

ANNUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICES REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

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Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

Act 109 = 2001, Wisconsin Act 109, enacted in July 2002, provided additional state statutory direction for implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and Federal Title IV-E requirements.

AFCARS = Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. The Federal Foster Care Data System, where states submit information, is a source of permanency and placement data.

AODA = Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

ASFA = Adoption and Safe Families Act, particularly the ASFA requirement to pursue termination of parental rights after a child has been in Out-of-Home Care (OHC) for 15 months.

BCRA = Bureau of Child Welfare Research and Analytics (BCRA) is responsible for the oversight and management of the data analytics and program integrity of DSP programs and policies related to child welfare to ensure compliance with Federal Title IV-E requirements.

BITS = Bureau of Information Technology Services in the Division of Management Services (DMS).

BOS = Balance of State refers to information and/or data that describes the counties outside Milwaukee.

BPOHC = Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care that coordinates the state adoption program, provides technical assistance on foster care, out-of-home care, independent living services, and licenses child welfare facilities.

BPM = Bureau of Performance Management in the Division of Management Services is responsible for continuous quality improvement, performance review and evaluation, and research/program evaluation.

BRO = Bureau of Regional Operations in the Division of Management Services works with local agencies administering DCF programs, including child welfare, child care subsidy, child support, and W-2 financial assistance.

BSWB = Bureau of Safety and Well Being in the Division of Management Services is the state unit responsible for child welfare program policy and practice standards.

DCF = The Bureau of Youth Services (DCF) is responsible for the Chafee Programs recently renamed the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood, Brighter Futures Initiative, Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, community-based Youth Justice programs, and other youth development initiatives.

CFSR = Federal Child and Family Services Review.

CFS 40 = Division of Safety and Permanence form used to collect information on child abuse and neglect investigations previously used by Wisconsin to collect data for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

Ch. DCF 43 = Division of Safety and Permanence administrative rule on child welfare staff training.

Ch. DCF 56 = Division of Safety and Permanence administrative rule on foster home licensing.

Chapter 48 = Wisconsin Children's Administrative Code.

Chapter 938 = Wisconsin Juvenile Justice Administrative Code.

CANPB = Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board

CFA = Children and Family Aids is a state level block grant funding source distributed to counties.

CFSP = Child and Family Services Plan.

CCIP = Children's Court Improvement Program, Wisconsin's Court Improvement program.

COKC = Court-Ordered Kinship Care placements for which providers receive a monthly payment.

CPS = Child Protective Services.

CQI = Continuous Quality Improvement which is DCF's Quality Assurance System.

CY = Calendar Year (January – December).

DCF = Department of Children and Families. The Department was created in July 2008 and includes child welfare services, prevention services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (W-2), child care regulation and licensing, child support, and youth development initiatives.

DCFS = Former Division of Children and Family Services in the Department of Health and Family Services. In July 2008, the division moved, in its entirety, to the new Department of Children and Families and its name was changed to the Division of Safety and Permanence. In addition, child welfare programming originally coordinated by DCFS was spread out amongst several divisions/offices in the new department.

DHCAA = Division of Health Care Access and Accountability in the Department of Health Services, the state Medicaid agency in Wisconsin.

DHFS = Former Department of Health and Family Services. Prior to July 2008, child welfare services were part of the Department of Health and Family Services.

DHS = Department of Health Services. Department that coordinates health services for the state of Wisconsin, including Medicaid, mental health and substance abuse services, and the Food Share program.

DMS = Division of Management Services is responsible for finance, information technology, performance management, and regional operations.

DMCPS – Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services directly operates child welfare services in Milwaukee and coordinates with DSP and DCF in state child welfare planning.

DSP = Division of Safety and Permanence in the Department of Children and Families, the state child welfare agency in Wisconsin.

dWiSACWIS = DCF's system that works with Business Intelligence (BI) staff to maintain current BI reporting tools and to implement enhancements to its BI data warehouse.

eWiSACWIS = Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS system).

eWiSACWIS Project Team = Staff supporting operations of eWiSACWIS system.

ETV = Education Training Voucher program.

FFPSA = Family First Prevention and Services Act.

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year (October – September).

FCARC = Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center; statewide resource center that provides information and materials on foster care and adoption.

GPR = General Purpose Revenues from state tax revenue.

GPRS = State Geographic Placement Resources system.

ICPC = Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children.

ICWA = Indian Child Welfare Act.

Kinship Care = Payment program to support children living with relatives.

NCANDS = National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. The Federal child abuse and neglect data system is a source of safety data submitted by states.

NYTD = National Youth in Transition Data Base.

Ongoing Services Standards = The five Child Protective Services Standards and Practice Guidelines issued by DSP that establish program standards for ongoing child welfare services.

OHC = Out-of-Home Care including children placed under court order in foster care, group homes, residential care centers and kinship care. This is equivalent to the federal definition of foster care.

PACE = Partners in Alternate Care, now Foundations Training, which is a competency-based pre-service training curriculum for foster and adoptive parents.

PDSA = Plan Do Study Act is a continuous quality improvement approach to improving practices that incorporates extensive feedback.

PIP = Wisconsin Program Improvement Plan for Round 3 of the Federal CFSR.

QIC-AG = Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship (QIC-AG). WI implemented an Adoption and Guardianship Enhanced Support (AGES) program.

QRTP = Qualified Residential Treatment Program.

Rate Regulation = Payment system that ensures that providers are licensed to provide a certain level of care, based on the types of services they offer, and receive a pre-defined amount for providing those services to a child who needs them.

SAFE = Structure Analysis Family Evaluation.

SFY = State Fiscal Year.

TPR = Termination of Parental Rights.

WAFCA = Wisconsin Association of Child and Family Agencies.

WCWPDS = Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System is Wisconsin's School of Social Work operated training system that operates at the state level.

WCWPDS Steering Committee – leadership entity comprised of UW School of Social Work, WCWPDS, DCF, DMCPS and counties charged with oversight of the Professional Development System.

WiAPS - Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Supports.

WICWA = Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act.

YAC = Youth Advisory Council.

YJ = Youth Justice is Wisconsin's preferred term for Juvenile Justice.

YLT = Youth Leadership Team.

1. Overview and Agency Administering the Child and Family Services Plan

Overview

In this document, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides its annual update on the 2020-2024 five-year plan and describes the use of new federal resources provided in the last year. This report is jointly guided by the Child Welfare Model for Practice and the recently approved Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which builds on the most recent Child and Family Services Review Process in 2018. It is further defined by DCF's child welfare transformation that is in alignment with the Children's Bureau (CB) focus on strengthening families through prevention as articulated in the CB Call to Action from November 2018 and the goals of the Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA). It is also consistent with guidance offered through federally sponsored state team planning meetings, the Adoption Call to Action, the 2020 National Judicial Summit on Child Welfare and the growing emphasis to empower, engage, and apply the voice of lived experience through family and youth voice. The plan is data-driven and informed by stakeholders.

Administering Agency for Title IV-B, Title IV-E, CAPTA, Chafee and ETV

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
201 West Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency dedicated to promoting the social and economic well-being of Wisconsin's children and families. The department is committed to protecting children, strengthening families, and building communities. DCF is responsible for the human service program areas of child and family services, child welfare, community-based youth justice, child care subsidy, childcare licensing, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, refugee services, child support, and youth development initiatives. The department organizational chart is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/about-us>.

Organizational Structure

Division of Safety and Permanence

Children, youth, and family services are located in the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP), the unit within the department responsible for Title IV-B Subpart 1, Stephanie Tubbs Jones (Child Welfare Services), IV-B Subpart 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families) and Monthly Caseworker Visit grant programs, Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood ("Chafee," formerly known as Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)).

DSP is responsible for supervising Wisconsin's child welfare system. Services are delivered through county and tribal-administered child welfare programs, except in Milwaukee County and for the public adoption program, both of which are operated by the state.

Bureau of Safety and Well Being

The Bureau of Safety and Well Being (BSWB) within DSP provides policy guidance and statewide leadership on child protective services, including matters related to CAPTA. The bureau manages statewide prevention programs for the department, including Promoting Safe and Stable Families (IV-B Subpart 2), domestic violence programs, and the Wisconsin Trauma Project. BSWB staff collaborate with the Department of Health Services (the State Public Health Agency) to manage the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs. BSWB administers Wisconsin's current IV-E Demonstration Project, the Post-Reunification Supports program, and is responsible for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) for the statewide child welfare system.

Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care

The Bureau of Permanence and Out of Home Care (BPOHC) within DSP is responsible for oversight and licensing of child placing agencies, group homes, shelter care facilities, and residential care centers for children and youth. It also provides policy guidance and statewide leadership on foster care and kinship care programs. BPOHC administers the public adoption program, the adoption search program, and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). BPOHC also administers the Permanency Roundtable program and the initiatives related to health outcomes for children involved in the child welfare system.

Bureau of Child Welfare Research and Analytics

The Bureau of Child Welfare Research and Analytics within DSP is responsible for the oversight and management of the data analytics and program integrity of DSP programs, as well as policy and DSP compliance with federal Title IV-E requirements.

Bureau of Youth Services (BYS)

The Bureau of Youth Services (DCF) within DSP is responsible for overseeing and supporting youth development initiatives and programs. DCF has administration and oversight responsibility for the community-based juvenile (Youth Justice or YJ). The bureau also oversees the Federal Chafee Transition to Independence Program, the Educational and Training Vouchers Program (ETV), the Wisconsin Brighter Futures Initiative, the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) program, Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, and other youth development efforts.

Division Administrator's Office

In addition to providing overall leadership for the division, the Administrator's Office is responsible for working with tribes in Wisconsin to address tribal child welfare issues, including implementation of the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA), oversight of eWiSACWIS, the state child welfare data system, tracking state and federal legislative issues, leading child

welfare strategic planning efforts and major federally-required projects, including preparation for the Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) and PIP development.

Division of Management Services

The Bureaus of Finance, Regional Operations and Performance Management are part of DMS. Additionally, the Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) located in DMS is involved in child welfare program quality assurance on behalf of DCF. BRO provides technical assistance and training to counties in child welfare, communicates and collaborates with the state's eleven federally-recognized tribes, and connects child welfare to other areas of DCF programming (child care, employment services, child support and refugee services). In addition to providing regional support to child welfare agencies, BRO staff coordinate with other human services programs.

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services

The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) administers child welfare services in Milwaukee County, the state's largest county. DMCPS administers initial assessment and ongoing services for child welfare in Milwaukee County and collaborates with DSP on statewide child welfare issues.

Programs Included in the Child and Family Services Five Year Report

This report provides an update on the state goals and objectives established in the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) submitted in 2019. It details the activities DCF supports through Titles IV-B Subparts 1 and 2, Adoption, Chafee and Education and Training Vouchers, Indian Child Welfare, Kinship Care, and Title IV-E Foster Care programs. Further information about state use of disaster relief, COVID Relief or CARES Act, the Family First Prevention and Services Act transition funding, Title X and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) are included in this update. Additionally, this report includes CAPTA updates, information concerning Juvenile Justice Transfers, information required by the Child and Family Services Innovation Act, and all requirements related to 45 CFR 1357. Information and data on state achievement of national performance standards and case-related outcomes are also included in the report.

Data Sources

In accordance with 45 CFR 1355.53, Wisconsin utilized its Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWiSACWIS) in developing this Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). In addition, the following data sources were used by the division to evaluate Wisconsin's APSR:

- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Data
- Children's Court Improvement Project (CCIP) Review Data
- Information and reports from counties, tribes, and others
- State administrative data

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Collaboration

Over the next year, DCF will continue to build on the extensive collaboration that serves as the hallmark of DCF operations and its coordination of the state child welfare system. Of particular significance in the last year has been DCF's child welfare transformation efforts that have further framed and supported a collaborative approach to strategic planning and extensive stakeholder engagement. A stronger emphasis on the meaningful and systematic inclusion of lived experience has been a prominent feature of this year's effort that will continue going forward. A significant infusion of federal support reinforced critical collaboration and system building to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and overall child welfare system.

