



2022-23 Youth Justice Innovation Grants Project Summaries

The Youth Justice (YJ) Innovation Grants are an opportunity for county human service agencies to implement new, creative, evidence-informed practices or programs with short-term start-up funding from DCF. All projects must serve the overall purpose of improving community-based juvenile delinquency-related services and meet the requirements of one of the following topic areas: Matching Services to Needs, Racial and Ethnic Disparity (R.E.D.) Reduction, or School-Justice Partnership.

In 2022, 16 grants were awarded: 8 initial grants to start or enhance a program or practice and 8 continuation grants to continue implementation of a program or practice started in 2021.

| Matching Services to Needs | Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction | School-Justice Partnership |
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| <p>Initial Grantees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Jefferson Marathon Oconto Oneida Washburn <p>Continuation Grantees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashland Crawford Dane Jackson Pierce Washington | <p>Continuation Grantee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eau Claire | <p>Initial Grantees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walworth Waushara <p>Continuation Grantee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outagamie |

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Matching Services to Needs

Research suggests assessment tools (like the YASI) are most effective when paired with evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies focused on positive community support, strength-building, and cognitive-behavioral techniques and appropriately matched to a youth's level of need. **The objective of this project area is to implement or enhance an evidence-informed practice and/or program to increase access to "right" services for youth.**

Initial Grantees

Green County Human Services Department

Objective: Implement a targeted mentoring program to promote positive activities, build skills, and increase informal supports while also providing support to prevent repeated delinquency referrals, out of home placements, and formal system involvement for youth with complex needs at high risk of entering the YJ system.

Target population(s): Youth in need of independent living skills or with complex needs including mental health, trauma, alcohol/drug use, cognitive, or other disabilities and/or a combination of those issues.

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Mentoring program specifically tailored to youth interests as well as cultural, emotional, and behavioral needs
- YASI and CANS assessments will be used to identify youth needs
- Collaboration with schools and law enforcement to improve community support for youth with complex needs
- Subcontract with Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and Orion Family Services

Primary Contact: [Dee Jaye Miles](#)

Jefferson County Human Service Department

Objective: Ensure available community services are comprehensive and well-matched to family needs by addressing identified gaps in Jefferson's YASI service matrix.

Target population(s): Youth served on truancy orders as well as moderate and high-risk youth on supervision (ongoing program) and their parents

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Reliably assess needs of youth who are habitually truant with the JIFF assessment
- Train new staff in Aggression Replacement Training (ART), as many youths in the community are assessed as having high needs in areas of aggression/violence, attitudes, skills, and negative peer influences
- Address lack of family therapy resources for families who do not qualify for Medical Assistance (MA), by purchasing 5 Family Centered Treatment (FCT) slots for non-MA families
- Purchase of additional e-Carey Guide licenses to address volume of YJ-involved youth with high needs in areas of attitudes, skills, violence/aggression, family issues, and negative peer influences
- Expand available parent education services through the implementation of Connect, an attachment-based program for parents and caregivers

Primary Contact: [Jessica Godek](#)

Marathon County Department of Social Services

Objective: Provide training to YJ staff to implement new programming designed to empower youth and parents to better understand how decisions impact outcomes, teach new coping strategies and address risk and protective factors.

Target population(s): Youth who score moderate risk or above in YASI domains: Community and Peer Relationships, Alcohol/Drugs, Attitudes, Aggression, Mental Health or Skills; Girls between 11 and 17 identified to have low or moderate protective factors in YASI domains: Family, Community, Aggression, or Attitudes; Families of youth who score moderate risk or above in the YASI domains: Family or Environment

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Train county social service staff as well as staff from Sirona Recovery in the Only Person U Cheat is U – a curriculum designed to evaluate and change the way youth think, focus on motivation, and develop skills to visualize the future
- Prepare YJ professionals, parent aides, and Sirona Recovery staff to hold Mother-Daughter Circles to provide quality prevention and interventions that strengthen bonds between girls and their mothers or a female caregiver
- Subcontract with the Children’s Society of Wisconsin to offer Triple P Parenting, which is designed to teach parents de-escalation skills and prepare parents to hold their children accountable appropriately and effectively

Primary Contact: [Becky Bogen-Marek](#)

Oconto County Department of Health and Human Services

Objective: Reduce recidivism, keep youth in their home environments, and help YJ-referred youth graduate from high school through use of wraparound services.

