



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Bureau of Youth Services Newsletter

MAY 2022

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

Ragen Shapiro
Section Manager

Becky Yang
Strategic Initiatives
Coordinator

Youth Justice Team

Youth Justice Policy
Coordinators

Alana Peck
Carlton Frost
Jenna Dunlap
Joy Breese-Holz
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Youth Services Team

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Kelsey Hill
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Hello Colleagues! As I write this message, it is a stereotypically cold and rainy “spring” day in Wisconsin. However, I am eagerly awaiting the sunshine and warm weather that I know is right around the corner. We are also hopeful that we have turned a corner in the pandemic that began two long years ago and has had such an impact on those we serve, as well as on all of us. This newsletter highlights progress made in multiple areas, such as implementing the YASI, supporting youth who have aged out of care, elevating youth voice, and building affirming and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth and families to thrive. As always, thank you for your continued dedication and partnership in this important work.

Welcome to **BYS, Joy and Liz!**



As a result of the strategic realignment in the Division of Safety and Permanence, **BYS** is pleased to announce that we have two new staff members who have joined our youth justice team. Joy Breese-Holz and Liz Landerman transferred to the Bureau in March, and they will primarily work on youth justice-related projects and are already getting settled in and getting to know the rest of the team!

Joy (top) has been a licensed social worker in Wisconsin since 1980 and she has worked at DCF for the last 16 years doing permanency and consultation work with counties across the state. Joy and her husband have three adult children and six perfect grandchildren who are all under 7 years old. When she is not working, Joy enjoys spending time with all of them!



Liz (bottom) started out working in adoptions in 1986 and she eventually moved into a consultant role. As a strategic consultant she spent time with counties working through barriers for children with complex needs. She has one son who is faculty at a Big 10 School (Indiana University – Bloomington) and she says she has managed to stay married to the same guy for a very long time; if she is lucky, he still cooks her dinner.

Youth Justice Updates

YASI

BYS is excited to announce that in Phase 4 training will wrap up in August. We are hearing from our PDS trainers that there has been great participation and enthusiasm during the training sessions – thank you!

Counties in Phases 1 through 3, please contact your phase leader or the YASI master trainer, Lindsay Ebben (campbellebbe@wisc.edu), to enroll new staff in YASI training sessions training sessions and/or get them onto the waitlist for YASI training. A friendly reminder to attend training sessions when scheduled and notify PDS of any unplanned absences. If it is more than 8 days prior to training and you are no longer able to attend training, please log into PDS Online and withdraw from the training session. If it is **8 days or fewer** prior to a training session and you are unable to attend contact the WCWPDS Office at 608-890-3965 to withdraw. Participants in the wait pool will be contacted and made aware of the opening in YASI training sessions.

Phase 1 – Ragen Shapiro: Ragen.Shapiro@wisconsin.gov

Phase 2 – Jenna Dunlap: Jenna.Dunlap1@wisconsin.gov

Phase 3 – Alana Peck: Alana.Peck@wisconsin.gov

Phase 4 – Carlton Frost: Carlton.Frost1@wisconsin.gov

BYS is also excited to announce that the first cohort of coaches will complete their training early this summer. YASI Coaching provides opportunities for local leadership to help YJ staff continue shaping their YASI related skills and improve overall outcomes for youth. Coaches are identified through an application process and another round of coach training will be offered in the Fall of 2022. DCF staff will begin recruitment efforts in Spring 2022 with an updated application process, email your phase leader or project manager, jenna.dunlap1@wisconsin.gov for more details.

The BYS team will begin modifying and updating DCF's draft YASI Policy 3.0 once all 4 phases have completed implementation. Please contact the BYS YJ team with your suggested policy modifications and updates and to let them know about policy challenges or barriers. BYS staff reviewed the YASI Policy document; the hope is that the new format will assist counties that are revisiting or developing their local YASI procedures. Let your phase leader know if you would like an updated copy. Phase leaders have begun developing a schedule of YASI topics for the monthly check-ins with counties. Please send us your suggestions for monthly topics and/or frequently asked questions.

YASI has a new resource available for counties on the PDS [website](#). To accommodate our new virtual world, staff can now conveniently download YASI training materials from the PDS website.

The BYS Youth Justice Team would like to thank our county human service colleagues for their continued partnership and YASI implementation efforts amidst what has been a roller coaster of a year. We would like to acknowledge the challenges we know many counties are facing with staffing shortages and vacancies. It is nothing short of miraculous that we have been able to advance new youth justice practices and procedures this year. We know that building a youth justice infrastructure and shifting how we practice can be a slow and arduous process. We value your energy and commitment to this work and want to remind you to engage in self-care throughout the upcoming year. We look forward to continuing to work with all of you in 2022.

