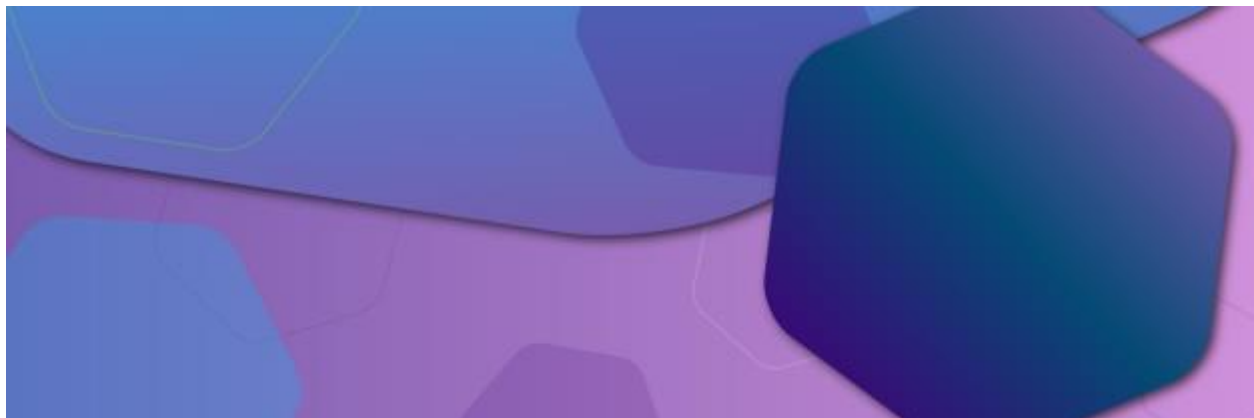




# WCI Annual Report

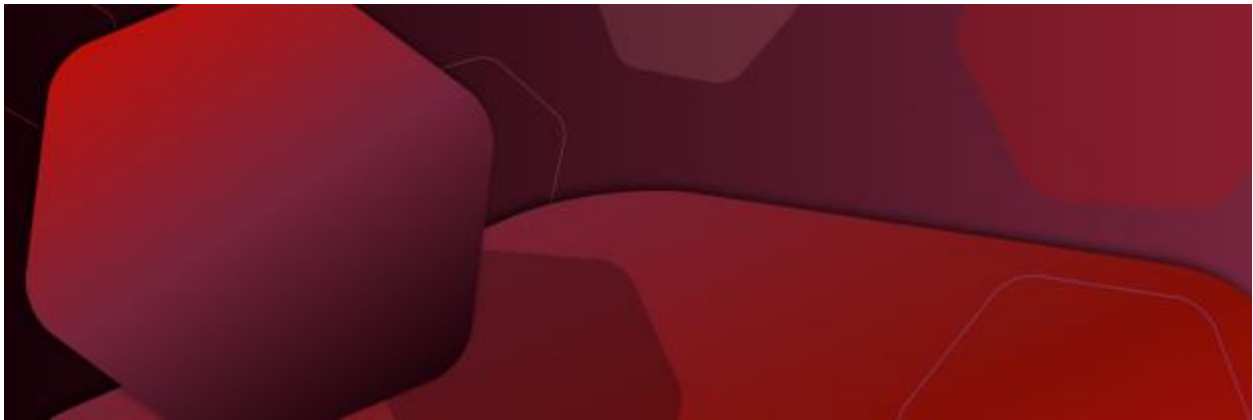
[Connect With Us](#)





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## A Note from the Executive Director



Dear Friends—

Thank you for your interest in our 2021-2022 annual report. This year, WCI embraced the idea of making a little bit of progress every day towards our strategic goals. This daily progress allowed us to move key initiatives forward in an exponential way. As a team, WCI was able to:

- **Enhance and expand our technology**—Our redesigned website was completed and reflects a new look, functionality, inclusive features, and improved service delivery model. We shifted to cloud-based data storage for file storage, our human resource platform, as well as upgraded our fiscal systems for greater efficiencies. We adopted an increased number of functionalities through Microsoft Office, and we now have all staff members using only cell phones to provide texting and video capabilities, and to connect with one another and necessary clients.
- **Weave Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into everything we do**—WCI created and promoted our Diversity Statement, hosted the Language of Diversity during Workforce Development Month, added Juneteenth as a paid day off, supported SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) training available to all staff, increased Board diversity, and updated hiring approaches to increase interest from a diverse population.
- **Increase Brand Awareness**—WCI updated our colors to freshen our look, and in conjunction with the website redesign, we've modernized the overall brand. We invested in promotional material for staff and board members and created videos to use to promote the success stories that reflect the complex work we do. We continue to connect with community partners to promote the work of the organization inside and outside of the Job Center.
- **Enhance service delivery design**—COVID changed a number of our service delivery methods, and post COVID, we are embracing some such as virtual appointments, as they are more convenient for parents, and now caseload assignments are not based on county of residence, but workload within the region. The website provides for immediate access to services by pressing the "request services" button.
- **Increasing fundraising opportunities**—We continue to explore services to the ALICE population, low-income adults, and have hired a part time grant writer to explore other funding opportunities.
- **Organizational Culture**—WCI prides itself on supporting a culture that is flexible and recognizes that all employees are looking for a healthy work/life balance. WCI has adjusted wage bands, added a full paid holiday, increased retirement based on longevity, and increase personal leave available.

As we look to the future, we recognize that there is much more to do, but taking time to celebrate incremental progress is important! The teamwork involved in making incremental progress is incredible!

This moment in time is unparalleled in recent history, and workforce and economic trends do not fall easily into past practices, so there is no clear pathway. As we create our preferred future, we will continue to focus energy on the future while navigating current operations. We are fortunate to enter this new fiscal year being financially sound, performance driven, employee focused, technologically advanced, and strategically steady.

Cheers to a focused year!

Teresa

# WCI Programs






## At a Glance

WCI operates a variety of programs that can serve your needs. This flyer gives a brief overview of each program.

<b>WIOA</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides case management and support services to Adults (18+) and Dislocated Workers to get them connected and into employment and training on a career pathway.
<b>W2</b>	Wisconsin Works (W2) provides employment preparation services, case management, and cash assistance to eligible families.
<b>FSET</b>	FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) is a voluntary, no cost program that helps FoodShare members build their job skills and find employment.
<b>FGP</b>	Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) places adults (55 years and better) in schools to serve as role models, tutors, and friends to children with exceptional
<b>WISE</b>	The Wisconsin Senior Employment (WISE) provides adults (55 years and better) with training opportunities and part-time paid work experiences to build work skills and obtain unsubsidized employment.
<b>EA</b>	Emergency Assistance (EA) assists eligible individuals that are homeless or about to lose their home because they cannot afford to pay their rent/mortgage or because of a fire, flood, natural disaster, or energy crisis.
<b>HN</b>	Healthcare Navigators (HN) help connect and educate individuals on various forms of health insurance, from navigating the Marketplace to learning about Badgercare.





**CONNECT WITH US**



[www.workforceconnections.org](http://www.workforceconnections.org)  
608-789-5620

Workforce Connections, Inc. administers employment and training programs funded through a variety of sources including the Federal Job Training Partnership Act, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Wisconsin Department of Health Care Services, the Wisconsin Department of Health Care Services, and community organizations. Workforce Connections, Inc. is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer (EEO/AAE). Any and all individuals are invited to apply for services or employment. If you need this printed material interpreted or in a different language, you may need assistance in using this service, please contact us.

## Board of Directors



*1 - Doug Billings | Gerrard-Hoeschler Realtors | Chair*



*2 - Heather St. Clair | Petro Energy, LLC. | Vice Chair*



*3 - Dimitar Dzikov | Coulee Bank | Treasurer*



*4 - Nick Goins | Mid City Steel, Inc. | Director*



*5 - Deb Scoville | Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration | Director*



6 - **Bradey Schleis** | Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative | Director



7 - **Matt Bainter** | Inland Packaging | Director





*8 - Mark Wemette | La Crosse Technical Consultants | Director*



*9 - Lyn Pletta | Great Lakes Cheese | Director*



*10 - Tou Yang | City Brewery | Director*

## WCI Strategic Planning



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### *2021-2025 Objectives:*

We will be successful and accomplish our mission by being financially sound, performance driven, value based, well-trained, and dedicated to organizational development and stakeholder relationships.