DCF focuses collaborative efforts on meaningful engagement of families, youth, partner agencies, counties, and tribes all working toward shared goals for improving the child welfare system and providing child and family safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. Some of the ways in which DCF assures collaboration include:

- Securing feedback, collaboration and ongoing input from counties, tribes, and other stakeholder organizations on DCF's child welfare transformation strategic planning process, including securing feedback on agency strengths, areas needing improvement, goals, and objectives;
- Coordinating, facilitating, and/or participating in standing bimonthly meetings with the Indian Child Welfare (ICW) directors and with a subset of county directors through the Wisconsin County Human Services Association's Policy Advisory Committee (WCHSA PAC);
- Elevating and engaging individuals, youth, and families with lived experience in policy and procedure development and decision-making;
- Spearheading stakeholder groups comprised of county staff at different levels and specializations, and receiving critical advice, feedback and comment from tribal members on the specifics of the state emerging efforts to outline and implement the child welfare transformation vision and meet key requirements of FFPSA;
- Ensuring representatives of group home and congregate care facilities are included through stakeholder meetings throughout the year and a series of town hall meetings in 2021;
- Effectively collaborating with judges and other legal stakeholders; and,
- Soliciting input on federal and state plans and reviews, in part by sharing relevant federal, state, and administrative data about child welfare system trends and issues and requesting feedback on data and information shared to prioritize data-driven decision-making. Examples include input on the CFSR, the CFSP, APSR, the PIP and current DCF strategic planning efforts.

DCF's plan for enacting the state's vision is built around a child welfare transformation initiative that was initiated in 2019. Wisconsin's approved Program Improvement Plan is the foundation for this transformation as outlined in Attachment A of this report- Child Welfare Transformation Alignment with Program Improvement Plan.

DCF leadership developed an overall framework for the future of child welfare that includes a vision that:

"All Wisconsin children are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities. The Wisconsin Child Welfare System will strengthen all Wisconsin families to support their children because children belong with their families."

Implementing this framework requires transformational change in Wisconsin's child welfare system. Key planning related to the following is already underway:

- Building local prevention services in part through increasing state investment in prevention services;
- Increasing children served in family settings by expanding the use of relative and foster parent settings; and,
- Reducing congregate care stays to short, clinical bursts of treatment by supporting providers to transition to the Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) service model and planning for the development of high-quality clinical care when clinically necessary.

A visual depiction of strategic planning is in the slide show is illustrated in the following link - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cqi-cfsr/pdf/report/apsr22attachmnt.pdf>

More information on the strategic teams developed in 2019 that continued work throughout FY 2022 and workplans related to strategic planning goals and requirements are detailed at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/teams>.

These continue to be driven by work necessary to meet the requirements of the Family First Prevention and Service Act that encompass initiatives in the CFSP and the approved 2020 PIP. The Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice is an overarching framework and prescribes that interactions and services in the child welfare system are based on the principles of trust, engagement, accountability, trauma-informed practice, cultural responsiveness, workforce support, and family-centered practices. The Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice is the compass that guides DCF's work and decision-making and can be viewed at <https://dcfweb/childwelfare/practice-model>.

COVID-19 Response

DCF worked closely with Wisconsin's county administered child welfare agencies and their workforce as well as tribes in 2020 and 2021 to respond to COVID-19 in the child welfare system. This included collaborating to identify and help respond to emerging needs. Key efforts included tracking data patterns, identifying tribal, county and provider needs (including foster homes, relatives, residential providers, and contracted partners), and providing resources, guidance documents and policy, and other supports.

Wisconsin appreciated the infusion of federal dollars in 2020 to support the state's response to COVID-19 and help address needs related to the child welfare system, domestic violence prevention, and others. Funding was a critical resource in supporting ongoing collaboration. DCF worked closely with stakeholders to identify and prioritize high need areas resulting from the impact of the public health crisis. Funding available through the Family First Transition Act of 2020, the COVID Relief Act in late 2020 and 2021, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) have supported needs identified.

DCF continued COVID-19 updates and conversation through opportunities with counties, tribes, and contracted providers to both share and receive information and gauge the need for resources, guidance, and/or training. DCF met weekly at first, then bi-weekly and is currently meeting monthly to share and receive information. DCF provided specific guidance and resources relative to child welfare through 2020 and 2021, which is catalogued on the DCF website at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/guidance>. These meetings are a critical communication resource for how counties and tribes are planning to respond to address emerging issues.

Collaboration to Support State Policies and Programs

Wisconsin will continue to collaborate with other agencies and partners to ensure an inclusive and shared vision and ongoing coordination across systems. DCF staff currently chair the following collaborative groups: Casework and Out-of-Home Care (OHC)/Adoption Committees, Rate Regulation Advisory Committee, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Committee, and others. In addition to these efforts, the agency communicates with county child welfare agencies through department regional meetings for local child welfare agency foster care coordinators, child welfare program supervisors, and fiscal managers to keep them updated about policy and procedures and provide a forum for both state and local child welfare agencies to discuss current child welfare issues. When DCF issues a policy that affects counties or tribes, DCF provides the draft policy for comment to counties through the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) and the Indian Child Welfare directors prior to finalizing policy. Comments are solicited and included in updated policy guidance. This process is specified in the state/county contracts. DCF efforts to collaborate and coordinate with Wisconsin tribes are detailed in Section 6 of this report.

The department regularly works with groups representing key constituencies to develop program and policy initiatives to strengthen the child welfare system. These groups include, but are not limited to, WCHSA, the Wisconsin Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, the Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies (WAFCA), the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, the Children's Court Improvement Program, the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB), the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), Relative Caregiver Stakeholder Group, a Foster and Adoptive Parent Advisory Council, the Office of Children's Mental Health, and other state agencies. DCF also supports a statewide Youth Advisory Council (YAC) for current and former foster youth. The statewide YAC meets about six times a year and includes members from across the state. In addition, local YAC groups are active in each of the seven youth

services regions and meet monthly to work on local projects, influence policy change, and to educate communities and local partners about the child welfare system. Collectively, the local and statewide YACs help inform DCF about youth experiences in foster care and prioritize the voices of those with lived experience.

Collaboration to Strengthen the Voice of Lived Experience

In the last year, DCF has built on ongoing efforts with a goal of more effectively and systematically elevating and incorporating the voice of lived experience in DCF policies and programs. A lived experience coordinator has been hired by DCF with the support of Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA) transition funding. This position has a primary focus on elevating lived experience voice through the engagement, development, and support of lived experience experts, including parents impacted by the child welfare system and the facilitation of lived experience stakeholder groups.

This position will support the ongoing work of a lived experience advisory group that was formed in 2021. DCF worked with the Office of Children's Mental Health to form this workgroup. The lived experience coordinator is responsible for identification and support of strategies to build engagement with lived experience at every level of the child welfare and youth justice systems. In addition, this role will lead the development, coordination, and implementation of policies and procedures which promote elevating and supporting stakeholders with lived experience. While newly created, this position will eventually assist DCF in further supporting advocacy, education, and training to a wide array of internal and external stakeholders with the goal to promote lived experience expertise across program and policy areas to best serve children, youth, and families. This position will also continue to build DCF's long-standing efforts to engage youth voice throughout all aspects of the child welfare system as well as reaching out to existing relative caregiver, foster, and adoptive parent support groups.

Youth Advisory Council

DCF continues to support the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council (W-YAC) to empower youth who have touched the child welfare system (past or present) to advise and contribute to DCF policy and practice as well as strengthen their own advocacy skills. The YAC's efforts were previously identified as a strength in the Wisconsin CFSR, particularly as it relates to efforts to empower youth to organize and testify around key legislative issues. An example of an annual event planned by the YAC is Hands Around the Capitol. The event aims to draw attention to the needs of youth in the child welfare system and advocates for solutions to address these needs. In addition, in the past year, the YAC had youth representatives attend and be a voice for other youth in Wisconsin at the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative Activating Youth Engagement Summit and Virtual Roundtables. DCF will continue to support the local and statewide YACs to participate in similar future opportunities. See the John H. Chafee section of the report for more information about Wisconsin/s Youth Advisory Council. The YAC will also assist DCF in a specific youth engagement strategy that is described in section 3, the Update on the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision.

Youth Leadership Teams

The purpose of DCF's Youth Leadership Teams are to engage youth across the state who have lived experience with the youth justice system (past or present) and want to share their perspectives and provide input to DCF. Input includes what is working well, areas for improvement, and feedback on policies, program, and resources. In addition, youth are provided opportunities to develop their leadership and advocacy skills and work on a project of their choosing to improve the system or inform best practice. Thirteen founding partners that were either county agencies or youth-serving organizations continue to support these teams and their members. New partnerships have been developed across Wisconsin as youth justice service providers continue to learn about this opportunity. Adult supporters assist in recruiting and engaging youth participants, transport youth to and from meetings (when meetings were held in-person), and, recently, help youth overcome any barriers to attending virtual meetings. More details on the teams and their work is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/yj/pdf/ylt-youthvision.pdf>. In 2020-2021, DCF continues to convene quarterly meetings. All are held virtually and all four regions across the state meet as one large YLT group. DCF supports youth from the leadership teams to assist with the Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission, a requirement of Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funding from the Department of Justice.

Both the YAC and YLT members received leadership training in a variety of areas, including, but not limited to strategic sharing/effective advocacy, diversity and inclusion, micro-aggressions, the brain game, and healthy coping skills. DCF will continue to support and consult with these advisory bodies to ensure broad and consistent youth voice in DCF policies and programs. More information about Wisconsin DCF's youth leadership opportunities can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youthservices/leadership>.

Relative Caregiver Stakeholders

DCF formed a relative caregiver workgroup for the purpose of having more consistent input from relatives caring for children in child welfare. This effort was initiated in 2019 using FY 2018 Kinship Navigator Funding under title IV-B, subpart 2. The group is comprised of family members who are involved in child welfare and those who are not. It also includes families both temporarily and permanently providing care to relative children. This group meets virtually on a bimonthly basis and subcommittees meet as needed. Efforts were guided by using the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan and the 2020 PIP as a guide to focus relative caregiver activities. This group provided information to be included in a relative caregiver guided 211 Search for the KIN-NAV portal; and helped plan for and participate in the second and third relative caregiver virtual conference; and various other activities. This group was also tapped for input on the DCF strategic plan.

Foster Parent Advisory Group

DCF has a long-standing foster and adoptive parent advisory group that meets regularly with DCF to provide input on policies, programs, foster parent resources, and other needs. They assist with developing a foster parent recruitment campaign and resources that support

identified needs for foster families. The advisory group meets quarterly and also connects with the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association on annual conferences and support needs. More information on the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Association can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/wfapa/>

Standing Advisory Bodies for DCF

DCF established the following standing advisory bodies to provide oversight, direction, and support to the agency to inform its development of policies and programs that support and frame an effective child welfare system.

SECRETARY'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH JUSTICE

In April 2016, DCF established the Secretary's Advisory Council on Youth Justice. The council is composed of key youth justice leaders from state agencies, county-based youth justice system stakeholders, prevention service providers, and affected youth and families. The council was meeting quarterly to advise DCF on matters related to supporting a stronger community-based youth justice system. Council members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the secretary of DCF. This committee was reconfigured with new department leadership in 2019 and was paused as a result of COVID. DCF expects to resume meetings in the later part of 2021.

MILWAUKEE CHILD WELFARE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Through the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS), DCF directly administers the child welfare system in Milwaukee County, the state's largest county. The Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council is a broad-based advisory body, established by statute in 1998, which advises the department on its administration of the system in Milwaukee County. The Partnership Council meets four times per year and is composed of state legislators, county elected officials, members of the judicial and legal systems, health care and child welfare service providers, partners in the birth to five system, advocates, community members, representatives from the K-12 educational system, and representatives from the mental health and alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) systems. Section 48.562 of the Wisconsin Statutes specifies the charge of the Partnership Council, which is to recommend policies and plans for the improvement of Milwaukee County child welfare system including outcome measures and recommending processes to evaluate its effectiveness and funding priorities

Cross-Systems Collaborations Targeted to Well-Being Outcomes

DCF regularly convenes or partners with other organizations and subject matter experts to assure there is cross-system dialogue about issues affecting families involved with the child welfare system. In the past these have included efforts related to anti-human trafficking, trauma, the opioid crisis, and children with disabilities in the child welfare system. Lessons learned from these efforts are incorporated in DCF's ongoing work.

