



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES
Where Meeting Basic Needs Inspires Hope

**ANNUAL REPORT
2015**

OUR MISSION

To provide individuals and families with advocacy and services that meet their basic needs so they may live in dignity.

OUR VISION

A community in which each person envisions a future with hope.



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES
Where Meeting Basic Needs Inspires Hope



MILWAUKEE WOMEN'S CENTER
Where Abuse Ends and Hope Begins
A Division of Community Advocates



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To learn more about
our work, please visit
communityadvocates.net.
Thank You!

A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

As Community Advocates completes another rewarding year of serving men, women and children in Milwaukee County, it is with sincere gratitude that we thank you for your support of our work. Your commitment and contributions have helped us positively impact the lives of more than 76,000 children and adults in 2015.

As we reflect on our many achievements over the past year, the source of our greatest pride is the support that we have been able to provide to our community's individuals and families. Without your generosity, this would not be possible. Please join us in celebrating the many wonderful accomplishments we achieved together in 2015 through the remarkable opportunities our organization has to offer for those in our community.

One of greatest accomplishments in 2015 was our role in the transformation of the Energy Assistance program in Milwaukee County, which you will have the pleasure of reading about in this report. Another source of organizational pride is that our Lovell Street facility has delivered on its promise of being a hub of social services. We are happy to report that our building includes complementary services for those we serve including legal services, employment services, and health insurance navigation services, which have transformed our home into a one-stop shop of valued community resources.

On behalf of the tens of thousands of lives we touch each year, we truly thank you for your generosity, time and investment in our work in the greater Milwaukee community. Thank you, again, for being a valuable partner. We could not do what we do without you!

Sincerely,




Pam Klein, *President*
Board of Directors




Andi Mallmann-Elliott
Chief Executive Officer

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position

YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014 AND 2015

ASSETS	2015	2014
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 509,282	\$ 548,658
Investments	-	-
Receivables:		
Grants	1,720,060	1,010,545
Pledges – Current portion	218,542	280,017
Prepaid expenses and deposits	52,956	70,634
Total current assets	\$ 2,500,840	\$ 1,909,854
Restricted assets:		
Restricted cash – Client trust	128,660	139,330
Total restricted assets	128,660	139,330
Property and equipment:		
Land, buildings & improvements	9,944,826	9,905,116
Furniture & equipment	935,294	912,069
Vehicle	17,143	17,143
Total property and equipment	10,897,263	10,834,328
Less accumulated depreciation	3,313,679	2,924,769
Property and equipment – Net	\$ 7,583,584	\$7,909,559
Other assets:		
Pledge receivable, less current portion, net	—	—
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 10,213,084	\$ 9,958,743

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	2015	2014
Current liabilities:		
Current portion of notes payable	\$ 325,573	\$ 320,260
Line of credit	100,000	-
Accounts payable	780,245	497,039
Accrued payroll & related liabilities	288,513	238,232
Deferred revenue	73,236	74,605
Other accrued expenses	37,087	42,838
Total current liabilities	1,604,654	1,172,974
Client trust payable	132,294	142,964
Long-term liabilities:		
Line of credit	-	-
Notes payable, less current portion	4,127,785	4,530,549
Total long-term liabilities	4,127,785	4,530,549
Total liabilities	5,864,733	5,846,487
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	3,437,150	3,273,447
Temporarily restricted	911,201	838,809
Total net assets	4,348,351	4,112,256
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ 10,213,084	\$ 9,958,743

