



## SYNC FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### GENERAL FAQs

#### 1. What does the acronym SYNC mean and what is it?

SYNC stands for Supporting Youth and Children, a new website that allows group care facilities and child placing agencies to securely access referrals made by county agencies, of youth, who need placement outside of their homes. The intent of SYNC is to increase efficiency, streamline referral information, reduce redundancies in documentation, and securely transmit information.

SYNC's general associated term is a *provider portal*.

#### 2. What are the *benefits* of SYNC:

SYNC streamlines referral processes and communication, as well as keeps records of current and past placements in one secure system. SYNC also:

- Allows uniform referral information to reach multiple providers at the same time.
- Automates documentation of referrals sent and providers' decisions.
- Provides a repository of referral records for providers to aid in tracking information about the number of referrals received, and occurrence of multiple referrals on the same child.

#### 3. What are the *limits* of SYNC:

- SYNC does not increase the capacity or availability of placement resources in child placing agencies or group care facilities in the state of Wisconsin.
- SYNC is not available to out of state providers at this time.
- SYNC allows a child welfare professional to send a referral to multiple providers at once; therefore, discretion is necessary by the child welfare professional when determining which providers to whom a referral is sent. Discretion includes the discernment in matching the Level of Need of a child with the appropriate Level of Care provided by an agency, determining whether or not a referral to a child placing agency for placement in various levels of foster care is most appropriate or if it is necessary to refer to a group care facility whose treatment, service array, and intended target population best meet the needs of the child.

#### 4. Who can use SYNC?

SYNC is designed for group home, residential care center, and child placing agency staff to review referrals and to further exchange information with county agencies. County



agencies with full eWiSACWIS access will be able to transmit information to SYNC for the referral of children to group care facilities and child placing agencies, and to exchange information with providers after a child is placed.

## 5. Who has access to SYNC?

For provider agencies, everyone designated by the agency's SYNC Administrator with a signed and submitted Sync User Agreement will have access.

## 6. Do Tribes have access to SYNC?

Tribes may have limited access to eWiSACWIS and the information therein but only individuals with full eWiSACWIS access are able to transmit placement referrals to group care providers or child placing agencies via eWiSACWIS at this time. It will remain the county's responsibility to maintain communication between group care providers and tribes regarding the information exchanged via eWiSACWIS and SYNC. This includes referral information, status of referrals, and other shared or updated information from the group care provider to the county, via SYNC.

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## SYNC FAQs FOR GROUP CARE FACILITIES AND CHILD PLACING AGENCIES

### 7. What is a SYNC Administrator and how do you determine who it is at an agency?

Provider agencies must designate a SYNC Administrator. This individual will determine who, within the agency, will have access to SYNC and what level of access will be delegated to each individual. For example, access and delegation may range from review only to the ability to approve/deny referrals, or to document and transmit information about a youth in care to the county agency.

### 8. What is my role as a SYNC Administrator?

SYNC Administrators are the primary contact for any breaches of User Agreements, security issues, or confidentiality issues.

### 9. How many people should have access to SYNC from my agency?

All staff who are responsible for reviewing and responding to placement referrals for youth in need of treatment and services should be given access. Additional consideration should be given to allow access for management and direct care staff who may be responsible for receiving or transmitting pertinent information about a youth in exchange with the county agency. All information transmitted from the group



care facility to the county agency via SYNC becomes part of a youth's permanent case record in eWiSACWIS.

**10. How do I remove access from an employee who terminates employment from my agency?**

The SYNC Administrator must immediately remove SYNC access when any staff ends employment or changes roles in the agency. If there are technical difficulties encountered, the SYNC Administrator should contact the eWiSACWIS Help Desk to provide technical assistance.

**11. What do I do if I believe there has been a breach of security or information sharing?**

The SYNC Administrator should immediately suspend or remove access from the individual. Further, this must be reported to the agency's Department of Children and Families Child Welfare Licensing Specialist immediately. A Licensing Specialist will connect with the eWiSACWIS Help Desk to determine next steps to secure information and resolve the issue.

**12. Who do I reach out to if I have any login, security, or other technical problems or questions?**

The eWiSACWIS Help Desk provides technical assistance for all SYNC related issues.

Contact information is as follows:  
Email: [dcf servicedesk@wi.gov](mailto:dcf servicedesk@wi.gov)  
Phone: (608) 264-6323

**13. Can I print the file information of youth submitted in the referral via SYNC?**

Documents and attachments made available in SYNC are intended to be stored in SYNC as a secure system. Agencies are highly discouraged from printing or making copies of documents in SYNC.

**14. As a group care provider or child placing agency, can I accidentally delete a referral, or can I change my decision response?**

Referrals cannot be deleted from SYNC. Each referral must be accepted, declined, or waitlisted, and will remain in pending status until the referral is withdrawn or finalized by the child welfare professional. Until a referral is finalized or withdrawn, updates can be made to the decision response.



## **15. If I do not use SYNC, can I receive referrals?**

SYNC is intended to expedite and appropriately document placement referrals for both county placing agencies (memorialized in eWiSACWIS) and private child placing agencies and group care providers (memorialized in SYNC), via secure transmission of personally identifiable information, and therefore should be the sole method of referral.

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## **SYNC FAQs FOR COUNTY AGENCIES**

### **16. Can multiple providers receive the same referral at the same time?**

Yes. The intent of SYNC is to seamlessly and securely send uniform referral information to multiple providers at once. Discretion is necessary by the child welfare professional when determining which providers to whom a referral is sent. Discretion includes the discernment in matching the Level of Need of a child with the appropriate Level of Care provided by an agency, determining whether or not a referral to a child placing agency for placement in various levels of foster care is most appropriate or if it is necessary to refer to a group care facility whose treatment, service array, and intended target population best meet the needs of the child.

### **17. If I make a referral to a Child Placing Agency, will it go directly to all of the foster homes licensed by that agency?**

No. The referral information is sent only to the designated individuals with SYNC access at the agency. The agency will then discern which, of any homes, may be a suitable match and provide pertinent information to those homes only.

### **18. How do I include additional attachments to the referral?**

Additional attachments deemed pertinent to making referrals to providers can be uploaded or shared if already part of the eWiSACWIS case record and transmitted with the referral, in accordance with respective agencies confidentiality policies. Step-by-step instructions are in the SYNC User Guide.

### **19. What happens if more than one provider accepts placement?**

Each provider who receives the referral makes an individual decision to accept or decline placement. If multiple providers accept placement, the county placing agency



will determine which provider meets the necessary case planning goals of the youth referred.

**20. Do I need a Request of Information (ROI) for each of my referrals?**

The information transmitted in eWiSACWIS is considered privileged and confidential. The information is securely transferred and is for use in determining the possibility of appropriate care and treatment of a youth. eWiSACWIS prompts users to confirm they are following their county specific practice guidelines; and this includes practice related to ROI's. It is important for county agencies to determine local agency practice and consult Corporation Counsel or County Attorney as necessary.

Do you have a question related to SYNC? Submit your question by email to:

[dcfcwlr@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfcwlr@wisconsin.gov)