

# Future of the Family Commission

## Final Report & Recommendations



**Final Report submitted December 1, 2016**  
Commission created through Executive Order  
#184 by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

# Letter from the Chairperson



## Future of the Family Commission 2016

Dear Governor Walker:

I am pleased to present the final report of the Wisconsin Future of the Family Commission.

Established under your direction, the commission has striven to better understand the many obstacles that can hinder a family's ability to thrive and worked to develop real-world recommendations to help support all Wisconsin families in their quest for stability, independence and prosperity.

Over the course of the past year, the Future of the Family Commission heard from some of the nation's most distinguished researchers in the areas of social and economic mobility and leading domestic policy experts on family structure and stability. After careful deliberation, the Commission has concentrated its recommendations into four focus areas:

- Parenting Stability
- Economic Stability Through Education and Training
- Economic Stability Through Jobs and Work
- Social and Cultural Support for Marriage

Our state has long been known as a national leader in developing positive changes in social policy. Wisconsin pioneered the creation of the child support system and was the first state to reform the failing welfare system in the 1990s. This report offers a wide variety of potential next steps in continuing that tradition and we hope that you find it a helpful guide in your efforts to help all of our families thrive.

The Commission thanks you for the opportunity to work on this important issue and gladly offer our assistance in the future as you continue to help Wisconsin's children succeed, adults achieve, and communities flourish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eloise Anderson".

Eloise Anderson  
Chairperson, Wisconsin Future of the Families Commission

# Future of the Family Commission

## *Final Report & Recommendations*

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## Executive Summary & Recommendations

Strong families are the foundation of a prosperous society. In January 2016, Governor Scott Walker issued Executive Order #184, creating the *Future of the Family Commission*, charged with generating policy recommendations to strengthen Wisconsin families. He appointed Eloise Anderson, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, as Chair of the Commission and charged her with appointing Commission members.

In fulfillment of its charge, the Commission identified twelve recommendations to address key challenges in four Focus Areas related to the overall goal of improving family success. The Commissioners believe that achieving this goal requires the combined efforts of civil society, the private sector and government. Importantly, the Commission's charge was limited to recommending strategies to achieve this goal, and not how they should be implemented, or who should implement them. It is the hope of the Commissioners that these recommendations will help guide efforts to strengthen Wisconsin families.

### Focus Area #1: Parenting Stability

#### Key Challenges

- Lack of support for men's role in forming and sustaining families;
- Low "demand" for marriage / too many barriers to marriage;
- Unplanned pregnancies and lack of family planning; and
- High family complexity.

#### Recommended Strategies

1. Consider solutions that increase the "demand" for marriage, specifically:
  - Remove public policy barriers, such as marriage penalties (e.g., marriage license fees, tax law related to low income / dual income households).
  - Redirect resources from policies designed to cope with the declining rate of marriage, toward policies focused on developing, strengthening and building families. Consider marriage and child tax credits.
  - Develop healthy relationship/marriage readiness programs, since these are learned behaviors.
  - Reframe the concept of marriage for teens and young adults.
  - Provide divorce intervention services, with opportunities to repair damaged and at-risk marriages.
2. Inform youth (especially those at highest risk, such as youth in or aging out of foster care), young adults and married couples about:
  - Prevention of unplanned pregnancy through support/encouragement of family planning, provider awareness of options, and opportunities available by delaying sexual activity; and
  - Consequences of sexual activity disconnected from a committed / monogamous relationship, e.g., financial and other consequences.
3. Provide in-home education programs for new fathers, similar to the home visiting program for new mothers; include relationship skills in the curriculum.

## **Focus Area #2: Economic Stability Through Education & Training**

### **Key Challenges**

- Lack of high quality K-12 education for high-risk segments of our society;
- Lack of support for the most vulnerable groups to find, navigate, and complete vocational/ technical training and traditional four-year college degree programs;
- Low levels of adult functional literacy and math skills;
- Limited capacity and access to vocational and technical training opportunities; and
- Stigma around vocational and technical training tracks in high school.

### **Recommended Strategies**

1. Teach financial and life skills in high school, including but not limited to the “Success Sequence” and awareness of child support laws.
2. Increase high school students’ exposure to technical fields, especially in at-risk rural and urban communities.
3. Promote school choice/vouchers, to provide children from low-income households with equal access to better schools.

## **Focus Area #3: Economic Stability Through Jobs & Work**

### **Key Challenges**

- Insufficient support for men and boys to prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism;
- Lack of alignment between available jobs and geographic mobility incentives, and infrastructure and transportation resources;
- Insufficient supply of high quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood education;
- Limited access to subsidized employment and on the job training opportunities;
- Limited access to employment-related supports for partial-/non-custodial parents; and
- Limited ability to match employers with skilled potential employees.

### **Recommended Strategies**

1. Consider solutions that address the needs of employers and the workforce in both rural and urban areas of the state. Align geographic mobility incentives, infrastructure and transportation resources with available jobs.
2. Provide supports/opportunities for offenders to re-enter society in a meaningful way after incarceration, including removing obstacles to success and civic engagement, and improving opportunities for community connections.
3. Provide parents with support, including reducing economic stress by increasing access to affordable, quality early childhood education.

## **Focus Area #4: Social & Cultural Support for Marriage**

### **Key Challenges**

- Few positive cultural messages about marriage;
- Few positive societal/cultural role models for men;
- Combating cultural messages that sexual activity disconnected from a committed/ monogamous relationship has no consequence; and
- Social isolation of families.

### **Recommended Strategies**

1. Develop and promote positive cultural messages for both men and women about:
  - Healthy relationships;
  - The “Success Sequence;”
  - The key role of fathers (including those who are noncustodial or have partial custody) in forming and sustaining families; and
  - Male youth/young men’s need for social and other supports.
2. In addition to job skills, provide programs for incarcerated men that build their skills in the areas of parenting, marriage and finance.
3. Encourage community-based social support networks for families.

# Future of the Family Commission Final Report

## Introduction

In January 2016, Governor Scott Walker issued Executive Order #184, creating the *Future of the Family Commission*, charged with generating policy recommendations to strengthen Wisconsin families. He appointed Eloise Anderson, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, as Chair of the Commission and charged her with appointing Commission members.

This report presents the Commission's recommendations, as well as background information on the Commission's charge, composition and the approach/process used to generate its recommendations.

The Commission's deliberations focused on the social and economic challenges faced by Wisconsin families, and on which policies have and have not worked to address these challenges. The Commission's charge was limited to generating policy recommendations to strengthen Wisconsin families, and did not include how they should be implemented or who should implement them. The Commissioners believe that achieving this goal requires the combined efforts of civil society and both the private and public sectors.

This report begins with an overview of the Commission's charge, membership and approach used to fulfill its charge. It then provides a high-level summary of the proceedings of each meeting, including the expert presentations and Commission discussions. The summary is followed by an overview of the four Focus Areas and key challenges in each Focus Area, as identified by the Commissioners. Finally, the report provides the Commissioner's twelve recommended strategies, three in each Focus Area, for the Governor's consideration. Appendices provide additional information on Commission deliberations, including detailed information on the issues, challenges and barriers facing families as identified during the presentations and the Commission's deliberations.

## Commission Charge, Membership & Approach

### **Future of the Family Commission Charge: Executive Order 184**

Strong families are the foundation of a prosperous society. Executive Order #184 established the *Future of the Family Commission* as a non-statutory committee, pursuant to 14.019 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The purpose of the Commission was to identify issues and barriers related to the overall well-being of Wisconsin families, and to develop policy recommendations that better serve Wisconsin families and lift individuals out of poverty. See **Appendix A: Executive Order 184**.

### **Future of the Family Commission Members**

Commission members are a diverse group, and include residents of urban and rural Wisconsin who are recognized thought leaders and civically engaged individuals. They brought a wide spectrum of expertise, experiences, and perspectives to the Commission's deliberations.

Members included (See **Appendix B: Commission Member Biographies**):

- Eloise Anderson, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (Madison);
- Dr. Sarah Campbell, Pediatrician and board member, WI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Appleton);
- Rachel Campos-Duffy, Author, television personality and national spokesperson for The LIBRE Initiative (Wausau);
- Delvyn Crawford, Author, poet, and fatherhood specialist (Milwaukee);
- Mikel Holt, Associate publisher and co-founder of the Milwaukee Community Journal, and President of Malik Communications (Milwaukee);
- Jim Kacmarcik, President of Kapco, Inc., and ACI Advanced Coatings, and Founder of SpeedKore Performance Group (Cedarburg);
- Rev. Jerome Listeki, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Milwaukee);
- Alicia Manning, Program Officer, New Citizenship programs, Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (Milwaukee);
- Greta Munns, Foster Youth Liaison at the University of Wisconsin – Stout (Eau Claire); and
- Jeff Pralle, Property manager, real estate broker and board member, Wisconsin Apartment Association (Onalaska).

### **Future of the Family Commission Plan/Approach**

The Future of the Family Commission met for six full days between January and November 2016 to learn, deliberate and formulate its recommendations for submission to the Governor by December 1, 2016. Meetings were subject to Wisconsin’s open meetings law, with meeting agendas posted in advance and all materials including video recordings of the proceedings posted to a public website following each meeting. Each meeting was professionally facilitated and structured to allow time for expert presentations, individual reflection, and large group discussion. These discussions focused on the social and economic challenges faced by Wisconsin families, including policies that have and have not worked to assist parents and children be productive and successful citizens. To maximize participation and build consensus, the facilitator employed nominal and affinity grouping techniques as well as a range of decision-making processes. Assignments completed by Commissioners between meetings kept the work on schedule.

Commissioners’ reflections and discussions were documented in individual meeting notes; these notes were combined into a “Key Themes” document that captured cumulative themes, challenges, and proposed responses. This document, approved by the Commissioners, helped them to identify key Focus Areas and challenges, and to identify and prioritize recommendations for each Focus Area. Commissioners reviewed drafts of this report prior to approving the final report. Throughout the year, a DCF staff team and the facilitator planned each meeting and ensured appropriate documentation, review and approval of meeting proceedings and deliverables. See **Appendix C: Detailed Facilitation Approach**.

## **Meeting Summaries**

The Commission’s six meetings were organized to first facilitate learning and reflection on the relevant research associated with family well-being, and then move towards identifying areas to focus on and the challenges/barriers to success within each area, and, finally, to identify strategies in each Focus Area

that supported family success. The first three meetings primarily focused on learning, with presentations from national experts and opportunities to reflect and discuss key challenges and barriers. During the fourth and the fifth meetings, the Commissioners' focus turned to applying what they'd learned: identifying Focus Areas, prioritizing key challenges/issues and proposing potential solutions. In the sixth meeting, the Commissioners completed their prioritization of challenges for each Focus Area and identified their top three recommended strategies for each.

The next section summarizes the substance of the presentations and discussions from each meeting. See **Appendix D: Key Themes & Comments** and **Appendix F: Expert Presentation Summaries** for detailed information on each meeting. See **Appendix G: Glossary of Terms & Responses to Commissioner Questions** for descriptions of relevant state and federal programs and responses to questions posed by Commissioners in meetings 1 and 2.

### **Meeting 1: January 27, 2016**

#### **Topic: History and Current State of the American Family**

The Commission's first presenter was Timothy Smeeding, Distinguished Professor of Public Affairs and Economics at UW-Madison. Formerly the Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at UW-Madison, his research interests include low-income men and their role as fathers, generational economic mobility, and ways to reduce economic inequality. Prof. Smeeding's presentation focused on three areas: the changing American family, relevant socio-economic data for the US and Wisconsin, and key policy issues associated with building strong families.

#### **Presentation Highlights**

##### *Changing American family:*

- Changes in the composition of the American family may be attributed to changing family economics, including a decline in median wages and in wage labor opportunities, especially for the unskilled. Birth rates are not declining, but marriage rates are. More "multi-partner" fertility (e.g., men and women having children with more than one partner) exists and has resulted in a decline in family stability. There is less upward income mobility than in the past.
- Parenting skills, abilities and resources matter for child well-being.
- There is a "right" way and a "wrong" way to have a child that affects the child's well-being; the "right" way supports best outcomes for children, and includes the "Success Sequence": finish school, get a decent job, find a reliable partner, make a life plan, including marriage and having children, if desired. The "wrong" way - in which these actions are taken out of sequence - does not support best outcomes for children, and is characterized by having children before finishing education or securing a decent job, and without having a reliable partner and life plan.

##### *Socio-economic data: US and Wisconsin:*

- High unemployment levels exist for young people, particularly those with little education.
- Child poverty rates have been declining, due to public policies and government safety nets such as refundable tax credits, noncash benefits, work-related benefits and lower out of pocket health costs.
- 40% of US births in 2010 were to unmarried mothers; of these, more than half (60%) were unplanned. Twenty percent (20%) of unmarried African-American mothers in Milwaukee surveyed in 2010 after giving birth indicated that the baby was "unwanted."

- Metro Milwaukee ranks 8<sup>th</sup> among US metro areas with the most concentrated poverty – 40% of African-American children live in poverty, compared to a white child poverty rate of 8.5%.
- Nearly one-third (30%) of African-American Wisconsinites are poor; of these, more than three-fourths (76%) reside in Milwaukee. Only 22% of Wisconsin African-Americans are middle class. In Milwaukee, 13% of African-American families were middle class, compared to 26% nationally.

*Policy Recommendations:*

- To build stronger families, need to increase economic prosperity and reduce unplanned, out of wedlock pregnancies.
- Adopt the four cornerstones of the report “*Opportunity, Responsibility & Security: A Consensus Plan for Reducing Poverty and Restoring the American Dream*” (2015: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and the Brookings Institution): (1) promote a new cultural norm surrounding parenthood and marriage; (2) promote delayed, responsible childbearing; (3) increase access to effective parenting education; and (4) help young, less-educated men and women prosper in work and family.

**Summary of Reflections & Key Challenges**

The Commissioners identified key challenges including the erosion of marriage, how assortative marriage accentuates inequality, and how issues of poverty, education and incarceration need to be addressed to improve marriage. Other comments included the negative impacts of media messages; the need for young people, especially young men, to understand the financial and other consequences of unplanned pregnancies; and the declining role of cultural institutions in supporting families. Commissioners identified questions for follow up and requested a glossary of federal and state programs to better inform their deliberations.

**Key Definitions**

Recognizing the high complexity of topics within the scope of the Commission’s work, and the differences between their own beliefs, values and opinions associated with these topics, the Commissioners determined to reach consensus on all recommendations advanced to the Governor. They agreed to employ the following definition of **consensus**:

“The group will have reached consensus on a decision when, after a prescribed period of discussion, each participant can say about both the process and the outcome:

- I believe that others understand my point of view
- I believe I understand others’ points of view

*and*

- Whether or not I prefer this decision, I expect my opinion will be duly recorded/ noted by the Commission and the recommendations have been arrived at openly and fairly.”

In addition, at the first meeting, as the Commissioners discussed various aspects, definitions and types of family, the question emerged “what do we mean when we say ‘Family’”? It became clear that a mutually agreed-upon working definition was needed. After much discussion, the Commissioners agreed that “**Family**” is best defined, for the Commission’s work, by focusing on “What is best for the child?” and includes the following:

- “Natural” or biological parents – both, mother and father, and single parents;
- Grandparents and other relatives providing care for the child;

- Legal guardians;
- Foster family and/or residential care providers; and
- A person perceived by the child as his or her parent, including key influencers in a child's life, individuals and supporting agencies.

### **Meeting 2: February 23, 2016**

#### **Topic: The Role of Family Structure on Child Well-Being and How Family Formation Affects Income/Earning Potential**

There were two presentations at meeting 2. The first was given by Lonnie Berger, Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty, and Professor and PhD Chair in the School of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prof. Berger's research focuses on the ways in which economic resources, sociodemographic characteristics, and public policies affect parental behaviors and child and family wellbeing. The second presentation was given by Rachel Sheffield, a policy analyst in the DeVos Center for Religion & Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation, where her research focuses on welfare, marriage and family, and education.

#### **Presentation Highlights: Family Complexity and Fluidity, Child and Family Wellbeing, and Public Policy (Berger)**

- Families are increasingly complex and fluid, as reflected in increased rate of couples who cohabitate rather than marry, resulting in an increase in the number of parents who have multiple roles (biological, step-, resident, non-resident, custodial, non-custodial, etc.). As a result, many children experience multiple family structures and transitions by age 9.
- Family complexity influences family functioning and child well-being. While a mother's engagement with her children is consistent across family types, a father's engagement is not. Multiple parental roles lead to multiple demands and often result in increased family stress/conflict.
- Low parental investment and poor family functioning lead to poor childhood and long-term outcomes for children, including unintended pregnancies and non-marital births.
- Current family policies were designed for less complex families; greater complexity requires a shift in how policies address custodial and noncustodial parents.
- Policies need to provide parallel and proportionate supports, benefits and tax credits to custodial and non-custodial parents, and need to prevent family complexity via access to family planning services.

#### **Presentation Highlights: How Family Formation Affects Income/Earning Potential (Sheffield)**

- Marriage decreases probability of child poverty in Wisconsin by nearly 90%. Even controlling for education levels, married couples with children have a lower poverty rate than that for single parent households.
- Majority of unwed births in WI are to women age 20-29, not to teens.
- Co-habiting couples are less stable than married couples; half are likely to break up before the child turns five years old.
- Many financial benefits are available to married families, and they are better able to build wealth.
- Policy recommendations: reduce marriage penalties in welfare by providing assistance grants to low-income married couples; consider social marketing and educational campaigns addressing the benefits of marriage.

### **Summary of Reflections & Key Challenges**

While reflecting on the presentations, Commissioners identified the role of education and economics in family success and the need for more opportunities/options for young adults. Key barriers to success/challenges included policy disincentives to marry; need for policy alignment with multiple parenting roles; need for society to invest in/support men; the need to delay childbearing and change societal attitudes toward sex/marriage. The Commissioners identified additional questions for staff follow up.

### **Meeting 3: May 5, 2016**

#### **Topic: Strong Families, Prosperous States: Do Healthy Families Affect the Wealth of States?**

At the third meeting, the Commissioners heard a presentation by W. Bradford Wilcox and Joseph Price. Prof. Wilcox is Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies, and a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His research focuses on the quality and stability of family life in the US, and on the links between family structure and economics. Prof. Price is an Associate Professor of Economics at Brigham Young University (BYU). He directs the BYU Record Linking Lab, is a co-editor of the *Economics of Education Review*, and a Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research. He has authored over 50 academic articles, including a recent report with the American Enterprise Institute on the link between family structure and state-level economic outcomes.

#### **Presentation Highlights: Do Healthy Families Affect the Wealth of States?**

- Presentation derived from their report with Robert Lerman entitled, *“Strong families, Prosperous States: Do Healthy Families Affect the Wealth of States?”* (2015: American Enterprise Institute and the Institute of Family Studies).
- Four outcomes that influence state politics are, in turn, affected by marriage rates: economic growth, child poverty, family median income and upward income mobility.
- These outcomes are influenced by marriage: (a) marriage motivates men to work more; (b) married families have more money to manage and motivation to manage it more prudently; (c) children from intact married families are more likely to flourish and acquire the human capital needed to graduate from college and be gainfully employed; and (d) teens/ young men from intact married families are less likely to commit crime or end up in jail, resulting in lower public safety costs and greater upward mobility.
- Public policy should “do no harm” to marriage, especially for low-income families; 40% of American families receive government benefits, but many benefits penalize marriage.
- Policy recommendations: (1) reform TANF, SNAP and Medicaid to minimize the marriage penalty; (2) expand vocational education and apprenticeship programs; (3) expand the child tax credit to \$2,500 and encourage investments in future workers and taxpayers; and (4) expand civic and cultural supports for marriage, by promoting the “Success Sequence” of finishing school, working, marrying and then becoming a parent. Focus promotional efforts on men with lower education levels, and learn from the success of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

### **Summary of Reflections & Key Challenges**

The Commissioners’ reflections on the presentation included thoughts on how to help individuals stay on the “Success Sequence,” and how to help those not on the sequence to be successful. In addition, they reflected on how to encourage and support family formation, and how to support men to succeed economically. During this meeting, Commissioners identified factors that influence and challenge the

formation and sustainability of healthy families, based on what they had learned to date as well as on their own experiences.

#### **Meeting 4: June 28, 2016**

##### **Topic: Social Policy and the Family**

At meeting 4, the Commissioners heard from Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, where he holds the Cabot Family Chair in Economic Studies and co-directs the Center on Children and Families. Dr. Haskins is also a senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and President of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. In 2016, Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul Ryan appointed him Co-Chairman of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policy. Also in 2016, Dr. Haskins and his colleague Isabel Sawhill won the Moynihan Prize, awarded by the American Academy of Political and Social Science for “championing the use of informed judgment to advance the public good.” He is the author of *Show Me the Evidence: Obama’s Fight for Rigor and Evidence in Social Policy* (Brookings, 2015) and *Work Over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law* (Brookings, 2006); co-author of *Creating an Opportunity Society* (Brookings, 2009) and *Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America* (Pew Charitable Trusts and Brookings, 2008); and senior editor of *The Future of Children*. In 2002, he was the Senior Advisor for Welfare Policy to President George W. Bush. He spent 14 years on the staff of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee, serving as Staff Director in 1995.

##### **Presentation Highlights: Social Policy and the Family**

- Dr. Haskins framed his presentation in the context of economic mobility, citing the work of researcher Raj Chetty, who used Internal Revenue Service data to study family economics. This work, based on millions of income records from the IRS, confirms that there is an economic mobility problem in the U.S.
- His presentation was drawn from “*Opportunity, Responsibility & Security: A Consensus Plan for Reducing Poverty and Restoring the American Dream*” (2015: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and the Brookings Institution), authored by the AEI/Brookings Working Group on Poverty and Opportunity, on which he served along with other experts on poverty, with members balanced across the political spectrum of conservatives, centrists and progressives.
- The report concluded that the three main causes of poverty and lack of economic mobility are family composition, work, and education. In order for the U.S. to make progress towards alleviating poverty and increasing economic mobility, progress is needed in all three areas.
- The report advanced four solutions, or “best bets” to make progress in the three areas: (1) combine work and work supports; (2) increase family stability (via family planning); (3) prepare young people for skilled jobs available in the local economy; and (4) increase access to high quality early childhood education.

##### **Summary of Reflections & Key Challenges**

The Commissioners held an extensive discussion with Dr. Haskins about the role of states in advancing policies to support families, including policies on incarceration and re-entry, tax credits, work supports, and focus on the most disadvantaged children. The Commissioners continued the process begun in meeting 3 of identifying key factors influencing and challenging the formation and sustainability of healthy families, and began formulating potential responses. Potential responses included: engaging local religious and community organizations in support of marriage and family initiatives; addressing unplanned pregnancy, in and outside of marriage; and helping the most

vulnerable youth find, access and complete training and education programs that are responsive to employer needs.

### **Meeting 5: August 25, 2016**

#### **Topic: Community Approaches to Strengthening Families**

At meeting 5, Commissioners heard from Bob Woodson, Founder and President of the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE). Often referred to as the “godfather” of the movement to empower neighborhood-based organizations, Mr. Woodson has promoted the principles of self-help and neighborhood empowerment and the importance of the institutions of civil society for more than four decades. In 1981, Mr. Woodson founded CNE to help strengthen and advocate for neighborhood-based organizations struggling to serve their communities. Since its inception, CNE has provided training and capacity-building technical assistance to more than 2,600 leaders of community-based groups in 39 states. He is the author of *Youth Crime and Urban Policy, A View from the Inner City* (1981), *On the Road to Economic Freedom: An Agenda for Black Progress* (1987), *A Summons to Life, Mediating Structures and the Prevention of Youth Crime* (1988), and *The Triumphs of Joseph: How Today’s Community Healers are Reviving Our Streets and Neighborhoods* (1998, reissued in paperback in 2008).

#### **Presentation Highlights: Community Approaches to Strengthening Families**

- Between 1965 and 1995 the marriage rate declined dramatically. There are two main factors behind this trend, which led to a breakdown of the American family: (1) up to the 1960’s, poor people, including immigrants and migrants, were integrated into their communities with the help of civic institutions that made conscious efforts to help people assimilate; (2) in the 1960s and later, the stigma of welfare was removed as it became defined as a right. Welfare policies separated income from work.
- Mr. Woodson proposed that key principles of the market economy be applied to the social economy: a market economy encourages competition, entrepreneurship and innovation. He suggested that not all poor people are the same; rather, there were four categories of poor, each requiring different solutions: (1) those who use welfare as a temporary solution - they have strong moral character intact; (2) those who remain on welfare - they have strong moral character but perverse incentives to remain on government assistance; (3) those who are physically and/or mentally disabled; and (4) those who are poor due to character deficits such as moral and spiritual failings.
- CNE works with those in category (4), creating neighborhood-based solutions through entrepreneurship to address community problems such as drug addiction, prostitution, vandalism, etc. CNE locates existing community leaders with moral authority, and helps them provide residents the means to protect and clean up their own neighborhoods.
- A key tenet of CNE’s work is to study and learn from success. Mr. Woodson has found that the most successful innovations come from those suffering from the problems. People cannot learn from studying failures only; rather, he encouraged the Commission to study examples of success, as there are many “islands of excellence” within poor communities around the country.

#### **Summary of Reflections & Key Challenges**

In reflecting on Mr. Woodson’s presentation, the Commissioners noted the positive role of apprenticeship programs, the importance of role models and surrogate dads, and the need to study the successes, not just failures. They also noted that government should not be considered as the only solution; rather, consider government a collaborator in finding solutions.

