



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Our Work

Founded in 2008, the primary goal of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute is to design and put into place the policy changes needed to dramatically reduce poverty in Milwaukee and Wisconsin. We work closely with individuals and organizations in the city, throughout the state and across the nation—including policymakers—in crafting policies that offer the poor the jobs, income and health insurance they need to escape from poverty.

While the Institute's primary task is reducing poverty itself, we also seek to reduce the many burdens that the poor face as they navigate through life. One of our major objectives is to create a rational and effective community justice system. We are committed as well to ensuring that low-income individuals can easily obtain affordable and high-quality health care, substance use disorder treatment, mental health services, housing and utility services, as well as a good education for their children.

Our Projects

True to our name, we are at heart an advocacy organization. The Community Advocates Public Policy Institute will, as needed, conduct research and prepare analyses that relate to poverty, its symptoms and its remediation. Unless the facts are known, advocacy cannot proceed. But developing concrete proposals to actually reduce poverty and its burdens—and then advocating for those policy changes—is our main work.

We are intensely engaged in the business of organizing, communicating and ultimately persuading policymakers to take action.

The Institute has taken a leadership role in six major projects aimed at reducing poverty and improving the poor's circumstances:

► **Transitional Jobs**

In Wisconsin and the United States, we are suffering from uncommonly high unemployment. The job gap—the difference between the number of unemployed men and women who need jobs, and the jobs that are available to them—has also risen to unprecedented levels.

To help get people back to work, the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute has worked closely with Milwaukee lawmakers to create transitional jobs: wage-paying jobs that allow low-income, unemployed men and women to do useful work and support themselves and their families. Transitional jobs—in combination with earning supplements, affordable childcare and

Aug. 9, 2010

affordable health care—are key to reducing poverty and increasing employment. In Milwaukee alone, several small-scale transitional jobs programs are already in operation.

The Public Policy Institute's work on transitional jobs has already resulted in two significant pieces of legislation:

- In 2009, Public Policy Institute Director David R. Riemer drafted language for a 2009-11 budget amendment—inserted into the budget by Sen. Spencer Coggs (D-Milwaukee)—which created the Transitional Jobs Demonstration Project authorizing up to 2,500 jobs slots.

Eligible participants in the Transitional Jobs Project must be between the ages of 18-64 (and parents if between the ages of 21-64); unemployed for over four weeks; ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits and W-2; and have an annual household income of less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level. Unemployed adults would be paid the minimum wage for up to 40 hours of work per week for a maximum of 1,040 hours, or six months. Each job slot could employ several individuals during the life of the project.

The Coggs amendment also created a new W-2 component that, beginning in 2011, will offer W-2 participants the opportunity to work in wage-paying “subsidized private-sector employment” positions—another version of transitional jobs paying wages that qualify for earnings-based tax credits.

- Riemer subsequently worked with Rep. Tamara Grigsby (D-Milwaukee) to draft the *Wisconsin Family Jobs Act*, which Gov. Jim Doyle signed into law in May 2010. The Act removed the Demonstration Project's 2,500 job cap.

The Act also increased the wage subsidy for the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) seldom-used Trial Jobs Program for W-2 enrollees so as to make it more attractive to employers. Under this provision, employers would receive a 100 percent wage subsidy at the minimum wage for the hours worked by an eligible employee hired to work up to 40 hours per week for a maximum of 1,040 hours, or six months.

In July 2010, DCF Sec. Reggie Bicha announced \$34 million in federal funding for the Transitional Jobs Demonstration Project, designed to get 4,000 Wisconsin residents back into the workforce. Funding is provided by federal Recovery Act dollars provided to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Fund.

As a local leader on transitional jobs, the Public Policy Institute helped to found the Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative, which seeks to obtain state and federal programs and funding to make transitional jobs available to Wisconsin's unemployed. Other organizations in the collaborative include the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Good Jobs and Livable Neighborhoods, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Milwaukee Community Service Corps, MICA, Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission, the New Hope Project, Northwest Side Community Development Corporation, Policy Studies Inc., Social Development Commission, Thomas & Associates, UMO, Milwaukee Urban League, WISDOM and the YWCA.

► **The Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI)** is a collaboration among more than 80 local and state organizations—including law enforcement, public health agencies, treatment providers and advocates—to expand access to drug and alcohol treatment for everyone in Milwaukee County and the State of Wisconsin who needs it. Launched in the fall of 2008, MATI has already produced positive results.

