



WI FACETS

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center
For Education, Training & Support

2025

Annual Impact Report



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Introduction

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary and head into a new year, we pause to reflect on three decades of dedication, growth, and partnership. Since opening our doors in 1995 with just two part-time staff and a single office, WI FACETS has grown into a trusted statewide resource—serving thousands of children, families, and professionals every year. What began as a vision from a small group of committed parents has become a powerful movement of advocacy, education, and support that continues to shape lives across Wisconsin.

Throughout these 30 years, one thing has never changed: our commitment to ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive. Families have turned to WI FACETS for knowledge, guidance, and empowerment, and together we have built a strong, supportive community. From our workshops and individualized assistance to leadership development and bilingual outreach, our work has always centered on meeting families where they are and helping them take the next step forward.

This progress would not be possible without the dedication of our staff, board, volunteers, and partners—past and present—whose passion fuels our mission. We are equally grateful for the families who have trusted us with their stories, challenges, and hopes. Their voices continue to inspire our work and push us toward new possibilities.

As we honor this milestone, we are also looking ahead. The next 30 years will bring new opportunities to expand services, strengthen partnerships, and respond to the evolving needs of Wisconsin families. Whether you are just discovering WI FACETS or have been part of our journey from the beginning, we invite you to join us in shaping this next chapter. Together, we will continue building communities where every child can achieve their fullest potential.

Thank you for being an integral part of our story—yesterday, today, and tomorrow.



Courtney Salzer
Executive Director

Jennifer Nicholson
Board President



30 Years of Serving Families: An Interview with WI FACETS Co- Founder Jan Serak



WI FACETS was founded in 1995 by co-founders Jan Serak and Charolette Price, two parents who experienced firsthand how overwhelming and difficult the special education system could be. At the time, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was still relatively new, and families across Wisconsin struggled to understand their rights and navigate complex systems. Both had children with disabilities and faced significant barriers to securing appropriate services, prompting a simple but powerful question: *how could things be better for families like theirs?*

Before WI FACETS had an office or funding, Jan and Charolette volunteered their time, traveling across Wisconsin to support families wherever the need arose. Support groups met in libraries, trainings were informal, and resource materials were carried in Rubbermaid containers in the trunks of their cars. In 1995, they formally established WI FACETS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, enabling the organization to apply for grants and build a sustainable structure. Its first grant was for \$25,000 through the WIN-MILL Rehab Act, that supported transition-age youth with disabilities and funded one part-time staff position.

A major turning point came in 1997 with a federal Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC) grant, which allowed Jan and Charolette to be paid for their work and opened the organization's first office in Milwaukee. WI FACETS focused on reaching families often excluded from information and decision-making, particularly those from underserved communities. In 2001, the organization was awarded Wisconsin's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) grant, expanding its reach statewide—a role it continues to hold today.

Over time, WI FACETS became known as a collaborative, credible, and family-centered organization committed to constructive problem-solving and strong partnerships. As Jan shared, *"We worked hard to be known as a positive, collaborative agency—one that tried to resolve issues at the lowest level whenever possible."* Beyond individual family support, WI FACETS helped shape statewide systems and policies, including co-founding the Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System and helping lead the passage of Wisconsin's Seclusion and Restraint Law. *"Because of the legislative changes WI FACETS helped lead,"* Jan noted, *"there is more oversight, more appropriate services, and better protections for children with disabilities."*

Thirty years later, WI FACETS remains a trusted statewide resource, serving thousands of families, youth, and professionals each year through training, individualized assistance, leadership development, and systems change efforts. While service models have evolved, the heart of the work has remained the same. Jan describes the organization in one word: ***"Empowerment."*** *"WI FACETS has always been about equipping families with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to confidently advocate for their child."*

Looking ahead, Jan hopes WI FACETS continues to be a steady, trusted presence for families navigating disability and education systems. *"Disability will always be there. Education will always be there,"* she said. *"Families need accurate information, support, and reassurance that they are not alone."*



30 Years of Empowerment

As WI FACETS celebrates its 30th anniversary, the organization remains grounded in the belief that families are essential partners, their voices matter, and every child deserves the opportunity to succeed. Guided by a long-standing commitment to empowerment through knowledge, WI FACETS continues to equip families with the tools, training, and resources they need to make informed decisions and confidently advocate for their children. Collaboration and partnership remain central to the work, with ongoing dedication to working hand-in-hand with schools, community organizations, and state partners to create welcoming and supportive learning environments for all students. WI FACETS also renews its commitment to equal access—advocating for opportunity and the removal of barriers that prevent students with disabilities from thriving. Above all, the organization's work centers family voice, recognizing parents and caregivers as the true experts on their children.