The Commissioners then reviewed an initial draft of the Recommendations Blueprint (see **Appendix E: Recommendations Blueprint**), a tabular summary of identified Focus Areas, specific challenges and potential recommendations, based on the content of the discussions from meetings 1 – 4.

### **Meeting 6: November 2, 2016**

#### **Finalize & Prioritize Recommendations**

There were no speakers or presentations for meeting 6, which focused on (1) completing Commissioners' review of the four Focus Areas and challenges that had been identified and prioritized to date via the Recommendations Blueprint; (2) prioritizing the recommended strategies in each Focus Area; and (3) prioritizing the top three recommendations for each Focus Area. By the meeting's conclusion, three recommendations in each of the four Focus Areas were finalized.

## **Focus Areas & Key Challenges**

The Commissioners' discussions of key factors that influence and challenge healthy family formation and sustainability were organized into seven preliminary categories: (1) marriage; (2) family complexity; (3) family planning and the "Success Sequence"; (4) roles and responsibilities of men in forming and sustaining families; (5) economics; (6) education; and (7) civil society and popular culture.

These categories were further organized into four Focus Areas to assist with developing recommendations. Each Focus Area is listed below along with the associated specific key challenges facing families, as prioritized by the Commissioners. See **Appendix D**.

#### **Focus Area 1: Parenting Stability**

Key challenges to parenting stability include:

- Lack of support for men's role in forming and sustaining families;
- Low "demand" for marriage / too many barriers to marriage;
- Unplanned pregnancies and lack of family planning; and
- High family complexity.

#### **Focus Area 2: Economic Stability Through Education & Training**

Key educational and training challenges to economic stability include:

- Lack of high quality K-12 education for high-risk segments of our society;
- Lack of support for the most vulnerable groups to find, navigate, and complete vocational/technical training and traditional four-year college programs;
- Low levels of adult functional literacy and math skills;
- Limited capacity and access to vocational and technical training opportunities; and
- Stigma around vocational and technical training tracks in high school.

**Focus Area 3: Economic Stability Through Jobs & Work**

Key jobs and work challenges to economic stability include:

- Insufficient support for men and boys to prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism;
- Lack of alignment between available jobs and geographic mobility incentives, and infrastructure and transportation resources;
- Insufficient supply of high quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood education;
- Limited access to subsidized employment and on the job training opportunities;
- Limited access to employment-related supports for partial- and non-custodial parents; and
- Limited ability to match employers with skilled potential employees.

**Focus Area 4: Social & Cultural Support for Marriage**

Key challenges to social and cultural support of marriage include:

- Few positive cultural messages about marriage;
- Few positive societal/cultural role models for men;
- Combating cultural messages that sexual activity disconnected from a committed/ monogamous relationship has no consequence; and
- Social isolation of families.

The following table depicts the alignment between the seven preliminary categories and the four Focus Areas.

<b>Preliminary category for organizing Reflections and Challenges</b>	<b>Focus Area 1: Parenting Stability</b>	<b>Focus Area 2: Economic Stability through Education/Training</b>	<b>Focus Area 3: Economic Stability Through Jobs/Work Supports</b>	<b>Focus Area 4: Social/Cultural Support for Marriage</b>
<i>Marriage</i>	X			X
<i>Family complexity</i>	X			
<i>Family planning &amp; the “Success Sequence”</i>	X			X
<i>Roles &amp; responsibilities of men in forming &amp; sustaining families</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Economics</i>		X	X	
<i>Education</i>		X	X	
<i>Civil society &amp; popular culture</i>				X

**Recommendations**

The Commissioners propose the following prioritized recommendations to address the challenges identified in each of the four Focus Areas. The *Recommendations Blueprint*, from which these recommendations are derived, reflects the cumulative learning, reflection and discussions of the Commissioners over the course of their six meetings, and includes a comprehensive list of identified strategies by Focus Area . See **Appendix E**.

### **Focus Area 1: Parenting Stability**

1. Consider solutions that increase the “demand” for marriage, specifically:
  - Remove public policy barriers such as the marriage penalty (e.g., marriage license fees, tax law related to low income / dual income households).
  - Redirect resources from policies designed to cope with declining marriage rates, toward policies focused on developing, strengthening and building families. Consider marriage and child tax credits.
  - Develop healthy relationship/marriage readiness programs, since these are learned behaviors.
  - Reframe the concept of marriage for teens and young adults.
  - Provide divorce intervention services, with opportunities to repair damaged/at-risk marriages.
2. Inform youth (especially those at highest-risk, such as youth in or aging out of foster care), young adults and married couples about:
  - Prevention of unplanned pregnancy through support/encouragement of family planning, provider awareness of options, and opportunities available by delaying sexual activity; and
  - Consequences of sexual activity disconnected from a committed / monogamous relationship, e.g., financial and other consequences.
3. Provide in-home education programs for new fathers, similar to the home visiting program for new mothers; include relationship formation in the curriculum.

### **Focus Area 2: Economic Stability Through Education & Training**

1. Teach financial and life skills in high school, including but not limited to the “Success Sequence” and awareness of child support laws.
2. Increase high school students’ exposure to technical fields, especially in at-risk rural and urban communities.
3. Promote school choice/vouchers, to provide children from low-income households with equal access to better schools.

### **Focus Area 3: Economic Stability Through Jobs & Work**

1. Consider solutions that address the needs of employers and workforce in both rural and urban areas of the state. Align geographic mobility incentives, infrastructure and transportation resources with available jobs.
2. Provide supports/opportunities for offenders to re-enter society in a meaningful way after incarceration, including removing obstacles to success and civic engagement, and improving opportunities for community connections.
3. Provide parents with support, including reducing economic stress by increasing access to affordable, quality early childhood education.

### **Focus Area 4: Social & Cultural Support for Marriage**

1. Develop and promote positive cultural messages for both men and women about:
  - Healthy relationships;
  - The “Success Sequence;”
  - The key role of fathers (including those who are noncustodial or have partial custody) in forming and sustaining families; and
  - Male youth/young men’s need for social and other supports.

2. In addition to job skills, provide programs for incarcerated men that build their skills in the areas of parenting, marriage and finance.
3. Encourage community-based social support networks for families.

## Appendices

- A. Executive Order
- B. Commission Member Biographies
- C. Detailed Facilitation Approach
- D. Key Themes & Comments
- E. Recommendations Blueprint
- F. Expert Presentation Summaries
- G. Glossary of Terms & Responses to Commissioner Questions

## Acknowledgements

This Report is the product of the Commissioners' deliberations. Per Executive Order 184, the Department of Children and Families provided staff support to the Commission. The following DCF staff were instrumental to the success of the Commission and the timely production of this report:

- Joe Scialfa, Communications Director
- Dianne Jenkins, Executive Policy Advisor
- Kay Maier, Executive Staff Assistant
- Jack Grotsky, IT/Customer Services Supervisor (Technology Support)
- Brett Cook, IT/Workstation Support Team Lead (Technology Support)

Raj Kamal, Principal, Credens LLC, provided expert facilitation and planning support for the Commission. His professionalism was critical in ensuring each Commissioner's voice was heard; he fostered a tone of civility and mutual respect throughout the Commission's deliberations. His Associate, Daryl Harrison, ensured meeting discussions were accurately captured and summarized.

## Appendix A: Executive Order 184



### EXECUTIVE ORDER #184

#### Relating to the Creation of the Future of the Family Commission

WHEREAS, strong, stable families are the foundation for a prosperous society and help lift individuals out of poverty; and

WHEREAS, both single-parent and two-parent families face unique challenges in contemporary society; and

WHEREAS, certain programs and policies may present obstacles to families of all forms, ultimately preventing positive outcomes for families, individuals, and society; and

WHEREAS, well-designed policies may assist parents and children in establishing the life skills needed to leave behind poverty and be productive, successful citizens, and the State has a role in analyzing and developing policies that strengthen and lift up all families;

NOW THEREFORE, I, SCOTT WALKER, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of this State, do hereby establish the **Future of the Family Commission** and order as follows:

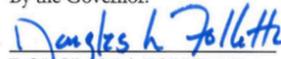
1. The Future of the Family Commission shall operate as a nonstatutory committee pursuant to 14.019 of the Wisconsin Statutes, for the purpose of identifying issues and barriers relating to the overall wellbeing of families in the State, developing policies that lift individuals out of poverty, and developing and recommending policies for implementation to better serve Wisconsin's families throughout the future.
2. The Secretary of the Department of Children and Families shall serve as chair of the Commission and shall appoint all other members of the Commission. The Secretary may create subcommittees as necessary to achieve the goals of the Commission. The Department of Children and Families shall provide staff support to the Commission.
3. The Commission shall submit to the Governor a final report containing its findings and recommendations no later than December 1, 2016, and the Commission shall dissolve upon the submission of its final report.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this twenty-fifth day of January, in the year two thousand sixteen.

  
SCOTT WALKER  
Governor

By the Governor:

  
DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE  
Secretary of State

## Appendix B: Commission Member Biographies

Commission members are a diverse group, and include recognized thought leaders and civically engaged individuals who brought a wide spectrum of expertise, experiences, and perspectives to the Commission's deliberations.



**Eloise Anderson** – Ms. Anderson is the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and an internationally renowned leader in public policy creation and implementation, with extensive experience in child welfare and work support programs. She has more than 20 years in state service, including Administrator of the Division of Community Services in the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, and Director of the California Department of Social Services. She is a former President of Job Wave America, and a former Director of the Project for the American Family at the Claremont Institute. She is currently President of Anderson Resource Management Services, which assists families to achieve wellness and become contributing members of the community.



**Dr. Sarah Campbell** – Dr. Campbell is a pediatrician in Appleton, Wisconsin with Affinity Medical Group. Originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, Dr. Campbell earned her undergraduate degree from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin and completed her medical degree and residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. As a National Health Service Corps Scholar recipient, Dr. Campbell practiced rural medicine for four years in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. She currently serves on the board of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.



**Rachel Campos-Duffy** – Ms. Campos-Duffy is an author and television personality specializing in political, cultural and parenting commentary. A member of the Today Show Parenting Team, she is the national spokesperson for The LIBRE Initiative, a non-profit that educates and advocates for the economic empowerment of Hispanics through limited government, self-reliance, and entrepreneurship. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Arizona State University, and a Master's degree in International Affairs with an emphasis on Economic Development in Latin America from the University of California, San Diego. Rachel writes for Today Parenting, CNN.com, FOX News Latino, and The Huffington Post, among others. Her book, "Stay Home, Stay Happy: 10 Secrets to Loving At-home Motherhood" was published in 2009.



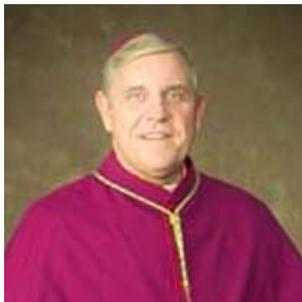
**Delvyn Crawford** – Mr. Crawford is an author, poet, and fatherhood specialist. As a Fatherhood Specialist, he facilitates a unique and innovative program that helps fathers strengthen their relationship with their children, and their children’s mother. He provides innovative ways for fathers to get engaged, and connects them to the resources they need to become better fathers and role models. Mr. Crawford is also a public speaker, multi-media communicator, and musician who uses different mediums to convey a message of hope. A respected orator, he has delivered presentations to Johnson Controls, Marquette University, BMO Harris Bank, and other organizations across the United States.



**Mikel Holt** – Mr. Holt is the associate publisher and co-founder of the Milwaukee Community Journal, Wisconsin’s largest African-American newspaper and winner of numerous National Newspaper Publishers Association awards. In addition, he is the President of Malik Communications, which specializes in the minority consumer market. He is the first recipient of the Medical College of Wisconsin's President's Diversity Award, a member of Who's Who in Black Milwaukee and named as one of the 100 Most Influential Black Milwaukeeans. His book, “Not Yet ‘Free at Last’: The Unfinished Business of the Civil Rights Movement: Our Battle for School Choice,” was published in 1999.



**Jim Kacmarcik** – Mr. Kacmarcik is the President of Kapco, Inc., a family-owned metal fabricating and stamping company based in Grafton, Wisconsin. Mr. Kacmarcik also oversees the operations of Advanced Coatings, Inc. and SpeedKore Performance Group and is a minority owner of the Milwaukee Bucks. A lifelong Wisconsin resident, he understands that there is no single greater reward than giving back to the community, which is why Kapco has been known for its philanthropic efforts and community involvement. He helped launch and remains actively involved with Camp Hometown Heroes, the Lakeshore Chinooks and KNE (K-Nation Entertainment)..



**Archbishop Jerome ListECKI** - The Most Reverend Jerome ListECKI was appointed to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. He previously served as an Appellate Judge for the Matrimonial Tribunal, as in-house legal counsel for the Archdiocese of Chicago from 1985-1987, and as host for WIND Catholic Conversation from 1978-1979. Recently, Archbishop ListECKI called for an urban initiative in Wisconsin to address the issues of poverty, unemployment, crime and violence. Central goals of the initiative are to strengthen Wisconsin families, offer young men and women positive role models, and establish a coordinated effort between members of the local community and law enforcement.



**Alicia Manning** – Ms. Manning is Program Officer, New Citizenship Programs, with the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is responsible for the full range of the foundation’s Wisconsin programs, with a particular emphasis on its grants to grassroots and faith-based groups in Milwaukee’s inner city. Ms. Manning has written and spoken publicly on how the work of such organizations is critical to the revitalization of civil society. Ms. Manning played a lead role in bringing an established national model for youth violence intervention to Milwaukee.



**Greta Munns** – Ms. Munns is a Foster Youth Liaison at the University of Wisconsin – Stout, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in art education. A Wisconsin native, she has spent the past nine years working to connect and empower a range of at-risk youth, work that is informed by her foster care history. Ms. Munns has held internships with Fosterclub and the National Resource Center for Youth Development, and is a former member of the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council. She has presented workshops across the nation focusing on meaningful youth engagement, and testified before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee in Washington D.C.



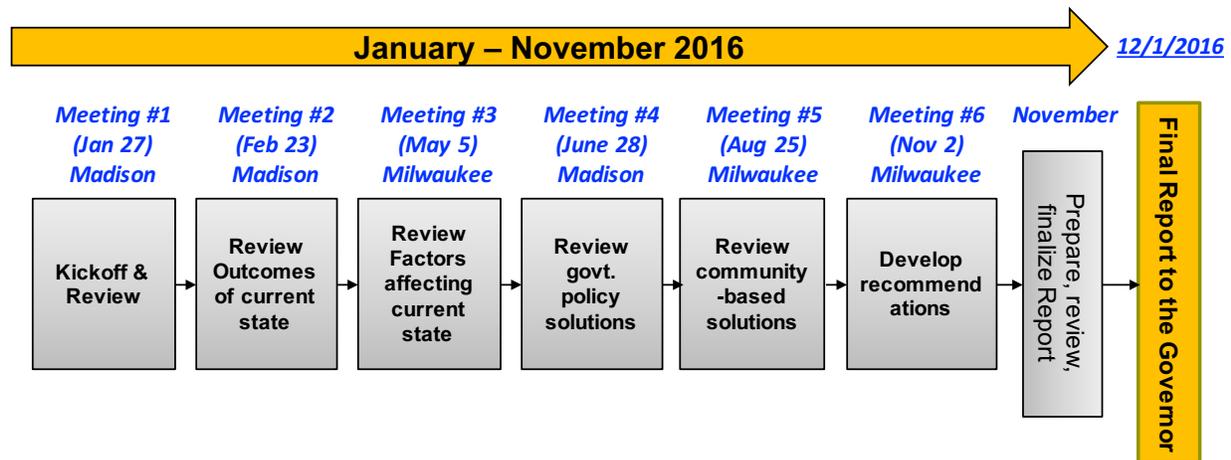
**Jeff Pralle** – Mr. Pralle is a property manager and real estate broker, born and raised in Onalaska, Wisconsin. Previously, he enjoyed a 32 year career at the United Parcel Service, Inc. Mr. Pralle serves on the Board of Directors of the La Crosse Realtors Association and the Wisconsin Apartment Association, where he serves as their Director of Legal Affairs. He is a U.S. veteran who served in both the Navy Reserves and on active duty. Mr. Pralle is a member of the Onalaska American Legion, the Onalaska Business Association, NFIB, and the Onalaska Historical Society.

## Appendix C: Detailed Facilitation Approach

### Overview

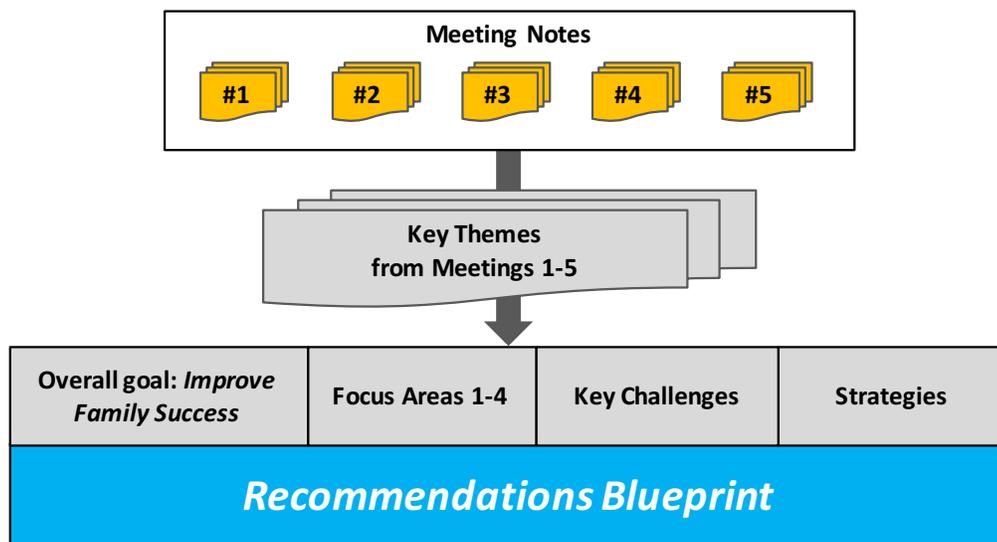
The Future of the Family Commission employed the following approach for completing its charge:

1. During January through November 2016, the Commission held six meetings (shown in the chart below), leading to the final report to the Governor's Office in December 2016.



2. The meetings were subject to Wisconsin's open records law, which was duly announced at the beginning of each meeting by the Commission Chairperson. Video recordings of the meetings were also posted on the Commission website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/future-family-front-page>
3. The Commission was supported by a team of DCF staff and an independent external facilitator; the team conducted extensive planning and preparation for each meeting, invited the expert speakers, managed logistics and ensured appropriate documentation, review and approval of meeting notes and supporting documents.
4. The first five meetings of the Future of the Family Commission were focused on learning about and discussing issues, challenges and barriers related to the overall well-being of families. Invited, nationally-renowned experts provided background information, summarized relevant research and offered recommendations to the Commission. Presentations on the topic areas listed below laid an informed foundation for the Commissioners to use when identifying potential recommendations.
5. The Commissioners heard presentations by leading experts on these topics:
  - Meeting #1 - *History and current state of the American family* - Professor Tim Smeeding, University of Wisconsin-Madison
  - Meeting #2 - *The role of family structure on child well-being, and How family formation affects income/earning potential* - Professor Lawrence Berger, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Ms. Rachel Sheffield, The Heritage Foundation
  - Meeting #3 - *Strong families and prosperous states* - Professor Brad Wilcox, University of Virginia, and Professor Joseph Price, Brigham Young University
  - Meeting #4 - *Social policy and the family* - Dr. Ron Haskins, the Brookings Institution
  - Meeting #5 - *Community approaches to strengthening families* - Mr. Bob Woodson, Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

6. Following each expert presentation, a structured process was used to facilitate individual reflection, sharing of reactions to the presentations, and a discussion of main points that stood out to the Commissioners. The reflections included new, relevant or otherwise interesting information, along with identified barriers, challenges and problems. Key reflections, barriers and challenges were documented in detailed meeting notes, which the Commissioners reviewed and approved.
7. The sum of information from presentations, discussions with expert presenters and discussions among the Commissioners, including ideas, trends, factors, barriers, challenges, potential solutions, and other relevant information became the basis for the Commission’s final report. As reflected in the diagram below, the DCF staff and the facilitator documented, summarized and organized the notes from the first five meetings into Key Themes, which helped the Commissioners identify, review and prioritize areas of focus for their recommendations, related key challenges and specific recommended strategies throughout the process. All the documents and steps were reviewed, discussed and approved by the Commissioners during the meetings, and via email between meetings.



8. For their deliberations, Commissioners also had access to multiple information sources, listed below and available on the Commission’s website:
  - Video recordings of each meeting;
  - Summary notes from each meeting;
  - Expert presentations;
  - Responses to Commissioners’ questions, compiled by DCF staff; and
  - Key Themes.

### Meeting Details

During **meeting 1**, the Commissioners discussed various aspects, definitions and types of families. For the purpose of this Commission, the Commissioners agreed to use a working definition of “**family**” that focused on “What is best for the child?”, and to include the following in its definition:

- “Natural” or biological parents – both mother and father, and single parents;
- Grandparents and other relatives providing care for the child;
- Legal guardians;
- Foster family and/or residential care provider; and
- A person perceived by the child as his or her parent, including key influencers in a child’s life, individuals and supporting agencies.

The Commissioners also recognized that the topics within the scope of the Commission’s work were very complex, and that the Commissioners held different beliefs, values and opinions associated with these topics. Therefore, the Commissioners agreed to reach consensus on the final recommendations it submitted; they defined “**consensus**” as follows:

“The group will have reached consensus on a decision when, after a prescribed period of discussion, each participant can say about both the process and the outcome:

- I believe that others understand my point of view
- I believe I understand others’ points of view

*and*

- Whether or not I prefer this decision, I expect my opinion will be duly recorded/ noted by the Commission and the recommendations have been arrived at openly and fairly.”

During **meetings 1 and 2**, the Commissioners also identified multiple questions for follow up. The DCF staff compiled responses and posted them on the Commission website. See **Appendix G**.

During **meeting 3**, the Commissioners were asked to identify factors that influence and challenge the formation and sustainability of healthy families. Their facilitated discussion helped identify 29 different key trends and factors, listed as Key Themes for Reflections in Table 1 of **Appendix D**.

At **meeting 4**, the Commissioners reviewed a summary of Key Themes, and consolidated multiple categories of issues into four Focus Areas, for which they then identified and prioritized challenges and strategies to address each of these Focus Areas. This discussion was summarized in a “Recommendations Blueprint,” (**Appendix E**) a tabular view of Focus Areas, specific Challenges, and Recommended Strategies.

At **meeting 5**, Commissioners reviewed an initial draft of the Recommendations Blueprint and began prioritizing recommendations in each of the four Focus Areas.

**Meeting 6** of the Commission concentrated on completing discussions of the four Focus Areas, voting on and prioritizing Recommended Strategies, discussing the top 3 recommendations for each Focus Area, and reviewing an initial outline and first draft of the Commission’s report to the Governor (prepared by the DCF staff based on the content created by the Commissioners throughout the year).

## **Voting**

During meeting 6, there were two rounds of voting. In the first round, each Commissioner received 12 colored dots to vote for their top three recommendations in each of the four defined Focus Areas. In total, each Commissioner voted for 12 recommendations, 3 in each Focus Area.

Following the first round of voting, each Commissioner had an opportunity to make oral arguments to convince other Commissioners to change their votes; Commissioners were not obligated to try to convince other Commissioners if they were satisfied with the results of the first round of voting. As part of this discussion, some recommendations were consolidated, some removed, and some moved from one Focus Area to another.

Specifically,

- Focus Area #1: “provide parents with support, including reducing economic stress by increasing access to affordable, quality early childhood education” was moved to Focus Area #3.
- Focus Area #3: integrated two draft recommendations, namely “Provide incentives for families to relocate to areas where jobs are located” and “address wage disparities” were consolidated into “Consider urban and rural solutions that address the needs of employers and the workforce. Align available jobs with geographic mobility incentives, infrastructure and transportation resources.”

The second round of voting took place following these discussions, and yielded the final priorities assigned to each recommendation. At this point, Focus Area #2 had a tie for the 3rd place between two Recommended Strategies. Following further discussion, the Commissioners voted by acclamation to prioritize the eventual Recommended Strategy #3 in Focus Area 2 over Strategy #4.

## Appendix D: Key Themes & Comments

This Appendix provides the Key Themes and comments from the Commission’s deliberations.

- **Table 1** presents an organized summary of the Commissioners’ discussions from the **first five** Commission meetings, created to aid in their deliberations. Key Themes were organized into the four Focus Areas.
- **Table 2** shows the alignment between the seven preliminary categories of information with the final four Focus Areas for recommendations.
- **Table 3** depicts the identified challenges in each Focus Area, as prioritized by the Commissioners.

### Table 1. Key Themes

Following each expert presentation and Q & A, the Commissioners reflected and identified main points that stood out to them. These reflections included new, relevant or otherwise interesting information related to the presentation, along with various barriers, challenges and problems identified by the Commissioners as relevant to the topic of the day. They then shared and discussed their reflections with each other. These discussions were documented in the detailed meeting notes, and are summarized in Table 1, created to aid the Commissioners in their deliberations.

