

2022/2023 Annual Report



WESTERN DAIRYLAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As our communities slowly recover from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we find ourselves strengthening old connections and reaching out to make new ones.

Since our founding in 1966, Western Dairyland EOC has provided much-needed assistance to low-income families and individuals with a wide range of programs including Head Start, Energy Assistance, Weatherization, Business Development, Fresh Start, and Homeless Services. These programs were needed before, during, and after the pandemic.

Now, as we emerge from this unprecedented pandemic, we're placing a priority on serving rural communities and connecting the various resources in west-central

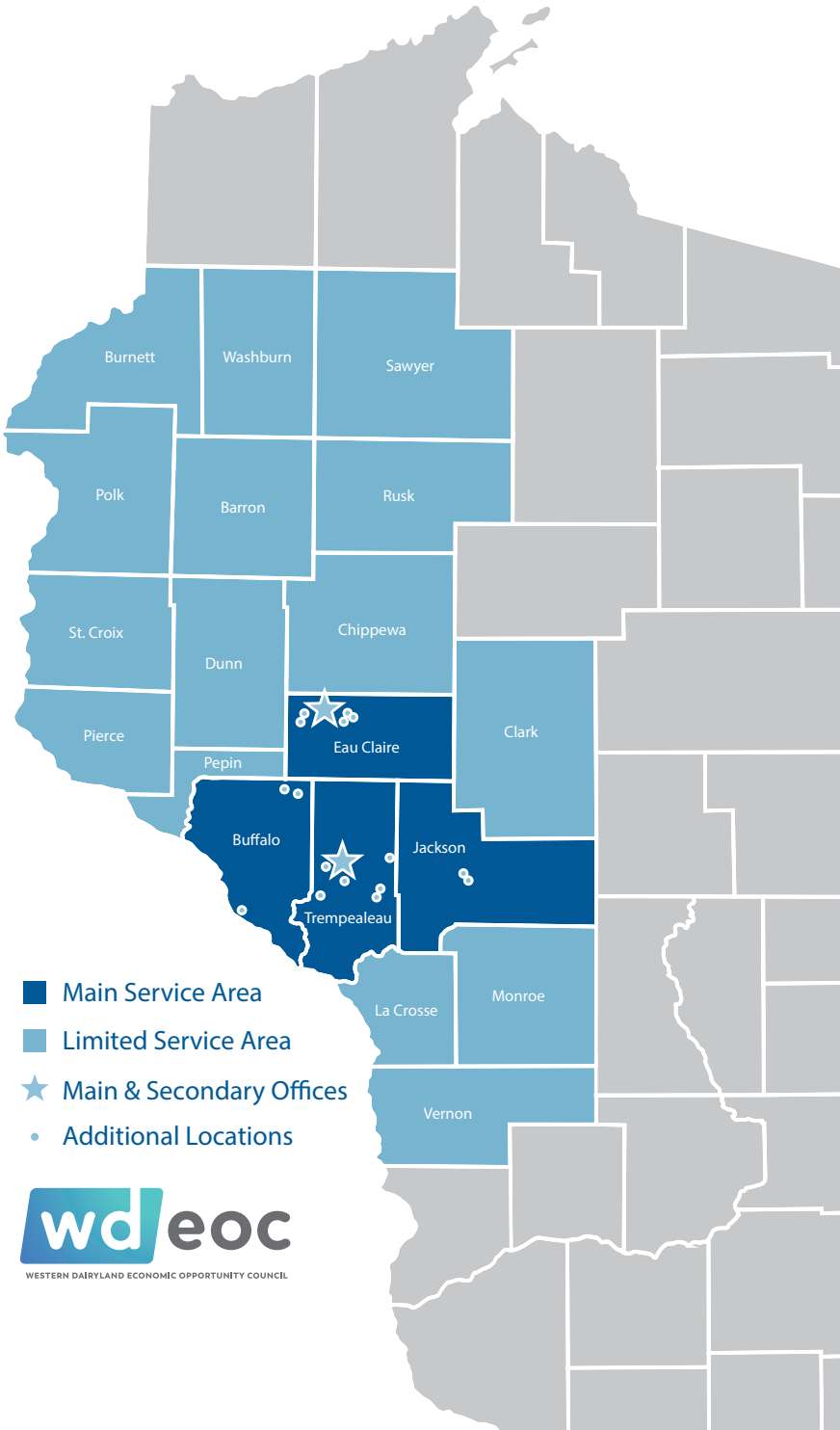
Wisconsin. Western Dairyland will step-up and step-in, where appropriate, to facilitate and build strong and enduring relationships between the groups doing good and important work in our communities.

