



MARATHON COUNTY EXTENSION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

Date & Time of Meeting: **Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 3:00pm**

Meeting Location: **Courthouse Assembly Room, Courthouse, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI 54403**

Committee Members: Rick Seefeldt, Chair; Becky Buch, Vice-Chair; Bobby Niemeyer, Crystal Bushman
Kim Ungerer, David Baker, Tom Rosenberg

Marathon County Mission Statement: Marathon County Government serves people by leading, coordinating, and providing county, regional, and statewide initiatives. It directly or in cooperation with other public and private partners provides services and creates opportunities that make Marathon County and the surrounding area a preferred place to live, work, visit, and do business. (Last updated: 12-20-05)

Committee Mission Statement: Provide the leadership for implementation of the Strategic Plan, monitoring outcomes, reviewing, and recommending to the County Board all policies related to educational and economic development initiatives of Marathon County.

Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the **telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number:**

Phone#: 1-408-418-9388 Access Code: 146 235 4571

When you enter the telephone conference, **PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!**

The meeting will also be broadcasted on Public Access or at <https://tinyurl.com/MarathonCountyBoard>

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Public Comment (15 Minutes)** (Any person who wishes to address the committee during the "Public Comment" portion of the meetings, must provide his or her name, address, and the topic he or she wishes to present to the Marathon County Clerk, or chair of the committee, no later than five minutes before the start of the meeting. All comments must be germane to a topic within the jurisdiction of the committee.)
4. **Approval of the August 3, 2023, Extension, Education and Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes**
5. **Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination**
 - A. Marathon County Government's Role in Providing Affordable High-Quality External Child Care
 - B. Marathon County's Role in Providing Affordable Housing
 - C. Consideration of Request from WI RNG VDG LLC for Adoption of Initial Resolution Regarding Solid Waste Disposal Revenue Bond Financing for Renewable Natural Gas Production Plant Project
6. **Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance, Resolution, or Policy**
 - A. 2024 Marathon County Public Library Budget
 - B. 2024 UW-Extension Contract
 - C. Discussion of HR, Finance & Property Committee's 2024 Proposed Budget and possible recommendations regarding modifications
7. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion**
 - A. MCDEVCO'S Monthly Report
 - B. Library Monthly Report
 - C. UW - Extension Monthly Report
 - D. UWSP - Wausau Report
8. **Next Meeting Date & Time, Announcements and Future Agenda Items**
 - A. Committee members are asked to bring ideas for future discussion.
 - B. Next meeting: Thursday, November 2, 2023, at 3:00pm
9. **Adjournment**

*Any Person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 261.1500 or email countyclerk@co.marathon.wi.us one business day before the meeting.

SIGNED _____ s/s Rick Seefeldt
Presiding Officer or Designee

EMAILED TO: Wausau Daily Herald, City Pages, and other Media Groups

EMAILED BY: _____

DATE & TIME: _____

NOTICE POSTED AT THE COURTHOUSE

BY: _____

DATE & TIME: _____



MARATHON COUNTY EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA WITH MINUTES

Date & Time of Meeting: **Thursday, August 3, 2023 at 3:00pm**

Meeting Location: **Courthouse Assembly Room, Courthouse, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI 54403**

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Rick Seefeldt | Present |
| Becky Buch | Present |
| David Baker | WebEx |
| Bobby Niemeyer | Absent |
| Tom Rosenberg | Present |
| Kim Ungerer | Present |
| Crystal Bushman | Present |

Staff Present: Administrator Leonhard, Kurt Gibbs, Michael Puerner, Leah Giordano, Jeremy Solin, Ozalle Toms, Supervisor Lemmer, Supervisor Robinson WebEx, Kim Trueblood WebEx,
Others Present: Kimm Weber, Melanie from MCDEVCO, Elsa Duranceau, Representative Pat Snyder, Kelly Borchardt WebEx, Kelly Westlund WebEx

1. **Call Meeting to Order** – Chair Seefeldt called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Public Comment:** Kelly Borchardt commented on Childcare.
4. **Approval of the July 6, 2023, Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes** - Motion by Rosenberg, Second by Bushman to approve the minutes. Motion carried on voice vote, unanimously.

The agenda was taken out of order with no objections. Starting with 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 7C proceeding to 6A, 6B1, 8 and 9

5. **Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination:** None
6. **Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance, Resolution, or Policy**
 - A. Resolution recommending the provision of funding for the Marathon County Historical Society and MCDEVCO in the 2024 Annual Budget consistent with previous funding allocations: Motion made by Rosenberg second by Bushman to keep the funding the same. Motion made by Baker second by Ungerer to amend the resolution. Voting Aye; Ungerer, Bushman, Buch and Baker, Voting No Rosenberg and Seefeldt. Discussion followed with questions and answers. Baker called the question, no objections. Motion made by Ungerer second by Bushman to send the resolution to the full board. Motion carried with Ungerer, Bushman, Buch and Baker voting Aye and Rosenberg and Seefeldt voting No.
 - B. Continued discussion to develop recommendations relative to the County's role in supporting access to affordable, high-quality childcare and affordable housing
 1. Consideration of Supervisor Baker's resolution draft: Baker explained his resolution. Discussion was had. Chair Seefeldt tabled the discussion until next months meeting with no objections from the committee.
7. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion**
 - A. Kelly Westlund – Extension Housing Programming: Kelly Westlund the Bayfield County Housing Educator gave a presentation. Representative Pay Snyder talked about the legislative side of housing. Discussion was had with questions being asked and answered.
 - B. MCDEVCO's Monthly Report: Kimm Weber gave the MCDEVCO update explaining Gap funding and Micro funding along with POUTS and sharing the monthly calendar.
 - C. Library Monthly Report: The library report was given by Leah Giordano. Leah stated the summer programs are in full swing and going well and the Athens branch is coming along nicely.
 - D. UW – Extension Monthly Report: Jeremy Solin reported that the 4H program is at the fair. He also noted that the foodwise program will be going into the school setting.

E. UWSP – Wausau Report: Dr. Oz gave the monthly report stating there will no longer be the Taste of Jamaica. They are looking for food trucks to sell food during the lunchtime.

8. **Next Meeting Date & Time, Announcements and Future Agenda Items**

A. Committee members are asked to bring ideas for future discussion.

B. Next meeting: It was mentioned that the next meeting should be September 7, 2023, neither Chair nor Vice Chair will be able to attend. No date was set.

9. **Adjournment**

Motion by Bushman, second by Rosenberg to adjourn. Motion Carried on voice vote, unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by Kelley Blume, Deputy County Clerk

DRAFT

SEPTEMBER 2022



Off Track: An Assessment of Wisconsin's Early Care and Learning System for Young Children

By Angela Rachidi, Ph.D.



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A P R E F A C E T O

Off Track: An Assessment of Wisconsin's Early Care and Learning System for Young Children

Raising children, as can be fully appreciated only after you've done it, takes place in real time. They eat, sleep and grow whether you're ready or not. So as parents supply children with the most crucial material treasure they ever will receive — a stable, loving home — many rely on some outside help in caring for their children while earning a living. Wisconsin long ago decided to assist low-income parents in finding good help.

How is Wisconsin doing at this? Not so well.

Here, an eminent Wisconsin-based scholar and Badger Institute visiting fellow, Angela Rachidi, examines the current landscape, looking at how Wisconsin spends about \$400 million a year in federal and state taxpayer money to subsidize childcare and early learning. Crucially, she looks at how the government's efforts to improve the quality of childcare has increased costs, diminished parents' options and resulted in fewer children accessing the help that taxpayers offer.

And Rachidi lays out steps that Wisconsin policymakers can take to fix things — specifically how they can reduce the deadening weight of the state's hand and, instead, give more authority to parents and childcare providers.

Her recommendations are urgent: Wisconsin's future adults are growing and learning in real time, whether their parents — and the state's assistance — are ready or not.

— *Badger Institute*



Off Track: An Assessment of Wisconsin's Early Care and Learning System for Young Children

By Angela Rachidi, Ph.D.

Introduction

A recent report by a bipartisan group of experts on economic and family policy stated, “The research evidence indicates that, on average, children who have a) two parents who are committed to one another, b) a stable home life, c) more economic resources, and d) the advantage of being intended or welcomed by their parents are more likely to flourish.”¹ This underscores the conventional wisdom that parents and family form the foundation for early childhood development.

Fortunately, the majority of young children in the United States grow up in an environment that lends itself to healthy development, mainly through their relationship with their parents and other loving adults. However, not all children have the same advantages. Certain circumstances, often outside the control of parents, can make healthy development more challenging — circumstances such as poverty, stressful work schedules and other home and life challenges.

The government can play an important role in early childhood development by helping children and families when they face instability and economic insecurity. The government has a long history of providing resources to help close the development gap between low-income and other young children, with programs dating back to the Great Depression.² However, it was not until 1965, with the implementation of Head Start, that the federal government began to assume greater responsibility for assisting disadvantaged children.³

By 1990, the federal government created the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to help low-income families afford childcare so that parents could work.⁴ Welfare reform in 1996 transformed the provision of childcare assistance to low-income families even more by consolidating funding streams into the Child Care and Develop-

ment Fund (CCDF), and expansions to the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) also helped low-income families offset childcare expenses.

Scientists have consistently shown that healthy brain development in the first few years of life profoundly improves future outcomes for children.⁵ The Center on the Developing Child describes the importance of early brain development in this way: “Healthy development in the early years provides the building blocks for educational achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, lifelong health, strong communities and successful parenting of the next generation.” Scientists also recognize that adverse experiences or trauma early in life can impede brain development in ways that make the achievement of positive outcomes more challenging. For this reason, childhood experts argue in favor of publicly supporting early care and learning to ensure that all children have similar opportunities for healthy development.

Early care and learning is a general term that incorporates childcare with education and development activities and typically refers to programs involving children before they enter kindergarten. Most commonly, we think of children attending an outside facility with other children, supervised by unrelated adults. However, early care and learning can encompass a wide variety of settings where young children (birth to age 5) spend their time when they are not with their parents. It includes children cared for by relatives or friends, family childcare (sometimes called in-home childcare because it takes place in the provider’s home) or church-based nursery schools.

While not unique to Wisconsin, the structure of early care and learning and childcare programs within the state creates a disjointed system that can be challenging to coordinate.

In recent decades, arguments in favor of publicly supported early care and learning opportunities for young children have merged with the desire for policies that help parents find safe and affordable childcare while they work. Today, early care and learning is largely synonymous with childcare, and government policies seek to both support the development of children at an early age and support the employment of parents. Additionally, some policymakers have moved beyond advocating for public support to close the development gap or to support employment for low-income parents — instead favoring universal publicly funded programs.

This report explains the current early care and learning policy landscape at the federal level and in Wisconsin and assesses the effectiveness of the system. The evidence suggests that an overemphasis on quality regulation likely has driven some childcare providers out of the market, resulting in fewer low-income children served by Wisconsin Shares (the state’s subsidized childcare program) and less overall parental choice and higher costs, without measurable improvements in outcomes.

Recommendations include consolidating leadership and organization for early care and learning at the state level, reforming the regulatory framework for early care and learning, improving the data infrastructure, developing a new “Birth to Age 5” strategic plan for Wisconsin and exploring education savings accounts to help families offset child-related costs.

Evidence Base for Early Care and Learning

The emphasis on early care and learning in U.S. policymaking stems from the proliferation of brain science in the past several decades pointing to the outside importance of the early years for cognitive development.⁶ Nobel laureate and economist James Heckman has spent the bulk of his career researching early childhood education programs, and he argues for focusing public policy on early childhood development:

“A critical time to shape productivity is from birth to age five, when the brain develops rapidly to build the foundation of cognitive and character skills necessary for success in school, health, career and life. Early childhood education fosters cognitive skills along with attentiveness, motivation, self-control and sociability — the character skills that turn knowledge into know-how and people into productive citizens.”⁷

However, Heckman’s work is often misunderstood, and people mistakenly use it to argue for placing every child away from their parents into a childcare setting at an early age. In truth, Heckman believes strong families are crucial for positive child development, though he also acknowledges the importance of early childhood investments for vulnerable children when their family life places them at a disadvantage, arguing:

“Every child needs effective early childhood supports — and at-risk children from disadvantaged environments are least likely to get them. They come from families who lack the education, social and economic resources to provide the early developmental stimulation that is so helpful for success in school, college, career and life. Poor health, dropout rates, poverty and crime — we can address these problems and substantially reduce their costs to taxpayers by investing in developmental opportunities for at-risk children.”

One question is whether the government should be involved in the early care and education of young children at all. State and local governments play a large role in K-12 public education, and some people believe that responsibility should extend to younger children. However, the care of young children rightfully falls primarily to the family, with questions around the government’s role largely falling to the licensing and regulating of childcare providers and assisting families in paying for it. Although debate remains over the proper role for government in the early care and learning of children, the preponderance of evidence suggests that an important role for the government is to help disadvantaged children with targeted public investments at an early age.⁸

Research also shows that children do better when they experience environments conducive to healthy development. Most important is the time that young children spend with their parents and families, but when children must be away from their parents, settings

The results point to a highly regulated system, likely overburdening providers, while serving a declining number of families and limiting childcare choice for families, with very little evidence of effectiveness for children.

should be conducive to early childhood development and make children better off. Regrettably, the record of achievement for large-scale, government-funded pre-kindergarten programs in this regard is lacking.

Children who participate in universal pre-kindergarten programs may be more kindergarten-ready than children who do not participate, but academic gains quickly fade after entering kindergarten.⁹ Yet, the research also shows that these programs can be effective when they target disadvantaged children, operate on a small scale and offer children stable and consistent interactions with caring adults. When programs do not meet these criteria, they often produce weak or negative results.

When referring to the evidence in 2014, the former head of the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education, Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst, expressed skepticism about universal government programs, stating, “I conclude that the best available evidence raises serious doubts that a large public investment in the expansion of pre-K for four-year-olds will have the long-term effects that advocates tout.”¹⁰

One of the best examples, and perhaps the most rigorously studied statewide pre-kindergarten program, comes from Tennessee. That program actually showed that participants in pre-K did worse on academic outcomes over time than those in the control group.¹¹ Relying on the results from Tennessee and other statewide pre-K programs, authors of a consensus report wrote:

“There is persuasive evidence from earlier small-scale programs like the Perry Preschool and Abecedarian programs that long-term impacts are possible under some circumstances. But the evidence that contemporary scaled up state or district pre-K programs can produce such impacts is not conclusive. The path ahead must combine well-documented program innovations at the state and district level with evaluation research of broader scope and greater rigor.”¹²

One notable exception is for children from disadvantaged backgrounds who participate in early care and learning programs. A 2017 report from a group of early childhood experts stated, “Researchers who study pre-K education often find that children who have had early experiences of economic scarcity and insecurity gain more from these programs than their more advantaged peers.” The authors posited that the positive effects of early care and learning programs for children facing adversity stem from brain science — that is, the programs make up for challenges to their cognitive development in the home.¹³

There is ample evidence to support the claim that early care and learning programs benefit disadvantaged children the most. For example, in the 1960s and ’70s, two evaluations of service-intensive early education programs have provided researchers with a wealth of information on the advantages of early education for disadvantaged children. Research using data from the Perry Preschool Project found that positive changes to behaviors resulting from the program led to better lifelong outcomes for participating children.¹⁴ Evidence from the Abecedarian Project in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, found similar

long-term benefits for children who participated. Both programs, however, targeted children from disadvantaged backgrounds, were very well-resourced and offered intense full-day programs.

However, few programs since then have been able to replicate their results, whether it be for disadvantaged children or those from more affluent families. Attempts to implement universal childcare programs without attention to the intensity and quality of the program largely have failed. A government-funded universal childcare program in Quebec that was started in the 1990s, for example, resulted in worse behavioral and health outcomes for participating children.¹⁵

Another study exploring longitudinal survey data found that being in nonrelative childcare resulted in worse externalizing behaviors for children, such as acting out or harming oneself or others.¹⁶

This leads to the conclusion that in order for publicly funded early care and learning to work, it should target the least advantaged children and replicate aspects of successful programs. Though the scientific literature is still progressing, development science describes the importance of “serve and return” interactions that occur between caregivers and children — for example, a caregiver making eye contact, smiling or cooing and enticing a response from the child. According to the Center on the Developing Child, “When caregivers are sensitive and responsive to a young child’s signals and needs, they provide an environment rich in serve and return experiences.”¹⁷ The question is how does government regulate early care and learning programs to maximize these serve and return experiences?

There has always been a flaw in the belief that states, with support from the federal government, could regulate childcare into high quality. Although the YoungStar rating system is well-intentioned, it likely has had a negative effect on the number of children receiving childcare subsidies in Wisconsin by pushing providers out of the subsidy system altogether.

Regrettably, many states answer this question by imposing excessive regulations in an attempt to improve quality of care. Though well-intentioned, this often reduces childcare supply and drives up costs, making it harder for low-income families to access high-quality care in the end. One reason for this unintended consequence is the government is not well-equipped to regulate “quality” early care and learning opportunities for children. Even the early childhood experts who summarized the scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects in 2017 struggled to offer concrete actionable guidance, instead identifying:

“several factors that together seem to be ‘good bets’ for supporting strong early care and learning in pre-K and other settings: the use of 1) curricula that are known to build foundational skills and knowledge, coupled with 2) professional development and coaching that enable teachers 3) to create organized and engaging classrooms.”¹⁸

A summary of the evidence from my American Enterprise Institute colleague Max Eden suggests that the federal government’s record in trying to produce quality early care and

learning programming is not good. He notes the mixed evidence on Head Start, acknowledging that while research showed that an early cohort of Head Start participants experienced positive results, later cohorts did not.¹⁹ Eden also notes the mixed evidence on the federal government's childcare assistance program for low-income families. Research has shown that childcare subsidies for low-income families increase maternal employment, but the outcomes for children who receive a subsidy appeared worse than those who do not receive a subsidy.²⁰

One potential reason for the poor outcomes associated with certain early care and learning programs involves the poor quality of childcare it funded. This became a particular concern during the early 2010s when policymakers perceived the childcare funded by CCDBG to be poor quality.²¹ Coupled with the push to expand early care and learning opportunities during President George W. Bush's and President Barack Obama's administrations, this led to a bipartisan compromise and focus on quality during the reauthorization of the CCDBG in 2014, including increased funding to achieve higher-quality childcare.

