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Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Emilie Amundson

Division of Safety and Permanence

Friday, March 20th, 2020

DCF Order #9 – Brighter Futures Initiative Letter

Dear BFI Grantees,

During this rapidly changing time as we all respond to COVID-19 and all related issues, I want to continue to support you and provide resources. Our team is working remotely and thanks to technology we can continue our work in supporting the Bureau of Youth Services (BYS) programs.

First and foremost, we recommend following any guidance provided by your local public health agencies. While DCF may have more guidance forthcoming, some initial guidance follows:

Service Documentation

If your program is reducing direct services and face-to-face contact with BFI eligible youth, document that information via the most appropriate means for your program (case notes, electronic systems, etc.). We will know that a decrease in youth served and low program completion rates around this time are due to COVID-19 response.

Connecting with Youth Virtually

Many of the programs work with youth in their school and with schools being closed indefinitely, this creates a barrier in the amount of youth you can serve, if any. Some programs have reported they are moving to attempting phone or videoconference meetings with the youth in their home. We encourage programs to identify ways to stay connected with youth, if possible, during this time.

Front-line Staff

If staff members that provide direct services are unable to support youth via technology, it is recommended that they work with their supervisors in developing a plan for completion of their work. This may include completing online training or certifications, researching for future projects or events, developing curriculum supplemental materials, organizing and planning for future sessions, and completing any other necessary administrative work. We understand the difficulty with making staffing decisions and the need to retain skilled staff.

Resources

Below are some resources that could support your program:

- A COVID-19 page has been added to the DCF website with information and guidance for DCF programs: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/covid-19>

- The WI Department of Health Services has up-to date information and guidance on COVID-19 at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>.
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network created a “Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Corona Virus Disease 2019”. This document or information from it may be helpful to share with families:
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>
- [Up-to-date information on the status of the virus outbreak](#) is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

I will send you additional information relevant to BFI as I receive it. In the meantime, if you have questions, please send them to me. We are collecting questions from across all of our program and service areas and working to communicate answers as timely as possible. Thank you for all that you do every day on the behalf of youth and families.

Faith Price
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