BYS launches the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) in eWiSACWIS for use with youth justice referrals.

The DRAI is now available for use in eWiSACWIS to help determine whether a young person should be held in detention following a referral from law enforcement. When law enforcement requests a secure hold, the DRAI screener (typically an eWiSACWIS user associated with human services) can open the DRAI page and search for the youth as on other eWiSACWIS pages.

The following are excerpts from the forthcoming DRAI desk guide:

What is the DRAI?

The Detention Risk Assessment Instrument, or DRAI, is a short questionnaire that can help determine whether pretrial detention is warranted when Law Enforcement requests a youth be held in a Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF).

Where does the DRAI come from?

The DRAI was created in 2015 right here in Wisconsin by a workgroup that included representatives from La Crosse, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, and Waukesha counties. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) has spearheaded the use of such tools in jurisdictions around the country, and the WI workgroup drew on elements of tools created in other jurisdictions to craft an instrument specifically for Wisconsin.

What does the DRAI measure?

The DRAI considers the severity of the most significant alleged offense; the youth's history of YJ Referrals, as well as capiases/escapes/failures to appear; their current YJ case status; and specific aggravating and mitigating factors that can be used to reflect the scorer's professional judgment.

How can I learn more?

DCF hopes to host webinars featuring current DRAI counties to help interested parties understand the tool and how to incorporate it into their practice. Carlton Frost will be the lead policy contact in BYJ. User Guides are available on the Knowledge Web, and the eWiSACWIS helpdesk can assist if users encounter technical issues.

Youth Services Updates

Reflecting on one year providing direct financial assistance (DFA) to young people with funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA)

In March 2021, DCF received \$6M for Independent Living (IL) and nearly \$900,000 for Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) following the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) in December 2020. Thanks to ongoing input from system partners, BYS had a good idea about the key areas in which to invest the new federal funds.

BYS used this infusion of federal funding into its programs as an opportunity to pilot some IL investments that had been on its 'wish-list' but for which it had not previously had the opportunity or funds to initiate. These included: serving youth up to age 23, allowing support for vehicle purchases, and providing \$6000 in direct financial assistance to young people who aged out between 1/27/20 and 9/30/21 (the federally defined public health crisis timeframe; what BYS calls the "age out cohort"). Each of these efforts have been options for Wisconsin and are prevalent in a lot of other states but are usually cost-prohibitive. Having stimulus money was the perfect opportunity to invest in these ways to be responsive to young people and to collect feedback and data on how these interventions can serve the qualifying population. This a good basis for analyzing the value of keeping the interventions in place in the longer-term.

Additionally, BYS endeavored to use an equity lens as it distributed the funds. BYS worked to be as intentional as possible to provide supports throughout the state and to key subpopulations within IL. BYS provided additional funds to multiple partners, encompassing the whole state; invited tribes to receive stimulus funding and made sure tribes knew how to refer their young people to IL programming and services as well; and made strategic funding allocations based on population scale and scope, including age out trends in recent years.

Despite efforts to be as equitable as possible, BYS recognized that increased investments in IL would not mean the same thing for every youth. For those with preexisting challenges, debt, or other hardships, it might offer increased stability but not necessarily leaps and bounds of progress or thriving. For others already on a solid foundation, it would allow them to continue to rise. BYS wanted to raise up and support as many youth as possible while also knowing what that looked like would vary depending on individual circumstances. Increased funding was not a great equalizer, but BYS hoped that it would help every benefactor at least a bit.

Throughout the course of the past year, BYS has collected input on the impact of the increased IL funding and the piloted initiatives. The following are key themes that have emerged. The stimulus funding has:

- **Increased financial stability/ability to save** – through the costs IL funding can offset AND the provision of direct financial assistance to young people, youth have been able to pay off debts, open savings accounts, and more – in general, achieve greater financial stability.
- **Increased transportation stability** – by increasing IL investments, the Transition Resource Agencies (TRAs), counties, and tribes can support youth with bus passes, gas cards, mileage support, etc. The provision to allow TRAs to assist youth with vehicle purchases has been a gamechanger for some young people, particularly those in more remote areas, those juggling work and school obligations that would otherwise require them to rely on public transportation, and others.

- **Provided choices** – A heartwarming impact has been the ability of these funds to provide youth with “choice.” Many young people with foster care experience have not had the chance to choose items during their life – they get what’s left or what’s cheap. This additional funding has allowed these youth to indulge a bit, to feel more normal, and to have choices.
- **Provision of services up to age 23** – One of the most important things the funding did was allow our providers greater space and financial resources to be adaptive to youth needs – including up to age 23.
- **Thriving young people** – Overall, the big takeaway is that these increased strategic investments have provided our young people more time and reduced stress, allowing them the time to focus on other things – be a student, be an employee, be a parent – and thrive.