Childcare markets are still feeling the implications of decisions around CCDBG reauthorization. While the push for higher-quality childcare for low-income families in the subsidy program was consistent with the evidence showing that low-income children could benefit, states had to figure out how to implement quality requirements. How were states supposed to regulate individual childcare programs to ensure quality curricula, professional development and organized classrooms? The answer has become clear. Many states chose overly burdensome regulation and procedures that pushed many childcare providers out of the market, replaced by higher-cost center-based care.

In the next section, I provide background on early care and learning at the federal level and in Wisconsin, followed by a review of the data for Wisconsin over the past several years to illustrate trends in the overall childcare market and the subsidy program, Wisconsin Shares. The results point to a highly regulated system, likely overburdening providers, while serving a declining number of families and limiting childcare choice for families, with very little evidence of effectiveness for children.

Background on Early Care and Learning

Federal and State Financial Assistance for Early Care and Learning

The federal government provides funding across several programs to help states offer early care and learning opportunities. These programs generally target low-income children, with the exception of the federal child and dependent care tax credit, which is available to families higher up the income scale. Combined federal and state funding for Head Start, childcare subsidies and home visiting programs alone totaled almost \$400 million for Wisconsin families in federal fiscal year 2019. The federal government provides millions more in tax credits and tax preferences for families with childcare expenses.

Table 1 details the major federally funded childcare and early care and learning programs.

Table 1

| Major federally funded early care learning programs | | |
|--|---|---|
| Program | Description | FY 2019 expenditures in Wisconsin |
| Head Start | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides early childhood education and development activities for low-income children to promote school readiness. • Operates through grants from the federal government to the local level. • Serves children ages 3-4 and younger through Early Head Start. • Federal funds flow directly to Head Start programs, with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Head Start Association offering support to local community programs. • The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families regulates Head Start programs similar to other childcare/preschool programs. | Federal funding ²² \$155,322,531 |
| Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) / Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federally funded childcare subsidies (with state matching requirements) to low-income families. Funded with discretionary funds through the CCDBG and mandatory funds through the Social Security Act — funds pooled together in the CCDF. • States administer the subsidy program with guidance from the federal Office of Child Care in the Administration for Children and Families. States must submit a CCDF state plan every three years. • Families must meet income eligibility criteria and participate in an approved childcare setting. They receive funds to help pay for childcare but must pay a co-payment and be reassessed for eligibility periodically. | Federal and state funding ²³ \$224,971,577 |
| Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports home visiting services by health professionals for families with young children who reside in communities with concentrations of poor child health and other risk indicators. • Provides federal grants to states to operate programs, supplemented by state funding. Provides regular in-home visits to participating families using evidence-based curriculum. • Wisconsin’s MIECHV program operates in collaboration between the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Health Services. | Federal funding ²⁴ \$8,587,993 (FY 2020 award) |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Preschool Development Grant (PDG)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal funding available to “build state capacity to develop, enhance or expand high-quality preschool programs, including comprehensive services and family engagement, for preschool-aged children from families at or below 200% of the federal poverty line.” Guidance later expanded to children birth to age 5. • Wisconsin received an initial Planning Grant and a Renewal Grant through the PDG. The PDG helped develop the Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan for 2021-2023. | <p>Approximately \$10 million (\$30 million over three years)²⁵</p> |
| <p>Child and Dependent Care Credit</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-refundable federal tax credit ranging from 20% to 35% of childcare expenses up to \$3,000 for one child and \$6,000 for two or more children. | <p>N/A²⁶</p> |
| <p>Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxpayers can exclude from their income \$5,000 to cover childcare expenses. The DCAP operates through the employer. • DCAP lowers taxable income and is not a tax credit. It must be used for qualified employment and childcare expenses. Participants must select an annual amount during an open enrollment period and use it or lose it. | <p>N/A²⁷</p> |

Source: Congressional Research Service, Early Childhood Care and Education Programs: Background and Funding, May 2016

State Licensing, Regulation and Quality Ratings

State governments are responsible for licensing and regulating early care and learning providers. In Wisconsin, the Department of Children and Families serves this function and publishes licensing rules and manuals to assist early care and learning providers with the process.²⁸ Different licensing rules apply to family childcare providers (when the provider cares for four to eight children, usually in the provider’s home) and group childcare providers (when the provider cares for more than eight children, usually in a childcare center).

In general, rules cover things such as supervision, staff, operations, physical settings, programming and transportation. Providers must apply for a license and pass an inspection, with licenses renewed every two years. Providers caring for fewer than four children can receive a certification, which is similar but with slightly fewer requirements than licensing.²⁹

In Wisconsin, early care and learning providers that accept subsidies are also required to participate in YoungStar, the childcare quality rating system.³⁰ YoungStar involves a self-assessment and a one- to five-star rating system operated by contracted observers. Providers must renew their YoungStar rating every other year. Payments through the federal subsidy program depend on the quality rating, and parents can review quality ratings when making decisions about placements.

What are the Implications for Wisconsin?

While not unique to Wisconsin, the structure of early care and learning and childcare programs within the state creates a disjointed system that can be challenging to coordinate. This administrative complexity, combined with a desire to regulate quality at the state level, has led to dramatic changes in the availability of childcare slots in Wisconsin and the number of low-income children receiving a childcare subsidies.

State officials are well aware of the deficiencies in the current early care and learning environment. Wisconsin conducted a statewide needs assessment on early care and learning in 2020 using funding from a federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG), followed by a more in-depth needs assessment in 2021. The report paints a concerning picture for families with young children in Wisconsin. According to the report, Wisconsin parents of young children struggle to access and afford quality childcare, while the early care and learning workforce perceives a lack of professional respect, adequate pay, benefits and diversity.³¹

One of the most glaring issues for Wisconsin leaders is the negative impact that state-level quality regulation has on the composition of childcare providers in the state and the availability of childcare slots. An analysis of total childcare slot capacity across Wisconsin's 72 counties by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) showed that overall capacity in Wisconsin was largely unchanged from 2005 to 2019, but licensed and certified family childcare slots declined by 38% (i.e., care provided to children usually in the home of the provider).³²

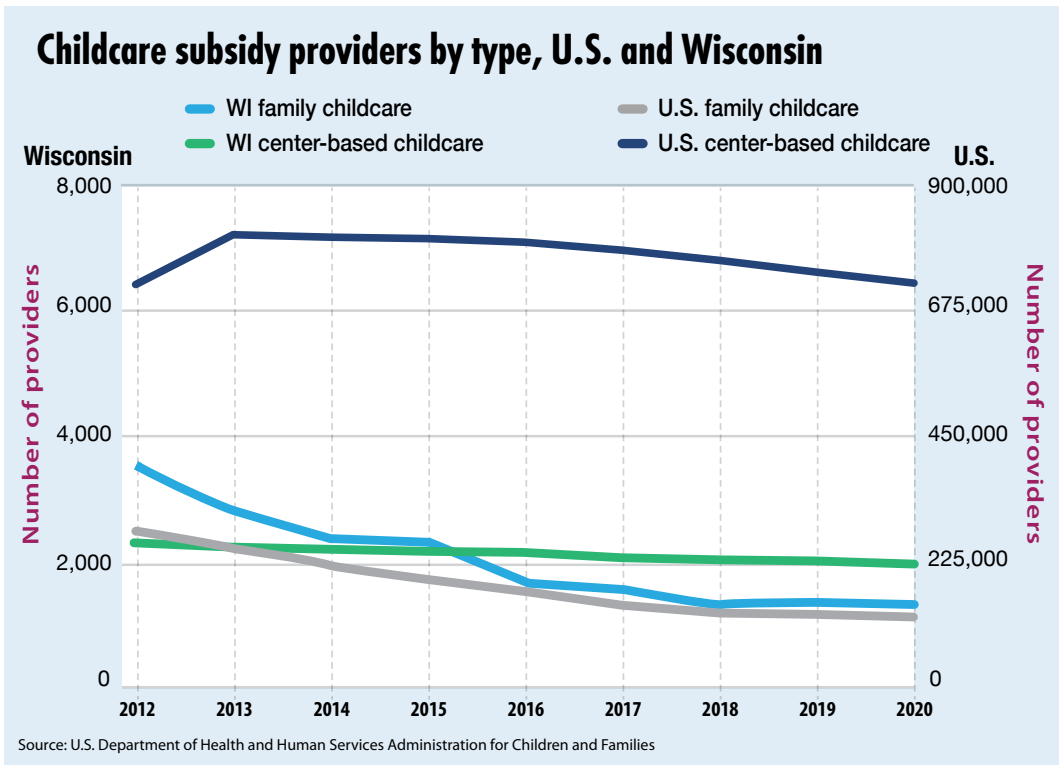
The reasons behind such a large decline in family childcare slots are likely many, and family childcare providers who were unable to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate childcare setting should have exited the system. However, overregulation and excessive government interference likely explains some of this decline, suggesting that an overhaul of the regulatory environment could help bring more family childcare providers back into the system.

The shift in the composition of available childcare slots from family childcare slots to center-based childcare slots also affects average cost because family childcare is generally more affordable than center-based childcare. Notably, the IRP analysis was unable to assess childcare slot capacity by age of child, although it is highly likely that the decline in family childcare has affected the availability of childcare slots for infants and rural families, given that family childcare is generally more flexible than group childcare.

The decline in family childcare slots overall corresponds to a similar decline in family childcare providers who accept vouchers from Wisconsin's childcare subsidy program, Wisconsin Shares. According to federal data, family childcare providers that accept subsidies declined by 63% from 2012 to 2019, compared to 14% for center-based providers (Figure 1). The trend was similar for CCDF providers at the national level, suggesting that the shift away from family childcare providers in the subsidy program is a nationwide issue, not unique to Wisconsin, although Wisconsin's decline has been somewhat more pronounced.

This trend in declining CCDF providers also corresponded with a decline in the total

Figure 1



number of low-income children served by Wisconsin Shares. According to an analysis by IRP, the number of children served by Wisconsin Shares declined by 35.4% between 2008 and 2018 (Figure 2). IRP found that the decline was steepest for children under age 2 and those in family childcare.³³ The reasons behind such a large decline are unclear, although

Figure 2

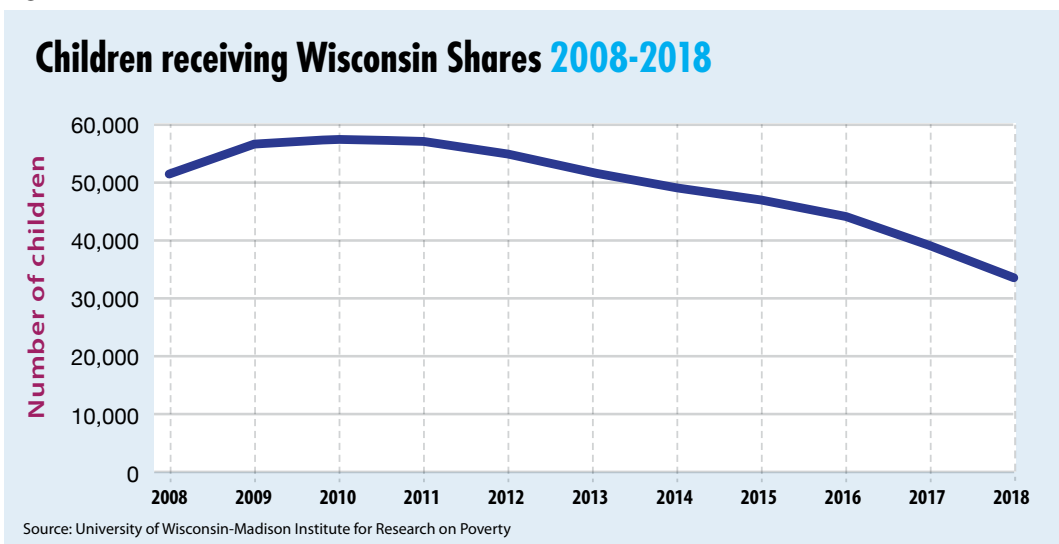
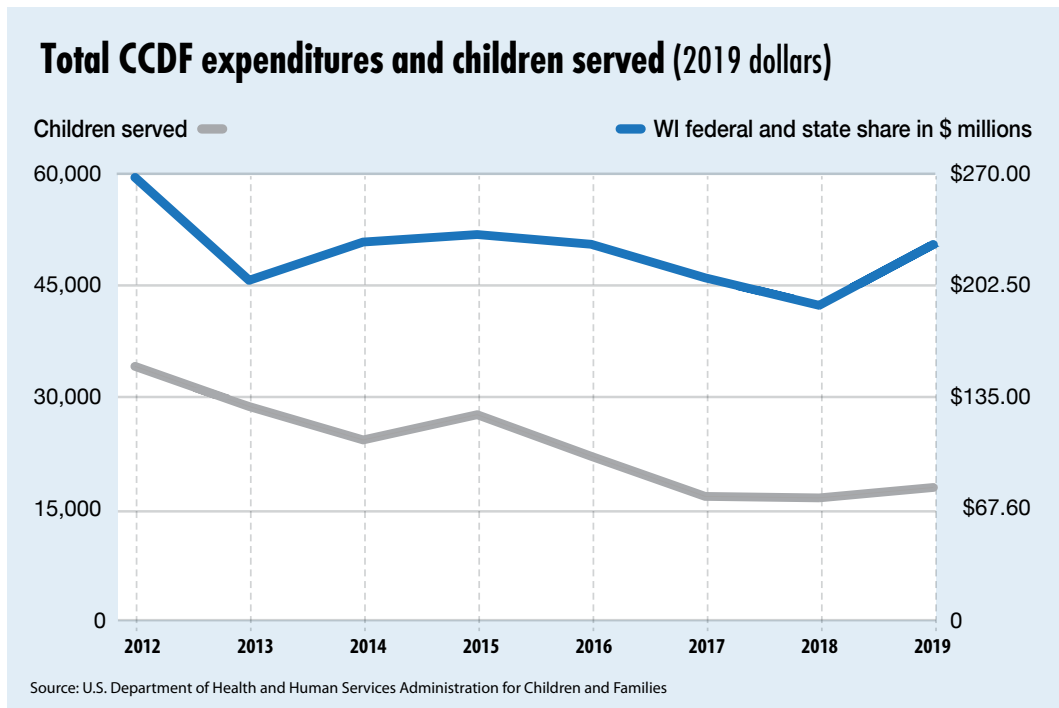


Figure 3



the IRP report concludes, “It is very unlikely that they could be explained by changes in poverty rates or family income, childcare capacity or demographic changes in the state.”

While changes in parental employment, income and the population of young children in Wisconsin likely explain some of the fluctuations in total children receiving Wisconsin Shares, the consistent downward trend corresponds to changes in the administration of the program, including the introduction of YoungStar in 2012 and rule changes resulting from CCDBG reauthorization in 2014. More research and better data are needed to draw concrete conclusions, but the push toward higher-quality childcare through regulation likely has played a role in fewer low-income children receiving a childcare subsidy in Wisconsin over time.

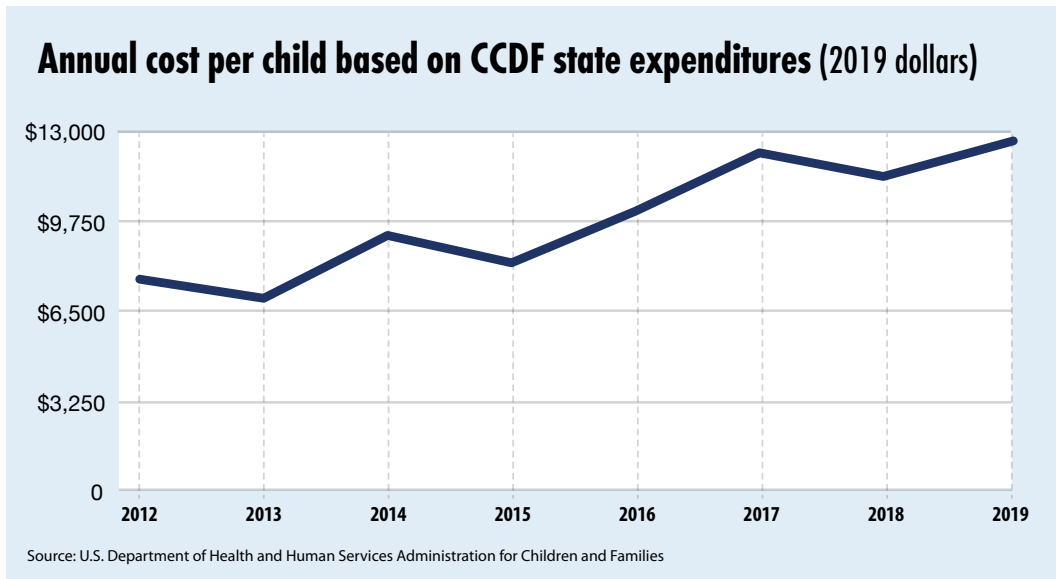
Total CCDF expenditures for Wisconsin, including the federal and state share, have remained relatively consistent since 2012 even though the number of children served has declined (Figure 3).

Although it is somewhat difficult to determine the precise cost per child served due to a lack of data on hours of care, these trends suggest the cost of care per child has increased (Figure 4). The increasing cost per child is consistent with reports from parents about the increasing cost of childcare through Wisconsin’s 2021 PDG needs assessments.³⁴

What is Driving These Trends?

Two major policy changes likely have affected the type of providers who participate in

Figure 4



Wisconsin's childcare market as well as the number of children participating in Wisconsin Shares: the implementation of YoungStar and the 2014 reauthorization of CCDBG. These policy decisions were motivated by the desire to improve the quality of childcare, driven by the evidence that high-quality childcare is more effective than lower-quality care for child development. However, as in many states, officials in Wisconsin have overregulated childcare providers under the belief that it would result in better outcomes for children. Regrettably, there is no evidence that it has positively affected child outcomes, and it likely has harmed them by restricting the availability of childcare and driving up costs.

The decline in children receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidies coincides with the 2012 implementation of the YoungStar rating system for childcare providers in the state. YoungStar requires providers that accept Wisconsin Shares subsidies to participate in the program, which creates a disincentive to participate. This is evidenced by the declining trend of children served in Wisconsin Shares beginning in 2012 and accelerating after the reauthorization of CCDBG in 2014. This likely stems from the focus of CCDBG reauthorization on quality and a push at the state level to enroll children in high-quality childcare.