Where Funds Come From

State of Wisconsin **36%**

Milwaukee County **22%**

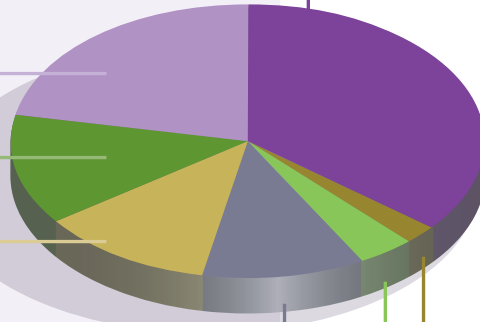
Grants/Donations **13%**

Federal Agencies **12%**

City of Milwaukee **11%**

Other **4%**

Contracts **2%**



What Funds Pay For

Public Policy Institute **38%**

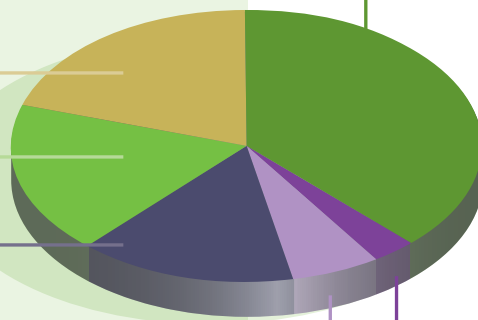
Basic Needs **20%**

Behavioral Health **18%**

Milwaukee Women's Center **15%**

Administration **6%**

Fundraising/Other **3%**



Major Revenue Sources 2015

Federal

Department of Health & Human Services, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
 Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency
 Department of Housing & Urban Development

State of Wisconsin

Department of Administration, Division of Housing
 Department of Children and Families
 Department of Health Services

Milwaukee County

Department of Child Support Services
 Department of Health & Human Services, Behavioral Health Division
 Department of Health & Human Services, Disability Services Division
 Department of Health & Human Services, Housing Division
 Department of Health & Human Services, Management Services Division

City of Milwaukee

Department of Administration, Community Development Block Grant
 Department of Administration, Emergency Solutions Grant
 Department of Administration - State of Wisconsin Emergency Solutions Grant, Transitional Housing Program & Homelessness Prevention Program
 Department of Neighborhood Services

Public, Private, & Corporate Contracts

AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin
 Children's Community Health Plan
 Heartland Housing
 Kenosha Department of Human Services
 Managed Health Services
 Open Society Foundation
 Outreach Community Health Centers
 Public Service Commission
 United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County
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BASIC NEEDS

73,000 individuals and their families received critical assistance through the Basic Needs Division in 2015.

Comprehensive **Housing Programs** provide case management, advocacy, relocation services, and financial assistance to reduce the risk of homelessness for individuals and families who are low-income and vulnerable to becoming homeless.

2,324 clients were placed in permanent housing and maintained their housing for at least 6 months.

14,682 families received assistance to resolve tenant/landlord issues to sustain housing.

Utilities Programs help low-income individuals and families avoid service interruption and disconnection.

45,109 Energy Assistance Applications were processed providing needed financial assistance and payment plans for these families to maintain their utilities.

9,500 individuals completed Crisis Applications to prevent disconnection or have their utilities restored.

195 individuals received a matching telephone assistance grant to connect and/or maintain home telephone service.

Disability Advocacy Programs provide SSI/SSDI application assistance to individuals with disabilities and protective payee services to individuals and families needing help managing their finances.

1,120 clients received assistance with filing for SSI/SSDI benefits.

70 individuals with disabling conditions received protective payee and financial management services.

Ms. Williams was referred to Community Advocates' housing programs for assistance because she was homeless and exiting Joy House shelter with her seven children who ranged in age from 17 to 4. She had established individualized goals to better provide for her children and hoped to obtain safe affordable housing. The housing case manager assisted her with \$700 towards a security deposit so that she and her family could move into a new residence. While in the program, Ms. Williams found employment and continues to maintain her safe and affordable home for her family, and she is still working on obtaining her GED and other goals set for her family. Ms. Williams continues to stay in contact with her case manager and provides monthly updates on the progress that has been made with her and the children. She is grateful for the support that she received through the housing program and credits the staff with going the extra mile to make sure that her family has a roof over their heads, stability, and a hopeful future.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

The **Homeless Outreach Nursing Center** provides person-centered outreach and engagement to individuals with mental illness who are homeless and living on the streets, in vacant buildings, under bridges or in parks. Clients are assessed by Nurse and Social Worker advocates and are provided services to assist them in stabilizing their mental and physical health and homeless situations.

