



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.

ppi.communityadvocates.net

 @ca_ppi

 CAPublicPolicyInstitute

PPI YEAR IN REVIEW 2019

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, the Public Policy Institute has sought out creative and effective ways to reduce poverty and improve community health and wellbeing," says PPI Deputy Director Kari Lerch. "With the support of our partners and allies, our impact will grow in our second decade."

PPI Policy Research and Advocacy

Our Policy team is working on some of the most innovative responses to long-standing problems of inequity and poverty in our community. The key to their success is in listening to those most affected and developing common-sense, nonpartisan solutions that work when put to the test.

Milwaukee Lawmakers Assessed Safety Net Programs

In February, PPI sponsored State Leaders Look Ahead, a panel discussion with Milwaukee legislators on employment and safety net programs. State Sen. LaTonya Johnson and State Rep. Evan Goyke, who serve on the Joint Finance Committee, and State Rep. Daniel Riemer, who sits on the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, provided a preview of some of the budget and spending debates echoed throughout the Legislature this year.



Three legislators joined a PPI-organized panel to provide a preview of the state's budget priorities. From left to right: PPI's Conor Williams, Community Advocates CEO Andi Elliott, Rep. Evan Goyke, Sen. LaTonya Johnson, Rep. Daniel Riemer, PPI's Mike Bare, researcher Yaidi Cancel Martinez, and PPI's David Riemer.

Healthy Housing Initiative Takes Off

The Healthy Housing Initiative worked with its Advisory Committee to compile and research the impact of a series of policy recommendations to improve housing affordability, quality, and stability. In September, Mike Bare, PPI's Research and Coordinator, participated in a panel discussion at CommonBond Communities' 2019 Affordable Housing Forum in Milwaukee.

Authors Sparked Discussion on Poverty and Violence

PPI helped to bring two authors to Milwaukee to discuss issues at the heart of our mission. In March, Scott Allard, author of *Suburbs in Need*, provided a new and more accurate view of poverty in urban and suburban areas to help us re-think and talk about this issue with clarity. Allard's talk was organized by PPI's Julie Kerksick and cosponsored by the City of West Allis. In May, PPI cosponsored Alex Kotlowitz's talk at Boswell Book Company in support of *An American Summer: Love and Death in Chicago*, which delved into the impact of gun violence.

Healthy Workers, Healthy Wisconsin Tackles Trauma

PPI's Conor Williams and Terrece Irving and our UWM collaborators continue to work with a network of partners in the implementation of Healthy Workers, Healthy Wisconsin, which embeds screening for trauma and health needs within workforce development programs. Fifty-two percent of participants to date have screened positive for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and 59% have accepted referrals to mental health services; 13% of participants had already accessed mental health services. Williams was among the authors of an *American Journal of Community Psychology* paper on the feasibility of integrating trauma screening into employment programs.



The Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative welcomed Connie Chesnik, Linda Richardson, Bianca Shaw, and Becky Yang from Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to discuss subsidized employment opportunities and challenges in the city. PPI's Julie Kersick and Terrece Irving helped to organize the visit.

PPI's Kasaundra Brown and Neu-Life Community Development's Jody Rhodes welcomed keynote speaker Kwabena Antoine Brown to MCSAP's third annual Youth Summit.

Transitional Jobs Grow

We're happy to announce that funding for Transitional Jobs increased by \$1 million in the biennial state budget to \$9 million per year, with \$5.5 million going to the Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program and \$3.5 million to Transitional Jobs in the rest of the state. The geographic borders of the Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program were also expanded to make the program available to more people. PPI's Conor Williams coordinates the Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative to advocate for and monitor Transitional Jobs programs.

In August, the Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative welcomed Connie Chesnik, Linda Richardson, Bianca Shaw, and Becky Yang from Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, which oversees Transitional Jobs in Wisconsin. Our many partners—including UMOS, MICAH, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, Community Warehouse, 53206 Drug-Free Communities Project, and the City of Milwaukee—had a great conversation about how subsidized jobs can help people get to work and establish careers.

