



Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY

WCS Connection

October 2024



From the desk of the WCS President & CEO: **WCS Continues to Improve its Facilities**

Wisconsin Community Services is nearing the completion of improvements to the south facade along Wisconsin Avenue of our 37th Street building. The improvements were much needed as the foundation of the building along Wisconsin Avenue was deteriorating and crumbling. The large storefront window system and multiple doorways are several decades old, and the overall appearance of the façade was decaying and dated. Improvements include replacing the deteriorating limestone base under the storefront windows with an insulated cast in place concrete finish for enhanced durability and lower maintenance. We also replaced the large single pane storefront window system with new double pane insulated glazing and composite metal panel infills in the framed storefront system. The new system is a Low-E energy efficient tinted glass to mitigate heat gain along the south façade. We have also replaced insets where the storefront jogs, integrated doors, and single storefront openings to the second floor of the building. Old exterior lighting was removed and replaced with new lighting at the storefront segments. Motorized shades will be installed on the inside of the storefront window system to provide additional sun control for heat gain and reflectivity and will also provide desired privacy along Wisconsin Avenue. Additional improvements were made to the first-floor interior to complement the exterior overhaul. New signage will be installed at the top of the building along Wisconsin Avenue in early 2025. The improvements to the building represent one of the most important priorities for WCS to make our facilities warm, welcoming, and comfortable for the people that we serve and our staff.

In 2022, WCS completed major renovations to the first floor of the Wisconsin Avenue campus. The feedback from our staff and people who visit the space has been overwhelmingly positive. In 2021, WCS purchased the former Employ Milwaukee building at 27th and North Avenue. We have consistently made improvements to the exterior and interior of that building and will do more as our resources allow. Similarly, with smaller properties that we own in the Milwaukee area, we strive to make them clean, comfortable, warm, and inviting. We are in the beginning stages of planning for major renovations to the second floor of our Wisconsin Avenue building. The space accommodates hundreds of individuals on a weekly basis including both staff and

people served in various programs. Our vision is to transform the space and make it warm, inviting, comfortable and functional for the people served and the staff who provide important needed services. At WCS, we place the 17,000 people that we serve annually at the center of our mission. Creating spaces that make them feel welcome, supported, respected and safe will remain a top priority for the organization.

Clarence Johnson



Attending Brewers Game Has Positive Impact on Youth

Thanks to tickets donated by the Brewers Community Foundation, a young person in a WCS program had the opportunity to attend his first Milwaukee Brewers game. Although he was very excited at the prospect of attending a Major League Baseball game at American Family Field, the anxiety he always feels when he is part of a large crowd almost kept him from taking advantage of this amazing opportunity. Being able to attend the game with his WCS Support Specialist made all the difference. They provided support and guidance each step of the way to enable him to take on the challenge and succeed at navigating large crowds and overcoming his fears. And, in doing so, he was able to enjoy watching the Brewers clinch a division title.



After processing the experience, he told his support specialist that he not only enjoyed going to the game but would even like to attend another. When he was faced with being in the midst of another large group of people the following week, rather than becoming anxious, he smiled with confidence, stating that he could do it because, after all, he had “been in bigger crowds than this,” thanks to his experience at the ballpark!

By providing Brewers tickets to WCS, the Brewers Community Foundation gave this young person a chance to enjoy a quintessential Milwaukee event and helped him grow the confidence to overcome the anxiety he experienced in crowds. WCS is grateful to the Milwaukee Brewers for providing magical moments on the field and in the stands! The Brewers Community Foundation donated over 100 tickets to WCS programs during their 2024 season.



MATC Leadership Training Benefits WCS Staff

Several WCS employees in leadership positions are improving their leadership skills this fall by taking part in a series of workforce training sessions led by MATC. The courses are accessible because of a Workforce Advancement Training Grant provided to WCS from MATC’s Office of Workforce Solutions.

“Milwaukee Area Technical College and Wisconsin Community Services work hand-in-hand to create pathways in education to remove barriers for individuals in our community,” said MATC President Anthony Cruz, Ed.D. “We are honored to be a trusted partner supporting their leaders’ development so they can best serve individuals who are impacted by the justice system.”

WCS began pursuing the training opportunities after an April 2023 survey of its leaders found they desired support, ongoing training, team-building experiences, professional development, and career growth opportunities.

“As we continue to recognize talent development is just as important as talent acquisition, we need to invest in people to help them be better leaders and coworkers for the staff they supervise,” said Dwayne Marks, WCS V.P. of Operations. “Offering these courses is also an effort to retain top talent which is one of our strategic priorities. We recognize today’s workforce is looking for more than just a paycheck – they’re looking to invest in their career and development.”

The first course, Leadership Principals, took place in September. A Management Essentials Course will be offered in October and November. The last of the three courses, Effective Communication, will take place in December.



WCS Receives \$75,000 Award from Waukesha County



Pictured from left: WCS Peer Services Coordinator Susie Austin, WCS President & CEO Clarence Johnson, WCS Vice President of Court & Community Reintegration Services Sara Carpenter, and Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow.