"Families carry a heavy load, but it is important to remember that YOUR voice matters. You know your child better than anyone else. We are here to make sure you are not alone so you can keep showing up" Jan Serak Co-Founder

1995 VS 2025

- 1 part time staff member who worked 20 hours a week
- 3 board members
- Serve 1,000 families and professionals a year
- 1 grant
- Annual budget was \$25,000
- Small office located on Dr. MLK Jr. Drive in Milwaukee

- 13 staff- 5 full time, 6 part time
- 10 Board Members
- Serve over 5,000 families and professionals a year
- 4 grants
- Annual Budget of 1.1 Million
- Expanded office and training space on 6th and Virginia in Milwaukee



WI FACETS IN ACTION

2025

Results

What parents have to say about services they received from WI FACETS:

92% Indicated that workshop information was useful

84% Indicated that workshop content was relevant to their needs

88% Felt prepared to use the information that they received within the past 6 months

96% Felt that the information they received from PTI improved their knowledge

88% Indicated that the info. and support they received met their needs

97% Had an increase of understanding of the IEP/IFSP processes.

85% Felt confident in their ability to work with their child's school

100% Indicated that they had increased their awareness of self-advocacy skills.

WI FACETS HAD

5,670

contacts with families, professionals, and youth with disabilities in 2025

WI FACETS PROVIDES ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT THROUGH PHONE CALLS, LETTERS, EMAILS, AND IN-PERSON MEETINGS

2,102

Parents, youth and professionals served

WI FACETS PROVIDES SUPPORT TO SPANISH SPEAKING FAMILIES

506

Received services in Spanish from WI FACETS

WI FACETS empowers families of children with disabilities to be effective advocates for their children

113

Live Trainings offered in 2025

1,439

PARENTS attended trainings

2,411

PROFESSIONALS attended trainings

5,889

INDIVIDUALS who viewed our Archived Webinars

11,814

Materials Disseminated

WI FACETS PROVIDES SUPPORT TO PARENTS AT SCHOOL RELATED MEETINGS

62

Number of MEETINGS attended

LEADERSHIP AND SELF-ADVOCACY TRAINING

410

Individuals who received Leadership training

40

Systems Change Activities

WI FACETS REACHES PEOPLE THROUGH NEWSLETTERS, SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS, EXHIBITS, OUR WEBSITE, AND MEDIA EVENTS

329,835

People reached



What Others Have to Say About Us

"Because of WI FACETS and Mrs. Overturf, I have grown more confident and informed in my role as an advocate for my child.

This has directly resulted in better educational opportunities and support for my child, for which I am incredibly thankful." J.V. (parent)

"WI FACETS' training and its dissemination of information is of the highest quality and has reached many parents and other individuals who may have remained misinformed and/or misguided without such support and guidance from a parent perspective. Their monthly Family Engagement Newsletter and their excellent website reach families statewide and nationally with information that is critical for families as well as educators and other professionals." J.O. (professional)

"WI FACETS has been a lifeline for my family and for many of the families that I support. As a professional working to help educators and families navigate the complexities of their children's education and needs, the resources and support of WI FACETS have made a significant difference." M.P. (parent)

"I want to express my gratitude for WI FACETS, as they have provided me with the knowledge and confidence to advocate more effectively for my child.

Their support has significantly benefited my child by ensuring access to the educational opportunities they deserve." W.M. (parent)

"WI FACETS gives parents the tools they need to advocate for their children. Equally important, WI FACETS give youth with disabilities the skills and confidence to advocate for themselves, preparing them for life after high school. When young people with disabilities are given the tools to become independent and productive members of society, they don't just benefit individually – our entire community becomes stronger and more connected." N.V.M. (professional)

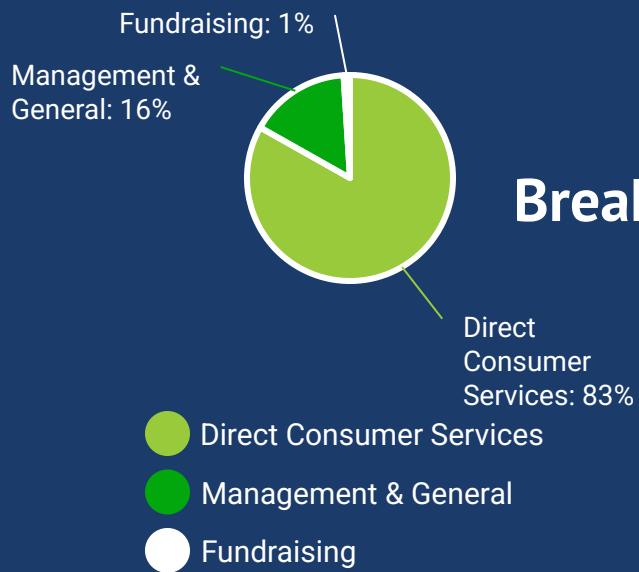
"WI FACETS innovative use of webinars and online platforms ensures families across Wisconsin can access critical information, regardless of location or circumstance. My agency has the privilege of collaborating with WI FACETS to provide training.