During 2015, the Homeless Outreach Nursing Center served **1,400** men and women.



Autumn West Safe Haven is a low-barrier, housing refuge for individuals who are homeless and experiencing severe and persistent mental health challenges. This program provides no-cost, safe, apartment occupancy housing using a housing first approach to support the transition from homelessness to permanent housing.

Of the **46** individuals served in 2015, **35 (76%)** achieved housing stability through residing at the Safe Haven and permanent housing placement. **98%** had health insurance benefits at year-end.

Project Bridge/Autumn West Permanent Housing Program

121 individuals who have a disabling condition and have experienced chronic homelessness received immediate, safe, affordable, permanent housing and case management services to support housing stability.

Three years ago, John had a key to his own home, but when he lost his income, he lost that home. He turned to living outside with brief stays at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission. John has also battled depression for years. Without a job and a place to live, he felt hopeless and worthless. The Autumn West Homeless Outreach Nursing Center team met John a few times while doing street outreach. Staff offered him the opportunity to reside at Autumn West Safe Haven and he gladly accepted the offer to live in a stable environment while he got back on his feet. John could now concentrate on his goals without having to worry about basic needs. The Care Coordinator and John sat down and created a plan to achieve his goals. Finding a job and permanent housing were his top two. He was given access to a computer and spent much of the day working on his resume and job hunting. Even though there were many bumps in the road, John never gave up. He worked with Autumn West staff to access permanent supportive housing through the Housing First Initiative and found a one-bedroom apartment. He was also offered a full-time permanent position in a construction company. Today, John is hopeful and appreciates what Autumn West was able to provide. Once again, John has a key to his own home and a smile on his face.



ENERGY ASSISTANCE

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), created in 1981, assists families and individuals with home energy costs. LIHEAP provides federally funded assistance in managing costs associated with home energy bills, energy crises, weatherization and energy-related minor home repairs. LIHEAP helps people stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer through programs that reduce the risk of health and safety problems that arise from unsafe heating and cooling practices.

In Milwaukee, LIHEAP providers have traditionally used a first-come, first-served customer service model, which resulted in a rush to apply in person and meant long wait times and long lines for clients. The program was also geographically limiting because of a small number of application sites.

In 2015, Community Advocates designed a new service delivery model that incorporates current technologies to improve customer service, program efficiencies and overall effectiveness. This transformation, driven by a dedicated focus on client care, presents a new service paradigm for delivering Energy Assistance benefits in Milwaukee County.

Lisette's Note of Thanks

"I have been applying for energy assistance for a couple of years. By far this year's changes have made this process much more convenient. As I'm online, I noticed you could make appointments, so being the person I am I thought there was a catch to it, but I continued to print a confirmation. On October 1st, I had my appointment at 7:30 a.m. and sure enough, my name was called first, for real that was a good feeling! Thank you for considering those of us whose lives are definitely busy and finding alternative options for us to receive benefits."

ACCESS... DIGNITY... RESPECT...

These values have always been at the heart of Community Advocates' mission and are now a hallmark of the newly imagined Energy Assistance program. Client survey results, client comments, staff review and observations, and thorough research of Energy Assistance best practices influenced and provided the basis for the new design, transforming these values into creative client-focused program enhancements:

- Early morning, evening and weekend appointment times.
- A centralized countywide call center and online appointment scheduling.
- Improved accessibility through expansion of service sites throughout Milwaukee County.
- Increased outreach to seniors and individuals who are homebound.
- Community outreach including billboards, bus ads, and radio spots.
- Customer service and quality assurance improvements through ongoing training.