To continually shape child welfare policies and programs in the best way possible, DCF will be involved with the following issue-specific collaborations related to the following areas of focus.

HEALTH

DCF collaborates with the Department of Health Services (DHS) for the purpose of improving the quality, access, and timeliness of healthcare services to children and youth in out-of-home care (OHC). One example of this work is through the implementation of a Medicaid medical home service delivery model called Care4Kids. The Care4Kids program provides comprehensive, coordinated care for children and youth in foster care tailored to each child's individualized needs. Other collaborative health projects include automation of Foster Care State Medicaid certification for children in out-of-home care, and an ongoing DataMart project to track healthcare usage and medication management through the matching of child welfare data from eWiSACWIS with Medicaid utilization data in ForwardHealth. DCF also works with DHS to ensure access to Coordinated Service Teams to coordinate care for children and youth in multiple systems of care.

EDUCATION

DCF collaborates with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the state education agency, for the purpose of improving educational outcomes of children in child welfare and coordination of services and supports that enhance educational needs. Examples of joint efforts include data matching focused on connecting the child welfare and education data systems. Specifically, collaboration continues on the education portal that is designed to facilitate improved understanding and information sharing of the educational needs and experiences of children. In partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, DCF and DPI also continue to engage in research about the educational outcomes of children in OHC to inform policy development.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

DCF coordinates with, and provides support to, the Foster Youth to College (FYC) advisory group that is composed of professionals from child welfare, private colleges, technical colleges, the state university system, former foster youth and DPI. The purpose of this group is to improve access and supports for youth in the child welfare system accessing and succeeding in higher educational opportunities. The group oversees grants to students and institutions for this purpose and has been primary in continuing the conversation to not only increase youth access to postsecondary programs, but success in post-secondary education via robust programs like Fostering Success, an initiative to help support students through financial and support resources at major college campuses. Information about campus contacts for this program can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youthservices/college>. Youth are also connected to smaller local efforts to help with access to critical resources such as food pantries, mentorships, and/or increased housing options for youth with no alternative address.

Over the past year, the group did considerable work to better identify existing individuals and programs involved with these efforts and better support them by developing tangible resources (e.g. tip lists for working with foster youth populations, trainings for existing Foster Youth Campus Contacts, and more). Their efforts are further described in more detail in the Chafee section of the report. Additionally, Transition Resource Agencies (TRAs) also assist in these

areas because of the pro-youth network of partners and providers they are expected to foster to help youth achieve IL goals and needs, two of which are employment and education.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

DCF collaborates with the Department of Public Instruction for the purpose of ensuring that young children have access to high-quality learning opportunities and other supports for families with young children, such as home visiting. An example of coordination in this area includes the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) which is co-chaired by the DCF secretary and DPI superintendent. The ECAC is a high-level stakeholder group comprised of public and private leaders that provides advice on the strategic direction for the state's efforts to promote early childhood development. The ECAC has developed a cross-system agenda with the overall goal of having all young children be safe, healthy, and successful. DCF anticipates that its strategic planning efforts may uncover other potential areas of overlap and focus between child welfare and early childhood that could be elevated and discussed by this advisory body. In the last year, DSP assisted the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) in implementing a Preschool Development Grant. DSP is currently collaborating around other federal opportunities to provide support for a comprehensive early childhood system for all families. This will be another resource to continue to strengthen coordination between early childhood and child welfare systems. Efforts to address the birth to five population are further described in section 5 of this report.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION BOARD (CANPB)

The Prevention Board is the designated Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) lead in Wisconsin. DCF and the Prevention Board will continue to collaborate to leverage resources and implement primary prevention initiatives.

For example, DCF and the Prevention Board collaborate on abusive head trauma prevention. The Prevention Board is charged in Wisconsin Statutes with providing educational materials for parents to prevent abusive head trauma and provides community-based funding to implement the Period of PURPLE Crying® with four grantees. Wisconsin Statutes require home visiting programs to provide parents with newborns educational information on abusive head trauma prevention. The Prevention Board has made funds available for DCF to integrate the Period of PURPLE Crying into the MIECHV funded home visiting programs.

Another example is evidence-informed parent education. For the past seven years the Prevention Board has funded evidence-informed parent education programs through a competitive grant-making process. One of the programs funded is Triple P (Positive Parenting Program). The Prevention Board supports Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 including Stepping Stones and Teen which are primary prevention focused. DCF was able to expand its evidence-informed parent education with the new DCF TANF funding for prevention programs and services specifically focused on families with children pre-natal to five years of age. The Prevention Board also coordinates a network of family resource centers that provide prevention and parenting services for families.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT THE CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

The Department's Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) works with DCF's child welfare system to coordinate technical assistance to counties and the child welfare workforce. Information and support are provided about welfare policies and programs. BRO supports the coordination of child welfare and other key local services, including child care and Wisconsin Works (the Wisconsin program for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families – TANF). BRO regularly shares information with county child welfare supervisors and convenes quarterly meetings to offer child welfare supervisors the opportunity to receive DCF updates and guidance, discuss child welfare workforce recruitment and retention issues, provide peer support to each other, and provide information about child welfare worker training. BRO convenes more frequent calls as needed, for example responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Wisconsin County Human Services Association's (WCHSA) Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) is a critical collaboration mechanism for coordination with the counties. The WCHSA's PAC functions as a steering committee for high level child welfare policy and program development and is comprised of the leadership of a subset of counties in the state. Examples of collaboration include working with PAC on DCF's strategic plan, collaboration related to all federal plans including the development of the 2020 Program Improvement Plan (PIP), providing input on a workload study for the state, and other efforts that help shape the state child welfare system and vision.

In addition, beginning in 2020, a group of supervisors and workers from the county level has been convened regularly to provide input on Wisconsin's child welfare transformation.

OTHER CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

The DCF secretary or secretary's designee will continue to serve on additional statewide councils and workgroups that promote cross-system collaboration and coordination. Some of these include the State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health, the Council on Offender Reentry, and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

DCF staff have served on the multidisciplinary Wisconsin Department of Justice State Task Force on Children in Need, as required under sections 107(b)(2) and 107(c)(1) of CAPTA since 1991. This is a key component of Wisconsin's plan to comply with the Children's Justice Act.

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Consistent with CAPTA requirements for citizen review panels (CRP), Wisconsin has eight panels:

- Jefferson County Citizen Review Panel;
- Langlade County Citizen Review Panel;
- Marathon County Citizen Review Panel;
- Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council;
- Outagamie County Citizen Review Panel

- Polk County Citizen Review Panel;
- St. Croix County Citizen Review Panel; and
- Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council

All panels fulfilled their responsibilities as required by CAPTA regarding meetings, mission, and submission of annual reports. Each panel received CAPTA funds in the amount of \$10,000 to support their activities, which includes sending panel members to the annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference. The panels engage and coordinate local activities and benefit from attending the national conference, where they can make connections, learn about other states' CRP initiatives, and bring ideas back to Wisconsin. DCF will continue to support the CRP efforts in the next year. For more information about each panel's 2020 activities, please see the citizen review panels' annual reports and DCF responses online at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/prevention/crp>.

COLLABORATION SPECIFIC TO FEDERAL PLANS AND REVIEWS

As articulated in the Child Welfare Model for Practice, DCF encourages stakeholder feedback in the development of all federal planning documents focused on system strengths, needs, and strategies for improvement, including the CFSP and APSR, as well as federal review and planning processes such as the CFSP and the PIP. In addition to posting the CFSP and APSR online for public comment and general information-sharing, DCF briefs its standing advisory bodies and stakeholder groups on these plans to provide updates and secure feedback on DCF efforts. Wisconsin posts all current federal plans at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/reports>.

COURT SYSTEM COLLABORATION

DCF coordinates with the court system in multiple ways for the purpose of ongoing coordination with judicial and legal partners. The DCF Judicial Workgroup is currently staffed by DCF's Bureau of Youth Services and facilitates efforts in coordination with the Children's Court Improvement Program (CCIP). This group includes 10 judges, CCIP staff, and a representative of the University of Wisconsin Law School. The initial focus of this group was developing an effective court order for use in Wisconsin's youth justice system. Members have advised the DCF on the effort to pilot tailored and effective court orders in youth justice. This process has been piloted in two counties. This group will be providing additional expertise to DCF and CCIP in the Tailored Dispositional Orders Project in child welfare that is part of Wisconsin's Program Improvement Plan.

Under the Wisconsin Director of State Courts Office, CCIP coordinates with DCF on a wide range of additional projects and collaborations. DCF will continue a long-standing, strong collaboration to support the jointly held goal of improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families in our state. The two entities are regularly engaged in joint child welfare program planning, policy and legislative development, and improvement activities. Current joint projects include the TPR Timeliness Project, the Tailored Dispositional Orders Project, Adoption Call to Action, the Title IV-E Legal Representation Program, Wisconsin Indian

Child Welfare Act (WICWA) Continuous Quality Improvement Project, and co-sponsoring the biennial Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts.

DCF and CCIP work together to respond to legislative changes that affect child welfare and local court systems. In the last year, this included coordination of efforts related to codification and implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which Wisconsin deferred implementation until October 2021. DCF and CCIP formed a workgroup to draft legislation regarding the FFPSA's Qualified Residential Treatment Program procedures. DCF and CCIP are planning multiple trainings on the legislation, including sessions at the Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts for judicial officers, attorneys, agency representatives, and other stakeholders. DCF and CCIP maintain regular contact regarding legislative committees (e.g., Speaker's Task Force on Adoption) and proposals to determine potential impacts on the child welfare system and to provide information as necessary.

In 2019, DCF collaborated with the CCIP and sent a seven-person team to the National Judicial Summit on Child Welfare in Minneapolis. The Wisconsin team included a judge, CCIP representative, Guardian ad Litem, prosecutor, public defender, a Supreme Court designee, and DCF attorney. The team discussed current joint DCF and CCIP projects such as the TPR Timeliness Project, the Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts, and the Tailored Dispositional Court Order Project within the proposed Program Improvement Plan. The team focused on the summit's themes to develop short-term ideas and bold strategies to advance Wisconsin's work. The team's ideas were then shared with various DCF and CCIP workgroups. CCIP also partnered with DCF to participate in two state team planning meetings and the Adoption Call to Action. Planning from these meetings has been incorporated into Wisconsin's PIP and overall strategic planning efforts. A virtual follow-up meeting occurred in 2020. This was also attended by a similar team.

DCF's involvement in committees staffed by CCIP are varied and extensive. For example, the DCF secretary serves as a member of the Wisconsin Commission on Children, Families and the Courts, which is a broad-based stakeholder advisory body that provides input on court improvement projects and child welfare related policies and activities. The commission, chaired by the Wisconsin Supreme Court Chief Justice, is charged with developing and institutionalizing meaningful collaboration across systems to identify and address barriers to safety, permanency, and child and family well-being at the state and local levels.

DCF will continue to utilize the Wisconsin Commission, the Wisconsin Judicial Committee on Child Welfare, and other committees staffed by the Children's Court Improvement Program (CCIP) to provide agency updates to and solicit input from judicial officers, attorneys, and other stakeholders regarding legislation and policies. Recent topics have included youth justice issues, Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), Program Improvement Plan (PIP), the Tailored Dispositional Orders Project (a PIP strategy), foster parent/caregiver recruitment and support initiatives, court and child welfare practice and challenges during COVID-19, Adoption Call to Action Activities & Resources, racial disparity in the Wisconsin child welfare system, and the Family First Prevention Services Act. These committees have also provided input on the Child

and Family Services Plans (CFSPs) and Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), and recently provided input on DCF's current strategic planning process.

In addition, staff from CCIP and/or circuit court judicial officers participated in a number of ongoing committees staffed and led by DCF, such as the Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory Committee, the Out of Home Care and Adoption Committee.

The department values and is committed to strong collaboration with the judicial branch and the CCIP. The department will continue to include CCIP representatives as part of CFSR/PIP and Title IV-E activities and the development of the CFSP and DCF's strategic planning efforts. DCF also shares AFCARS and eWiSACWIS administrative data with CCIP on an ongoing basis.

