



2021-22 Youth Justice Innovation Grants

Project Summaries

The Youth Justice (YJ) Innovation Grants are an opportunity for county human service agencies to implement new, creative, evidence-informed practices or programs with short-term start-up funding from DCF. All projects must serve the overall purpose of improving community-based juvenile delinquency-related services and meet the requirements of one of the following topic areas: Racial and Ethnic Disparity (R.E.D.) Reduction, School-Justice Partnership, Matching Services to Needs, or Continuation.

In Fall 2021, 16 grants were awarded: 10 initial grants to start or enhance a program or practice and 6 continuation grants to continue implementation of a program or practice started in 2020.

Matching Services to Needs

Ashland

Objective

Study the gaps in their current YJ intervention system to identify and implement evidence-informed strategies to address and heal the underlying root causes of delinquent behavior in the community. This project will help to expand Ashland's community-based offerings to include more intensive, restorative, and healing-focused services for youth and their families, which support transformative shifts in thinking, attitudes, and actions.

Target population

- Ashland County youth (including Bad River Tribal youth) ages 10-17 involved with the YJ system

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Community-informed gap analysis which will include input from youth and families with YJ system experience, tribal leaders, behavioral health providers, people impacted by youth offenders, school district staff, and local organizations
- Use of gap analysis to inform selection of evidence-based interventions that best fit the needs of local youth and families and capacity of county staff.
- Development of qualitative assessment tool in the form of a survey or interview to be used before and after interventions to assess quality, impact, and potential areas for improvement

Project Lead: [Scott Griffiths](#)

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Crawford

Objective

Collaborate with their Deputy Juvenile Clerk as well as local providers, Hidden Springs and Family Support Services, to support the enhancement and further development of community-based youth justice related services to support progress towards the following goals:

1. Increase prevention efforts and service availability, reduce referrals to YJ, and increase deferments for Disorderly Conduct type offenses in home and at school, as well as for parent-child conflict related offenses
2. Reduce youth recidivism through an increased utilization of appropriate restorative services for youth

Target population

- Youth ages 10-17 who have been referred to the YJ system
- Youth identified by community partners as “at-risk” of future YJ system involvement

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Establish an evidence-informed mentoring program for youth referred to the YJ system as well as youth at-risk of YJ system involvement
- Continue parental engagement and support by connecting adult role models with parents through the mentorship program and allocating funds to support family activities and prosocial connection as a whole
- Development of a more formal Restorative Justice Program in collaboration with the Juvenile Court
- Partner with Hidden Springs to train a staff member in *Thinking for a Change*
- Partner with Family Support Services to train a staff member to provide *Parent Management Training*

Project Lead: [Jada Hrubes](#)

Dane

Objective

Expand access to restorative services for youth in Dane County in order to divert youth away from the formal court system, provide interventions geared toward reducing Disproportionate Minority Contact, and assist youth in problem-solving around encountered barriers and building positive community ties.

Target population arey

- Youth referred to the Dane County DHS Court Diversion Unit or the formal YJ Intake Unit for at least the following five misdemeanor offenses:
 1. Battery
 2. Resisting/obstructing
 3. Disorderly conduct
 4. Criminal damage to property
 5. Theft

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Subcontract with Briarpatch Youth Services (BYS) to provide *Victim Respondent Conferences (VRC)* and *Restorative Justice Circles (RJC)* to youth referred on state charges as close to their home as possible
- Train new YJ staff in *Carey Guides* and *BITS*

Project Lead: [Andre Johnson](#)

Jackson

Objective

Enhance current programming and develop additional program based on risk, needs, and responsivity factors of the youth and families served in Jackson County through the provision of mentorship programming, positive community connections, skill building, and pro-social activities.

Target population

- Youth aged 10-17 working with Jackson County Department of Health and Human Services due to a law enforcement, school, or parent referral resulting in a Deferred Prosecution Agreement, Consent Decree, or Court Order

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Collaboration with Children's Wisconsin to locate, train, and fund:
 - A Youth Navigator to be trained in the *Mobility Mentoring* model
 - A Mental Health Consultant who will offer evidence-based treatment approaches to assist youth in developing emotional regulation and problem-solving skills
- Children's Wisconsin will also collaborate with Jackson County DHHS to offer the following services:
 - Mentoring
 - Career exploration/planning
 - *Casey Life Skills* Assessment
 - Mental Health Consultant to guide *Carey Guides* and *BITS* practice with youth

Project Lead: [Jenny Dormady](#)

Pierce

Objective

Provide community-based, intensive in-home services to youth and their families as a mechanism to keep families intact and to assist those youth in out-of-home care to return home.