Target population(s): Youth who score moderate or high risk on the YASI who are on a Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA), consent decree or formal supervision

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Provide mentors or support paraprofessionals to build relationships with youth and work towards individualized goals to address areas of criminogenic needs as identified by the YASI
- Offer youth opportunities to get involved in healthy activities and choices through incentives like gift cards, gym memberships, and fees for school and/or extracurricular activities

Primary Contact: [Carrie Kleinschmidt](#)

Oneida County Department of Social Services

Objective: Expand the county’s service array to better match services available at home and in the community to the YASI-identified needs of youth – specifically for the domain areas aggression/violence, alcohol/drugs, community/peers, family, and school.

Target population(s): Youth referred to YJ between ages 10 and 17 and youth identified as at risk of future delinquent behavior

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Subcontract with New Horizons Family Services, LLC to provide interventions from Botvin Life Skills and TruThought
- Programs will be offered in group or individual settings, depending on needs identified through YASI
- Collaboration with school districts and Boys and Girls Club of the Northwoods to identify youth who may also benefit from these programs and determine which programs could be offered in educational settings

Primary Contact: [Brenda Lee](#)

Washburn County Health and Human Services Department

Objective: Address underlying causes of delinquent behavior to divert youth from formal systems and Out-of-Home Care through use of trauma-informed care and restorative justice practices.

Target population(s): Youth ages 10-17 who have been referred or are currently involved with youth diversion or formal youth justice services

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Collaborate with a consultant from the University of Minnesota – Duluth’s Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking to develop restorative justice programming like Talking Circles and Victim-Offender Conferences
- Provide in-home counseling services like Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Family Centered Treatment (FCT)

Primary Contact: [Alanna Pahos](#)

Continuation Grantees

Ashland County Health and Human Services Department

Objective: Expand Ashland’s community-based offerings to include more intensive, restorative, and healing-focused services for youth and their families to support transformative shifts in thinking, attitudes, and actions.

Target population(s): Ashland County youth ages 10-17 involved with the YJ system

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Community-informed gap analysis which will include input from youth and families with YJ system experience, tribal leaders, behavioral health providers, people impacted by youth offenders, school district staff, and local organizations
- Implementation and expansion of evidence informed interventions that best fit the needs of local youth and families and capacity of county staff – current interventions of interest include Credible Messengers and Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Approach guided by the philosophy of Homeboy Industries, one of the largest gang rehabilitation programs in the world that is focused on healing and transformation

Primary Contact: [Scott Griffiths](#)

Crawford County Health and Human Services Department

Objective: Increase prevention efforts and reduce youth recidivism by expanding evidence-informed community-based youth justice related services available.

Target population(s): Youth ages 10-17 who have been referred to the YJ system and youth identified by community partners as “at-risk” of future YJ system involvement

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Collaborate with UW-Extension to offer ongoing trainings related to restorative justice and the community’s role in supporting these practices
- Enhance the Mentor/Mentee program, while continuing to explore options for additional entities to support this programming
- Expand outreach and build partnerships with other service providers to expand service array to include programming like Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Thinking for a Change (TFC), and Equine Therapy
- Continue to offer Parent Management Training (PMT) curriculum to at-risk youth and families

Primary Contact: [Jada Hrubes](#)

Dane County Department of Human Services

Objective: Expand access to restorative services to divert Dane County youth away from the formal court system, provide interventions geared toward reducing disproportionate minority contact, and assist youth in problem-solving around encountered barriers and building positive community ties.