Coalition On Lead Emergency Works on Employment Issues

Conor Williams and Terrece Irving are active within the Coalition On Lead Emergency (COLE) and lead the Workforce Development Sub-Committee, which seeks to foster employment and skills development in the central city as part of efforts to address lead poisoning and abatement in affected communities. In December, COLE organized a Youth & Young Adult Resource Fair to promote awareness of educational and career opportunities.

Milwaukee Reentry Council Expanded Its Reach

A sub-committee of the Milwaukee Community Justice Council, the Milwaukee Reentry Council, facilitated by Conor Williams, is broadening and deepening community engagement in and support for reentry. The Milwaukee Reentry Council had a busy 2019:

- In May, the council launched Home to Stay, a monthly reentry resource fair held on the first Wednesday of each month to provide services to those returning from incarceration.
- Circles of Support, restorative practice circles to support successful reentry, take place monthly in four host sites in the city, including at Community Advocates' downtown offices. Approximately 20 new Circle Keepers were trained in 2019, many of whom were once incarcerated.
- Members of the Reentry Healthcare Task Force are working on creating a Transitions Clinic in Milwaukee, which will focus on proactively providing health care to men and women coming home from incarceration.
- Members of the Reentry Housing Task Force are working on coordinating currently fractured approaches to meeting the housing needs of those coming home from incarceration.
- The Milwaukee reentry community organized its second Southeast Wisconsin Reentry Employers Expo to bring together organizations that support the success of returned citizens with employers needing to fill their workplace with ready-to-work individuals.

David Riemer Releases New Book

PPI was thrilled to support our Founding Director and Senior Fellow David Riemer's latest endeavor, the book *Putting Government in Its Place: The Case for a New Deal 3.0*, in which David argues that now is the perfect time to update the New Deal to address our current needs and disparities. David drew about 100 readers to his book launch and signing on November 6 at Boswell Book Company, a testament to his decades of innovative work and long-lasting friendships in our community. In addition, David was named to the National Academy of Social Insurance's new Study Panel on Economic Security. The panel is tasked with identifying options for modifying our current social insurance and social assistance programs to address our current economic challenges.

PPI's Prevention Year in Review

We at PPI believe that it just makes sense to invest in prevention activities. Not only does prevention provide a terrific return on investment financially, but it also saves lives, strengthens our communities, and supports families. Our prevention team is definitely making a difference in our community by building on individuals' strengths and creating environments in which everyone can thrive.

Connecting with Youth & Families

Throughout 2019, the Public Policy Institute's prevention team has sought out opportunities to work with youth and allow them to shine.

In March, the Milwaukee County Substance Abuse Prevention (MCSAP) coalition, coordinated by Kasaundra Brown, held its third annual Youth Summit at Neu-Life Community Development, which was attended by an estimated 100 young people



A large group of allies got together for a beach cleanup and press conference at Bradford Beach to announce the launch of Hold On To Your Butt MKE, a City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance-led initiative to remove cigarette litter to improve our environment and health.



Amanda Clark, who coordinates the 53206 Drug-Free Communities Project, returned medication during the Amani neighborhood's first drug take-back event and resource fair in August.



PPI's John Eshun, Jazzmyne Adams, and Kari Lerch welcomed Rodney Wambeam and Julia Sherman to Milwaukee for a unique series on creating a safer alcohol environment in October.

who explored achieving a “natural high” without drugs.

Amanda Clark, Coordinator of the 53206 Drug-Free Communities Project, facilitated a mentorship group at Auer Avenue Community School made up of eight students who had high absenteeism and behavioral issues. At the end of the six months, the students increased their grades, attendance, and school involvement, and their suspensions and corrective actions fell.

