



OCTOBER 2020

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!

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As the leaves begin to turn and the temperature drops, this issue of the BYS Newsletter looks back at staff and partners' recent work and ahead to what is to come. Many of us are transitioning to yet another "new normal" as children return to school in various formats, we combine in-person and remote work in new ways, and those we serve continue to feel the impacts of the pandemic, systemic racism, and other challenges. But we still have reasons to celebrate, like the Foster Youth Graduation Event (held virtually for the first time) highlighted in this newsletter. And we continue to rely on your partnership to move forward important initiatives in the areas of youth justice, homelessness, and others. Thank you, as always, for everything you do, and we hope you are able to enjoy some of what fall has to offer.

YJ Innovation Grants

Six new counties received Innovation Grants for 2020-21 to support innovative work in youth justice.

- School Justice Partnership: Shawano
- Service Matching: Adams, Clark, Douglas, Grant, Manitowoc

Ten counties received continuation grants for 2021 to continue the innovative work they began with the grants they received last year: Barron, Dodge (w/ Columbia, Fond du Lac, and Sauk), Door, Iron, Kenosha, Kewanee, Menominee, Milwaukee, St. Croix, and Wood.

Profiles of each of the grant projects can be found under the "Innovative Practice" tab on the [DCF YJ page](#).

In September, the first Innovation Grants Final Report was released. 16 grantees who received innovation funding between 2017 and 2019 were highlighted in the report.

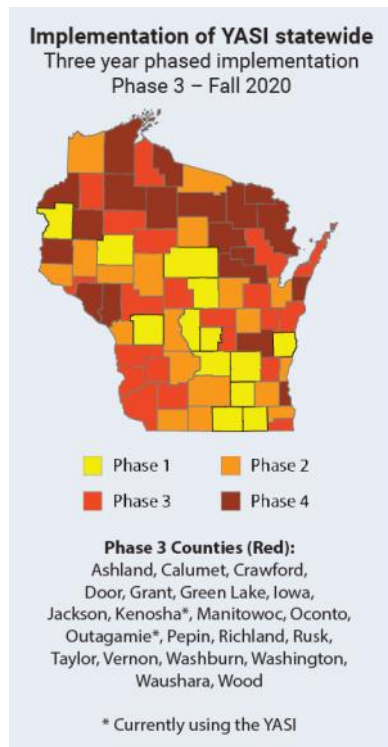
Innovation Grants provide support to counties looking to launch new, innovative youth justice projects and practices in one of the following project areas: Alternatives to Detention, Robust Case Planning, School/Justice Partnerships, and Community Partnerships. Since 2017, programs stemming from Innovation funding have provided services to over 350 youth statewide and have helped to encourage other YJ stakeholders to approach youth from a position of support rather than punishment.

The Youth Justice Innovation Grants Final Report: 2017-2019 is available to read here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/yj/pdf/ig-rpt-17-19.pdf>.

Save the Date for 2021 BYS Conference

- **Theme:** Amplifying Youth Voice and Increasing Engagement
- **Dates:** Pre-conference workshops are on 4/27/2021, conference runs from 4/28/2021 through 4/29/2021

Phase 3 of YASI Roll-Out



After a brief intermission to adjust to the challenge that COVID-19 poses for training, August marked the start of the 3rd phase of YASI roll-out. Twenty-one counties are included in Phase 3 and are highlighted in red on the map. Counties included in Phase 3 are just starting to dig into the tasks included in their Implementation Checklists and prepare for CCW1 training – scheduled to begin at the end September and run through early spring 2021.

On September 14 and September 15, 2020, BYS virtually hosted Orbis Partners CEO David Robinson and YASI Master Trainer Diana Wavra for the YASI Phase 3 Kick-Offs. These meetings were incredibly well-attended, with over 200 stakeholders statewide tuning in! Dr. Robinson provided an overview of the CaseWorks software including the YASI assessment tool and case planning module and Diana charted a course for the material covered in CCW1 and CCW2 training.