WI FACETS transforms knowledge into empowerment, allowing families to advocate effectively and confidently. Their emphasis on high-quality training and resources is unmatched." H.G (professional)



2025 Finances

For many years, WI FACETS has been supported primarily through state and federal grants, reflecting a strong history of successful program delivery. While these resources are vital, they are often restricted in how they can be used. Flexible funding supports long-term stability, allowing WI FACETS to sustain knowledgeable staff, adapt services, and remain a reliable resource for families and professionals across Wisconsin.



Your support allows WI FACETS to host free statewide trainings for families and professionals, one on one guidance through the Help Desk and Individual Assistance, bilingual resources and outreach to underserved communities, ongoing updates and guidance as special education systems evolve and more!

Behind every chart are families seeking answers and staff committed to helping them navigate complex systems with clarity, respect, and care.

Looking Ahead: The Next 30 Years of WI FACETS

WI FACETS looks ahead with purpose and clarity. Guided by the voices of families and grounded in our mission, we remain committed to strengthening systems, expanding access, and ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Families as Essential Partners

WI FACETS envisions a Wisconsin where families of children and youth with disabilities are not only consulted by the systems that serve them but are treated as essential partners in the systems that serve them. We will continue to equip families with clear, reliable information and practical skills so they can confidently participate in decisions that shape their children's education, healthcare, and community life.

Expanding Access Through Innovation

As family needs and expectations evolve, WI FACETS will expand access through innovation—using technology, virtual learning, and flexible service models to reach families wherever they are. These approaches will strengthen, not replace, the trusted relationships and personal guidance that have defined our work for 30 years.

Promoting Collaboration Across Systems

We remain committed to supporting families to understand their rights and options while partnering with professionals and decision-makers to encourage responsive, family-centered practices that lead to meaningful participation and improved outcomes.

Strengthening Family Leadership and Systems Change

WI FACETS will continue to elevate family perspectives and prepare parents and caregivers to share their experiences, mentor others, and help shape lasting system improvements across education, healthcare, and community settings

How To Support WI FACETS

There are plenty of different ways to support us here at WI FACETS. We appreciate and welcome any contributions and volunteering!

HELP US EXPAND OUR REACH

If you know a family who has a child with a disability, let them know about us, we are here to help. Help us spread the word by sharing information about our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page with your family and friends!

BECOME A VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBER

Join the WI FACETS Board of Directors which consists of volunteers who are parents and professionals working together to govern the organization on behalf of all the families impacted by disability in Wisconsin. They also establish and update bylaws, craft agency mission and vision, monitor the agency's financial health, and raise funds for the agency.

MAKE A DONATION

WI FACETS welcomes contributions in a variety of ways, and any amount is appreciated. Your tax-deductible financial support is the most direct and effective way to help provide support to our mission. To donate, please visit <https://wifacets.org/about-us/fundraising/>



Who We Are Today

WI FACETS LEADERSHIP & STAFF

Board Members

- Jennifer Nicholson- President
- Jessie Greenwald- Secretary
- Cindy Anderson- Treasurer
- Nan Upright-Sexton
- Andi Minster
- Stephanie Mauck
- John Littrell
- Angelica Perez
- Tara Gardetto
- Rachel Fellers

Interested in serving
on our board?
[Click here to learn
more!](#)

Staff Members

- Courtney Salzer, J.D- Executive Director
- Nelsinia Ramos- Associate Director
- Lori Karcher- DPI Grant Director
- Jaimee Cannon- Help Desk Specialist
- Christine Hyndman- Help Desk Specialist
- Alejandra Loeza- Bilingual Outreach Specialist
- Wendy Overturf, E.d.D- Intensive Support Specialist
- Maddie Paar- Front Office Operations
- Nathaly Silva- Bilingual Help Desk Specialist
- Chris Stagge- Program Assistant/Event Coordinator
- Lisa Stewart- Lead Help Desk Specialist
- Melissa Voegeli- Electronic Communications Coordinator
- Ann Zielke- Training Coordinator



Left to Right: Courtney Salzer, Melissa Voegeli, Jaimee Cannon, Nathaly Silva, Lisa Stewart, Christine Hyndman, Ann Zielke, Maddie Paar, Alejandra Loeza, Lori Karcher, Nelsinia Ramos, Chris Stagge. Not Pictured Wendy Overturf



CONNECT WITH US

For 30 years, WI FACETS has partnered with families to provide trusted guidance, education, and support. As we look ahead, we invite you to stay connected and be part of the work to strengthen outcomes for children with disabilities across Wisconsin.



Explore our past trainings!



Follow us for updates, events and resources



Sign up for our Family Engagement newsletter



Visit our website to view resources, trainings and learn more about us

Families don't have to navigate systems alone. Contact WI FACETS to connect with knowledgeable, supportive staff.

414-374-4645 | 877-374-0511

www.wifacets.org

600 W Virginia Street, Suite 501,
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Celebrating 30 Years | 1995–2025
Thank you for being part of our journey.



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