Milwaukee County currently suffers from a substantial “treatment gap”—the difference between the number of people who need treatment for substance use disorders and those who actually receive it. In 2004, the last year for which we have data, more than 82,000 people needed but did not receive treatment for substance use disorders in Milwaukee County. The 2009 “State Estimates of Substance Use from the 2005-2006 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health” study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) showed that in Wisconsin as a whole, 21 percent of individuals age 18-25 needed but did not receive treatment for alcohol use, compared to 17 percent nationally. Nationally, only about one in 10 people of all ages who need treatment receive it.

MATI is successfully pursuing two approaches to closing the addiction treatment gap:

- **Advocacy for expanded health insurance and parity:** MATI works to ensure that everyone in Wisconsin has health insurance that includes substance use disorder and mental health coverage on a parity basis. The Public Policy Institute played a major role in 2009-10 in Wisconsin’s decision to require parity in the BadgerCare Benchmark Plan and in persuading the Legislature and Governor to enact the *Wisconsin Parity Act*, which requires small and large group insurance policies sold in the state to cover substance use disorder and mental health treatment on a parity basis. We are also involved in the Legislature’s effort to implement national health insurance.
- **Facilitating improved treatment delivery:** MATI also plays a lead role in helping to integrate the delivery of substance use disorder treatment services in Milwaukee County with mental health services, other health services, and employment, housing and other supportive services. In 2009-10, we worked to include up-to-date information about local substance use disorder providers in the searchable, web-based directory of mental health providers created by Mental Health America-Wisconsin (visit <http://www.mhawisconsin.org> and click on Mental Health, Wellness and Addiction Services Directory). Additionally, MATI is working to improve services for people suffering from substance use disorder so that they are identified appropriately, assessed accurately, and receive timely and ongoing treatment as needed.

MATI is sponsored by a national grant from the Open Society Institute, Baltimore, with additional local funding from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Helen Bader Foundation and the Zilber Family Foundation.

► **The Mental Health Policy Initiative** is a multiyear project that aims to improve state and local policies for individuals suffering from mental illness. Funded by a 2009 gift from Wildflower Communities, the Mental Health Policy Initiative seeks to increase funding for mental health services, ensure the availability of appropriate inpatient and outpatient mental health services in Milwaukee County, and improve the decision-making process among agencies that serve those with mental illness.

The project has been engaged in:

- **Helping to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness** to ensure that it is regarded and treated as the chronic medical condition that it is.
- **Increasing public and private funding for mental health services** as part of the extension of insurance to all Wisconsin residents. The Public Policy Institute played a major role in the 2010 enactment of the *Wisconsin Parity Act*. This Act requires that all commercially purchased group health insurance plans provide mental health and substance use disorder insurance benefits at parity levels of coverage with physical conditions. We are now involved in helping to promulgate the administrative rules that will implement the law.
- **Integrating mental health treatment** with substance use disorder treatment, physical health services, and non-health services such as employment and housing.
- **Improving the decision-making processes used by governmental agencies and private organizations** as they work with those who have a mental illness.
- **Assisting the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County** in the formulation of a county-wide supportive housing plan for people who have a mental illness, have a disability or are at risk of homelessness. This project also includes assisting the City with the development of zoning ordinance changes that will improve the development and siting process.

► **Community Justice Project**

In 2010, Community Advocates merged with Justice 2000, an organization established in 2001 to promote the safe release and community reintegration of criminal offenders. With the merger, the Public Policy Institute incorporated Justice 2000's Community Justice Project. Funded in part by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, this project aims to strengthen the quality and efficiency of the criminal justice system, both in Milwaukee County and statewide.

In Wisconsin, spending on corrections has risen faster in the past 20 years than nearly any other state budget item. According to the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, the State Corrections budget grew from \$178.6 million in 1990 to \$583.4 million by the end of the decade. The state budget now projects a doubling of Corrections expenditures during fiscal years 2009-11 to \$1.3 billion. Despite mounting corrections spending, incarceration rates remain high.

The Community Justice Project promotes a shift away from current policy that overutilizes incarceration to one that focuses on early intervention, treatment programs and community supervision, particularly for those individuals at greatest risk for committing crimes.

