

Supporting Youth Who are Vulnerable and Historically Underserved

Investing in evidence-based, system-level changes ensures all youth can thrive.

Implementing Evidence-Based Youth Justice System Changes

Reshaping the youth justice system to align with best practice and research on adolescent brain development, and serving youth safely within their communities, are critical undertakings. Providing **\$20 million** over the biennium to return 17-year-olds to the youth justice system, ending the Serious Juvenile Offender program, and increasing Youth Aids funding to help counties meet the increased cost for youth justice services are foundational to achieving this goal.



Enhancing Programming for Youth Who Are Historically Underserved



Keeping kids connected with families and supporting young people to become successful adults are fundamental to DCF's vision, and the agency's budget supports these efforts in several ways. Expanding child-focused adoption recruitment in Milwaukee County through Wendy's Wonderful Kids provides permanency for more children. Funding for programs like summer camps which allow siblings in out-of-home care critical opportunities to be reunited. Covering the cost of driver education classes and license costs for youth in foster care promotes independence. Investing **\$1 million** over the biennium to establish or continue foster youth programming for eligible students at University of Wisconsin institutions increases access to higher education. Increasing the maximum age and expanding eligibility for independent living services allows DCF to better support young people for an extended period of time.

Streamlining Statutory Language and Appropriations

Young people need services focused on who they are as individuals, not just the box they check on an intake form. Providing flexibility and transparency for appropriations, updating and streamlining statutory language, and reducing the complexity of administering these funds is essential to meeting this need. Ensuring this funding reaches youth-serving programs in a timely and efficient manner is critical to improving systems and outcomes.

