



La Crosse Area Family Policy Board

300 4th Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601

Senator Alberta Darling
Joint Committee on Finance Co-Chair
Room 317 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Representative John Nygren
Joint Committee on Finance Co-Chair
Room 309 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Re: 2019-21 State Budget Priorities

Dear Senator Darling, Representative Nygren, and Joint Finance Committee members:

The La Crosse Area Family Policy Board is a local coalition of over 30 nonprofit and government agencies and stakeholders who serve children, youth, and their families. Together, we provide for the needs of several thousand La Crosse County citizens. Our purpose is to have a more effective human services system through practicing four “Cs”: communication, coordination, collaboration and connectedness.

Like many counties, La Crosse has struggled in recent years as the opioid and meth epidemics have progressed and mental health needs have skyrocketed. **Being effective in addressing substance abuse and mental health issues in our community is our number one priority.** The membership of the Family Policy Board recently came together to identify what items in Governor Evers’ biennial budget proposal would be our priorities to see adopted by the Joint Finance Committee. The items selected are listed below.

1. **Home Visiting for Expecting Mothers:** Provides an additional \$1,012,500 TANF in FY20 and \$2,175,000 TANF in FY21 to expand home visiting to support expecting mothers and mothers with infants and small children.
2. **Children and Family Aids:** The Governor’s budget increases funding for Children and Family Aids by \$15 million GPR beginning in CY20. Considering the scope of the crisis in the child protective services system and consequences of not stabilizing the system, **we support the Wisconsin Counties Association’s request to increase this amount to \$30 million.**
3. **Homelessness:** The Governor’s budget increases funding for various homeless prevention programs by \$3.9 Million GPR and \$500,000 TANF.
4. **School Mental Health:** The Governor's budget would add \$22 million each year to help schools pay for social workers, psychologists, counselors and nurses to assist students facing mental health challenges.

5. Return of 17 Year-Olds to the Juvenile Justice System: The Governor's budget reverts jurisdiction of 17-year-old offenders from adult court to juvenile court for acts committed on or after January 1, 2021 and provides sum sufficient funding to Wisconsin counties to cover eligible costs associated with returning these youth to the juvenile justice system.

Thank you for the consideration of our budget priorities. If you would like additional information about these priorities and their importance to our agencies, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Tita Yutuc, Chair
La Crosse Area Family Policy Board

Family Policy Board Member Agencies:

<i>APTIV</i>	<i>La Crosse County Family Court Commissioner</i>
<i>Big Brothers Big Sisters</i>	<i>La Crosse Community Foundation</i>
<i>Bikers Against Child Abuse</i>	<i>La Crosse County Human Services</i>
<i>Boys & Girls Club</i>	<i>La Crosse County Health Dept</i>
<i>Catholic Charities</i>	<i>La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium</i>
<i>Coulee Council on Addiction</i>	<i>La Crosse County Judicial</i>
<i>Couleecap</i>	<i>La Crosse County UW-Extension</i>
<i>County of La Crosse HHS Board</i>	<i>Mayo Clinic Health System</i>
<i>Essential Health Clinic</i>	<i>Neighborhood City Church</i>
<i>Family & Children's Center</i>	<i>New Horizons</i>
<i>Garrison Counseling</i>	<i>Partners in Excellence</i>
<i>Great Rivers 2-1-1</i>	<i>The Parenting Place</i>
<i>Great Rivers United Way</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>
<i>Gundersen Health System</i>	<i>School District of La Crosse</i>
	<i>School District of Onalaska</i>
	<i>Western Technical College</i>
	<i>Workforce Connections, Inc.</i>
	<i>Workforce Development</i>
	<i>YWCA</i>