This project, modeled on successful initiatives in Minnesota and other states that have lower

numbers of prisoners but comparable crime rates, aims to develop a new community corrections policy that will:

- Strengthen the quality and efficiency of the criminal justice system.
- Promote community-based programs that provide cost-effective, evidence-based alternatives to incarceration.
- Empower collaborations between local criminal justice system partners and community organizations to plan, implement and evaluate a continuum of services to address local criminal justice and community needs.
- Create strong incentives to reduce utilization of expensive prison beds, and develop and implement effective community-based programs.
- Result in cost savings from reductions in prison admissions, thus allowing counties to reinvest a portion of the savings in innovative, outcome-based programs and healthy neighborhood initiatives that will further reduce recidivism.

► **Tobacco Prevention & Control Program**

In April 2010 the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute was selected by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to lead the Milwaukee operation of the state's Tobacco Prevention & Control Program.

Community Advocates' primary responsibility is to help implement the *Wisconsin Smoke-Free Act* in Milwaukee, a new law which went into effect July 5, 2010, prohibiting smoking in bars, restaurants and all other workplaces in Wisconsin.

Community Advocates Public Policy Institute staff will also:

- **Conduct outreach and education** to the media, workplaces, key local and state leaders, and the general public to ensure broad compliance with the *Wisconsin Smoke-Free Act*.
- **Build a grassroots coalition** of Milwaukee-area tobacco prevention and control supporters trying to eliminate the death and disease caused by tobacco use.
- **Engage youth** in activities supportive of tobacco control and prevention, including community outreach and education.
- **Conduct compliance checks** of local tobacco retailers to limit tobacco sales to underage consumers.

► **Pathways to Ending Poverty** seeks to change the way we think about poverty by creating and testing a specific "policy package" that, if implemented, would reduce poverty in Wisconsin to a residual 2-5%. This new framework, based on the best evidence about which policy changes actually lower poverty, as well as rigorous modeling, aims to shift the

debate about poverty to a serious, evidence-based discussion about which combination of policies for ending poverty would actually make the most sense for our state.

Pathways to Ending Poverty will:

- **Create a realistic poverty line for Wisconsin and Milwaukee.** The current poverty line, dating to the early 1960s, is no longer valid. With the help of Steve Holt, who has written extensively on poverty issues for the Brookings Institution and other groups, we have examined alternative poverty measures developed by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), and recommended a preliminary new poverty measure for Milwaukee and Wisconsin. In late 2010, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty, under the direction of Professor Tim Smeeding, plans to present an NAS-based "Wisconsin Measure" of poverty to guide future policymaking.
- **Establish a specific goal for reducing poverty in Wisconsin.** Our current goal is to reduce poverty from the current level of 11% to a residual 2-5%.
- **Determine which "policy packages" of changes to our current systems of need-based or work-based assistance, social insurance, incentives and investments are likely to get Wisconsin to the residual 2% poverty goal.** We are looking at what the evidence says as we put together alternative combinations and consult with a number of local advisors such as Julie Kerksick, Sheri Johnson, Tim Smeeding and Don Sykes; and national experts such as Gordon Berlin, Greg Duncan, Peter Edelman, Eboni Howard, Demetra Nightingale and Mark Rank.
- **Retain an independent, analytic organization to test alternative "policy packages"** to confirm that they reduce poverty to a residual 2-5%; quantify estimated costs; and assess likely positive side-effects (with a particular emphasis on improved health outcomes) and gauge unintended negative consequences. This is the heart of the project.
- **Communicate to local and national policymakers** the results about which "policy package" does the best job of reducing poverty to a residual level, at the lowest cost and with the best side-effects.

Pathways to Ending Poverty is a unique initiative to reduce poverty to close to zero. We have been directly influenced by work from the Center for American Progress and the "Half in Ten Campaign," which decided that cutting poverty by 50% within a decade was their goal, producing an Urban Institute report that shows how to reduce poverty by 26%.

Who We Are

David Riemer is Director of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. He is responsible for developing and advancing policies to greatly reduce poverty. David has been active for many years in reshaping Wisconsin and U.S. policies on welfare, poverty, health care and education. He was recently chosen to serve as a member of the Wisconsin Legislative Council Special Committee on Health Care Reform Implementation, which will study and make recommendations to the State Legislature on what changes Wisconsin should make in response to recently enacted federal health care reform legislation. It will also study all aspects of the federal legislation that affect Wisconsin including insurance market reforms, coverage for uninsured persons, preventive care and quality improvement.

David is the author of *The Prisoners of Welfare* and several articles on poverty, health care reform and public administration. He is one of the co-founders of The New Hope Project.

