



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Bureau of Youth Services Newsletter

DECEMBER 2023

The Bureau of Youth Services is a unit within Wisconsin's DCF that is dedicated to being more responsive to the needs of older youth in and at risk of being involved in the child welfare or youth justice system. If you have questions or ideas, please contact us!

Leadership

Shelby McCulley
Director

Evelyn Joy Coker
Youth Justice Section
Manager

Nikki Weiss
Strategic Initiatives
Coordinator

Youth Justice Team

Youth Justice Policy
Coordinators

Alana Peck
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Asia Jackson
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Faith Price
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Kelsey Hill
Independent Living
Coordinator

Happy almost-New Year everyone! This last issue of the Youth Services newsletter for 2023 is full of information on youth serving providers, new and continuing. We are thrilled to welcome new providers, and grateful for all of those who continue to collaborate with us in this important work. Please take a look, and we encourage you to make connections with your colleagues across programs as we continue to build capacity to support young people throughout Wisconsin. Stay warm, and we'll see you in 2024!

Welcome, Nikki!



Nikki Weiss joined BYS in September as the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator. She holds a B.A. in International Studies and a Masters of Sustainable Peacebuilding. She comes from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, where she worked on strategic planning, project management, and evaluation within the Health Analytics Section to support Division-wide initiatives. She previously worked for the Department of Defense and for nonprofit organizations both in the US and internationally. She is excited to join the dedicated team here at DCF and to take part in the impactful work BYS and our partners are doing for Wisconsin families and youth.

Youth Services Updates

New Independent Living Grantees!

As of October 1, 2023, DCF provides funding and support to [six tribal independent living \(IL\) programs in the state](#). This year, **Saint Croix Chippewa Indian of Wisconsin joined five other tribal child welfare agencies** throughout the state with preexisting IL programs to implement its own IL program for qualifying youth in its care. The other five tribes are Bad River, Ho Chunk, Lac Courte Oreilles, Menominee, and Red Cliff. All tribal IL partners work closely with DCF staff and the Transition Resource Agency (TRA) in their area to serve IL-eligible young people.

Starting January 1, 2024, Workforce Resource, Inc. (WRI) will be the TRA in Youth Services Region 6. As the TRA in that area, WRI will be responsible for providing independent living services to qualifying youth who discharged from out-of-home care and reside in one of the area's 15 counties. **WRI has been the TRA in Youth Services Region 7 since 2017 and will continue to serve that area as well.** WRI is in the start-up phase for Region 6 and is working closely with DCF and the current Region 6 TRA, Family and Children's Center, to make the transition as smooth as possible for all involved – most importantly the clients! In November, DCF hosted a "meet and greet" with WRI and county partners in its new IL service area, as well as a kick-off meeting for WRI Region 6 staff. Please be patient and stay tuned for more information as this transition continues. See <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2023-21i.pdf>.

Youth Services Updates continued...

New Anti-Human Trafficking Grantees!

In August 2023, BYS released a **Request for Proposal (RFP) for Improving and Increasing Services for Survivors of Sex Trafficking**. As a result of the RFP process, awards were made in **Youth Services Regions 3, 4, 5, and 6**. Allowable services include the following:

- case management,
- referral and case coordination,
- support groups,
- mentoring, and
- advocacy and accompaniment

Additionally, each program includes a multidisciplinary team (MDT) component which is either achieved either through participation in an existing MDT or coordination of a new MDT; in either case the MDT includes a coordinator to facilitate or participate. Each MDT will bring together a group of professionals to discuss cases of child sex trafficking to best serve youth and/or adolescents through the provision of services (healthcare, legal, mental health, education, housing, etc.). **Services are to be provided to adolescents and/or youth up to age 21 who experienced sex trafficking while under the age of 18, as well as to their caregivers to assist them in supporting young people who have experienced sex trafficking.**

For more information about Anti-Human Trafficking grantees, email DCFAHT@Wisconsin.Gov.

Agency	Youth Services Region
Children's Wisconsin	3
Children's Wisconsin	4
Grateful Girls	5
Workforce Resource, Inc.	6



Congratulations to the Region 1 Brighter Futures Initiative Team!

In September, Lydia Van Beek, a member of CW Solution's Brighter Futures Initiative's Learn and Empower Oneself (LEO) team, located in **Youth Services Region 1**, received the **Beyond the Call to Action: Outstanding Prevention Professional Award**. Given at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Substance Use Prevention Conference, the award recognizes Lydia's work developing and implementing age-appropriate activities to educate youth about healthy coping skills to prevent the initiation of substance use, while being an empowering advocate for our youth participants.

More information about Lydia's award and the Prevention Conference is available here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/091323a.htm>.

Youth Justice Updates

Innovation Grantees

In September 2023, DCF announced the **2024 Youth Justice Innovation Grantees**. DCF changed the areas of focus to include **Reducing YJ Referrals, Pre-Court Diversion, and Post-Dispositional Services**. BYS was also able to offer an additional year of continuation funding to current innovation grant recipients.