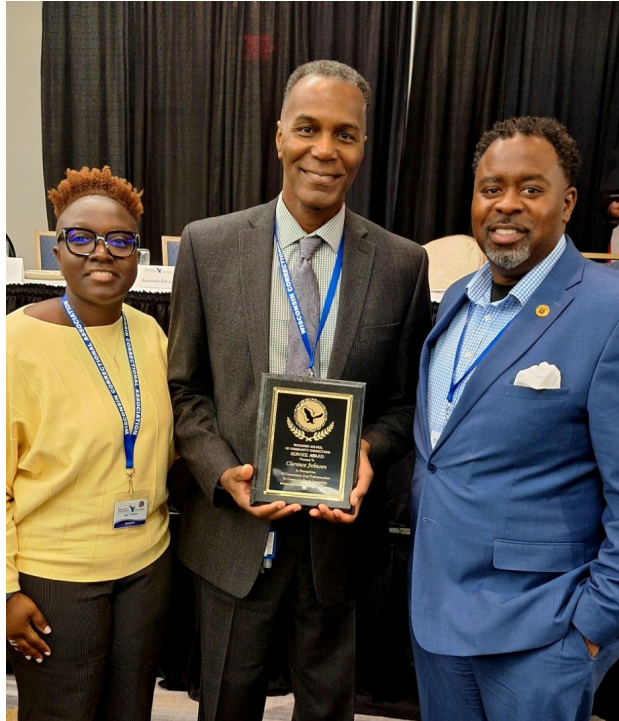
WCS leadership accepted a \$75,000 award in Waukesha County in response to a proposal the agency submitted to the county’s Public Health Division of Health and Human Services which addresses key strategic health priorities. The funding became available to the County through the federal government’s appropriation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to local and state governments to ensure communities have access to resources necessary to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Waukesha County’s Community Health Improvement Plan has been leading the way in addressing Strategic Health Priorities through three primary Action Teams including Substance Use, Healthy Aging, and Mental Health. The funds awarded to WCS allowed the agency to develop a Certified Peer Support program for individuals who are identified as struggling with opioid use and mental health and in need of life-saving interventions.

WCS hired a full-time Certified Peer Specialist and enhanced our Drop-in Center for peers to ensure ongoing support to individuals in recovery with the goal of reducing relapse and the number of overdoses and deaths in Waukesha County. The program will provide individuals in

recovery who do not have access to peer services and will offer a continuum of care for individuals who completed peer services and need ongoing support. All individuals in the program will receive education on harm reduction strategies, be connected to a strong recovery community, and have support with access to resources to address root causes such as lack of treatment, unemployment, lack of stable housing, transportation, and food. The program aims to reduce stigma by educating community-based organizations and employers on the profession and benefits of Certified Peer Support.



Wisconsin Correctional Association Award Received



Pictured from left: WCS Community Reintegration Services Administrator Jay Tucker, WCS President & CEO Clarence Johnson, and WCS Director of Workforce Initiatives Richard Badger.

WCS President & CEO Clarence Johnson is the recipient the 2024 Wisconsin Council on Community Corrections Community Service award. Established in 2004, this award from the Wisconsin Correctional Association recognizes individuals who showcase exceptional commitment and professionalism in community corrections. Johnson's leadership and vision have greatly enhanced the services and programming at WCS for individuals impacted by the criminal legal system. His innovative approaches have improved the quality of support provided and fostered a more inclusive and effective environment for reintegration. As a result, Johnson's efforts have profoundly impacted the community, inspiring positive change and promoting a greater understanding of the challenges those navigating the criminal legal system face.

Johnson is the fourth person to win the Wisconsin Council on Community Corrections Community Service Award while employed at WCS, joining past WCS Residential Services Administrator, Joe Spolowicz, and two past Executive Directors, Erwin Henzelmann and Stephen Swigart. Henzelmann was the first recipient of the award, while Swigart and Spolowicz were honored in 2007 and 2014, respectively.



Looking for People to Join the WCS Team!

Are you a dedicated, diligent, and caring individual? Why not work at WCS and become part of the team in one of the following positions:

Support and Service Coordinator (SSC) – Children’s Long-Term Support Program (CLTS)

Help improve the lives of children in need and their families as a Support and Services Coordinator for CLTS. The coordinator will use their knowledge of available programs, resources, and services to create a service plan customized to fulfill the specific needs of each child. This could include connecting those served to sources of community support that are trauma-informed, strength-based, and culturally intelligent. The primary responsibility of the position is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of each child, both at home and in their community. To qualify, candidates must have at least a bachelor’s degree in a field related to health and human services and one year of experience working with people with disabilities. Those hired must complete mandatory CLTS training and job shadowing and possess a valid driver’s license, reliable transportation, and sufficient auto insurance coverage.

Certified Peer Support Specialist – Waukesha Court Services

Make your community a better place to live by working as a Certified Peer Support Specialist. The person hired will provide 1-on-1 peer support to people living in Waukesha County who do not have access to peer support. Such support involves connecting peers with community resources and providing strength-based support and encouragement. They will combat stigma and promote peer support services by delivering presentations to local businesses and community partners. The peer support specialist must have a high school diploma or GED/HSED and be Wisconsin Peer Support-certified.

Resident Monitor II – Parsons House Residential Reentry Center (RRC)

(Part-time and fill-in shifts available)

Help others reenter the community successfully by providing supervision in a secure residential setting. Current shift needs include 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. Part-time shifts of five hours are available on Saturdays and Sundays. To qualify, candidates must have a high school diploma or equivalent, a valid driver’s license, pass background checks and a drug screen, and a physical examination. One year of experience in corrections or a related security or social services field is preferred.

Drug Treatment Court Case Manager – Waukesha

Assist others in improving their lives by handling day-to-day operations of the Drug Treatment Court, a post-plea court providing intensive support and monitoring of eligible drug offenders in Waukesha County. The person hired will work closely with the Drug Treatment Court Team, which includes the court judge, and representatives from the District Attorney and Public Defender’s offices. To qualify, candidates must have a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, social work, or a related field, an understanding of AODA issues and treatment, and court system experience. It’s preferred that candidates have Clinical Substance Abuse Counselor credentials and case management experience.

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Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS) advocates for justice and community safety, providing innovative opportunities for individuals to overcome adversity.

WCS is a 501(c) 3 non-profit agency that provides services in southeastern Wisconsin.
WCS has been serving the community successfully for 111 years.

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