A review of the rating criteria reveals why a family provider might not want to participate in YoungStar and might choose to leave the childcare business entirely.³⁵ Providers must do a self-assessment and develop a quality improvement plan. They must develop a registry program profile and have their operations observed by raters. Raters give higher scores to providers with higher levels of education, even though research shows a weak relationship between education level and childcare quality. In addition, providers must verify their education level, adding another layer of administrative burden. The list of requirements and evaluation criteria rate every aspect of the childcare provider's operation, including but not limited to the number of books, specific time requirements

for free play and parental communication requirements.³⁶ It is unsurprising that childcare providers might want to exit the system entirely.

There has always been a flaw in the belief that states, with support from the federal government, could regulate childcare into high quality. Although the YoungStar rating system is well-intentioned, it likely has had a negative effect on the number of children receiving childcare subsidies in Wisconsin by pushing providers out of the subsidy system altogether. All children receiving a Wisconsin Shares subsidy must use it at a YoungStar-rated provider. If a family does not have access to a YoungStar-rated provider, that family cannot use a subsidy.

If the YoungStar system was producing positive results for children, the burden it places on providers might be justified. However, state officials acknowledge that they have little evidence that children are doing better after the implementation of YoungStar. In a 2021 needs assessment, state officials acknowledged that Wisconsin does not have data on kindergarten readiness, making the assessment of the effectiveness of YoungStar impossible. Additionally, UW-Madison's IRP conducted an analysis and validation of YoungStar in 2016, finding that the tiered rating system did not translate into better outcomes for children. Specifically, "analyses of the data did not support the conclusion that children in more highly rated YoungStar programs, whether measured by star level or total rating points, predicted children's school readiness in the spring of the study year."³⁷

A New Approach to Support Early Care and Learning

Research shows that public investments in high-quality childcare for disadvantaged children can have positive long-term effects. It also shows that childcare assistance to low-income families increases employment, which offers poor families a path out of poverty. However, Wisconsin leaders have misapplied these two important research findings to the state's early care and learning infrastructure, resulting in higher-cost childcare, less parental choice and fewer children participating in Wisconsin Shares.

Regrettably, state leaders have reinforced this misguided approach issuing a Birth to 5 strategic plan in 2020 that doubles down on government regulation and seeks to increase childcare labor costs while illogically also promising to reduce the percentage of families' income spent on early care and learning.³⁸

There are several missing pieces from the state's approach to early care and learning, mainly the importance of the role of parents, as both caregivers and decision-makers. Instead of more regulation and higher costs, the answer to Wisconsin's early care and learning problems is to reduce government regulations and place more authority into the hands of parents and childcare providers.

Here is how Wisconsin can get its early care and learning system back on track.

1. Streamline Wisconsin's early care and learning program oversight to ensure accountability.

Wisconsin has a number of leadership bodies that oversee early care and learning programs at the state level, though childcare providers are scattered across the state. Addi-

tionally, Head Start programs operate at the local level but are licensed and regulated by the state Department of Children and Families. The DCF operates the YoungStar quality rating system through a contractor, and the state Department of Public Instruction oversees early care and learning model standards.

This complex governing structure lacks a formal accountability system and needs reform. As a starting point, a governor-appointed workgroup should review the existing structure, assess how other states organize their early care and learning programs, and suggest improvements to state policymakers. The goal of the workgroup would be to inform legislative and executive action to streamline Wisconsin's early care and learning program, including an emphasis on oversight and accountability.

2. Reduce the regulatory burden on childcare providers.

A 2016 assessment of YoungStar suggested that the tiered rating system had not resulted in better outcomes for children. Additionally, YoungStar likely has contributed to a decline in family childcare providers that has limited parental choice and driven up costs. A quality rating system can be worthwhile to help parents make decisions about early care and learning programs, but officials should not use it to drive providers out of the market entirely, especially when the result is less childcare availability and minimal impact on child outcomes. Additionally, the evaluation criteria for YoungStar ratings are overly prescriptive and limit autonomy among childcare providers. A governor-appointed workgroup with public and private stakeholders should review YoungStar and the evaluation criteria.

To diversify the early care and learning options for families, Wisconsin must reduce the regulatory burden on childcare providers. A review of YoungStar and the state's overall childcare regulatory framework should identify key steps to reduce the burden on childcare providers while still ensuring the proper health, safety and development standards are in place. The goal should be to help Wisconsin children flourish while keeping flexibility for families.

3. Develop a performance evaluation system and data infrastructure that measures key outcomes related to early care and learning effectiveness.

One of the most glaring deficiencies in Wisconsin's system is the lack of data. There is no Head Start data at the state level, no consistent data on childcare capacity or enrollment by type of provider and age of child, no pre-kindergarten data at the state level and no statewide kindergarten readiness data.³⁹ These limitations make any efforts by state leaders to operate an effective system impossible. Some efforts already have begun within the state bureaucracy to address these deficiencies, but state leaders must invest in a data infrastructure and develop a performance measurement system that assesses the effectiveness of the early care and learning system. The governor should appoint a data infrastructure workgroup to assess the technology and make recommendations to bring the system into compliance with 21st century expectations for data.

4. Develop a new Birth to 5 strategic plan that focuses on parents and providers.

The current system in Wisconsin follows a pattern seen across the country — parents and education professionals desire high-quality childcare, so states try to regulate childcare

toward quality. The problem is that quality is difficult to measure and often involves intangible factors such as the responsiveness of caregivers and their relationships with children. The evidence that YoungStar-defined quality does not lead to better school readiness for children supports this view. Because the evidence suggests that increased regulation has driven up costs and reduced the availability of childcare, especially subsidized childcare, the state needs a new approach.

One solution is to return more authority to parents and childcare providers to determine quality. Granted, state officials need to regulate certain health, safety and development requirements. However, parents are better equipped to determine quality than government officials who visit once per year or less. By improving competition among providers, parents will have more childcare options, lower costs and the ability to demand better quality.

A new Birth to 5 strategic plan for Wisconsin should incorporate the work mentioned above, including plans to streamline administration of the system, reducing the regulatory burden on providers and improving the data infrastructure. Generation of the strategic plan should stem from the governor's office or the leader of a newly created early care and learning governing structure rather than relegating it to the existing state bureaucracy. The intention is to avoid problems between state agencies around budget, authority and strategic direction.

5. Explore the creation of early education savings accounts to facilitate Head Start and Wisconsin Shares.

As part of a new Birth to 5 strategic plan, state officials should explore the creation of education savings accounts. Policymakers can model these after Pell Grants for low-income families or other flexible savings accounts for health and education expenses. The government could fund the accounts for low-income families and phase out assistance at higher income levels. All parents could contribute to the accounts in a state income tax-deferred way. Parents could use the accounts for early care and learning opportunities or other development or recreation activities.

Savings accounts also could give parents more flexibility to determine the right program mix for their children as well as the right employment level for their family. For example, the availability of some financial assistance to cover recreation activities for young children might give parents the flexibility they need to pursue less than full-time employment opportunities. Availability of savings accounts would not necessarily be linked to parental employment, meaning that stay-at-home parents could also benefit from the accounts. However, the program would link government assistance to employment to avoid work disincentives.

Conclusion

Birth to age 5 are crucial years for child development. Research shows that public resources can effectively help low-income parents work by providing childcare assistance and help close the development gap between disadvantaged children and their higher-income peers. However, a push in the past several years toward high-quality early care and learn-

ing in Wisconsin and across the country, although well-intentioned, likely has overburdened many providers, driving family childcare providers out of business, reducing access and increasing costs.

Throwing more money at an inefficient and ineffective system is not the answer. Instead, Wisconsin's leaders should revisit and consider reforming a few key areas, including the state's governance structure, regulatory framework, data infrastructure and strategic plan. Policymakers should think outside the box and organize the state's support for early care and learning to meet the demands of today's parents.

Rigid government programs and oversight cannot provide families the flexibility and help that they need when they need it. Policymakers could consider alternative ways to structure assistance for early care and learning programs through mechanisms such as education savings accounts or flexible spending plans.



Badger Institute takeaways

A push to regulate our way to higher-quality childcare has resulted in fewer options and higher costs. Simply spending more will not be effective.

Wisconsin should:

- Streamline Wisconsin's oversight of childcare and early learning, enabling now-absent accountability.
- Reform YoungStar to reduce the deterrent regulatory burden on providers.
- Begin collecting data on early childhood enrollment and outcomes.
- Reorient the state's strategy around granting more authority to parents and childcare providers to choose options they find best.
- Channel state subsidies through a parent-controlled mechanism such as education savings accounts. Allow unsubsidized parents to access such tax-deferred accounts, and make them independent of employment status to enable stay-at-home parents to benefit.

About the Author



Angela Rachidi is a senior fellow and the Rowe Scholar in poverty studies at the Washington, D.C.-based American Enterprise Institute. She is the founder and principal of Rachidi Research and Consulting, LLC. Before joining AEI, she was the deputy commissioner for policy research at the New York City Department of Social Services. Rachidi holds a doctorate in public policy from The New School in New York City, a master's degree in public administration from Northern Illinois University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Rachidi, a Badger Institute visiting fellow, lives and works in Middleton, Wisconsin.

Endnotes

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- ⁴ See the history of childcare funding: greenbook-waysandmeans.house.gov/book/export/html/291
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- ²⁰ See Chris Herbst and Erdal Tekin, "Child Care Subsidies and Childhood Obesity," *Review of Economics of the Household* 9 (September 2011): 349–78; Chris Herbst and Erdal Tekin, "The Geographic Accessibility of Child Care Subsidies and Evidence on the Impact of Subsidy Receipt on Childhood Obesity," *Journal of Urban Economics* 71, no. 1 (January 2012): 37–52; and Chris Herbst and Erdal Tekin, "The Impact of Child-Care Subsidies on Child Development: Evidence from Geographic Variation in the Distance to Social Service Agencies," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 94–116.
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- ²² eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/head-start-program-facts-fiscal-year-2019
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- ²⁴ mchb.hrsa.gov/programs-impact/programs/maternal-infant-early-childhood-home-visiting-awards-fy20

²⁵ dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/pdg

²⁶ The exact amount of child and dependent care tax credits for Wisconsin are not readily available.

²⁷ The exact amount of DCAP credits for Wisconsin are not readily available.

²⁸ See website for rules and manuals, dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules

²⁹ See website for rules and manuals around certification, dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification

³⁰ See website for more details on YoungStar, dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar

³¹ Statewide Needs Assessment Summary Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, October 2020, dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/statewide-needs-assessment-summary.pdf

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³³ dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/pdg-wisconsin-shares-recipe-memo.pdf

³⁴ See the 2021 PDG needs assessment, dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/2021-needs-assessment.pdf

³⁵ YoungStar Evaluation Criteria: Family Child Care 2021/2022, dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/ys-2021-22/evaluation-criteria/21-22-eval-criteria-family.pdf

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Katherine Magnuson and Ying-Chun Lin, "Wisconsin Early Child Care Study Findings on the Validity of YoungStar's Rating Scale: Executive Summary", May 9, 2016. See also dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/validationreport2.pdf and dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/validationexecutivesummary.pdf

³⁸ Preschool Development Grant, Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/b5-strategic-plan.pdf

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RESOLUTION # R-??-23
Marathon County Government's Role in Providing Affordable
High-Quality External Child Care

WHEREAS, a shortage of affordable, high quality child care is directly impacting Marathon County families and indirectly impacting Marathon County businesses through workforce shortages; and

WHEREAS, the EEED committee has been tasked with preparing recommendations for Marathon County Government's role in supporting affordable high-quality childcare, with input from non-EEED Supervisors and other Marathon County Stakeholders, per Marathon County's Strategic Plan Objective 10.3, Outcome Measure 3, and

WHEREAS, the certified family child care segment of the child care industry has been decimated, declining from 5000 certified family care providers statewide in 2001ⁱ to 580 in 2018ⁱⁱ, diminishing a substantial source of lower cost, high quality childcare slots, and

WHEREAS, at least one report indicates that state regulation, including the YoungStar rating system and the reauthorization of the CCDBG in 2014, has played a major role in the substantial decrease in the number of certified family care providers: "The answer has become clear. Many states chose overly burdensome regulation and procedures that pushed many childcare providers out of the market, replaced by higher-cost center-based care."ⁱⁱⁱ "Additionally, YoungStar likely has contributed to a decline in family childcare providers that has limited parental choice and driven up costs"^{iv}, and

WHEREAS, the Marathon County has an integral role in certified family child care as the Marathon County Department of Social Services is the local certification agency for certifying family care providers, and

WHEREAS, the state provides financial child care assistance to lower income families through Wisconsin Shares, with a state wide total of more than \$300,000,000.00 provided over the last 12 months to more than 17,500 Wisconsin families to assist in providing child care to more than 31,000 children^v, and

WHEREAS, family child care providers must be either certified or licensed to be eligible to accept Wisconsin Shares funding, and

WHEREAS, the federal and state government have provided \$10,641,766 of taxpayer funded subsidies to Marathon County child care providers since May 2020^{vi}, a level of funding which was not widely known to local taxpayers or local governments, and for which local input was not sought or approval received, and

WHEREAS, expanding childcare subsidies is contrary to the goal of increasing the number and percentage of self-sufficient households in Marathon County as stated in Marathon County's Strategic Plan Objective 10.3 Outcome Measure 1 adopted April 25, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that it is not the role of Marathon County Government to subsidize external child care using taxpayer funds from the property tax levy, the sales tax levy, or from APRA funds,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in general, the County believes that a significant part of the answer to Wisconsin's early care and learning problems is to reduce government regulations and place more authority into the hands of parents and childcare providers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County will identify state and county regulations that negatively impact the number of certified family child care providers in the County, and provide options for eliminating or mitigating these impacts, including but not limited to providing recommendations for feedback to the State and developing potential pilot programs to reduce unnecessary child care regulation while still maintaining high standards of health and safety. County staff are directed to provide a report to EEEDC detailing the results of this effort on a quarterly basis.

ⁱ Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners, "Working to Transform Early Childhood Education and Care", November 2001, Page 11

ⁱⁱ Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Division of Early Care and Education, "2018 Annual Report Early Care and Education in Wisconsin", March 2019, Page 22

ⁱⁱⁱ "Off Track: An Assessment of Wisconsin's Early Care and Learning System for Young Children." Angela Rachidi, Ph.D. SEPTEMBER 2022, Page 7, Page 14, Entire Document

^{iv} *ibid*, page 15

^v <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/stats>

^{vi} EEED Packet 20230706, page 22

CERTIFICATE OF WI RNG VDG LLC

WI RNG VDG LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (the “Borrower”), has requested that the County Board of Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “Issuer”) consider an “Initial Resolution Regarding Solid Waste Disposal Revenue Bond Financing for WI RNG VDG LLC Renewable Natural Gas Production Plant Project” (the “Initial Resolution”) on October 24, 2023, for the purpose of financing a project to be owned by the Borrower consisting of (i) design, development, construction and operation of a solid waste disposal facility for the purpose of converting dairy cattle waste to natural gas for sale on property owned by Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc., a Wisconsin corporation, at 5555 County Road A in the Village of Maine, Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “Project Site”), (ii) the lease of the Project Site to the Borrower for the production of renewable natural gas, (iii) acquisition and installation of an anaerobic digester and related equipment at the Project Site, (iv) capitalized interest during the construction period, (v) funding of a Debt Service Reserve Fund and other funds, if necessary, and (vi) payment of certain professional fees and costs of issuance (collectively, the “Project”). This certificate is delivered in connection with the Borrower’s request for the Issuer to issue conduit revenue bonds pursuant to Section 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes on behalf of the Borrower to finance the Project.

The undersigned hereby certifies, represents, and warrants to the Issuer as follows:

1. The undersigned is the Managing Member of Progressive EnergyCo LLC, which entity is the managing member of the Borrower, and as such is familiar with the Borrower’s affairs, properties and records, and in particular, with the Project and the conduit bond financing request to which this certificate relates.
2. The Borrower represents that it is able to negotiate satisfactory arrangements for completing the Project and that the Issuer’s interests are not prejudiced thereby.

Dated: September 22, 2023.

WI RNG VDG LLC

By: Progressive EnergyCo LLC, its Managing Member

By: 

R. Nick Cioll, Managing Member

HUSCH BLACKWELL

Lynda R. Templen
Senior Counsel

511 North Broadway, Suite 1100
Milwaukee, WI 53202
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September 5, 2023

Kim Trueblood, County Clerk
Marathon County
500 Forest Street
Wausau County, WI 54403

Steve Sabatke
Underwriting Manager
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
201 West Washington Avenue, 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53149

**RE: Not to Exceed \$45,000,000 Marathon County, Wisconsin
Solid Waste Disposal Revenue Bonds, Series 2023
(WI RNG VDG LLC Renewable Natural Gas Production Plant Project)**

Greetings:

We understand that in the near future, the Board of Supervisors of Marathon County, Wisconsin (the "County"), will take action on an Initial Resolution for industrial development revenue bond financing under Section 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes on behalf of WI RNG VDG LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, and/or a related entity, and/or a limited liability entity to be formed.

Section 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes requires that prior to the adoption of the Initial Resolution, a document containing a good faith estimate of the legal fees which will be paid from the bond proceeds must be filed with the County Clerk of the County and with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. This letter is that document.

Estimating legal fees at this stage in the proceedings is difficult because many of the most significant factual matters which may affect legal costs are not known in detail at this time. The size and structure of the bond issue have not been finalized. These and other matters normally are negotiated and determined after the Initial Resolution is adopted. As a result, the scope and amount of work which the

various parties may choose to refer to their lawyers can vary considerably as the economic aspects of the financing develop.

The relationship of these variables to an estimate of aggregate legal fees is evident from the principles which lawyers apply in charging fees for their services. Fees for services rendered by any Wisconsin lawyer should be consistent with, and grounded upon, the Rules of Professional Conduct for Attorneys of the American Bar Association, as currently enforced in Wisconsin. Those rules set forth the following basic guidelines:

A lawyer's fee shall be reasonable. Factors to be considered as guides in determining the reasonableness of a fee include the following:

- (1) The time and labor required, the novelty and the difficulty of the questions involved, and the skill requisite to perform the legal service properly.
- (2) The likelihood, if apparent to the client, that the acceptance of the particular employment will preclude other employment by the lawyer.
- (3) The fee customarily charged in the locality for similar legal services.
- (4) The amount involved and the results obtained.
- (5) The time limitations imposed by the client or by the circumstances.
- (6) The nature and length of the professional relationship with the client.
- (7) The experience, reputation and ability of the lawyer or lawyers performing the services.
- (8) Whether the fee is fixed or contingent.