Target population

- Youth ages 9-17 and their families who have been identified as medium to high risk, in need of in-home therapy, and are willing to participate in Family Centered Treatment

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Implement *Family Centered Treatment (FCT)*, an evidence-based program with proven results for YJ-involved youth and their families
 - FCT works intensively with a family within home and utilizes clinical modalities that include eco-structured family therapy, emotionally focused therapy, accelerated resolution therapy, and contingency management

Project Lead: [Joy Lynn George](#)

Washington

Objective

Create a community-based and in-home therapeutic service option matched to a youth's risk level as identified by YASI.

Target population

- Youth aged 11 through 17 years old and their families who are under a Deferred Prosecution Agreement, Consent Decree, or Dispositional Order and have likely experienced complex trauma and emotional dysregulation

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Implement *Family Centered Treatment (FCT)*, an in-home, family-focused treatment modality that has been found to reduce out-of-home placements and the likelihood of recidivism for youth
- Coordinate with Youth Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) and other wrap around services to eliminate the need for youth to enter the YJ system in order to access services

Project Lead: [Coral Kline](#)

Adams (Continuation)

Objective

1. Reduce the number of youth requiring Out-of-Home Care by targeting the entire family system
2. Foster a sense of community among youth justice-involved youth while also providing them with prosocial development.

Target population

- Youth and their families who score medium or high risk in the YASI Family domain
- Youth with needs identified in the YASI risk domains of Community and Peer, Skills, and/or Aggression/Violence

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Continue provision of *Family Centered Treatment (FCT)*, an intensive in-home therapy model that meets the needs of the entire family and shows effectiveness in 6-9 months of family engagement
- Continue the *Teens Initiating Transformation Among Neighborhoods (TITAN)* program, a weekly program that integrates components of *Aggression Replacement Training (ART)* with youth-identified community service projects

Project Lead: [Erin Schiferl](#)

Clark (Continuation)

Objective

Continue to improve ability to appropriately match services to the YASI-identified needs of Clark County youth and their families in order to increase strengths, reduce the likelihood for recidivism, and increase youth confidence in finding sustainable employment opportunities or successfully pursuing higher education.

Target population

- Youth aged 10-17 working with Clark County Department of Social Services due to a law enforcement referral resulting in a Deferred Prosecution Agreement, Consent Decree, or Court Order

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Continue locating, training, and funding a mentoring program that pairs adult mentors with youth to provide positive adult interaction
- Encourage and support youth participation in community pro-social activities like boxing, hockey, football, or horseback riding
- Facilitate groups and individual instruction on life skills like job planning, interview strategies, and financial management
- Increase opportunities for staff to attend youth justice specific trainings to increase confidence in ability to provide services directly related to a youth's YASI identified priorities and targets

Project Lead: [Trena Abbott](#)

Douglas (Continuation)

Objective

Expand and enhance current practice by offering an array of services available to youth and their families while maintaining youth in their home and community in order to increase long-term success within a functional family system, prevent out-of-home placements for youth, and reduce recidivism for youth.

Target population

- YJ-involved youth and their families with YASI scores that indicate a need for programming

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Continue staff training in *Functional Family Case Management (FFCM)* through the implementation of Phase 2 of the FFCM model
- Increase the number of YJ staff trained in *Decision Points*, a cognitive behavioral intervention

2021-22 Youth Justice Innovation Grants | Project Summaries

- Provide prevention and intervention courses developed by 3rd Millennium Classrooms to youth and their families
- Train and educate Youth and Family Services staff in the dynamics within a family when domestic violence is a factor

Project Lead: [Brooke Fitzgerald](#)

Grant (Continuation)

Objective

Help youth become successful and thriving adults, encourage personal growth, and reduce involvement in the youth justice system by focusing on development of positive connected relationships as well as targeted education and skill-building.

Target population

- Middle and high-school aged youth referred to the YJ system who are identified as moderate to high risk on the YASI

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Continue to develop and enhance the *Teaching Healthy Relationships in Volunteering and Education (THRIVE)* initiative, an evidence-informed, county-developed program that focuses on:
 1. Responsibility and Accountability
 2. Building Community Partnerships
 3. Service Projects
 4. Healthy Supportive Relationships
 5. Youth Empowerment
 6. Trauma, Resiliency, and Self-Care
 7. Mindfulness and De-escalation Techniques
 8. Functional Skill Building
 9. Other topics based on assessed needs
- Completion of the *Casey Life Skills Assessment* to custom tailor sessions to the needs of the group

Project Lead: [Clark Thelemann](#)

Manitowoc (Continuation)

Objective

Enhance current programming and develop additional programming based on risk, needs, and responsivity factors of youth and families served in Manitowoc County.

Target population

- Youth referred to the juvenile justice system in Manitowoc County and their families.

