

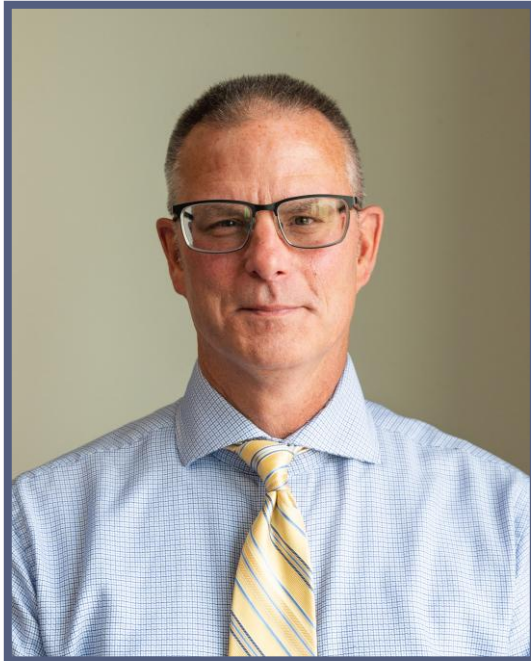


Putting

Families First



# Welcome!



**John Elliott**  
Administrator



**Shelby McCulley**  
Deputy Administrator



***Who is joining us today?***

A top-down view of several hands of different skin tones holding white rectangular cards on a dark wooden floor. The hands are arranged in a circle, with some cards held up and others being placed down. The entire image has a dark blue overlay.

# Vision

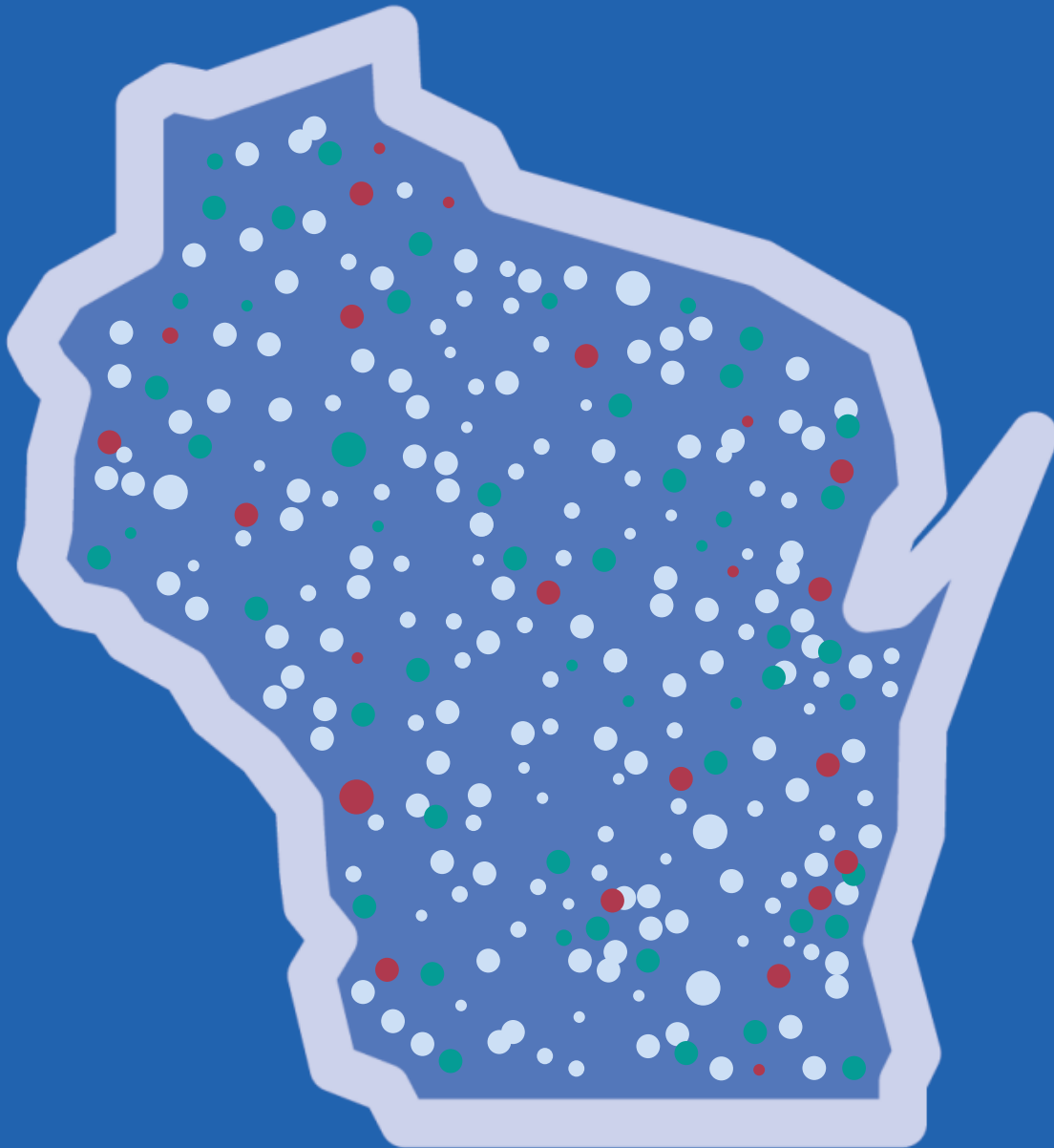
All Wisconsin children and youth are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities.



