

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Children and Families
Division of Safety and Permanence

DSP Memo Series 2009 - 08
September 14, 2009
Re: New Independent Living
Data Collection and Reporting
Requirements

To: Area Administrators/ Human Services Area Coordinators
Bureau Directors
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities
Services Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Indian Child Welfare Directors
Licensing Chiefs/Section Chiefs
Tribal Chairpersons/Human Services Facilitators

From:

Cyrus Behroozi
Administrator



The intent of this memo is to notify agencies of changes regarding data collection for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. New federal regulations issued in February 2008 require that services and outcomes data are collected for youth receiving Independent Living services and youth who are aging out of placement up to age 21. This memo provides specific direction to county agencies and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) on meeting IL service and outcome reporting requirements, including information regarding IL contractor access to support county and BMCW reporting requirements.

Background

In January 2009, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) began collecting data in eWiSACWIS relating to the Independent Living (IL) Program for youth receiving IL services. DCF is interested in ensuring that each youth aging out of foster care in Wisconsin receives the support and services needed for the successful transition to self-sufficiency. Improved data collection is an opportunity to learn more about whom agencies are serving, how services are being delivered, and the impact of services on youth who age out of care. While data collection is important to understanding and improving services to and outcomes for youth served in and exiting from out-of-home care (OHC), solid relationships with youth ages 15-21 are the foundation to good service delivery and successful outcomes.

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act – National Youth in Transition Database

As part of the Foster Care Independence Act (FCIA) of 1999, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) developed and implemented a data collection system called the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). Under this federal reporting requirement, states are now required to track the provision of independent living services and obtain data on specific outcome measures for the purpose of assessing state performance in operating independent living programs. On February 26, 2008, the Children's Bureau published a final rule on NYTD outlining new data collection requirements and regulations.

Document Summary

Beginning January 1, 2009, new federal reporting requirements for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) will require Wisconsin to collect independent living service information within the electronic Wisconsin Child Welfare Information System (eWiSACWIS).

Collection of "IL services data" within eWiSACWIS began in January 2009. In order to capture the federally-required Independent Living service data, new functionality has been added to eWiSACWIS with the Maintenance Release on January 12, 2009. Changes include the development of an IL page to enter, view, and capture independent living information related to IL assessment and service planning and data that are required to meet federal NYTD reporting requirements. The IL page may be accessed by county or approved outside agencies contracted by a county agency to provide IL services.

Service Data:

The FCIA requires that each state report the following information:

- 1) the number of youth receiving IL services;
- 2) the characteristics and demographics of youth receiving independent living services; and
- 3) the completion of an IL assessment and the type, quantity and duration of IL services provided to youth

To meet the service reporting requirements established under NYTD , information related to IL must be documented and updated in the eWiSACWIS IL page for every youth receiving independent living services who has been determined to be eligible for Wisconsin's IL Program and who receive IL services up to age 21. Definitions of the service categories can be found at the following website:

Independent Living Service Category Definitions

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/knowledgeweb/training/ewisacwis-user-guides/case-work?accactive=16>

Collection of the "outcomes data" information, in the system, will begin in October 2010.

Outcome Data:

For CY 2009, agencies will continue to be responsible for collecting outcomes data on all eligible youth via paper reports using the same process used in prior years. In October 2010, outcomes data will be collected on youth who are likely to age out of OHC based data entered in eWiSACWIS per the federal NYTD reporting criteria. Reporting requirements associated with these youth will consist of:

- 1) a baseline population consisting of all youth who are 17 years old and in OHC, and
- 2) a follow-up survey of these youth at the age of 19 and at age 21 regardless of whether they remained in the OHC past the age of 18 or received independent living services after the age of 17.

DCF will work with counties and the BMCW to develop and implement an automated process for collecting the required NYTD outcomes data as reporting requirements are further clarified by the federal Children's Bureau.

Agency IL Service Reporting and Documentation

Youth in federally-qualifying OHC placements whom have been in OHC for any 6 months after the age of 15 will trigger a tickler notifying the primary county worker that they have 90 days to create the Independent Living record and complete the Independent Living Assessment and Independent Living Transition Plan to identify transition goals, services and accomplishments as a part of the youth's Permanency Plan. In counties where contracted agencies are providing IL services, it is up to the county agency to notify the contracted provider when a youth becomes eligible for IL services. IL service data must be entered via the newly created IL page in eWiSACWIS. This page allows workers and providers to document required service delivery, IL Assessments/Plan dates and other relevant information for each youth subject to NYTD reporting requirements.

Agencies will be responsible for creating an IL page for every IL eligible youth who is currently in OHC as documented in the OHC Placement page in eWiSACWIS or who has been determined to be eligible for IL services; **and** for each youth, who has left care, is over the age of 18 and is receiving IL services. This record will be created via information entered into eWiSACWIS under the IL page. Updates to service documentation must occur no less than every six months. Instruction regarding data entry for the IL page can be found in the eWiSACWIS Independent Living Quick Reference Guide at the following website:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/knowledgeweb/training/ewisacwis-user-guides/case-work?accactive=16>

For tribes receiving direct IL allocations from DCF, additional direction will be provided regarding IL Data reporting.

eWiSACWIS Access Policy and Agreements

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) or county agencies who work with contracted agencies to provide IL services may enter the service data themselves or work with contracted agencies to allow these contracted agencies access via a security profile to the eWiSACWIS Independent Living page only. Contracted agencies may be permitted to enter data on behalf of the county agency or the BMCW IL clients using the IL page. As part of this access, these contracted agencies will have the ability to search for any person in eWiSACWIS, closed or open, to update basic person information, e.g. address, military status, etc., and to enter service data for the county's or BMCW's IL clients being served by the contracted agency.

In order for a contracted agency to gain access to eWiSACWIS, the county and the contracted agency must follow the attached "Access to eWiSACWIS and Information Contained in eWiSACWIS Confidentiality" policy, Memo 2007-03, 2/26, "WISACWIS: Confidentiality and Access to the System" found at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/ewisacwis/ew-policy.pdf> and complete the "Agency Agreement on Access to eWiSACWIS" and "eWiSACWIS Use Agreement" forms; CFS-2275 and CFS 2276. Subsequently, it is up to the county to ensure that all service provisions and data entry deadlines are met and to prescribe expectations related to data corrections and updates to the youth's Person Management and IL pages during periods where the youth remains open for services with the BMCW or county agency. Counties are responsible for providing training and direction to their contracted agencies regarding entering independent living information into eWiSACWIS. **Agreements for eWiSACWIS access to contracted agencies must be in place** as soon as possible to ensure accurate data collection for the IL service and outcome information to be submitted to the Federal Children's Bureau for federal fiscal year 2010.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: DCF Area Administrators

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Youth Services Section Manager
Division of Safety and Permanence
Bureau of Youth Services
608-422-6993

MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Attachments:

eWiSACWIS Use Agreement, CFS-2275
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms>

Agency Agreement on Access to eWiSACWIS, CFS-2276
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms>

eWiSACWIS Independent Living Quick Reference Guide
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/knowledgeweb/training/ewisacwis-user-guides/case-work?accactive=16>

Confidentiality Policy
<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/ewisacwis/ew-policy.pdf>

eWiSACWIS Access Process Instructions
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/knowledgeweb/ewisacwis-access>