The maximum principal amount of the bonds will not exceed \$45,000,000.

The following is a good faith estimate of the legal fees which will be paid from the proceeds of the bonds with respect to this financing:

COUNSEL

FEE ESTIMATE

Bond Counsel

\$137,500 plus disbursements*

Counsel to the Eligible Participant

It is unknown whether the legal fees and disbursements of such counsel will be paid from the proceeds of the bonds

Attorneys who have not yet been identified who may be involved in the transaction, including, without limitation, counsel to any Trustee involved, any real estate counsel involved, and any counsel to the initial bond purchaser(s)

It is unknown whether the legal fees and disbursements of such counsel will be paid from the proceeds of the bonds

The actual fee charged by each of the lawyers acting in this matter may vary considerably from the estimates provided above. Without purporting to be exhaustive, the following are reasons why actual fees may be higher or lower than the estimate: (i) assumptions regarding the size, structure, complexity and timing of the bond financing may change; (ii) clients may alter the scope of their lawyers' engagement; (iii) parties may require legal opinions or legal advice beyond that normally requested in similar financings; and (iv) unforeseen legal problems may arise.

We are writing and filing this letter to comply with the requirements of Section 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes. To the extent that we have estimated attorneys' fees other than our own, we did so on the basis of prior experience and information available to us at the time of writing this letter.

Please complete and return the receipt below by email. Thank you.

Very truly yours,


Lynda R. Templen

*Estimate only, based on par.

The undersigned acknowledge receipt of the foregoing this ____ day of _____, 2023.

**WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

By: _____
Steven Sabatke, Underwriting Manager

MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

By: _____
Kim Trueblood, County Clerk

MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

RESOLUTION NO. 2023 - _____

**INITIAL RESOLUTION
REGARDING SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL
REVENUE BOND FINANCING FOR
WI RNG VDG LLC RENEWABLE NATURAL GAS
PRODUCTION PLANT PROJECT**

WHEREAS, Section 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes (the “Act”) authorizes Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “Issuer”), to authorize the issuance and sale of bonds by the Issuer to construct, equip, re-equip, acquire by gift, lease or purchase, install, reconstruct, rebuild, rehabilitate, improve, supplement, replace, maintain, repair, enlarge, extend or remodel industrial projects; and

WHEREAS, WI RNG VDG LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, and/or a related entity, and/or a limited liability entity to be formed (collectively, the “Borrower”), desires to complete a project to be owned by the Borrower consisting of financing the (i) design, development, construction and operation of a solid waste disposal facility for the purpose of converting dairy cattle waste to natural gas for sale on property owned by Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc., a Wisconsin corporation, at 5555 County Road A in the Village of Maine, Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “Project Site”), (ii) the lease of the Project Site to the Borrower for the production of renewable natural gas, (iii) acquisition and installation of an anaerobic digester and related equipment at the Project Site, (iv) capitalized interest during the construction period, (v) funding of a Debt Service Reserve Fund and other funds, if necessary, and (vi) payment of certain professional fees and costs of issuance (collectively, the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, the cost of the Project to be financed with one or more issues or series of tax-exempt and/or taxable industrial development revenue bonds (the “Bonds”) issued under the Act does not exceed \$45,000,000; and

WHEREAS, the Borrower has requested that the Issuer now approve an initial resolution (the “Initial Resolution”) providing for the financing of the Project in an amount not to exceed \$45,000,000; and

WHEREAS, the Issuer is a county organized and existing under and pursuant to the laws of the State of Wisconsin, and is authorized to enter into revenue agreements with eligible participants with respect to the Project whereby eligible participants agree to cause said Project to be constructed and to pay the Issuer an amount of funds sufficient to provide for the prompt payment when due of the principal and interest on said industrial development revenue bonds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of Marathon County, Wisconsin, as follows:

1. Based upon representations of the Borrower, it is the finding and determination of the Board of Supervisors that the Project is a qualified “project” within the meaning of the Act and that the Borrower is an “eligible participant” within the meaning of the Act. The Issuer shall:

(a) Finance the Project in an amount not to exceed \$45,000,000; and

(b) Issue industrial development revenue bonds in one or more series of tax-exempt and/or taxable bonds (the “Bond(s)”), in an amount not to exceed \$45,000,000 in order to finance costs of the Project.

2. The aforesaid plan of financing contemplates, and is conditioned upon, the following:

(a) The Bonds shall never constitute an indebtedness of the Issuer within the meaning of any state constitutional provision or statutory limitation;

(b) The Bonds shall not constitute or give rise to a pecuniary liability of the Issuer or a charge against its general credit or taxing powers;

(c) The Project shall be subject to property taxation in the same amount and to the same extent as though the Project were not financed with industrial development revenue bonds;

(d) The Borrower shall find a purchaser for all of the Bonds;

(e) The County’s out-of-pocket costs, including but not limited to legal fees and trustee’s fees, in connection with the issuance and sale of the Bonds shall be paid by the Borrower; and

(f) A notice of public hearing required by federal law for purposes of Section 147(f) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in Marathon County and a public hearing shall be held to provide interested individuals or parties the opportunity to testify as to the Project and the issuance of the Bonds.

3. The aforesaid plan of financing shall not be legally binding upon the Issuer nor be finally implemented unless and until:

(a) The details and mechanics of the same are authorized and approved by a further resolution of the Board of Supervisors which shall be solely within the discretion of the Board of Supervisors;

(b) The County Clerk shall cause notice of adoption of this Initial Resolution, in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A, to be published once in a newspaper of general circulation in Marathon County, and the electors of Marathon County shall have been given the opportunity to petition for a referendum on the matter of the aforesaid bond issue, all as required by law;

(c) Either no such petition shall be timely filed or such petition shall have been filed and said referendum shall have approved the bond issue;

(d) The County Clerk shall have received an employment impact estimate issued under Section 238.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes; and

(e) All documents required to consummate the financing have been duly authorized and delivered.

4. Pursuant to the Act, all requirements that the Project be subject to the contracting requirements contained in Section 66.1103 are waived, the Borrower having represented that it is able to negotiate satisfactory arrangements for completing the Project and that the Issuer's interests are not prejudiced thereby.

5. The County Clerk is directed, following adoption of this Initial Resolution (i) to publish notice of such adoption not less than one time in the official newspaper of Marathon County, Wisconsin, such notice to be in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit A and (ii) to file a copy of this Initial Resolution, together with a statement indicating the date the Notice to Electors was published, with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation within twenty (20) days following the date of publication of such notice.

6. This Initial Resolution is an "initial resolution" within the meaning of the Act and official action toward issuance of the Bonds for purposes of Sections 103 and 144 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and the regulations promulgated thereunder. Furthermore, it is the reasonable expectation of the Issuer that proceeds of the Bonds may be used to reimburse expenditures made on the Project prior to the issuance of the Bonds. The maximum principal amount of debt expected to be issued for the Project on the date hereof is \$45,000,000. This statement of official intent is made pursuant to Treasury Regulations §1.150-2.

Dated: October 24, 2023

Approved as to Form:

Corporation Counsel

Finance Director

County Administrator

I, the undersigned, the duly appointed and qualified Clerk of Marathon County, Wisconsin do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Supervisors at a meeting of said County held in open session in accordance with the requirements of Subchapter V of Chapter 19 of the Wisconsin Statutes on October 24, 2023

Kim Trueblood, County Clerk

EXHIBIT A

NOTICE TO ELECTORS OF MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Supervisors of Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “Issuer”), at a regular meeting held at the Marathon County Courthouse, 500 Forest Street, Wausau, Wisconsin, on October 24, 2023, adopted an Initial Resolution pursuant to Section 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes, as amended, expressing the intention to issue not to exceed \$45,000,000 of industrial development revenue bonds of the Issuer (the “Bonds”) on behalf of WI RNG VDG LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, and/or a related entity, and/or a limited liability entity to be formed (collectively, the “Borrower”). The Borrower desires to complete a project consisting of financing the (i) design, development, construction and operation of a solid waste disposal facility for the purpose of converting dairy cattle waste to natural gas for sale on property owned by Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc., a Wisconsin corporation, at 5555 County Road A in the Village of Maine, Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “Project Site”), (ii) the lease of the Project Site to the Borrower for the production of renewable natural gas, (iii) acquisition and installation of an anaerobic digester and related equipment at the Project Site, (iv) capitalized interest during the construction period, (v) funding of a Debt Service Reserve Fund and other funds, if necessary, and (vi) payment of certain professional fees and costs of issuance (collectively, the “Project”). The Borrower has represented that the net number of full-time equivalent jobs which the Project is expected to create on the Project site within three years is 10.

Pursuant to the terms of Section 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes, all requirements that the Project be subject to the contracting requirements contained in Section 66.1103 are waived, the Borrower having represented that it is able to negotiate satisfactory arrangements for completing the Project and that the Issuer’s interests are not prejudiced thereby.

THE BONDS SHALL NEVER CONSTITUTE AN INDEBTEDNESS OF THE ISSUER, NOR SHALL THE BONDS GIVE RISE TO ANY PECUNIARY LIABILITY OF THE ISSUER, NOR SHALL THE BONDS BE A CHARGE AGAINST THE GENERAL CREDIT OR TAXING POWERS OF THE ISSUER. RATHER, THE BONDS SHALL BE PAYABLE SOLELY FROM THE REVENUES AND OTHER AMOUNTS TO BE DERIVED PURSUANT TO THE REVENUE AGREEMENT RELATING TO SAID PROJECT TO BE ENTERED INTO BETWEEN THE ISSUER AND THE BORROWER.

The Initial Resolution may be inspected in the office of the County Clerk at 500 Forest Street, Wausau, Wisconsin, during business hours.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT THE ELECTORS OF MARATHON COUNTY MAY PETITION FOR A REFERENDUM ON THE QUESTION OF THE BOND ISSUE. Unless within thirty (30) days from the date of the publication of this Notice a petition signed by not less than five percent (5%) of the registered electors of Marathon County is filed with the County Clerk requesting a referendum on the question of the issuance of the Bonds, the Issuer will issue the Bonds without submitting the proposition for the electors' approval. If such petition is filed as aforesaid, then the Bonds shall not be issued until approved by a majority of the electors of Marathon County voting thereon at a general or special election.

Kim Trueblood, County Clerk
Marathon County, Wisconsin

SUMMARY

**Request for MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN
to Serve as Conduit Issuer
for
Not to Exceed \$45,000,000 Exempt Facility Revenue Bonds
to Benefit
WI RNG VDG LLC Renewable Natural Gas Production Plant Project**

This will summarize the request of WI RNG VDG LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, and/or a related entity, and/or a limited liability entity to be formed (collectively, the “Company”), asking that Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “County”) consider an Initial Resolution to benefit the Company through the conduit issuance of one or more series of tax-exempt and taxable exempt facility revenue bonds (“Bonds”) to finance a project located at 5555 County Road A, in the Village of Maine, Marathon County, Wisconsin. The Project consists of the (i) design, development, construction and operation of a solid waste disposal facility for the purpose of converting dairy cattle waste to natural gas for sale on property owned by Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc., a Wisconsin corporation, at 5555 County Road A in the Village of Maine, Marathon County, Wisconsin (the “Project Site”), (ii) the lease of the Project Site to the Company for the production of renewable natural gas, (iii) acquisition and installation of an anaerobic digester and related equipment at the Project Site, (iv) capitalized interest during the construction period, (v) funding of a Debt Service Reserve Fund and other funds, if necessary, and (vi) payment of certain professional fees and costs of issuance (collectively, the “Project”). Exempt facility revenue bonds must comply with both Federal law (Sec. 142 of Internal Revenue Code (“IRC”) and State law (Section 66.1103 Wis. Stats.). In a conduit bond transaction, a state or local governmental entity issues bonds and loans the proceeds from the sale of the bonds to a private entity for an authorized project. In Wisconsin, counties, cities, villages and towns, as well as duly constituted redevelopment authorities and community development authorities may issue such conduit bonds.

Section 142(a) IRC permits the issuance of qualified exempt facility bonds for multiple purposes, including for projects in which 95% of the project is used for conversion of solid waste to a first useful product (Section 142(a)(6) IRC). The Project, as outlined above, converts animal waste into renewable natural gas (“RNG”) and will constitute a solid waste conversion facility under Section 142(a)(6) IRC.

These exempt facility Bonds are municipal bonds; however, they are not general obligations of the County. If the County agrees to issue bonds to benefit the proposed Project:

1. The County will not be liable for payment of the principal and interest on the bonds;
2. The County will not have ongoing responsibilities of monitoring or reporting with regard to the bonds or the Project.
3. The bonds do not count against the County’s borrowing capacity. The County will not levy a tax for payment of the bonds.
4. The County will be reimbursed for all fees and costs incurred because of the County’s participation as the conduit issuer of the bonds.

The County acts strictly as a conduit, which enables the Company to borrow at a lower rate of interest.

Because the bonds are issued by a governmental entity, the holder of the bond may exclude the interest on the bonds from gross income for federal tax purposes.

Inducement/Reimbursement

Companies considering bond financing must obtain an Initial Resolution, also sometimes referred to as an “inducement resolution” or “qualified reimbursement resolution” from the municipality in which the Project being financed is located, in order to preserve the option to use bond financing and apply for volume cap from the WEDC. The Initial Resolution is preliminary approval only and is non-binding as to the County or the Company but is required by Federal tax law and State law. If the Initial Resolution is adopted by the County, this will assure that when and if bonds are issued, all eligible project costs incurred no more than 60 days prior to the date of the Initial Resolution (including reimbursement of equity contributions or refunding of conventional financing), may be included in the ultimate bond financing. Failure to have a qualified resolution may result in disqualifying certain costs.

By acting as the conduit issuer, the County can grant the Company a significant monetary benefit, at no cost to the County, because the Company will enjoy a lower interest rate as a result of using a bond structure. The bonds will be sold to the public (“Bondholders”) by an underwriter and thereafter, an independent third-party fiduciary, (the “Trustee”) will continuously monitor the bonds on behalf of the Bondholders. The Bondholders will look solely to the Company for repayment. Bondholders will not look to the County for payment. The County will assign all of its rights, liability and responsibilities under the bonds to the Trustee for the benefit of the Bondholders. In addition, the Bond documents will include broad indemnification of the County. The Company will be fully responsible for repaying the loan. If the Company is not able to meet its payment obligations, the Trustee will enforce the rights of the Bondholder as required in the Bond documents. The County is not liable for payment.

If the County adopts the Initial Resolution and the bond financing proceeds, the County, and their counsel, will receive copies of all documents, will be asked to hold a public hearing required by the IRC (the “TEFRA hearing”) at a future date. Once all documents are in substantially final form, the County will be asked to consider a Final Resolution approving the financing.

The foregoing is just a brief discussion of tax-exempt financing. By issuing the bonds, the County will give the Company an interest rate benefit, because the tax-exempt bonds will be tax-exempt in the hands of the Bondholders and, therefore, the cost savings passed along to the Company. It must be emphasized that the County will not be liable in any way on the bonds; the conduit bonds are special, limited obligations of the County.

The Company respectfully asks that the County Board consider the Initial Resolution at its October 24, 2023 meeting.

Not to Exceed \$45,000,000
Marathon County, Wisconsin
Solid Waste Disposal Revenue Bonds, Series 2023
(WI RNG VDG LLC Renewable Natural Gas Production Plant Project)

CHECKLIST FOR MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN (the “Issuer”)

| ITEM | ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY ISSUER | DATE ACTION TAKEN |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Husch Blackwell LLP (“HB”) provides Procedure Letter to Marathon County, Wisconsin (“Issuer”). | N/A | September 5, 2023 |
| 2. HB provides Fee Estimate Letter to County Clerk and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (“WEDC”). | County Clerk signs Fee Estimate Letter and returns to HB. | September 5, 2023 |
| 3. HB / Borrower provide Job Estimate to Issuer, WEDC and union representatives (if any). | N/A | September 5, 2023 |
| 4. HB provides Initial Resolution (inducement resolution) to Issuer. | County Clerk includes Initial Resolution in County Board packet and on agenda. | September 5, 2023 |
| 5. County Clerk provides Notice of Meeting to consider Initial Resolution. Must include job information. See Procedure Letter for required language. | County Clerk provides notice of meeting, including required job language to comply with Wisconsin open meetings law. | Notice of meeting provided by County for October 24, 2023 meeting |
| 6. County Board considers Initial Resolution. | County Board considers Initial Resolution. | October 24, 2023 |
| 7. HB publishes Notice to Electors. | County Clerk calls Kate L. Albrecht at HB (414-978-5516) to confirm adoption of Initial Resolution. | October 25, 2023 |
| 8. HB provides a copy of Initial Resolution and publication date of Notice to Electors to WEDC. | County Clerk mails copy of signed Initial Resolution to Kate L. Albrecht. | October 25, 2023 |
| 9. HB provides Issuer with Final Resolution and other documents. | County Clerk includes Final Resolution in County Board packet and on agenda. Issuer reviews documents. | TBD |
| 10. County Clerk provides Notice of Meeting to consider Final Resolution. Final Resolution considered approximately 4 weeks after publication of Notice to Electors (#7 above); however, bonds cannot be issued sooner than 30 days after publication of Notice to Electors. | County Clerk provides notice of meeting to comply with Wisconsin open meetings law. | TBD |
| 11. HB publishes TEFRA Notice at least 7 days prior to meeting date. | County Clerk includes Notice of Public Hearing on County Board agenda. | TBD |
| 12. Issuer holds TEFRA public hearing and considers Final Resolution. | County Board holds TEFRA public hearing, County Board consider Final Resolution, and County signs and returns all bond documents provided by HB to Kate L. Albrecht. | TBD |
| 13. Closing (Issuer does not attend closing; signature pages will be sent to Issuer prior to closing) | N/A - HB will send a closing book to Issuer upon closing. | TBD |

Husch Blackwell LLP
Lynda R. Templen, Esq. 414-978-5505

Notice of Intent to Obtain a Municipal Industrial Revenue Bond

Section 66.1103 (4m) (a) 1 of the Wisconsin Statutes requires the person or business who intends to obtain an industrial revenue bond issue from a Wisconsin municipality to notify this intention to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and to any collective bargaining agent in the state with whom the person or business has a collective bargaining agreement. This notification must occur at least 30 days prior to entering into the revenue agreement or signing the loan contract. The person or business must provide information on the number of full-time jobs that are expected to be eliminated, created, or maintained at the project site and elsewhere in Wisconsin as a result of the project which is the subject of this notice. The person or business named below hereby gives notice of intent to obtain an Industrial Revenue Bond pursuant to s. 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