David served from 2004-07 as Director of the Wisconsin Health Project to lower the number of Wisconsin's uninsured and control health care costs. The project was responsible for developing bipartisan legislation (Assembly Bill 1140) to tackle the state's two biggest health care problems.

In 2004 David campaigned for Milwaukee County Executive. He received 101,000 votes, or 43 percent of the votes cast. During 2003, David served as Budget Director for Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle. His primary responsibility was to solve the State's projected \$3.2 billion deficit. The resulting balanced budget preserved vital services without raising taxes. David worked as an Atlantic Fellow in Public Policy in London and Oxford, England, in 2002; his research focused on supplementing low-income workers' earnings through the tax system.

From 1988-2001, David held several high-level jobs for the City of Milwaukee, including Budget Director, Administration Director and Chief of Staff for Mayor John O. Norquist. For most of this period, he was responsible for overseeing the central fiscal, purchasing, IT and intergovernmental functions of the City's 7,500-person, \$700 million government.

From 1975-88, David held several positions in government and the private sector. He was legal advisor to Wisconsin Gov. Patrick Lucey, worked for Sen. Edward Kennedy's Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research, developed health policy options for the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, prepared a report on Wisconsin's uninsured for the state Department of Health and Social Services, and worked on health care cost containment issues for Time Insurance Company. David received an AB degree from Harvard College in History and Literature (1970) and a law degree from Harvard Law School (1975).

Debra Kraft is Deputy Director and Counsel of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. She is responsible for assisting the Director in the development and advancement of policies to reduce poverty and its effects in both Milwaukee and Wisconsin, such as initiatives for health care reform, mental health, substance use disorder treatment and supportive housing. Her duties also include the provision of legal counsel and research; federal, state and local advocacy; and operations oversight.

Before joining the Public Policy Institute, Debra was the General Counsel of the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing, the state agency responsible for the licensing and enforcement of most regulated professions in the state. As its chief legal advisor and member of the senior management team, she rendered advice and opinion on administrative, legal and policy matters for the agency while also overseeing the department's Office of Legal Counsel.

Debra has extensive experience in the private corporate sector, where she concentrated her legal practice in the general business and real estate areas in both law firm and in-house settings, including a position as Corporate Counsel at the world's largest privately held printing company. She began her career as an Assistant District Attorney in Milwaukee County.

Debra received her undergraduate degree, with honors, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School. She continued her studies in public international law at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Jason Brame is Communications Coordinator for the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. He is responsible for media relations, public messaging and external communications. Jason has worked at Milwaukee-area non-profit organizations since 2000. He received a BA in English Writing from the University of Pittsburgh in 1996 and an MA in English Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2000.

Robert Cherry is Public Health Systems Coordinator for the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. Rob coordinates the Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative and the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. He was formerly Associate Outreach Specialist of Community Based Initiatives at the Milwaukee office of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Urban Population Health. Robert, who has strong interests in public health and systems design, also worked in the central intake unit at M&S Clinical Services and Wisconsin Community Services. He received a BS in criminal justice from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Genyne Edwards is Advocacy Consultant for the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. As an attorney she has been actively involved in policy, politics and social advocacy. While Deputy Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism she successfully advocated for an increased role for cultural and urban tourism in statewide economic development policy. Genyne is the Program Director for Milwaukee Mosaic Partnerships Program and Commissioner for the City of Milwaukee-Equal Rights Commission. She is a graduate of Marquette University Law School and received a BS in Organizational Leadership and Supervision from Purdue University.

Andrea Gouin is a Trinity Fellow at Marquette University, where she is currently pursuing her MA in Public Service, with a specialization in criminal justice administration. While at Justice 2000 she is researching national criminal justice policies and programs, such as the *Community Corrections Act* and community courts. She is also working with a variety of criminal justice and community planning groups dedicated to criminal justice reform.

Prior to beginning her studies at Marquette, Andrea completed two years of service with AmeriCorps. She served one year as an AmeriCorps*VISTA at St. Norbert College where she helped organize an academic service-learning program, and served as a liaison for volunteer coordination and management between SNC and the Boys and Girls Club of Green Bay.

She also served one year with the Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency AmeriCorps Program in Holyoke, Mass., as an advocate at a legal services agency, and managed a weekly, in-court volunteer program providing legal assistance to tenants on the day of their eviction hearing. Andrea received a BA in Sociology with a human services concentration from St. Norbert College in 2007. At that time she was also inducted into Pi Gamma Mu, the International Honor Society in Social Sciences. In 2009 she was the recipient of a PGM academic scholarship in support of her graduate work.

