


To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator
DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: **Youth Justice Risk/Need Assessment: Announcement of Selection of the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) and selection criteria for county participation in Phase One Implementation**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to inform counties about DCF's selection of a statewide youth justice risk/need assessment tool and the process for volunteering to participate in the first phase of the assessment tool implementation.

BACKGROUND

Section 938.01(2)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes outlines the legislative intent for the youth justice system which includes "provid[ing] individualized assessment[s] of each alleged and adjudicated delinquent juvenile, in order to prevent further delinquent behavior[...]" The Department of Children, in partnership with counties, tribes and youth justice system partners, has concluded that the implementation of a consistent, validated, statewide assessment tool is a top priority for strengthening the youth justice system. In 2017 the Department convened an assessment workgroup, and in spring 2018 the Department issued a request for proposal (RFP) in order to select a validated risk/need assessment tool and case management system. The RFP evaluation team was comprised of both state and county stakeholders. Based on the RFP process, the Department has issued a letter of intent to award a contract with Orbis Partners, the vendor for the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI), as the risk/need assessment tool and case management system to implement statewide.

Orbis Partners has the necessary technical and practical expertise to implement a statewide assessment, and has conducted similar statewide implementations throughout the United States. Orbis Partners and the YASI will best meet the needs identified through the assessment workgroup and DCF's information gathering process. Included amongst the features and products that will be available to counties through Orbis Partners and the YASI are a pre-screen version of the tool, desktop reference guides, case planning tools and online training capabilities. The YASI is currently in use in the following Wisconsin counties: Kenosha, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Oneida, Outagamie, Racine and Rock.

The full YASI includes a total of 88 questions which identify both the dynamic risks exhibited by a youth and the needs factors to be addressed in reducing further youth justice contacts. The YASI identifies those characteristics of a youth that, when changed, are associated with changes in risk of reoffending. The

YASI and the accompanying case planning model, Collaborative Case Works, are grounded in the principles of Risk, Need and Responsivity (RNR) and Motivational Interviewing (MI). Both the assessment and case-planning model are youth-centered and strengths-based. Research has found that a youth's strengths have a buffering effect on future success that supports the inclusion of strengths-based items in the assessment of juvenile risk.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

DCF is planning a two-year phased implementation of the YASI in all 72 counties beginning in January 2019. Counties currently using the YASI will be expected to join one of the implementation phases. The DCF Bureau of Youth Services (BYS) will be using the following criteria for selecting the first 10-15 counties for Phase 1 of implementation:

1. **Robust Data Collection** – Priority given to Advanced Data Users (and/or counties that maintain their own robust data collection system.)
2. **Leadership Strength** – Priority given to counties with verification of stakeholder support, including a letter of support from at least one judge in the county.
3. **Urban/Rural mix** – BYS will select 2-3 counties from each of the five BRO regions (Northern, Northeastern, Southeastern, Southern and Western).
4. **Mentorship** – Willingness to serve as a mentor to Phase 2 counties in the region.
5. **Local Implementation Committee** – Each county will need to develop a county implementation team that should include the following (at a minimum): the county director/YJ supervisor and 1-3 YJ worker(s).
6. Counties not currently using an assessment tool will be prioritized.

Counties may submit a letter of interest addressing the selection criteria outlined above if they would like to participate in the first phase of implementation of the YASI. Letters of interest should be emailed to dcfj@wisconsin.gov no later than the end of the day on August 30, 2018.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Youth Justice Policy Coordinator
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MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>