

**Service Integration in Wisconsin -  
Racine and Kenosha Counties**

**Report by the Rockefeller Institute of Government  
for the Casey Strategic Consulting Group**

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## Summary

Frequently at sites visited for this study of service integration staff suggested that Racine and Kenosha counties in Wisconsin were widely acknowledged as pioneers in building comprehensive service systems. In July of this year, Rockefeller Institute staff visited both counties to determine the level of integration and document lessons learned, based on the experiences of local program administrators.

While there are some differences in the emphases of each county's approach, there are many similarities. In both locations, the human services agency in county government is responsible for an unusually broad range of programs. Both counties have developed one-stop offices that focus on employment, but where staff from multiple organizations provide supportive services for individuals and families attempting to become self-sufficient. Both counties have been recognized by national organizations as being among the best examples of service integration in the country.

The one-stop model that both counties have implemented (the Workforce Development Center in Racine and the Job Center in Kenosha) include programs for job seekers and for employers. State- and county- administered employment and training programs, county-administered programs, such as Wisconsin Works (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), Food Stamps, Medicaid, and child support enforcement, as well as programs and services provided by community agencies are all available at a single location.

A number of factors contribute to the success of their efforts:

***A high level of cooperation and partnering between government agencies and community organizations*** - County agencies, local service providers and community organizations partner in planning new services, allocating resources, and providing services to meet community needs.

***One-stop offices that facilitate client access and staff interactions*** - Managers in both counties are convinced that one-stop offices are critical to their efforts to provide comprehensive services. There is no confusion about the location of human service programs in the community.

***A simple governance structure*** - Unlike many other places around the country, in Racine and Kenosha counties, a single county agency administers most human service programs, including income support programs, child welfare programs, child support enforcement, as well as workforce development programs under the Workforce Investment Act.

***A clear mission*** - At both sites, managers and staff of county agencies, as well as partner organizations, enthusiastically support the agency's mission and goals.

# **Service Integration in Wisconsin - Racine and Kenosha Counties**

## *Background*

### **Introduction**

This paper is one in a series of reports that describe efforts to integrate the delivery of human service programs in different locations around the country. Funded by the Casey Strategic Consulting Group, the project is designed to document lessons learned, analyze critical success factors, and describe the operational processes and tools, including information technologies, that have contributed to these efforts.

In July 2002 staff from the Rockefeller Institute of Government conducted a site visit to human service offices in Racine and Kenosha counties in Wisconsin. Locations visited included one-stop locations in both counties that include both administration and client services offices for county human services programs. The goal of the site visit was to assess the extent of service integration and to compare the different approaches taken by these two counties.

### **The Human Services Delivery System in Wisconsin**

In Wisconsin, which is widely acknowledged for innovation in reforming welfare programs, administration of human service programs is generally the responsibility of the counties. The Wisconsin Works, or W-2, program, which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children, was one of the first plans submitted in response to federal welfare reform legislation. At the state level, employment programs and welfare programs, previously supervised by different state departments, were combined in a new Department of Workforce Development. Another innovation was competition at the county level and in multiple districts in Milwaukee, the largest city in the state, to administer W-2.

In Racine and Kenosha counties, the county department with responsibility for other human service programs also runs the W-2 program. Like W-2, programs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) are administered by a range of organizations; in Racine and Kenosha counties, the same county agency that administers W-2 also administers WIA.<sup>1</sup> These agencies -- the Racine County Human Services Department and the Kenosha County Department of Human Services -- also administer a wide range of other programs, as described below.

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<sup>1</sup> Racine, Kenosha, and Burlington counties are grouped together for funding under WIA. The Tri-County Workforce Development Board oversees administration of the program. Each county, in turn, has its own Workforce Development Board, and each receives a share of available funds.

In both counties, all human service programs are the responsibility of a director of human services who answers to the county executive and board of supervisors. As a consequence, there are fewer bureaucratic barriers to coordination and integration than exist in other jurisdictions, since the majority of human service programs are within the same department.