Our agency will renew our commitment to serving all who need assistance. We will continue our effort to ensure all of our neighbors are provided with an opportunity to advance economically and socially.

Learn more about our efforts online at WesternDairyland.org.



Anna L. Cardarella
Chief Executive Officer
Western Dairyland EOC, Inc.



- Main Service Area
- Limited Service Area
- Main & Secondary Offices
- Additional Locations



HOMELESS SERVICES

Western Dairyland operates seven homeless shelters in western Wisconsin for families with children. Our shelters are single-family units which may be occupied for up to 30 days. Each shelter is a completely furnished apartment with bedding, furniture, cooking utensils and cleaning supplies donated by the community.

Our shelters are located in safe locations, and every effort is made to maintain the privacy of the families staying there. Family members are referred to other Western Dairyland resources and community organizations for additional help.

Our first priority is to provide a safe place to stay for homeless families with children. During their stay, we do everything we can to locate permanent housing and help them on their way to self-sufficiency.

Since 2016, Western Dairyland has provided housing and case management services to chronically homeless individuals and families in the city of Eau Claire with Housing First.

The Housing First model is simple: the primary need is stable housing, so we will provide housing first. Clients are given an assessment by a case manager, and those who are deemed most vulnerable are placed directly into apartments.

The apartments are not all in one location, but spread throughout the community to help clients reintegrate more quickly. Once housing is provided, a case manager works with the clients in the areas of mental and physical health, substance abuse, education, and employment. Western Dairyland currently has 25 apartments in the Housing First program.



CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP

Western Dairyland's Child Care Partnership consists of three distinct programs: Child Care Resource & Referral, YoungStar, and the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Child Care Resource & Referral connects parents with child care services, develops professionals who care for and educate children, and analyzes and reports child care data that impacts communities.

YoungStar is a program of the Department of Children and Families created to improve the quality of child care for Wisconsin children. YoungStar evaluates and rates the quality of care given by providers, helps parents choose the best child care for

their kids, supports providers with tools and training to deliver high quality early care, and sets a consistent standard for child care quality. Learn more at youngstar.wi.gov.

The mission of the **Child & Adult Care Food Program** is to improve the diets of children by reimbursing family child care providers for serving food that meets USDA nutritional guidelines.

Our overall goal is to increase access to consistent, affordable, and quality child care services. We work with parents, providers, and communities to develop highly competent children through quality early childhood programming.



WESTERN WISCONSIN
WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

If you're thinking of starting, improving or expanding a business, the Western Wisconsin Business Center can help.

We work with start-ups and existing businesses to offer assistance and training in all aspects of business, including business plan development, marketing, management and finance options. Special efforts are made to assist economically and socially disadvantaged women and individuals through low or no-cost classes, events and business counseling.

We helped entrepreneurs start dozens of businesses last year, and over the past two decades we've helped more than 500 clients start businesses in West-

ern Wisconsin, resulting in more than 1,000 full-time and part-time jobs. Our clients include men, women, teenagers, minority populations, military veterans, disabled individuals and low-income families.

Our Women's Business Center (WBC) specializes in providing services to assist women entrepreneurs. Special efforts are made to assist economically and socially disadvantaged women. We continue our commitment to provide intensive group and one-on-one business training and technical assistance that will assist women to grow their business ideas and acquire or improve their business management skills.