#### Organization of Table 1:

The table is organized by preliminary categories. To facilitate the Commissioners’ future discussions, meeting notes were grouped into preliminary categories, and further organized by type of content. As expected, given the nature of the topics, there was considerable overlap among these eight categories:

- I. Marriage
- II. Family complexity
- III. Family planning & the “Success Sequence”
- IV. Roles & responsibilities of men in forming & sustaining families
- V. Economics
- VI. Education
- VII. Civil society & popular culture
- VIII. Context/Other

For each preliminary category, meeting notes were summarized and classified as one of three types of information: reflections, barriers/challenges/problems, or potential solutions. At the beginning of each preliminary category, in columns 1 and 2, DCF staff added **Key Themes** (in italics) that summarized the column’s content. The second column also reflects labels in bold to reflect similar comments.

The meeting in which each item originated is indicated by the number in parenthesis at the end of that item. For example, (2) at the end of the item “How do we normalize marriage? (2)” denotes that this item was discussed in meeting 2.

Each column in the table contains an independent list; item numbers in one column are not related to item numbers in other columns. For example, item #1 in the **reflections** column of the category “Marriage” is not related to item #1 in the **barriers** column of the category “Marriage.” Therefore, it is recommended that the table be read by preliminary category, one column at a time, and not across columns.

**Table 1. Key Themes from Future of the Family Commission: Meetings 1 to 5**

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<b>I. Marriage</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>From the legal perspective, there is more than one way to define “marriage” than what has been the traditional understanding.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Assortative marriages are not new. People tend to marry people with similar backgrounds and education levels.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Marriage has eroded in the middle class. We need to increase the “demand” for marriage.</i></p> <p>d) <i>Marriage is a strong defense against poverty. Strong marriages reduce crime.</i></p> <p>e) <i>Marriage education and child support are important.</i></p> <p>f) <i>Remove disincentives to marriage in government programs.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People are forming a variety of alternative family structures outside of the traditional marriage; for example, cohabitation (1)</li> <li>2. The erosion of marriage among today’s middle class is surprising. We cannot take the institution of marriage for granted even among communities where the marriage rates have been historically high (Latinos, for example). (1)</li> <li>3. Assortative relationships (“marrying your own kind / class”) and marriages accentuate socio-economic inequality – for example, a high-earning professional typically marries another high-earning professional, and a low-earner typically marries another person from the same socio-economic segment of the society. Although there are more marriages between different ethnicities, neighborhoods and religions, people still tend to largely marry within the same class. Assortative</li> </ol>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>There are policy disincentives to marriage.</i></li> <li>• <i>The institution of marriage has changed significantly over time.</i></li> <li>• <i>People are not prepared for marriage.</i></li> <li>• <i>Most marriage promotion efforts to date have been ineffective; need to consider different approaches</i></li> </ul> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are policy disincentives to marry; the accompanying challenge is that “it has always worked this way,” and the challenge of changing mindsets about these policies. (2)</li> <li>2. Rethinking marriage as a journey or adventure, as something that could be “normally achievable” by most people. (2)</li> <li>3. Marriage as a partnership—what does a partnership look like in the modern day? Historically marriage were contractual partnerships, what do they look like today? (2)</li> <li>4. <b>View on Marriage and</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove governmental barriers to marriage such as income support and the marriage penalty. (2)</li> <li>2. Develop healthy marriage formation programs that encourage “living / existing in marriage”. Reframe marriage to teens and young adults. (2)</li> <li>3. Provide divorce intervention to try to salvage marriage even after filing for divorce. Create opportunities for marriage repair. Provide resources about strong marriages, for example, when couples apply for their marriage license. (2)</li> <li>4. Code of ethics for divorce attorneys instructs them to seek reconciliation of the parties. To what extent is this enforced?</li> </ol>

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<p>marriage is not a new phenomenon. (1)</p> <p>4. Poverty, education, and incarceration need to be fixed in addition to addressing marriage. (1)</p> <p>5. Marriage is a strong defense against poverty. (2)</p> <p>6. How do we normalize marriage? (2)</p> <p>7. Why are people penalized for being married in income support programs? (2)</p> <p>8. Sexual activity is a cultural issue. Young women want to get married and like the idea of marriage, so maybe we need to address the benefits of marriage for men. (2)</p> <p>9. Marriage inoculates against poverty; let's create incentives for or remove disincentives to marriage. (2)</p> <p>10. For people with less than a college education who are married, what are they doing to encourage marriage in this subset of people? (2)</p> <p>11. Societies with polygamy and polyandry lose wealth. Monogamous societies tend to be wealthier. What can we learn from the historical transformation from polygamous to monogamous societies? (2)</p> <p>12. Marriage education and the role of child support are important. (2)</p> <p>13. A marriage license is expensive, and has different cost in different counties. (3)</p> <p>14. How can we frame the public debate in a manner that helps increase &amp; inspire the "demand" for marriage? (3)</p> <p>15. If we cannot influence culture, then policies should "do no harm" to marriage. (3)</p> <p>16. We need to support the long-term costs/benefits of marriage. (3)</p> <p>17. We need to encourage and support new parents—would that help young parents stay together? (3)</p> <p>18. Family is the foundation of the state's prosperity; how can we educate youth about</p>	<p><b>Sex:</b> Marriage is no longer viewed as a lifetime commitment and lifelong marriages are looked down upon. We have created a selfish society. Sex is no longer reserved for marriage. It is easy to change partners and easy to get a divorce. (3)</p> <p>5. <b>Faith and Marriage:</b> The common bond of faith in marriage is not as strong as it once was. (3)</p> <p>6. <b>Readiness for Marriage:</b> Increasingly, people see romance as a sufficient reason to get married, regardless of their readiness for a successful marriage. More work is needed to get people ready for marriage. (3)</p> <p>7. Couples do not have conversations about finances before getting married and thus bring different financial assumptions and goals to the relationship. Differences in how couples save and spend money are a common reason for marital disagreements. (3)</p> <p>8. The decline of Judeo-Christian faiths and "Christmas Phenomenon": Couples get married without knowing each other well enough, and discover their differences</p>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<p>the structure and roles of family? (3)</p> <p>19. Marriage penalty for means-tested programs provides disincentives for marriage. (4)</p> <p>20. Teach young adults the economic benefits of marriage and do not penalize marriage through government programs. (4)</p>	<p>when their first Christmas together comes around. (3)</p> <p>9. How to engage local religious and neighborhood organizations in support of marriage and family initiatives? (4)</p> <p>10. How do we promote the positive benefits of marriage? (4)</p> <p>11. How do we ensure that public policy does no harm to marriage? (4)</p> <p>12. How to communicate to the population at large that stable families undergird Wisconsin's prosperity? (4)</p>	
<b>II. Family Complexity</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>Contemporary families are increasingly complex, involving multiple partners and roles; poverty exacerbates complexity; family complexity affects multiple facets of society.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Education and economic stability are key factors in family success, especially so for complex families.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Noncustodial parents face significant challenges, but are largely unassisted by current policy.</i></p> <p>d) <i>Quality childcare is important but expensive, and varies widely.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <p>1. It is sad to realize that many children are trapped in an adverse situation that feels normal to them. (1)</p>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increased family complexity and single parent households mean that children do not have the perspectives of both parents as strong role models.</i></li> <li>• <i>Childhood experiences shape what children learn about family life and stability, and influence the choices they will make as adults.</i></li> <li>• <i>Parents need support, especially poor parents.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p>	

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<p>2. Education and economics are big barriers for the success of the family; these barriers are exacerbated for complex families. (2)</p> <p>3. Three different populations that need help were discussed (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children born into poverty</li> <li>• Teenagers in poverty who need help to gain upward mobility</li> <li>• Families in tough situation</li> </ul> <p>4. There are many different ways you can put together a family. How can a child understand what is “normal”? (2)</p> <p>5. There is an increase in family complexity for all but those with bachelor’s degrees. How do we get vulnerable young men and women to decrease that fluidity? (2)</p> <p>6. Family complexity and fluidity put pressure on all families, not just the poorer ones. (2)</p> <p>7. Members of complex families with stresses may have a hard time becoming the best employees, parents, or community members if they are just trying to keep things functional in their households. This has a high social cost. (2)</p> <p>8. We need to move from mere education about family issues to “formation” of strong families, and teach families how to deal with hard issues. (2)</p> <p>9. There are lots of mandates and not a lot of support for noncustodial parents, so how can we encourage noncustodial parents to contribute more financially and emotionally to their children? (2)</p> <p>10. Stronger families lead to safer streets. How can we raise awareness that healthy families can reduce crime? (3)</p> <p>11. How do we educate/make aware poor parents about successful parenting, child development, educational options, good daycare, etc.? (4)</p> <p>12. Poverty does not equal bad parenting. Poor</p>	<p>1. Impact of foster care and lack of help to children transitioning out of foster care in learning about family stability. (1)</p> <p>2. Helping fathers and mothers who are in multiple family relationships. (2)</p> <p>3. <b>Father Figure:</b> There is a lack of a strong father figure in our society. One man can have children with multiple mothers and is therefore not a strong father figure for a single family. This is equally applicable to strong mother roles, too. Many factors will fall into place with a strong and positive father figure, but strong mothers are also needed. (3)</p> <p>4. <b>Role Models:</b> in traditional families, there are two roles models, one for each gender. With an increase in single parents, there is an absence of one of the two important role models. Need to strengthen role models for fathers. (3)</p> <p>5. <b>Childhood Experiences:</b> One’s upbringing affects how one views work and poverty. For example, childhood experiences vary depending on whether their parents</p>	

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<p>families may just need support, not necessarily parenting education. Do not stereotype all poor parents. Let's work with their needs and not our assumptions. Support parents, do not supplant them. (4)</p> <p>13. The need for quality, affordable, accessible childcare that works for working people. How to increase quality while not increasing cost? (4)</p> <p>14. Perception that daycare is bad. If you need it, do we have it available? (4)</p>	<p>worked and the quality of their parents' marriage. (3)</p> <p>6. <b>Childhood Experiences:</b> A person's exposure to marriage and the family culture in which a person grew up (single parent, multigenerational, etc.) affects how that person views family life. (3)</p> <p>7. How to provide total parental support at all stages of parenthood, including daycare? (4)</p> <p>8. How can the State support those suffering from mental illness? (4)</p> <p>9. Would the State consider providing total wrap-around services in the schools, or expanding the proposal, for poor families in Wisconsin, rural and urban? (4)</p> <p>10. How to consider stressors on all families, not just poor families, including those with complex family structures? (4)</p>	
<b>III. Family Planning &amp; The "Success Sequence"</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>Despite declines in teen pregnancy, the rates of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies for young adults ill prepared economically, socially and emotionally to be parents has increased.</i></p> <p>b) <i>"Success Sequence" is supported by evidence. Change and intervention are needed when a child is born outside of the "Success</i></p>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Family planning is necessary for success.</i></li> <li>• <i>Cultural messaging about healthy sexual relationships needs to change.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p>	<p>1. Delay pregnancy in order to get men and women into healthy, committed relationships by supporting LARCs. Learn from the programs in Colorado and St. Louis. Consider offering LARCs to those who are interested and/or at most risk, e.g., young women in</p>

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<p><i>Sequence.”</i></p> <p>c) <i>There are conflicting opinions about the role of government in family planning efforts that effectively decouple sexual activity from commitment.</i></p> <p>d) <i>There are moral and religious implications that need to be considered in discussing family planning solutions.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The onus of preventing unwanted or unplanned pregnancies should fall equally on both young men and women, and not just on women. (1)</li> <li>2. Many young men do not understand the financial and other consequences of unprotected sex, unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. (1)</li> <li>3. It was shocking to know that 20% of babies are unwanted. (1)</li> <li>4. The 20% rate of unwanted babies is close to the rate of domestic child abuse. (1)</li> <li>5. The Expert spoke about the “right” and “wrong” way to have a baby; we need to effect change when the “wrong” way happens—the unplanned and unwanted babies. (1)</li> <li>6. The lower teen pregnancy rate is good, but we still need a behavioral and mindset change. The symptoms are changing in the right direction, but we have not yet addressed the root causes. (2)</li> <li>7. Young people still want marriage and families, but there is disconnect between reality and the choices they make. (2)</li> <li>8. If we could delay pregnancies beyond the late teens and early 20s, would that allow people to choose more effective life partners? (2)</li> <li>9. Children learn by watching their parents; how can we get young women to envision</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High rate of unwanted babies. (1)</li> <li>2. Changing the mindset of what is a healthy sexual relationship, through cultural messaging. (2)</li> <li>3. Responsible sexual relations start with personal integrity. Teaching the immature “how” will not convince them of the “why.” (2)</li> <li>4. <b>Family Planning:</b> It matters how parents arrive at parenthood. There is a difference between parents who planned to be married and have children, vs. those who became parents because they did not have access to family planning. Lack of family planning means “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” (3)</li> <li>5. <b>Social Norms:</b> Society frowns on families of more than one or two children, despite the fact that we need more children to take care of aging parents. (3)</li> <li>6. Address unplanned pregnancies, in and outside marriage. (4)</li> <li>7. How can we inform teenagers about healthy alternatives to sexual relations? (4)</li> </ol>	<p>foster care who are twice as likely to get pregnant by age 19. (2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Implementation of a media/community campaign to promote the “Success Sequence”, similar to the national anti-teen pregnancy campaigns that helped reduce the U.S. and Wisconsin Teen pregnancy rate.</li> </ol>

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<p>putting off having babies? (2)</p> <p>10. Are we seeing the decline of the family from trends started 20-25 years ago? (2)</p> <p>11. Sexual behavior among high and low income people is similar and has not changed. However, high-income people have better access to a wider range of reliable birth control methods, such as LARCs. (2)</p> <p>12. LARCs carry moral considerations that are unacceptable to segments of the population. (2)</p> <p>13. How do we approach unplanned pregnancy? Options include prevention, focus on adoption as a viable alternative, and leading those who are pregnant on a road to marriage. (3)</p> <p>14. The teen pregnancy rate has gone down but the unwed pregnancy rate has not. (3)</p> <p>15. How can the State help de-stigmatize adoption? (3)</p> <p>16. We need to focus on the “Success Sequence” by encouraging cultural change and vocational training. (3)</p> <p>17. The “Success Sequence” has strong evidence as a means to address poverty – how should we begin meaningful conversations about it and help people get back on the success continuum when they have diverted from the sequence? (3)</p> <p>18. We need to meet people where they are, even if they are not on the “Success Sequence.” (3)</p> <p>19. More qualified foster homes are needed because the foster care system is already overburdened. Let’s consider the costs to the children that never find a permanent family. How should we handle worst case scenarios when children “age-out” with no foster family or close ties? (3)</p> <p>20. Whether or not we agree on LARCs, a campaign to promote LARCs spearheaded by</p>		

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<p>the State will be met with derision. That is not a good issue for this Commission. We need to be careful not to appear as social engineers, or to make proclamations regarding what people should do in their personal lives. (4)</p> <p>21. Unplanned pregnancy rate. (4)</p> <p>22. The foster care population has not been affected by the reduced teen pregnancy rate. (4)</p> <p>23. The effectiveness of long-term birth control in delaying out of wedlock births. Open to LARCs being part of a holistic solution; concerned that government funded programs include forms of birth control that may cause abortion. (4)</p> <p>24. Provide education and same day access to pregnancy prevention options including LARCs. (5)</p>		
<b>IV. Roles &amp; Responsibilities of Men in Forming &amp; Sustaining Families</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>Incarceration, poverty and unemployment are key factors that adversely affect men and their ability to form and sustain families.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Schools have not provided young men the skills and training they need to get good jobs and support their families. Supporting male employment and male earnings will likely lead to more marriages and fewer out-of-wedlock births.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Need more positive male role models and other supports for men.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <p>1. Many young men seem to jump from boyhood to fatherhood, and miss the transformational stages of adulthood and “husband hood.” (1)</p> <p>2. Many young fathers feel that more money</p>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Society has not acknowledged the key role of fathers in family life.</i></li> <li>• <i>Need to change the widespread belief that men do not need social and other supports, and invest in men.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <p>1. How can we help get society to be ready to invest resources in men, and especially low-income men? (2)</p> <p>2. How to invest resources in teaching incarcerated men</p>	<p>1. Provide support to help men re-enter society after incarceration – look at Department of Corrections policies and procedures that would do less harm – e.g., enabling identification cards in advance of release, changing time of release from county jails (currently midnight), helping former inmates connect with 3 people outside the prison as support group (similar to Alcoholics Anonymous approach – support groups help people understand they are not alone), considering family distance</p>

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<p>will solve their problems and so they engage in illegal activities to get money. This leads them to exist in a constant “survival mode.” (1)</p> <p>3. The incarceration rates in Wisconsin are staggering. (1)</p> <p>4. Milwaukee leads the nation in seven negative indicators, and Wisconsin has the highest black incarceration rate in the country. (1)</p> <p>5. If we could support male employment and male earnings, we would probably see more marriage and less out-of-wedlock births. (2)</p> <p>6. If it is within the scope of supporting families, the Commission can include in its recommendations reducing the number of incarcerated non-violent offenders. The US incarcerates more people than any other country. (2)</p> <p>7. We could look at how men get themselves into situations where they are making illegal choices, for example, when men cannot get jobs, they are pushed in negative directions. Schools have not provided young men the training they need to get a job. (2)</p> <p>8. When the expectations and roles of a father are not met, there is lot of stress, anxiety, frustrations and pressure, and fathers are more likely to leave. Is it easier for them to give up? (2)</p> <p>9. How do we help fathers deal with their multiple roles and expectations, especially regarding complex families? (2)</p> <p>10. The “male issue” has to be addressed; there are a lot of hurt men out there. (2)</p> <p>11. How does a man operate in the world? What is men’s understanding of their role? (2)</p> <p>12. Why does a dad who has partial custody not get partial support from income support programs like SNAP, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), etc.? (2)</p> <p>13. We need to emphasize education for men,</p>	<p>about parenting skills, marriage skills, financial skills and job skills? (2)</p> <p>3. Helping incarcerated men through mandated classes in prison. Requiring programs about healthy relationships, life skills, marriage stability. (2)</p> <p>4. Providing men with support such as counseling, information, faith initiatives, support groups. (2)</p> <p>5. Helping men understand the role of fathers and expectations from them. (2)</p> <p>6. <b>Role of Men:</b> Society has not looked at men historically as having a key role in family (for example, women typically are favored in child custody cases). (3)</p> <p>7. There is a belief that men should pull themselves up by their bootstraps without help, and that men do not need social support. How can we help change that belief, so that men have the support that they need in life? (3)</p> <p>8. How to engage fathers in education/training programs? (4)</p> <p>9. How can State reinforce positive, responsible male role models in parenting? (4)</p>	<p>when relocating prisoners to facilitate family contact, etc. (2)</p> <p>2. “Ban the box.” (2)</p> <p>3. Support programs for disadvantaged men, especially those incarcerated, and unemployed African-American men. Make programs for incarcerated men mandated rather than voluntary. (2)</p> <p>4. Provide more opportunities for former offenders, such as restoring their right to vote and offering skill certification programs while incarcerated to improve their employability and rehabilitation. (2)</p> <p>5. Make men of color less threatening to employers, and young tattooed white men more acceptable to employers. (2)</p> <p>6. Rehabilitation, not just punishment, is needed in our prisons – incentives that encourage the individual to achieve a level of success. (3)</p>

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<p>especially young men. (3)</p> <p>14. The government has never invested in programs that support a married man in the house. (3)</p> <p>15. Economics is key. In order to influence marriage rates, poor men need access to economic success through skilled training since women do not marry men without jobs. (3)</p> <p>16. Explore the impact of incarceration rates of African American and Native American men. (3)</p> <p>17. How can we provide more opportunities for our men to become self-sufficient? (4)</p> <p>18. Make government programs more inclusive and focused on the needs of men. (4)</p> <p>19. In areas with high numbers of absent fathers, there may be a way to financially incentivize men to become teachers in those communities. A male teacher could make a big difference in a few of those boys' lives. (4)</p> <p>20. Male children suffer more in a single mother household. We can address this. (4)</p> <p>21. Importance of role models and surrogate dads. (5)</p> <p>22. Provide meaning and purpose for everyone, especially youth, while working to turn those at risk into role models. (5)</p>		
<b>V. Economics</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>Need more and better job opportunities for young people.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Policies that help create jobs will help families, as would reforms related to EITC and TANF (economic and fiscal policies).</i></p> <p>c) <i>Need to “move the needle” on poverty.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <p>1. Job opportunities that allow for mobility into the middle class are evaporating. (1)</p>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Economic factors place significant stress on young families due to the high cost of raising children.</i></li> <li>• <i>Different economic expectations are challenging for couples.</i></li> <li>• <i>Geographic mobility for economic reasons is an important factor in</i></li> </ul>	<p>1. Offer high-quality childcare subsidies, and review income thresholds for eligibility so that available family resources and incentives to participate in high-quality childcare are aligned. (2)</p> <p>2. Redirect current fiscal resources away from current policies designed to cope with a declining state</p>

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<p>2. The child poverty rates, especially in Milwaukee, are sobering, as are the disadvantages young men face when they become fathers. (1)</p> <p>3. Despite data showing recent economic decline, the trades are alive and well in Wisconsin. Manufacturing in and around Milwaukee is still healthy. The challenge today is to find skilled machinists and labor. (1)</p> <p>4. We need more jobs in Wisconsin. (1)</p> <p>5. Today, many families typically do not save money for a rainy day. (1)</p> <p>6. How has the divorce rate changed since manufacturing and low-skilled jobs started to fall apart in the 1980s? Have we looked at divorce in the context of economic stability? (2)</p> <p>7. More and better opportunities and options are needed for men and women age 20-25. (2)</p> <p>8. At the “macro level,” the economic policies that help create jobs also significantly help families. (2)</p> <p>9. We need to think of adjustments to monetary / fiscal policies for complex issues. (2)</p> <p>10. DCF has a project that helps children in foster care get jobs at age 16. (2)</p> <p>11. At the “micro level,” there is a lot of hopelessness and not enough role models to help people understand the link between their choices and related financial outcomes. (2)</p> <p>12. Should schools teach financial independence? Would that bring hope and control? (2)</p> <p>13. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reform is needed. (3)</p> <p>14. Wage disparity between genders and races could exist due to discrimination, choices</p>	<p><i>economic success.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <p>1. How EITC (earned income tax credit) is currently applied to non-custodial parents. (2)</p> <p>2. <b>Immigrant Families:</b> Perspectives on poverty tend to vary between immigrant and non-immigrant families, and this can lead to different economic expectations of a couple. (3)</p> <p>3. Is the issue of absent fathers more of an economic issue than a social issue? (3)</p> <p>4. <b>Economic circumstances:</b> Adjusting to changes in economic circumstances creates significant stress for spouses and can lead to conflict. (3)</p> <p>5. <b>Affordable Daycare:</b> Students who get pregnant in college tend not to return to college. The lack of affordable daycare means young mothers cannot go to class, and their upward economic mobility is compromised because they cannot graduate. (3)</p> <p>6. <b>Economic Factors:</b> “You may marry for love but you cannot eat love.” Economic situations place considerable stress on</p>	<p>of marriage, and increase spending on developing, strengthening and building families. (2)</p> <p>3. We should consider marriage and child tax credits. (3)</p> <p>4. Rural and urban needs and available resource are different. We need solutions that work for all parts of the State, without leaving rural WI behind. The weight of regulations may be too high for small towns in rural areas due to limited resources. (3)</p>

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<p>made by individual workers, educational preparedness, # of years of work experience (e.g., women come out of careers more than men do to have babies or to care for children), etc. (3)</p> <p>15. The impact of globalization/robotics and technology on poverty in America, especially as it relates to men. (4)</p> <p>16. How can we provide opportunities for those who have less than a high school diploma, regarding employment and becoming financially stable? How to give them a sense of hope and purpose? (4)</p> <p>17. What impact would be the impact of expanding Medicaid in Wisconsin on poverty? (4)</p> <p>18. Regarding the Brookings and AEI consensus on food stamps and housing opportunities, skepticism was raised about the proposed solution of government offering people a job. (4)</p> <p>19. Three factors are indisputable: (1) EITC, (2) keeping individuals out of jail, (3) helping with re-entry. (4)</p> <p>20. How to deal with fraud so that the EITC can be expanded? (4)</p> <p>21. We will not be able to eradicate poverty but we can move the needle, and that would be significant. (4)</p> <p>22. How do we reduce crime, and therefore incarceration? (4)</p> <p>23. The impact of increased mobility on a community, especially Northern rural communities, Milwaukee, Racine, Beloit, etc. (4)</p> <p>24. Would like to know more about the ten communities with upward economic mobility. (4)</p> <p>25. The positive role of apprenticeship programs. (5)</p>	<p>families, and they particularly change as children are born. Varying expectations of each partner about finances are accentuated when they have children. (3)</p> <p>7. <b>Cost of Raising Children:</b> The cost of children’s basic needs is out of reach for many people. (3)</p> <p>8. <b>Technology:</b> As technology increasingly replaces manual labor, it reduces the earning potential of men and makes it impossible for manual laborers to support a family. (3)</p> <p>9. How to adopt a pro-growth tax and regulatory climate that attracts and allows for the creation of family-supporting jobs? (4)</p> <p>10. How do we provide EITC support benefits to non-custodial parents and the childless poor? (4)</p> <p>11. How can the State alleviate the influence of poverty on families? (4)</p> <p>12. How to provide mobility incentives or assistance for families to move to communities with higher upward economic mobility? (4)</p>	