The response to these program enhancements has been overwhelming and has resulted in:

- Elimination of early morning long lines, missed workdays and wait times in crowded waiting rooms.
- Scheduled appointments and efficient application processing.
- Improved call center response times.
- Reduced travel distance and time.
- Streamlined furnace repair process.
- Exemplary customer service.

Energy Assistance Program Improvements at Community Advocates (2014-2015)

	2014	2015
Appointments	13,568	57,173
Completed Interviews	11,258	45,109
Wait Time	40 minutes	15 minutes



MILWAUKEE COUNTY ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTNERS:



“Community Advocates has been instrumental in creating the technology that has allowed us to serve Energy Assistance customers in a more efficient and respectful way with appointments, online scheduling, and sites across the county. This truly embodies their dedication to serving people in the community with dignity, respect, and compassion.” ~ DIANE ZETTELMEIER, Program Coordinator, Milwaukee County Energy Assistance program

Additional Services Provided by Community Advocates’ Utility Services Department:

Furnace Replacement Referral: Community Advocates’ Energy Assistance program processes requests for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program emergency furnace replacement or repair.

The Low-Income Pilot program offers case management, educational conservation information, and financial literacy workshops for clients wishing to significantly reduce their energy bills and/or who have historically fallen behind in their utilities payments.

Milwaukee Telephone Access Advocacy Program assists low-income Milwaukee residents in establishing or maintaining basic telecommunications services, so that seniors and families are able to access the telecommunications needed to maintain their health, security, and basic needs.

Since 2008, the Public Policy Institute has worked to promote and implement evidence-based policies that will prevent and reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for individuals and families in Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin by advocating for policy changes, convening coalitions, and supporting community-based programs to increase our collective impact.

The Public Policy Institute's 2015 **policy** work included continued advocacy and research focusing on the Affordable Care Act, Transitional Jobs, and testing and researching the **Working Our Way Out of Poverty Project**, a five-part package of policies that would reduce the poverty rate by more than half and lift most people in the United States out of poverty.

Thanks in part to advocacy by our **Effective ACA Implementation Project**, each individual transitioning out of Wisconsin state prisons to the community is now offered the chance to enroll in BadgerCare. Our policy team also released our vision for how to effectively implement the Affordable Care Act in Wisconsin, including the expansion of BadgerCare.

To help get people back to work, we continued our efforts to sustain the momentum of **Transitional Jobs** in Wisconsin, an employment strategy that seeks to transition people into wage-paying jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families. Currently, the Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program offers approximately 450 transitional jobs each year in Milwaukee with approximately 100 of those jobs placed in the City through Compete Milwaukee.

Prevention work in 2015 continued our emphasis on creating a community where everyone, especially children, can live up to their full potential.

In September, we learned that the Public Policy Institute was again chosen to lead the **Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative** through 2018. This Initiative aims to positively impact Milwaukee youth by incubating programming focusing on teen pregnancy prevention, AODA

prevention, and violence prevention. Its implementation features training and technical assistance to improve the quality and capacity of all grantee organizations. The Institute's current role is to manage more than 10 competitively awarded grantees, who collectively served more than 5,400 people in 2015.



The **Milwaukee County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (MCSAP)** continued work on its two key focus areas: youth marijuana prevention and opiate abuse prevention. In March, we were excited to take part in the City of Milwaukee's press conference announcing that nearly all Milwaukee Police Department district stations now house prescription drug drop-boxes, which allow residents across the city to anonymously dispose of unwanted or expired pharmaceutical medications. In the fall, MCSAP presented a youth-led anti-marijuana campaign called "Let's Be Blunt," which included a poster contest, social media, and graphics on local buses.

Because of our outstanding MCSAP accomplishments, the Institute applied for and received a new five-year federal **Drug-Free Communities** grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration to develop a coalition addressing youth alcohol and marijuana use in Milwaukee's 53206 zip code.