I. Project

- A. Person: Nick Cioll
 Business: WI RNG VDG LLC
 Address: 111 Veterans Memorial Blvd, Suite 1546
 Post Office/ZIP: Metairie, LA 70005
- B. Project site: Marathon County, Wisconsin (Village of Maine)
 (Name of city, village or town in which the project is located)
- C. Project type: Expansion at Present Location Relocation Within Same Municipality
 Relocation From Within State Relocation from Out-of-State New Business
 Branch-Wisconsin Operation Branch-Out-of-State Operation _____
- D. Maximum amount of IRB financing: \$45,000,000

II. Employment Estimates (to result within the next 3 years)

| Number of Full-Time Jobs | Before Project | To Be Maintained | To Be Created | To Be Eliminated | Net Total Number of Jobs |
|---|----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| A. <u>At the Project Site</u> | -0- | -0- | 10 | -0- | 10 |
| B. <u>At All Other Wisconsin Operations</u> | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- |
| C. <u>Net Totals</u> | -0- | -0- | 10 | -0- | 10 |

- D. Will any jobs transfer from one or more locations to the project site? Yes No

Number of jobs to transfer: N/A

Location(s) the jobs will transfer from: (municipality) N/A

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|------|
| | Nick Cioll | |
| Signed/Person completing this form | Name | Date |
| (469) 951-3264 | | |
| Telephone Number | | |

Notice of Intent to Obtain a Municipal Industrial Revenue Bond

Section 66.1103 (4m) (a) 1 of the Wisconsin Statutes requires the person or business who intends to obtain an industrial revenue bond issue from a Wisconsin municipality to notify this intention to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and to any collective bargaining agent in the state with whom the person or business has a collective bargaining agreement. This notification must occur at least 30 days prior to entering into the revenue agreement or signing the loan contract. The person or business must provide information on the number of full-time jobs that are expected to be eliminated, created, or maintained at the project site and elsewhere in Wisconsin as a result of the project which is the subject of this notice. The person or business named below hereby gives notice of intent to obtain an Industrial Revenue Bond pursuant to s. 66.1103 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

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 Relocation From Within State Relocation from Out-of-State New Business
 Branch-Wisconsin Operation Branch-Out-of-State Operation _____

D. Maximum amount of IRB financing: \$45,000,000

II. Employment Estimates (to result within the next 3 years)

| Number of Full-Time Jobs | Before Project | To Be Maintained | To Be Created | To Be Eliminated | Net Total Number of Jobs |
|---|----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| A. <u>At the Project Site</u> | -0- | -0- | 10 | -0- | 10 |
| B. <u>At All Other Wisconsin Operations</u> | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- |
| C. <u>Net Totals</u> | -0- | -0- | 10 | -0- | 10 |

D. Will any jobs transfer from one or more locations to the project site? Yes No

Number of jobs to transfer: N/A

Location(s) the jobs will transfer from: (municipality) N/A



 Signed/Person completing this form

R. Nick Cioll

 Name

Sept 21,
 2023

 Date

(469) 951-3264

 Telephone Number

Division of Extension – County Partnership Guidance

August 1, 2021

THANK YOU TO THE MANY COUNTY CONTRIBUTORS WHO MADE THIS DOCUMENT POSSIBLE!

Feedback was received and incorporated from the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) Executive Committee including representatives from Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Marathon, Sauk, and Wood Counties, as well as other counties who expressed interest in reviewing the draft document including: Pierce, Marinette and Columbia Counties. UW-Madison Division of Extension appreciates the feedback received to develop this ‘living’ foundational document that will continue to evolve into the future.

OVERVIEW

The 100+ year partnership between UW-Madison Division of Extension (Extension) and counties has endured a great deal of change and our partnership continues to be crucial in providing educational services to the people of Wisconsin. Changes have occurred among both partners over the years. And, the codification of the partnership in state statute (Chapter 59), has not evolved with the changes.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a foundation that allows a new Extension committee member, county board member, or the general public an understanding of the benefits and responsibilities of the partnership between Extension and counties.

This document is not a legal contract. It was developed with input from the Wisconsin Counties Association Executive Committee which includes several county representatives to be broad enough such that each of the 72 counties can see themselves within the context of the partnership. The document is also not meant to prescribe specific details, such as how many support staff an office should have for example. There are certainly many factors that influence decisions like that, and in partnership, Extension is open to engage in those discussions to determine the best solution.

Moving forward, with this foundational document in place, the next step will be to form an advisory committee to assist with identifying topics that need further updates and clarification. Extension will work with the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) and the Wisconsin Extension Association (WEXA), affiliated with WCA, to establish a process to select advisory committee members. The committee will convene on an annual basis to strategize and focus attention on the partnership items that need clarification so the document can continue to grow and develop as we identify new topics to include and as our relationship evolves over time.

Our hope is this document continues to provide clarity between the relationship and how we can cooperatively partner to better serve the people of Wisconsin in the future. Together we can achieve more!

Division of Extension – County Partnership Guidance

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[Our Purpose:](#)

[Link to Organization Chart -](#)

[Link to Division of Extension Staff Directory-](#)

[Link to Area Map w Director Names.pdf](#)

[136 County Contract template](#)

Preamble

Change is inevitable, and over the past 100+ years, UW-Madison Division of Extension (Extension) and counties have evolved to continue to meet the ever changing educational needs of our local and statewide constituents. It is Extension's hope and aspiration to grow and evolve in concert with the counties.

Both county government and Extension have evolved since the authoring of Chapter 59.56, which captures the foundations of the relationship between Extension and counties in state statute.

Notable changes include:

- Since the late 1990's, Extension educators have been 100% state employees having one employer and a uniform benefits program, and not employees of both the county and the state as outlined in 59.56(3)(c);
- Some counties have combined Agriculture and Extension Committees with other county departmental committees, which varies from 59.56(3)(b);
- And, the focus of our shared educational work has evolved from what is listed in 59.56(3)(f) and has required that Extension education become more specialized and focused to meet the more complex local and state needs.

Additionally, there are many other elements of the Extension-County relationship that are not specifically codified in statute that have evolved over time.

We recognize the need to make sure our changes are evolving in partnership with counties. While we have been responsive to changing county needs, this is an optimal time to reconnect and strengthen the mutual understanding of our partnership. We have mutual interests and we both depend on our partnership to meet these needs. This document is focused on the nexus of this interdependence.

Together we will engage in discussions that create a common understanding among counties that partner with Extension to best address critical educational needs. We believe we mutually agree on many aspects of the relationship. We know we can strengthen the understanding around aspects that may be more complicated or have yet to be defined.

ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS:

This foundational document was reviewed by the Wisconsin Counties Association Executive Team which includes several county representatives in March of 2021. Several other counties also offered input. The next step will be to form an advisory committee to assist with identifying topics that need further updates and clarification. Extension will work with the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) and Wisconsin Extension Association (WEXA), affiliated with WCA, to establish a process to select advisory committee members consisting of Extension committee members and other critical decision-makers such as a county board chair, coordinator, administrator, or executive. The committee will convene on an annual basis to strategize and focus attention on the partnership items that need clarification so the document

can continue to grow and develop as we identify new topics to include and as our relationship evolves over time.

Introduction

Extension has been part of the University of Wisconsin System since 1906 and hired its first county-based educator, E.L. Luther, in 1912 in Oneida County. Both Extension and Wisconsin counties have benefited from the strong partnership to provide an array of educational programs that continue to serve the people of Wisconsin wherever they live and work. Fundamental to our mission to fulfill the promise of the Wisconsin Idea, Extension extends the boundaries of the university to the boundaries of the state. We establish beneficial connections with all of our statewide stakeholders including our connection to UW-Madison and other UW campuses, and our partnerships with county and tribal governments, as well as with other public and private organizations. Our faculty and staff continue their impactful work across the state to enhance the quality of life for all Wisconsin residents. Our educators don't lecture or give grades in a typical classroom. Instead, we deliver education to people where they live and work – on farms, in schools, in community centers and other locations that are convenient for people both virtually and/or face-to-face. Extension educators also engage with civic groups and county boards, write newspaper columns, participate in radio and TV programs, facilitate meetings and build coalitions to solve complex, high priority community needs. Extension brings the research, knowledge and resources of the University of Wisconsin to your community.

Purpose and Scope of Guidance

With over 100+ years of a successful partnership between Extension and counties, we understand there is a benefit of clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the partnership so we can mutually meet the needs of the residents across Wisconsin. More specifically we hope this document serves to:

- Describe the types of services and programs that Extension provides to the county, based upon the level of educational services that the county agrees to invest in;
- Describe the types of services and resources the county will provide to host an Extension office in their county;
- Standardize the processes, responsibilities, and lines of authority between Extension and the county

Extension Responsibilities

Role of the Area Extension Directors (AEDs)

Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs) who oversee an area comprising from one to five counties each (Area Map with Directors is on page 13 of this document). These administrative positions are responsible for partnership management, staff development, financial management and program coordination.

Through the many interactions the AED has with county partners and local educators, the AED develops a solid understanding of the local needs and county priorities and helps to align Extension educational programs to ensure the programs address county needs. Educators also communicate local needs to their programmatic Institutes which collectively identify opportunities to address statewide needs. Some additional primary duties of the AED include:

- They serve as the county Extension Department Budget Officer and Administrative Officer for the counties in their area. Specific signatory authority is agreed to by the county to allow the AED to serve in this capacity.
- They are the hiring authority of Extension staff and serve as the direct supervisor of Extension educators, conducting annual and mid-point performance evaluations with each Extension employee.
- They are responsible for the regular operations of county Extension offices and provide oversight to county staff within the office.
- They support educators and staff who direct Extension volunteers. They engage when volunteer behavior concerns expand beyond coaching or if dismissal of the volunteer is warranted.
- They monitor and manage risk and liability situations that might arise.

Roles of Extension Employees

Fundamental to our mission to fulfill the promise of the Wisconsin Idea, Extension extends the boundaries of the university to the boundaries of the state. We establish beneficial connections with all of our statewide stakeholders including our connection to UW-Madison and other UW campuses, and our partnerships with county and tribal governments, as well as with other public and private organizations.

Extension faculty and staff educators assess local and statewide needs to develop and deliver educational programs that transform the lives of people in communities, with emphasis on addressing the local needs of youth, families, government, agriculture, businesses and others. Educators bring research-based information backed by one of six academic disciplines housed within Extension.

Informational brochures that highlight the educational outreach of Extension and each institute are listed below. An embedded link will take you to the specific page:

- [Division of Extension overview](#)
- [Agriculture Institute](#)
- [Community Development Institute](#)
- [Health & Well-Being Institute](#)
- [Human Development & Relationships Institute](#)
- [Natural Resources Institute](#)
- [Positive Youth Development Institute](#)

Institutes not only serve as the programmatic home of Extension employees but also include expertise from faculty and staff integrated with UW-Madison and other UW-colleges. This provides access to cutting-edge research and knowledge around issues that matter to the people of Wisconsin. Educational programs that are hosted at the local level are based on sound research-based knowledge.

Educational services are broadly defined and include the work that is included in an annual work plan for a particular educator in a geographic location. Educators, as state employees, have both county and state responsibilities and expectations, including participating on teams and/or research activities that support programming that benefits audiences statewide as well as locally.

The county will be a partner in identifying key educational priorities for Wisconsin residents, and in collaboration with Extension leadership, counties will identify local educational priorities for their communities. Experience has demonstrated that local priorities often align well with statewide priorities.

Role of AEDs and Performance Evaluations

Employees hired by Extension as part of the 136 County Contract are employees of Extension. They are subject to Extension personnel rules, policies, and procedures. Faculty, academic staff and university staff follow the guidance and policy appropriate to their respective appointment in Extension.

The AED is responsible for performance evaluations of Extension academic staff and University staff working in the county. Faculty are reviewed by their Academic Department Chair or Section Chair of their department. The county Extension oversight committee is encouraged to provide performance feedback for all the county-based educators to the AED to consider when conducting their review. And, the oversight committee is encouraged to raise concerns as well, although performance remediation of Extension staff is confidential, similar to county staff performance.

In some cases, through negotiation with the county, additional staff such as area or regional outreach specialists may be housed in a county office if space is available. The county benefits by having that additional resource located in their county. Terms and conditions will be negotiated by the AED between the county and Extension in those cases.

Roles of Extension Volunteers

Extension benefits from and relies on nearly 11,000 volunteers who serve to increase the educational delivery of programs in counties across the state. Any individual who meets Extension's definition of a volunteer and completes all registration requirements is considered an Extension volunteer.

Volunteers are an essential component of Extension's outreach. Extension enhances its ability to impact the lives of people in all areas of Wisconsin through the efforts of volunteers. Since volunteers represent Extension while providing the service outlined in their volunteer agreement letters, they must abide by the rules, regulations, and policies set by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, and the State of Wisconsin. These include, but are not limited to Extension's Volunteer Behavior Expectations. In addition, volunteers must comply with federal nondiscrimination laws and policies. All volunteers are accountable to Extension while volunteering in Extension programs.

In support of the volunteers, Extension provides management, oversight, training, liability insurance and other benefits for volunteers while working in the capacity as an Extension Volunteer. Both Extension employees and volunteers are covered by Extension liability insurance while working to accomplish Extension's mission.

Administrative Duties serving the county

The AED has the privilege of serving as the county Extension Department Budget Officer and Administrative Officer for the counties in their area. The AED is often viewed by the county as the office Department Head in the county. In most situations, counties provide AEDs a Delegation of Authority (DoA) to provide signatory authority for Extension related county accounts and business activities for the county Extension office. A DoA formally authorizes and codifies this role with the county. The DoA document can be updated at any time. In some counties, the signature authority is maintained with a county employee or other designee. The county is asked to confirm the amount of signature authority it authorizes to the AED as a means to fulfill many of the roles of managing the office budget. Because most AEDs serve multiple counties, the AED may partner with an office staff member to assist with the day-to-day management of the office.

Partnering with the county to identify educational priorities

Assessing current and future educational needs is an ongoing process that counties, AEDs, local educators, program managers, and Institute Directors consistently engage in. This is often done through a more formal needs-assessment process which is broadly distributed to solicit input. Results are shared with key stakeholders. In addition, needs-assessment also occurs informally through normal daily conversations and monitoring of local and statewide trends.

Extension educators are asked to annually update their work plans and goals that serve the identified needs of residents within their geographic area, and contributions to statewide teams and programs. Educators regularly share summaries of programmatic goals and updates with their respective Extension oversight committee. Oftentimes situations arise in a given year which may require an adjustment to their work plan. The Extension committee will be kept abreast of changes throughout the year as the AED and/or educators share updates about programming and accomplishments.

Extension utilizes a program recording system to capture the outcomes and impacts from educators. This data is used by AEDs to develop monthly and annual reports. Special reports can be developed as requested throughout the year. In many rural counties, educators provide a written or oral report to the committee as frequently as monthly. In other situations, reports may be quarterly or even annually. Extension Committees should engage with their AED to strategize on how we can best share the impact and programs that are delivered to the county stakeholders.

County Responsibilities

County Facilities

The county agrees to provide office space, meeting space, telephone, computer, network connections for email and other communications, software, and other general office supplies. Extension does not dictate the level of support necessary from the county, but would expect comparable support as other county departments; adjusted for size.

In many cases this includes:

- Office and educational meeting room space.
- Adequate supplies for office and educational programming needs.
- Access to computers, internet, and other necessary office and educational equipment.
- Adequate storage space for equipment, publications, program files.

Office support

Support staff provide a critical function within the county Extension office. They are typically the first person that members of the public interact with. They can quickly identify which educator or resource may be able to further answer the person's question. They also provide assistance for program material preparation, marketing and outreach of educational programming, data-base entry of participants and enrollment, mailings of newsletters and other critical roles that help support the efficiency and effectiveness of the office and the educator's work.

The county agrees to provide adequate local office support. Again, although Extension does not offer a formula for determining the number of support staff the county should invest in, a minimum level of staffing would include one support staff. We would ask the following minimum support be provided for each Extension office:

- Support the administrative needs of the office
- Meet the program support needs of the educators

Extension is beginning to explore and pilot new support staff models with some counties. For example, a support staff hired as an Extension employee on the 136 contract. These positions continue to be fully county-funded but this adds additional benefits:

- Eliminates the risk associated with an AED supervising a county support staff employee, especially through performance issues.
- The support staff member would have access to all the software licenses that educators have access to including Microsoft Office, Zoom, Qualtrics and other educational-related software resulting in a cost savings for the county and more uniformity with Extension staff.
- The support staff member directly utilizes all of the same processes and systems of Extension employees

Supervision of County Employees

County support staff typically function at a high capacity as part of an effective office Extension team. When performance is high, there are rarely challenges with an AED providing support

and guidance for county support staff. In recent years Extension has become increasingly aware of the potential risk and liability of having an AED supervise a county employee, especially through performance concerns. The county will need to ensure that performance reviews of county employees are managed appropriately in the partnership. Support staff are part of the office team, which is important for the effectiveness of the Extension office. However, while Extension can contribute feedback and input for performance evaluations of support staff, Extension needs to work in partnership with the county HR department on county staff performance reviews.

An AED **can serve as a supervisor of function** for county employees within the office, but **cannot serve as the supervisor of record**. This adds a level of risk and liability for Extension and the county. Performance and disciplinary actions with support staff must be, and are best led, by the county. Again, in most situations the AED benefits by the engagement of support staff as part of the team. It's in the rare cases of performance issues with a county employee that the AED cannot be their 'supervisor' during that process.

County Policy, Rules and Procedures

Similar to the guidance above regarding Extension staff and employees, any individuals who are employed by the county are county employees and are subject to applicable county personnel rules, policies and procedures. Likewise, any volunteer who works on behalf of the county to further the purposes of the county will be considered a volunteer of the county.

The county will be responsible for ensuring that its employees and volunteers take affirmative steps to make it clear that they are employees or volunteers of the county. And, similar to the protections afforded to employees and volunteers that work on behalf of Extension, the county shall be liable for the acts and omissions of its **employees** and **volunteers** while acting within the scope of their employment or volunteer role.