Amanda was among the organizers of a Community Day at COA Goldin Center, where she gave out 84 gun locks and 24 medication lock boxes to keep homes safe. Throughout the summer, she worked with several community partners to create a six-week youth and police dialogue program, REAL-ationships in Moody Park, where topics like drugged driving, healthy relationships, and more were covered. Nineteen youth and young adults graduated from the program.

Emphasis on Wellness

PPI and Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division partnered on a Spring Wellness Fair in May. This free, day-long fair featured demonstrations of yoga, line dancing, martial arts, mindfulness, and creativity, as well as resources, lunch, and raffles. We intended to raise awareness of the positive activities anyone can do to relieve stress, stretch their boundaries, and reach their full potential instead of turning to substances.

Smoke-Free Outdoor Spaces in the Spotlight

The City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance, coordinated by Anneke Mohr, has been busy building partnerships to raise awareness of the environmental impact of cigarettes

and e-cigarettes and expand the number of smoke-free outdoor spaces. In August, they partnered with Mexican Fiesta to make all eight stages smoke-free. They also launched the Hold On To Your Butt MKE campaign, which included six bus shelter ads, beach cleanups, and installation of cigarette butt receptacles at local beaches, business districts, and community partner agencies. The campaign encourages smokers to dispose of their butts and tobacco-related trash responsibly so that the litter doesn't harm kids, wildlife, and plant life.

Talking about Problematic Drinking

Two of PPI's prevention coalitions—the Southeast Region of the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth and the MCSAP—brought prevention experts to Milwaukee in October to provide a new perspective on problematic drinking. Rodney Wambeam of the University of Wyoming explained the role of alcohol in our culture, from the colonial days to today's “wine moms” and day drinking. Julia Sherman of the Wisconsin Alcohol Policy Project explored what local advocates and policymakers can do to prevent and reduce problematic drinking in local communities.

Reaching Out to LGBTQ+ Youth

In August, the City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance, the 53206 Drug-Free Communities Project, Safe & Sound's 27th Street West Drug Free Communities Project, and the Milwaukee Rep created an LGBTQ+ Youth Substance Use Prevention Summit at the Stackner Cabaret, a totally unique gathering in Milwaukee. The event brought together young LGBTQ+ individuals (ages 12-24) and their allies for a panel discussion, resource fair, video presentations, dinner,

and a drag performance, all intended to provide a positive, safe environment for candid discussions, a sense of support, and good company.

Taking Back Medication

Perhaps the best way to prevent medication from getting into the wrong hands is making medication inaccessible to everyone but the person who has been prescribed it. That's why PPI has long supported 24/7 drug drop-off boxes, drug take-back events, and medication lockboxes in the home.

New in 2019 was the launch of the first-ever drug take-back event in the Amani neighborhood, sponsored by MCSAP, the 53206 Drug-Free Communities Project, Children's Wisconsin, COA Youth & Families Centers, and Safe & Sound. Held at Moody Park to observe International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, much of the returned medication was dropped off by young people, who also enjoyed activities, lunch, and resources, including a clothing bank.

MCSAP also partnered with Children's Community Health Plan for take-back events in June. In addition, MCSAP partner Take Back My Meds MKE added seven new drop boxes at CVS locations in Milwaukee County, as well as a new drop box at the entrance of Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center.

Sports Fans Get a Dose of Reality

MCSAP provided Dose of Reality materials at sporting events throughout the region. At the top of 2019, coalition members appeared at select Marquette University men's basketball games at Fiserv Forum. In the autumn, MCSAP partnered with My24 and CW to provide prevention materials



PPI's Jeremy Triblett trained local human services professionals and community members on the intersection of substance abuse and trauma.



Safe & Sound's Zoe Worrell, City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance Coordinator Anneke Mohr, and Hold On To Your Butt MKE's Michael Gonzalez helped to organize the city's first LGBTQ+ Youth Substance Use Prevention Summit at the Stackner Cabaret.

at seven Thursday Night Lights high school football games. MCSAP representatives were interviewed to share information about how viewers and fans can prevent substance abuse and addiction.