### *Efforts to Integrate Human Services in Racine and Kenosha Counties*

#### **Racine County**

##### **Site Demographics**

Racine County is on the western shore of Lake Michigan about an hour north of Chicago, and 45 minutes south of Milwaukee. It is a mixed rural and urban county; Racine, the county seat, is on the eastern border of the county. County population was approximately 188,831 in 2000, with most residents living in and around Racine. U. S. Census estimates of persons and children below the poverty line (9.1 percent and 14.2 percent, respectively) are approximately the same as the averages for the rest of the state.<sup>2</sup> The most common employment is in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for nearly one-third of employment and over 50% of wages earned in Racine County. During the early 1980s, manufacturing was as high as 50% of employment; despite loss of manufacturing jobs, it still remains the most common employment area. The unemployment rate of 7 percent in June 2002 is significantly higher than the state average of 4.3 percent.<sup>3</sup> (The percentage for Racine City is 10.9 percent.) The caseload for income support programs has risen over the last few years due to a combination of changes in eligibility factors for some programs, notably Medicaid, and the economic downturn.

Over the last twenty years, challenges for human service programs have centered on the loss of manufacturing jobs when a number of large businesses closed their doors. More recently, efforts have focused on creating a viable workforce in order to attract business to the area. Racine has had the reputation for being a conservative, blue-collar town. There is concern that to remain viable economically the county must attract potential employers. In order to do so, employers must be convinced that there will be an adequate supply of labor. Retaining younger workers and attracting new residents is a goal of local economic development organizations, which actively work with the manager of the Workforce Development Center.

#### **The Racine County Human Services Department**

The Director of the Racine County Human Services Department is responsible for a large agency that includes multiple programs and approximately 300 staff. Programs include adult services (substance abuse, developmental disabilities and mental health programs),

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics from U. S. Census Quickfacts at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>.

<sup>3</sup> From U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment data at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/>.

economic support (W-2, Medicaid, child care, Food Stamps), youth and family services (child protective services, child welfare programs), child support enforcement, workforce development, and aging programs.

The Racine County Human Services Department is located in a large building that houses the majority of the Department's programs. The building, which was previously a tractor manufacturing facility, was extensively remodeled by the county in the mid-1990s as a consequence of the need to create a juvenile detention facility. The building's four floors were not needed for the facility, and this provided the opportunity and the space for the county to co-locate human service and workforce development staff, as well as partner agencies, under one roof. One of the unique aspects of the arrangement is that the juvenile detention facility, which is located on the top floor, is not at all obvious from the front of the building. Its entrance is in the back of the building, away from the two front doors, one of which leads to the Workforce Development side of the building. A second door leads to other human services, such as child welfare programs.

### **The Workforce Development Center**

As materials provided by the county suggest, the Workforce Development Center is not just a site where multiple organizations are co-located. It is the focus of a comprehensive service initiative that seeks to meet the needs of both job seekers *and* employers, serving as a critical component of larger efforts to improve the economic health of the county.

The system of services that had been operated by various organizations and agencies within the community ha[s] been eliminated. It is important to understand that the Workforce Development Center did not co-locate agencies, but rather "re-invented" the entire system of employment services.<sup>4</sup>

With the strong commitment of the County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors, the county bonded to provide \$14.5 million to renovate the building in which the Center is located. The Management Team, which includes the directors of local programs with staff located in the Center, has responsibility for the Center, with day-to-day management support from the Operations Team, which includes on-site managers from the partner agencies. Partner agencies include:

- Gateway Technical College
- Goodwill Industries, Inc.
- Kaiser Group
- Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce
- Racine County Human Services Department
- Racine County Economic Development Corporation
- State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
- University of Wisconsin - Parkside

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<sup>4</sup> From a description of the Workforce Development Center provided by the Racine County Human Services Department.

- The YWCA

The first floor of the building is the location for universally accessible services which focus on job seekers, including: an employment resource area with job listings, information on employment search techniques, job search assistance, and a library; a career development area with individual counseling; a career discovery center for youth, with career planning and youth activities; an academic improvement area with basic skills instruction, tutoring, and test preparation; and workforce development instruction, with a variety of workshops to assist clients search for jobs.

The second floor of the Center is the location of "specialized services" where clients can apply for income supports and other programs and services. The third floor is the location of employer services and administrative offices.

The approach to service delivery at the Center is one system of service for all clients, regardless of the staff serving them or the source of funding for the services they receive. In order to accomplish this, employees from the various partner agencies work in functional teams. For example, Specialized Services for Targeted Populations (e.g., veterans, older workers) includes staff from the University of Wisconsin, the county Department of Workforce Development, Kaiser Group, which provides employment services under contract with the county, the AFL-CIO, and the Senior Aides Program. Other functional teams include the Resource Room Functional Team, the Educational Services Functional Team, the Employer Services Functional Team, Specialized Employment Support for W-2 Participants, Financial Employment Planners for Public Assistance Recipients, and Youth Services. All are identified as Workforce Development Center staff; no other organization names are utilized in the building, on business cards, letterhead, etc.