In 2024,

**16,537**

families had a child welfare  
professional knock on their  
door.



**16,537**

families had a child welfare  
professional knock on their door.

**2,031**

of these families' cases transitioned  
into an ongoing case.

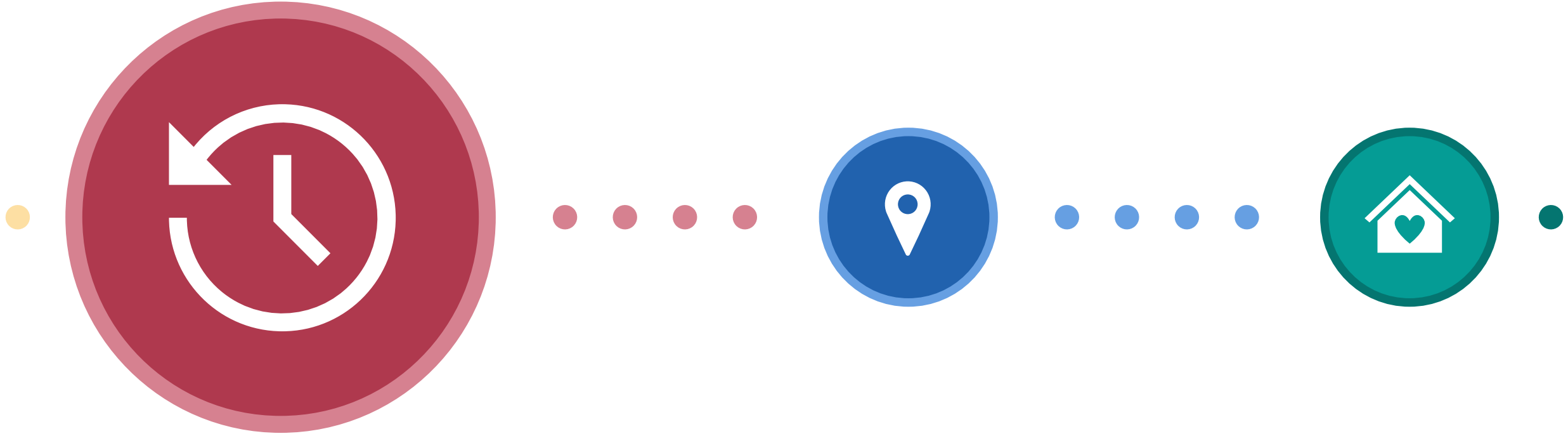
**778**

of these families had children who  
remained in home.

