

Eligibility

Our goal is to engage young people who have had involvement with the juvenile justice system, and who represent a variety of perspectives. We see value in engaging young people who are currently involved in the system and youth who were formerly involved in the system.

We are looking for young people ages 14 up to 24, though this is not a set age range.

The most important qualifications are willingness to be part of a team, share your perspective, and participate meaningfully in the meetings (four times a year). There is no need to have been involved in anything like this in the past. We also do not look at grades, nature of juvenile justice involvement, or anything else of that nature.

Youth can complete a short online application if they are interested in joining. We will notify the youth within two weeks of applying if they've been selected to join a Team.



Purpose

Young people who have had contact with the juvenile justice system have unique and valuable insight into which practices and services are most and least effective. Direct youth involvement is a necessary piece of any work to improve the juvenile justice system.

The work of the Youth Leadership Teams will benefit young people and their families, the state and counties, caseworkers and organizations working with the youth, and the community as a whole.

Contact

For more information:

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Sponsor: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, which has state supervision of the community-based juvenile justice system.

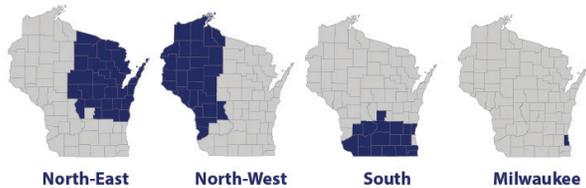
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Youth Leadership Teams

Involving young people in juvenile justice decision making, and empowering the next generation of young leaders.



The Basics



There will be **four area Teams** (North-east, North-west, South, and Milwaukee) that will each **meet four times a year**.

Meetings will be from 10am-2:30pm and food will be served. The meetings will be held on week days, and we will schedule as many as possible on school holidays, teacher in-service days, or early release days.

Meetings will be held at a partner youth-serving organization in each area, and will be co-facilitated by staff from the non-profit and a staff person from WI DCF. After the first meeting, meetings will also be co-facilitated by a youth team member.

DCF will provide food at meetings, member shirts, and a gift card to the youth for each meeting attended to recognize the value of his/her time.

Transportation to meetings should be arranged at the local level. If needed, DCF can help connect the youth with local county or service providers.

What the Teams Do

The Youth Leadership Teams will **give feedback to DCF** on juvenile justice policies.

The Youth Leadership Teams will have an **annual project**. Examples of possible projects:

- Producing a training video for juvenile court intake workers explaining how to work with young people and build a trusting relationship;
- Developing a presentation to law makers about a pressing issue in juvenile justice;
- Producing a video using data and individual stories to increase awareness and break down stereotypes about kids in the juvenile justice system.

These are just examples! The group will decide together on its project for the year.

Youth will **develop their leadership skills**, including developing a sense of individual leadership strengths, and developing written communication and public speaking skills.

Youth will rise up in their leadership levels the more meetings they attend and the more projects they complete in between meetings. Higher leadership levels will come with greater responsibilities and rights, such as being eligible to present on behalf of the group, to co-facilitate meetings, and to become a mentor to new members. The group will decide how it wants to structure these leadership levels.

The Meetings

Every meeting will have common elements:

- Team building exercises – fun activities such as basketball, art projects, spoken word or other activities;
- Leadership skill building exercises;
- Something inspirational – such as a speaker or an inspirational video;
- Working together on the annual project;
- Working together to give feedback to DCF on juvenile justice policies;
- Food and drink – morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack.

In Between Meetings

Every 1-2 weeks, DCF will send out a small optional project Team members can complete that will contribute to the larger group project. Examples of possible projects:

- Watching YouTube videos that other advocacy groups have made and rating their effectiveness;
- Writing a spoken word piece related to the group project;
- An activity to continue developing leadership skills;
- A community activity.

The more projects a young person completes, the more quickly he/she will rise up in his/her leadership levels in the group.