Initial 2024 grantees include:

- Barron
- Door
- Douglas
- Dunn
- Juneau
- Kenosha
- La Crosse
- Monroe
- Price
- Sheboygan
- Waupaca

Counties receiving additional continuation funds include:

- Ashland
- Crawford
- Dane
- Eau Claire
- Green
- Jackson
- Jefferson
- Marathon
- Oconto
- Oneida
- Outagamie
- Pierce
- Walworth
- Washington
- Waushara



2024 YJ Innovation Grant Recipients

 Reducing YJ Referrals	 Pre-Court Diversion	 Post-Dispositional Services	 Continuation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barron • Door • La Crosse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenosha • Monroe • Waupaca 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Douglas • Dunn • Juneau • Price • Sheboygan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashland • Crawford • Dane • Eau Claire • Green • Jackson • Jefferson • Marathon • Oconto • Oneida • Outagamie • Pierce • Walworth • Washington • Waushara



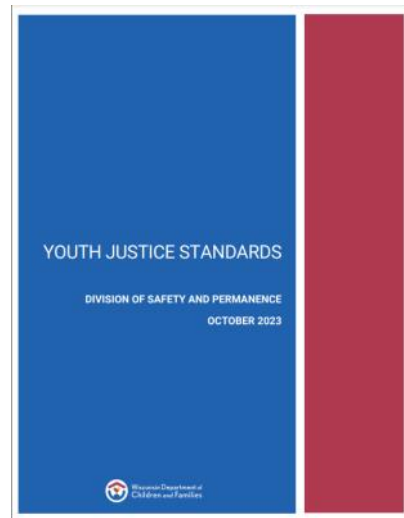
Youth Justice Updates Continued...

YASI

DCF published YASI standards in October; please see [DSP Numbered Memo 2023-16](#) for more information about the changes, including practice implications. DCF staff drafted the new YASI standards **based on the familiar YASI policy document used during statewide implementation and inclusive of county input and suggestions over the last four years.**

DCF requests that all counties review the new YASI standards and update local YASI procedures accordingly. **Counties that have not yet sent copies of their updated procedures should send them to DCFYJ@wi.gov as soon as possible with the subject line "(County Name) Updated YASI procedures."**

County staff can reference all YJ standards here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/yj-standards.pdf>.



Tailored Dispositional Orders Project

The [Children's Court Improvement Program](#) (CCIP) and DCF are **bringing the Tailored Dispositional Orders Project to additional counties in 2024.** The project seeks to **collaboratively bring together child welfare agency, court, and legal partners to improve conditions for return in CHIPS cases and/or conditions of supervision in Youth Justice cases, all while utilizing the SMART goals framework.** Additional information about the project can be found under [CCIP's Resources page](#).

Please contact Kristen.Wetzel@wicourts.gov if your county is interested in learning more about the Tailored Dispositional Orders Training project.

YJ Data

The February 2024 release of eWiSACWIS is jam-packed with Youth Justice updates. First up are some much-anticipated enhancements to the **Youth Justice Court Report!** Here are some changes you will notice:

- **More guidance via static text and flare text** throughout the page/document.
- **More elements will be hidden when not applicable.**
- **Improved formatting** for legibility.
- **Persistent checkbox selections** when re-opening the page/document.
- Ability to **copy-forward a previous court report** for a particular youth.
- Ability to **manually select YASI scores** when needed.
- **Selectable legal history**, similar to CPS/placement history.
- **Available fields for prosecutor/defense.**
- **Ability to number offenses** to match petition order.
- **Optional field to explain when you do NOT recommend placement.**
- **Improved formatting so language will appear as expected**, removing unnecessary phrases and fields as appropriate, when choosing end date vs. duration of supervision.

YJ Data Continued...

The February 2024 release will also include some improvements to the Case Information Page. These include:

- **Court Case Number** will replace **Petition Number** and appear at the level of offenses, rather than referrals. This should allow for better tracking of which offenses move through court together.
- **Additional fields** to document prosecutors associated with referral decisions/filed petitions.
- **Value added to the [Closing] Reason dropdown** specific to original adult court jurisdiction due to a **severe offense** (in addition to that due to age).
- **Additional fields** when documents were sent to victims.

Last but not least, **the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) will automatically prefill offense severity based on statute, making it simpler to fill the instrument out without external documentation.** As a reminder, **the DRAI is a short questionnaire that can help quickly determine whether pretrial detention is truly warranted when law enforcement requests a youth be held securely.** The DRAI was developed collaboratively by seven counties around the state, who continue to use it for their detention facilities. In a Milwaukee County pilot, ~90% of youth screened out did not reoffend within 90 days or fail to appear.

If you are curious about trying the DRAI in your county, it's never been easier!

YJ Reminders

Please schedule your annual YASI 1:1 consultation with Policy Coordinator Sarina Wiesner by utilizing the new Bookings Page: <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/DCFYouthJustice@wigov.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>

Please send new YJ hire information to DCFYJ@wisconsin.gov. Include name, title, and start date. New hires will be added to the YASI distribution lists each month.