*Behind each number,  
each circle . . .*



*. . . is you.*



**Where we *were*.**

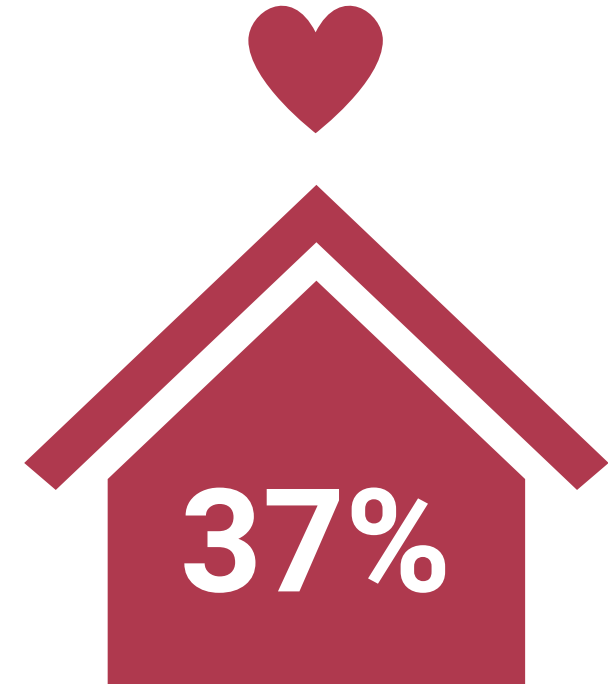
# In 2019 . . .



**13.3 children**  
removed per day.



**210** entered  
congregate  
care.



**37%** initially  
placed with  
relatives.





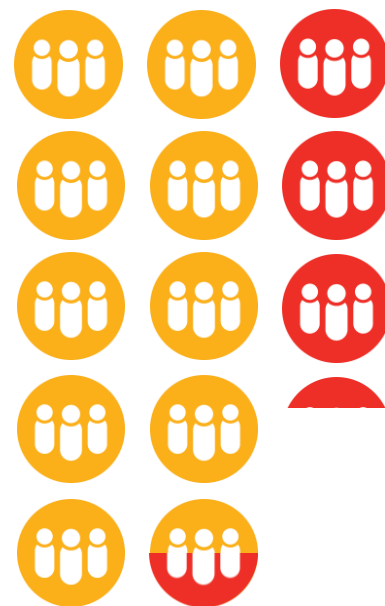
**Where we are.**

# 3.8

**fewer children  
removed per day**

since 2019.

2019



13.3

2024



9.5



# 32%

**fewer children  
entering  
out-of-home care**

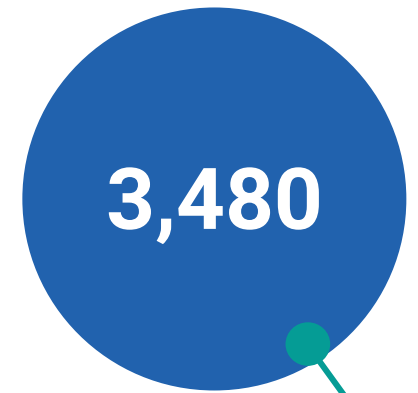
since 2019.