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- 1. Enhance and expand our **Technology** to provide the efficient and effective service*
- 2. Weave **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** into everything we do.*

3. Increase our **brand awareness** within the community

4. Expand our **fundraising** sources


5. Enhance our **service delivery model**

6. Strengthen our **organizational culture**

---

## DEI Statement and Mission, Vision, and Values





**Workforce Connections is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive space, both internally for staff and externally for each person we serve. No matter your race, age, religion, gender, orientation, identity, or experience; our goal is to create a welcoming environment for all to ensure universal service accessibility. We strive to present our authentic selves while fostering healthy relationships within our community.**

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## A New Look - Updated Website and Flyers



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The updated website is live! Take a few minutes and visit <https://www.workforceconnections.org/> to view.

*With the updates, we also revisited our marketing materials and redesigned everything to match and streamline with the new look. We also expanded our color palette to accommodate the updated marketing materials.*

---



# FGP

## Foster Grandparents

FGP provides classrooms with senior volunteers for children with special needs or who are at an academic or social disadvantage. Volunteers work one-on-one with students serving between 10-40 hours a week in local schools.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Individuals age 55+ who meet income guidelines and other requirements
- No formal experience with tutoring required

### TRAINING

- 20 hours paid orientation training
- Monthly meetings for continued training

### WORK

- Volunteers share their expertise with students
- Volunteers challenge themselves to learn new skills with students

### SUPPORT

- Peer support
- Support from school staff

## CONNECT WITH US



[www.workforceconnections.org](http://www.workforceconnections.org)  
608-317-9133

## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Personal satisfaction
- Paid stipend not counted as income
- Mileage reimbursement
- Paid meal at school



**AmeriCorps  
Seniors**



**FOSTER  
GRANDPARENTS**  
Share Today. Shape Tomorrow.

The Foster Grandparents Program is a part of Senior Corps, along with RSVP and Senior Companions. Senior Corps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Workforce Connections, Inc. is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer/contractor and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of services or employment. If you need this printed material interpreted or in a different format, or if you need assistance in using this service, please contact us. Blind, hearing or speech impaired callers may reach us through the Relay Texas Relay System at 1-800-WIRELAW (347-2529).





# W2

## Wisconsin Works

Wisconsin Works (W2) assists individuals in meeting their employment & career goals. Individualized services are provided to each participant through Workforce Connections staff, partner agencies, and Wisconsin Job Centers.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Available to parents (both custodial and non-custodial) with minor children
- Meet the financial criteria

### TRAINING

- GED/HSED classes
- Certified Training Programs
- Unpaid work experience at non-profit and for profit businesses

### WORK

- Access to career interest assessments
- Resume and cover letter development
- Mock interviewing
- Tools to successfully navigate job search

### SUPPORT

- Individualized case management in person or via technology
- Other support services as needed

## CONNECT WITH US



[www.workforceconnections.org](http://www.workforceconnections.org)  
608-789-5620

### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Individualized case management
- Connections to resources and referrals
- Clothing and personal hygiene support
- Transportation and childcare assistance
- Potential financial assistance during job search
- Skills and aptitude testing
- Training assistance

This program is funded through the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families using Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funds.

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# FSET

## FoodShare Employment and Training

The FoodShare Employment and Training program is a free voluntary program for all FoodShare members ages 16 and older who want to build job skills and find employment. The FSET program is a tool available for FoodShare members who need assistance in meeting the work requirement for FoodShare benefits.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Must be currently receiving FoodShare benefits
- Must be at least 16 years old

### TRAINING

- GED/HSED classes and testing fees
- Certified Training Programs
- Unpaid work experience at non-profit and for profit businesses

### WORK

- Interest assessments
- Resume and cover letter development
- Mock interviewing
- Tools to successfully navigate job search

### SUPPORT

- Individualized case management in person or via technology
- Other support services as needed

## CONNECT WITH US



[www.workforceconnections.org](http://www.workforceconnections.org)  
608-789-5620

### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Transportation assistance
- Childcare assistance
- Interview clothing assistance
- Skills and aptitude testing
- Training assistance

The FSET program is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds and is administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. TTY users 1-800-547-3029. Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



# WIOA

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

WIOA provides connections to training and support services to strengthen the workforce. This program provides relevant career training and guidance tailored to the local job market. A variety of individualized services are available to help overcome employment barriers.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Age 18+ and/or lost job
- Authorized to work in the United States
- Compliant with the Selective Service Act