County Policy Impact on Extension

Counties, as well as Extension, have developed work-related policy. Extension staff housed in a local Extension office are users of county-based technology, facilities and may have other county-based services potentially including the use of a county purchasing card for business. County-based Extension staff will abide by policy that relates to privileges afforded by the county. This may include but is not limited to:

- Technology use
- Keys to access the building
- Driving authorization if using a county vehicle

Similarly, Extension also has work-related policy that all Extension staff are expected to follow. There may be an overlap of some programs, such as Sexual Harassment training, technology/cybersecurity training, drivers authorization (for personal vehicle which is the norm for most staff). Extension staff will accept responsibility for county policy as it applies to their roles.

County Extension Oversight Committee

Each county Extension department should have an Extension oversight committee for policy and decision making as described in state statute. In a majority of counties, a dedicated committee is assigned for the Extension department. In other cases, counties have a committee that oversees several departments including Extension. The oversight committees provide valued feedback to Extension on educational priorities and staffing decisions.

Committee business such as agenda creation and minute taking is a county government function and is the responsibility of the county. The county Extension oversight committee should take the lead role in developing their committee agendas and taking minutes during their meetings. If support is needed for taking minutes during the meeting, the committee chair should work with their county clerk to explore options, such as the use of the county support staff. AEDs will engage and partner with the committee on agenda creation, to highlight the work that Extension educators are conducting in the area and on budget development and approvals, etc.

The county Extension Oversight Committee is encouraged to provide feedback for all of their Extension educators to the AED. Ideally, feedback is provided as close to the time when the observation is made, rather than just prior to a performance review. That way the AED can share celebrations and address concerns as quickly as possible with the staff member. Performance remediation of Extension staff is confidential, similar to county staff performance.

Mutual Responsibilities

Budget responsibilities

Extension provides co-funding for most educator positions. Counties purchase Extension's educational services through the 136 County Contract ([136 County Contract template](#)). This contract is updated and authorized annually for the calendar year. If both partners have adequate resources, positions can be co-funded based upon an annually established fee for educational services in the 136 County Contract. Counties can also fully-fund additional positions if Extension does not have the resources to co-fund all, or part, of the position.

The 136 County Contract is established with a fee structure for educational service for a given year. Regardless of employee salary, the possibility for mid-year promotions, or other factors, counties benefit by knowing the annual cost of the contract for service for the year for co-funded positions.

The fee for educational service also leverages other services and resources of the University of Wisconsin - Madison. The educator can tap into the expertise of specialists, technology, and other resources to address local issues. In general, the more the county contributes through the 136 County Contract for educational services for positions, the greater the opportunity and benefit of leveraging resources since the educators bring connections with campus specialists and other resources.

The AED is responsible for developing the county contract with appropriate staffing and accurate costs, and building that into the departmental budget for county adoption. The AED works through the appropriate channels and approval processes to ensure the departmental budget is reviewed and adopted by the full county board according to the county timeline.

Both Extension and the county recognize the cost of doing business may increase from year to year. Extension will review the fee structure each year and may include a fee adjustment to account for anticipated or unanticipated adjustments in the costs of doing business. Factors that contribute to these increases over time may include state-mandated pay-plans, health care and benefits related costs, promotions and other factors that impact costs.

Per the county contract, counties agree to provide travel and appropriate job expenses. County travel budgets dictate how much travel can occur for an educator to meet the educational needs of county constituents.

Hiring and Managing Vacancies

When a position becomes vacant both Extension and the county will re-evaluate the need and the financial commitment to the position. Both partners need to review and approve their financial commitment and other decision points before approving the refilling of the position. If the county and Extension agree to continue to support the desired program and position, Extension will lead a hiring process with the AED as the hiring authority. Most positions, with the exception of FoodWise staff because they are fully federally grant-funded, the AED will seek input and engagement from the county throughout the hiring process.

State budget cuts over the years have reduced the number of Extension educator positions across the state. Extension does not have the resources to co-fund every position in every county across the state. As a necessary effort to provide service to more people, Extension is exploring developing more specialized positions within a program area and sharing the position across two or more counties. Most of the institutes have examples of this shared arrangement. The current strategy has been that counties pro-rate the cost of the position across the number of counties participating. Perhaps a future topic that the advisory committee can wrestle with in the future is to best determine what happens when a county cannot maintain their funding. That adds additional financial burden to the remaining counties, and could possibly lead to a shared-educator feeling insecure in their position and leaving.

The AED will work with Extension Human Resources and lead the interview process to ensure that EEO/AA and other policies are followed. Typically one or more members of the county Extension Education committee are involved with the final interview process. This does not exclude a county administrator or county HR director from participating in the hiring process.

Extension discourages counties from hiring county staff to serve as 'Extension like' educators in a county office. This has created significant challenges associated with supervision and direction as well as liability and insurance concerns. As referenced earlier, positions hired under the 136 County Contract, whether co-funded or fully county-funded, can leverage services and resources of Extension and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. These staff can tap into the expertise of specialists, technology, and other resources of the University to

address the local issues. County employees do not have the same level of access to those resources.

Although Extension cannot control what positions the county hires, the county will be responsible for ensuring that its employees (and volunteers) take affirmative steps to make it clear that they are employees or volunteers of the county.

Professional Development

Professional development shall be supported by both Extension and the county. The AED works closely with the educational staff to identify professional development needs. Professional development requested or required at the state level will be financially supported by Extension. Professional development that benefits the county (conferences, training, etc) should be supported with professional development funds associated with the county Extension department budget.

Educator's travel to Extension mandated meetings will be covered by Extension.

Nondiscrimination/Affirmative Action

The county and Extension will comply with all applicable state and federal laws and rules prohibiting unlawful discrimination. During the performance of work under this contract, Extension agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, creed, ancestry, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, arrest or conviction record, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or membership in the National Guard. This provision shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and, selection for training, including apprenticeship. Extension further agrees to take affirmative action to ensure equal employment opportunities.

Appendices

Our Purpose:


As a statewide engagement arm of UW–Madison, the Division of Extension embodies the Wisconsin Idea to extend university knowledge to every corner of the state. That mission started in 1912 with Extension’s first agent making farm visits and continues today along with community and business development, youth engagement, and well-being programming. Our statewide network of educators and specialists with UW–Madison and on UW campuses across Wisconsin is responding every day to emerging and longstanding hurdles residents are overcoming to compete and prosper. We’ve identified key opportunities to leverage local resources and leading research to affect change and improve lives.

Link to Organization Chart

<https://extension.wisc.edu/files/2019/06/extension-orgchart.pdf>

Link to Division of Extension Staff Directory

[Staff Directory](#)

Link to  Area Map w Director Names.pdf

136 County Contract template

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P2wSdA3knibltYWBIr2aH_cBSoSxjNL/view?usp=sharing

**Contract Between Marathon County
and
Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System**

This contract is by and between Marathon County (**County**), State of Wisconsin, and Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, on behalf of the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Division of Extension (**Extension**) and is entered into pursuant to the authority vested in the County Committee on Agriculture and Extension Education by sections 59.22(2)(d) and 59.56(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Whereas, Extension is organized both around geography, as faculty and staff deliver programs in communities throughout the state, and around academic disciplines including Agriculture, Natural Resources, Community Development, Youth, Human Development & Relationships, and Health;

Whereas, Extension is committed to maintaining an office in every county willing to commit to continued funding and space for Extension staff. Extension recognizes the value in keeping a local presence in every county and keeping the shortest distance possible between the people of Wisconsin and the Extension staff delivering programming to them;

Whereas, Extension provides opportunities to additional resources such as statewide specialists and UW-System campus resources to address specific local issues in core areas of expertise;

Whereas, the County is a critical partner in developing and implementing key educational priorities for county residents. In collaboration with Extension leadership, counties will identify local services of priority to their communities. County will agree to co-fund Extension faculty and staff based upon annually established flat fees for positions as defined below; and

Whereas, the parties need to define their respective rights and responsibilities;

Now therefore, the parties agree as follows:

1. **Term, Amendment & Termination.**
 - a. The term of this contract is one (1) year. The term shall run from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, unless amended or terminated as set forth below.
 - b. Any additions, changes, modifications or renewals of this contract are subject to the mutual agreement and written consent of authorized representatives of both parties.
 - c. Either the County or Extension may cancel this entire Agreement with or without cause upon sixty (60) days' written notice delivered by mail or in person; provided, however, the County shall be responsible for paying a prorated amount of fees under Section 3.1.a. through the notice period. In addition, if the contract is canceled before the end of the term, the discount identified in Section 3.1.a. shall be prorated (i.e. the discount amounts to roughly \$834 per month).
2. **Extension Responsibilities.** Extension agrees to:

- a. Hire local Extension staff who will deliver educational services aligned to County priorities. As vacancies occur, and if the County and Extension agree to continue to support the desired program and position, Extension will seek County input when filling vacant positions.
- b. Invoice the County semi-annually, in May and November for amounts due under this agreement.

3. County Responsibilities

3.1 In consideration of the programs that Extension provides to County under this contract, the County agrees to:

- a. Pay to Extension the County share of up to \$236,895 for the period of January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 as allocated below.

| Co-Funded Positions | Fee | FTE | Total |
|---|------------|------------|-------------------|
| 4-H Extension Educator | \$46,247 | 1.0 | \$46,247 |
| Agriculture Extension Educator - Dairy | \$46,247 | 1.0 | \$46,247 |
| First Educator Discount | | | (\$10,000) |
| Subtotal | | | \$ 82,494 |
| Proposed or fully-county funded positions and other county contributions | Fee | FTE | Total |
| Horticulture Extension Educator | \$88,065 | 0.7 | \$61,646 |
| 4-H Extension Associate Educator | \$65,000 | 0.5 | \$32,500 |
| Administrative Assistant | \$60,255 | 1.0 | \$60,255 |
| Final Total | | | \$ 236,895 |

- b. Provide travel and appropriate job expenses to the staff, office facilities and equipment, office supplies and demonstration materials, salary and fringe benefits for the clerical support staff, and other supporting budgetary items through regular County budgetary procedures in which funds are appropriated for such purposes under applicable Wisconsin law.

3.2 Consider and assess opportunities to provide office space with desks and chairs; access to IT support and internet connectivity; and basic operational resources in a manner similar to other Extension colleagues in the office, for FoodWise nutrition education programming to County SNAP/FoodShare eligible residents. Technology for FoodWise positions will be coordinated through the County.

- 3.3 Consider and assess opportunities to provide office space with a desk and chair for fully state funded Extension employees who serve in a regional or statewide capacity. These regional and statewide educators will be provided state-purchased technology and IT support. The opportunity for these positions to access the internet through the county may also be discussed.
4. **Delegation of Financial Budget Authority.** The parties hereby acknowledge that Extension will employ an Area Extension Director (AED), whose responsibilities may include certain budget-related functions as set forth in the Delegation of Financial Budget Authority Form (DFBA Form) attached hereto as **Exhibit A**. County may authorize the AED to carry out such functions on its behalf, but only to the extent specified in in the DFBA Form, which must be signed by an authorized representative of County in order to be effective. The County may rescind such authorization at any time by providing written notice to Extension.
5. **General Conditions** This contract is established under the following conditions:
- a. **Notices.** Any notice or demand which must be given or made by a party to this Agreement or any statute or ordinance shall be in writing, and shall be sent via e-mail and certified mail. Notices to the County shall be sent to County Representative(s). Notice to the Extension shall be sent to Area Extension Director.
- b. **Employer, Personnel Rules, Volunteers and Liability.** Any employees hired by Extension under Section 2.a. of this contract are employees of Extension, and are subject to the personnel rules, policies, and procedures for faculty, academic staff or University staff, as appropriate to the respective appointment in Extension as established by Wisconsin statute, and, or administrative rules; and, or, by policies or procedures adopted by the Board of Regents and the University of Wisconsin - Division of Extension. Any individual who meets Extension’s definition of a volunteer and completes all registration requirements will be considered an Extension volunteer. Extension will be responsible for ensuring that its employees and volunteers take affirmative steps to make clear, when entering into relationships with third parties, that they are employees or volunteers of Extension. Extension shall be liable for the acts and omissions of its employees while acting within the scope of such employment. To the extent they are acting as agents of Extension, Extension shall be liable for the acts and omissions of its volunteers while acting within the scope of such agency.
- Any individuals who are employed by the County in order to satisfy obligations under Section 3.1.a. of this contract are County employees and are subject to applicable County personnel rules, policies and procedures. Any volunteer engaged by County to further the purposes of this contract will be considered a volunteer of County. County will be responsible for ensuring that its employees and volunteers take affirmative steps to make clear, when entering into relationships with third parties, that they are employees or volunteers of County. County shall be liable for the acts and omissions of its employees while acting within the scope of such employment. To the extent they are acting as agents of County, County shall be liable for the acts and omissions of its volunteers while acting within the scope of such agency.
- c. **Billing.** For the period January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, Extension shall bill the County for the total amount under Section 3.1.a. of this contract. The County will be billed for the first half of the total contract by May 31st and the second half of

the total contract by November 30th. If services are not rendered or excess services are provided to the County by Extension during the contract period, the parties will use good faith efforts to adjust the total contract amount and update future bills to coincide with the new agreed upon amount. The County shall pay the amount billed within 30 days of the billing.

- d. **Insurance.** The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System as an agency of the State, and consequently, Extension, is self-funded for liability (both public and property) under ss. 893.82 and 895.46(1), Wis. Stats. As a result, such protection as is afforded under respective Wisconsin Statutes is applicable to officers, employees, and agents while acting within the scope of their employment or agency. Since this is statutory insurance, there is no liability policy as such that can extend protection to any others.

County agrees to maintain appropriate insurance to cover the potential liability of its officers, employees and agents while acting within the scope of their employment or agency. Such insurance may be provided through a self-insurance program. To the extent that an Extension employee is allowed to use a County vehicle, the responsibility for insuring that vehicle lies with the County.

- e. **Nondiscrimination/Affirmative Action.** The County and Extension will comply with all applicable state and federal laws and rules prohibiting unlawful discrimination. During the performance of work under this contract, Extension agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, creed, ancestry, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, arrest or conviction record, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or membership in the National Guard. This provision shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and, selection for training, including apprenticeship. Extension further agrees to take affirmative action to ensure equal employment opportunities.

By: _____
County Representative

Date:

By: _____
County Representative

Date:

By: _____
County Representative

Date:

By: _____
County Representative

Date:

By: _____
**Area Extension Director
UW-Madison, Division of Extension**

Date:

By: _____
County Representative

Date:

By: _____
**Director of Financial Services
UW-Madison, Division of Extension**

Date:

By: _____
**On Behalf of Board of Regents of
The University of Wisconsin System**

Date:

Exhibit A

Delegation of Financial Budget Authority Form

Area Extension Directors play an important part in county Extension offices as they manage the faculty and staff within that county, and many times, that includes the county support staff. Area Directors also work with county partners to develop a departmental budget and provide oversight to that budget on an annual basis in cooperation with corresponding county financial departments and county board committees. The Delegation of Financial Budget Authority allows Area Directors, hired, and managed by Extension as state employees, to manage county fiscal resources in service to the people of those counties.

To be completed by the county administrator or county official delegating signature/budget authority.

County hereby delegates to the Area Extension Director for Marathon County and the Extension Administrative Assistant authority to approve/authorize the following financial budget matters on behalf of County, provided, however, that such delegation is limited to the extent that such matters are directly related to County's authority under section 59.22(2)(d) and 59.56(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes and subject to any conditions/limitations indicated by County below.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Invoices | Travel Reimbursements | Supply & Expense Reimbursements |
| Time/Leave Approvals | Purchase Requisitions | Internal Budget Transfers |
| Inter- departmental transfers | County specific space agreements for educational programs | Bank account signatory |
| Other items: | | |
| Conditions: | | |

This authorization is effective until either party (UW-Madison Extension or Marathon County) requests a change to the document

Budget Authority signature: I am aware this constitutes a delegation of budget authority allowing the Extension Area Director, and any other position mentioned above, to manage county fiscal resources in service to the Extension office and residents of Marathon County. I understand that delegating authority does not release Marathon County, from full responsibility as Budget Authority.