2. Update on the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes

Context for State's Current Performance

This section captures data related to the performance outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being, notes trends with respect to the CFSR outcomes and national performance standards, and highlights initiatives to address each area. We would be remiss not to acknowledge that our 2020 data begins to capture the quantitative story of our child welfare system through the lens of the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our state saw a sharp decline in reports of suspected maltreatment— as well as other data aberrations that reflect the impact of the pandemic on our system — and we are committed to continuing to deepen our understanding of the impacts of the pandemic on the children, families, and communities we serve. Other deviations potentially related to COVID-19 include a larger proportion of substantiated Initial Assessment (IAs), a decrease in entries into OHC, an increase of children placed in group homes, and longer length of stays.

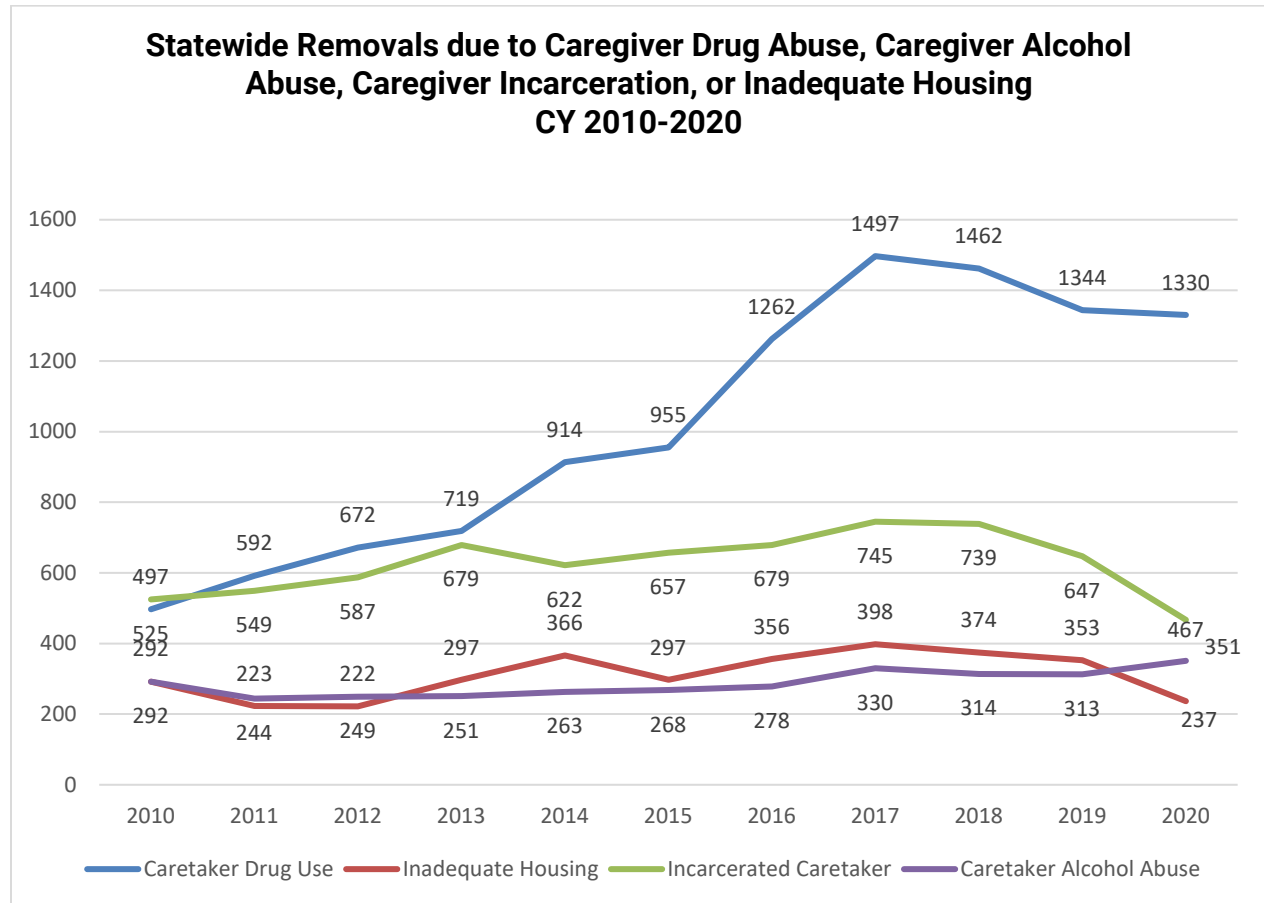
Data presented includes:

- The most recently available case review data using the federal On-site Review instrument (OSRI);
- State administrative data when available;
- Federal performance measures; and,
- Where data is available, information from research partners on specific topics.

Overall trends of note in the last decade include a growth in out-of-home care cases; however, in very recent years there has been a slight decrease in the number of unique child removals to out-of-home care. Based on analysis of eWiSACWIS administrative data shown in the graph on the following page, the factor contributing most significantly to the rise in child welfare cases is parental drug abuse, which reflects the significant rise in opioid and methamphetamine use in the state. Research has shown that parental drug abuse-related child welfare cases are generally more complex than other child welfare cases, and therefore more costly in terms of caseworker time and services than other child welfare cases.¹ Due to the rise in caseload, workload on child welfare workers has increased significantly. Based on the discussions with stakeholders prior, during, and after the CFSR, including county caseworkers and managers, a

¹ R. Ghertner, M. Baldwin, G. Crouse, L. Radel, and A. Waters, "The Relationship between Substance Use Indicators and Child Welfare Caseloads," *ASPE Research Brief*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, revised March 9, 2018. Available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/pdf-report/relationship-between-substance-use-indicators-and-child-welfare-caseloads>.

major root cause of any weaknesses in performance on case practice items is the increased demand workload and caseloads place on child welfare workers.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Caretaker Drug Use	497	592	672	719	914	955	1262	1497	1462	1344	1330
Inadequate Housing	292	223	222	297	366	297	356	398	374	353	237
Incarcerated Caretaker	525	549	587	679	622	657	679	745	739	647	467
Caretaker Alcohol Abuse	292	244	249	251	263	268	278	330	314	313	351
Unique Child Removals	4735	4728	4471	4949	4976	4942	4993	5277	5100	4833	3937

Child and Family Outcomes

The section that follows represents data specific to each of the 18 safety, permanency, and well-being case review data. These include the State 2018 CFSR results, performance on the CFSR national standards and available state administrative data for areas of safety, permanency, and well-being over recent years. Additionally, we report baseline case review data, as well as year one case review data from our Program Improvement Plan measurement plan.

Safety Outcomes 1 and 2

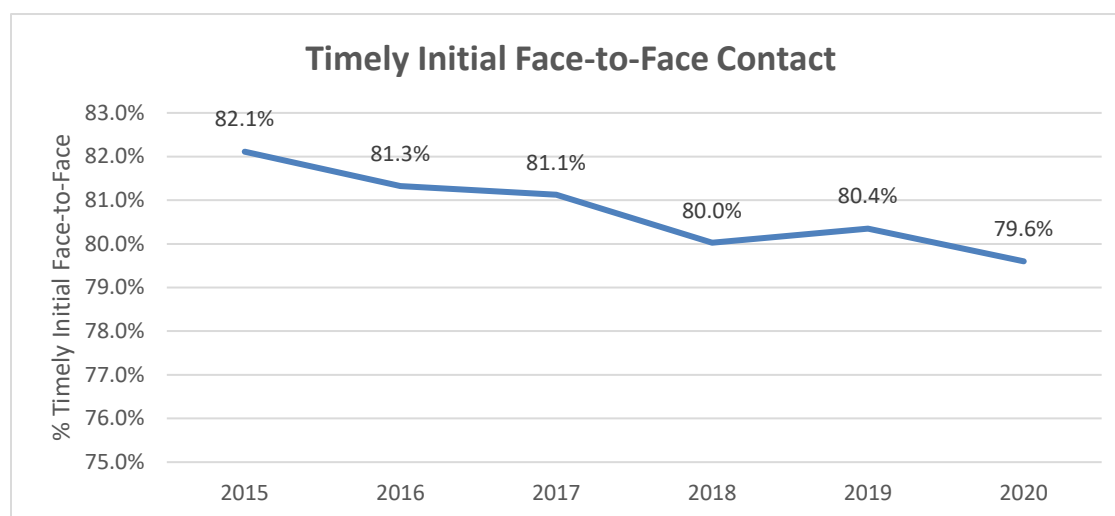
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
On Time Face-to-Face %	82.1%	81.3%	81.1%	80.0%	80.4%	79.6%
Total IAs Completed	26,956	26,456	26,188	27,148	25,352	18,061

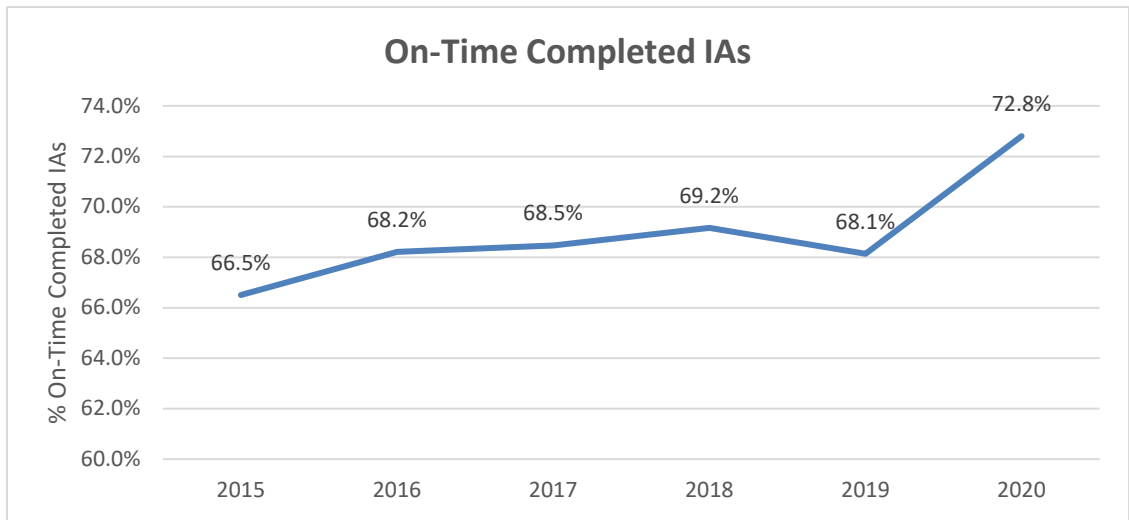
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Item 1: Timelines of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 1	76%	76%	76%	49%	93%	75%	75%

Administrative Data





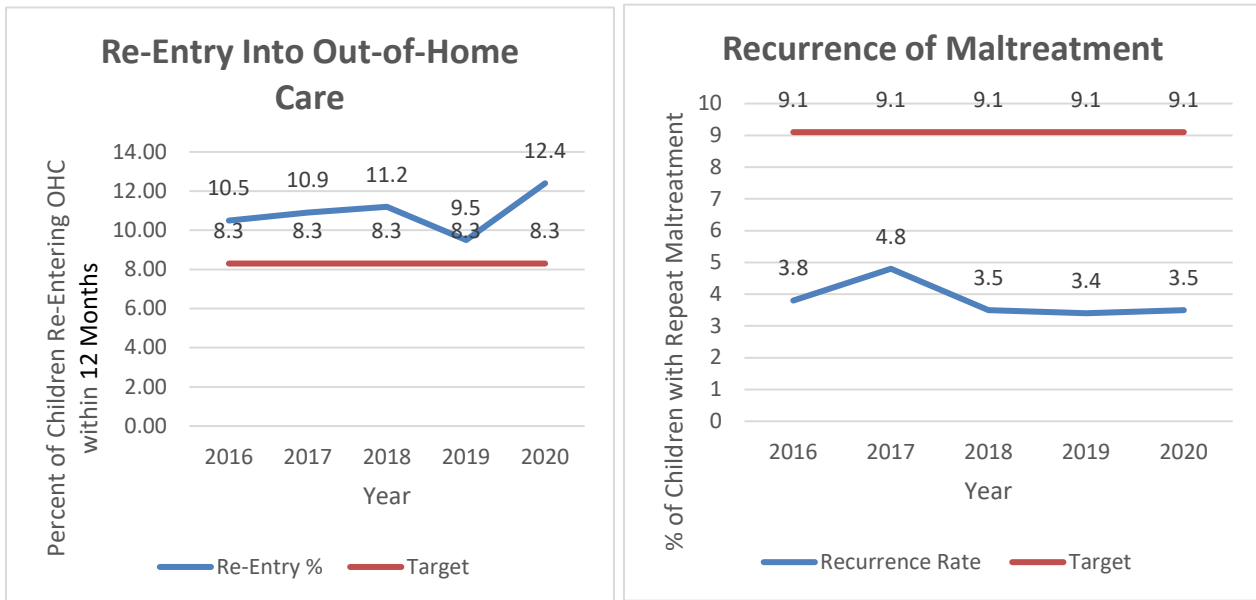
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
On Time IAs	66.5%	68.2%	68.5%	69.2%	68.1%	79.6%
Total IAs Completed	26,956	26,456	26,188	27,148	25,352	22,684