PHOTO: MIKE DESISTI

Youth from Neu-Life Community Development take part in our Coming Together Partnership luncheon against gun violence.

In October, the **City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance** presented the poster, “Opening the Doors to LGBTQ+ Tobacco Prevention in Milwaukee: A Community Readiness Assessment,” at the National Conference on Tackling Tobacco Use in Vulnerable Populations in Bethesda, MD, as well as the LGBTQ Health Conference in Chicago, IL. The poster highlighted results from the Community Readiness Assessment conducted in 2014 and described how we are using the results to inform future actions to reduce disparity rates. The Alliance also conducted 32 community meetings and outreach events and, with assistance from youth and the Milwaukee Police Department, nearly 500 tobacco compliance checks. Six presentations in particular focused on the harm of e-cigarettes, a growing concern.

In 2015, we piloted the **Youth Works MKE** program. This program seeks to link teens at risk of criminal involvement with subsidized jobs and supportive services including mentoring. The goal is to increase employment skills and positive engagement while preventing participation in criminal and delinquent activities. During our 2015 pilot

implementation, more than 30 low-income adolescents participated at Boys & Girls Club locations, where the youth were employed and were also linked with mentors and Social-Emotional Learning sessions.

A new state grant awarded in late 2015 enabled the Public Policy Institute to coordinate the eight-county southeast region of **Alliance for Wisconsin Youth (AWY)** coalitions, which focuses on youth substance abuse prevention. Our role is to increase collaboration among the region’s various coalitions, provide training and technical assistance, and help to grow more substance abuse prevention work in the eight counties. Partnership for Success funding, which aims to prevent prescription drug abuse, now flows through Community Advocates because of our status as a regional AWY center.



MILWAUKEE WOMEN'S CENTER

145 women and **130** children received comprehensive domestic violence services through the **Emergency Shelter**. **91%** of the women reported that they can achieve desired personal goals, **90%** became more aware of resources that they could use in the future, and **88%** gained knowledge about safety planning.

192 low-income, homeless women and **344** children received shelter and assistance through the **Family Support Center**.

Of the **401** men who began batterers' prevention and intervention education, **211** completed the six-month **Nevermore Program** to help them change abusive and controlling behaviors in their intimate partner relationships.

130 men learned how to become better dads and role models through their participation in the **Fatherhood Program**.

94 women age **50** and older who were abused at the hands of their long-time partners or adult sons or daughters received assistance through the **Older Abused Women's Program**.

62 women received intensive substance treatment through the **POWER Program** to overcome alcohol and other drug abuse issues. **10** families participated in POWER's Celebrating Families, which included supervised visitation to aid women in the process of reunification with their children.

The Bottomless Closet provided free clothing and job readiness assistance to **483** women and **244** men who were entering or re-entering the workforce.



Travon was court-ordered to Nevermore and attended on an irregular basis and then he stopped attending. His probation officer ordered him to return to the program, which he did. He attended 13 of the required 23 sessions and then disappeared. Travon showed up again requesting to enroll in the program and he made staff aware that he was no longer on probation so staff questioned him as to why he wanted to be in the program. His response was that "this program is the best program that I have ever attended...you guys always walked with and supported me." He went on to say, "I am 32 years old now and I realize that I can do what you guys did and turn my life around and that is why I came to you of my own free will because I know that you can help me be a better man to myself, my children, and to my fiancé." Travon was re-enrolled and he attended and actively participated in 23 consecutive sessions and subsequently graduated from the program. He continues to attend Nevermore bi-weekly and refers to the program as his "life skills class" which has aided in his personal growth and willingness to change.



MILWAUKEE WOMEN'S CENTER
Where Abuse Ends and Hope Begins

2015 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

*Thank
you!*

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continued on next page ▶

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Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize if any errors have occurred. Questions can be directed to Kris Uhen at kuhen@communityadvocates.net or by calling (414) 405-6054. Thank You!



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