New YASI Resource and Support

A recording of the YASI Kick-Off from early September is available online! The Kick-Off meeting covers Wisconsin's Implementation Plan, as well as an introduction of the YASI assessment and case plan, and a preview of the Collaborative Case Works trainings. For those who are interested in learning more about the YASI from the experts from Orbis, this recording is a great place to start.

Follow [this link](#) to watch the Kick-Off Meeting.

If you have questions or are looking for additional support, remember that you can always contact a member of Wisconsin's YASI Implementation Team.

Wisconsin's YASI Implementation Team

- Ragen Shapiro – YASI Project Lead, Phase 1 Lead
- Carlton Frost – eWiSACWIS/CaseWorks Technical Assistance, Phase 2 Lead
- Alana Peck – YASI Quality Assurance, Phase 3 Lead
- Becky Yang – YASI Training State Committee Coordinator, Coaching Model Coordinator
- Nicki Laudolff – WCWPDS YASI Trainer
- Lindsay Campbell Ebben – WCWPDS YASI Trainer
- Diana Wavra – Orbis Master Trainer

2020 Foster Youth Graduation Celebration

The Department of Children and Families held the 7th annual Foster Youth Graduation Celebration on Wednesday, July 15th virtually over Zoom. Governor Tony Evers, DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson, Division of Safety and Permanence Administrator Wendy Henderson, and Bureau of Youth Services Director Shelby McCulley, joined other supportive adults to share their words of admiration and congratulations to recent graduates. The event included a slideshow of photos that the graduates submitted – whether of themselves or something representative of their academic accomplishment.



In addition to celebrating all graduates, each year DCF awards the Champion of Change Award and Path to Success Award.

The Champion of Change award is given to youth who demonstrate a commitment to improve youth-serving systems. This year, the agency renamed the award to the Champions of Change Award in honor of Dosha “DJay” Joi. DJay was a former foster youth and a true Champion of Change who was sadly lost to COVID-19 in May. DJay served on the Statewide Youth Advisory Council (YAC) for many years – both as a member and a group officer. He was instrumental in launching the first Hands Around the Capitol event in 2017 to recognize Foster Care Awareness month. Even after leaving the statewide YAC, DJay continued to mentor the next generation of advocates through involvement in his local Youth Advisory Council and stayed connected to the Statewide group. DJay used his personal experiences to push forward meaningful child welfare reforms at the local, state, and national levels. He testified before the State Legislature, shadowed on Capitol Hill, and advocated for numerous proposals at the state and national levels. And for these efforts, he himself was twice honored with the Champions of Change Award that now honors him. DJay was joyfully persistent in moving his advocacy forward, a skill that is much needed on behalf of youth with foster care experience. DCF hopes that other young people will continue to use their own voices to advocate for better policies and systems that truly support all youth and families.

The 2020 recipients of the Champions of Change Award in honor of DJay were ShawnaRae and Madison.

As a member of Wisconsin’s Youth Advisory Council (YAC) since she was 16, **ShawnaRae** has passionately advocated for changes to the Wisconsin foster care system. For the past year, she has served as the President of the YAC, facilitating and adapting meetings to a virtual platform, and demonstrating the power of sharing her story to influence policy and social work practice. In 2018, ShawnaRae also completed a [FosterClub All-Star internship](#) and collaborated with DCF and another All-Star on her capstone project. The end result was DCF’s [Independent Living Roadmap](#), a resource that DCF and partners have shared widely with Independent Living Coordinators and Case Workers across the state. ShawnaRae also recently executed the YAC’s [virtual Hands Around the Capitol event](#) and worked diligently to ensure that the work of the YAC and legacy of the event continued. For these reasons DCF selected ShawnaRae as a Champion of Change recipient.