2019



210\*

2024



149\*

*\* Children entering congregative care.*

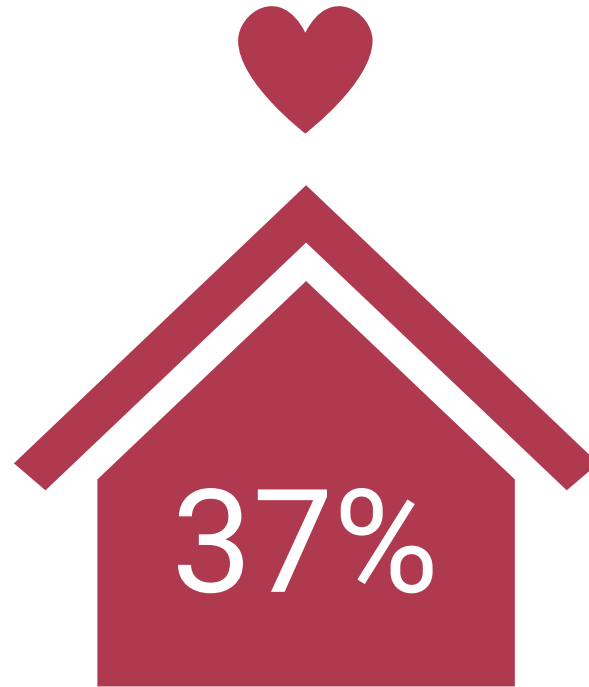


# 3%

**more children  
initially placed  
with relatives**

since 2019.

2019



2024



# Chapter 56 Revisions

## Foster Care Licensing Rule



Reduces administrative burden on relative and like-kin caregivers and the workforce.



Decreases timeframe for caregiver licensure and payments.



Provides pay equity.



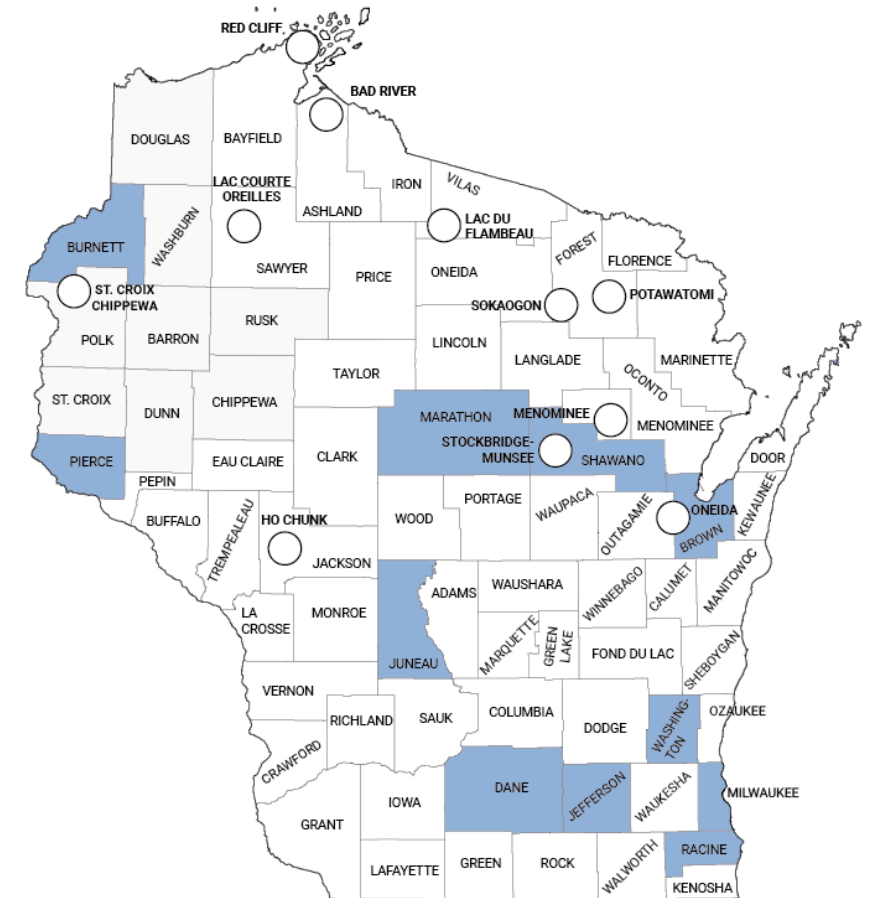
Creates separate licensing pathway for relative and like-kin caregivers.

# Access Response Time Pilot



**Pilot goal:** To make the response time decision point easier for the workforce and more consistent across the state.

- DMCPs and 10 local CPS agencies participating.
- No changes to screening decision.
- Simpler, more straightforward response time decision-making.
  - Six criteria to determine how quickly to respond.
  - Allows IA to gather information before identifying danger threats.
- Positive experiences and data so far!