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019- 2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020- 2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 2	88%	86%	82%	83%	58%	82%	94%

*National Performance Data-CFSR 3 Measures***

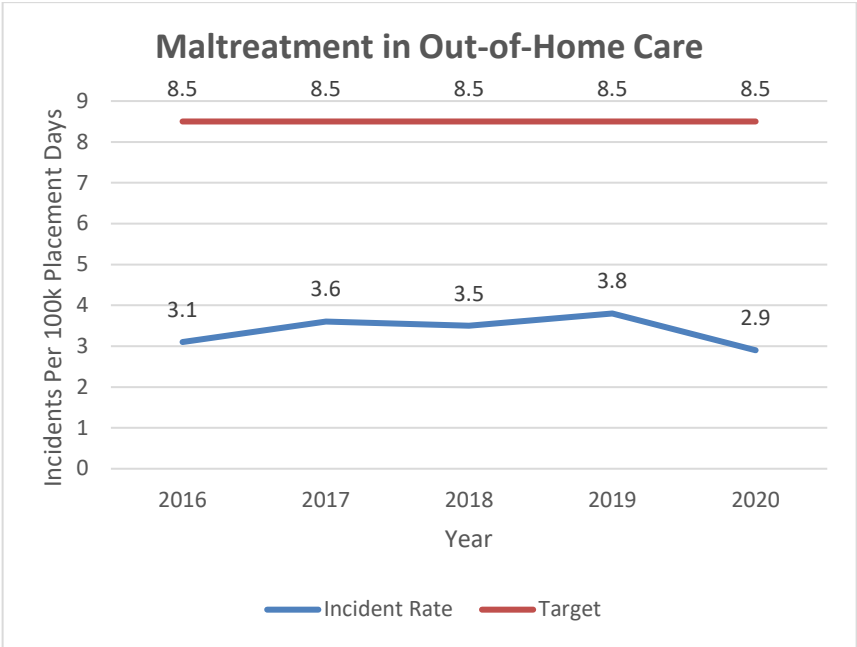


***Note, the X axis for both CFSR3 measures above notes performance during the CY Outcome Window.*

Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 3	64%	72%	70%	64%	35%	75%	75%

National Performance Data-CFSR3 Measures**



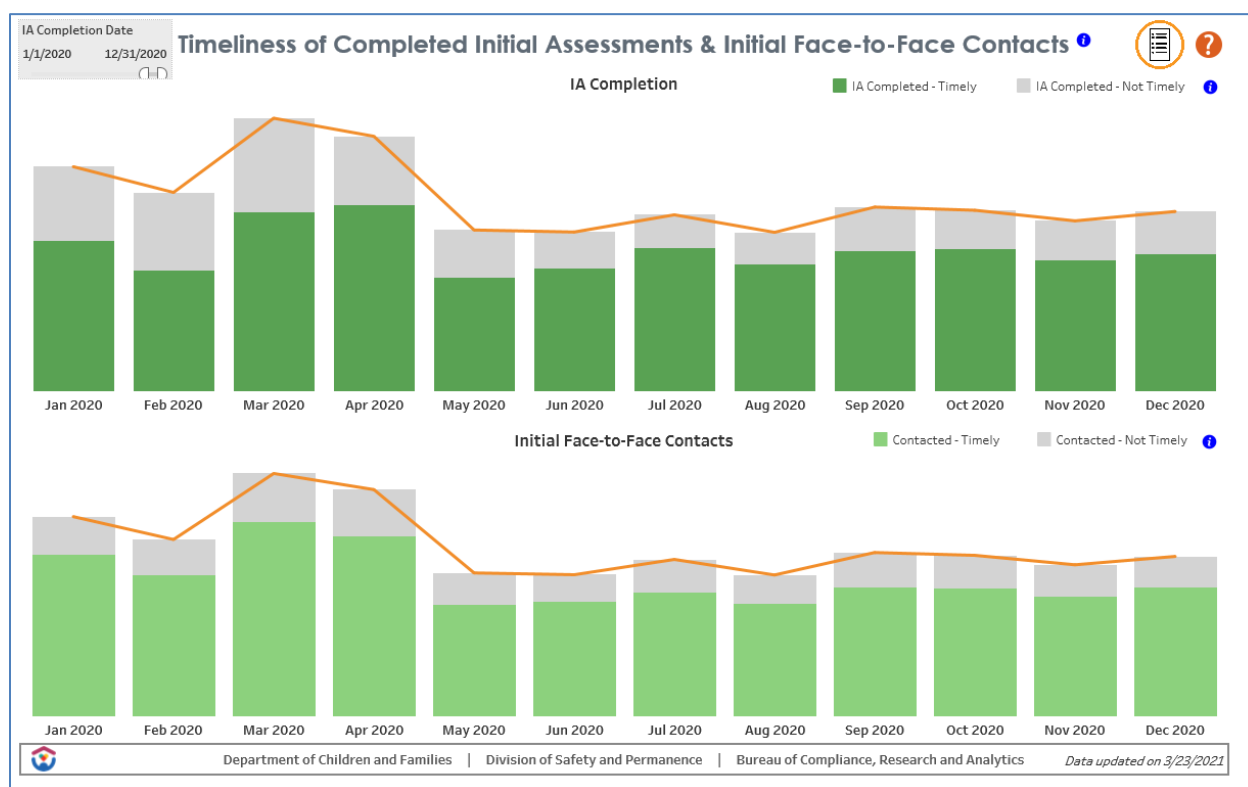
**Note, the X axis for the measures above notes performance during the CY Outcome Window.

Administrative Data

Safety Decision by Initial Assessment Disposition for Primary Caregiver CPS Initial Assessments: Calendar Year 2020

Initial Assessment Disposition	Safe		Unsafe		No Safety Decision		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Case Closed	13,515	70.0%	94	0.5%	252	0.6%	13,861	71.1%
Case Closed – Child Safe and Referred to Community Services	1,942	10.1%	37	0.2%	91	0.2%	2,070	10.7%
Case Opened – Ongoing CPS Services: Petition	280	1.4%	2	0.0%	11	0.0%	293	1.5%
Case Already Opened – Ongoing CPS Services	249	1.3%	1,728	8.9%	52	0.1%	2,029	10.5%
Case Closed – Child Safe and Referred to Community Response Program	222	1.1%	216	1.1%	13	0.0%	451	2.3%
Case Opened – Ongoing CPS Services: Voluntary	201	1.0%	264	1.4%	6	0.0%	471	2.4%
Case Opened – Non-CPS Services	87	0.5%	9	0.0%	10	0.0%	106	0.5%
Case Opened – DMCPs Safety Services	7	0.0%	31	0.2%	0	0.0%	38	0.2%
Total	16,503	85.4%	2,381	12.3%	435	2.3%	19,319	100.0%

Initial Assessment Dashboard



Safety Outcomes Strengths and Challenges

The department continues to orient the child welfare system toward the goal of keeping children supported in their homes and communities. The safety data captured prior reflect the child welfare system’s ability to maintain children safely in their home and assess and address safety concerns. Administrative data shows performance holding relatively steady over the last five years as it relates to timeliness of face-to-face contacts and timely completion of initial assessments, though in 2020 Wisconsin did see a marked improvement in timely completion of initial assessments. National Performance Data suggest Wisconsin continues to exceed federal standards by limiting the recurrence of maltreatment and the incidents of reported maltreatment in out-of-home care.

Initiatives to Address Safety

- DCF Initial Assessment Standards spell out policies and practices to support meeting federal safety guidelines.
- Applied Learning Communities (ALCs) provided by the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System have focused on improving safety practices through a collaborative learning model that includes a peer support Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) approach and supported in regions across the state.

- Required Initial and Ongoing training in safety decision making is another key initiative focused on safety practices.
- Dashboards are a valuable tool to help both DCF and counties track safety outcomes and patterns and identify areas where performance is strong, or improvements are needed. As part of the 2020 PIP, DCF is continuing the practice of reviewing of these dashboards and providing feedback to counties about performance expectations.
- Related to the PIP initiative, DSP has been coordinating with the Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) since the fall of 2020 to keep track of timely initial face-to-face contacts. These monthly reports are gathered and documented by BRO and sent to the DSP lead for the project to be analyzed. Thus far, the data shows agencies in larger counties in the state make timely initial face-to-face contacts less often than agencies in smaller counties. Since larger agencies account for a larger percentage of cases for the state, there is a larger impact on the overall data. Efforts to work with the larger agencies to enhance success with this measurement is a focus in the upcoming PIP quarter.

While it is difficult to quantify, documentation of initial face-to-face contacts is one area that can be improved upon. Anecdotal feedback indicates many of the missed responses are due to documentation errors. Other reasons for missed responses are due to workload and difficult-to-locate families. To address this, DSP elicited the help of BRO to reach out to 11 agencies who show strong success in this area. Agencies were asked a series of questions aimed at learning what strategies they use to consistently meet their initial face-to-face contacts. All of the responses have been received and will be synthesized in a 1-2 page information sheet, which will be distributed statewide once completed. Also included on this informational sheet are details on what constitutes a timely initial face-to-face contact along with what is outlined in Access & IA standards.

- The Targeted Safety Services Program is one important tool that DCF uses to prevent re-entry into the child welfare system. This is also a focus of Wisconsin's PIP. This program provides TA to counties and provides a venue for peer support related to meeting safety needs of families. One area identified was the need for more flexible funding was needed to support families in being better able to safely care for children in their own homes. Targeted safety services is available statewide and considered a critical resource to provide flexible funding to families that help them meet their child welfare goals, including avoiding re-entry into the child welfare system.

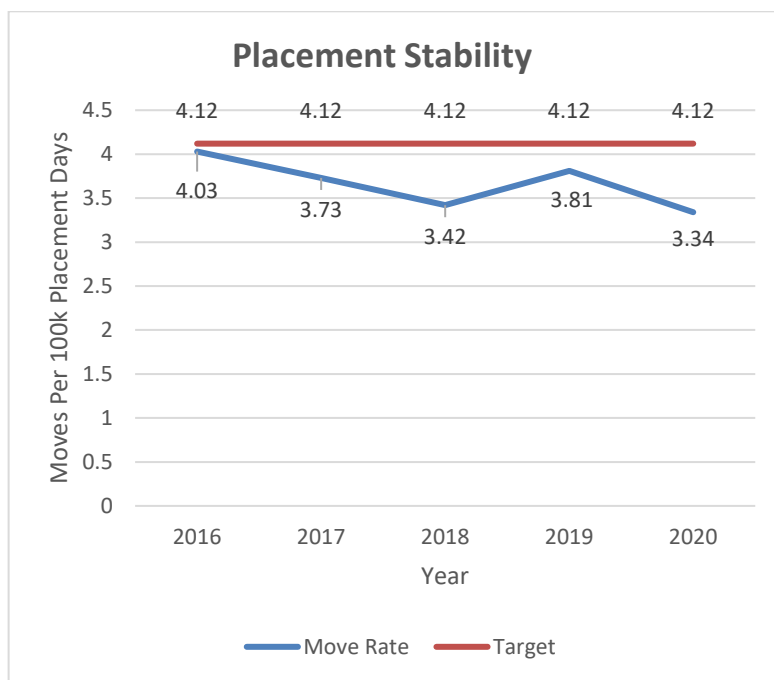
Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 4	82%	71%	72%	61%	88%	73%	74%

National Performance Data- CFSR 3



Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child Case Record Review Results.