FRESH START

The Western Dairyland Fresh Start Program helps build strong communities by involving young adults, ages 16 to 25, in the construction and rehabilitation of homes in western Wisconsin. When completed, the houses are sold to income-eligible families in the community.

During the course of the program, the young adults gain valuable skills, perform community service, and prepare for post-secondary education and/or careers.

At first glance, they're learning how to build homes. Take a closer look and you'll see they are actually rebuilding their lives. Since 1998, hundreds of young adults have gone through the program and 87% have completed the program successfully.

Fresh Start combines classroom instruction to help the youth complete studies for their high school diplomas, GED or HSED with other educational goals including independent living skills and the actual "hands on" construction work. Upon completion of the Fresh Start program, the goal is to have each participant either enroll in post-secondary education or be employed full-time.

All program participants are AmeriCorps members, and an hourly wage is paid for construction work. The most important goal of the project is to help youth find their way toward self-sufficiency and build self-esteem through accomplishment, while staying on the path to success.



RETIRED & SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) connects individuals age 55 or older with meaningful volunteer opportunities in their communities. Volunteers are matched with opportunities that best reflect their interests, available time, and preferences.

RSVP currently partners with more than 40 different organizations throughout Buffalo, Jackson, Trempealeau, Pepin and Eau Claire counties. Volunteer sites are varied and may include food distribution, tutoring or mentoring children, providing transportation services, assisting at local nursing home and rehabilitation centers, working with environmental groups, schools, libraries and museums.

RSVP also operate three signature projects: Volunteer Caregivers, Birthday Boxes, and Weekend

FOOD 4 KIDS.

RSVP Volunteer Caregivers serves the residents of Trempealeau County in Western Wisconsin with supportive home care services for the elderly and disabled.

Birthday Boxes are delivered to less-fortunate children staying in Western Dairyland homeless shelters, families enrolled in Head Start, and other families who are struggling to make ends meet.

Weekend FOOD 4 KIDS is a volunteer-based project devoted to providing pre-K and school-aged children in Independence with nutritious weekend food assistance. Although many children are being fed well during the school day, some students struggle with getting enough to eat on non-school days, including weekends and holidays.



HEAD START

Since 1966, the Western Dairy-land Head Start program has been preparing young children ages three to five to succeed in school and beyond in Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson, and Trempealeau counties. The Early Head Start program for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women was added in September 2015. Head Start and Early Head Start programs promote children's development through services that support early learning, health, and family well-being.

Head Start offers education, health programs, and social services to income-eligible pregnant women and families with children ages birth to 5. Our objectives are:

- To enhance children's health growth and development.
- To strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their

children.

- To link children and families to needed community services.
- To ensure well-managed programs that involve parents in decision-making.

In Head Start, children and families benefit from a wide range of services, including:

- Prenatal and postpartum education for expectant mothers.
- Personal support from professional and caring early childhood experts.
- Resources to ensure children's health, safety and good nutrition.
- School readiness activities.
- Referrals to community services to meet each family's needs.
- Support for parents to be their child's most important teacher.



WEATHERIZATION & ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Western Dairyland administers the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) which provides eligible households with assistance for their home heating and energy costs. This program can offer a one-time per heating season (October 1 to May 15) benefit to help with fuel and electrical expenses and is generally paid directly to the fuel or electrical supplier.

All households that qualify for energy assistance are eligible for the Western Dairyland Weatherization program. During the past 40 years, weatherization services have been provided at no cost to thousands of low-income families and individuals. In Buffalo,

Trempealeau, Jackson, Clark and Eau Claire counties, Western Dairyland provides weatherization services to approximately 300 to 500 homes each year.

Weatherization services vary with each home, depending on how it was built and its current condition. Common weatherization services include installing attic and sidewall insulation, sealing major air leaks, repairing or replacing furnaces, caulking and/or repairing inefficient windows and doors, adding weather stripping, insulating hot water heaters, installing energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances, plus other energy-conserving activities.