Target population(s): Youth referred to the Dane County DHS Court Diversion Unit or the formal YJ Intake Unit for at least the following five misdemeanor offenses: battery, resisting/obstructing, disorderly conduct, criminal damage to property, theft

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Subcontract with Briarpatch Youth Services to provide Victim Respondent Conferences (VRC) and Restorative Justice Circles (RJC) to youth referred on state charges as close to their home as possible
- Consider expanding the types of offenses allowed for both diversion and VRCs

Primary Contact: [Andre Johnson](#)

Jackson County Department of Health and Human Services

Objective: Enhance current programming and develop additional programming based on risk, needs, and responsibility factors of the youth and families served in Jackson County.

Target population(s): Youth aged 10-17 working with Jackson County DHHS due to a law enforcement, school, or parent referral resulting in a DPA, consent decree, or court order; Siblings of youth referred to Jackson County DHHS who are identified as “at risk” by the social worker; Youth who schools or other service providers identify as “at risk” prior to referring to the YJ system

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Collaboration with Children’s Wisconsin to continue to fund a Youth Navigator who is trained in Mobility Mentoring, and a mental health consultant who will offer evidence-based treatment approaches to assist youth in developing emotional regulation and problem-solving skills
- Children’s Wisconsin will also continue to offer career exploration/planning and the Casey Life Skills Assessment
- Expand community service sites to included non-profit agencies that give back to the community and clients in a positive way
- Expand population served by mentor programming to include siblings of YJ-involved youth who are identified by their social worker as at risk of future delinquent behavior

Primary Contact: [Jenny Dormady](#)

Pierce County Department of Human Services

Objective: Provide community-based, intensive in-home services to youth and their families to keep families intact and facilitate a return home for youth placed in out-of-home care.

Target population(s): Youth ages 9-17 and their families who have been identified as medium to high risk, in need of in-home therapy, and are willing to participate in Family Centered Treatment (FCT)

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Continue implementation and model adherence to program fidelity of FCT:
 - Continue to build electronic filing system to meet documentation needs of FCT
 - FCT therapists and clinical supervisors complete check-offs needed to become certified in FCT
- Develop a family satisfaction survey and key stakeholder survey to assist in gathering of qualitative data

Primary Contact: [Joy Lynn George](#)

Washington County Human Services Department

Objective: Fully implement and sustain Family Centered Treatment (FCT), a community-based and in-home therapeutic service option designed to address needs within the family system to reduce the number of youth needing to enter out-of-home care, support reunifications, and reduce recidivism.

Target population(s): Youth aged 11 through 17 years old and their families; Youth who are under a DPA, consent decree, or dispositional order and have likely experienced complex trauma and emotional dysregulation; Youth referred by Comprehensive Community Services (CCS), School Based Services (SBS), and private clinics

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Build caseloads of three therapists to their full capacity of 5-7 families by the end of the year
- Identified agency leadership will complete all FCT training competencies
- Treatment team supervisor will complete supervisor certification in order to train new staff and sign off on demonstrated competencies of the model
- Work directly with the current subcontractor for CCS service facilitation to pilot an FCT-specific service facilitator position – this position will support families who are receiving FCT services in coordinating CCS-required programmatic functions and ensure sustainability

Primary Contact: [Coral Kline](#)

Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction

[Wisconsin's YJ Vision and Strategic Plan](#) recognizes a systemic opportunity for improvements in quantifying and reducing racial and ethnic disparities – work that requires specific strategies aimed at eliminating bias and improving outcomes for youth of color. **The objective of this project area is to explore and develop a collaborative strategy aimed at reducing racial and other disparities in youth justice outcomes.**

Continuation Grantee

Eau Claire County Department of Human Services

Objective: Analyze YJ data to identify decision points where disparity occurs, create a diverse stakeholder group to provide input from consumers and professionals on strategies to improve practice, provide professional development to staff and service providers, learn more about the experiences of Eau Claire County's (ECC) YJ system and implement youth mentoring and advisory groups for youth of color.