### TRAINING

- Determine education and career goals
- Apprenticeships and credit for prior learning
- Tuition assistance for approved training programs

### WORK

- Access to career interest assessments
- Resume and cover letter development
- Mock interviewing
- Tools to successfully navigate job search
- Job search leads and assistance

### SUPPORT

- Individualized case management in person or via technology
- Other support services available to help navigate individual needs

## CONNECT WITH US



[www.workforceconnections.org](http://www.workforceconnections.org)  
608-789-5620

## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Tuition and training assistance
- Assistance with program books and fees
- Skills and aptitude testing
- Mileage reimbursement and vehicle repairs
- Clothing/uniform allowance
- Tools for employment or training
- Job search assistance

A proud partner of the **AmericanJobCenter** network

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs are made available with federal, state and local funding from the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc., Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and United States Department of Labor. The Western Workforce Development Board is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services. If you have a disability and need assistance with this information, please call us through Wisconsin Relay Service 711. Please contact us at 608-789-5620 to request information in an alternate format, including translated or braille language.

Western Wisconsin  
**Workforce  
Development  
Board, Inc.**

# Online Training Academy



*WIOA provides connections to training and support services to strengthen the workforce. This program provides relevant career training and guidance tailored to the local job market. A variety of individualized services are available to help overcome employment barriers.*



## HOW TO ACCESS:

The training academy is available to all participants in any of our programs. Connect with your career planner to learn more.

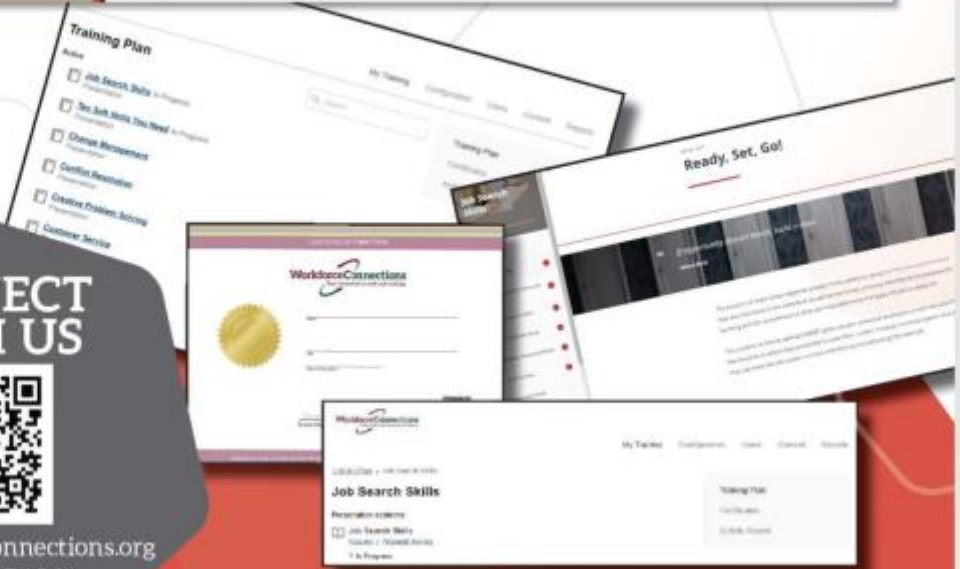


## TRAINING TOPICS:

There are pre-selected training packages, each of which can be customized based on the participant's needs. Each training contains a set of self-paced modules and knowledge checks after each one to stay on track. Trainings are available on a variety of subjects and topics including Soft Skills, Personal and Professional Development, Human Resources, Management, Career Development, Sales and Marketing, and other topics.