REFLECTIONS <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
<b>VI. Education</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>Vocational training at high schools and a technical education will help young people find good jobs, leading to economic stability. We need more vocational/technical schools and less stigma associated with them.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Focus on access to a quality education for children from poor families.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have pushed 4-year education at the expense of technical education that will help young people find good jobs. (2)</li> <li>2. Could we bring back vocational training in high school? (2)</li> <li>3. Less than 3% of youth in foster homes go to college. There is a lot of financial aid available for them, but there is little awareness of it. (2)</li> <li>4. At UW-Madison, organic relationships with professors are effective ways of mentoring students who were in foster homes. (2)</li> <li>5. We need to increase the number of vocational schools. What can be done to start children on a vocational path earlier? How do we deal with the stigma of vocational training and careers? How do we address parents' expectations re: vocational training? (3)</li> <li>6. Math is essential for success in our society. We need to quit making children and people afraid of math (algebra, trigonometry and geometry). (3)</li> <li>7. Poor children go to the worst schools. So, they are set up from the beginning not to be successful. (4)</li> <li>8. School choice: parents should decide where their children go to school, and tax dollars should follow that</li> </ol>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Financial management, family management and parenting skills are not mandated nor widely taught.</i></li> <li>• <i>Parents' education affects the investments they make in their children's education.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High rate of adult functional illiteracy – among other things, this impacts parents' ability to help child to succeed in school by reading to them and assisting them with their homework. (1)</li> <li>2. Lack of education that focuses on family impact and financial management, in addition to academics. School choice, because without a functional family with good role models, the schools become the next vehicle for teaching. (2)</li> <li>3. There are no mandated classes for parents. How do we educate parents to be parents? (2)</li> <li>4. <b>Education:</b> The level of parents' education affects the investment parents make in their children's education, and their expectations about their</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Skill development for young men is lacking, which tends to push men in undesirable directions. Increase high school exposure to technical fields in at-risk rural and urban communities, and explore new models for vocational education. Look for information on ways to reduce the stigma associated with two-year technical education. (2)</li> <li>2. Provide in-home education programs for new fathers similar to the home visiting nurse programs for new mothers. Teach about relationship formation because it is as important as birth control. (2)</li> <li>3. Promote school choice. (2)</li> <li>4. We need to link families, students, and the industry to help remove stigma of vocational training. (3)</li> </ol>

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<p>child. (4)</p> <p>9. Give poor children equal access to better schools (expand voucher programs). (4)</p> <p>10. Studies show the ineffectiveness of many of the preschool (Head Start) programs. If those programs are not showing results, we should reconsider investing in them. It is difficult to have any lasting results when there are no changes in the home or with the parents. Not sure how government can help in that area. (4)</p> <p>11. Provide life skills curriculum in schools, including mental health, cognitive behavioral therapy, and fiscal responsibility. (4)</p> <p>12. De-stigmatize vocational training. (4)</p> <p>13. Exposure to vocational training starting in junior and senior high school and prison, and de-stigmatize it. (4)</p> <p>14. Work with employers to determine their needs and match those needs with training. (4)</p> <p>15. Infrastructure skills are missing, for example carpenters, welders, plumbers, etc. Training--not a four-year education—is needed for well-paid jobs. (4)</p>	<p>children going to college. For example, if both parents are college-educated, they automatically expect their children to go to college. (3)</p> <p>5. How do we help the most vulnerable (children in foster care, young men exiting prison, single parents) find, navigate and stay in training and higher education programs that meet demand and their needs? (4)</p> <p>6. How to provide better educational opportunities, including school choice, educating the whole child? (4)</p> <p>7. How to achieve modernization, organization and accountability of education? (4)</p> <p>8. How can the State make life skills training courses mandatory in high schools and colleges? (4)</p> <p>9. How to dramatically reform vocational training in middle-, high-, and post-secondary institutions, and consider private sector solutions? (4)</p> <p>10. How do we give children hope and purpose (guidance) for life? Skills, training, college, technical schools? (4)</p>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
	11. What influence can schools play in shaping and forming good citizens, from preschool through high school? How can these involve parents? (4) 12. How to improve skills at all levels of paying jobs, and ensure that jobs are available? (4) 13. How do we decrease the income gap between those with higher education and those without? (4)	
<b>VII. Civil Society &amp; Popular Culture</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>Popular cultural messages largely promote negative messages about sex, and do not transmit positive morals and values.</i></p> <p>b) <i>As a result, many young adults have distorted views about healthy sexual relationships.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Traditional institutions and supports that build social capital have declined.</i></p> <p>d) <i>Societal and private business investment are essential for family success. Government is only one of the collaborators in finding effective solutions.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are not enough educational and informational programs about morals and values to offset changing cultural influences and societal desensitization about sex. (1)</li> <li>There are not enough conversations between adults and children about healthy sexuality; many children learn about sexuality from TV and movies. This keeps young members of the society from having the tools to make appropriate sex-related decisions. (1)</li> <li>There is concern about the dissolution of</li> </ol>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Impact of popular culture on morals and values is negative, since it glorifies single parenthood and dumbs down the role of fathers. Need to change this.</i></li> <li><i>Difference in beliefs, culture and world views make challenges faced by a family more difficult.</i></li> <li><i>Increasing social isolation, and families who are isolated from support networks, make it more challenging for marriages to remain intact.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The changing/ declining importance of morals and values, and reduced exposure to those from past generations. (1)</li> </ol>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<p>traditional institutions of civil society. Communities today are unable to transmit virtues. How can we build social capital? (1)</p> <p>4. The values of love, family, and stability are not being heard on mainstream radio, but have been replaced by negative messages and negative aspects of the “hip-hop culture.” (1)</p> <p>5. The message is “you’re not cool if you haven’t slept around.” We have a lot of media messages to overcome. (2)</p> <p>6. The disassociation of sex and marriage and the impact of early exposure to sex, pornography, especially via social media, is troubling. (2)</p> <p>7. Encourage a cultural shift around healthy sexual relationships. We strive for them, and still a lot of people are having sex but not healthy relationships. (3)</p> <p>8. Pornography among young people distorts their perceptions of sex. Young people have easy access to pornography through cell phones &amp; the internet. Pornography can be an addictive behavior. If parents do not monitor what their children are viewing, the result could be a distorted understanding of sexuality. (3)</p> <p>9. Despite pop cultural references, two parents are necessary, not just one. (3)</p> <p>10. How can we find consensus on political strategy re: cultural influences? (3)</p> <p>11. The use of media in promoting information about the consequences of sexual activity; the media can be a useful tool. (4)</p> <p>12. Educate that sex is not a recreational sport. (4)</p> <p>13. Study the successes, not just failures. (5)</p> <p>14. Do not depend on the government for solutions; consider it a collaborator for finding solutions. (5)</p> <p>15. Need to create a marketing campaign / counter-narrative of success studies and</p>	<p>2. Changing cultural influences, especially those that are highly sexualized and violent. (1)</p> <p>3. <b>Religion and beliefs:</b> Differences in religion, beliefs, and spirituality or world views make challenges faced by a family more difficult, particularly when raising children together. A lack of hope can occur even when faith, religion and beliefs are shared. (3)</p> <p>4. <b>Culture:</b> There is much cultural variation regarding sexual education and generational shifts regarding the value of getting married after a teen pregnancy. (3)</p> <p>5. <b>Social Isolation:</b> In the context of a robust civil society, social isolation vs. connectivity are important factors for a healthy family. Regardless of economic status, it is difficult for couples to stay married and have children. Due to increased economic mobility today, couples have family spread all over the world; this increases social isolation. Immigration or significant geographical relocation makes it difficult for families to create their emotional safety nets</p>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<p>share them. (5)</p> <p>16. Need more programs/options/pathways for individuals aging out of group homes. (5)</p> <p>17. Private sector investment is needed for public-sector problems. (5)</p> <p>18. How to expand programs that support at-risk populations, e.g., foster youth, those out of incarceration, single moms, etc.? How to help them succeed and become “witnesses”? (5)</p> <p>19. How to build capacity among witnesses? How to support them? (5)</p> <p>20. Consider revising qualifications needed to be a provider for programs that have proven to be effective; do not rely on credentials as a predictor of success. (5)</p> <p>21. Train neighborhood organizations to be more competitive for funding options, e.g., how to write grant proposals. (5)</p> <p>22. Utilize local leaders in order to influence behaviors in the community. (5)</p> <p>23. Do not undermine community strengths, whether rural or urban. The challenges of poverty exist in rural and urban communities; do not ignore one in favor of the other. (5)</p> <p>24. Poverty has become a big industry, and there are vested interests that keep people in poverty. Solutions tend to focus on creating comfort in poverty versus moving people out of poverty. We need a new paradigm, but how can advocates for a new paradigm get more visibility? How can we get resources for successful ground-level programs? (5)</p> <p>25. A lack of visible opportunities in the private sector promotes reliance on the poverty industry. People hustle because they don’t see other opportunities. (5)</p> <p>26. We forget that it takes two, at least two, to raise a family. In single parent, low-income families, government has become the “second” parent; one income does not work for these families. It’s “mom and a partner” or “mom and government support.” (5)</p>	<p>(beyond government support) in the community. (3)</p> <p>6. <b>Religion and ethics:</b> if there is strong religion or ethics, self-policing within a family is more common. When couples vary in their strength of faith or clash over the importance of ethics/values, it can be challenging to parent. (3)</p> <p>7. <b>Communitarianism:</b> America’s culture of “rugged individualism” means self-determination, but we forget about communitarianism (solidarity with all other beings). (3)</p> <p>8. <b>Television &amp; Entertainment:</b> TV culture today exploits sex, and promotes viewing sex as a recreational sport. There is a trend towards degrading and dumbing down men and fathers in entertainment. Single parenthood is glorified. (3)</p> <p>9. <b>Superficial Solutions:</b> Widespread pharmaceutical use teaches us to rely on drugs when things go bad. If something goes wrong, we take a pill instead of addressing the root causes. (3)</p> <p>10. <b>Social Stigma:</b> Women, not just men, have</p>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
	<p>children with multiple partners but do not face the same stigma as men do. (3)</p> <p>11. <b>Support Network:</b> Especially for foster children, there is a lack of people’s stake in each other and they do not have access to “go-to” support of in times of struggle, making derailments worse. (3)</p> <p>12. <b>Personal Introspection:</b> It is not easy to look inward and be unselfish, nor to understand the sacrifice it takes to remain committed in a family. (3)</p> <p>13. How can the use of media be an instrument in challenging acceptable sexual behaviors and the understanding of marriage and family? (4)</p> <p>14. How can the State legislate behaviors, attitudes and culture? Encourage healthy decision-making? Is it possible for government to legislate the culture of poverty? How do we change the culture of poverty? (4)</p> <p>15. What is the societal willingness to invest in “others” (incarcerated, those who “live on the other side of the tracks”, etc.)? (4)</p> <p>16. How do we better prepare</p>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
	those in the State’s care to transition into adulthood? (4)	
<b>VIII. Context</b>		
<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <p>a) <i>Families are formed in many ways, and the definition of family is broad. For the purpose of its work, the Commission defined “family” as ‘the people and supports who work in the best interest of a child, and can include parents, family members, guardians, foster families, residential care, etc.</i></p> <p>b) <i>The problems and issues addressed in the presentations and discussed by the commission are broad and complex. Solutions and consensus will be difficult. Issues that cannot be addressed with policy solutions may be suited for the “pulpit” of the Governor’s office.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <p>1. For the purpose of this Commission, the Commissioners discussed and agreed to define family by focusing on “What is best for the child?”, and by including the following in that definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. “Natural” or biological parents – both, mother and father, and single parents</li> <li>b. Grandparents and other relatives providing care for the child</li> <li>c. Legal guardians</li> <li>d. Foster family and/or residential care</li> <li>e. A person perceived by the child as his or her parent, including key influencers in a child’s life, individuals and supporting agencies. (1)</li> </ul> <p>2. The definition of family is very broad. (1)</p>	<p><b>KEY THEMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Negative factors such as violent crime, gun violence, addiction, health challenges and adverse childhood experiences affect all families.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>MEETING NOTES:</b></p> <p>1. Increase in the number of undocumented people. (1)</p> <p>2. Impact of violent crime and gun violence on communities and families; these affect all families, not just vulnerable ones. (1)</p> <p>3. <b>Health Issues:</b> Challenges with physical and mental health can have a polarizing impact on families – they create a lot of tension for families or bring them together and cause them to think beyond themselves. (3)</p> <p>4. There is a societal deficiency in understanding the factors that affect mental health and its impact on families and cost. (3)</p> <p>5. <b>Addiction:</b> Alcohol, drug and pornography addictions leads to physiological changes, and all addictions affect the</p>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<p>3. Given the diversity of the Commissioners, it will be challenging to reach consensus on all items, even though the Commissioners are all participating for the right reasons. (1)</p> <p>4. These are extremely complex and broad problems facing the Commission, and proposed solutions are likely to be reductive. (1)</p> <p>5. Many of the facts presented by the guest speaker are startling to the Commissioners. Collectively, information on the current state is lacking or not well known. (1)</p> <p>6. Should we assume that the facts we heard are, indeed, facts? (1) Comment: Some of the facts heard may be coated with opinion; the Commissioners will hear a lot of facts and may need to challenge and question them. (1)</p> <p>7. Issues that cannot be addressed by policy solutions may be suited for the “pulpit” of the Governor’s office. (1)</p> <p>8. There are no quick fixes – these are cultural problems that require long-term solutions. (1)</p> <p>9. Wisconsin does not have a long history with blacks. Many came to Wisconsin after the war for manufacturing jobs, and the second wave came in the 1980s for welfare. Within Wisconsin, Beloit has the longest history with blacks. (1)</p> <p>10. We tend to look at Milwaukee as unique in Wisconsin with its socio-economic issues, but similar things are happening in rural parts of the State, as well. Therefore, these issues pertain to the whole State. (1)</p> <p>11. There is hope. (2)</p> <p>12. Minnesota and Wisconsin are very similar in many respects, yet have significantly different outcomes re: families. Examine what makes Minnesota different: Is it cultural? Industrial? Jobs creation? Policy? (3)</p>	<p>family. (3)</p> <p>6. <b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE):</b> ACEs accentuate trauma, make it more challenging to have a sustainable healthy family because personal attachments become more difficult, and there is low “social capital”. (3)</p> <p>7. How can we impact partisanship so legislature moves to consensus? (4)</p>	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b> <i>(new, relevant or otherwise interesting)</i>	<b>BARRIERS / CHALLENGES / PROBLEMS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
<p>13. Milwaukee’s economic base is manufacturing; Minnesota’s economic base is agricultural movement and trade. As a city, Minneapolis does not have much competition, while Milwaukee competes with Chicago. Milwaukee has a large refugee population from southern Africa which tends to be Christian, while Minneapolis has Northern African population which tends to be Muslim. Milwaukee has always been an ethnically segregated city, unlike Minneapolis. (3)</p> <p>14. A lot of government programs have already reduced our poverty rate quite a bit. Government programs have had a positive impact. (4)</p> <p>15. General awareness of available programs is low. (4)</p> <p>16. We need to evaluate programs using standards. (4)</p> <p>17. We need incentives to ensure participation. (4)</p> <p>18. Look at programs that have been successful, for example, BAM in Chicago. (4)</p> <p>19. Let’s build on what has already been proven to work in other places. (4)</p> <p>20. Would like to know more about Colorado’s LARC program because Republicans were skittish about it. We need to know what made these programs successful. How can we reduce misperceptions about such programs? Make alternatives available when needed. (4)</p> <p>21. The four categories of poverty described by Mr. Woodson were helpful; while he focused mostly on Category 4, the Commission has to focus on all the categories. (5)</p> <p>22. The speaker’s recommendations validated Secretary Anderson’s approach to change. (5)</p>		

**Table 2. Aligning Challenges with Focus Areas**

The Commissioners identified the following four Focus Areas for their recommendations, based on their reflections, challenges and the preliminary categories listed earlier in this document:

1. Parenting Stability;
2. Economic Stability through Education & Training;
3. Economic Stability Through Jobs & Work Supports; and
4. Social & Cultural Support for Marriage.

The table below shows how the four Focus Areas relate to the seven preliminary categories of reflections and challenges. An “X” in a cell below marks the relationship between a specific preliminary category and a specific Focus Area. The last category (“Context”) was not applicable to the Focus Areas.

<b><i>Preliminary categories for organizing Reflections and Challenges</i></b>	<b>Focus Area 1: Parenting Stability</b>	<b>Focus Area 2: Economic Stability through Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>Focus Area 3: Economic Stability Through Jobs &amp; Work Supports</b>	<b>Focus Area 4: Social &amp; Cultural Support for Marriage</b>
<i>Marriage</i>	X			X
<i>Family complexity</i>	X			
<i>Family planning &amp; the “Success Sequence”</i>	X			X
<i>Roles &amp; responsibilities of men in forming &amp; sustaining families</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Economics</i>		X	X	
<i>Education</i>		X	X	
<i>Civil society &amp; popular culture</i>				X

**Table 3. Prioritized Challenges for each Focus Area**

From the comprehensive list of identified challenges, the Commissioners prioritized specific challenges to be addressed within each of the four Focus Areas. These are listed below in a descending order of priority, based on votes received.

<b>Challenges by Focus Area</b>	<b>Votes</b>
<b>Focus Area #1: Parenting Stability</b>	
• Lack of support for men’s role in forming and sustaining families	8
• Low demand for marriage/too many barriers for marriage	7
• Unplanned pregnancies and lack of family planning	7
• High family complexity	5
<b>Focus Area #2: Economic Stability through Education &amp; Training</b>	
• Lack of high-quality K-12 Education for high-risk segments	7
• Lack of support for most vulnerable groups to find, navigate, and complete vocational/ technical training and traditional four-year college	7
• Lack of affordable, high-quality early childhood education for high-risk segments	5
• Low levels of adult functional literacy and math skills	5
• Limited capacity and access to vocational / technical training	3
• Stigma around vocational / technical training	0
<b>Focus Area #3: Economic Stability Through Jobs &amp; Work Support</b>	
• Insufficient support for men to prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism	11
• Lack of alignment between geographic mobility incentives, infrastructure and transportation with available jobs	7
• Insufficient supply of high-quality, affordable, accessible early childhood education	5
• Limited access to subsidized employment and on-the-job training	2
• Limited access to employment-related supports for partial/non-custodial parents	2
• Limited ability to match employers with skilled potential employees	0
<b>Focus Area #4: Social &amp; Cultural Support for Marriage</b>	
• Few positive cultural messages about marriage	8
• Few positive societal/cultural role models for men	7
• Combating cultural messages that sexual activity disconnected from a committed / monogamous relationship has no consequence	6
• Social isolation of families	6

## Appendix E: Recommendations Blueprint

The **Recommendations Blueprint** is based on the ideas, presentations, discussions, reflections, challenges and recommendations heard and discussed by the Commissioners. The Blueprint incorporates the Focus Areas and challenges as prioritized by the Commissioners, and includes their recommendations for addressing these strategies. The Commissioners reviewed and provided feedback to revise the Blueprint at several junctures during the process, via both face-to-face discussions and email.

Recommended Strategies for each Focus Area are listed in a descending order of priority, as determined by votes of the Commissioners (each Commissioner had a total of 12 votes, 3 for each of the 4 Focus Area).

Focus Area #2 had a tie for the 3rd place between two Recommended Strategies since each received 6 votes. After further discussion, the Commissioners voted by acclamation to prioritize the eventual Recommended Strategy #3 in Focus Area 2 over Strategy #4.

## Recommendations Blueprint

### Overall Goal: Improve Family Success

*Note: there is not a 1:1 relationship between the Key Challenges and the Recommended Strategies. Strategies are listed in priority order as determined by the Commissioners.*

Key Challenges	Recommended Strategies	Final Votes
<b>Focus Area #1: PARENTING STABILITY</b>		
<p>a. Lack of support for men’s role in forming and sustaining families</p> <p>b. Low “demand” for marriage / too many barriers for marriage</p> <p>c. Unplanned pregnancies and lack of family planning</p> <p>d. High family complexity</p>	<p>1. Consider solutions that increase the “demand” for marriage, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove public policy barriers such as marriage penalty (e.g., marriage license fees, tax law related to low income / dual income households).</li> <li>• Redirect resources from policies designed to cope with declining state of marriage, toward policies focused on developing, strengthening and building families. Consider marriage and child tax credits.</li> <li>• Develop healthy relationship/marriage readiness programs, since these are learned behaviors.</li> <li>• Reframe the concept of marriage for teens and young adults.</li> <li>• Provide divorce intervention services, with opportunities to repair damaged/at-risk marriages.</li> </ul>	8
	<p>2. Inform youths, young adults and married couples, focusing on highest-risk youth, e.g. those in or aging out of foster care, about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention of unplanned pregnancy through support/encouragement of family planning, awareness among providers, and opportunities available by delaying sexual activity; and</li> <li>• Consequences of sexual activity disconnected from a committed / monogamous relationship, e.g., financial and other consequences.</li> </ul>	7
	<p>3. Provide in-home education programs for new fathers similar to the home visiting program for new mothers; include relationship formation in the curriculum.</p>	6
	<p>4. Mitigate negative impacts of family complexity by supporting parents and children in complex families to build positive childhood experiences and views on marriage and work.</p>	2
	<p>5. Increase availability and retention of qualified foster homes.</p>	2
	<p>6. Mitigate impacts of mental and physical health issues by offering mental, medical and other wraparound services in schools and helping families to build social capital.</p>	0
	<p>7. Assist both mothers and fathers to become strong role models for their children.</p>	0

Key Challenges	Recommended Strategies	Final Votes
	8. De-stigmatize adoption as an alternative for unplanned pregnancy.	0
	9. Assist children and youth in foster care to learn more about family stability, including age-appropriate relationships.	0
<b>Focus Area #2: ECONOMIC STABILITY THROUGH EDUCATION &amp; TRAINING</b>		
a. Lack of high quality K-12 education for high-risk segments of our society	1. Teach financial and life skills in high school, including but not limited to the “Success Sequence”, awareness of child support laws.	9
b. Lack of support for most vulnerable groups to find, navigate, and complete vocational/technical training and traditional four-year college	2. Increase high school students’ exposure to technical fields, especially in at-risk rural and urban communities.	7
c. Low levels of adult functional literacy and math skills	3. Promote school choice/vouchers, to provide children from low-income households with equal access to better schools.	6
d. Limited capacity and access to vocational and technical training opportunities	4. Develop strategies for employers to be more accepting of formerly incarcerated men as potential employees - see beyond the tattoos.	6
e. Stigma around vocational and technical training tracks in high school	5. Focus on rehabilitation not just punishment for offenders while incarcerated – mandate programs that will improve their employability, such as skills certification programs.	1
	6. Explore new models for high school vocational education including those that link families, students and industry to remove stigma of vocational training.	1
	7. Improve access to affordable, high quality early childhood education for high-risk populations.	0
	8. Explore options for replicating successful schools serving high-risk populations.	0
	9. Work with employers to determine needed technical and vocational skills.	0
	10. Improve rates of adult functional and financial literacy and math skills.	0
	11. Improve awareness of financial aid available to foster youth.	0
	12. Better prepare foster youth for the transition to adulthood.	0
	13. Improve adaptability to newer technologies.	0
<b>Focus Area #3: ECONOMIC STABILITY THROUGH JOBS &amp; WORK</b>		
a. Insufficient support for men and boys to prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism	1. Consider solutions that address the needs of employers and workforce in both rural and urban areas of the state. Align geographic mobility incentives, infrastructure and transportation resources with available jobs.	9
b. Lack of alignment between available jobs and geographic mobility incentives, infrastructure and transportation	2. Provide supports/opportunities for offenders to re-enter society in a meaningful way after incarceration, including removing obstacles to success and civic engagement, and improving opportunities for community connections.	8
	3. Provide parents with support including reducing economic stress by increasing access to affordable, quality early	7

Key Challenges	Recommended Strategies	Final Votes
resources c. Insufficient supply of high quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education d. Limited access to subsidized employment and on the job training opportunities e. Limited access to employment-related supports for partial/noncustodial parents f. Limited ability to match employers with skilled potential employees	childhood education.	
	4. Provide parents with support, including reducing economic stress by increasing access to affordable, quality early childhood education.	5
	5. Promote job opportunities in skilled labor and trades for those with less than a high school diploma.	3
	6. Support efforts that facilitate matching of employers with potential workers who have requisite skills.	3
	7. Assess eligibility of non-custodial parents for partial access to income support programs and review related child support policies.	0
<b>Focus Area #4: SOCIAL &amp; CULTURAL SUPPORT FOR MARRIAGE</b>		
a. Few positive cultural messages about marriage b. Few positive societal/cultural role models for men c. Combating cultural messages that sexual activity disconnected from a committed/ monogamous relationship has no consequence d. Social isolation of families	1. Develop and promote positive cultural messages for both men and women about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy relationships;</li> <li>• The “Success Sequence”;</li> <li>• The key role of fathers (including those who are noncustodial or have partial custody) in forming and sustaining families; and</li> <li>• Male youth/young men’s need for social and other supports.</li> </ul>	8
	2. In addition to job skills, provide programs for incarcerated men that build their skills in areas of parenting, marriage and finance.	8
	3. Encourage community-based social support networks for families.	8
	4. Encourage / support positive role models in media/entertainment for parenting, fatherhood, marriage.	4
	5. Encourage men to be positive role models in areas with high rates of absent fathers.	2

## Appendix F: Expert Presentation Summaries

In its first five meetings, the Commissioners heard presentations by leading experts on the following topics:

- **Meeting #1** (January 27, 2016) – History and current state of the American family
- **Meeting #2** (February 23, 2016) - The role of family structure on child well-being, and how family formation affects income/earning potential
- **Meeting #3** (May 5, 2016) - Strong families and prosperous states
- **Meeting #4** (June 28, 2016) – Social policy and the family
- **Meeting #5** (August 25, 2016) – Community approaches to strengthening families

This attachment provides a summary of the expert presentations and Q & A discussions. This information is also available on the Commission website.