# Youth Justice Training

## WiLearn Youth Justice

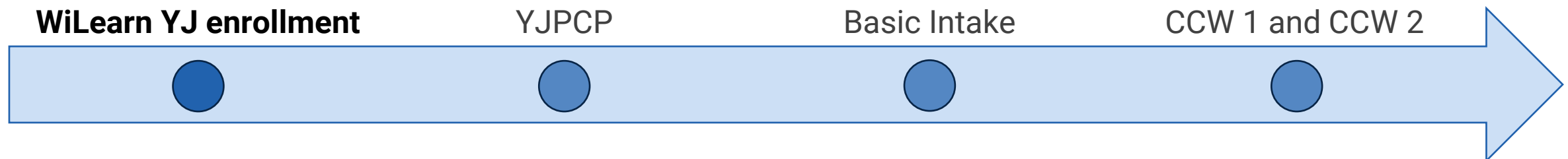


**Accessible, focused training** that prepares the workforce to work with families in making decisions to support youth.

Foundational Elements include:

- “Culturally-Responsible Practice”
- “Trauma-Informed Practice”
- “Engaging Families”
- “Case Practice with American Indian Tribes”
- “Case Practice with American Indian Tribes: Understanding WICWA”

Ideal sequence:



# Youth Justice Training

## Youth Justice Philosophy and Case Process

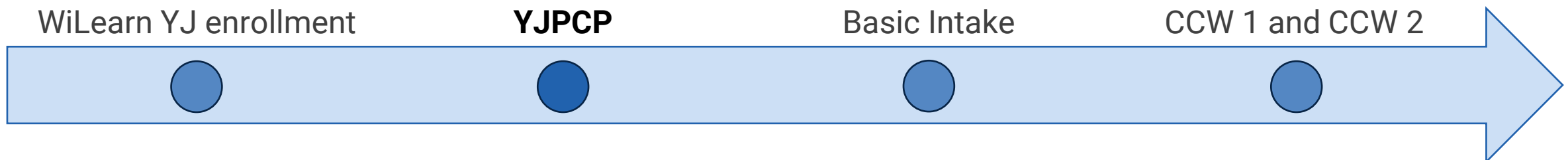


**Offers foundational knowledge for new YJ professionals** that will set up the rest of the learner's training arc.

Becomes a prerequisite for new YJ professionals hired on or after January 1, 2026.

- New YJ professionals will be auto-enrolled.

Ideal sequence:



# Supporting Youth and Children (SYNC)



**Secure** and **efficient** exchange of information between child welfare agencies and group care providers.

→ **2025 enhancements include:**

- Access to up-to-date status of referrals.
- Provider updates section – can now document/update:
  - Program description.
  - Operational capacity.
- Provider forms expansion.
- Automated messages.

# Independent Living

## Independent Living Transition to Discharge Plan



February 2025  
eWiSACWIS changes  
were made to make the  
discharge process  
more **meaningful** and  
**supportive**.

Sections designated with a ★ below have at least one field that is required for all ILTDs, regardless of whether the youth does or does not participate in their discharge planning. The sections designated with a ‡ have at least one field that is required when the youth actively participates in their discharge planning, in addition to those already required for all ILTDs.		
Background and General Information Sections	Youth Demographic and Contact Information ★ <i>(primarily pre-fills)</i>	Essential Documents <i>(see list of <u>federally</u> required documents on page 1)</i>
	Concurrent Planning ★ <i>(new section)</i>	Transition Planning ★
	Eligibility for Extended Out-of-Home Care/Youth Decision ★	Who I Am ★ <i>(new section)</i>
Youth-Driven Planning Sections	Housing ★	Health and Well-being ‡
	Employment ‡	Transportation ‡ <i>(new section)</i>
	Income and Finances ★‡	Community and Support Network ★
	Education ‡	Other Areas of Need

