

# 2006 Annual Plan of Work

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## Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis in Pierce County

### **Situation Analysis and Program Priorities:**

The western Wisconsin counties of Pierce and St. Croix have seen growth in population as well as rental and home ownership costs. Growth in the job sector for west central Wisconsin has been in lower wage jobs that do not meet livable wage standards. In addition, the overall cost of living in these counties has created a need for more than one wage earner per family. The 204 self-sufficiency wage for a single parent raising one preschooler and one school-age child in Pierce County is \$19.01 per hour (\$21.18/hour in St. Croix) compared to \$13.25 in Dunn County. Self-sufficiency wage is the hourly wage needed in order to have sufficient after-tax income to meet basic needs without public or private assistance (Wisconsin's Women Network).

The fair market rent for Pierce and St. Croix counties is \$912 per month for a two-bedroom apartment, the highest in the state. The median sale price of a single-family home rose 54% in Pierce County between 1995 and 2002 (\$164,000 in 2003), far exceeding the state's overall increase in housing costs. During that same time period, the Consumer Price Index climbed at less than half that rate increasing only 17.8 percent.

According to the Department of Workforce Development, the jobs in greatest demand in western Wisconsin make \$10.11 or less per hour. This disconnect between livable wage jobs and escalating housing costs will continue to increase the burden on low and moderate income households.

The Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network (PSCHRN) was convened in 2001 to address the local issue of homelessness and, more broadly, affordable housing. Members of this group engaged the wider community in a successful effort to renovate a former convent into a multi-bed transitional housing facility for homeless individuals and families. The shelter has been filled to capacity since it opened in 2002. They renovated the adjoining chapel in 2005 to accommodate families on a waiting list.

The Pierce - St. Croix Housing Resource Network has documented the growing need for safe and affordable housing in the area. Communities, government and nonprofit entities need to respond to the housing crisis using a variety of tools, but first they must be educated about the possible options. One innovative solution that has been successful elsewhere is the community land trust; a nonprofit organization created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community while providing access to permanently affordable housing. One goal of the PSCHRN is to bring the community land trust model to western Wisconsin with the intent to demonstrate to developers, potential funding partners and the broader community that a community land trust is a useful tool to help address the affordable housing issue. A long-term strategy is to have a community land trust in place so that the housing stays affordable in perpetuity by removing escalating land values from the equation.

**Intended Outcomes for Priority Programs:**

Priority Program #1: Safe and Affordable Housing for Residents of Pierce County

Long Term Outcome:

1. Communities will increase their capacity to develop and preserve decent, safe and affordable housing.
2. Low to moderate income families will have greater access to safe, affordable housing options.

Medium Term Outcome:

1. Community partners will adopt and implement new practices that increase access to housing resources and housing stability.

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Community partners will build connections through multi-stakeholder coalitions, planning and other efforts.
2. Community partners will increase their knowledge related to the effectiveness of working on housing issues.
3. Community members will become more aware of the local housing situation.

**Implementation Plan – Inputs & Outputs:**

**Inputs:**

1. UW-Extension Staff
2. UW-Extension Housing Specialist, Marc Smith
3. Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network
4. Two Rivers Community Land Trust (Theresa Vanderbent)
5. Grant funding
6. Educational materials/curriculum related to affordable housing

<b>Outputs: Participation</b> (who we reach)	<b>Outputs: Activities</b> (what we do)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Service agencies and providers</li> <li>✓ Local developers and home builders</li> <li>✓ Faith-based community representatives</li> <li>✓ Local and county government officials</li> <li>✓ Landlords and realtors</li> <li>✓ Bankers and lenders</li> <li>✓ Local volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Continue to recruit new housing coalition members from key organizations in the community</li> <li>✓ Facilitate community presentations to increase awareness of local housing issues and resources: Shanty Town event planned for April 29, 2006</li> <li>✓ Educate key stakeholders about the value of community land trusts as an option for affordable housing</li> <li>✓ Continue to seek funding to support a community land trust (CLT) model for affordable housing in Pierce and St. Croix counties</li> </ul>

### **Evaluation:**

1. Number of people who increase their awareness of the affordable housing and homelessness issue as a result of participating in community awareness events.
2. Number of partners or key stakeholders who increase their awareness of affordable housing issues and resources.
3. Number of new partners or key stakeholders who commit to working on issues related to affordable housing.
4. Describe how partners have collected, shared and/or used local housing data using a survey format or personal contact (phone).
5. Describe ways in which the coalition's work has effected infrastructure changes related to local housing.

### **Professional Development:**

1. Attend housing-related presentations at the National Extension Association for Family Consumer Sciences annual conference in Denver (October 2006).
2. Attend district in-service: "Revitalizing Rent Smart: Helping Wisconsin Citizens Secure Stable Housing" (fall 2006/spring 2007).
3. Attend Shanty Town educational event (April, 2006).

