

News from the National League of Cities

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Madison Featured in New Report on Innovative City Leadership for Children and Families

Washington, DC – A new report by the National League of Cities (NLC), *The State of City Leadership for Children and Families in 2009*, recognizes Madison, Wis., for its cutting-edge early childhood initiatives, including the city's Child Care Assistance Program.

To read the full report, visit www.nlc.org/iyef.

Even as cities grapple with the worst budget outlook in decades, mayors and other municipal leaders have maintained a strong commitment to children, youth and their families. The report describes local innovations and trends in education, early childhood success, afterschool, youth in transition, youth violence prevention, community wellness, youth civic engagement, family economic success, and local “infrastructure” – such as cross-agency planning entities, data sharing efforts and creative financing mechanisms – to support children and families.

“In recent years, cities have tested creative approaches to some of the nation’s greatest challenges and achieved impressive results,” said Clifford M. Johnson, executive director of NLC’s Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), which published the report. “NLC applauds municipal leaders in Madison for breaking new ground and inspiring other cities across the country to take their efforts to the next level.”

The *State of City Leadership* report highlights the Child Care Assistance Program as one of the nation’s four most innovative city models for promoting early childhood success. The program, which pairs child care subsidies for low-income families with a requirement that subsidies be used at locally accredited providers, remains a unique city

model after 35 years of operation. During 2008, a total of 10,332 children were enrolled in child care programs in the city. Of these, 53 percent, or 5,476 children, were in city-accredited programs. Although the accreditation process is voluntary, approximately half of Madison children with working parents attend a Madison accredited child care program, demonstrating strong support among providers and parents.

“Madison continues to be on the forefront of providing quality early childhood programs,” Mayor Dave Cieslewicz said. “I hope we can continue to build on our successes and continue to provide innovative community services for families.”

The report provides a snapshot of the progress cities have made as the nation’s largest network of public policy “laboratories” and the potential for future action as municipal leaders identify and share promising approaches in these areas. The innovations and trends included in the report were selected based on the YEF Institute’s intensive work with thousands of municipal officials in hundreds of cities over the past 10 years, as well as an open call for nominations and targeted outreach to other national organizations in the field.

The National League of Cities is the nation’s oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

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