PPI Goes Red

Red is the color of substance abuse awareness, and PPI got involved in a number of events related to the red theme. In January, the 53206 Drug-Free Communities Project partnered with Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division, COA Goldin Center, and Pathfinders during Light & Unite Red Week for two events highlighting prevention for youth and families. During Red Ribbon Week in October, MCSAP held a mini-resource fair in Community Advocates' downtown offices and supported youth-serving agencies who got into the Red Ribbon spirit with decorating contests, youth pledges, and knowledge building.

Training to Reduce Drug Use

PPI's Partnerships for Success grant, coordinated by John Eshun, supported two opportunities for Drug Impairment Training for Education Professionals this year, attended by 43 community partners. This training explored how to recognize and address youth and adult drug use and better address drug use.

MCSAP partnered with the Wisconsin Medical Society to offer Prescriber Education Training to Milwaukee County doctors and other health professionals. We were able to train 26 participants in person and 40 online participants in Alternatives to Opioids Prescribing practices.

Promoting Quality Programming

Jan Buchler, PPI's Contract Monitor, works closely with our partners engaged in the Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative and

Stay Strong Milwaukee. We've organized them into the Substance Abuse Prevention Grantee Collaborative to focus their efforts on preventing substance use among youth. In 2019, Jan conducted 57 site visits with 12 partner organizations, all of whom are using trauma-responsive (healing-centered) approaches within 11 evidence-based program models. She also led two trainings on Botvin LifeSkills to agency partners, and helped with the statewide November 4 webinar "Trauma and Culture," which was hosted at the Community Advocates Training Center and sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Community-Based Trainings Take Off

Jeremy Triblett, PPI's Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator, has kept up a busy schedule of community-based trainings throughout the county. With the support of a ReCast MKE grant from the City of Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention, Jeremy conducted 27 trainings, representing 125 hours of training, with 363 attendees, at sites including Diverse & Resilient, Ephesians Missionary Baptist Church, the Timbers Building, United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County Volunteer Center, UW-Milwaukee Zilber School of Public Health, Sojourner Family Peace Center, Pathfinders, and the Milwaukee Christian Center.

In addition, Jeremy held trainings at Greendale Fire and Police Department, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and the Greendale Library.

Thank You We are grateful for our generous 2019 funders who make our work possible.

2019 Major Revenue Sources

FEDERAL

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

STATE OF WISCONSIN

» Wisconsin Department of Children & Families
 » Wisconsin Department of Health Services
 » Wisconsin Department of Justice

MILWAUKEE COUNTY

» Department of Health & Human Services, Behavioral Health Division

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
 » Joseph and Vera Zilber Charitable Foundation, Inc.
 » Charles R. O'Malley Charitable Trust
 » The Brico Fund
 » Greater Milw. Foundation Fund for Lake Michigan

To welcome students back to school, Jeremy did a substance abuse prevention keynote at West Allis West Milwaukee schools in front of more than 4,000 middle and high school students. And, with PPI's John Eshun, Jeremy co-facilitated Prevention 101 for the Wisconsin Summit on Opioid and Meth in October.

Protecting Kids from Abuse

PPI coordinates the work of the public policy committee of the Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services Coalition (MCAPS), which brings together service providers, educators, health care professionals, and representatives of government programs to work on ways to support families and ensure that children are receiving great care. In 2019, MCAPS brought in experts on drug-endangered children and had a candid, fruitful conversation with Dr. Shandwlyon Hendricks-Williams, the director of Gov. Tony Evers' Milwaukee office.



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES
Public Policy Institute

Community Advocates Public Policy Institute
 728 N. James Lovell Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233
 (414) 270-2950

ppi.communityadvocates.net

@ca_ppi

CAPublicPolicyInstitute