# Independent Living

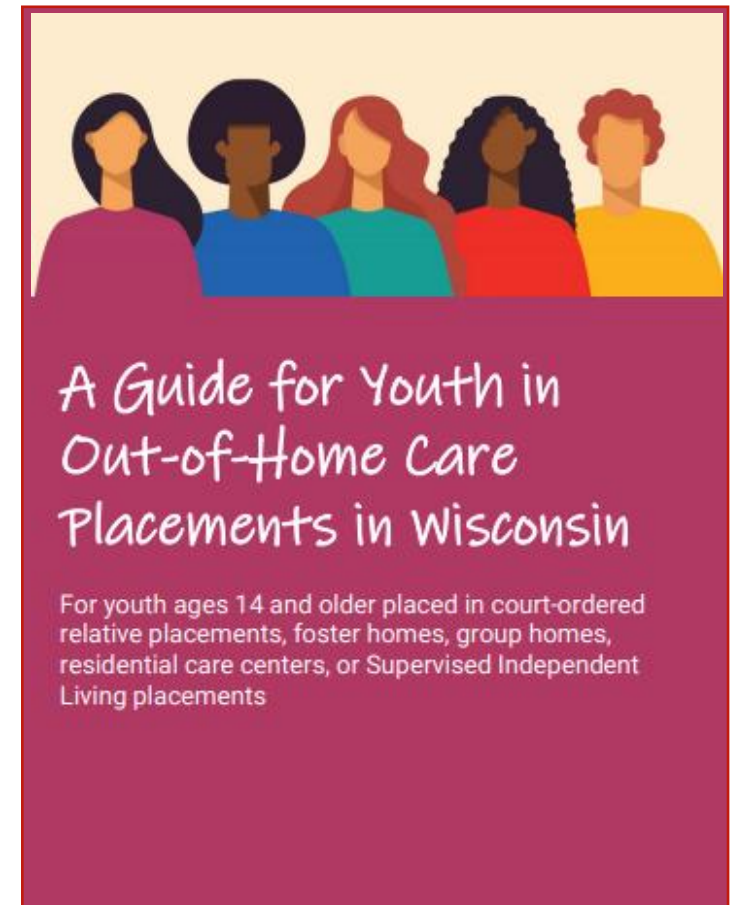
## Guide for Youth in Out-of-Home Care Placements