### Meeting #1 - Prof. Timothy (Tim) Smeeding

The Commission's first presenter was Timothy Smeeding, Distinguished Professor of Public Affairs and Economics at UW-Madison. Formerly the Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at UW-Madison, Professor Smeeding has expertise in research on low-income men and their role as fathers, generational economic mobility, and ways to reduce economic inequality. His presentation focused on three areas: the changing American family, socio-economics in Wisconsin, and key policy issues associated with building strong families.

#### The Changing American Family

- The composition of the American family has changed significantly since the 19th century, evidenced by people getting married at an older age, rising percentage of women who never marry, rising divorce rates, and increasing births to unmarried women.
- These changes are due to changing family economics, largely driven by a decline in median wages since the 1970s. More families have dual earners and female breadwinners. Wage labor opportunities, especially for the unskilled, have declined since 1970s.
- Wage gains have increased minimally only for those with postgraduate degrees. Wages have remained essentially flat for those with bachelor's degrees or no college.
- Assortative mating ("marrying your own kind / class") remains consistent which increases income disparities.
- More women are giving birth outside of marriage and in unstable situations; birth rates are not declining but marriage rates are.
- Decline in relative incomes of young men has implications for future of marriage.
- There is a "right way" and a "wrong way" of having a child, in terms of impact on children's well-being and development. The "right way" supports best outcomes for children and families, and includes the following sequence: Finish school; Get a decent job; Find a partner you can rely on; Make a life plan including marriage; Have a baby. Those who take this path are more educated, more likely to have a stable marriage, older, better parenting skills, smaller families, more income/assets, more stability and able to offer more opportunities for their children

- The “wrong way” does not support best outcomes for children and families, and includes the following sequence: Have a baby first; Do not finish school right away; Do not have a decent job; Do not have a partner to rely on; Never, ever have a life plan. Increasingly, more and more births are the “wrong way.” Those who take this path tend to be less educated (HS degree or less), younger, have fewer parenting skills, a lower rate of marriage, more multi-partner fertility, larger families, lower incomes, less stability and offer fewer opportunities for their children.

### **Socio-Economics in Wisconsin**

- Unemployment levels among young people are high, particularly for those with little education.
- College graduates delay childbearing until their late 20s.
- Family (partner) stability is difficult; WI has a 75% rate of multi-partner fertility.
- Less income mobility - if a child starts in the bottom 20% income bracket, the likelihood that he/she will move up is quite low.
- Parenting skills, abilities and resources matter; we need to make “weaker” parents “stronger” in terms of parenting quality.
- 41% of births are out of wedlock, 60% of those are unplanned. Out of wedlock birth rates among African-Americans in WI are 10 points above the U.S. as a whole.
- 20% of African-American babies born in Milwaukee are “unwanted”.
- Wisconsin’s child poverty rates have been declining since 2011 due to public policies and government safety nets such as refundable tax credits (Earned Income Tax Credit, child tax credit), noncash benefits (FoodShare, public housing), work-related expenses (SHARES), and lower out of pocket health costs (BadgerCare).
- Wisconsin has a small African-American middle class - 22% of all African-Americans in WI were middle class and it is declining; for African-Americans with children in Milwaukee, 13% were middle class, compared to 26% in the U.S. as a whole.
  - 30% of African-Americans in WI are poor; of these, 76% live in Milwaukee.
- Milwaukee has extreme racial and income disparities, and very high rates of child poverty. The rate of African-American child poverty is 40% in Milwaukee County; with areas in metro Milwaukee exceeding 60% - compared to white child poverty rate in Milwaukee of 8.5% overall and up to 34% in metro Milwaukee. Metro Milwaukee ranks 8<sup>th</sup> among U.S. metro areas with most concentrated poverty.

### **Policy Issues**

- To build stronger families, increase economic prosperity and possibly increase marriage, need to reduce unplanned, out-of-wedlock births and adopt four cornerstones of AEI-Brookings joint report: (a) promote marriage, (b) promote delayed childrearing, (c) promote parenting skills & practices, and (d) promote skill development, family involvement and employment.
- Marriage promotion policies to date have not worked; Also, need higher wages, increased incentives for marriage over cohabitation and decreased disincentives to marriage.
- Abstinence as a policy hasn’t worked, but abortion and adoption are controversial and less desirable choices. Evidence suggests that effective birth control is starting to work; recommends promotion of long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs)
- Also, need to reduce incarceration rates.

## **Meeting #2 - Prof. Lawrence (Lonnie) Berger & Ms. Rachel Sheffield**

There were two presentations at the second meeting. The first was given by Prof. Lawrence Berger, Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty and Professor and PhD Chair in the School of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Professor Berger's research focuses on the ways in which economic resources, sociodemographic characteristics, and public policies affect parental behaviors and child and family wellbeing. The second presentation was given by Rachel Sheffield, a policy analyst in the DeVos Center for Religion & Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation, where her research focuses on welfare, marriage and family, and education.

### **Family complexity and fluidity (Prof. Berger)**

- Families are increasingly complex and fluid. Fluidity (instability) across households and parental roles has increased greatly over the last 50 years.
- There are many implications for family complexity and fluidity.
- Births to non-married mothers have doubled since 1980 and there has been a large increase in cohabitating families.
- Many children face multiple family structure transitions by age 9, and cohabiting families with unmarried parents are nearly as unstable as single parent households.
- Most children born to single parents will be part of complex families.
- Parents, especially fathers, have multiple parenting roles (biological, step-, resident, non-resident, custodial, non-custodial, etc.), and this trend is higher for families of color.
- Over the past 20 years the trend of multiple parenting roles has increased for parents of all education levels except those with bachelor's degree or higher, indicating that there are two tracks of family experience, distinguished by the parents' education level.

### **Family complexity influences family functioning and child and family wellbeing**

- Social parent families are more likely to break up than biological families. Mothers' engagement with their children is consistent across family types, and married fathers are very engaged, but not fathers within cohabiting families.
- Expectations shape how well parents perform their roles. As parents take on multiple parenting roles, it becomes trickier to establish clear expectations across households and children. This places more demands on roles and resources, leading to increased family stress and conflict.
- Low parental investments and family functioning lead to poorer childhood outcomes, including unintended pregnancy and non-marital births.

### **How current policy addresses family complexity**

1. Policy implications
  - It is difficult to categorize families and policies; complex families necessitate a substantial shift in how we approach families and family roles and responsibilities.
  - Relevant policies cross economic and behavioral goals.
  - Current policies were designed in an era of less complex families and when disadvantaged men had higher earning potential.
2. Approaches to custodial and noncustodial parents
  - Custodial parents have access to more income and social supports than noncustodial parents.
  - Noncustodial parents are categorized as non-parents and are treated with mandates (child support payments, for example) rather than supports.

- Employment, child support and noncustodial parent involvement are interrelated; consider them as a package, not alone.

**Policy recommendations**

- Prevent family complexity by making LARCs (long acting reversible contraceptives) available for women who want family planning services.
- Provide a parallel and proportionate package of supports, benefits, and tax credits to non-custodial parents, and coordinate with the criminal justice system to accommodate incarcerated parents.

**Questions / Answers (Prof. Berger)**

**Q:** Could benefits incentivize parents to have more children?

**A:** He does not know of evidence to support that, but it could be possible.

**Q:** Could men work and earn money while in jail to continue to pay child support?

**A:** He knows of a program in Milwaukee that helped men stop accruing child support but it was not widespread. Under this program most men were not eligible, because to qualify they needed to have paid all child support for the prior year. That requirement disqualified anyone who had recently lost a job.

**Q:** What did the family planning programs in St. Louis and Colorado do to achieve their widespread reduction in unintended pregnancies when they offered LARCs (chosen by 2/3rd of the women seeking birth control)?

**A:** Health providers were able to give LARCs on the spot without a second appointment, LARCs were free, and providers were trained to give information about them.

**Marriage and poverty: how family formation affects income and earnings (Ms. Sheffield)**

- Marriage decreases the probability of child poverty by greater than 80%; in Wisconsin, the rate is 88%.
- Since 1960s the rate of births to unwed mothers has risen from 7% to over 40% (slide 39); in Wisconsin, the rate is 37%.
- In the U.S., 71% of poor families with children are not married; in Wisconsin, the rate is 77%.
- In Wisconsin, the majority of unwed births occurs to women ages 20-29, not teens (61% vs. 7% for under 18).
- Rate of out-of-wedlock births is significantly higher for women with less education (65% for high school dropouts; 55% for HS only) than for women with more education (42% for those with some college and less than 1% for college graduates).
- The poverty rate of married couples with children is lower than that for households headed by single parent, even controlling for education levels.
- In Wisconsin, non-married white families are ten times more likely to be poor than married white families (slide 46); non-married African-American families are five times more likely to be poor than married African-American families; and non-married Hispanic families are three times more likely to be poor than married Hispanic families).
- Single parents are more likely to remain in poverty and married parents are less likely to be in poverty.
- Cohabiting couples are not as stable as married couples:
  - 50% - 60% of cohabiting families are likely to break up by the time child turns 5.
  - Cohabitors are less likely to invest in child well-being than married families.

- Cohabiters are less likely to share resources and receive help from extended families; married couples are more likely to pool their resources and more likely to receive wealth transfer from their families.
- Men benefit from the so-called “married wage premium”- marriage has a causal effect on increasing men’s wages—likely due to a stronger commitment to their jobs and life routines.
- Married men maintain higher levels of employment than non-married men: in March 2013, 90% of married men were working or in military, compared to 70% of non-married men.
- If marriage rates had not declined, more men would be connected to the workforce.
- The decline in marriage has contributed to declining socio-economic conditions.
- There are financial benefits to intact families and their children, the “intact family premium.”
- Marriage affects the well-being of children and adults and keeps fathers connected to the labor force.
- Married couples more effectively build wealth than single parents do.
- Marriage is doing well among the highly educated but less well among those who could most benefit from it.

#### **Policy recommendations**

- Reduce welfare marriage penalties - provide assistance grants to couples who stay married.
- Consider social marketing campaigns addressing the benefits of marriage, similarly to how the message about the importance of completing high school is ubiquitous.
- Conduct education about the benefits of marriage.

#### **Questions / Answers (Ms. Sheffield)**

**Q:** Is the reduction in teenage pregnancy due to more planned pregnancies? Is it reflective of delayed childbearing versus teenage parents?

**A:** She did not have specifics. Lower income women tend toward unplanned versus unwanted pregnancies. Maybe the timing was not what they wanted.

**Q:** Does getting married after having a child affect the poverty rate?

**A:** She did not have specifics. Marriage and child-bearing have become disconnected in lower-income families.

**Q:** Has sex become a sport?

**A:** The 1960s sexual revolution and birth control contributed to the disconnection of sexual activity from commitment. Sexual activity is no longer reserved for marriage.

**Q:** With the benefits of marriage, why do you think so many people do not want to get married?

**A:** Perhaps they have a fear of divorce, so they go about it the wrong way. Instead of choosing a partner, getting married, then having a child, they go about it the wrong way.

**Q:** What is the resistance to removing barriers to marriage if we have known for so long its benefits?

**Commissioner comment:** There is a cost to that. A single parent family is cheaper. It is about the “now cost” versus the long-term gain. The conversation has to be about the long-term gain, which is longer than a politician’s watch.

**Q:** Cohabiting families do not receive as much family assistance—what about step-families?

**A:** She did not have details; step-families are likely to receive more assistance than cohabiters but less than married families.

**Q:** Have there been programs to target teen pregnancy that could be applied to unmarried 18- to 29-year-olds? Could we learn from the reduction in teen pregnancy rates?

**A:** There have been efforts in the past 20-30 years to address teen pregnancy; it was an “all hands on deck” approach. We could apply this to the unmarried pregnancy issue.

**Joint Discussion with Experts (Prof. Berger & Ms. Sheffield)**

After their individual presentations, the two experts and the Commissioners jointly discussed the following points:

- To increase marriage success, we need to support men and delay childbearing.
- If we could support male employment and male earnings, we would probably see more marriage and less out-of-wedlock births.
- Sexual activity is a cultural issue. Young women want to get married and like the idea of marriage, so maybe we need to address the benefits of marriage for men.
- Women seem to be generally more inclined toward marriage. Men need to hear other men tell them about the benefit of marriage and the dignity of “malehood” and fatherhood.
- The message is “you’re not cool if you haven’t slept around.” We have a lot of media messages to overcome.
- Sexual activity among high- and low-income people is similar and has not changed. What has changed is that high-income people have easier access than low-income people to a better type of birth control (LARCs). Higher-income people have healthcare providers who know about LARCs and can discuss them in the clinic setting; they have health insurance that covers this type of birth control; and, they have enough control over their lives that they are able to make a return appointment. In contrast, lower-income people do not typically benefit from such factors. In modern chaotic lives, it is hard to make consistent decisions to use condoms and the Pill. With LARCs, women only have to make a decision once every three years.
- Low-income folks say they want to get married. They delay getting married until after they’ve “made it” and can afford a wedding. Economic factors are entwined with marriage.
- How has the divorce rate changed since manufacturing and low-skilled jobs started to fall apart in the 1980s? Have we looked at divorce in the context of economic stability?
- If we could delay pregnancies beyond the late teens and early 20s, would that allow people to choose more effective life partners?
- We have delayed the age at which a lot of young disadvantaged women are having babies. Every additional year that they delay childbearing makes a big difference.
- Less advantaged women are still having babies early and they have little access to upwardly mobile choices. There is less to lose if you have babies at a young age and are disadvantaged.
- We have to consider the impulsiveness of young adulthood as well as the choice sets that people have, and the potential benefits and costs of those choices.
- Children learn by watching their parents; how can we get young women to envision putting off having babies?
- Three different populations that need help were discussed:
  - a. Children born into poverty
  - b. Teenagers in poverty who need help to gain upward mobility
  - c. Families in tough situation
- With regard to teens and upward mobility, less than 3% of youth in foster homes go to college. There is a lot of financial aid available for them, but there is little awareness of it. DCF has a project that helps children in foster care get jobs at age 16. At UW-Madison, organic relationships with professors are effective ways of mentoring students who were in foster homes.

## **Meeting #3 - Prof. Joseph (Joe) Price & Prof. Bradford (Brad) Wilcox**

At its third meeting, the Commissioners heard a joint presentation by W. Bradford Wilcox and Joseph Price. Prof. Wilcox is Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies, and a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His research focuses on the quality and stability of family life in the US, and on the links between family structure and economics. Prof. Joseph Price is an Associate Professor of Economics at Brigham Young University. He directs the BYU Record Linking Lab, is a co-editor of the *Economics of Education Review*, and a Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research. He has authored over 50 academic articles, including a recent report with the American Enterprise Institute on the link between family structure and state-level economic outcomes.

### **Introduction**

- Social science and medical research show that children who are raised by their married, biological parents enjoy better outcomes; one woman putting a child up for adoption can have a “million-dollar” impact, as it leads to successes across families and generations.
- Four outcomes that influence state politics are affected by marriage rates: (1) higher economic growth, (2) lower child poverty rates, (3) higher family median income, and (4) stronger upward income mobility (the American Dream). States need to renew the economic, policy, civic and cultural foundations of marriage and family life for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **HOW marriage matters**

- If society could go back to 1980 levels of marriage, national GDP would be higher, child poverty rates would be lower, and family median income would be higher.
- WI is #19 in the U.S. for the share of children living with married parents (70%). If WI enjoyed 1980 levels of married parenthood, GDP would be 3.2% higher, child poverty would be 12% lower, median family income would be about 7.4% higher.
- Economic growth, child poverty, family income and the American Dream are all affected by the health of the family in Wisconsin.

### **WHY marriage matters**

- Men settle down when they get married, and marriage motivates men to work more.
- Married families have more money to manage and manage it more prudently, due to economies of scale, income pooling, higher savings rates, greater family support, more long-term stability.
- Children from intact married families are more likely to flourish and acquire the human capital needed to graduate from college and be gainfully employed.
- Teenage boys and young men from intact married families are less likely to commit crime and end up in jail, leaving government with lower public safety and security costs, and greater upward mobility.

### **The States of Our Unions**

- In general, states in north have stronger and more stable families; states in south have less stable families.
- States with low levels of education or medium income without college education are most affected by retreat from marriage (Mississippi, Georgia); states with high level of education and median

income for men without college are least affected by retreat from marriage (Minnesota and New Hampshire).

- States with middling or low levels of education, but high degree of cultural conservatism are most resistant to retreat from marriage (Idaho, South Dakota, Utah).
- Both structural and cultural factors explain why some states are more successful in resisting the nationwide retreat from marriage (New Hampshire and Minnesota, Idaho and Utah).

### **Recommendations**

- Reform TANF, SNAP and Medicaid to minimize the marriage penalty. Public policy should “do no harm” to marriage, especially for low-income families; 40% of American families receive government benefits, but many benefits penalize marriage.
- Expand vocational education and apprenticeship programs. Most Americans will not get a college degree, and we need to improve economic prospects of Americans from working-class communities. Wisconsin’s Career Academies and Youth Apprenticeship programs are steps in the right direction.
- Invest in families because raising children is expensive. Expand child tax credit to \$2500 and encourage investments in future workers and taxpayers.
- Expand civic and cultural supports for marriage. Promote the “Success Sequence” of finishing school, working, marrying and then becoming a parent. Concentrate this campaign on less-education men.
- Take cues from the success of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

### **Discussion with Prof. Price and Prof. Wilcox**

- The “Success Sequence” is best; but how do we help those that fall out of the sequence?
- Adoption rates are very low.
- There is no dating any more.
- A legal marriage brings specific aspects—joint commitment, legal rights—that no other relationship does.
- Can having children out of wedlock, which is evidence that you had sex outside of marriage, become unlawful?
- Civil changes will fall to church, media and civic institutions to reshape the message of the “Success Sequence,” and have a positive influence.

## **Meeting #4 - Dr. Ron Haskins**

At its fourth meeting, the Commissioners heard from Ron Haskins, currently a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, where he holds the Cabot Family Chair in Economic Studies and co-directs the Center on Children and Families. Haskins is also a senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and President of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. In 2016, he was appointed to the Commission on Evidence-Based Policy as its Co-Chairman by Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul Ryan. Also in 2016, Haskins and his colleague Isabel Sawhill won the Moynihan Prize, awarded by the American Academy of Political and Social Science for “championing the use of informed judgment to advance the public good.” He is the author of *Show Me the Evidence: Obama’s Fight for Rigor and Evidence in Social Policy* (Brookings, 2015) and *Work Over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law* (Brookings, 2006); co-author of *Creating an Opportunity Society* (Brookings, 2009) and *Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America* (Pew Charitable Trusts and Brookings, 2008); and senior editor of *The Future of Children*. In 2002, he was the Senior

Advisor for Welfare Policy to President George W. Bush. He spent 14 years on the staff of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee, serving as Staff Director in 1995.

### **Social Policy and the Family**

- Reforms at the state and local level are where social policy is “missing the boat.” The U.S. has concentrated a lot of power and authority in Washington, DC.
- Researcher Raj Chetty used Internal Revenue Service data to study family economics. His work, based on millions of income records from the IRS, confirms that there is an economic mobility problem in the U.S. A child born into a family in the lowest 25% income level has a 43% chance of remaining in that lowest income level. The chances of making it to the top income level are only 5%.
- Many other countries have more economic mobility, on average, than the U.S. does. Within the U.S., economic mobility varies significantly - many communities have at least as much economic mobility as other countries. Key factors that influence economic mobility are demographic and economic segregation, schools and family structure (communities with more married versus single parent families, for example). States and localities can and do make a big difference in social mobility.
- Research presented is derived from a group of American Enterprise Institute and Brookings Institution experts. They met to discuss strategies for reducing poverty and increasing economic mobility. The final report was bipartisan, endorsed by 15 experts who agreed to support a minimum wage increase and the importance of marriage. This group demonstrated that key thinkers can come to agreement across the political spectrum.

### **Causes of poverty and lack of economic mobility:**

The three main causes of poverty and lack of economic mobility are **family composition, employment, and education**. In order for the U.S. to make progress towards alleviating poverty and increasing economic mobility, progress is needed in all three areas; current trends are moving in the wrong direction.

#### 1. Family

- In the last 40 years, American families have seen significant changes in demographics. A key factor is the increase in non-marital births.
- The rate of married adults with children has declined consistently over the last 40 years. Therefore, the number of children raised in single parent households has increased dramatically.
- The poverty rate among children in single parent families is five times the poverty rate of children in families with married parent. This is a relentless social pressure that increases childhood poverty; government programs need to counteract this social trend in order to be successful.

#### 2. Work

- The employment rate of men has decreased consistently in recent decades.
- In the same time period, the employment rate of single mothers has increased dramatically: a 40% increase over a 4-5 year period. This is a staggering change.
- The welfare reform message that people should work has been a successful one; the value of work and the importance of work has increased in many communities.

#### 3. Education

- At every level, it always pays to have more education; the lines on this graph never intersect.
- The salary payoff of higher education is even greater now than it was 50 years ago.

- The income disparity between those with no education and those with higher education is much greater now than it was 50 years ago.

**Solutions:**

Dr. Haskins proposed four solutions, or “best bets”:

1. Combine work and work supports
  - Single parent families work more now than they did in the past, and in general are doing better.
  - Government programs reduce poverty in half: the U.S. poverty rate is 48% when calculated using earned income alone; when other benefits are factored in (cash benefits, SNAP, EITC, etc.) the poverty rate is 24%.
  - The largest three federal benefits are EITC, child tax credit and SNAP. The first two of these benefits are entitlements tied to employment; if work rates increase, these benefits increase.
2. Increase family stability (birth control)
  - There is widespread agreement across the political spectrum about the importance of marriage.
  - The longer a woman waits to have a baby, the greater the chance that she will marry.
  - 60% of births to single women under age 30 are unplanned.
  - We have a lot of data about a key family factor - birth control. In Colorado and St. Louis, an experiment of increased access to birth control, specifically LARCs, to all who wanted it reduced unplanned pregnancies and abortions. Many benefits to reducing unplanned pregnancies; not many policies have as much impact as this does.
3. Skilled employment
  - Range includes 4-year and 2-year colleges, apprenticeships, certificates & licenses, career academies.
  - Goal is to prepare youth for skilled jobs available in the local economy.
  - Women do not want to marry men who do not have a job. Increased male employment would increase the marriage rate and therefore reduce the poverty rate. Furthermore, an increased marriage rate leads to improved childhood development.
4. Early childhood education
  - By age 2 or 3, children from low income families have already fallen behind their peers; they need this intervention.
  - By early childhood education, means home visiting, Head Start, State pre-kindergarten and child care programs.
  - U.S. preschool programs are not very effective in that they haven’t been sufficiently scaled up, both in terms of access and quality.
  - Quality is the key, but high quality programming is hard to do consistently. We have a lot of preschool programs across the U.S. that are actually harmful to children. We need to get rid of the poor programs and increase the positive programs.
  - State and local governments have to step up. This area will require a consistent effort over a decade to make a real difference. However, Wisconsin has a history of developing policies that are adopted on a national scale.

**Questions / Answers with Dr. Haskins**

**Q:** Are Scandinavian early childhood development programs successful even across poverty rates?

- A:** On average, Scandinavian childcare facilities are better than U.S. ones, but he does not know enough about the empirical data to speak to it. However, the guaranteed government programs in Scandinavian countries means there is less poverty than in the U.S.
- Q:** When I was a social worker, there used to be a lot of teachers' aides, and they were parents. No matter how well a child does in school, it is irrelevant if the parents do not change. How parents talk to their child matters, for example command language versus discussion language. Parents' education is needed.
- A:** Parents are a huge part of this equation—parent education throughout the childhood years is important. Home visits are a part of parent education and those programs produce positive impacts. In 2018 there will be more information about home visiting programs because 700 programs are being evaluated now. The language of low-income parents and the language of middle-income parents is different: more words, give-and-take, two-way conversations of middle-income parents are more conducive to childhood development than command language. Not confident that policy can influence parent activity enough to make a difference.
- Q:** In the research you cited, how extensive were the program parameters and assessment? Influence of environment, for example churches, associations?
- A:** The studies were program-specific; not many studies focus on wider circumstances. Chetty shows that broader circumstances make a big difference; however, most of our empirical studies do not do that. There are not many programs working on increasing community involvement.
- Q:** Regarding Head Start, is there research into why children drop off after first grade? How many low-income single parents have the means to assess schools?  
**Commissioner comment:** There is a big effort in Wisconsin to educate families about five-star childcare ratings. More childcare facilities want to rate above 2 stars, and many families look only at facilities with 3- to 5- star ratings.
- A:** During preschool years, children from low-income families go to low-rated facilities. Head Start for those families is better. The Obama administration is reviewing Head Start facilities and closing those that aren't working. But states and local governments haven't stepped up. No good answer for why children in Head Start have fallen off. Need programs for children at all life stages. Multiple interventions help. Preschool programs alone will not help.
- Q:** What about toxic stress in first 5 years? If high-risk children are in high-quality all-day daycare, could that be because you've removed a lot of toxic stress? For low-income children, could all-day daycare make a big difference? Could that change their trajectory?
- A:** The literature about toxic stress is very primitive. We already have a few small programs for children who have high stress. The intervention is with the mother to increase warmth from her. Those have an impact on children. Foster care has a big negative impact on children's development — it is a gamble when children are removed from home. Instead of foster care, intervention with parents is preferred. Children will move in the direction of their current environment.
- Q:** How do we make quality childcare attainable for all families?
- A:** Childcare Block Grant money goes to states. It funds less than 20% of children who are eligible. There is not enough funding for those who qualify. The Quality Rating System is a great idea but the engine needs money.