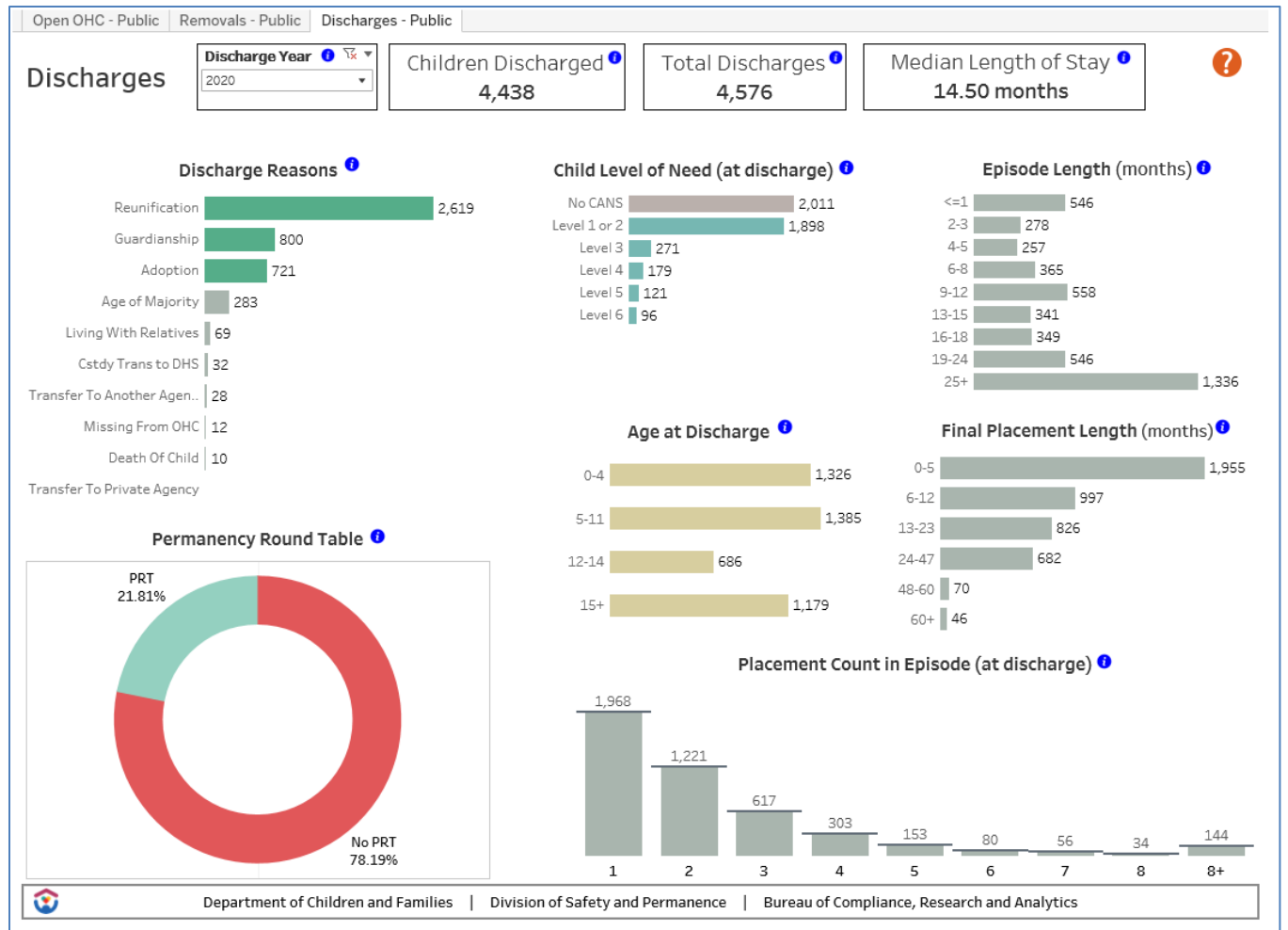
	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 5	54%	67%	59%	56%	59%	38%	56%

Administrative Data

Permanency Plan Goals

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Adoption	1,175	1,172	1,343	1,545	1,678	1,647	1,786	1,751
Reunification	3,966	4,034	4,344	4,498	4,954	4,822	4,690	4,408
Guardianship	513	598	719	852	887	892	933	954
Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative	193	149	150	164	141	116	123	82
Alt. Perm Plan	102	6	2	2	0	0	0	0
OPPLA	457	438	401	335	313	262	235	237
No Perm Plan Goal Listed	1,433	1,901	1,704	1,627	1,686	1,541	1,450	1,317
Total	7,839	8,298	8,663	9,023	9,659	9,280	9,217	8,749

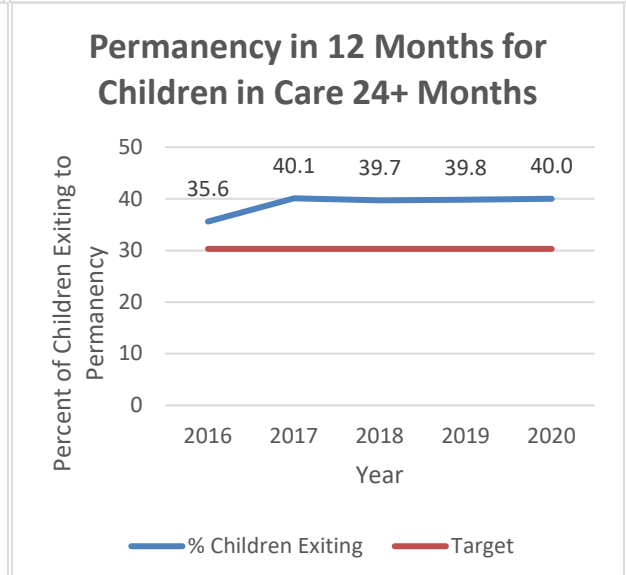
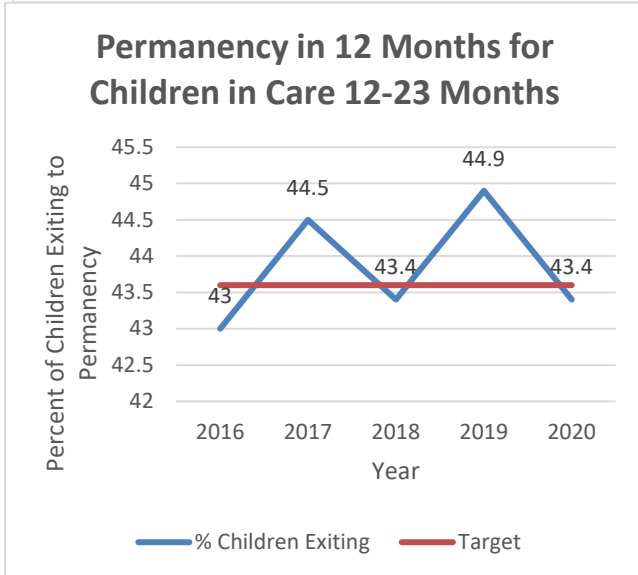
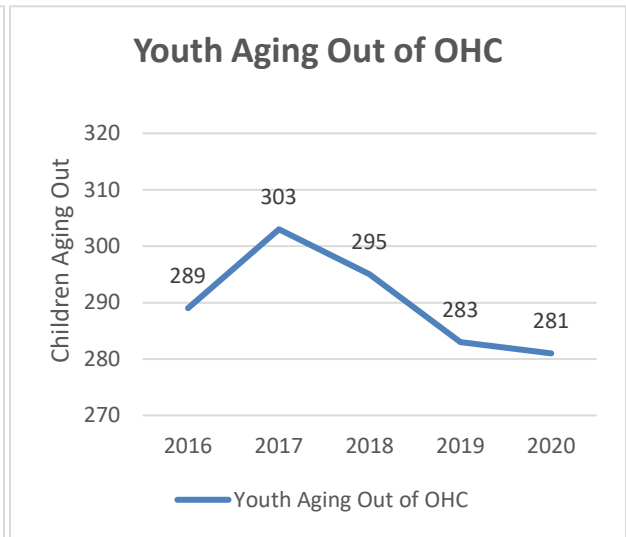
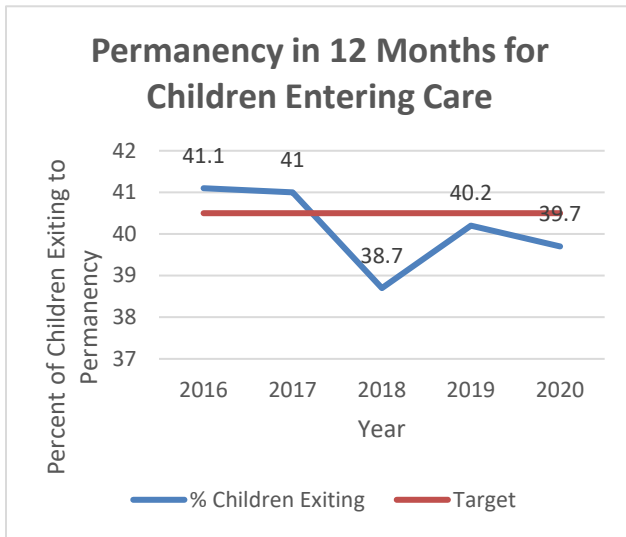
OHC Discharge Dashboard



Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement. Case Record Review Results.

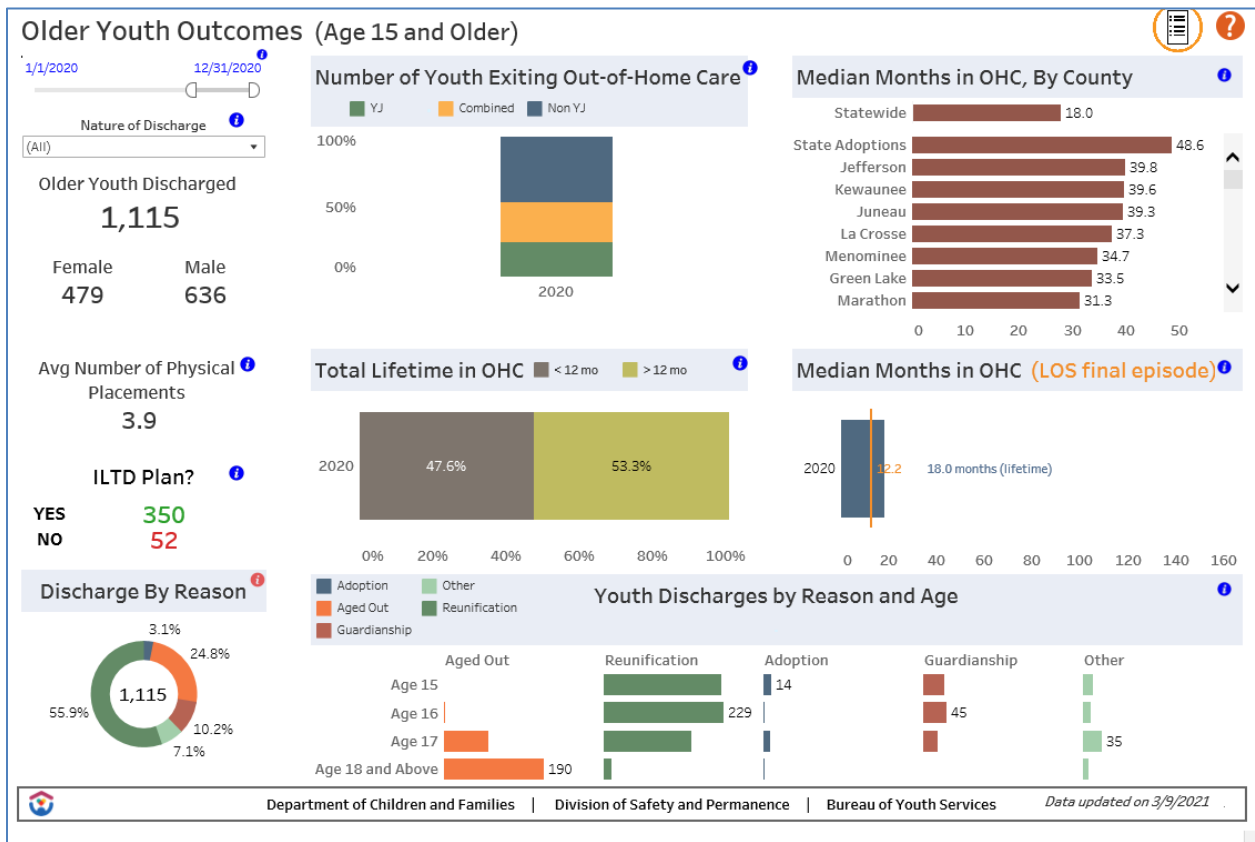
	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 6	66%	59%	50%	46%	48%	30%	32%