To simplify worker/client interactions, the county combined a number of job functions that were previously handled separately in the Financial Employment Planner (FSP) position. These staff are responsible for intake and ongoing case management for all income support programs. Cases are reviewed by staff teams and referrals are made for employment and other services, most of which are located in the building.

### **Serving Employers and Job Seekers**

One of the unusual features of the Racine County Workforce Development Center is extent to which services for employers, as well as job seekers, are provided. Providing quality services to both groups is viewed as essential to the economic prosperity of the community. Evidence of this dual emphasis is found in the mix of partner agencies that not only support the work of the Center, but also provide staff. The local chamber of commerce (Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce) and the Racine County Economic Development Corporation, as well as staff from other organizations, staff the Employer Services Functional Team. The inclusion of staff and management of organizations that focus on economic development helps ensure that the Center is a

valuable resource to employers and that employee development activities are in step with employer needs.

## **Kenosha County**

### **Site Demographics**

Kenosha County is just south of Racine County on the shore of Lake Michigan. As a consequence of the combination of its proximity to Chicago and relatively lower housing costs, the county has seen an influx of new residents over the last decade. The population increased by 16.9 percent from 1990 to 2000, when the population reached 152,524.<sup>5</sup> The percentages of children and adults below the poverty line (13.9 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively) are slightly below the state average. The unemployment rate of 5.5 percent in June 2002 is higher than the state average of 4.3 percent.<sup>6</sup>

Like Racine County, a major challenge has been the loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector. Over the last 20 years, approximately 17,000 jobs were lost when local automobile plants either closed or greatly reduced the number of employees. With the influx of residents who commute south to the Chicago area, the local economy has recovered to a large extent, though the caseload for income support programs has been on the rise. The major sources of local employment are manufacturing, services, and retailing.

### **The Kenosha County Department of Human Services**

The Kenosha County Department of Human Services (DHS) is a large agency with multiple program and administrative offices. DHS was created in a major reorganization in 1996 that combined a number of smaller departments. Program divisions in DHS include Workforce Development, which includes economic support programs, child support enforcement, Workforce Investment Act and other employment and training programs, Disability Services, Aging Services, Children and Family Services, Health, Brookside Nursing Home, and Veterans' Services.

### **The Job Center**

The focus of service integration in Kenosha County is the Job Center, located in what was previously a department store on the main street in south Kenosha. The Job Center opened in 1990, making it one of the first examples of a one-stop office integrating income support and employment and training programs in the country. The manager of the Job Center, who is responsible for facilitating the integration of services, is not located in a program division, but instead reports directly to the director of the DHS. Partners at the Job Center include:

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<sup>5</sup> Statistics from U. S. Census Quickfacts at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>.

<sup>6</sup> From U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment data at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/>.

- The Kenosha County Department of Human Services
- The City of Kenosha Housing Authority
- Gateway Technical College
- Goodwill Industries, Inc.
- The Job Corps
- Kenosha Literacy Council, Inc.
- Kenosha Unified School District
- NJM Management Services
- Professional Services Group
- South East Wisconsin Labor-Management Council, Inc.
- Senior Community Services of Southeast Wisconsin, Inc.
- The Small Business Development Center/University of Wisconsin-Parkside
- State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Job Service and Unemployment Insurance
- United Migrant Opportunity Services

DHS programs at the Job Center include child support enforcement and economic support programs, including W-2, Medicaid, Food Stamps, and child care. The building is currently being remodeled to accommodate additional DHS offices, which will further enhance the site's function as a one-stop location for all of the county's human service offices. A Child's Place provides drop-in child care for the Center's clients, and a Head Start center is also located in the building.

The Center is managed on a team basis. The Executive Management Team, which includes the directors of all of the agencies located at the Center, meets on a monthly basis. The Operations Team includes on-site managers from all of the partner agencies and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Center. There are approximately 200 staff from these agencies located in the building.