Our Continued Response to the COVID Pandemic

During the early days of the pandemic, rental assistance was identified as a primary need for hundreds of local families. More than \$322 million in rental assistance was made available statewide, and Western Dairyland administered the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance (WERA) program in Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, Clark, and Eau Claire counties.

As rental assistance funds dissipate, Western Dairyland has pivoted to provide Housing Stability Case Management. A variety of services are available to help families and individuals improve their housing situation. For homeowners impacted by the pandemic, Wisconsin Help for Homeowners (WHH) provides financial assistance with overdue bills including mortgage payments, property taxes, and utilities.

To address the child care crisis in west-central Wisconsin, our Child Care Partnership staff began administering two new programs funded by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families:

- Partner Up! focuses on supporting partnerships between businesses and child care providers by offering funding to businesses who purchase slots at existing regulated child care providers.
- Dream Up! focuses on building child care supply through a collaborative community approach.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The agency is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors comprised of eight income-eligible constituents, eight County Board Supervisors, and eight members representing private groups and organizations.

Buffalo County

Tom Marum *Mondovi*
Dennis Bork *Independence*
Jim Ziegeweid *Arcadia*
Lou Anne Roby *Mondovi*
Mary Anne Urell *Fountain City*
Gentry Jesse *Alma*

Trempealeau County

Bridgette Turner *Trempealeau*
Jeanne Nutter *Strum*
Dr. Charles Smith *Blair*
Kristy Kreibich *Trempealeau*
Dr. Bill Baxa *Independence*
Richard Schaumberg *Independence*

Officers of the Board November 2022

President: Dr. Charles Smith *Blair*
V.P. : Jim Ziegeweid *Arcadia*
Treasurer: Craig Thompson *Eau Claire*
Secretary: Richard Schaumberg *Independence*

Jackson County

Alton Staff *Blair*
Michelle Greendeer Rave *Black River Falls*
Sheila Kersten *Osseo*
Michelle Gunther *Melrose*

Eau Claire County

Paul Savides *Mondovi*
Nick Smiar *Eau Claire*
Jenny Ebert *Eau Claire*
Thomas Vue *Eau Claire*
Kelly Christianson *Eau Claire*
Craig Thompson *Eau Claire*

FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2022

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenue:			
Grant and contract revenue	\$ 16,821,340	\$ 376,554	\$ 17,197,894
Commodities received	545,240	0	545,240
Program contributions	307,481	70,362	377,843
Service fees/donations	90,814	0	90,814
Interest income	3,883	0	3,883
In-kind contributions	841,308	0	841,308
Net assets released from restrictions	99,616	(99,616)	0
Total revenue	18,709,682	347,300	19,056,982
Program expenses:			
Child education programs	8,114,503	0	8,114,503
Housing/weatherization programs	3,635,921	0	3,635,921
Food programs	1,694,965	0	1,694,965
Economic development programs	1,701,739	0	1,701,739
Youth programs	472,228	0	472,228
Job training programs	29,501	0	29,501
Homeless/shelter programs	517,742	0	517,742
Community services programs	1,395,517	0	1,395,517
Transportation programs	198,878	0	198,878
Senior services programs	184,199	0	184,199
Discretionary activities	143,056	0	143,056
Total program expenses	18,088,249	0	18,088,249
Support services:			
Management and general	572,718	0	572,718
Fund-raising	17,058	0	17,058
Total support services	589,776	0	589,776
Total expenses	18,678,025	0	18,678,025
Change in net assets	31,657	347,300	378,957
Net assets - Beginning of the year	3,201,624	2,048,978	5,250,602
Net assets - End of the year	\$ 3,233,281	\$ 2,396,278	\$ 5,629,559

Consolidated financial statements and supplementary information are available online at www.WesternDairyland.org/reports



WESTERN DAIRYLAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

Main Office

23122 Whitehall Road
P.O. Box 125
Independence, WI 54747
Ph: 715-985-2391

Eau Claire Office

418 Wisconsin Street
Eau Claire, WI 54703
Ph: 715-836-7511