**CONNECT WITH US**

www.workforceconnections.org  
 608-789-5620



Workforce Connections is a non-affiliated agency operated by regional programs. Workforce Connections has been set up exclusively on the basis of electronic file transfer. It does not have any legal responsibility in a legal system. If you have any questions, please contact us. Staff training is always required before we can help through the Workforce Connections at 1.800.468.8228 (87.8228)



# WISE

## Wisconsin Senior Employment

The WISE Program provides adults, age 55 and better, with training and part-time paid work experience in community service based organizations. The on-the-job experience helps to develop and improve skills necessary for permanent employment.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Wisconsin residents who are 55+
- Unemployed and living on a limited income

### TRAINING

- Paid on-the-job Training
- Limited educational opportunities

### WORK

- Interest assessments
- Resume and cover letter development
- Mock interviewing
- Tools to successfully navigate job search

### SUPPORT

- Individualized case management in person or via technology
- Peer support

## CONNECT WITH US



[www.workforceconnections.org](http://www.workforceconnections.org)  
608-789-5620

### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Paid work experience
- Gain and maintain work skills
- Obtain permanent employment
- Build a professional network
- Transportation assistance

Wisconsin Senior Employment Program (WISE) is the state-administered Senior Community Service Program (SCSEP) authorized by Title V of the Older Americans Act, federally funded in part from the U.S. Department of Labor. Workforce Connections, Inc. is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer/program. Workforce Connections, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of services or employment. If you need this printed material in a different form, or if you need assistance in using this service, please contact us. Best, hearing or speech impaired callers may reach us through the Wisconsin Relay System at 1-800-WI-RELAY (947-3529).

## Success Stories



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*Workforce Connections partnered with Taylor Media to produce success stories for all of our programs. All stories are available on our website at <https://www.workforceconnections.org/whats-new-and-success-stories/>*

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11 - Rosana: W2 | Available on our website [here](#)



12 - Carol: FSET | Available on our website [here](#)



13 - Kevin: WIOA | Available on our website [here](#)



14 - Linda: FGP | Available on our website [here](#)



15 - Julie: Healthcare Navigator | Available on our website [here](#)





Highlights - A Year in Review









**Department of Child and Family Services Child Support Liaison Leadership Award Ceremony - Congrats Andrea!**



**Working with Taylor Media to record Success Story videos**



**Working with Taylor Media to record Program videos**



**Job Center Mini Job Fairs**



**Job Center  
Mini Job Fairs**



**6th Annual Workforce  
Forum: The  
Language of Diversity**

**7th Annual Workforce Forum**  
**THE PURSUIT OF DIVERSITY**  
 September 8th from 8am to 11:30am via TEAMS

**AGEND**

- 7:45am TEAMS Webinar Opens
- 8:05am Welcome and Introductions with Teresa Pierce, WCI Executive Director and a word from our Gold Sponsors
- 8:15am **Dr. Jodi Vandenberg-Daves** Pathways to DEI
- 9:30am Break
- 9:50am Welcome back and a word from our Gold Sponsors
- 10:00am **Matt Glowacki** New Face of Disability
- 11:15am Wrap Up and Thank You's

**SPONSORS**

- Gold: Franciscan Sisters of Professional Women
- Gold: MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM
- Gold: GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM
- Silver: ORGANIC VALLEY

**7th Annual Workforce Forum: The Pursuit of Diversity**

**ASHLEY**  
 Manufacturing & Distribution  
**NOW HIRING**

**2021 Coulee Region Job Fair**





## General:

- This fiscal year, our staff returned to their offices three days a week and were able to work from home two days a week. This flexibility was appreciated by staff and has been deemed to create the safest environment for our staff and their families. This is a change of schedule that will continue to be assessed to ensure it meets the needs of the organization.
- Consistent use of TEAMS technology was critical to regularly disseminate staff and unit information as well as conduct trainings and virtual meetings with both new and seasoned staff.
- WCI sponsored SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) training for staff with Dr. Marcus Lewis to increase awareness of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts and facilitate conversations to build a positive and open work culture.
- Staff represented and presented at WCI Child Support Liaison position progress statewide.
- WCI is actively engaged with the Non-Profit Executive Directors and Family Policy Board.
- WCI has positive and effective relationships with the Workforce Development Board, Department of Health Services and Department of Children and Families.
- Staff represented on the Board of the La Crosse SHRM Chapter as the DEI and Governmental Affairs Chair. This position will be held until Fall of 2023.

## Administrative Updates:

- Staff will be receiving digital business cards as an initiative to continue leaning on hybrid work schedules and working more virtually with participants and clients.
- With the rebranding and redesign of our website, the WCI colors and marketing materials.
- Successfully hosted "The Language of Diversity" during September is Workforce Development Month.
- Fiscal team size expanded to increase organizational capacity and allow for broader cross training.
- The organization made significant technology advances including the shift from fiscal, data, and file servers to FENXT, SharePoint, JotForms, and One Drive.
- WCI shifted from Zenefits to Paycor for the Payroll and Human Resources platform, allowing the organization greater fiscal efficiencies with the ability to integrate with systems we already have.