Services for job seekers include:

- Information Point, where clients who are interested in receiving income supports are pre-screened, and appointments are made to meet with staff who are responsible for intake. Appointments are generally scheduled for the next work day;
- Employment Central, which includes self-service and assisted resources for job seekers, such as job search activities, resume preparation, job listings, workshops, assessments, and career planning; and
- Specialized Services, which include eligibility determination, formal assessments for W-2 clients, and case management provided by integrated service teams of staff from the county, non-profit, and for-profit contractors. Assessments focus on employment barriers, such as the need for mental health services and additional education. The Center's casework approach is a balance of the social work (human capital) and labor force attachment models

in establishing employability plans for clients. The plans are reviewed by multi-disciplinary teams (see Prevention Services Network, below.)

Because a significant percentage of W-2 cases are also involved with the child welfare system, the county routinely screens new cases in each system to determine whether there is currently an active case in the other system. If so, common case staffings are held to ensure that W-2 and child welfare plans are not in conflict.

Employer services include:

- Recruitment services, such as job fairs and offices for on-site recruitment;
- Access to Internet resources, such as job banks;
- Labor market information; and
- Information on hiring incentive programs.

### **Prevention Services Network**

DHS participates in the Prevention Services Network (PSN), a local initiative to "support and strengthen families as they achieve self-sufficiency."<sup>7</sup> PSN is a collaborative effort of community organizations, the Kenosha Unified School District, and DHS to provide supportive services to help low-income families, to support work, and to prevent the need for child welfare services. At the Job Center, contracted caseworkers who are included in staff teams provide a link to PSN services. Examples of PSN services include:

- In-home family service teams which include family therapists, drug and alcohol abuse counselors, and parenting mentors;
- School liaison workers who assist with academics and career planning;
- Health services;
- The Safe and Stable Families Program, which targets families at risk of out-of-home placements; and
- Teen Parent Home Visitation Program, which provides long-term in-home parenting and child development services.

### ***The Effects of a Comprehensive Services Approach***

Both counties monitor a number of indicators to measure the success of their efforts. While monitoring tends to be program-specific and process-focused, the combination of factors indicates that their efforts to develop a comprehensive approach to service delivery are working.

One measure is client satisfaction. In Racine County, both job seekers and employers are surveyed periodically to determine their awareness of the Workforce Development Center and their level of satisfaction. In 2001, a survey conducted by the Racine County

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<sup>7</sup> From materials provided by the Kenosha County Department of Human Services, February 2002.

Economic Development Corporation showed that 86 percent of employers were satisfied with the services that they received.

Another set of measures focuses on clients of the W-2 program. The state sets goals for the program as part of the process of contracting at the local level for services; in Racine and Kenosha, the contracts are with county government. Measures such as the percentages of participants who enter employment and who are participating in employment-related services are tracked. In 2001, Racine and Kenosha County exceeded all goals.

As has been the case with other sites visited for this study, neither county has implemented broad measures of family well-being that could be used to track progress and the effects of the service system. However, indicators such as client satisfaction and program performance suggest that residents of both counties benefit from the comprehensive service systems that have been developed.

### ***Critical Success Factors***

A number of factors contribute to the success of efforts to integrate and improve services in Racine and Kenosha Counties.

*Location of a wide range of services within a single government agency and in a single location* - In both counties, multiple programs are included in a single governance structure. In Racine, all of the county's human service programs are located in the same building; Kenosha is in the midst of moving the rest of its programs to join those already located in the Job Center. When compared with integration efforts in other jurisdictions, the progress made in Racine and Kenosha counties to coordinate and integrate programs is clearly influenced by a single governance structure and a single location.

Benefits of collocation include a culture of collaboration between management and staff from the various partner agencies, who gain a better knowledge of how each program contributes to efforts to support client self-sufficiency. Staff identify with the Center, rather than individual programs.

*Combining funding from multiple funding streams* - In Racine County, individual funding streams, including TANF, WIA, the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and other programs, are combined to facilitate and simplify Workforce Development Center operations. This approach supports the county's philosophy of a single system of services for all clients and the functional teams that provide services.

*Partnership with the business community* - In Racine County, the presence of staff from Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce and the Racine County Economic Development Corporation at the Workforce Development Center, and of executives of these organizations on management and operational teams, ensure that the Center is a critical tool in the economic development of the county. Their participation also

facilitates connections between employers and the Center, a benefit to both job seekers and employers.