Youth Voice Updates

December YAC Meeting

The Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council (YAC) includes young people, ages 16-26, with lived experience in the Child Welfare system. **The most recent statewide YAC meeting was on December 1 and 2, 2023 in the Wisconsin Dells. It was a busy one!** Together, members:

- **elected new officers** for 2024,
- **participated in a strategic sharing training** on how to safely and powerfully share their stories to help advance system change,
- **provided feedback to DCF staff about resources in the works**, and
- **participated in a marshmallow tower (team)building challenge.**

Additionally, **the YAC voted to bring a trainer in for their February 2024 meeting.** [Antonio Grate](#), social emotional strategist, public speaker and author, will join that YAC meeting to speak with and provide training to the members.

If a youth you know would like to get involved in the YAC at the local and/or state level, please contact your local YAC advisor for more information:
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youthservices/pdf/yac-advisors.pdf>.



YAC Meeting Photos



October 2023 and January 2024 YLT Meetings

The Youth Leadership Team (YLT) includes young people, ages 14-21, with lived experience in the Youth Justice system. **The YLT convened a hybrid meeting on October 26, 2023.** Seventeen youth attended, with six of them attending in-person! Awesome! The in-person portion of the meeting was held at [Briarpatch Youth Services](#).

Youth made inferences and analyzed data about the Youth Justice system, specifically the referral and intake portion of the process. Their input will be included in a future YJ Intake and Referral state report. You can view a prior version of the report here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5549.pdf>.



The next YLT meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 from 4:30pm – 6:00pm in-person at Briarpatch Youth Services and via Zoom. At the January YLT meeting, agency partners from The Sentencing Project and Wisconsin Association of Family & Children’s Agencies will be joining to share where things are at with Raise the Age in Wisconsin and to answer youth’s questions about this effort.

Eligible youth and their adult supporter who plan to attend the January YLT meeting should RSVP by 5pm on Friday, January 19, 2024 using this link: <https://form.jotform.com/DCFBYS/ylt-meeting-rsvp-january-23-2024>. Adult supporters should help youth complete their RSVP or complete it on the youth’s behalf with the youth’s permission.

Frequently Asked Questions about the YLT:

- **Who is eligible to attend?** Young people ages 14 – 21 with personal experience in the youth justice system. This includes (but is not limited to) youth on delinquency supervision, youth in detention or in placement, youth with a JIPS referral, etc.
- **Are youth compensated for their time?** Yes, youth will receive a \$25 stipend for their active participation in the meeting.
- **Do youth and their adult supporter need to let us know they plan to attend?** RSVP is encouraged, especially if attending in-person. DCF will only hold the in-person portion of the meeting if DCF staff know there are at least three eligible young people that RSVP to attend in-person. If that minimum is not met, the meeting will only be offered virtually.
- **I’m an interested adult, can I come by myself?** To help keep this a youth-centric space, we would like to limit adult supporters attending without accompanying a participating young person. Please consider if there are young people you work with who may be interested in this opportunity and who you can accompany.

Attached to this newsletter you can find the Youth Leadership Team flyer for the January 2024 YLT meeting. Please share this flyer to help recruit eligible young people to attend. If you have any questions or are unable to make the meeting but would like to receive additional information regarding future YLT meetings, email us at dcfyj@wisconsin.gov.

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***May every youth in, at risk of, or aged out of
the child welfare/youth justice system
transition to a successful adulthood.***

The goal of the Bureau of Youth Services is to improve outcomes for youth in the child welfare and youth justice systems and other vulnerable youth. Specifically, the Bureau supports service delivery systems that move youth towards academic success, safe and stable housing, employment, permanent connections with supportive adults, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Youth aged 12-21 in or at risk of entering the child welfare and a youth justice system present unique and complex challenges. The Bureau brings a more coordinated program and policy focus to youth in the child welfare system and other vulnerable youth.

Sign up for our newsletter [here!](#)






Do you have personal experience with Wisconsin's Youth Justice system? We want to hear from you!

The Youth Leadership Team (YLT) is a group for **youth ages 14-21 with Youth Justice system experience** who are interested in partnering with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) staff to impact state policy and practice.

Next YLT Meeting is on January 23 in Madison (or on Zoom)!

Do you have an interest in learning more about what Wisconsin is doing to return 17-year-olds to the Youth Justice system? Do you have questions about how you can get involved and have an impact on this policy change? Agency partners from [The Sentencing Project](#) and [Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies](#) will be joining to answer your questions and share where things are at with [Raise the Age](#) in Wisconsin.

Please use this JotForm to RSVP for the January meeting by 5:00pm, Friday, January 19.

-  **No previous leadership or data analysis experience is needed**
-  **Food will be provided at the in-person meetings**
-  **YLT members are compensated for attending meetings**

Fall Meeting Details
January 23, 2024
4:30pm – 6:00pm
[Briarpatch Madison, WI*](#)
[Zoom link](#)

**Note that DCF requires at least 3 youth RSVPs to host in-person.*

Need more information?
Contact a Youth Justice Policy Coordinator:
608-576-5582 or dcfyj@wisconsin.gov