## 2021-2022 Program Highlights



### FGP:

Total Service Hours: 3,796 in both in-person and virtual formats

- Total Number of Volunteers: 8
- Total Number of Schools: 7
- Total Number of Students Tutored: 134
- Total Number of Students with Improved Academic Performance: 80 out of 108 (74%) \*6 out of 7 schools reported data
- A creative outcome of the COVID virtual approach to service was the creation of a virtual afterschool tutoring group for the students which any grandparent is able to take part regardless of location.
- Excellent ongoing facilitation of advisory council for the Foster Grandparent Program.
- The FGP Success Story that was videotaped by Jack Taylor will be an excellent recruitment tool showing excellent relationships with grandparents, schools and families.

### FSET:

FSET Enrollments: 192

- The FSET videos provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the program, and staff worked diligently to coordinate the activity.
- Onsite location at Western Technical College enhances the programmatic ability to enroll students into the program and has been a great resource for both agencies.
- The Lending Library was created and is ongoing. It allows individuals the opportunity to access computers as needed.

### Healthcare Navigator:

- With the granting of additional funds, we were able to expand our program to hire additional staff. This will enable Kelly and Wanda to be able to efficiently assist customers in our counties of operation with new enrollment, re-enrollments, and information on health insurance options. Ongoing services are available while funds remain for those who are eligible for a special enrollment period enrollment to the Marketplace.
- Excellent partnerships with NWCEP to increase coverage area and funding when the opportunity arose

## W2:

W2 Enrollments: 132  
Emergency Assistance funds approved: \$8,924  
Customer Service Liaison: 69 CSL enrollments

- The program has been providing services in a hybrid model, both virtually and in-person, which has allowed a greater level of flexibility for staff and coverage. Technology investments such as TEAMS, DocuSign, online Tabe tests, and home-based workstations have allowed WCI to develop a unique coverage approach and opens up optional service delivery models. The hybrid model also provides ease of access to services for participants in crisis with limited time and funds.
- WCI continues to receive accolades from DCF regarding outreach for the Child Support Agency work and continues to have a positive and proactive relationship with DCF staff and leadership.

## WIOA:

WIOA served 140 participants of which 73 were new enrollments. Highest demand careers were in healthcare.

- Having the WDB waive the RFP for a third year is a positive reflection of our work.
- WIOA Informational Sessions and OJT Q&A Sessions have continued to be held virtually and advertised through social media to recruit program participants and provide informational opportunities for interested people and businesses.

## WISE:

Total Title V participants for 7/1/21 – 6/30/22: 23 participants

- The WISE program partnered with the WDB (WAI Program) to obtain computers for two WISE Participants. The WISE program has also partnered with the following resources to provide services for WISE participants and potential participants:
  - Food: Foodshare, WAFER, Coulee Cap, Salvation Army, A Place of Grace, Kane Street Community Garden
  - Thrift Stores: Goodwill, Good Stewart Resale Store, Salvation Army Thrift Store, RootinCrown
  - Healthcare: Neighborhood Family Clinics, St. Clare Health Mission, Community Care Clinic
  - Transportation: ADRC - Monroe County, ADRC - La Crosse County
  - Pets: Heart to Heart
  - Weatherization: Coulee Cap
  - Housing: Housing Authority for the City of La Crosse, La Crosse County Housing Authority, ADRC - La Crosse County
  - General Help: Catholic Charities, ADRC of La Crosse County
- Workforce Connections also has a strong partnership with Tomah Veterans Service and La Crosse Veterans. They give referrals to the WISE program on a monthly basis.