## Parenting Education and Support

### **Situation Analysis and Program Priorities:**

Pierce County is considered urban because of its geographic proximity to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area even though a majority of the communities are rural. It has a population of 36,804 (2000 Census) with 98% of the population being white. Approximately 8,850 children under 18 years of age live in family households.

Families raising children are faced with more complex and challenging responsibilities due to the familial, social, economic and technological changes of our modern society. There is an increasing struggle to balance family and work.

The federal government will once again be facing severe budget limitations and the state will be making difficult decisions affecting the education and social service budgets serving families. The stalling economy and rising unemployment means hard times for families and communities, especially low-wage families with children.

The decline in state revenues is causing a budget crisis forcing cutbacks in funding for education, social services, and other programs serving working families. According to Jan Richter, outreach specialist at Connect For Kids, "Low and moderate-income parents struggling to maintain shelter, food, and health coverage during lay-offs are finding that decades-old safety nets have been weakened. The majority of low-wage workers are no longer eligible for unemployment compensation. Many welfare-to-work families who need government benefits to supplement poverty earnings may be running up against their lifetime time limits for eligibility". Families struggling with multiple stressors are often dealing with parenting issues as well.

The need for effective, high quality parent education programs remains a high priority in Wisconsin and Pierce County. There is a growing need among parents, professionals, community leaders and citizens for educational opportunities and technical assistance that can

expand their knowledge and skills about child rearing, especially in the area of evidence-based programs.

Evidence-based (or “science-based”) programs are approaches that have been developed and evaluated using scientific processes. These programs are grounded in a clear theoretical foundation and have been carefully implemented and evaluated. The evaluation findings have been subjected to critical review by other researchers and the program has been replicated in a variety of settings. Programs and approaches that are evidence-based have produced desired results in a number of different settings.

I am working closely with the Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley (located in St. Croix County) to expand educational programs and resources into Pierce County. In January, I was also invited to serve on the leadership board of the “Success by Six” Initiative supported by the local United Way and other family service agencies throughout Pierce and St. Croix counties.

One relatively new stressor to families and communities is the increasing use and production of methamphetamine in Pierce and St. Croix counties. Local law enforcement, schools, human service agencies and other organizations are struggling to provide more comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies. The judicial and medical costs associated with this drug are astronomical and a larger portion of the county budget is being targeted towards enforcement and treatment.

The River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY) has been addressing issues of alcohol and other drug abuse in the River Falls school district for over ten years. Two of their major goals include: 1) reducing substance abuse among youth, and 2) increasing positive family communication and strengthening parental boundaries.

In my work with the RFPFY, I have collaborated with UW-River Falls (UW-RF) staff on projects related to the effects of adolescent alcohol and drug abuse on the mental health and ultimately the academic success of college students. UWRF counseling staff report that more and more students are seeking assistance for feelings of being “overwhelmed” as early as the third week of school rather than at semester time as in years past. Some of these students turn to inappropriate and ineffective stress management behaviors such as alcohol or other drug use among others.

I am currently working with colleagues from UW-Extension (Dianne Weber, Washburn County Family Living Educator), UW-River Falls, UW-Superior and UW-Barron to help research and respond to the mental health crisis on campuses. The plan is to develop a curriculum that focuses on specific solutions and best practices in preventing mental health problems during mid to late adolescence. Since the goal is to address the issue from a prevention standpoint, the primary target audience will be high school students who intend to pursue some form of post-secondary education and their parents/caretakers.

### **Intended Outcomes for Priority Programs:**

Priority Program #1: Increasing utilization of **evidence-based** parenting and family programs

#### Long Term Outcome:

1. Families who participate in **evidence-based** parenting programs will have more optimal child development outcomes and reduced youth and family problems.

#### Medium Term Outcome:

1. Community partners and volunteers will increase their use of **evidence-based** programs.

2. Families who participate in **evidence-based** programs will improve their parenting practices

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Families and individuals will become better informed and connected to community programs and resources thereby improving their overall health and well-being.
2. Community partners and volunteers will increase their understanding of, awareness of, and access to **evidence-based** programs.

Priority Program #2: Research-based and Best Practices Parenting and Family Programming

Long Term Outcome:

1. Families who participate in research-based and best practices parenting programs will have more optimal child development outcomes and reduced youth and family problems.

Medium Term Outcome:

1. Families and other caretakers of children who participate in research-based content and best practices parenting or family education programs will improve their parenting practices.

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Families and individuals will become better informed and connected to community programs and resources thereby improving their overall health and well-being.
2. Parents and other adults who care for children will increase their knowledge and use of positive communication and parenting practices.
3. The River Falls Community Partnership for Youth and other collaborations focused on children and families will function effectively to create and strengthen community capacity to meet the needs of children, youth and families.