The following table is a breakdown of payments distributed to eligible youth in each IL region as of April 8, 2022.

| Region | Total Qualifying | Any payments | % any payments | All payments | % all payments | No payments | % no payments |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | 46 | 43 | 93% | 42 | 91% | 3 | 7% |
| 2 | 83 | 51 | 61% | 50 | 60% | 32 | 39% |
| 3 | 178 | 73 | 41% | 62 | 35% | 105 | 59% |
| 4 | 34 | 30 | 88% | 29 | 85% | 4 | 12% |
| 5 | 87 | 73 | 84% | 69 | 79% | 14 | 16% |
| 6 | 73 | 33 | 45% | 26 | 36% | 40 | 55% |
| 7 | 32 | 32 | 100% | 28 | 88% | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 533 | 335 | 62.85% | 306 | 57.41% | 198 | 37.15% |

New Issue Brief: Working with LGBTQ+ Youth and Families

On March 2, 2022, the US Department of Health and Human Services released an information memo affirming what we know to be equally true right here in Wisconsin: LGBTQ+ children and youth are over-represented in the child welfare system and yet remain underserved. This population of individuals is historically and currently vulnerable and are subject to higher rates of physical violence and emotional harm prior to, and during, their involvement with the child welfare and youth justice system. And collectively, we are called to action to better meet the needs of these youth and their families.

We are proud to affirm that the Division of Safety and Permanence and the Department of Children and Families stand unequivocally in support of LGBTQ+ children, youth, and families and is committed to ensuring that our policies and programs advance the priority of building affirming and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth and families to thrive. We know that many of you are actively engaged in efforts to better serve LGBTQ+ youth and families, and we encourage continued and expanded dedication to those efforts. To support this effort, DCF has released an Issue Brief titled [Working with LGBTQ+ Youth and Families in Child Welfare](#). This document outlines background information supporting the call to action, as well as definitions and resources – many of which offer free training opportunities that may be of benefit to you and your agency. Perhaps most importantly, this document identifies initial action steps necessary to better support the LGBTQ+ children, youth, and families whom we serve in the child welfare and youth justice system and to enact best practice.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of kids and families every day.

Youth Services Updates

Introducing the 2022 Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Grantees!

DCF funding for Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs seeking to ensure services for youth that support safe shelter and stable housing, connections to healthy, supportive, and potentially permanent adults, and access to resources/supports designed to assist youth in meeting their social, emotional, mental, cognitive, and physical health needs. The target population for the RHY Program is youth and young adults ages 12-21 who have run away, are at-risk of running away, are homeless, or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

BYS released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for RHY service provision in all seven [Youth Services Regions](#) on October 15, 2021. Due to no response from Region 6, BYS staff released a revised RFP on December 21, 2021, exclusively for that region. On October 22, 2021, DCF notified counties, tribes, and non-profit agencies of this funding opportunity via [DSP Informational Memo Series 2021-30i](#). The Department notified potential Region 6 applicants separately after release of the revised RFP for that part of the state.

Apart from Region 6, all RHY contracts began on January 1, 2022. Region 6 began on March 1, 2022. Based on availability of funding, satisfactory performance, and mutual agreement of the agency and the contractor, each contract may be renewed up to four additional one-year periods.

The agencies that applied, and their corresponding region, are listed below:

| Agency | Region | Counties within the region |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---|
| CAP Services | 1 | Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Lincoln, Langlade, Marathon, Wood, Portage, Adams |
| Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley | 2 | Florence, Marinette, Oconto, Menominee, Shawano, Waupaca, Outagamie, Brown, Door, Kewaunee, Waushara, Winnebago, Calumet, Manitowoc, Green Lake, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan |
| Pathfinders | 3 | Milwaukee |
| Safe Haven of Racine | 4 | Racine, Walworth, Kenosha |
| Briarpatch Youth Services | 5 | Grant, Richland, Sauk, Iowa, Marquette, Columbia, Dodge, Washington, Ozaukee, Dane, Jefferson, Waukesha, Lafayette, Green, Rock |
| B.L.A.C.K. | 6 | St. Croix, Dunn, Chippewa, Clark, Pierce, Pepin, Eau Claire, Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Juneau, Vernon, Crawford |
| Human Development Center | 7 | Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, Iron, Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Price, Polk, Barron, Rusk, Taylor |

For all regions except for Region 6, this will be a continuation of current services, with BYS staff providing ongoing guidance and technical assistance as needed. More information about state-funded RHY programs can be found at [Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs](#), or by contacting BYS Program and Policy Coordinator Greta Munns at Margaret.Munns@wisconsin.gov.