2021-2022 Special Grants and Programs



## Special Programs:

- Living Independently Through Financial Empowerment (LIFE) Program through W2 was designed to increase economic mobility for survivors of domestic violence by providing a financial safety net to ensure their basic needs can be partially met as they create independent, violence-free lives for themselves and their children.
  - The \$14 million of emergency funds were distributed to over 4,000 individuals statewide. 155 were enrolled through WCI and provided a \$3500 stipend.
- Quotes from LIFE Program Participants:
  - "I used it for heating up cost and a different washer and dryer, Christmas present for my daughter, clothes, food & car repairs. It was a great program I think they should keep it going."*
  - "The LIFE program helped my daughter and I get out of homelessness and get our own place!"*
  - "The LIFE program grant was a perfectly times answer to prayer. It immediately helped me cover much needed deferred maintenance and an emergency to repair the car I share with my teen for school and work. It also provided the funds to address legal and financial issues as I negotiate closure in a prolonged divorce situation. Basically, the assistance affords me a platform from which I can ground my feet and allow my eyes to look out to the future for my daughter and me. I so appreciate the opportunity and I hope someday soon to be able to help others in a similar situation."*
- Refugee Cash Assistance Program (RCA) is a federally funded benefit program which provides temporary assistance to help refugees become self-sufficient during the period immediately after arrival in the United States. Single individuals, childless couples, teen parents, and two-parent families with no children under 18 years of age who meet the financial eligibility standards of Wisconsin Works (W2) and meet the RCA program's criteria for refugee status may receive benefits under the RCA program. Participants may receive benefits for up to eight months from the date of arrival. WCI currently has 3 enrolled in this program.
- WCI partnered with the La Crosse Community Foundation again to assist individuals or families with transportation-related hardships who meet the requirements for funding. Over \$12,000 in funding was paid out for 34 car repairs in partnership with local repair shops willing to work with WCI and the program.
- The UPLIFT Program partnered again with the La Crosse Community Foundation to provide assistance to individuals or families who earn an income above the Federal Poverty Level, but below the basic cost of living, also known as the ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) population. Funds are available to help 15 applicants facing a financial emergency that may hinder their ability to maintain current employment (making an initial payment of \$750 once the application was approved), and even further for soft skills (\$500) and hard skills training (\$2000) should they choose to continue.

WCI Staff - Leadership



**Teresa Pierce**  
*Executive Director*



**Gina Brown**  
*Director of Operations*



WCI Staff - Administrative



**Pamela Amundson**  
*Fiscal Coordinator*





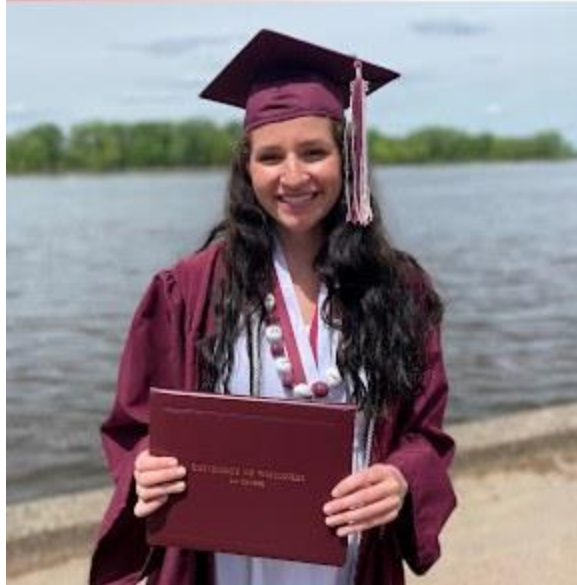
**Angie Erickson**  
*Fiscal Coordinator*



**Ashlynn Francis**  
*Administrative Coordinator*



**Kathryn Haldeman**  
*Grant Writer*



**Emily Ware**  
*Administrative Coordinator*



WCI Staff - Operations and Career Planners



**Kristi Bell**  
*Career Planner*



**Kelly Becker**  
*Healthcare Navigator*



**Anna Benthin**  
*Career Planner*



**Laurel Bowers**  
*Career Planner*



**Erika Deal**  
*Career Planner  
and Lead Developer*



**Shannon Franek**  
*Operations Coordinator*



**Gidget Gade**  
*Career Planner*



**Amy Larson**  
*FGP Program Director*



**Megan Miller**  
*W2 Education Navigator*



**Faith Oliver**  
*Career Planner*





**Caitlin Osegard**

*Career Planner*



**Wanda Palmer**

*Career Planner and  
Healthcare Navigator*



**Tina Tucker**  
*Career Planner*



**Megan Walters**  
*Career Planner*



**Sarah Wick**  
*Resource Coordinator*



**Chelsey Yeskie**  
*Career Planner*