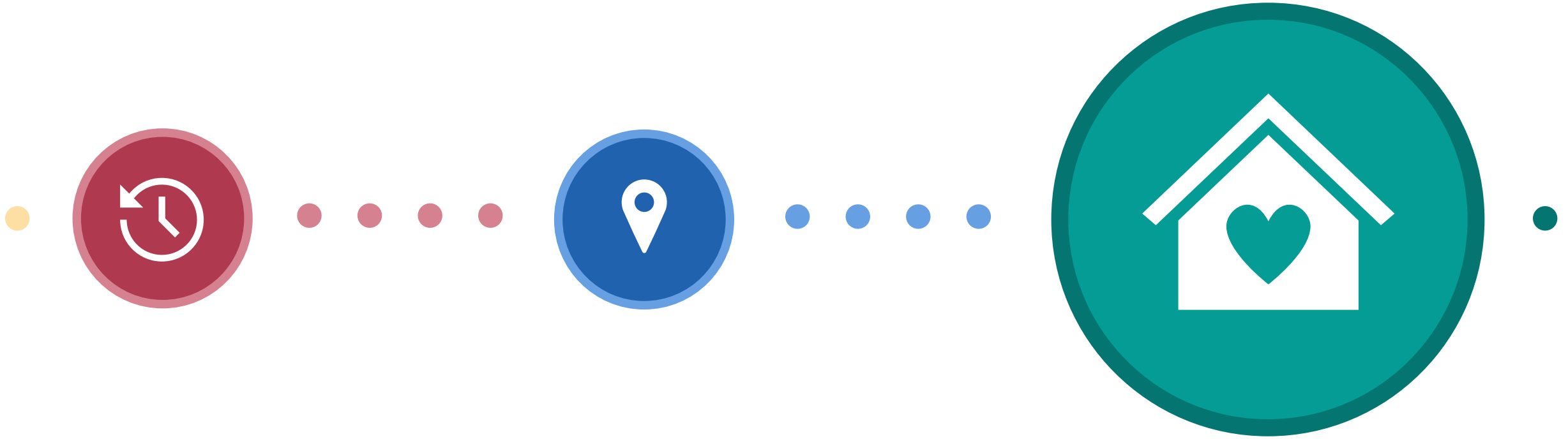


- ✓ Answers common questions.
- ✓ Helps young people better understand their rights.
- ✓ Teaches young people about the process, people involved, and what to expect.
- ✓ Includes information about available resources.
- ✓ And much more!



Find this resource and more at:  
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/toolbox>.





**Where we're going.**

# Placement with relatives and like-kin

## Keeping children with those who know and love them



- **Placing more children with relatives and like-kin at initial placement** when they cannot safely remain in their homes.
  - Making progress through efforts like DCF 56 revisions.

### ***What can you do today?***

- ✓ *Find out what this number looks like in your community by using the Implementation Support Metrics Dashboard.*
- ✓ *Set goals and develop strategies for reaching them.*
- ✓ *Continue to assess progress and local change.*

# Limiting child support collections for OHC



Child support collection while a child is in out-of-home care **directly** and **negatively** impacts child and family outcomes.

**Reduces family income.**

**Decreases family stability.**

**Increases time to reunification.**

Limiting child support collections would mean:

- Financial resources stay with the family, supporting reunification and family stability.
- Over time, a reduction in out-of-home care costs for agencies.

## ***What can you do today?***

- ✓ *Start or continue local discussions about ceasing collections or minimizing collections. What are concrete steps your agency can take?*

# Tailored Dispositional Orders Project



**51 counties** will have received the TDO CHIPS training by the end of 2025.  
**28 counties** have participated in the youth justice training.

Keys to achieving better outcomes:



**Work effectively with all partners** and incorporate tailored recommendations into decision-making up front at Disposition.



**Ensure Dispositional conditions/services are informed by the needs and strengths of the youth.**



**Divert low-risk youth** and prioritize resources for youth with the greatest need.

→ Next step is the evaluation phase.

# Motivational Interviewing



**Motivational Interviewing (MI) Exploration and Implementation Workgroup launching in January.**

The workgroup:

- Includes counties and lived experts.
- Will explore strategies for MI implementation (including ability to claim IV-E revenue).

Aims include:

- Improving family engagement and outcomes.
- Integrating MI into Wisconsin's prevention plan.
- Build statewide MI capacity.

## ***What can you do today?***

- ✓ *Start or continue local discussions about how to build stronger and more meaningful engagement with families.*

# Tribal Engagement Appendix



- In CPS Access & Initial Assessment Standards:
  - *NEW* Appendix 13: County Agencies' Responsibility to Engage Tribal Nations.
- No new policy.
- Best practice strategies and resources for local CPS agency staff, supervisors, and leaders.
- Fulfilling the purpose and intent of ICWA/WICWA.

# System Partner Engagement



## DCF will continue to:



**Partner with tribes** to ensure the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families.



**Partner with counties and the workforce** and invest in solutions to support the workforce so they can engage with families and support families in their communities.



**Work with our legal partners** to ensure better outcomes for children, youth and families.



**Engage lived experience** and build equitable programs, policies and practices that support families.

# Budget challenges



***What are you most  
excited about?***

# Let's keep transforming and making **meaningful change** for families!



Check out DCF's communications resources:  
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/toolbox>.



Explore the Child Welfare Implementation Support Metrics Dashboard, which offers local data.

Take a look today in eWiSACWIS!



**Local change is key to transformation.**

Have conversations about what you can start doing **today** to continue Putting Families First.



# Thank you!

Have additional questions? Don't hesitate to reach out!

**Putting Families First**

*Wisconsin Department of Children and Families*

[www.dcf.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov)

[FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov](mailto:FamilyFirst@wisconsin.gov)