**Commissioner comment:** Wisconsin supplements Block Grant funds with TANF funds.

**Q:** What changes can we make now that will make a difference in 20 years? What can we do for the children in poverty now? Brains are not fully developed until age 23. Fifty years ago, people got married younger. Now we know successful people are getting married later. This is a political issue—how do we make it a non-political issue?

**A:** The #1 success story for public policy is teen pregnancy prevention. Now the rate of pregnancies among 21-year-olds is declining as well. It would be worthwhile to study how we made progress with preventing teen pregnancy. Successful programs give children something to do in the community. The big difference with teen pregnancy is that we have unanimous agreement that it is a bad idea.

**Commissioner comment:** How to care for the elderly population? We cannot forget that we are living longer and we do not have enough young people to go into the workforce and make enough income to take care of older people. We need to remember the entire life cycle. We think about women too much, men not enough, and we do not think about the life cycle and needs of elderly. Family is also about older people and who is going to care for them.

**Commissioner comment:** Families need to be able to help each other instead of depending upon programs. Up north, success means leaving the area (moving to other areas). In rural areas, the labor force does not have enough skills for the work that needs to be done.

**Q:** Is \$12 per hour a livable wage? Regarding working single moms...should we look at wage increases?

**A:** That was part of our compromise—all agreed a minimum wage increase. Projections were that a wage increase to \$11.50 or \$12 per hour would result in the loss of half million jobs. Democrats agreed that it was worth it.

**Commissioner comment:** But higher minimum wage increases affect only higher wage earners. People with minimal skills, people just starting out, are not affected by wage increases.

**A:** One of the consequences of international competition is that other countries can produce things cheaper.

**Q:** Would that create a society more dependent on welfare?

**A:** There is a slim chance of that since cash welfare is hard to get.

**Commissioner comment:** Because quality of education is poor, and low-income men are not getting these programs, they are pushed to prison and street corner.

**Q:** What do you think about expanding EITC to non-custodial fathers?

**A:** I think it is a great idea. There is not strong evidence that it will work, but the goal of doing so is to lure them into the workforce. The President supports it and Paul Ryan supports it. I think we could take it to \$1000. Republicans think there is too much fraud in the program—mistakes, etc., so the error rate needs to go down before Republicans will support expanding EITC.

**Q:** How come so many unemployed people do not migrate for jobs the way they once used to? If Wisconsin were to create economic policies that attracted people from other states, would that change atmospheric benefits for everyone, or would it only benefit those who have the jobs?

**A:** That's a very complex question. Yes, Americans are less mobile. Yes, studies show that children who move to better neighborhoods when they're under 13 are helped by such a move. Would such movement on a large scale have positive effect on community? Probably yes. Two-parent households are more mobile than single-parent households, so my guess would be yes, but it is

just a guess. There is no literature on this topic. People who move for a job leads to an increase in the general quality of the state's population.

**Q:** Males are a big part of the problem—why? What can be done for them to help the problem?

**A:** Black males suffer more by virtue of not being with their fathers. We cannot raise a community of males without significant influence of males in the home and community. So, boys look for social relationships—gangs, peers. Referenced the “cool pose culture.”

**Q:** How can we help?

**A:** EITC, fewer incarcerated men, help people when they come out of prison (very difficult to do), programs for young males during school years, more male teachers, etc. Change the attitude of “I would have a baby with this guy, but never marry him!”

**Q:** What is the best approach to teach and educate young men to take responsibility for themselves and others?

**A:** The BAM (Be A Man) program through the University of Chicago, led by Dr. Jens Ludwig, teaches young men to think before escalating a situation. Children want to do it! It works! And it still works a year later—the participants are more likely to stay in school. It teaches them to slow down, think of a better response.

**Commissioner comment:** What you see in the home, you repeat in public. Today children are heavily influenced by media; we need positive influences.

**Q:** We know the impact of a dad in the household, the nuclear family. What impact does time element make? How much time does a father need to be involved for it to make a difference? At what point is the child negatively affected?

**A:** Professional opinion is that the father staying involved is a crucial element to childhood development. There is no doubt that having a father involved is important. The more, the better. But it is difficult for a non-custodial parent to have a consistent influence.

**Q:** What about a child support credit based on time spent with child?

**A:** That is against the law. Judges have a lot of discretion, but there are only very narrow circumstances in which a child support amount can be reduced.

**Q:** Regarding doing no harm to marriage, did your study look at reforms to help with that?

**A:** Tax policy is generally pro-marriage, and has gotten more pro-marriage. Bigger EITC if they got married, for benefits programs. Means-tested programs, not as much. Increasing food stamps and reducing marriage penalty would have biggest impact.

**Q:** What about the societal assumption that if I get married I will lose my benefits?

**A:** I do not think that's a widespread assumption, but I'm not sure. Public media campaigns haven't been tried enough on marriage and its advantage on children.

**Q:** Is it an issue that people associate marriage with religion?

**Commissioner comment:** We support marriage, so we need to get ready for all the counseling that needs to accompany it. If you haven't been in a married family, you have no idea how to do it. We need to help people be married.

**A:** The culture of marriage has been lost for major population segments.

- Commissioner comment:** Billy Graham was an influence. Today's youth are bombarded with negative influences and wrong thinking patterns. That takes away from them learning about fatherhood, mothers, taking responsibility. Children need an environment of trust and peers.
- A:** Focus resources on the poor, and the poorest of the poor. Head Start and home visiting dollars would focus on poorest of the poor, and a broader group of children would be assisted through Pre-K. This is how to help the most disadvantaged children early.
- Q:** What about childcare for low-income single parents? Many low-income parents work split or irregular shifts when good childcare is not available. How can we entice more people to do split shift and nontraditional childcare hours? We need to develop an early childcare education system that is supportive of parents' work schedules.
- A:** Technology is against us—companies can schedule in a way that is cheapest to them but at the expense of their employee.
- Commissioner comment:** Factory workers get paid more if they work 2nd and 3rd shift.
- Commissioner comment:** There is a perception that daycare is big and bad, but it is licensed. The in-home daycare is where maybe the problems are.
- Q:** So what do we do with men?
- A:** Increase the EITC, keep men out of jail—that means changing minimum sentencing laws and establishing programs for men when coming out of prison, and create fatherhood programs. There are many fatherhood programs across the country, but they're all so different, there's not a common curriculum or goals.
- Commissioner comment:** My program focuses on teaching evidence-based life skills, such as the needs of children, men's health, and responsibility. The challenge is getting men in the door because it is a voluntary program.
- A:** All voluntary programs have a problem with attendance. Several hundred million dollars were spent on Bush marriage initiatives. Across 16 sites and several thousand people, the average participant got only 20% of the curriculum.
- Q:** Can we incentivize attendance?
- A:** The Oklahoma program had the best impact. It offered dinners, supplied childcare, gave parents rewards if they met goals. The rewards were things for their children.
- Q:** Should school curriculum be about impulse control? Should we look at this as a public health crisis and include life skills in a public school curriculum?
- A:** My own view is that we should have programs like that. Right now, they vary state to state. Many schools teach these as extra-curricular activities because there is more flexibility in after-school hours.
- Q:** If children do not see that good behavior modelled outside of the school, how well will it sit? They need to see adults model it.
- A:** BAM focuses on children and practicing it with their friends.
- Q:** Is there any research regarding home schooling?
- A:** I do not know that research very well. Home schooling will not be a major solution because the assumption that men work while women stay home is no longer valid.
- Commissioner comment:** 60% of births to unmarried women under age 30 are unplanned. Men rate their manhood based on how many women they get pregnant.

**A:** Women want to control fertility, and if they can, they do. If there's going to be responsible behavior, it will focus on women. We have been successful at defining responsible sexual behavior as relationships in which they do not get pregnant. And if you are sexually active, use birth control.

**Commissioner comment:** I teach children to use two forms of birth control if you do not want to get pregnant. There is 9% failure rate 3 years down the road; hormonal contraception isn't 100% effective.

**Commissioner comment:** Sexual education has to deal with sexually transmitted diseases. Particularly within inner-city Milwaukee, STDs are at an all-time high. That's a discussion about community health that needs to happen; we need to teach children to say "no."

**Commissioner comment:** All 16-year-old girls are screened for Chlamydia because it is at an all-time high.

**Q:** There is a rise in unplanned pregnancies, but a lot of underlying things are going on. What is available to our youth to keep them out of negative situations?

**Commissioner comment:** One bad decision can have effects for 20-25 years. LARCs give women and society time for education, stability, relationships, etc.

## Meeting #5 - Mr. Robert (Bob) Woodson

At its fifth meeting, Commissioners heard from Bob Woodson, Founder and President of the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE) and has done significant work with communities across the country, including Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Often referred to as the "godfather" of the movement to empower neighborhood-based organizations, Mr. Woodson has promoted the principles of self-help and neighborhood empowerment and the importance of the institutions of civil society for more than four decades. In 1981, Mr. Woodson founded the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise for the purpose of strengthening and advocating for neighborhood-based organizations struggling to serve their communities. Since its inception, the Center has provided training and capacity-building technical assistance to more than 2,600 leaders of community-based groups in 39 states. He is the author of *Youth Crime and Urban Policy, A View from the Inner City* (1981), *On the Road to Economic Freedom: An Agenda for Black Progress* (1987), *A Summons to Life, Mediating Structures and the Prevention of Youth Crime* (1988), and *The Triumphs of Joseph: How Today's Community Healers are Reviving Our Streets and Neighborhoods* (1998, reissued in paperback in 2008).

### Community Approaches to Strengthening Families

Between 1965 and 1995 the marriage rate declined dramatically. There are two main factors behind this trend, which led to a breakdown of the American family:

1. Up to the 1960's, poor people, including immigrants and migrants, were integrated into their communities with the help of civic institutions that made conscious efforts to help people assimilate.
2. In the 1960s and later, the stigma of welfare was removed as it became defined as a right. Welfare policies separated income from work.

### Solution

Mr. Woodson suggested that key principles of the market economy be applied to our social economy. A market economy encourages competition, entrepreneurship and innovation. He suggested that not all

poor people are the same, and it is inappropriate to generalize about the poor. According to him, there are **four categories of poor**, and different categories require different solutions:

1. Those who use welfare as a temporary solution - they have strong moral character intact;
2. Those who remain on welfare - they have strong moral character but perverse incentives to remain on government assistance;
3. Those who are physically and/or mentally disabled;
4. Those who are poor because of character deficits such as moral and spiritual failings.

CNE works with people who are in Category 4 above - they need redemption and transformation before jobs and training can help them. A precondition of assisting people in Category 4 is redemption; once that happens then government supports can be effective.

CNE creates neighborhood-based solutions - the work focuses on grassroots social solutions through entrepreneurship to address community problems such as drug addiction, prostitution, vandalism, etc. CNE locates existing community leaders with moral authority, and helps them provide residents the means to protect and clean up their own neighborhoods.

A key tenet of CNE's work is to study and learn from success. Mr. Woodson found that successful innovations come from people suffering from the problems. People cannot learn from studying only failures. He encouraged the Commission to study examples of success as there are many "islands of excellence" within poor communities around the country.

CNE empowers those who are already successfully helping their own communities. Mr. Woodson noted that social problems do not necessarily need governmental solutions and reminded the Commission that government can contract with neighborhood groups. CNE's model involves looking for service providers in the very community suffering the problem. Doing so through governmental support would require a policy shift because being a governmental provider requires certification, licensure, and thus, more often, a college degree. There are barriers to providing assistance in a government-sponsored role.

#### **Questions / Answers with Mr. Woodson**

**Q:** What government programs work, and how would you retool existing governmental programs that are not effective?

**A:** Mr. Woodson shared a story of how gang members in a community were successfully engaged to help the community in cleaning up graffiti and doing other maintenance tasks. This created ownership about the community in the former gang members, and led to a successful truce. A condition of such contracts is to do something positive in the community. Any time there is a rule or governmental expectation, such as insurance, which is acting as a barrier to program or neighborhood success, consider creative solutions to that rule.

**Q:** What is your approach to addressing a culture that is bombarded with negative cultural influences?

**A:** Develop a counter-narrative, such as private-sector solutions that market success or resurrection.

**Q:** Do "islands of excellence" exist in rural areas as well as urban areas?

**A:** Yes, CNE has done a lot of work in rural Alabama and Appalachia.

**Commissioner comment:** The current rate of marriage among whites is where it was for blacks when Patrick Moynihan wrote his report. If blacks are the “canaries in the coalmine,” then we are in trouble.

**Mr. Woodson:** Material and financial success is not enough to live a fulfilling life. The crisis we have is due to a lack of meaning; this a cultural, moral, spiritual war we are fighting.

**Q:** What is the status of Wisconsin’s faith-based organizations?

**A:** Government should not directly support faith-based organizations. Transfer authority to individuals, for example in the form of a voucher, and let them make their own choices. The GI Bill of Rights is a successful example of this type of government assistance.

## Appendix G: Glossary of Terms & Responses to Commissioner Questions

At its first meeting, Commission members asked for and were provided this glossary of state/ federal programs that support families, prepared by Joe Meeker, DCF Budget and Policy Analyst.

### Glossary of Safety Net Programs & Related Terms (March 2016)

<b>Program</b>	<b>BadgerCare: BadgerCare, BadgerCare Plus</b>													
<b>Description</b>	BadgerCare is Wisconsin’s medical assistance health care coverage program administered by the State Department of Health Services under a framework of state and federal laws and policies. BadgerCare provides health care services for low-income people using a combination of state funds and federal matching funds.													
<b>Eligible Population</b>	<p>The following table shows the various eligible populations and the income eligibility requirements for each population</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;">Population</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Income Limits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Children under age 19</td> <td>300% of FPL (306% with disregards under modified adjusted gross income)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adults, including parents, caretaker relatives, and adults without dependent children</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100% FPL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnant women</td> <td>300% of FPL (306% with disregards under modified adjusted gross income)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Family planning only services</td> <td>300% of FPL (306% with disregards under modified adjusted gross income)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Former foster children under age 26</td> <td style="text-align: center;">categorically eligible</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Other eligibility requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wisconsin residency</li> <li>U.S. citizenship or qualified immigration status</li> <li>Cooperation with establishment of medical support and third-party liability</li> <li>Provision of social security number</li> <li>Cooperation with verification requests</li> <li>Access to other insurance requirements</li> </ul>		Population	Income Limits	Children under age 19	300% of FPL (306% with disregards under modified adjusted gross income)	Adults, including parents, caretaker relatives, and adults without dependent children	100% FPL	Pregnant women	300% of FPL (306% with disregards under modified adjusted gross income)	Family planning only services	300% of FPL (306% with disregards under modified adjusted gross income)	Former foster children under age 26	categorically eligible
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<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	The State sets its own eligibility requirements within the constraints of federal requirements.													
<b>Program</b>	<b>CCDBG: Child Care and Development Block Grant</b>													
<b>Description</b>	<p>The CCDBG is a federal block grant that provides states with funding to subsidize the cost of child care services for low-income families and to improve the quality and supply of child care for all families. States receive federal funds based on a formula that includes several factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A fixed amount based on funding received under the three child care programs previously authorized under the aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) program;</li> <li>The state’s share of children under age 13;</li> </ul>													

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state's share of children under age five;</li> <li>The state's share of children receiving free or reduced-price lunches; and</li> <li>The state's per capita income</li> </ul> <p>States must meet certain maintenance of effort and matching requirements.</p>																			
<b>Eligible Population</b>	States are allowed to provide assistance for child care services to children in families with income equal to or less than 85% of SMI (state median income) for a family of the same size. Family assets may not exceed \$1 million.																			
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	States may set their own initial eligibility requirements within the federal parameters. See WI Shares.																			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Shares: Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy</b>																			
<b>Description</b>	Wisconsin Shares is the state's child care subsidy program, administered by the Department of Children and Families. Shares provides financial child care assistance to low-income parents who are working or preparing to enter the workforce, and is funded with the federal TANF block grant and the CCDBG, along with state funds.																			
<b>Eligible Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The child must be &lt; 13 years of age, or &lt; 19 years of age if physically or mentally unable to care for him or herself.</li> <li>The family with which the child resides must have an income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level for initial eligibility, and income at or below 200% to retain eligibility.</li> <li>The parents must be working or participating in an education or job training program that prevents them from being able to care for the child.</li> <li>The child (but not the parents) must pass citizenship eligibility verification.</li> <li>The family must cooperate with child support collection efforts.</li> </ul>																			
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	The State sets its own eligibility requirements within the constraints of the federal TANF and CCDBG guidelines.																			
<b>Program</b>	<b>EITC: Earned Income Tax Credit</b>																			
<b>Description</b>	The EITC is a refundable tax credit for low- to moderate-income working individuals and couples, particularly those with children. It encourages and rewards work as well as offsets social security taxes. The amount of EITC benefit depends on a recipient's income and number of children. There is both a federal and state EITC benefit. The state EITC is a percentage of the federal EITC (4% to 34% depending on family size) and is funded with General Purpose Revenue (e.g., state tax dollars) and the TANF block grant.																			
<b>Eligible Population</b>	<p>An individual must either have a qualifying child or meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not be the dependent or a qualifying child of another taxpayer</li> <li>Be at least 25 years old and not more than 65 before the end of the tax year</li> <li>Have resided in the U.S. for more than half of the year</li> </ul> <p>The table below shows the federal adjusted gross income limits for 2016.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">If filing as:</th> <th colspan="4">Qualifying Children Claimed</th> </tr> <tr> <th>None</th> <th>One</th> <th>Two</th> <th>Three or more</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single, Head of Household or Widowed</td> <td>\$14,880</td> <td>\$39,296</td> <td>\$44,648</td> <td>\$47,955</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Married Filing Jointly</td> <td>\$20,430</td> <td>\$44,846</td> <td>\$50,198</td> <td>\$53,505</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	If filing as:	Qualifying Children Claimed				None	One	Two	Three or more	Single, Head of Household or Widowed	\$14,880	\$39,296	\$44,648	\$47,955	Married Filing Jointly	\$20,430	\$44,846	\$50,198	\$53,505
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<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	The criteria for the federal EITC are set by federal law, while the criteria for the state EITC are set by state law.
<b>Program</b>	<b>CTC: Child Tax Credit</b>
<b>Description</b>	A federal tax credit designed to help families offset the cost of raising children. The credit was created in 1997 and expanded in 2001 and 2009. Under current (2016) law, the credit is worth up to \$1,000 per child under age 17 at the end of the tax year, and is subtracted from the amount of income taxes the family owes. Since a portion of the credit is refundable, if the credit exceeds the amount of taxes the family owes, a percentage of the remaining credit is given back to the family in a refund check, and is officially called the Additional Child Tax Credit. Wisconsin does not have a state Child Tax Credit.
<b>Eligible Population</b>	A family can receive a refund worth 15 percent of earnings above \$3,000, up to \$1,000 per child. Families must have at least \$3,000 in earned income to claim any portion of the credit. The refund formula means that families with one child become eligible for the full credit with incomes of \$9,666 or more; families with two children when they have incomes of \$16,333 or more; and, for each additional child, the minimum income to receive the full credit increases by \$6,666. The credit begins to phase out when family income reaches \$75,000 for a single filer and \$110,000 for couples. The phase out allows families to claim a portion of the credit, capped at 5 percent of their income over the phase out threshold, so married couples making \$130,000 (\$95,000 for heads of household) with one child receive no credit at all, while families with two children are eligible for a partial payment with incomes up to \$150,000 (\$115,000 for heads of household) and families with more children are eligible at even higher income levels.
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	Criteria are set by federal law.
<b>Program</b>	<b>LIHEAP: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program</b>
<b>Description</b>	LIHEAP provides federal funds for one-time heating and electric assistance, emergency fuel assistance, and emergency furnace repair and replacement. Most types of fuel are eligible to receive assistance. LIHEAP is administered by the WI Department of Administration.
<b>Eligible Population</b>	Eligibility for the 2015-2016 program year is 60% of State Medium Income (SMI). Households having at least one member who receives TANF, SSI, or SNAP are categorically eligible, that is, eligible based on them having been determined eligible for receipt of benefits from one or more of these programs.
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	Federal law establishes a floor of 110% of FPL and a ceiling of 150% of FPL, unless 60% of SMI is higher than 150% of FPL. The state sets eligibility at 60% of SMI.
<b>Program</b>	<b>SNAP: Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program</b>
<b>Description</b>	SNAP, known in Wisconsin as "FoodShare," provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income individuals and "assistance groups (households);" it is administered at the state level by the WI Department of Health Services, with funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
<b>Eligible Population</b>	Most FoodShare groups must meet both gross and net income tests, with benefit amounts based on household size and monthly net income. In Wisconsin, the gross income test is at or below 200% FPL, while net income must be at or below 100% FPL. Households that include an elderly, blind or disabled member have no gross income limit, but must have a net income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level and countable assets that do not exceed \$3,250. Other eligibility requirements include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must not have food needs already met by being a boarder, foster person, or resident of institution.</li> <li>• Must be a U.S. citizen or qualifying alien.</li> <li>• Those ages 18-59 must register for and participate in work programs, unless exempt.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	Federal laws dictate eligibility requirements.
<b>Program</b>	<b>SSI: Supplemental Security Income</b>
<b>Description</b>	The SSI program, administered in Wisconsin by the Department of Health Services, provides federal and state cash benefits to guarantee a minimum income level for qualifying elderly, blind, and disabled individuals. In 2015, an individual could receive a monthly federal benefit of up to \$733, with the payment decreasing as a recipient's income increases, as well as a monthly state supplemental payment of approximately \$84. Some SSI recipients may also receive an exceptional expense supplement if (a) residing in certain facilities or (b) they require support services to live independently or (c) if taking care of dependent children – this benefit is called a caretaker supplement and is funded with TANF.
<b>Eligible Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be age 65 or older, blind, or disabled.</li> <li>• Must have income less than the federal benefit plus \$20, or \$753 per month.</li> <li>• Must have assets of no more than \$2,000, excluding a home, one vehicle, and life insurance policies of not more than \$1,500.</li> <li>• Must apply for any other benefits for which they are eligible.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	The federal benefit is determined by federal laws and regulations, is adjusted annually to reflect cost-of-living adjustments, and the amount depends on income. The state supplement is a flat payment. While the Department of Health Services may seek an increase in the flat payment through the Department of Administration, the current amount has not changed since 1994.
<b>Program</b>	<b>TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</b>
<b>Description</b>	TANF is a federal block grant that provides cash assistance and supportive services to assist families with children under age 18, helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency. Congress created the TANF block grant through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, as part of a federal effort to “end welfare as we know it.” TANF replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which had provided cash welfare to poor families with children since 1935. Under TANF, the federal government provides a block grant to the states, which use these funds to operate their own programs. In order to receive federal funds, states must also spend some of their own dollars on programs for needy families (they face severe fiscal penalties if they fail to do so). This state-spending requirement, known as the “maintenance of effort” (MOE) requirement, replaced the state match that AFDC had required.
<b>Eligible Population</b>	<p>States may use federal TANF and state MOE dollars to meet any of the four goals set out in the 1996 law: “(1) provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (2) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and (4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families.”</p> <p>Some restrictions flow from federal law. Key ones include:</p>

	<p><i>Time limits.</i> While states can set their own time limit policies, they cannot provide cash assistance from federal TANF funds for longer than 60 months to a family that includes an adult recipient; however, states can exceed the 60-month limit for up to 20 percent of their caseload, based on hardship. Federal law does not impose a time limit on “child-only families” (those with no adult receiving benefits) or on families receiving assistance funded entirely with state MOE funds. Most states have set time limits of five years on TANF- and MOE-funded assistance, though time limits in about one-third of the states are shorter, including WI (See W-2 program). States generally provide exceptions and exemptions for some groups of families meet specific criteria, allowing them to receive assistance beyond the time limit. Some states continue benefits to the children in a family even after the parent reaches the time limit.</p> <p><i>Immigrant eligibility.</i> Federal law bars states from using federal TANF dollars to assist most legal immigrants until they have been in the United States for at least five years. This restriction applies not only to cash assistance, but also to TANF-funded work supports and services such as child care, transportation, and job training. A substantial percentage of poor children have non-citizen parents who are ineligible for TANF benefits and services.</p>
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	States have flexibility in determining how these block grant funds are spent, within the four purposes and a 15% administrative limit. Penalties may be imposed, however, if certain work participation reporting requirements are not met. For more information, see W-2 program.
<b>Program</b>	<b>W-2: Wisconsin Works</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>W-2, administered by the Department of Children and Families, is WI’s TANF cash assistance and work program, implemented in September 1997. It is based on the tenets of work participation and personal responsibility, providing employment preparation services, case management and cash assistance to eligible families. Under W-2, there is no entitlement to assistance. The program is available to low-income parents with minor children who meet eligibility requirements and who are willing to work to their ability. Each W-2 eligible participant meets with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP), who helps the individual develop an employability plan. W-2 offers four types of paid placements:</p> <p><i>Community Service Jobs (CSJ):</i> CSJ placements are developed for individuals who lack the basic skills and work habits needed in a regular job environment. CSJ positions offer real work training opportunities, but with the added supervision and support needed to help the participant succeed. CSJ participants receive a monthly grant of \$653. Individuals who are employed part-time, but have personal barriers that prevent them from increasing their work hours, may be placed in a part-time CSJ position with prorated benefits. In addition to a cash grant, CSJ participants may be eligible for FoodShare, Medicaid, child care assistance, and Job Access Loans.</p> <p><i>W-2 Transition (W-2 T):</i> W-2 T is reserved for those individuals who, because of employment barriers, are unable to perform independent, self-sustaining work. Those individuals who have permanent employment barriers are assisted in securing federal Supplemental Security Insurance benefits. W-2 T participants receive a monthly grant of \$608. In addition to a cash grant, W-2 T participants may be eligible for FoodShare, Medicaid, child care assistance, and Job Access Loans.</p> <p><i>Caretaker of an Infant (CMC):</i> CMC placements are for individuals who are the custodial parent of an infant who is 8 weeks old or less. Individuals in a CMC placement receive a monthly cash grant of \$673 and are not required to participate in an employment position unless he/she volunteers to do so. In addition to the cash grant, CMC participants may be eligible for FoodShare, Medicaid, child care assistance, and Job Access Loans.</p> <p><i>At Risk Pregnancy (ARP):</i> ARP placements are available to unmarried women in the third</p>

	<p>trimester of pregnancy who have a medically-verified at risk pregnancy. Individuals in an ARP placement receive a monthly cash grant of \$673. In addition, ARP participants may be eligible for FoodShare and Medicaid.</p> <p>In addition to paid placements, noncustodial parents, minor parents, and pregnant women may be eligible for an array of case management service; custodial parents who are employed when they apply or become employed after participating in W-2 also may be eligible for case management services. The final group potentially eligible for case management services is W-2 participants who reach their time limit but ask for case management services.</p> <p>Local W-2 agencies, under contract with DCF, determine eligibility and help applicants participate in work preparation activities, find or keep jobs, and pay for the costs of maintaining employment.</p>
<b>Eligible Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be a custodial parent who has attained the age of 18</li> <li>• Must be a U.S. citizen or qualifying alien</li> <li>• Must reside in Wisconsin</li> <li>• Must cooperate with child support efforts</li> <li>• Applicant must have made a good faith effort to obtain employment and not refused a bona fide job offer within the 180 days immediately preceding the application for W-2 services.</li> <li>• Must not be not receiving federal or state supplemental SSI payments or federal social security disability insurance (SSDI) payments</li> <li>• Must be a part of a W-2 group whose gross income is at or below 115% of FPL</li> <li>• Must not have assets that exceed \$2,500 in combined equity value, excluding the equity value of vehicles up to a total value of \$10,000 and one home that serves as the homestead</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	<p>States have latitude to set program design and eligibility requirements, such as income and asset limits, within the federal parameters. For example, the federal program has a 60-month lifetime limit on receipt of assistance, while Wisconsin has a 48-month time limit for assistance receipt.</p>
<b>Program</b>	<b>WIC - The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>WIC provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. The WIC program is administered at the state level by the WI Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health and by Indian Tribal Organizations, and is a program of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).</p>
<b>Eligible Population</b>	<p>Low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.</p>
<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	<p>In addition to categorical eligibility, applicants must meet residency, income and nutrition risk requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residency – must live in the State in which application is made</li> <li>• Income - family income at or below 185% of the federal poverty income guidelines. Most states allow Automatic Income Eligibility, where a person or family participating in certain benefits programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, may automatically meet the income eligibility requirements. Currently, WIC serves 53 percent of all infants born in the United States.</li> </ul> <p>Nutrition risk – applicants must be seen by a health professional who must determine that</p>

	nutrition risk criteria are met.
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**RELATED TERMS**

**FPL: Federal Poverty Level**

The 2016 FPL guidelines for a family of four show \$24,300 as 100% FPL.