National Performance Data – CFSR3** and Administrative Data



**Note, the X axis for the CFSR3 measures above notes performance during the CY Outcome Window.

Older Youth Outcomes Dashboard



Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Item 7: Placement with Siblings. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 7	86%	84%	90%	93%	83%	96%	91%

Item 8: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 8	57%	68%	65%	58%	66%	63%	75%

Item 9: Preserving Connections. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 9	75%	81%	78%	64%	65%	73%	73%

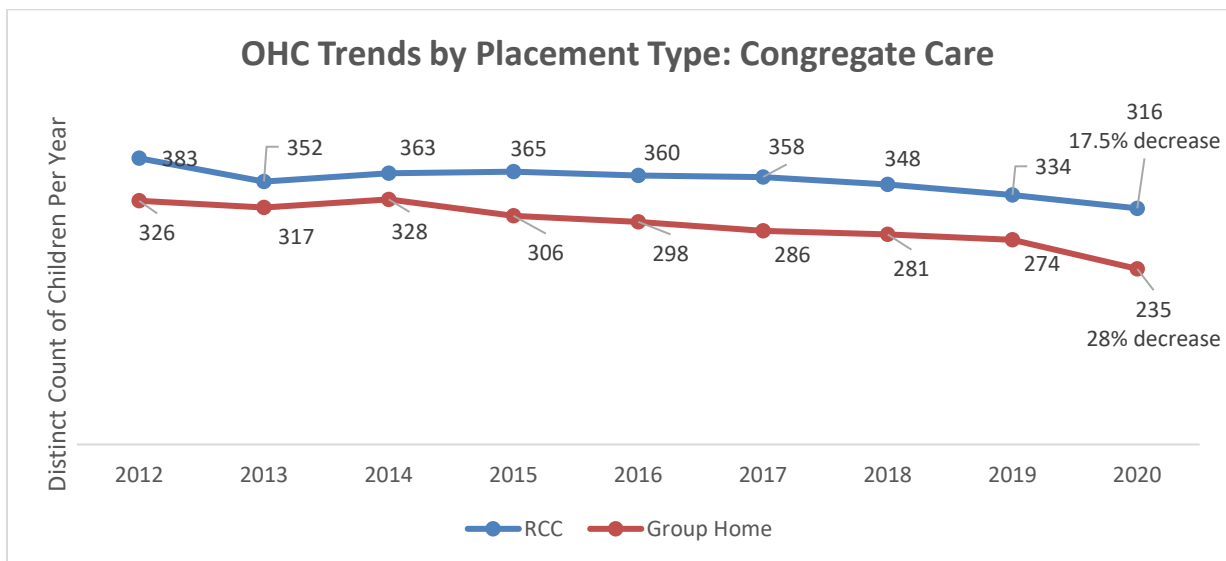
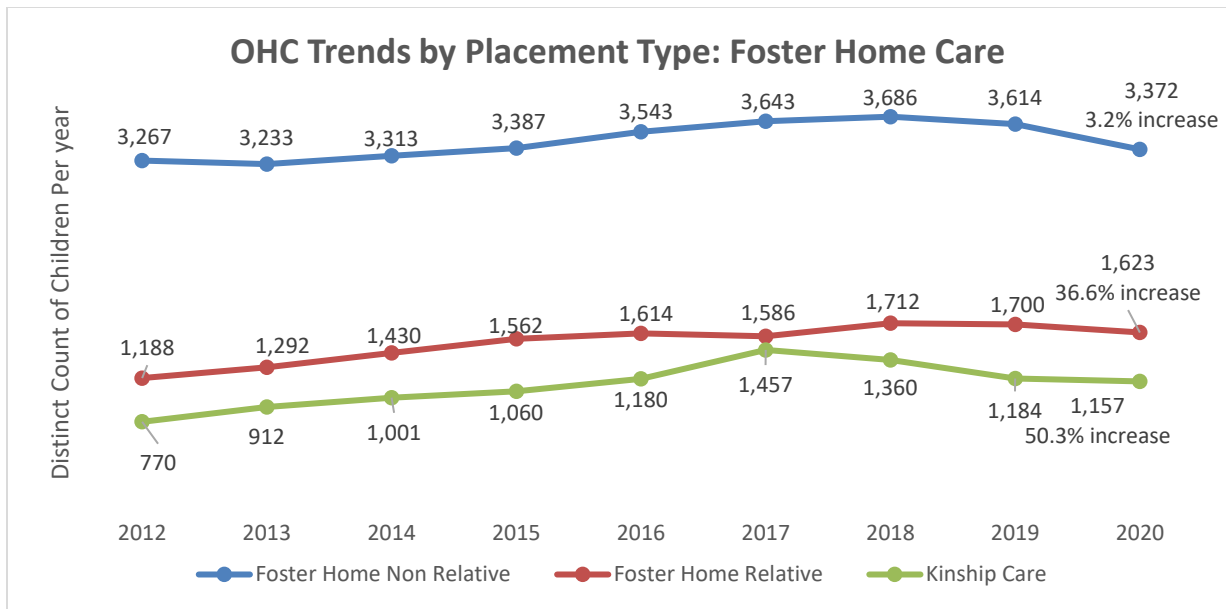
Administrative Data

	Number of Children Placed in Homes (at Removal) Within 60 Miles of Home					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Children Removed	4,008	4,094	4,442	4,229	4,098	3,225
Total Removals	4,183	4,292	4,597	4,439	4,303	3,349
Median Distance (miles) from Home	7.73	7.14	7	6.82	6.41	7.13

Item 10: Relative Placement. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 10	62%	70%	82%	57%	68%	74%	75%

Administrative Data



Item 11: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 11	67%	67%	72%	65%	65%	67%	88%

Summary of Performance on Permanency Outcomes

Wisconsin’s vision for child welfare strongly emphasizes the role of relatives and like-kin in caring for all children and youth who cannot be safely maintained in their home. This focus is reflected in the substantial increase in children placed in relative foster homes and in kinship

care since 2012. Wisconsin’s focus on keeping children connected to their families and communities aligns with the good practices of relative placement and placement with siblings. Wisconsin is also working toward a vision in which we safely reduce the use of congregate care; the system has made measurable progress as the number of children placed in residential care centers and group homes has steadily declined since 2012.

Initiatives to Address:

- Ongoing Standards spell out comprehensive policies to assure alignment with federal and state permanency guidelines and requirements focused on promoting timely and safe permanency for children.
- Case practice is focused on planning on avoiding re-entry.
- A key component of standards focuses on the Permanency Plan (“Written Case Plan”) Development to identify and address permanency and child and family support needs.
- Family Find and Engagement is a DCF initiative that has worked to significantly expand the pool of relatives to care for children in the OHC system. This initiative is a key focus of the Wisconsin PIP.
- The Relative Caregiver Initiative, or sometimes called the “Kinship Navigator” project, is bolstering ongoing efforts to help caregivers best care for children in their families. This is also a key initiative of the Wisconsin PIP.
- The TPR Timeliness Project is a collaboration with the Children’s Court Improvement Project and the University of Wisconsin’s Institute for Research on Poverty to explore data and practice that will assist with timelines. This and additional collaborative training and resources developed with the Children’s Court Improvement Project are described in case review items 21-24 in the systemic factors overview in the systemic factors part of this section following the data.

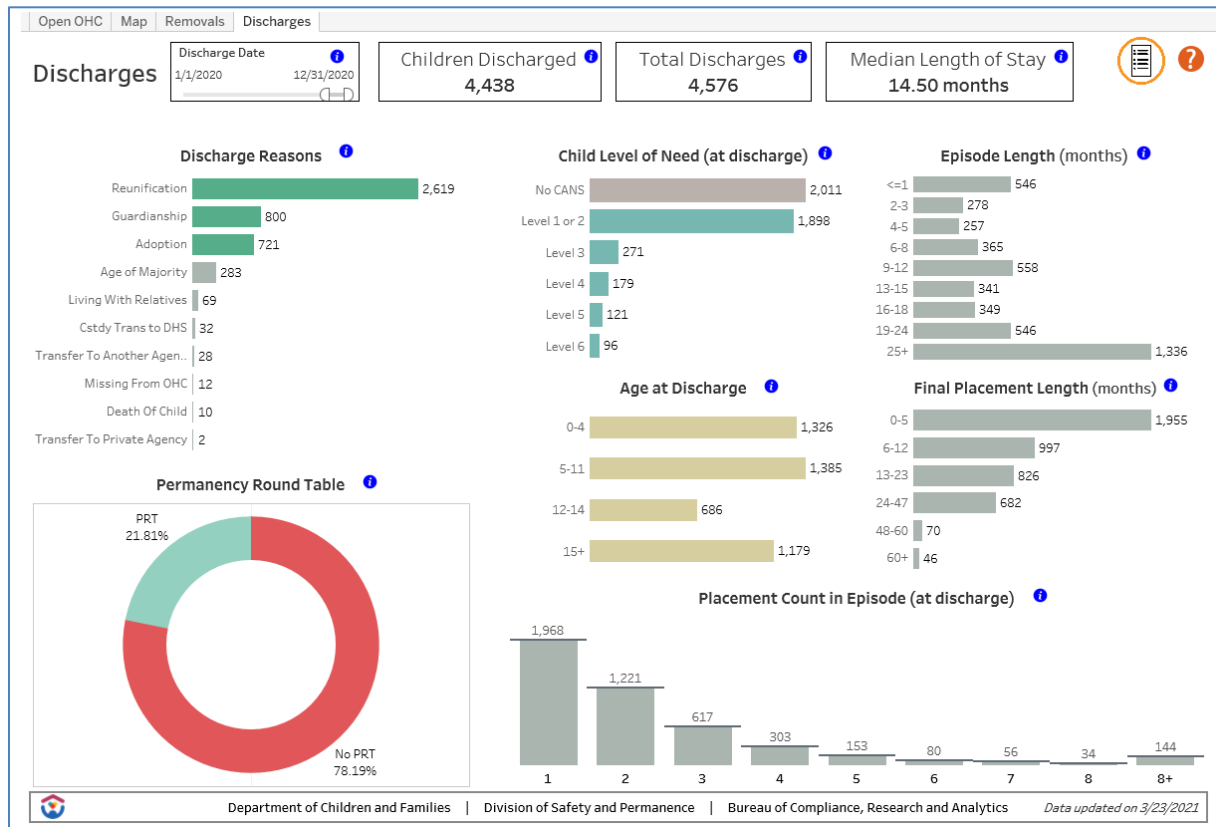
Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3

Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.

Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFSR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 12	52%	60%	54%	36%	43%	31%	40%

Removals Dashboard



Confirming a Safe Environment

Confirming Safe Environment (CSE) is an assessment used to confirm a safe environment prior to placing a child in OHC. If there is a pre-existing approved CSE, a Reconfirming Safe Environment (RCSE) is completed. CSEs are due 10 calendar days past the placement begin date, and RCSEs are due 180 calendar days after the previous RCSE or CSE approval date.

- Of 3,723 CSEs due from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, 3,047 (81.4 percent) were completed. Of the total number of RCSEs due from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, all were completed (3,485).