**Implementation Plan – Inputs & Outputs:**

**Inputs:**

1. UW-Extension Staff
2. UW-Extension State Specialists
3. River Falls Community Partnership for Youth
4. Research-based parenting education curriculum and materials
5. Evidence-based parenting education curriculum and materials
6. Funding for training and purchasing materials
7. Local community leaders
8. Strengthening Families Program (SFP) Training
9. Program evaluation tools
10. Donations for food for SFP
11. UW-River Falls (UW-RF) student volunteers
12. UW-RF teaching and guidance staff
13. UW-RF survey research center staff
14. UW-Superior staff: Brent Notbohm and Tom Notton (filmmakers)

<b>Outputs: Participation</b> (who we reach)	<b>Outputs: Activities</b> (what we do)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Parents and grandparents and other caretakers</li> <li>✓ Childcare providers</li> <li>✓ Teachers, other school staff and administrators</li> <li>✓ NEAFCS members</li> <li>✓ NAE4-HA Conference attendees</li> <li>✓ Home visitors</li> <li>✓ Separated and divorced parents</li> <li>✓ Young families</li> <li>✓ UW-RF staff and students</li> <li>✓ UW-Barron staff and students</li> <li>✓ River Falls Partnership for Youth members</li> <li>✓ Students preparing for college</li> <li>✓ Parents of students preparing for college</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide technical support and parenting education and support programs for the River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY).</li> <li>2. Teach RFPFY members how to use the logic model for developing programs (to be used in applying for the federal Drug-Free Communities grant).</li> <li>3. Network and develop working relationships with local agencies, organizations, schools and families to help support healthy families and communities in Pierce County.</li> <li>4. Organize and teach parenting portion or “Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth 10-14” in the Fiver Falls School District (Fall 2006).</li> <li>5. Teach “Bully Prevention” to Pierce County families (Spring 2006)</li> <li>6. Teach “Bully Prevention” at the Northwest Parenting and Family Education Conference at Washington State University Vancouver (March 16, 2006)</li> <li>7. Teach “Raising Your Spirited Child” for Pierce County families (Spring 2006).</li> <li>8. Teach “Overindulgence” to Pierce County families (Spring 2006)</li> <li>9. Teach “Overindulgence and Teaching Responsibility” at UW-Stout Early Childhood Education Conference (April 2006).</li> <li>10. Teach “Overindulgence and Teaching Responsibility” at NEAFCS conference in Denver (October, 2006)</li> <li>11. Teach “Overindulgence and Teaching Responsibility at”</li> <li>12. NAE4-HA conference in Milwaukee (October, 2006)</li> <li>13. Coordinate funding and distribution of the monthly, age-paced “Parenting the First Year” Newsletter to parents of children born at the River Falls Hospital.</li> <li>14. Co-author and coordinate distribution of monthly Young Families Newsletter to Pierce County families.</li> <li>15. Coordinate distribution of “Parenting Together While Apart” newsletter for non-traditional families in Pierce County.</li> <li>16. Participate as member of the Pierce-St. Croix Tobacco Coalition by providing educational resources as it relates to health education in the community.</li> <li>17. Participate as member of the Area Health and Mental Health Services Network by providing educational resources as it relates to health and mental health education in the community (quarterly).</li> <li>18. Review and update local family living web page (quarterly).</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Monthly radio show on family living related topics (ie. Parental involvement in schools, internet safety and children, sibling rivalry, etc).</li> <li>20. Provide health-related information at the Pierce County employee health fair (April 2006).</li> <li>21. Participate as member of the Success by Six Leadership Board.</li> <li>22. Assist is expanding Family Resource Center educational programs into Pierce County.</li> <li>23. Participate as member of the Coordinated Services Team/Wraparound (pilot in Ellsworth and Prescott School districts)</li> <li>24. Participate as member of the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to Methamphetamines.</li> <li>25. Assist in planning, implementing and evaluating community meth forums in Pierce, Polk and St. Croix counties (April/May 2006).</li> <li>26. Participate as member of the Western District Urban Initiative on Methamphetamine team.</li> <li>27. Assist in developing web site for meth information.</li> <li>28. Complete research for College Transition project (2006).</li> <li>29. Develop College Transition curriculum (2006-07).</li> </ol>
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**Evaluation:**

1. Retrospective evaluation of the Raising Your Spirited Child class.
2. Retrospective evaluation of Bully Prevention classes.
3. Review and make recommendations for organizations in the RFCPFY using the logic model to apply for Drug-Free Community grant funding.
4. After session evaluation for “Overindulgence and Teaching Responsibility” to Early Childhood and NW Parenting and Family Education conference attendees.
5. River Falls Partnership for Youth group member survey to assess effectiveness of coalition activities and leadership.

**Professional Development:**

1. Attend and teach at Northwest Parenting and Family Education Conference at Washington State University-Vancouver (March 2006)
2. Attend and teach at Early Childhood Education Conference at UW-Stout (April 2006)
3. Attend parent education related presentations at the National Extension Association for Family Consumer Sciences annual conference in Denver (October 2006)
4. Attend and teach at the NAE4-HA Annual Conference (October 2006)