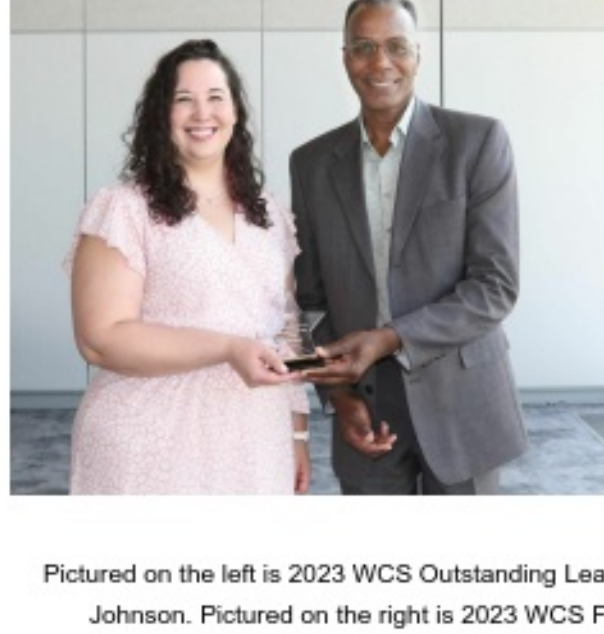




**Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.**  
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY

# WCS Connection

June 2023



Pictured on the left is 2023 WCS Outstanding Leader award winner, Rachel Bacon, with WCS President & CEO, Clarence Johnson. Pictured on the right is 2023 WCS Friend of the Friendless award recipient, Jim Gramling, with Johnson.

## From the desk of the WCS President & CEO:

### Employee Recognition Event Honors Outstanding Work

Wisconsin Community Services held our 20<sup>th</sup> annual Employee Recognition Event Tuesday, June 20, at Discovery World. The Employee Recognition Event is designed to acknowledge and honor WCS team members who have attained significant milestones in terms of their tenure with the organization. This year we had honorees at the 3-, 5-, 10-, 15-, 20- and 35-year levels of tenure with WCS. Each level has significance because it represents where each person is as it relates to their commitment to the work and mission of WCS. Beginning with the three-year level of longevity, it represents those team members who have made a significant contribution over the first few years of their time at WCS. They have already provided considerable support to the people we serve. Our five-year honorees are those people who have now spent a sizeable amount of their career with WCS, are very skilled at what they are doing, have determined the mission and work of WCS closely aligns with their personal values, and have had a long term, significant impact on service delivery and the development of new team members. In many ways our three- and five-year honorees are team members who stand as the bedrock of the organization. This is illustrated in many ways, including the fact that in most years, between 75 and 80 percent of our honorees are three- and five-year team members.

Our 10- and 15-year honorees embody the characteristics of three- and five-year tenured team members and in many cases have worked for WCS longer than they have for any other organization. This group includes people who lead in formal and informal ways and are very dedicated to the work and mission of WCS. Many of the team members in this group will finish their career with WCS or go on to achieve higher levels of longevity. Honorees who achieve longevity milestones of 20 years and beyond are in a special group and embody many of the characteristics of those other tenured classes. They have spent the bulk of their career with WCS, and the organizational fit is one that has clearly worked well for many, many years. Each year, there are one or two people honored for 30 years and beyond. This year, we honored Lori Sheets, Director of Human Resources, for her 35 years of service and the numerous contributions she has made, including helping to build a more effective human resources department.

We were pleased to recognize Rachel Bacon as the 2023 WCS Outstanding Leader. Rachel has made numerous contributions to our Wraparound and Reach children's mental health programs. We also recognized Jim Gramling as our 2023 WCS Friend of the Friendless award recipient for his professional and community work to advocate and support underserved and underrepresented communities.

Please join me in recognizing all our honorees and award winners and their special contributions to support the work and mission of Wisconsin Community Services.



## NOVA House Expands Behavioral Health Services at WCS

WCS is nearing its goal of opening NOVA House, a 14-bed transitional living center for those who need additional time to work toward their recognized recovery goals. While WCS already has a transitional living center in Sankofa House, it can only accommodate adults on their recovery journey for up to 90 days. NOVA will be an extension of Sankofa House in that it will allow those in recovery to stay for longer — potentially as long as they need, depending on their goals — provided they remain committed to their recovery. There is great need for additional housing options for people experiencing substance use needs, according to Chad Meinholdt, WCS Vice President of Behavioral Health Services. Meinholdt said it's important to note that Sankofa House will have a peer-led staff whose own experiences can be of help to those in recovery.

NOVA has been made possible through the NOVA House (Capital) Project, which has received funding from Bader Philanthropies, City of Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Zilber Family Foundation, and an anonymous donor. Other community members and WCS staff have played an important role, too, including Torre Johnson, Program Manager at Sankofa House. Johnson has been an advocate and leader of the project while supporting fundraising efforts and designing the program to meet the needs of the people and community. The project, which has been in the works for two years, continues as the building is updated. WCS is seeking funding and donations to help furnish the building.



