Setting Priorities and Fighting Poverty In Wisconsin

Emory University Conference on “Reducing Poverty: Assessing Recent State Policy Innovation and Strategies”

November 20, 2009

Jennifer L. Noyes
Jane Penner-Hoppe
Timothy M. Smeeding
Wisconsin Idea

- The boundaries of the University of Wisconsin should be the boundaries of the state.
- Research conducted at the University should be applied to solve problems and improve all aspects of human life.
Reducing Poverty & Enhancing Economic Opportunity: Three Key Strategies

- Planning and implementation of statewide strategic plan development.
- Identification and provision of key information needed to implement strategic plan.
- Compilation and analysis of poverty trends.
Strategy: Statewide Strategic Plan Development

- **Opportunity**
  - Creation of Department of Children and Families
  - Support from the National Governors Association

- **Ownership**
  - Office of the Governor
  - Department of Children and Families
  - Core Team

- **Centerpiece**
  - Governor’s Summit: “Building Bridges to Family Economic Success”
Poverty Reduction Goals

- A statewide poverty reduction goal was not adopted.
- Focus shifted to:
  - Assessing the current status of family social and economic well-being.
  - Identifying actions that could be taken to improve family economic security.
  - Prioritizing identified actions.
  - Assigning clear roles for taking these actions.
Governor’s Summit: “Building Bridges to Family Economic Success”

- Provided an overview of current family economic challenges throughout Wisconsin.
- Illustrated evidence-based, best practices in improving family economic security.
- Highlighted local and state innovations in improving family economic security.
- Identified clear roles and priority strategies of diverse partners involved in the Summit.
- Launched a Call to Action to develop a shared vision for a set of Wisconsin priorities to reduce poverty and increase economic opportunity.
Creation of Six Workgroups

- Job Creation
- Adult Education
- Building Family Income and Access to Support
- Family Support
- Housing
- Birth to Grade 12 Education
Current Status

- Each Work Group has developed and submitted recommended strategies to the Core Team.
- Core Team final report and recommendations to be presented in December 2009.
Strategy: Provision of Key Information

- Topical areas developed in consultation with the public officials.
- Focused on current knowledge regarding the efficacy of programs and policies.
- Draw on practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.
- Example: “State Innovations in Policies Supporting Healthy Families.”
Strategy: Development of Wisconsin Poverty Report

- Driven by Core Group interest in better understanding where and who was affected by poverty.
- Supplements ACS data with SNAP enrollment data.
- Initial report employed Federal poverty definition.
- Subsequent reports will employ a modified definition based on the NAS approach.
## Poverty in Wisconsin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enhanced Understanding of Poverty within Wisconsin

- Data from 2007 ACS.
- Analysis focuses on counties, multi-county areas, and six areas within Milwaukee County.
- Poverty and income cuts for all persons and for children.
- Information presented in several formats, including “poverty maps”: Red (highest); Dark Grey (above average); Light Grey (below average); White (lowest).
Overall Poverty

MAP 1
Poverty Rate for 2007
by Wisconsin PUMAs/PUMA Groups
For All Individuals

Poverty
- < 8%
- 6-10%
- 10-12%
- > 12%
### Moving Forward: Key Challenges/Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Change in plan leadership</td>
<td>• Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change in executive leadership</td>
<td>• Availability of federal funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continued economic challenges</td>
<td>• Other initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wisconsin Idea
Additional Information

- Governor’s Summit: “Building Bridges to Family Economic Success”:
  dcf.wisconsin.gov/building_bridges_summit/conference.htm

  www.irp.wisc.edu/newsevents/conferences.htm

- Wisconsin Poverty Report:
  www.irp.wisc.edu/research/wipoverty.htm#wipovreport