- For a family of four in LIHEAP, 110% FPL is \$26,730 and 150% FPL is \$36,450.
- For BadgerCare, 300% FPL for a family of four is \$72,900.
- For Wisconsin Shares, 185% FPL for a family of four is \$44,955 and 200% FPL is \$48,600.
- For W-2, 115% FPL for a family of four is \$27,945.

**SMI: State Median Income**

In federal fiscal year 2014 (most recent available), Wisconsin's estimated median income for a family of four was \$79,141. As such,

- The LIHEAP eligibility of 60% SMI for a family of four is \$47,485.
- The CCDBG eligibility of 85% SMI for a family of four is \$67,270.

## Responses to Commissioner Questions

*Note: The DCF staff team acknowledges and thanks Tim Rupinski and Matt Walsh of DCF for their assistance in compiling responses to questions posed by the Commissioners in meeting 1, and June Paul, doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for responses to questions posed in meeting 2.*

### Meeting 1 Questions and Responses

**1. What data related to the Adolescent Risk Assessment in Wisconsin are available? Does it tell us the average age that kids in Wisconsin are starting to have sex? Can we get this data by ethnic / racial groups, and by urban/rural or part of the state they live in?**

*What data is available?*

The “Adolescent Risk Assessment” refers to the *Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System (YRBSS)*, developed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor priority health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems among youth and young adults. The survey monitors six types of health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults, including:

- Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence
- Sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Tobacco use
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors
- Inadequate physical activity

The YRBSS includes a national school-based survey conducted by CDC and state, tribal, and local surveys conducted by state and local education and health agencies and tribal governments. The local (state/tribal) surveys include representative samples of 9th through 12th grade public and private school students and are conducted every two years, usually during the spring semester (sample may include charter and public alternative, special education or vocational schools, and may include religious and other private schools, but not private alternative, special education or vocational schools). The national survey, conducted by CDC, provides data representative of 9th through 12th grade students in public and private schools. Wisconsin has participated in the survey since 1991.

To respond to this question, DCF staff analyzed YRBSS responses from the most recent available data - the 2013 survey. For further information, see: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>.

*What is the average age at which youth in Wisconsin become sexually active?*

Of those reporting they “ever had sex” (35% of those surveyed), the average age at which they first became sexually active (“at first sex”) was 14.8 years.

*How does this break out by race/ethnicity, and by urban/rural or part of the state they live in?*

Black youths were significantly more likely to report “ever having sex” than other race/ethnicity groups:

- 62% of Black youths report “ever had sex” vs. 32% of Whites, 41% of Hispanics, and 36% “other” race/ethnicity.

Black youths who reported “ever had sex” were significantly younger “at first sex” as compared to white youths, but not as compared to youth from other race/ethnicity groups:

- Average age “at first sex” for Blacks was a year younger than that for whites: 14.1 years vs. 15.1 years
- Average age “at first sex” for Hispanics was 14.7 years and 14.4 years for “other” race/ethnicity.

Gender differences in age “at first sex” are not statistically significant; also, the data is not broken out by geography (e.g., rural/urban).

**Percentages and Ages of Wisconsin Youth Self-Reporting Sexual Activity**

Group	Percent ever had sex	Average age (in years) at first sex
Entire 2013 Sample	35.3% [31.7%, 38.9%]	14.8 [14.7, 15.0]
Gender		
Female	37.3% [32.4%, 42.3%]	14.9 [14.8, 15.1]
Male	33.1% [29.4%, 36.8%]	14.7 [14.5, 14.9]
Race/Ethnicity		
White	31.8% [28.2%, 35.5%]	15.1 [14.9, 15.2]
Black	61.6% [52.7%, 70.5%]*	14.1 [13.7, 14.4]*
Hispanic	41.1% [32.2%, 50.1%]	14.7 [14.2, 15.1]
“Other”	36.4% [29.5%, 43.3%]	14.4 [14.0, 14.7]

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease and Control, “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2013,” June 13, 2014.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>

Analysis by DCF staff.

**2. What effective interventions exist for teaching families to be successful and teaching young boys to be responsible men?** (context: poor urban and rural families/young men have worse economic outlooks)

*Family Success*

Problems are complex and interwoven. Family success in terms of “achieving the American Dream” traditionally refers to having the skills and resources to get and keep a good job, to raise healthy children and to contribute to one’s community. Interventions that focus on increasing income have related positive effects on children’s health, academic success and positive social behaviors.

The *Families and Schools Together program (FAST)* is an internationally acclaimed parent engagement program that supports the family bonding necessary for children to thrive. Built on evidence-based practices and rigorously tested, FAST (a) empowers parents to be more effective family leaders; (b) builds positive connections and social capital between families and schools; and (c) creates a supportive community engaged in fostering children’s well-being and education.

Independent analyses of the FAST program show significant improvement of participating children’s mental health. FAST parents were significantly more active in community activities, obtaining jobs, and returning to school to further their education (44%). They were more involved in children’s school as partners; and were more likely to report that they had sought out counseling for mental health or substance abuse. Two to four years post-FAST involvement, parents were less isolated, had a support

network of friends, and were more involved in their community. See:  
<http://parenthood.library.wisc.edu/McDonald/McDonald.html>.

The *Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPCs)* is a proven effective intervention for parent involvement and student achievement; CPCs provide comprehensive educational support and family support to economically disadvantaged children and their parents. The guiding principle of the program is that by providing a school-based, stable learning environment during preschool, in which parents are active and consistent participants in their child's education, scholastic success will follow. The program requires parental participation and emphasizes a child-centered, individualized approach to social and cognitive development.

The *New Hope Project*, which operated from 1994 to 1998 in two inner-city areas of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is also proven effective at increasing family economic self-sufficiency as well as school achievement for children of participating families. *New Hope* offered low-income individuals and families the opportunity to use a comprehensive set of integrated program services designed to increase income, financial security, and access to full-time employment. In the two target locales, all adults whose earnings were below 150 percent of the federal poverty level and who were willing to work full-time were eligible to apply for enrollment in the program. Applicants need not have been welfare recipients nor have children. Participants were offered two program benefits: community service-based full-time job opportunities for those unable to find full-time work (or part-time job opportunities to supplement an existing part-time job) in the private job market; and personalized services assisting in job searches, childcare, and other employment-related needs. For participants who worked full-time (30+ hours per week), *New Hope* also offered a monthly earnings supplement, designed to raise their income to exceed the poverty threshold for the household; subsidized health insurance; and childcare subsidies.

*New Hope* achieved a 20 percent reduction in the number of families living below the poverty line five years after the intervention. Increases in income resulted in improvements in parents' effective child management, which in turn was associated with improvements in children's test scores and teacher- and parent-rated school performance, and children's behavior. Children in *New Hope* families had significantly higher academic achievement: in particular, boys had higher academic achievement and classroom behavior ratings five to eight years later. For more information on CPCs and *New Hope*, see: <http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=269>

Effective home visiting programs, such as *Nurse Family Partnership* and *Parents as Teachers*, also improve family success in terms of increasing economic self-sufficiency and child health and development. See meeting 2 Responses and <http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=16>.

#### *Responsible Men*

Youth development programs seek to improve adolescent boys' life skills, belief in their future, opportunities, and, more generally, "life options." They focus on promoting academic success; encouraging meaningful participation in the community; and avoiding early childbearing and other risky behaviors. Achieving these goals increases young men's chances of finishing their education, getting a job and marrying before starting a family.

Among the best-known programs proven effective at improving academic success, and reducing early childbearing and other risky behaviors among low-income youth are Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Career Academies, both of which are available in Wisconsin.

#### Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)

The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters is to provide supportive relationships for young people to assist them in realizing their potential. The program positively affects behavioral outcomes, using a developmental mentoring program that provides participants with positive, caring, and supportive role models.

In the traditional Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring model, the volunteer mentor commits to spending approximately three to five hours per week with a child/youth for at least one year. Goals for the child/youth are set with the BBBS staff during an initial interview held with the parent and child/youth. Big Brothers Big Sisters also offers an in-school mentoring program in which participants take part in one-to-one activities with the mentor during the school day. BBBS programs operate across Wisconsin, in rural and urban areas. See:

[http://ppv.issuelab.org/resource/making\\_a\\_difference\\_an\\_impact\\_study\\_of\\_big\\_brothersbig\\_sisters\\_re\\_issue\\_of\\_1995\\_study](http://ppv.issuelab.org/resource/making_a_difference_an_impact_study_of_big_brothersbig_sisters_re_issue_of_1995_study)

#### Career Academies

Career Academies are “schools within schools” that link students with peers, teachers, and community partners in a disciplined environment, fostering academic success, social and emotional health, and labor market success. Originally created to help inner-city students stay in school and obtain meaningful occupational experience, Career Academies and similar programs have evolved into a multifaceted, integrated approach to reducing delinquent behavior and enhancing protective factors among at-risk youths. These academies aim to improve labor market prospects of youth beyond high school without compromising high school academic goals and preparation for postsecondary education. Each Career Academy has a specific career concentration. In Wisconsin, Construction Career Academies operate in high schools in Burlington, Fond du Lac, Kimberly, La Crosse, Marshfield and Tomah. West Allis initiated a welding career academy in 2014.

See: [http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full\\_45.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_45.pdf)

Additional proven “promising” and “effective” youth development programs include:

*Teen Courts* (also known as youth courts or peer courts) – these are specialized diversion programs for young offenders that use court-like procedures in a courtroom setting. The typical delinquent youth referred to teen court is 12 to 15 years old, in trouble for the first time, and charged with vandalism, stealing or another non-violent offense. Teen court offers a non-binding, informal alternative to the regular juvenile court process. In most cases, young offenders agree to participate in teen court as a way of avoiding formal prosecution and adjudication in juvenile court. The most recent and comprehensive investigation of teen court effectiveness was conducted by the Urban Institute. The project studied teen courts in four jurisdictions: Alaska, Arizona, Maryland and Missouri. In three of the four study sites, recidivism was lower among youth handled in teen court. In Alaska, for example, recidivism for teen court cases was 6%, compared with 23% of cases handled by the traditional juvenile justice system.

See: <http://johnjayresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/buttsortizjrjan11.pdf>

*Aggression Replacement Training (ART):* Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) concentrates on development of individual competencies to address various emotional and social aspects that contribute

to aggressive behavior in youths. The program teaches techniques on how youth can control their angry impulses and take perspectives other than their own. The main goal is to reduce aggression and violence among youths by providing them with opportunities to learn prosocial skills in place of aggressive behavior. A study of Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2004) indicated that within the 21 courts rated as either competent or highly competent, the 18-month felony recidivism rate was 19 percent, compared with 25 percent for the control group. Gundersen and Svartdal's 2006 study of Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) found that, based on parent-reported results, there were significant improvements in Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) scores among ART® youths. Based on these results the researchers concluded that ART® promoted an effective improvement in social skills among participating youths. See: <http://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=254>

*Transformative Mentoring Program:* Based in the Mentoring Center in Oakland, California, the Transformative Mentoring Program involves a structured curriculum that offers a long-term group-mentoring program. Key components of the curriculum focus on character development, cognitive restructuring, spiritual development, life skills training, anger management, and employability skills. The primary audience is highly at-risk youth of color, and the program's goal is to reduce their involvement in violence-related activities. Winner of grants funded by President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" program, the Transformative Mentoring Program has shown promising, but not yet evidence based, results. See: <http://mentor.org/>

**3. What evidence-based curricula are being used (in WI, other states) to teach life skills? (Context: If kids are not learning life skills at home, what is available to them outside the home that works?)**

In terms of teaching youth life skills, we looked at three areas: financial literacy (how to manage daily living expenses), how to get a driver's license and how to look for a job.

*Financial Literacy*

A 2015 report card on financial literacy gave Wisconsin an "F," because students in the state can graduate from high school without having the opportunity to take a course or otherwise be exposed to personal finance. The report also noted that Wisconsin is doing many things to promote financial literacy in public high schools. These include creating an Office of Financial Literacy in 2000 (see: <https://www.wdfi.org/yymm/>) and a Governor's Council on Financial Literacy in 2010 (see: <https://www.wdfi.org/yymm/govcouncilfinlit/>), which gives awards and grants to individuals and corporations for financial literacy education activities. According to the Council, only 44% of Wisconsin school districts have a one-semester financial literacy requirement. For many years, Wisconsin has hosted the National Institute on Financial & Economic Literacy, which has provided teacher training to hundreds of educators. In 2006, Wisconsin also created a nationally recognized Model Academic Standards for Personal Financial Literacy for school districts to use when implementing financial literacy curricula into their classrooms. See: <http://www.champlain.edu/centers-of-excellence/center-for-financial-literacy/report-making-the-grade>

The Community Development Corporation of Long Island's (CDCLI) *Financial Fitness* program is a proven effective financial literacy curriculum that has shown marginal increases in low-income families' financial literacy. The program focuses on recipients of federal rental housing vouchers, providing a five-session course that covers topics such as credit, savings, and budgeting. In 2010, the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) at the University of Wisconsin in Madison analyzed the program's effectiveness, finding that financial literacy education led to improved financial behavior among the program's very low-

income clients. The primary evidence of behavior change was a significant increase in savings account balances (an additional \$362), as well as a decrease in the percentage of clients whose FICO scores were below 680. See: [www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc271c.pdf](http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc271c.pdf)

#### *Driver's license*

While two-thirds of 16-18 year olds in Wisconsin overall have their driver's license, the rate is significantly lower for teens from low-income households. A UW-Milwaukee (UW-M) report noted that only 25 percent of 16-18 year olds in the City of Milwaukee had a driver's license, compared to 66 percent of teens in the Milwaukee County suburbs.

Two key barriers to obtaining a driver's license are access to the funds needed to pay for driver's education and the license, and for fines/fees related to suspension orders. The UW-M study found that the large number of teens with suspension orders related to juvenile offenses (i.e., curfew violations, underage drinking) contributed to the very low percentage of central city teens with a driver's license. Suspension orders prevent teens from obtaining an instruction permit until all fines are satisfied and a \$50 reinstatement fee paid to the Department of Transportation. See <https://www4.uwm.edu/eti/dot.htm>

With regard to the first barrier, access to a car and a driver's license can be critical to getting a job, but it is much more difficult for low-income households to pay the \$443 bill for driver education, a permit and a license. This can leave a young person unable to obtain a juvenile work permit or eliminate his or her eligibility for jobs that require a license. In Dane County, the *Access to Opportunity* initiative provides free drivers education to 50 low-income teenagers in the Madison Metropolitan School District each year, and is working with local teen mentoring programs to identify adults to help these teens obtain their behind-the-wheel hours. Dane County is also looking into lowering fines for suspension orders related to juvenile offenses.

#### *How to look for a job*

Regional workforce development boards offer programming (funded by the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, or WIOA) focused on youth entering the labor force.

The *Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board* (MAWIB) offers several programs, including:

- *WIA Youth Services*, which helps low-income youth to develop long-term, individual and progressive career plans, rather than simply focusing on "just getting a job." It provides coaching activities and resources to help develop skills for career development and job retention. The operates the program, which includes: (1) Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion; (2) Alternative secondary school offerings; (3) Summer employment opportunities; (4) Paid and unpaid work experiences; (5) Occupational skills training; (6) Leadership development opportunities; (7) Support services; (8) Adult mentoring; (9) Follow-up services; and (10) Comprehensive guidance and counseling.
- *Transform Milwaukee Jobs Foster Care* program, an employment program that offers unemployed qualified foster care youth immediate work.
- See <http://milwaukeeewib.org/job-seekers/youth/#wia> for additional programs in Milwaukee

The *North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board* (NCWWDB) provides oversight, guidance and direction for the WIOA Title I-B Youth program, whose goal is to provide career awareness and employment information services to low-income in-school youth and out-of-school youth with barriers to employment. The goal is for program participants to increase their earnings and future employability.

The program is available in nine counties: Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Wood and Vilas.

#### **4. What effective post-secondary education programs are available to low-income parents?**

(Context: how can low-income parents get the post-HS education/training they need to advance, whether vo-tech or other; both what is available and what is being done to encourage/ accommodate them to be able to successfully complete such programs, given family/economic constraints.)

National data show that higher educational attainment leads to higher earnings, lower unemployment rates, increased family stability, and improved outcomes for children. Communities across the US have taken different approaches to boost the education attainment level of low-income, at-risk populations with the goal of increasing access to the American Dream and offering a pathway to self-sufficiency.

Barriers to working parents' ability to attain a postsecondary education include tuition costs, limited childcare options (affordability and quality), and transportation, according to *The Working Poor Families Project* (WPFP), a national initiative to strengthen state policies and programs that influence the advancement of low-income working families. The project encourages states to include non-academic student support services in their strategies to increase college completion, especially at community colleges, where more than half of students are non-traditional adult students and more than a third are first generation students. They support a framework that includes non-academic supports and services: helping students pay for college; providing access to family supports for student parents, promoting career development to ensure students are on the right path to gaining these skills and credentials needed to move into a family-supporting career, and strengthening personal competencies to develop the emotional and life skills needed to persist in college. For more information:

[www.workingpoorfamilies.org/reports\\_and\\_pubs/](http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/reports_and_pubs/)

Access to apprenticeships and career pathways are also instrumental to improving the economic prospects of low-income workers.

#### Wisconsin RISE Partnership:

The *Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) Partnership*, administered by the WI Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Technical College System, is working to make college and workplace success an attainable reality via Career Pathways that provide low-income working adults with realistic opportunities to develop advanced technical skills and earn college credentials. Developed by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Career Pathways approach has shown early encouraging signs of success. Between calendar years 2012 and 2014, 1,370 students participated in Career Pathway Bridge programs during their study period. Of these, 74% completed all of the postsecondary credits associated with the Career Pathway Bridge; nearly 50% completed at least one postsecondary credit after completion of the program, and 25% enrolled in 12 postsecondary occupational credits.

For more information, see:

<http://risepartnership.org/>

[http://www.cows.org/data/files/Wisconsin\\_Career\\_Pathways\\_v4\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.cows.org/data/files/Wisconsin_Career_Pathways_v4_FINAL.pdf)

[http://risepartnership.org/Media/Default/pdf/RISE\\_Career\\_Pathway\\_Bridge\\_Evaluation\\_10.2.14.pdf](http://risepartnership.org/Media/Default/pdf/RISE_Career_Pathway_Bridge_Evaluation_10.2.14.pdf)

#### Gateway to College National Network:

Partially funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the *Gateway to College National Network* helps transform high school dropouts into college graduates by incorporating a combination of intensive academic and non-academic supports. Located on community college campuses, supports include helping students hone basic skills in reading, writing and math, developing individual college graduation plans, and teaching time management and stress management skills. Initial evaluation of the Gateway to College model conducted by Pacific Research and Evaluation showed that 73.2% of participants who earn their high school diploma continued on to attend post-secondary education.

For more information, see: <http://www.gatewaytocollege.org/assets/pre-grad-final-report.pdf>  
<http://www.mdrc.org/publication/gateway-college>

#### Working Families Success Network (WFSN) and Achieving the Dream

The *Working Families Success Network* is a group of nonprofit organizations and community colleges that uses a model based on three core service areas: employment and career advancement, income enhancement and work supports, and financial and asset building services. A review of these programs showed that asset building and financial education services were associated with achievement of major outcomes, including term to term retention rates of 80% or higher. In 2015, the model expanded to 19 institutions in four states (Arkansas, California, Virginia and Washington) and entered into collaboration with *Achieving the Dream*; this collaboration integrates the WFSN model within community colleges' existing student success and workforce development efforts. See:

[www.mdcinc.org/resources/publications/center-working-families-community-colleges-clearing-financial-barriers](http://www.mdcinc.org/resources/publications/center-working-families-community-colleges-clearing-financial-barriers)

#### Opening Doors

Funded by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), *Opening Doors* demonstrations tested a range of services and interventions to improve college outcomes for low-income students. Launched in 2003, *Opening Doors* was the first large-scale random assignment study in a community college setting. The demonstration pursued promising strategies that emerged from focus groups with low-income students, discussions with college administrators, and an extensive literature review. Collaborating with six community colleges across the country, MDRC helped develop and evaluated four distinct programs based on the following approaches: financial incentives, reforms in instructional practices, and enhancements in student services. Colleges were encouraged to focus on one strategy but to think creatively about combining elements of the other strategies to design programs that would help students perform better academically and persist toward degree completion. See:

[www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief\\_27.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief_27.pdf). The programs and their effects follow:

*Financial incentives* - One site (Louisiana) used performance-based scholarships paired with counseling, targeted to low-income parents attending community college. The program resulted in students earning more credits and showing more persistence to complete a degree.

*Instructional reform* – one site (Brooklyn, NY) created learning communities, in which incoming students had linked courses; were provided enhanced counseling and tutoring, as well as a text book voucher. The approach resulted in increased number of courses passed and credits earned, and moved students more quickly through requirements.

*Enhanced student services* – two programs in this area: enhanced academic counseling and enhanced targeted services. The first (northern Ohio) had a modest positive effect on registration choices, while the second (Los Angeles) resulted in an increased number of credits earned, positively impacted students' moving off probation and increased GPA.

**Benefits Access for College Completion (BACC)**

This demonstration (in CA, KY, OH, MI, NY & PA) embedded access to public human services programs on community college campuses within financial aid or academic advising offices; it raised staff and faculty awareness of services; they in turn connected students to these services. Students receiving multiple public benefits demonstrated higher degree persistence and completion rates. See: [www.equalmeasure.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/BACC-Final-Report-FINAL-111914.pdf](http://www.equalmeasure.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/BACC-Final-Report-FINAL-111914.pdf)

## Meeting 2 Questions and Responses

### **1. What are Wisconsin's current public and private investments in technical colleges and in job training, inside and outside prison? Are these programs effective? What examples of effective practices exist in other states?**

*Wisconsin's public investments in technical colleges: Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS)*

Sixteen colleges and 50 campuses deliver career and technical education. In 2013-14, WTCS had 71,643 full-time equivalent students: 89% in a postsecondary program, 7% in basic education, and 4% in continuing education.