2020 Foster Youth Graduation Celebration continued...

Madison is another example of how the power of your voice can impact child welfare. Madison is an active member of her local and the statewide YAC and a mentor to potential or new members. Throughout the years, she has spoken on numerous panels for various professional and student organizations, passionately advocating for changes in the foster care system. During her time at Waukesha County Technical College, she worked in the Multicultural Resource Center that focuses on diversity, inclusion and student engagement. Her commitment to improving the system and creating an environment of inclusivity for her peers is apparent in the work she does and make Madison a wonderful Champion of Change.

The graduates' success is reflective of their hard work and commitment; graduation is a huge accomplishment. It is also reflective of the important work social workers, educators, and foster families do every day. Supportive adults' efforts remove or reduce barriers for youth and encourage them to dream big, helping to pave the way for youth to excel and achieve academic success.

At the graduation event, DCF recognized three individuals who helped three graduates on their path to success. Selections were made based on youth nominations of the supportive adults in their life. The 2020 recipients of the Paths to Success Award were Alex Maves (Region 5 Independent Living Coordinator), Mark Stigler (educator), and Molly Scallon (school counselor).

Congratulations to all the recent graduates and award recipients!

Expanded PATHS Grant Opportunity Coming Soon!

In 2021, DCF intends to issue two Permanent Connections, Academics, Training and Employment, Housing, and Social and Emotional Well-being (PATHS) awards – one to serve the Southern Youth Services Regions (3, 4, 5) and one to serve the Northern Youth Services Regions (1, 2, 6, 7), presuming successful applications are received from both parts of the state. Read on for a brief overview of the opportunity and historical information and keep an eye out for the PATHS request for proposal (RFP) on [VendorNet](#) within the next few months!

PATHS History

In 2013, DCF was a recipient of a “Youth at Risk of Homelessness” planning grant, the PATHS to Success grant, from the Administration for Children and Families. At the conclusion of this initiative, three key components were identified and demonstrated to be promising practices:

1. A Housing First model through supported independent living
2. Comprehensive and targeted treatment through intensive case management and wraparound services; and
3. Multi-disciplinary community partnerships to address youths' individual needs.

Path Grant Opportunity continued...

PATHS History continued...

The PATHS Pilot Project, which utilized the Housing First approach, was implemented in three pilot sites across the state. All three sites were successful in getting their programs established and operational within the two-year pilot period. At the end of the project, main themes emerged regarding what worked well within the programs, and the challenges experienced. Additionally, strategies for program improvement were identified which included the need to develop new partnerships in order to expand program capacities, as well as housing and other services, for participating young adults. The identified need to expand housing, services and community partnerships to address youth homelessness is the basis for the PATHS program.

In 2016, a three-year contract was awarded to a sole provider, who will continue to implement the grant until December of 2020. Over two-thirds of participants served during this time have demonstrated progress towards education and employment goals.

In 2019, additional state resources were added to support ending youth homelessness in Wisconsin. After reviewing research regarding youth homelessness and conducting listening sessions throughout the state, it was determined expanding PATHS to allow for programming in both Northern and Southern Wisconsin was the best use of state dollars. That is the basis for the forthcoming RFP.

If you have questions about PATHS and the RFP opportunity, contact Greta Munns, BYS Policy Coordinator, via

Margaret.Munns@wisconsin.gov.

2021 PATHS RFP Quick Facts

This grant will:

- Operate on an annual contract beginning January 1, 2021, with the potential for 4-one-year renewals.
- Require a housing-first model serving the most vulnerable youth; it shall focus on youth who are at-risk of “aging out” or who have recently “aged out” of out-of-home care.

The Core Principles of Housing First for Youth include:

- Immediate access to housing with no housing readiness requirements.
- Youth choice and self-determination (choice of housing and supports).
- A positive youth development orientation.
- Individualized and client-driven supports.
- Social and community integration.
- Be open to applicants from county and tribal child welfare agencies, private not-for-profit and for-profit organizations throughout the state.
- Require a 15% cash or in-kind match.



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

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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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