County Administrator/County Official(s):

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

2024 Budget Details

Marathon County Public Library



2024 Library Budget Request

Marathon County Budget Report

Library

Org. Level: Library Cost Center

Fund: 101 General Fund

| 2023 Original Requested Budget * | 2023 Modified Budget Tax Levy 2 | 2024 Requested Budget Tax Levy2 | Variance of 2023 Modified Budget vs 2024 Requested | Variance of 2023 Requested Budget vs 2024 Requested |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | 3,217,685 | 3,666,423 | 448,738 | |
| 3,636,685 | | 3,666,423 | | 29,738 |

| Revenues | 2023 Original Requested Budget | 2023 Modified Budget2 | 2024 Requested Budget2 | Variance |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 46100 - 46170 Sale of Maps, Poll Lists, Copies | 10,000 | 10,000 | 12,000 | 2,000 |
| 46100 - 46190 Other General Government Fees | 20,000 | 20,000 | 24,000 | 4,000 |
| 46500 - 46199 Employee Share of Insurance | - | - | - | - |
| 46500 - 47393 Local Department Charges Internal Service Fund | - | - | - | - |
| 46700 - 46710 Library Fees | 50,000 | 50,000 | 45,000 | (5,000) |
| 48200 - 48200 Rental of Buildings and Property | 43,153 | 43,153 | 42,153 | (1,000) |
| 49200 - 49210 Transfer from the General Fund | - | 356,603 | - | (356,603) |
| Total | 123,153 | 479,756 | 123,153 | (356,603) |

| Operating Expenses | 2023 Original Requested Budget | 2023 Modified Budget2 | 2024 Requested Budget2 | Variance |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------|
| 50210 - 52130 Accounting and Audit Services | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,300 | - |
| 50210 - 52131 Financial, Banking and Investment Services | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,200 | (100) |
| 50210 - 52192 Other Professional Services | 6,500 | 6,500 | 6,500 | - |
| 50220 - 52250 Telephone, Internet and Cable | 25,000 | 25,000 | 22,750 | (2,250) |
| 50240 - 52420 Machinery/Equipment Maintenance Services | 6,500 | 6,500 | 6,500 | - |
| 50250 - 52560 Other Special Services | 47,000 | 47,000 | 34,000 | (13,000) |
| 50250 - 52561 Reimburse County | 5,000 | 5,000 | 6,400 | 1,400 |
| 50290 - 52140 Technology Services | 27,500 | 27,500 | 16,000 | (11,500) |
| 50290 - 52932 Copier Charges | - | - | 6,500 | 6,500 |
| 50290 - 52990 Sundry Contractual Services | 9,000 | 9,000 | 15,000 | 6,000 |
| 50310 - 53110 Postage and Courier | 2,500 | 2,500 | 1,700 | (800) |
| 50310 - 53130 Printing and Forms | 10,000 | 10,000 | 5,000 | (5,000) |
| 50310 - 53142 Software - IT | - | - | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| 50310 - 53161 Books Library | 274,250 | 280,326 | 274,250 | (6,076) |
| 50310 - 53168 Audio-Visual Materials | 60,000 | 60,527 | 60,000 | (527) |
| 50310 - 53169 E-Books Library | 29,100 | 29,100 | 34,252 | 5,152 |
| 50310 - 53190 Office Supplies | 28,800 | 28,800 | 27,000 | (1,800) |



2024 Library Budget Request

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| 50320 - 53220 Subscriptions | 19,000 | 19,000 | 18,600 | (400) | |
| 50320 - 53221 Electronic Subscriptions | 21,000 | 21,000 | 31,000 | 10,000 | |
| 50320 - 53240 Membership Dues | 104,701 | 104,701 | 118,497 | 13,796 | |
| 50320 - 53250 Registration Fees/tuition | 4,000 | 4,000 | 3,500 | (500) | |
| 50320 - 53260 Advertising | 4,000 | 4,000 | 4,000 | - | |
| 50330 - 53321 Personal Auto Mileage | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,500 | 500 | |
| 50330 - 53350 Meals | 400 | 400 | - | (400) | |
| 50330 - 53360 Lodging | 400 | 400 | - | (400) | |
| 50340 - 53410 Meeting Expenses | 2,000 | 2,000 | 2,700 | 700 | |
| 50340 - 53494 Technology Supplies | 10,000 | 10,000 | 3,000 | (7,000) | |
| 50390 - 53916 Other Personal Effects | - | - | - | - | |
| 50390 - 53936 Other Supplies | 13,000 | 13,000 | 10,000 | (3,000) | |
| 50510 - 55190 Insurance Other Premiums | 44,961 | 44,961 | 48,000 | 3,039 | |
| 50530 - 55320 Building/Offices Rent | 65,000 | 65,000 | 65,000 | - | |
| Total | 825,212 | 831,815 | 832,149 | 334 | 6,937 |

| | 2023 Original Budget | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Personnel Expenses | Request | 2023 Modified Budget2 | 2024 Requested Budget2 | Variance | |
| 50110 - 51111 Salaries and Wages | 2,087,903 | 2,087,903 | 2,078,706 | (9,197) | |
| 50110 - 51120 Overtime | - | - | 22,935 | 22,935 | |
| 50130 - 51390 Other Special Pay | - | (69,000) | - | 69,000 | |
| 50150 - 51510 Social Security | 159,783 | 159,783 | 160,775 | 992 | |
| 50150 - 51520 Retirement Employers Share | 131,080 | 131,080 | 131,875 | 795 | |
| 50150 - 51541 Dental Insurance | 12,651 | 12,651 | 13,740 | 1,089 | |
| 50150 - 51550 Life Insurance | 943 | 943 | 7,016 | 6,073 | |
| 50150 - 51560 Workers Compensation | 1,283 | 1,283 | 1,261 | (22) | |
| 50150 - 51580 Unemployment Compensation | 2,085 | 2,085 | 2,102 | 17 | |
| 50150 - 51590 Other Employer Contributions | 37,998 | 37,998 | 30,030 | (7,968) | |
| 50150 - 51593 Health Insurance | 500,900 | 500,900 | 508,987 | 8,087 | |
| Total | 2,934,626 | 2,865,626 | 2,957,427 | 91,801 | 22,801 |

* Original requested budget line items different due to switch from Cayenta to Workday, but totals for overall revenue and expenses match.



Requested Library Budget History

(not including Facilities and Capital Management expenses)

| Year | Requested budget | Adjusted request | Approved budget |
|------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 2024 | 3,664,714 | 3,603,220 | |
| 2023 | 3,636,685 | 3,286,685 | 3,217,685 |
| 2022 | 3,562,609 | 3,562,609 | 3,562,609 |
| 2021 | 3,574,206 | 3,562,609 | 3,562,609 |



2024 Requested Budget Highlights- notable increases

- ▶ 3% increase in salaries
- ▶ Electronic subscription that is paid every 3 years due in 2024
- ▶ WVLS membership fees increase
- ▶ Insurance expenses passed on from county (5-9%)

2024 Requested Budget Highlights- notable personnel savings

- ▶ Combined two positions
- ▶ Seasonal position is not funded
- ▶ Part-time branch position is not funded



2024 Requested Budget Highlights- notable operating savings

- ▶ Staff taking on some of the processing that was outsourced in the past
- ▶ Maintenance on automated materials handler is lower with the new machine
- ▶ Lowered technical supply budget with tech plan implementation
- ▶ Lowered supply budget to meet current needs

2023 Actual vs Budget

Library 101 General Fund

| Accounts | <u>FY2023</u> <u>Actuals (thru mid-Sept.)</u> | <u>FY2023</u> <u>FY23 County Amended</u> | <u>FY2024</u> <u>FY24 Requested Budget</u> |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Revenues | | | |
| Miscellaneous Revenue | 31,614 | 43,153 | 42,153 |
| Public Charges for Services | 101,398 | 80,000 | 81,000 |
| Other Financing Sources | 356,603 | 356,603 | 61,494 |
| Total Revenues | 489,615 | 479,756 | 184,647 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Contractual Services | 57,778 | 129,100 | 116,150 |
| Fixed Charges | 32,785 | 109,961 | 113,000 |
| Operating Expenses | 381,952 | 592,754 | 602,999 |
| Personnel Services | 1,877,778 | 2,865,626 | 2,955,718 |
| Total Expenses | 2,350,293 | 3,697,441 | 3,787,867 |
| Net Change | -1,860,678 | -3,217,685 | -3,603,220 |

Includes health insurance conversion clean up for Workday
 Includes \$350,000 reduction from county administrator in 2023 and \$6,603 roll over of encumbered funds for books and AV
 County administrator reduction
 Includes \$69,000 cut from county board



2023 Expenditures to date

- ▶ Large expenses still coming
 - Personnel - 8 pay periods
 - Insurance (non-personnel) expenses from county
 - Payments to municipalities for branch locations - some charge annually
 - Print subscriptions paid annually coming due at year end

2023 Reserved funds used

- ▶ Sorter (final payment)
- ▶ Self check stations (down payment)
- ▶ Server install
- ▶ Staff work stations
- ▶ Server backup subscription and support
- ▶ Hatley internet switch and install

2023 Reserved funds in progress

- ▶ Self check stations (final payment)
- ▶ Athens move: movers, shelves, electrical, sign
- ▶ Mosinee handrail
- ▶ Branch furniture
- ▶ Patron computer replacements



Thank You



LIBRARY

| Account Description | 2023 (mid-Sept.) Actuals | 2023 Amended Budget | 2024 Requested Budget |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Fund: 101 - General Fund | | | |
| REVENUES | | | |
| Sale of Maps, Poll Lists, Copies | 4,670 | 10,000 | 12,000 |
| Other General Government Fees | 22,687 | 20,000 | 24,000 |
| Employer Share of Insurance | 34,685 | - | - |
| Employee Share of Insurance | 4,720 | - | - |
| Local Department Charges Internal Service Fund | 137 | - | - |
| Library Fees | 34,499 | 50,000 | 45,000 |
| Rental of Buildings and Property | 31,615 | 43,153 | 42,153 |
| Transfer from the General Fund | 356,603 | 356,603 | 61,494 |
| REVENUES TOTAL | 489,616 | 479,756 | 184,647 |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Salaries and Wages | 1,350,685 | 2,087,903 | 2,078,706 |
| Overtime | - | - | 22,935 |
| Other Special Pay | 14,760 | (69,000) | - |
| Social Security | 97,720 | 159,783 | 160,775 |
| Retirement Employers Share | 72,462 | 131,080 | 131,875 |
| Dental Insurance | 7,884 | 12,651 | 12,031 |
| Life Insurance | 312 | 943 | 7,016 |
| Workers Compensation | 1,992 | 1,283 | 1,261 |
| Unemployment Compensation | - | 2,085 | 2,102 |
| Other Employer Contributions | 28,359 | 37,998 | 30,030 |
| Health Insurance | 303,602 | 500,900 | 508,987 |
| Accounting and Audit Services | - | 1,300 | 1,300 |
| Financial, Banking and Investment Services | 652 | 1,300 | 1,200 |
| Other Professional Services | - | 6,500 | 6,500 |
| Telephone, Internet and Cable | 16,364 | 25,000 | 22,750 |
| Machinery/Equipment Maintenance Services | 6,059 | 6,500 | 6,500 |
| Technology Services | - | 27,500 | 16,000 |
| Other Special Services | 20,799 | - | 34,000 |
| Reimburse County | 5,502 | 5,000 | 6,400 |
| Copier Charges | 3,377 | - | 6,500 |
| Sundry Contractual Services | 5,025 | 56,000 | 15,000 |
| Postage and Courier | 752 | 2,500 | 1,700 |
| Printing and Forms | 3,976 | 10,000 | 5,000 |
| Software - IT | 3,053 | - | 6,000 |
| Books Library | 163,802 | 280,326 | 274,250 |
| Audio-Visual Materials | 31,666 | 60,527 | 60,000 |
| E-Books Library | 29,089 | 29,100 | 34,252 |
| Office Supplies | 17,185 | 28,800 | 27,000 |
| Subscriptions | 2,387 | 19,000 | 18,600 |
| Electronic Subscriptions | 15,658 | 21,000 | 31,000 |
| Membership Dues | 104,182 | 104,701 | 118,497 |
| Registration Fees/tuition | 974 | 4,000 | 3,500 |
| Advertising | 1,137 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| Personal Auto Mileage | 1,097 | 3,000 | 3,500 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Meals | - | 400 | - |
| Lodging | - | 400 | - |
| Meeting Expenses | 480 | 2,000 | 2,700 |
| Technology Supplies | 1,647 | 10,000 | 3,000 |
| Other Personal Effects | 64 | - | - |
| Other Supplies | 4,803 | 13,000 | 10,000 |
| Insurance Other Premiums | - | 44,961 | 48,000 |
| Building/Offices Rent | 32,785 | 65,000 | 65,000 |
| EXPENSES TOTAL | 2,350,293 | 3,697,441 | 3,787,867 |
| REVENUE GRAND TOTALS: | 489,616 | 479,756 | 184,647 |
| EXPENSE GRAND TOTALS: | 2,350,293 | 3,697,441 | 3,787,867 |
| NET GRAND TOTALS: | (1,860,678) | (3,217,685) | (3,603,220) |

Library
101 General Fund

| | <u>FY2023</u> | <u>FY2023</u> | <u>FY2024</u> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Accounts | <u>Actuals (thru mid-Sept.)</u> | <u>FY23 County Amended</u> | <u>FY24 Requested Budget</u> |
| Revenues | | | |
| Miscellaneous Revenue | 31,614 | 43,153 | 42,153 |
| Public Charges for Services | 101,398 | 80,000 | 81,000 |
| Other Financing Sources | 356,603 | 356,603 | 61,494 |
| Total Revenues | 489,615 | 479,756 | 184,647 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Contractual Services | 57,778 | 129,100 | 116,150 |
| Fixed Charges | 32,785 | 109,961 | 113,000 |
| Operating Expenses | 381,952 | 592,754 | 602,999 |
| Personnel Services | 1,877,778 | 2,865,626 | 2,955,718 |
| Total Expenses | 2,350,293 | 3,697,441 | 3,787,867 |
| <u>Net Change</u> | <u>-1,860,678</u> | <u>-3,217,685</u> | <u>-3,603,220</u> |

UW-EXTENSION

| Account Description | 2023 (mid-Sept.) Actuals | 2023 Amended Budget | 2024 Requested Budget |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Fund: 101 - General Fund | | | |
| REVENUES | | | |
| State Grants Culture and Recreation | - | 30,200 | - |
| Other General Government Fees | - | 6,600 | 3,600 |
| UW Extension Fees | 6,130 | 21,900 | 19,000 |
| Donations from Private Organizations or Individuals | 23,725 | - | 40,500 |
| Transfer from the General Fund | - | 9,602 | - |
| REVENUES TOTAL | 29,855 | 68,302 | 63,100 |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Other Professional Services | - | 230,000 | 238,000 |
| Telephone, Internet and Cable | - | 1,100 | 1,100 |
| Machinery/Equipment Maintenance Services | - | 7,000 | 7,500 |
| Technology Services | 1,247 | 500 | 600 |
| Contractual Services | 111,319 | - | - |
| Copier Charges | 1,278 | - | 2,500 |
| Postage and Courier | (1,500) | 12,100 | 12,100 |
| Printing and Forms | 220 | 8,100 | 4,350 |
| Training Supplies | 649 | - | - |
| Office Supplies | 6,676 | 15,452 | 5,800 |
| Books & Directories | - | 200 | - |
| Subscriptions | 369 | 1,450 | 200 |
| Membership Dues | - | 780 | 780 |
| Registration Fees/tuition | 794 | 2,200 | 1,650 |
| Personal Auto Mileage | 5,778 | 13,600 | 14,000 |
| Meals | 125 | 450 | 650 |
| Lodging | 139 | 1,700 | 950 |
| Meeting Expenses | 477 | 3,250 | 3,250 |
| Educational Supplies | 15,571 | 1,750 | 3,250 |
| EXPENSES TOTAL | 143,142 | 299,632 | 296,680 |
| REVENUE GRAND TOTALS: | 29,855 | 68,302 | 63,100 |
| EXPENSE GRAND TOTALS: | 143,142 | 299,632 | 296,680 |
| NET GRAND TOTALS: | (113,287) | (231,330) | (233,580) |

MCDEVCO, Inc. – September 2023 Report

GAP FINANCING

MCDEVCO continues to work with businesses throughout Marathon County to provide *GAP* financing.

POWTS REVOLVING LOAN FUND

MCDEVCO is now accepting applications!

COVID-19 GRANTS

MCDEVCO administrated the Marathon County Microbusiness Grant.

- Total Amount of \$5,000.00 Grants Disbursed: 47
- Total Amount Disbursed to Marathon County Businesses: \$235,000.00

ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

2023 PROGRAMMING:

- **March 14, 2023:** Business Start Up Information Session hosted by MCDEVCO.
- **March 28, 2023:** MCDEVCO *GAP* Financing Information Session for Financial Institutions.
- **March 29, 2023:** MCDEVCO led an entrepreneurship segment with the DC Everest Youth Entrepreneurs.
- **April 4, 2023 & April 11, 2023:** Strategic Planning Workshop hosted by MCDEVCO.
- **April 20, 2023:** MCDEVCO was present at the Chamber Expo.
- **April 26, 2023:** MCDEVCO was present at the CWIMMA Expo.
- **May 9, 2023:** *GAP* Financing Information Session was held for EEC Tenants looking to grow and evolve their business.
- **May 15, 2023:** MCDEVCO attended a Strategic Doing Workshop and led a table discussion surrounding Brainpower and Talent Development in our Region.
- **May 16, 2023:** Business Networking hosted by MCDEVCO.
- **May 23, 2023:** MCDEVCO partnered with the DC Everest Youth Entrepreneurs for a class visit.
- **June 13, 2023:** Business Start Up Information Session hosted by MCDEVCO.
- **June 21 & 28, 2023:** Quickbooks for Business hosted by MCDEVCO.
- **July 19, 2023:** Law Clinic hosted by MCDEVCO in partnership with UW Madison Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic.
- **July 24 & 31, 2023:** Marketing Workshop hosted by MCDEVCO.
- **September 12, 2023 through December 5, 2023:** *GEARS* Certificate of Entrepreneurial Excellence.
- **October 10, 2023:** Business Start Up Information Session to be hosted by MCDEVCO.

Municipalities

MCDEVCO hosts quarterly municipality meetings.

EEC Management

Occupancy Update:

- August 2023 Occupancy: 88%

Kimm Weber, Executive Director - MCDEVCO

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

Now is the time for you to start planning the business you want to grow and succeed.

 **TUESDAYS:**
APRIL 4 & 11, 2023

 6:00-7:30PM

 **MCDEVCO, Inc.**
Entrepreneurial & Education Center
100 N 72nd Avenue, Wausau, WI


Scholarships Available

www.mcdevco.org
715.298.0084



TIM MCKEOUGH
Q Up Success



 **Tuesday, May 16, 2023**
6:00 - 7:30PM

MCDEVCO, Inc.
Entrepreneurial & Education Center
100 N 72nd Avenue, Wausau, WI

 715.298.0084

 www.mcdevco.org


Scholarships Available



Amy Plier
Wausau Container Corp
Co-Founder

QuickBooks Online Workshop

MCDEVCO, Inc.
Entrepreneurial & Education Center
100 N 72nd Avenue, Wausau, WI

 **Wednesdays, June 21 & 28, 2023**
6:00-8:00PM

715.298.0084
www.mcdevco.org

Instructor
Sydney Fritzel, CPA
Owner - Summit Tax & Accounting

Marketing Workshop

Tara Schessler
Sales Manager - WAOW TV 9

Mondays, July 24 & 31, 2023

MCDEVCO, Inc.
Entrepreneurial & Education Center
100 N 72nd Avenue, Wausau, WI
www.mcdevco.org
715.298.0084

Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN LAW SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON

BUSINESS LAW BASICS

UW Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic Supervising Attorney Jeff Glazer will present on Business Law Basics and Intellectual Property. Q & A to follow.

10:00-11:00AM - Presentation and Q & A

11:00AM to 3:00PM - Eight (8) 30-minute time slots available by appointment.

Wednesday, July 19, 2023
Entrepreneurial & Education Center
100 N 72nd Avenue, Wausau, WI 54401

Register Online
www.mcdevco.org/Events&Programs

715.298.0084

MCDEVCO, Inc.
Entrepreneurial & Education Center
100 N 72nd Avenue
Wausau, WI 54401

GEARS Certificate of Entrepreneurial Excellence

Tuesdays, September 12 - December 5, 2023
6:00-8:00PM - 22 Hours of Focused Management Skills

Join us for this 12-week leadership program and learn the skills, tools, and strategies to get your new venture off to a great start or to grow your existing business.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE



Monthly Summary of the Marathon County Public Library for the Marathon County Extension, Education, and Economic Development Committee

For October 5, 2023 EEEDC Meeting

Strategic Plan Update



WILS consultants Laura D and Melissa M hosted the “Dream Big with MCPL” steering committee virtual kick-off meeting on September 5. During the meeting, steering committee members were able to introduce themselves to the group, learn more about their role in the creation of the library’s strategic plan, and start to build a community contact list for future community conversations. I am pleased to report that we have an exceptional group of influential community members who have already added value to this monumental process for the library.