- Of the 2014 graduates surveyed in 2015, 92% were employed, and 84% were employed in Wisconsin
- Public investment in WTCS (2013-15): State \$112 million; federal \$48 million, local \$614 million
- For additional information on WTCS, see [WTCS Board 2013-15 Biennial Report](#)

*Wisconsin's public investments in job training: Department of Workforce Development (DWD)*

DWD has primary responsibility for the state's employment and training services, and offers a broad spectrum of employment programs and services, supported through multiple funding streams (federal, state and/or local match funds). Its overall investment in job and employment training for 2013-2015 was approximately \$100 million. Major DWD employment and training programs include:

- *Apprenticeships\** — hosted 7,755 apprentices in SFY 2015
- *Dislocated Worker Services (DWS)*—served 1,869 individuals in SFY 2015
- *Job Service Programs (JSPs)* — in 2013-2015, there were 592,199 job seeker registrations; 2,800 new employer registrations; and 600,000 job openings posted via the Job Centers
- *Career Pathways\* (a.k.a. Regional Industry Skills Education or RISE)*—Career Pathway programs are present in the 16 technical college districts in Wisconsin. In 2013-15, there were 1,370 RISE participants.
- *Veterans Employment Programs (VEPs)*—the program served 3,142 veterans in SFY 2014
- *Wisconsin Fast Forward\* (WFF)* —in 2013-2015, WFF supported 145 grant projects that involved 13,800 trainees and 300 businesses

\*also serves high school age youth

For more information: [https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/Biennial/2013-2015\\_biennial\\_report.pdf](https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/Biennial/2013-2015_biennial_report.pdf)

*Wisconsin's public investments in job training: Department of Children and Families (DCF)*

DCF provides job training and employment services targeted to low-income parents with minor children, and to youth aging out of foster care. Total annual investment in job and employment training for 2013-2015, including federal and state resources, was approximately \$59.1 million. Major DCF job training and employment programs include:

- *Wisconsin Works (W-2) Program*— available to parents of minor children whose family income is below 115% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Each W-2 eligible participant meets with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP), who helps the individual develop an employability plan. In 2015, there were 29,000 total participants; of these, 11,000 (38%) obtained employment. Total cost in 2015 was \$44 million. For more information, see <http://www.dcf.wi.gov/w2/wisworks.htm>
- *Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ)* — A transitional jobs program in Milwaukee County that assists low-income adults and youth ageing out of foster care transition into stable unsubsidized employment. Also provides businesses with subsidized workers to better position themselves to expand and hire unsubsidized workers. Services are delivered by UMOS and the Milwaukee Area

Workforce Development Board. In 2015, over 1,100 individuals were served; of these, 346 obtained employment. Total cost was \$4.8 million. For more information, see [http://www.umos.org/workforce/transform\\_milwaukee.html](http://www.umos.org/workforce/transform_milwaukee.html) or <http://milwaukee.wib.org/job-seekers/youth/#transform>

#### *Wisconsin's private investments in job training*

Wisconsin does not track private investments in job training. The University of Wisconsin, WTCS and state agencies have a long history of investments in business-led, public-private partnerships. Examples of major private-public partnerships include:

- *Wisconsin Industry Partnership* (2008-2012), <http://www.cows.org/data/documents/1489.pdf>
- *Community Action Agencies (CAAs)* <http://wiscap.org/programs-services/programs/job-business-development/> and <http://wiscap.org/programs-services/programs/skills-enhancement/>

#### *Wisconsin's investment in education and job training for incarcerated individuals: Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC)*

DOC is the state agency responsible for providing education and job training programs to incarcerated individuals. These programs help prisoners obtain a high school or general education degree, and deliver technical training via partnerships with the WTCS and DWD. In 2015, DOC expended approximately \$21 million in support of employment and training re-entry services, which served approximately 25% of Wisconsin inmates (5,500 of 22,000). Other major DOC employment and training programs include:

- *Windows to Work (W2W)*--In 2015, W2W served 471 incarcerated offenders.
- *Community Corrections Employment Program (CCEP)* — served 1,059 incarcerated offenders in 2015.

In addition, Employment Specialists in DOC's Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) served 605 inmates in 2015.

#### *How effective are Wisconsin's prison-based education and job training programs?*

In June of 2014, DOC released its most recent "Recidivism after Release from Prison" [report](#). It indicates that the three year recidivism rate in Wisconsin decreased by 33.6% between 1993 and 2009.

#### *Practices in other states*

Examples of strategies used by other states to improve training and postsecondary education attainment:

- Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) - [www.aidt.edu](http://www.aidt.edu)
- New Jersey Talent Networks - [jobs4jersey.com](http://jobs4jersey.com)
- Kansas Works Initiative – <http://kansasworksstateboard.org>
- Michigan Regional Skills Alliances - [MiRSA](http://www.mirsa.org)

## **2. What is Wisconsin's current investment in vocational / technical programs? What examples are available?**

#### *Vocational and technical career education for youth: Department of Public Instruction (DPI)*

DPI redesigned high school curricula to integrate career-technical education pathways for students, as approximately 21% of Wisconsin's high school graduates go directly into the job market. DPI implemented *Career and Technical Education (CTE)* programs statewide to help students develop individualized career plans (ICP) that are compatible with their abilities, aptitudes and interests. DPI

collaborates with DWD and DCF to link high school students to vocational/technical programs. See <http://dpi.wi.gov/cte> or <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/cte/pdf/ctebrochure.pdf>.

#### *Vocational and technical training programs*

These programs are designed to help individuals prepare for employment, or find better jobs, by offering basic skills and occupational training, and/or industry-recognized credentials.

- *Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership – Milwaukee (WRTP)*--WRTP provides job training in areas such as health care, construction, and manufacturing to unemployed or disadvantaged individuals in Milwaukee. <http://www.wrtp.org/bigstep/>
- *Gateway Boot Camps*--Gateway Technical College offers fast-track opportunities for skills training and certification in Computer Numeric Control (CNC) Operations and Telecom / Cabling Installer. See <https://www.gtc.edu/business-workforce-solutions/boot-camps/cnc-boot-camp> and <https://www.gtc.edu/business-workforce-solutions/boot-camps/telecom-cabling>

In addition, as noted in Question 1, DWD and DCF programs include vocational and training components.

#### *Effective vocational and technical training programs*

- *WRTP—Milwaukee*--WRTP is an evidence-based program that was evaluated using a randomized control trial design (the gold-star in program evaluation) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 2010 (N=393). See <http://evidencebasedprograms.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Wisconsin-Sectoral-Training-RCT-Feb-2011.pdf>.
- *Career Pathways*—From 2012-14, there were 50 active career pathway programs in Wisconsin. These programs reached 1,370 students and accounted for approximately five percent of the state's total adult basic education population. Of these students, 74% (1,015) completed all the credits associated with their program. See [http://www.cows.org/data/files/Wisconsin\\_Career\\_Pathways\\_v4\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.cows.org/data/files/Wisconsin_Career_Pathways_v4_FINAL.pdf).
- *Wisconsin Fast Forward*—In 2015, Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) supported customized skills training for 14,011 workers at more than 300 Wisconsin businesses through 146 grants (3 rounds of funding) issued by the Office of Skills Development (OSD) that included nine industry-specific Grant Program Announcements (GPAs). See <http://wisconsinfastforward.com/pdf/wffAnnualReport2015.pdf>
- *Transform Milwaukee Jobs*—TMJ (which ran from 2010-2013) was evaluated in 2013 by the Economic Mobility Corp. A total of 4,076 people participated, and over half (2,050) secured unsubsidized employment. More than 800 businesses provided work for the job-seekers. Participants' average annual earnings prior to program entry was less than \$2,000. In the year after leaving the program, average annual income increased to \$5,296.

#### *Effective vocational and technical training programs in other states – a Sample*

- *WorkAdvance*: [Locations: Oklahoma, Ohio and New York]. A sector-based program for low-income adults that helps participants prepare for, enter, and succeed in quality jobs in high-demand fields by aligning training, job preparation and job placement with employer needs. Labor market sectors include information technology (IT), transportation, manufacturing, health care, and environmental remediation. See <http://www.mdrc.org/publication/workadvance/file-full>.
- *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/Employment and Training Program (SNAP/E&T) Pilot Programs*: [Locations: Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, and Virginia]. SNAP E&T pilot programs help SNAP

recipients obtain unsubsidized employment, increase earned income, and reduce their reliance on public assistance by gaining work-readiness training and other skills and/or employment experience. Mathematica Policy Research is in the process of completing randomized controlled trial evaluations at all four sites. See <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-employment-and-training-study>.

- *Sectorial Employment Programs*: [Locations: Boston, New York and Milwaukee]. Sectoral employment programs—training programs that focus on a certain industry—that have improved job outcomes for low-income adults who were struggling in the labor market. In Boston, workers were trained in medical billing and accounting; in New York, they were trained in information technology; and in Milwaukee, they were trained in manufacturing, construction, and health care. The Boston program provided longer-term job-specific occupational training, and the New York curriculum was designed with the industry A+ certification—a credential for service technicians used by many IT companies—in mind. In Milwaukee, programs were designed to fill specific immediate needs, sometimes at the direct request of employers. The programs ranged from up to eight weeks in Milwaukee to around twenty weeks in Boston. Evaluated in the Sectoral Employment Impact Study, in the year after the program, trainees in these three programs earned about \$4,000 more than nonparticipants per year—a 29 percent increase. See <http://www.aspenwsi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/TuningExecSum.pdf>.

**3. Are there existing evidence-based programs that reduce recidivism? What types of programs are more effective – those managed by the state or those that are faith based?**

*Evidence-based programming*

Research suggests effective correctional programs must address criminogenic needs in two key domains:

(1) those that aim to reduce criminal or anti-social thinking and behavioral patterns, and (2) those that aim to help people acquire manual or cognitive skills for application in the workplace. Programs designed to focus on the educational and training needs of offenders without addressing aspects of individuals' functioning linked to criminal acts are determined to be far less effective.

Correctional services have implemented a broad array of programs, ranging from interventions for juveniles (e.g. *Aggression Replacement Training* or *Multi-Systemic Therapy*) to prison-based therapeutic communities and after-care programs for substance-abusing offenders (e.g. *Amity* and *Vista*). Given the scale and diversity of the correctional services and agencies in the U.S., there is no integrated national strategy for program implementation. However, social policy research organizations, such as the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) have evaluated existing programs to provide guidance about how to build better programs.

For information on successful prisoner reentry programs, see:

<http://www.mdrc.org/publication/successful-prisoner-reentry-program-expands/file-full>

For information on evaluation and evidence-based practices related to employment-focused programs for ex-prisoners, see: <http://www.mdrc.org/publication/employment-focused-programs-ex-prisoners/file-full>.

Examples of promising programs:

- *Re-Integration of Ex-Offenders (RExO) Program*—the RExO program is designed to serve urban centers and areas of greatest need by providing mentoring, job training, case management, education, legal aid services, and other comprehensive transitional services to assist former prisoners with successful entry into the public workforce system. It also aims to capitalize on the strengths of faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) and their ability to serve prisoners seeking to reenter their communities following the completion of their sentences. Locations: AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, IL, IA, LA, MD, MA, MI, MO, NJ, OH, OR, PA, TX, WA). To access the full evaluation report of RExO, please see <http://www.mdrc.org/publication/evaluation-re-integration-ex-offenders-rexo-program/file-full>
- *Cognitive Behavioral Employment for Offenders Seeking Employment (CBE-EMP)*— (CBI-EMP) is designed for criminal and juvenile offenders who have moderate to high needs in the area of employment. The curriculum integrates cognitive-behavioral interventions with more traditional employment approaches and teaches individuals how to identify and manage high-risk situations related to obtaining and maintaining employment. Heavy emphasis is placed on skill building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development for the work environment. The curriculum is designed to allow for flexibility across various service settings and intervention lengths. (Locations: NY). For more information CBI-EMP, please visit [http://www.uc.edu/corrections/services/trainings/changing\\_offender\\_behavior/cbi-emptrainingoverview.html](http://www.uc.edu/corrections/services/trainings/changing_offender_behavior/cbi-emptrainingoverview.html)

In Wisconsin, DOC is focused on using evidenced-based strategies to guide and inform correctional services. All of the programming provided through the Becky Young Community Services: Recidivism Reduction Community Services (BYCS-RRCS) adheres to the national guidance regarding effective programming. In addition, in 2015, Wisconsin was awarded a grant from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to participate in a national Evidence-Based Decision Making Initiative focused on reducing offender risk and building collaborative evidence-based decision-making and practices in Chippewa, Lacrosse, Marathon, Outagamie, Rock and Waukesha counties. This grant will allow policymakers to identify services that are cost-effective and have the greatest impact on reducing recidivism. For more information on DOC's efforts to reduce recidivism and increase the use of evidence-based practices, please see <http://doc.wi.gov/about/doc-overview/office-of-the-secretary/reentry-unit>.

#### *Secular versus faith based programming*

Currently, no information is available that compares effectiveness rates of secular versus faith-based recidivism prevention programs nationally. However, a number of programs determined to be effective at reducing recidivism among offender populations, such as the RExO program noted above, include faith-based program components.

In Wisconsin, faith-based services offered by DOC and its contracted services providers are supportive in nature and do not cite recidivism reduction as their main objective. However, DOC has a number of chaplaincy services staff within their institutions and faith-based community organizations that provide evidence-based, scripted curricula such as "Thinking for a Change" and "Cognitive Interventions for Domestic Violence Offenders." These interventions were designed and have proven effective as recidivism reduction tools. Program activities are delivered by formally trained facilitators and engage offenders in cognitive restructuring, social skills development, and problem solving in order to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Social workers, teachers, and treatment specialists often facilitate evidence-based interventions and enlist the help of chaplains as co-facilitators.

**4. What information is available about ways to reduce the stigma associated with directing high school youth to attend a 2-year vocational / technical college rather than a four-year institution?**

Jobs in skilled trades provide a stable income and require a smaller investment than college, but negative attitudes about this career path remain. Some people see the trades as a path for students who aren't "book smart;" one survey of parents indicated that one in four thought the trades were for "weak" students.

However, technological advances mean these jobs are more technical and complex than ever, and more rewarding. They require math, science and English skills at more advanced levels than ever. Others view the trades as requiring hard physical labor, when in reality technology is doing most of the heavy lifting and workplaces are discouraging it to reduce injuries.

College isn't for everyone, but high schools continue to focus on preparing all students for a four year college, and the narrowing of the curriculum may squeeze out programs that could improve high school graduation rates, particularly for boys. As noted earlier, career academies and other types of technical education are available in schools to provide hands-on career training.

A recent study using data from the National Center for Education Statistics found that enrollment in Career Technical Education (CTE) is a strong predictor of staying in high school for boys. Other research has consistently shown a link between CTE and higher levels of engagement and achievement in high school.

Additionally, part of the stigma attached to not going to college is the earnings gap between high school graduates and those with a college degree. However, this is not always the case, as graduates of trade and vocational schools with strong connections to industry can enter the workforce prepared to earn good wages.

According to the president of the Association of Career and Technical Education, these approaches would reduce this stigma:

- Expose policymakers and their staff who do not actively value and support CTE to the research and student success stories that highlight the effectiveness of CTE in keeping students in school and employed after graduation.
- Improve the quality of teaching via professional development that focuses on weaving math, science and English into CTE courses and helping students apply their knowledge to real-world problems.
- Provide venues for high school students to start career exploration early and assist them to develop individual graduation plans consistent with their interests

See: <http://www.macleans.ca/education/college/jobs-report-the-tricks-of-the-trades/>  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/robertfarrington/2014/11/10/5-proud-alternatives-to-going-to-college/#21be561e3343>  
<http://fortune.com/2012/11/20/why-college-grads-are-heading-back-to-community-college/>  
<http://hechingerreport.org/even-vocational-high-schools-are-pushing-kids-to-go-to-college/>

See Questions 1 & 2 for information on opportunities for high school youth in Wisconsin.

**5. What is Wisconsin's data on home visiting nursing or other similar programs? Are there any parallel programs for new fathers, particularly in at-risk communities?**

*What are Wisconsin's home visiting programs?*

Wisconsin's home visiting program, *Family Foundations*, administered jointly by DCF and DHS, is focused on three goals: improve maternal and child health outcomes, ensure children are ready to learn upon entering school, and prevent child abuse or neglect.

*Family Foundations* currently funds seventeen "local implementing agencies" to deliver evidence-based home visiting services in 18 Wisconsin counties and 5 tribes. The evidence-based program models used by these agencies include *Healthy Families America*, *Early Head Start*, *Family Spirit*, *Nurse - Family Partnership*, and *Parents as Teachers*.

Services are voluntary, and provided in the homes of pregnant women, children from birth to five years, and their families. Home visitors and the families they serve collaborate to develop a set of goals and activities that they work on together, to ensure the healthy development of the child and the well-being of the family. Home visitors are nurses, social workers, or paraprofessionals who meet with program participants weekly. Visit activities may include accessing quality prenatal care; conducting screenings and assessments; providing health education; connecting the family to community resources; and offering strategies for parents to support their child's development.

*Who is targeted?*

Family Foundations home visiting programs target at-risk communities; within these, services are targeted to families identified as high risk for poor birth and child outcomes.

*What are the outcomes of interest?*

Improved child and maternal health; improved child development and school readiness; reduced incidence of child injury and maltreatment; improved family economic self-sufficiency; reduced domestic violence; and greater coordination of and referrals to other community resources and support.

*How many are served?*

In 2015, the program served 1,406 families statewide, in 18 counties and five tribal communities. [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/home\\_visiting\\_needs\\_assessment/default.htm](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/home_visiting_needs_assessment/default.htm)

*How effective are they?*

In general, evidence-based home visiting services have been found to improve parenting, school readiness, and both child and maternal health, and can help prevent child abuse and neglect. Research also shows that evidence-based home visiting can provide a positive return on investment to society, through savings in public expenditures (on emergency room visits, child protective services and special education), as well as increased tax revenues from parents' earnings. See "Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE)," available at: <http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/>; and "Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise," available at: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG341.html>

*Are there parallel programs for new fathers? How effective are they?*

While the evidence-based models implemented in Wisconsin have focused on working with mothers, at least ten of the 17 programs provided services to fathers or other male caregivers during 2015, and the remaining programs include outreach to fathers. The ten programs serve Brown, Burnett, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, and Winnebago, as well as all listed Tribes. The Brown County program has two fatherhood specialists on staff, who provide services to fathers such as home visits and support groups; the

Milwaukee DADS project, embedded in the City Health Department's programs, employs male home visitors to engage fathers early in the mother's pregnancy.

Nationally, evidence-based home visiting models have not focused on father engagement, but there is emerging work in this area. At the federal level, resources are being directed to build the research base regarding what works. More information on this and other research on fathers and home visiting can be found at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/home-visiting-approaches-to-father-engagement-and-fathers-experiences>.

Also, the *Fatherhood Research and Practice Network* examines the evidence base for fatherhood programs more broadly, highlighting the extent to which programs have worked to strengthen fathers' involvement, parenting skills, relationship quality, and economic stability: see <http://www.frpn.org/asset/making-good-fatherhood-review-the-fatherhood-research>.

*What effective practices exist in other states?*

The *Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness* (HomVEE) provides information about additional home visiting program models that have been proven effective: <http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/models.aspx>.

## **6. What is the rate of incarceration and the demographics of those incarcerated? What is the rate of non-violent incarceration? Are there alternatives to incarceration for some of them?**

*Current:*

In April of 2010, when the U.S. Census Bureau conducted its decennial count of Wisconsin residents, it found 12.8% (or 1 in 8) of African American men of working age were behind bars, in state prisons and local jails. This incarceration rate is the highest for African American men in the country and nearly double the national average of 6.7% (or 1 in 15). Wisconsin also leads the nation in incarceration of Native American men, with 7.6% of working age men (or 1 in 13) in state prisons and local jails in 2010, compared to 3.1% (or 1 in 32) nationally. By contrast, Wisconsin's rate of incarceration of white men is similar to the national average (1.2%, or 1 in 100).

State DOC records show incarceration rates for African American males in Milwaukee County are even higher: over half of African American men in their 30s and half of men in their early 40s have been incarcerated in state correctional facilities.

- Of these, one-third were incarcerated for non-violent offenses; of these, 40% were for drug-related offenses
- Two-thirds came from 6 zip codes in the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee.

*Background:*

From 1925 to the mid-1970s, the incarceration rate did not rise above 140 per 100,000. From 1980 – 2014, the incarceration rate increased dramatically, from 220 per 100,000 to a peak of 760 per 100,000 in 2008 and 2009, to 690 per 100,000 in 2014. Importantly, less than ten percent of the increase is attributable to changes in criminal behavior. Most of the increase is due to "tough-on-crime" policies; individuals now are imprisoned for crimes that they would not have been incarcerated for in the past (e.g., less serious crimes such as nonviolent drug offenses). In addition, those who committed offenses that would have previously warranted confinement receive much longer prison terms.

African-American males are disproportionately more likely to be incarcerated, due to policing and prosecutorial decisions; these decisions may not be intentional, but may be reflective of racial biases.

- Black children born in 2001 are 5.5 times more likely than their white counterparts to be incarcerated, a disparity that is historical but exacerbated in recent years.

There are strong effects of incarceration on employment and earnings for ex-offenders, as well as voter disenfranchisement. Recommendations to address systemic racial bias within the law include increasing the diversity of criminal justice actors with the most discretion (police officers, prosecutors and judges) and redirect funds used to expand incarceration towards social programs that improve the quality of education and enhance job skills and employment specifically of marginalized youth. The *National Investment Employment Corps* has been mentioned as a promising initiative.

Source: [Where Do We Go from Here? Mass Incarceration and the Struggle for Civil Rights](#): Economic Policy Institute, January 2016

*Proposed Alternatives:*

- Divert technical violators of probation rules, whenever appropriate, to community supervision to allow employed ex-offenders to continue working.
- Expand programs such as Windows to Work, a joint effort between the DOC and Workforce Investment Boards, to improve employment readiness, including restoration and repair of the driver's license for those with fixable problems. Those unable to secure or repair their license should be given assistance obtaining a state photo ID. Obtaining a driver's license and clearing up license suspensions and revocations should also be a priority employment initiative for those already released into the community.
- Expand transitional jobs programs for released inmates and for offenders diverted from incarceration especially in communities with high unemployment and job gaps.
- Target funding for employment training, job placement, and driver's licensing to the large population of black males approaching adulthood in Milwaukee County. Without such investments, the population incarcerated will likely only increase and public safety problems escalate.
- State aids funding free driver's education in school districts where the families of more than half of the students are poor or near poor would advance the engagement of low-income youth in the labor force.

Source: [Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males: Workforce Challenges for 2013](#): UW-Milwaukee Employment & Training Institute, 2013.

Other recommendations for reducing levels of imprisonment and improving life outcomes for offenders have been advanced by religious leaders and others throughout the state:

- The *Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System* (report and appendices posted at <http://www.epi.org/files/2014/MassIncarcerationReport.pdf>)
- "11x15 Campaign for Justice" at [prayforjusticeinwi.org](http://prayforjusticeinwi.org)
- Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm (<http://www.jsonline.com/news/crime/john-chisholm-criminal-justice-system-cant-solve-societal-problems-b99584618z1-329642371.html>)
- "The Cost of Corrections: Wisconsin and Minnesota" by the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, April 2010 at <https://wistax.org/publication/the-cost-of-corrections-wisconsin-and-minnesota>

## 7. What are the societal costs of putting the children of incarcerated men in foster care?

While there are societal costs, both financial and otherwise, associated with children being placed in foster care, fathers' imprisonment for the most part does not lead to their children being placed in foster care, because fathers are much less likely than mothers to be their children's primary (or only) caregiver prior to incarceration.

Nationally, 51% of incarcerated males were parents of minor children.

- Less than half (47%) of incarcerated fathers lived with at least one of their children prior to incarceration.
- Of those fathers who lived with their children before incarceration, only 26% were responsible for their children's daily care.
- Most (88%) reported that, while they were incarcerated, their minor children were being cared for by their other parent (e.g., their mother).
- Less than two percent (2%) reported that their minor children were in a foster care placement.

[Source: *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*: August 2008; accessed at <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf> ]

The impact of fathers' incarceration on a child in part depends on whether or not a child was living with his/her father before he was incarcerated, and whether or not the father was abusive prior to being imprisoned.

[Source: *Parents' Imprisonment Linked to Children's Health, Behavioral Problems*; accessed at <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2014/incarcerated-parents-and-childrens-health.aspx>]

There are indirect ways in which paternal incarceration could raise the future risk of children's foster care placement, by increasing household instability in one of four ways:

- Financial instability – includes that faced by a mother as a result of her children's father's incarceration, as well as the negative consequences for the father of a criminal record on employment; also, if the romantic relationship between the father and mother ends, father's financial household contributions are reduced.
- Maternal well-being – women whose partners are incarcerated are likely to experience increased mental health problems and reduced social support, leading to worse parental behaviors
- Changes in romantic relationships – in addition to incarceration increasing the likelihood of a romantic relationship ending, it also increases the likelihood of the mother finding a new romantic partner; the presence of a social father in the household after incarceration of the biological father has been linked to higher risk of child abuse.
- Diminished parenting ability of fathers – recently incarcerated fathers are less likely to be positively involved with their children and more likely to use violence against their children's mothers and to experience problems with both mental and physical health.

(See "If Dad is in Prison, Will His Children End Up in Foster Care?" – Focus: Volume 32, No. 2, Fall/Winter 2015-16 <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc322e.pdf> )