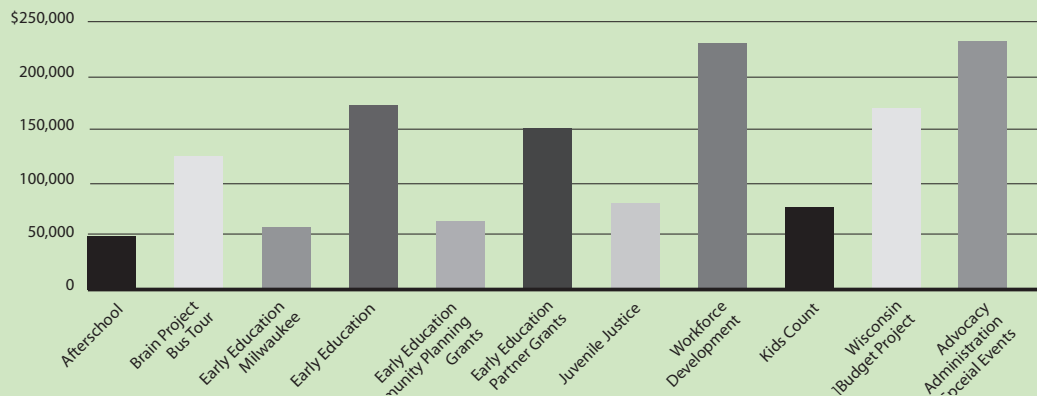


Financial Information

Note: The income and expense figures shown in this section are lower than WCCF's 2006 audited financial statements. The amounts in this document include all WCCF program activities, but exclude fiscal agent activity.



2006 Expenses by Program Total 2006 WCCF Program Expenses = \$1,418,689



Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2006

Assets

Current Assets	
Cash	411,546
Receivables	87,962
Promises to give	27,315
Inventory	1,410
Prepaid expenses	41,739
Prepaid grant awards	44,512
Equipment - net	22,286
Unemployment reserve fund	11,561
Investments	124,891
Total Assets	773,222

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	46,647
Provision for UC claims	20,989
Accrued vacation and related liabilities	19,294
Deferred revenue	301,893
Custodial account	9,032
Total Liabilities	397,855

Net Assets

Total unrestricted net assets	269,405
Temporarily restricted	105,962

Total Net Assets 375,367

Total Liabilities and Net Assets 773,222

2006 Income Statement

Income

Foundation/Grant Income	1,199,849
Donations & Membership	69,864
Conferences & Events	124,355
Other Earned Income	59,134
Total Income	1,453,202

Expense

Program Expense	1,256,923
Management & General	132,009
Development	29,757
Total Expense	1,418,689

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets 34,513

Each year, we receive support from foundations, organizations and individuals that helps us ensure that every Wisconsin child can grow up in a just and nurturing family and community. We greatly appreciate our supporters' commitment to improving outcomes for children and families in Wisconsin.

2006 Funders

Annie E. Casey Foundation
 Campaign 4 Youth Justice
 Center on Budget
 and Policy Priorities
 The Charles D. Jacobus
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 The Faye McBeath Foundation
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 The Joyce Foundation
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This list includes private donors and workplace donors through Community Shares of Wisconsin who contributed \$50 or more to WCCF.

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2006 Event or Publication Underwriters

The following organizations contributed funds to help underwrite the cost of an event or a publication:

Department of Health
 & Family Services
 Department of Public
 Instruction
 Office of Justice Assistance-
 Governor's Juvenile Justice
 Commission
 Rogers Memorial Hospital
 Wisconsin Counties Association
 Wisconsin Education
 Association Council

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