During this next phase, consultants will be focused on extensive data gathering through area demographic and DPI reports, as well as community and staff engagement through: SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results) sessions, community gatherings, stakeholder interviews, surveys, and community Q&A boards.

Central Wisconsin Book Festival 2023

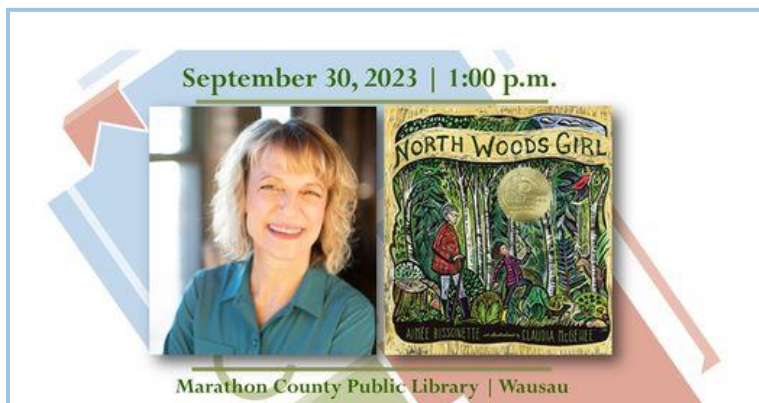
The Central Wisconsin Book Festival began in 2017 as an initiative of the Marathon County Public Library in Wausau, WI and takes place annually around the second half of September. The festival remains under MCPL’s umbrella and is organized by about a dozen community volunteers. In 2021, our festival expanded to include the participation of the Portage County Public Library in Stevens Point, WI and

McMillan Memorial Library in Wisconsin Rapids, WI. Our three libraries remain annual partners for this festival and you'll find events in a variety of places in each city as well as a few virtual events!

The idea was, and continues to be, to provide lovers of literature in Central Wisconsin and beyond with a chance to hear and meet a multitude of authors – some they know, some they don't – over the course of several days or even a week or more. This year most events are held Thursday, September 28th through Sunday, October 1st.

Highlights from the 2023 lineup include:

- A Community Read of the *Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley
- An Evening with Angeline Boulley via Zoom
- Fiction (and Funny) with Author Lorna Landvik
- Nature Connections for Children with Aimée Bissonette
- "Small Town Wisconsin" with Mary Bergin
- "Chinese Prodigal" with David Shih
- A Writer's Life with Victoria Houston
- ... and so much more!



The Festival is almost entirely grant-funded and is free to attend! All event details can be found on the Marathon County Public Library website at mcpl.us/cwbf. -Chad D, Library Specialist

Library Services

August saw the end of our Summer Library Program (SLP) and gave Library Services an opportunity to plan for a busy autumn. Over the course of the summer, we gave over 600 books to the 500 children who participated in our SLP. We were thrilled to have such a successful year and to empower so many young readers across Marathon County. We are already planning for next year's SLP—stay tuned for more literary fun in 2024! August story times at our local parks continued to be a hit with over 50 people in attendance at each event. Due to the success of Story Time at the Parks, we are already planning to offer the program again next summer. In collaboration with Marathon County Parks & Recreation, Youth Services staff led a space-themed story time at the popular Wausau Under the Stars event in Sunny Vale Park. Teens joined us for the last Dungeons and Dragons event where they raved about the program. We have monthly D&D themed events for teens planned throughout the rest of 2023 and hope to see

many of these young people back in the library. DIY friendship bracelets, therapy dogs, and Pokémon Club continued to be popular with children and families as summer winds down.

Our Adult Services team is hard at work preparing for the upcoming Central Wisconsin Book Festival and fall programming. September 1st ushers in a whole host of excitement at the library. Led by our Event Coordinator and a team of volunteers, the Central Wisconsin Book Festival activities begin on September 1st with the Poetry Walk in downtown Wausau and Steven's Point. Throughout the month of August, our Marketing Specialist brainstormed an exciting and fun way to encourage Marathon County residents to get a library card or renew an inactive card. Our Library Card Sign up Drive begins September 1st. During the month of September, Marathon County residents can sign up for a library card at any of our locations and enter to win a raffle for library-themed prizes. In August, we collaborated with the Wausau ECDC Multicultural Community Center to organize a book display in the library for Welcoming Week. Other August programming highlights include the MCPL-wide Artist Celebration Weekend in honor of American Artist Appreciation Month, Let's Talk! Social Hour, Extensions Gardening: Herbaceous Ornamentals, and Anime After Dark.

Library Services also had the opportunity to attend AED training with a representative from Marathon County.

-Katelyn S, Library Services Manager

Branches

Summer has been a fun and busy time across all of our locations. It would be impossible to share all of the wonderful things happening in all of our locations this summer, but here are some highlights. Additional information (and photos!) can be found on our social media.

Dinosaur Dimensions filled the air with thrills, chills and Jurassic Jump Scares at both our Stratford and Rothschild branches on Aug. 2. More than 80 people in Stratford and 250 in Rothschild enjoyed the very entertaining and fascinating puppet show that incorporated prehistoric facts, fossils and fun!



Edgar hosted a stuffed animal sleepover event on the 21st and had 16 in attendance. Children were able to drop off a favorite stuffed animal and then received photos of all the fun things their stuffed friends got up to while the library was closed. This event is always a favorite!

Patrons at all locations enjoyed our book and art display for American Artist Appreciation Weekend on Aug. 4 and 5, and participated in our creative DIY Artist Stations inspired by famous American artists.

Book Club and Family Story Time continue to be well attended at many of our locations. Patrons have also visited our locations for a variety of craft weeks, Lego events, sidewalk chalk parties, and educational programs. Creative book displays were featured at all locations including ones like "The Dog Days of Summer," "Back to School," "But wait...it's still summer," and "Fire and Ice.

All locations are working with Kayla and James on a graphic novel relabeling project. This will help make the collection easier to shelve and will help patrons and staff better find what they are looking for.

Regarding facilities, in Hatley, the AC for the library portion of the building has not been working correctly. Bauer Plumbing and Heating has been out multiple times to figure out the issue and we are hopeful it will be fully functional within the first week of September! In Edgar, the new parking lot project was completed on 8/31. It looks great! In Mosinee, new locks were installed to the three outer most doors of the Mosinee Branch.

In staffing news, Kitty R took over as Athens Branch Coordinator on August 21. She lives in the Athens area and is happy to be back home. Thank you to everyone who helped out at Athens this month during the transitional time. Kitty and Shahara are prepping for the move to the new building and are busy sorting and organizing. Interviews for the open Marathon City position were held on August 9th and 11th. They went well and we will hopefully have a new team member starting soon.

–Laura W, Branch Team Lead



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

September 2023 Report

*We teach, learn, lead, and serve,
connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with
them in transforming lives and communities.*

4-H – Positive Youth Development

Holly Luerssen, 4-H Program Educator

Jasmine Carbajal, 4-H Associate Educator

The Marathon County 4-H team is excited to jump into fall programming and reflect on the success of summer opportunities. Marathon County youth were able to explore their sparks, increase their knowledge, and meet new people through the various programs like trips, 4-H Foodie, and the WI Valley fair. This year Discover WI took youth in 5th-8th grade to Southeastern Wisconsin where they explored places like Old World WI and the East Troy Electric Railroad Museum. Not to mention all the local fun and food participants had! In July, our 4-H Foodie Program was just as popular as last year. Youth learned to cook various recipes and enjoyed going to the Farmer’s Market to buy locally grown ingredients for the dishes we made. Finally, August brought the fair and our community was able to experience various 4-H activities at our “Discover 4-H” activity stations. 4-H youth showcased their skills and talents not only in departments like cultural arts, sewing, mechanical sciences and more, but also in the various animal they took to the fair. Our Marathon County 4-H team was so proud of their hard work and dedication, and they keep us motivated to keep offering more countywide programs!



This fall we have already offered things like a fall wreath making workshop in partnership with the Marathon County Public Library, quilting club, clover kaboom, and a teen movie night event. We will be rolling out more educational, fun, and hands-on programs so stay tuned.





- A hands-on educational workshop where Marathon County youth in 3rd grade and older learned the basics of quilting and practiced using a sewing machine. The goal of the workshop was for the participants to start a quilt project of their own that they can continue to work on during monthly meeting times.
- An educational booth at a local high school's open house where the goal was to promote 4-H and Juntos and to recruit families to participate in the program in the 2023-2024 academic year. Youth and families that stopped at the booth were able to learn about piñatas and make one for their family.

Agriculture

Heather Schlessor, Dairy Agent

Calf blood draws have started! Heather and Jade started collecting blood samples on heifers and crossbred calves this month. We are assessing the serum total protein of calves aged 1 – 7 days old to identify if calves are receiving enough colostrum to transfer passive immunity successfully. We have thirteen farms signed up for the project and hope to get as many as 30 farms. The project runs all year, with data collection occurring quarterly.



- A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest research and applications regarding a blood panel developed to predict high liver triglyceride status in multiparous cows and early lactation milking frequency in an automated milking herd. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research on impacts of fresh cow herd health and monitoring.
- A peer-reviewed journal article submission, for Extension Agriculture professionals, where participants will learn about beef x dairy sire selection and calf care practices. The goal of this effort is to share our scholarly work derived from surveying 40 Wisconsin farms on the beef x dairy crossbreeding practices.
- Planning for the release of the Dairy Worker Training Modules. The goal of this effort is to provide training material that farms can use with their employees, so that employees are better able to provide the labor needed on farms.
- Planning and creating videos for agriculturists including youth involved in livestock production where they will learn biosecurity principles in collaboration with the WI Department of Agriculture and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The goal of this project is to help livestock producers increase their understanding of biosecurity practices that will help them achieve and/or maintain economic viability.



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

September 2023 Report

- Planning for development of factsheets/articles, longer publications, and videos on nutrition, genetics, & reproduction topics. The goal of this effort is to increase farmer, nutritionist, veterinarian, and other agribusiness professionals understanding of management of these topics to help improve farm sustainability and economic viability.
- A study to better understand the prevalence of Prototheca Bovis Mastitis on dairy farms in Wisconsin. Results from this study will help Extension Educators provide tailored education to the farmers of Wisconsin on this type of mastitis.

FoodWise

Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator

Michelle Van Krey, Healthy Communities Coordinator

Julia Perock, FoodWise Educator

Welcome to our new FoodWise Nutrition Educator Julia Perock. Julia is serving as the FoodWise Nutrition Educator in Marathon County. She will focus on school education programs, as well as work with families to provide nutrition education. She looks forward to partnering with food pantries to provide nutritional support within the community. She graduated from The University of Wisconsin Stevens Point in December 2022, with a BA in Sustainable Food and Nutrition. Julia is excited to step into this role and provide education about healthy food choices as well as encourage community members to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Julia also participated in the Hunger Coalition's Mobile Pantry at Head Start – offering samples, recipes, and other information to guests.



- Shared leadership in the Marathon County Hunger Coalition, where emphasis is placed on expanding healthy food access and developing new projects and partnerships that will empower Marathon County families through education and shared resources. The coalition's goal is to increase access to healthy foods in order to achieve health equity for all county residents.
- A quarterly nutrition education series in Marathon County utilizing the Feeding for Healthy Eating curriculum for adults with young children as part of the Children's Wisconsin LEAP (Learning Essentials about Parenting) program where they learn about incorporating healthy eating habits into the family routine, including family meals, and eating more fruits and vegetables. The goal of this effort is to encourage healthy eating behaviors at home.

Horticulture



Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

- An in person horticulture course where Marathon County Master Gardener Trainees learn the fundamental principles of IPM based gardening to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments.
- A therapeutic gardening program for justice-involved individuals where participants developed vocation skills including a foundation in IPM while practicing positive self-management techniques to reduce recidivism in Marathon County.
- A meeting hosted by the Marathon County United Way with partnering organizations, where community leaders began the organization process to create a community garden. The garden will serve as a space for individuals to learn about preparing, managing, and sustaining a garden, as well as an opportunity for participants to also experience the therapeutic effects of gardening.
- Two presentations (Choosing herbaceous ornamentals), for the general public hosted by the Marathon County Public Library-Wausau Branch, where participants learned best practices for using herbaceous ornamentals in their landscapes. This effort is designed to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments.
- A therapeutic horticulture class (Sustainable lawn care) for community members aged 55+ at the Woodson YMCA The Landing, where participants learned best practices for maintaining a reduced risk lawn, supporting lifelong learning, healthy wellbeing, and positive socialization.
- A therapeutic horticulture class (Bring them inside!) for community members aged 55+ at the YMCA aquatic center in Mosinee, where participants learned how to apply IPM principles to indoor plants, reduce stress on plants reintroduced to indoor climates through light mitigation, and proper watering techniques while supporting lifelong learning, healthy wellbeing, and positive socialization.
- A community of practice for horticulture educators where we explore strategies and resources to expand horticulture education and outreach to underrepresented audiences. The goal of participating in this group is to dig into ways we can locally continue to grow and enhance our horticulture programs to reach more diverse audiences.
- Planning for the creation of a repository of existing horticultural resources in multiple languages for home/community gardeners of all abilities. The goal of this effort is to make this repository accessible on the Horticulture Topic Hub.
- Developing informal learning communities utilizing the Horticulture Program's social media for all Wisconsin gardeners, including underserved populations. The goal of this effort is to provide accurate, practical and up-to-date information to the public primarily through the topic hub in order to bolster educational outreach efforts in support of addressing the Horticulture Program objectives.

Natural Resources

Kris Tiles, NRI Program Manager

Anna James, Regional Natural Resources Educator



- Participation in the advisory panel of a local producer-led watershed group for farmers, conservationists and community members of the Big Eau Pleine watershed, by assisting with planning and facilitating activities geared toward increasing the awareness and adoption of conservation and ultimately water quality of the Big Eau Pleine and Wisconsin River watersheds.

Additional Extension Outreach Programming Occurring in Marathon County

- An online program (Money Matters) for participants who want to improve their financial knowledge, where they complete 1-12 modules on different financial topics. The goal of the Money Matters modules is to increase participants' knowledge on topics such as credit scores and reports, making a spending plan, what to do when you can't pay your bills, and identifying financial strengths so that participants can apply these skills in the future.
- Participating on the steering team of a collaborative of local farmers and agricultural professionals called a "learning hub," based in a specific geography referred to as the Cloverbelt, focused on increasing grass-based agriculture in the region mainly by the implementation of grazing dairy heifers.
- Participated in pasture walks held in various locations around the state through the 2022 growing season. The goal of these events is to highlight specific methods and solutions that farmers can implement to improve their success in grazing.
- Coordinate the Grazing Management Team at the Marshfield Agricultural Research Station. The goal is to facilitate monthly meetings to make sure all research station staff and scientists are working toward the same goals, and to ensure success of the grazing program at the station.
- Planning for a small ruminant management program for goat producers, typically members of plain faith communities so that they may improve their production practices, profitability and sustainability of their goat management programs.

Upcoming Programs

- **4-H Programming** – Information at marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/
- **Horticultural Programs** – Information at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/>



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

September 2023 Report

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| Jeremy Solin <i>Area Extension Director</i> | Janell Wehr <i>Horticulture Educator</i> | Kris Tiles <i>NRI Program Manager</i> |
| Heather Schlessler <i>Dairy Agent</i> | Mallory McGivern <i>FoodWise Administrator</i> | Kathy Johnson <i>Administrative Assistant</i> |
| Holly Luerssen <i>4-H Program Educator</i> | Julia Perock <i>FoodWise Educator</i> | |
| Jasmine Carbajal <i>4-H Associate Educator</i> | Michelle Van Krey <i>Healthy Community Coordinator</i> | |



Wausau UW-Stevens Point

Report to the Extension, Education, and Economic Development Committee

October 2023

1. **Wausau campus dining-** We are in conversation with interested vendors and hope to resume on-campus dining service later in the fall.
2. **Fall 2023 Enrollment** -Our Fall 2023 enrollment is 368. While this is a slight decrease from Fall 2022, UWSP enrollment is up 10% and course enrollments on the Wausau campus are very strong. We have also begun receiving applications for Spring and Fall 2024.
3. **The Community's Campus-** we want to be a resource to the community. Upcoming community events:
 - a. Hank Talks 10/17 and 11/14, 7:00 PM in the Veninga Theater
4. **ViewPoint Days** – ViewPoint is a great opportunity for prospective students to learn about our campus. Each ViewPoint day includes information about admissions, a mock class, a student panel, and a tour of the campus.
 - a. Friday, October 20th from 9:00-11:00 AM
 - b. Friday, November 10th from 9:00-11:00 AM
 - c. Register at <https://apply.uwsp.edu/portal/all-visits-wausau>
5. **Continuing Education:** Please access our continuing education website for professional development opportunities.
<https://www3.uwsp.edu/conted/Pages/Professional-Development.aspx>
6. **Parks and Recreation Collaboration** – beginning in January, Parks and Recreation will offer the following programming in the Wausau campus Field House:
 - a. Open Basketball—Tuesday 7:00-8:30 PM
 - b. Toddler Time—Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-11:00 AM
 - c. Pickleball—Wednesday 8:30-10:30 AM
 - d. Fees: \$2 per drop in for Toddler Time, \$5 for basketball, and \$3 pickleball
7. **Degree Programs Offered** – We're refining our course pathways and our strategies to attract additional groups of students and hiring recruitment support for the UWSP at Wausau and Marshfield campuses. More details to follow in the coming months. Below is a list of the degree programs we currently offer on the Wausau campus.
 - a. Associate Degrees

Associate of Arts and Sciences Degree
Human Services
Leadership and Project Mgt
Pre-Engineering

- b. Bachelors programs
 - Business Administration
 - Nursing
 - Social Work
 - Sociology
 - Engineering (UW-Platteville Partnership)

- c. Master's Degrees
 - Business Administration (Main Campus)
 - Physician Assistant Program (UW-Madison Partnership)
 - Social Work (UW-Green Bay Partnership)

Submitted by Miranda Gentry-Siegel on behalf of Ozalle Toms, Campus Executive