Youth Voice Updates

Youth Advisory Council Celebrates National Foster Care Month and Looks Ahead to Legislative Day!

In honor of National Foster Care awareness month, the YAC will convene its quarterly in-person meeting and plan for some exciting things to come! At the meeting, YAC members will participate in a Strategic Sharing 2.0 training, team bonding activities, and plan for their summer meeting.

In addition, they will plan for a Legislative Day, to take place in summer 2022 (date TBD), which will be specifically for YAC members to learn more about and advocate for change in the child welfare system. The young people look forward to speaking with legislators on issues that are important to them and others with foster care experience – specifically regarding extending Independent Living services and supports to age 23. Below is a tentative agenda for the Legislative Day.

- Legislative Process Overview
- Time with DCF's Secretary
- Tour of the Wisconsin State Capitol
- Meet & greet at the Capitol with select Legislators



The YAC members will post content on the group's [Facebook page](#), including information and updates about the Legislative Day events. Please "follow" their Facebook page if you'd like to see more about the Legislative Day and other activities.

If you know a young person (between the ages of 14.5 and 26) who is or previously was involved in the child welfare system and would like to participate in their regional Youth Advisory Council, please [contact](#) the advisor for that region.

Youth Leadership Team

WE NEED YOUR HELP! DCF is looking to recruit new Youth Leadership Team (YLT) members from across the state to participate. YLT meetings take place four times per academic year in: October, January, March, and May.

The **next YLT meeting will take place on, Tuesday, May 24, 2022, from 3:30pm-5:30pm and will be a hybrid meeting.** New and existing YLT members are welcome to join. Direct service providers, please help us in keeping this is a youth-centric space by inviting young people who may be interested in this opportunity to attend with you.



Anthony Alvarado, co-founder of **RISE TOGETHER**, speaker, trainer, and certified coach, will be joining this month's YLT meeting to share his story and work with you on healthy and effective ways for you to share yours! **RISE TOGETHER** is a non-profit that is on a mission to prevent addiction by educating, engaging, and empowering youth to use their voice for change; breaking the silence around addiction and mental health.

(continued on next page)

Youth Voice Updates

Below are answers to a few frequently asked questions.

- **Who is eligible to attend?** Young people ages 14 – 21 with personal experience in the youth justice system. This includes, but not limited to, youth on delinquency supervision, Juveniles in Need of Protection or Services (JIPS), etc.
- **Are youth compensated for their time?** Yes, they'll receive a \$25 stipend for their active participation in the meeting.
- **Do youth and adult supporters need to RSVP?** RSVP is encouraged, but not required.

New and existing YLT members and adult supporters who plan to attend the May 24, 2022 YLT meeting should RSVP by 5pm on Friday, May 20, 2022 via JotForm by visiting: <https://form.jotform.com/DCFBYS/ylt-meeting-rsvp--may-24-2022>. Adult supporters, please assist youth in completing their RSVP or complete it on their behalf, if needed.

In-Person Meeting:

Running Rebels – 225 West Capitol Dr. Milwaukee, WI

Virtual option via Zoom:

<https://dcfwi.zoom.us/j/82989568769pwd=Z3VNZmFUR3JXd0gyUXRDY0VoK2ZEQT09>

You can visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youthservices/leadership> for more information regarding the Youth Leadership Team. If you have any questions or are unable to make the meeting but would like to be added to the contact list to receive additional information regarding future YLT meetings, e-mail us at dcfyj@wisconsin.gov.

Foster Youth Graduation Event

BYS will host its 9th annual graduation celebration this summer to honor the academic success of youth who spent time in out-of-home care. At this event, DCF will honor young people with out-of-home care experience who obtain their HSED/GED or graduate from high school or above during the 2021-2022 academic school year. The event will include live speeches from special guests, information about resources available to young people exiting out-of-home care, and recognition of the recent graduates! The event will likely take place in-person at the Governor's Executive Residence. However, should COVID-19 cases increase, and make it be unsafe to host a large group, DCF will shift the event to a virtual format.

Each year, in addition to recognizing recent graduates, BYS honors individuals with Champions of Change and PATHS Awards at the graduation event. The Champions of Change Award is given to youth who have dedicated efforts to improve youth-serving systems; the PATHS Award recognizes individuals who supported graduates on their path to success.

More details regarding the event date, exact location, and other details to follow via e-mail communication. If you have questions about this event, please contact dcfoys@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!](#)

Please note, due to staff working remotely, email is the best mode of contact. Hover over a staff member's name to e-mail them directly.

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