*A common mission* - Both at the state level and locally, the message that self-sufficiency through employment has replaced welfare dependency is clear. The Job Center and the Workforce Development Center are identified with employment, not welfare, reducing the stigma associated with programs designed to support work and self-sufficiency. Everyone who needs a job, as well as other human services, goes to the Center.

### *Lessons Learned*

Over the last decade, managers of human services programs in both counties have made significant progress in reworking local service delivery systems and processes. Managers' insights provide useful lessons related to service integration and changing the nature of human service programs.

*Assign a "Lead Partner"* - As one of the managers interviewed said, "A lot of people claim to have partnerships, but you've got to have a lead partner to actually do the work." Too often when partners agree on common goals and projects are reached, the meeting ends, and when the group reconvenes, nothing has happened. In Racine County, management team meetings include assigning responsibility for action steps to the various partners, so that there is no confusion over who has responsibility for those steps.

*Communication is key* - In a shared management arrangement such as those in the Racine and Kenosha county one-stops, it is necessary to share information with all of the partners. While information sharing slows down decisionmaking, it ultimately ensures participation and buy-in of all of the partners.

Managers at the Kenosha County Job Center have frequently hosted visitors from around the country and from other countries as well. They have put together a list of 14 Steps to an Integrated Service Center, below. The lessons learned include points that have been made in many of the service integration sites in other states that have taken part in this study.

1. **Lead Vigorously from the Top.** Executive management leadership is essential, preferably a single strong political leader who commands the respect and cooperation of agency heads.
2. **Approach All Obstacles, Barriers, Problems as Resolvable.** A positive attitude is essential. To achieve success, one must expect success. Management must create an environment for success for customers and staff.
3. **Integrate – Not Just Co-locate.** It is not enough to locate different agencies in the same building. Services and functions need to be integrated to the largest extent possible to reduce duplication of effort and ensure quality customer service.

4. Plan– But Do Not Over Plan. Just do it. Let the collaborative adventure evolve naturally.
5. Include All Levels of Staff and All Affected Agencies in Planning. The cost of collocation and integration lies mostly in the cost of staff time needed to work out the details. This normally requires an infinite number of meetings of staff at all levels.
6. Articulate a Common Mission. The time and energy needed to develop a mission statement that is inclusive and mutually supported is well worth the effort.
7. Implement Incrementally. Begin small. Pilot integrated services with voluntary staff. Let the success of initial efforts convert reluctant participants.
8. Confront Corporate Cultural Differences. When different agency perspectives indicate different approaches to program delivery, identify the underlying corporate assumptions to build a consensus and find a common ground based on understanding other points of view.
9. Identify New Funding Resources for Start-Up Costs. It is difficult to start a co-located and integrated delivery of services with funds in current operating budgets.
10. Establish Inter-Agency Knowledge Base Prior to Collocation. Fear of the unknown is one of our greatest nemeses. Bridge the knowledge gap first.
11. Co-locate a Mix of Public and Private Agencies. Agency diversity in terms of size, specialty, type, and institutional culture made it possible to accomplish what may not otherwise be possible.
12. Allow for Future and Unforeseen Developments. Flexibility in office layout and space are good investments in these days of rapid changes in program content, funding levels, staffing levels and client demand.
13. Be “State of the Art.” Incorporate the most effective program models as well as the latest in computer and telecommunications technology.
14. Develop a Strong Identity within the Community. Find a location with good visibility, advertise the facility through the use of building signage, provide tours of the facility to interested groups and allow community groups to use portions of the facility.

### *Conclusion*

Efforts to integrate services in both Racine and Kenosha counties have been recognized at the national level. In 1999, the Racine County Workforce Development Center received the National One Stop of the Year Award from the National Alliance of

Business. In 2001, U. S. Department of Labor gave the Center its Pyramid Award for excellence in customer service. The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at the Rutgers' Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy recognized the Kenosha County Job Center as an example of innovative and successful one-stop design and management in 2001.

Admittedly both Racine and Kenosha counties were in a better position to integrate services than many other locations around the country as a consequence of having a wide range of programs included in a single governance structure. However, neither county stopped there. In both cases, they have developed one-stop sites that include not only county offices, but many other partner agencies as well. While the emphases of the Job Center and the Workforce Development Center differ to a certain extent - in Racine, there is a stronger connection to the business community, in Kenosha, more focus on support services - both sites are a critical central focus of a comprehensive human service system.