Bob Sayner is the co-founder and former Chief Executive Officer of Justice 2000, a division of Community Advocates. Justice 2000 was established in 2001 to promote the expansion of opportunities for the safe release and community reintegration of criminal offenders. This mission is based on the belief that social services and treatment interventions, when combined with community supervision, can be useful, effective alternatives to incarceration and should be considered for wider application in Milwaukee, and throughout the state of Wisconsin and the nation.

From 1971-97 he served as Assistant Executive Director of Wisconsin Correctional Services (now known as Wisconsin Community Services [WCS]). During his tenure at WCS, Bob provided the leadership needed to develop, establish and manage Circuit and Municipal Court Intervention Services in the Milwaukee area for criminal offenders and indigent ordinance violators with mental health and substance use disorder problems, a program that evolved into a comprehensive Milwaukee County Pretrial Services Program. In 1994 and 1995, the Pretrial Services Program, operated by WCS was nationally recognized as an “Enhanced Model Pretrial Services Program by the Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance, deemed worthy of replication in other jurisdictions throughout the nation.

Bob also provided the leadership to develop, establish and manage a comprehensive Mental Health Community Support and Treatment Program designed to assist offenders with mental illness and co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder to function and live independently in the community as an alternative to institutionalization. In 1994, the WCS Community Support Program received national honors as a finalist for the Harvard Kennedy School of Government “Innovations in Government” award and was the subject of a National Institute Journal profile published by the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 1998, Bob received the “Olgiatti” award presented in Philadelphia by the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies for lifetime achievement “in recognition for continuing outstanding contributions to the furtherance of the principals of pretrial justice.”

Bob is currently collaborating with the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute to support the Community Justice Project, designed to reduce spending on corrections, control growth in Wisconsin’s prison and jail populations, hold offenders accountable and increase public safety.

Marilyn Walczak, co-founder and Community Justice Project Coordinator for Justice 2000, has over 33 years of experience working with local justice systems, and creating innovative and high-impact programs. She has done program development and has management experience in providing successful treatment intervention and pretrial services for criminal offenders. She served on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA) for six years. Additionally, Marilyn served NAPSA as the Service Coordinator for six years

providing support to the Board for Directors and membership. Marilyn currently serves on a variety of criminal justice and community planning groups dedicated to criminal justice reform.

Conor J. Williams is the Economic Policy Analyst for Pathways to Ending Poverty. He also operates a family-owned stone fabrication business which he helped to found. Conor holds an honors BA in Economics from University College Dublin in Dublin, Ireland. Conor started work doing econometric modeling at the Department of Transport in Sydney, Australia followed by a number of years as an economic analyst for an aircraft leasing company in Shannon, Ireland. Subsequently he worked as an economic policy analyst for the Department of Commerce and Industry, Gaborone, Botswana, facilitated through the Irish aid agency APSO. Conor is active in MICAH (Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope), where he leads the TIP Initiative (Treatment Instead of Prison), which offers an alternative to criminalization and incarceration through seeking to send non-violent offenders suffering from the disease of substance use disorder to supervised community treatment programs.

Contact Us

Community Advocates Public Policy Institute
744 N. 4th St., #200
Milwaukee, WI 53203
Phone 414.270.2970
Fax 414.270.2971
Web www.ca-ppi.org

Debra J. Kraft
Deputy Director and Counsel
Phone: 414.270.2944
Email: debrak@communityadvocates.net

Jason Brame
Communications Coordinator
Phone: 414.270.2951
Email: jasonb@communityadvocates.net

Robert Cherry
Public Health Systems Coordinator
Phone: 414.270.2953
Email: robertc@communityadvocates.net

Genyne Edwards
MATI Advocacy Consultant
Phone: 414.270.2952
Email: eingenuity@gmail.com

David Riemer, Director
Phone: 414.270.2943
Email: DRiemerMil@yahoo.com

Andrea Gouin
Trinity Fellow, Marquette University
Phone: 414.270.2955
Email: AGouin@justice-2000.org

Bob Sayner
Co-founder and Former Chief Executive Officer, Justice 2000
Phone: 414.270.2958
Email: BSayner@justice-2000.org

Marilyn Walczak
Co-founder and Community Justice Project Coordinator, Justice 2000
Phone: 414.270.2959
Email: MWalczak@justice-2000.org

Conor J. Williams
Economic Policy Analyst
Phone: 414.270.2954
Email: conor.williams@stonedimensions.com