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Expand use of *Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Teens (MBSR-T)* tools developed during 2021 for youth receiving ongoing youth justice services to also include youth at high risk of entering the youth justice system
- Work with Laura Saunders Consulting, Inc on an intensive technical assistance project to firmly implant the use of *Motivational Interviewing (MI)* model into the Youth and Family Services Unit
- Provide a refresher training in *Aggression Replacement Training (ART)*, for staff and trainers and purchase materials to train additional staff in the future
- Enhance *Kids at Hope* work through the development of a shared community goal and provision of additional training for a group of stakeholders at a Master's institute in spring 2022

Project Lead: [Stacy Ledvina](#)

Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction

Eau Claire County

Objective

The Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction Initiative (RED-R Initiative) in Eau Claire County will bring together a diverse stakeholder group to further assess and analyze data, with the intent of expanding a culturally competent service array and creating cultural competence among staff members.

Target population

- Youth in Eau Claire county receiving a formal referral to YJ system
- Youth admitted to the Northwest Regional Juvenile Detention Center (NWRJDC)

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Formation of a diverse community stakeholder group that includes youth and families who are past and current consumers of the county's Youth Justice System.
- Thorough analysis of data related to every point of decision-making in the youth justice system and a plan to collaborate with UW Institute for Research on Poverty
- Introduction of a *Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI)* at NWRJDC
- Use stakeholder input on data analysis to inform development of a culturally competent service array for youth

Project Lead: [Terri Bohl](#)

School-Justice Partnership

Monroe

Objective

Establish a collaboration between county human services, school districts, law enforcement, and the District Attorney to provide an evidence-based interactive education curriculum alternative to at-risk youth referred to juvenile court or identified with high risk behavior. Monroe's project will specifically focus on referrals related to sexualized behavior, use of social media to engage in inappropriate sexual behavior, and sex trafficking which have been identified as contributing to absences from school.

Target population

- Youth in the community ages 12-17 who have demonstrated minor sexually inappropriate behaviors or who have been referred for a first-time sexual offense

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Facilitator training for 5 staff from human services, school districts, and law enforcement in *Not a Number*, an interactive child trafficking and exploitation prevention curriculum
- Formation of an implementation team with representatives from Tomah and Sparta school districts, law enforcement from Tomah and Sparta departments, in addition to several other community organizations
- Implementation of evidence-based tools like the *Carey Guides* and *BITs* to complement the proposed curriculum

Project Lead: [Erica Brandau](#)

Outagamie

Objective

Reduce the number of Appleton Area School District (AASD) students referred to Outagamie County's Youth and Family Services (YFS) for truancy.

Target population

- Middle and high school students exhibiting signs of disengaging from school and identified as in need of Alternative Education programming

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Collaboration between YFS, AASD, and several other community agencies to identify gaps in services and development of services to address identified gaps that can be built into AASD's Equitable Multi-Level System of Support
- Project manager recruited by YFS, AASD, and the Boys & Girls Club to coordinate and maintain collaboration between agencies
- Re-establish connection between YFS and the Boys & Girls Club's Truancy Reduction & Assessment Center (TRAC) to work with students exhibiting a reduction in school engagement

Project Lead: [Scott Kornish](#)

Racine

Objective

Increase school and community competence in responding to and preventing student emotional and behavioral health crises to reduce referrals to the YJ system.

Target population

- Students attending Racine Alternative Education and Turning Point Academy who display intense emotional behaviors that are not easily and quickly diffused or resolved – this includes students who act out in class, threaten and are aggressive to classmates, teachers, principals, and themselves, and students who engage in other potentially dangerous activities and behaviors at school

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Utilization of *Kognito At-Risk Online Training* for school personnel to increase skills in identifying, approaching, and referring students with emotional and behavior health concerns to services.
- Training of 2 Youth Engagement staff from Professional Services Group (PSG CIP) and the Racine Police School Resource Officer(s) in *Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI)*, an intervention that focuses on cognitive behavior modification and prosocial skills training to address crisis response
- Expansion of the Community Panels – which engages youth, their families, and community members in a restorative process that holds youth accountable for their actions and encourages them to act responsibly – to include referrals from schools

Project Lead: [Glenn Larson](#)

Shawano (Continuation)

Objective

The purpose of the Helping At Risk Youth (HARY) program is to redirect youth with high risk behaviors from the formal youth justice system through programming, supervision, and support.

Target population

- Youth ages 8-16 and their families/caregivers that reside in Shawano county who are referred to DHS by the school district, mental health professionals, law enforcement, and other professionals

Key Features, Activities, and Elements

- Dedicated HARY program social worker who works with youth and their family to create a case plan and connect to services to prevent formal youth justice system involvement
- Collaboration with law enforcement, schools, and other service providers to encourage youth and families to participate in the program

Project Lead: [Jenny Stuber](#)