## Hub & Spoke Part of Presentation at Opioids Conference

The achievements of the WCS Hub & Spoke Health Home Program were acknowledged during a presentation at the 2023 Wisconsin Department of Health Services Opioids, Stimulants, and Trauma Summit held May 16-18 in Wisconsin Dells. The Hub & Spoke Health Home Pilot Program is comprised of three sites in Wisconsin treating eligible people in urban, rural, and reservation communities who have substance use disorders and at least one other health condition. Unlike the other sites, the WCS Hub & Spoke Health Home is freestanding and community-based, meaning its staff goes out to community partners and health systems in need to provide supplementary services. Because of this uniqueness, four members of the staff were asked to join Dr. Dean Krahn of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health as he presented on the pilot program.

Maya Robinson, assistant director of the WCS Hub & Spoke Health Home program, said the presentation was important because many medical professionals in the state are still not aware of the program and its benefits. Robinson said she and the other staff members were humbled and honored that so many people wanted to learn about the program and showed appreciation for its value.

In addition to joining the presentation, Hub & Spoke Health Home staff benefited from the educational opportunities provided during the three day event. Robinson said the event was also a good chance for staff to network and that people have reached out after the conference to learn more.



WCS Hub & Spoke Health Home staff joined Dr. Dean Krahn of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health as he spoke about the successes of the Hub & Spoke Health Home Pilot Program during Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Opioids, Stimulants, and Trauma Summit in Wisconsin Dells.

Pictured left to right: Crispin Ramirez, Enrollment Recovery Navigator; Maya Robinson, Assistant Director; Dr. Krahn; Raquel Castro, Lead Recovery Navigator; and Eric Diamond, Director of Innovation and Special Programs



## WCS Remains Focused on DEI in Recruitment, Hiring

WCS is constantly advancing its culture, and that includes its continued embrace of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). WCS human resources staff and hiring managers have worked since mid-2022 to ensure these efforts are apparent to job applicants during their first interactions with the organization by incorporating DEI values into the hiring process. This is important because it not only demonstrates to applicants WCS' true commitment to DEI, but it also allows WCS to better identify and select candidates who share those same values and are confident in their abilities to work in a diverse environment. Human resources staff have asked candidates in job screenings to explain how their education or previous work experience prepared them to work with a diverse population.

To ensure the hiring process identifies candidates committed to DEI, senior staff began sharing DEI-related interview questions with their program leaders in May. This action was a significant milestone in WCS' mission to fully incorporate DEI into its recruitment and hiring processes, according to Toni Rechlicz, Human Resource Generalist at WCS. One of these questions shared with hiring managers asked candidates to explain what DEI means to them. Another asks candidates to explain how their prior experiences contribute to a culture that fosters DEI concepts.

By incorporating a focus on DEI values at the very beginning of the hiring process, we expect to continuously attract new employees who more readily and fully embrace the WCS mission.



## Looking for People to Join the WCS Team!

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

### Case Manager – Community Support Program (CSP)

Make a difference in the lives of individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use needs by working as a Case Manager for CSP. The Case Manager will work as a member of an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team addressing all participant needs while utilizing the ACT treatment modality. The majority (70%) of the case management will be performed in the community and in homes of those being served. The Case Manager will provide ongoing assessment and treatment planning, supportive psychotherapy, symptom management, medication monitoring, and crisis intervention, including afterhours hotline coverage. Candidates must possess a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Behavioral Science — psychology, social work, counseling, marriage and family, etc. Candidates should have strong clinical skills, especially related to mental health and substance use disorders.

### Certified Peer Specialist – DHS Waukesha

A Certified Peer Specialist has lived the experience of mental health, substance use or co-occurring needs and uses it to help those enrolled in the Department of Health Services Peer Specialist Program. Peer Specialists help individuals to improve their quality of life, support their recovery, strengthen their ability to deal with challenges and crises, manage stressors, and navigate between system access points and levels of care. This Certified Peer Specialist provides 1:1 peer support service to people in Waukesha County. To qualify, candidates must have earned a high school diploma or GED/HSED, undergone formal peer specialist training, and have passed the State of Wisconsin certification exam before being hired.

### Certified Peer Support Specialist – Part-time

Help those in your community by working as a Certified Peer Support Specialist. In this role, you will provide 1:1 support to those participating in the Waukesha Drug Treatment Court. This involves work in drug treatment court staffing, weekly court appearances, and helping participants to obtain housing resources, mental health services, and other aid. Work is performed in offices and courtrooms and involves home visits. To qualify, candidates must have a high school diploma, valid state certification in Peer Support Services, and at least one year's experience as a peer support specialist. The job is 15-24 hours per week and requires the person hired to be flexible to meet the needs of the individual being served.



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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 over 110 years.

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