Target population(s): Youth age 10-17 living in ECC receiving a formal referral to YJ system; Youth age 10-17 admitted to the Northwest Regional Juvenile Detention Center (NWRJDC)

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Hold stakeholder committee meetings monthly to gather input from consumers and professionals
- Continue data analysis with the help of a DHS data specialist, ECC data analyst, and CESA Core staff
- Continue professional development for YJ and CPS staff through CESA Core
- Contract with an external consultant to conduct interviews of youth and caregivers to identify areas in need of enhancement
- Collaborate with the Power of Perception to develop unique in-person mentoring opportunities for youth and create a Youth Advisory Council to enhance practice within ECC's YJ system

Primary Contact: [Terri Bohl](#)

School-Justice Partnership

Research suggests school connectedness is an important protective factor for youth – a finding that underscores the importance of partnership between agencies to ensure youth are not brought into the youth justice system unnecessarily to address other primary needs. **The objective of this project area is to improve collaboration between human services, schools, and other community stakeholders to reduce school referrals to the youth justice system.**

Initial Grantees

Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services

Objective: Enhance and strengthen relationships between Walworth DHHS, school districts, and school resource officers to reduce formal referrals to the youth justice system.

Target population(s): Youth at risk of habitual truancy and delinquency referrals who are between the ages of 10 and 17 years and attend the Elkhorn Area School District (EASD)

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Social worker will work directly with EASD pupil services staff to focus on needs of students with patterns of poor school attendance and concerning behavioral issues
- Collaboration between DHHS and EASD to develop approaches to school-related misbehavior and/or truancy that provide alternative to exclusionary discipline and law enforcement referrals
- Train EASD and DHHS staff in fundamental theory and practices related to restorative justice as designed by the International Institute for Restorative Practices
- Strengthen relationships with other interested school districts in the county and discuss future partnerships
- Utilize the JIFF assessment to reliably assess a youth's day-to-day functioning and develop a corresponding service plan to address school related issues like attendance and behavior problems

Primary Contact: [Renee Peck](#)

Waushara County Department of Human Services

Objective: Collaborate with multiple stakeholders to develop a school-justice-community partnership program to ensure youth are not brought into the youth justice system unnecessarily to address other primary wellness goals and needs. Waushara's *Youth Wellness Partnership* will increase resiliency, reduce the likelihood of recidivism, and lay a foundation for positive protective factors through mentorship programming, positive community connections, skill building, and pro-social activities.

Target population: Youth referred to YJ between the ages 8-17 and their families or caregivers

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Subcontract with Dynamic Family Solutions, LLC to train county stakeholders from county human services, law enforcement, outside agencies, and local school districts in evidence-based, interactive curriculums to address community concerns like social media and sexting, healthy relationships, vaping and AODA, truancy, and domestic violence and sexual abuse
- Prepare youth to positively impact their peers via Youth Wellness Peer Leaders Training
- Repair, strengthen, and preserve community relationships through live student assemblies, evening presentations, and events designed to engage youth, family, and community members around youth justice topics

Primary Contact: [Brienna Noffke](#)

Continuation Grantee

Outagamie County Department of Health and Human Services

Objective: Reduce the number of youth referred to the YJ system for truancy through a community coordinated effort.

Target population(s): Middle and high school students referred for truancy from school districts in Outagamie County

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Program Coordinator will build off of gap analysis conducted in year 1 to train staff from the school district, department of human services, and other community members as identified in new interventions/programming
- Expand the reach of findings and interventions to other school districts in Outagamie County through in-service and training for staff
- Executive committee oversees implementation of grant programming and includes representatives from Outagamie County Youth and Family Services (YFS), Appleton Area School District (AASD), Appleton Police Department, Outagamie County Mental Health, Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley – TRAC program
- Creation of a new Attendance Coordinator position in AASD

Primary Contact: [Scott Kornish](#)