Risk Management Services by Child/Provider Match Category

When a risk is identified during a CSE/RCSE, a risk management plan must be created to mitigate the risk and ensure the environment is safe for the child. Considerations for a risk management plan include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Additional or special training for placement providers
- Additional contact by agency or other providers

- Re-arranging the living environment

Services Provided to Child Welfare Families

Service Category	Count
Case Management Services	4340
Individual Therapy	1810
Medical/Dental Services	1655
Educational Assessment/Services	720
Developmental Assessment/Services	608
Psychiatric Assessment/Services	193
Basic Home Management	191
Parenting Services	163
Family Therapy	149
Social Supports	138
Juvenile Justice Services/Activities	133
Psychological Assessment	72
Recreational Activities	66
Independent Living	65
Mentoring	57
Occupational/Physical Therapy (OT/PT)	46
Group Therapy	34
Crisis Services	33
Daycare	27
Spiritual/Cultural Supports	16
Legal Services	10
Work Related Services	7
Domestic Violence Services	3
Economic Support	3
Housing Assistance	3

Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFJR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 13	80%	61%	67%	49%	42%	29%	60%

Item 14: Caseworker Visits with Child. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFJR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 14	69%	69%	68%	60%	55%	66%	82%

Administrative Data

Monthly Caseworker Visits with Children in Foster Care; October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020

	Cumulative Number of Children in Foster Care	Number of Required Visits	Number of Successful Contacts	Percent	Number of Visits in Child's Residence	Percent
State Total	10,358	86,236	83,665	97.01%	68,885	82.34%

Item 15: Caseworker Visits with Parents. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CF SR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 15	48%	49%	49%	42%	41%	27%	52%

Well-Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CF SR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 16	88%	90%	84%	70%	87%	82%	94%

High School Educational Outcomes²

DCF contracted with the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in order to better understand education outcomes of youth experiencing out-of-home care (OHC); IRP investigated several potential links between OHC and the reduced likelihood of high school graduation. Analysis of education outcomes for students was considered for three different groups:

- (1) "Never SNAP, SI, OHC": These students came from families who did not receive SNAP assistance, had no history of a screened-in CPS report, and were not in OHC;
- (2) "SNAP Only": These students have families who received SNAP but who had no

² L. Berger and H. Kim, "Credit Transfer and High School Graduation Among Wisconsin's Out-of-Home Care Population." Report submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, February, 2020.

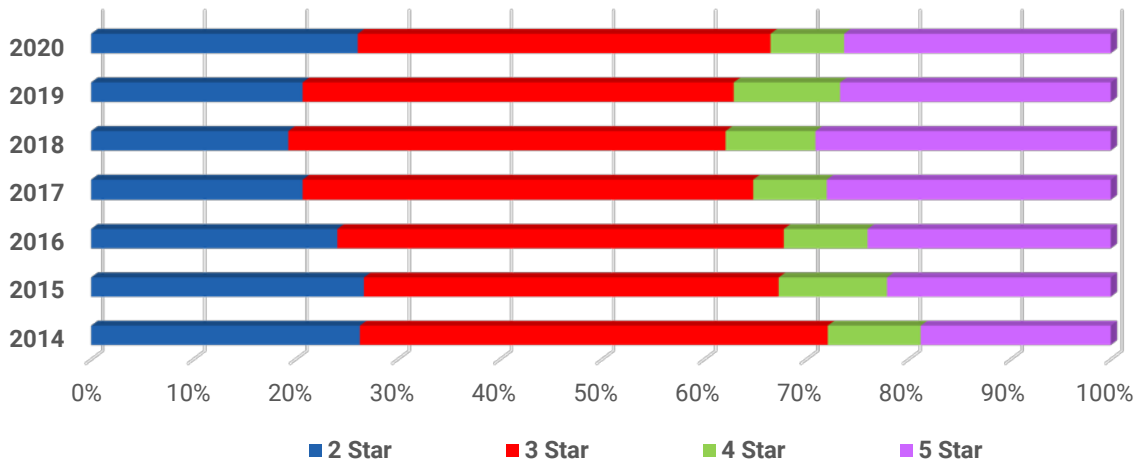
- history of a screened-in CPS report or OHC;
- (3) "SI Only": These students had a screened-in CPS report but did not experience OHC. IRP's work, part of which is captured in the figures below, suggests students in OHC experience a greater number of school moves than other similar students. Additionally, OHC students have fewer accumulated credits and graduation.

DCF recently received these findings and is continuing to analyze data to understand deeper lessons learned and implications for practice. Overall findings are that students in OHC move schools more often than students who are not in OHC. Additionally, OHC students have fewer accumulated credits which is a barrier to graduation. Both trends are tied to poor educational outcomes.

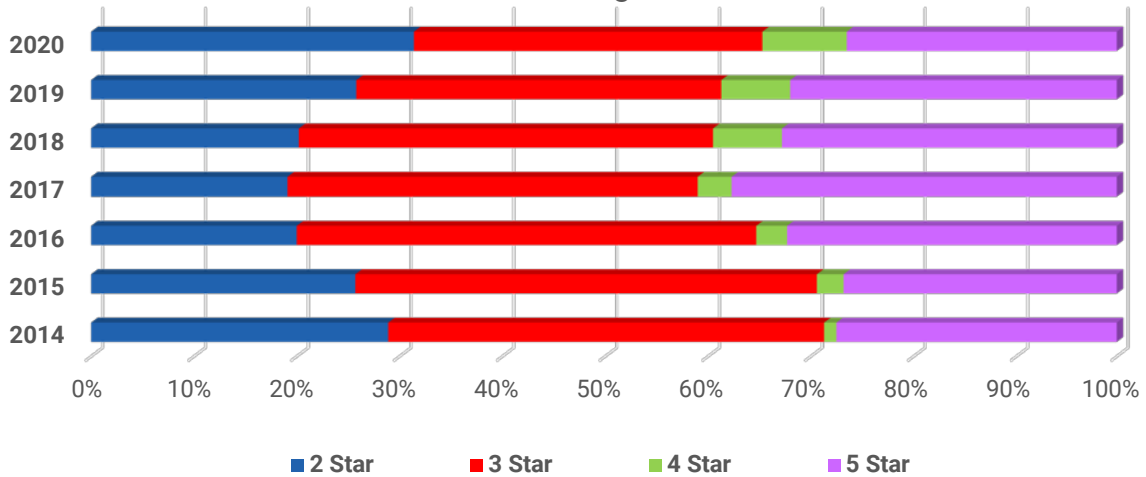
Early Education Data

It is critical that early education experiences are high quality to help children get off to a strong start. The Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program supports low-income working families by subsidizing a portion of the cost of quality child care so that parents or other approved caregivers may work, go to school, or participate in approved work training programs. Families who utilize Wisconsin Shares must attend a program who is participating in YoungStar, which is Wisconsin's child care quality rating and improvement system. Data visualizations on the following page show over-time improvement and sustained improvements in the number of children in OHC that are participating in higher quality early childhood programs.

BOS OHC Children Receiving Wisconsin Shares by YoungStar Rating



Milwaukee OHC Children Receiving Wisconsin Shares by YoungStar Rating

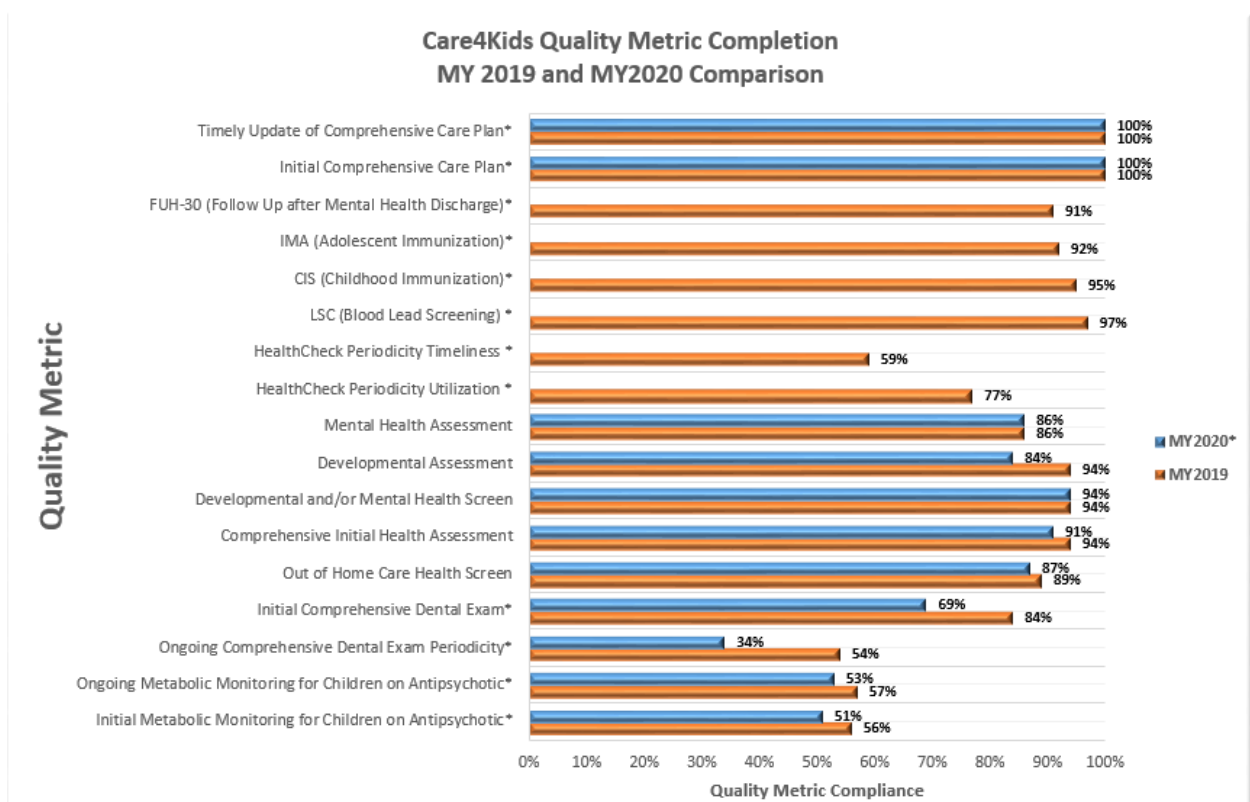


Well Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Item 17: Physical Health of the Child. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CFRS (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020-2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 17	61%	60%	60%	53%	72%	77%	76%

DCF and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) closely collaborate to improve the quality, access, and timeliness of health care services to children and youth in OHC through the implementation of a Medicaid medical home service delivery model called Care4Kids. The Care4Kids program provides comprehensive, coordinated care for children and youth in foster care tailored to each child’s individualized needs.



*Due to the reporting schedule, there are some rates for 2020 that have not yet been finalized. Timeliness rates were affected by the global health emergency. Ultimately, Care4Kids members received services at rates similar to 2019.

Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child. Case Record Review Results.

	2015 Case Reviews (271)	2016 Case Reviews (266)	2017 Case Reviews (105)	2018 Case Reviews (107)	2018 CF SR (65)	2019-2020 PIP Baseline (65)	2020 - 2021 PIP Year 1 (57)
Item 18	77%	72%	66%	54%	55%	65%	64%

Summary of Well-being Performance

DCF has extensively consulted with key stakeholder groups, families, foster parents, foster youth and others on the state’s performance related to child and family well-being. DCF was noted for performing well in meeting the educational needs of children in OHC in the 2018 CF SR. Additional areas of strength are that DCF continues to maintain a high proportion of children in OHC accessing high-quality child care through the state’s YoungStar program. The Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths Tool (CANS) has been an effective tool in helping identify needs and connecting youth and their families to resources.

Initiatives to Address:

- The CANS assessment tool provides a comprehensive assessment of youth and parent needs and helps identify services that will meet the level of need for children and families in the system.
- Care4kids initiative focuses on physical health and mental health and is a critical resource for children in OHC.
- Title IV-B services provide supports to runaway and homeless youth to address educational and well-being needs.
- The Chafee program has a Transitional Regional Agency structure that offers a range of educational, social and well-being initiatives designed to assist youth in successfully transitioning to adulthood.

Systemic Factors

The following section outlines an annual update to the 2020-2024 CFSP on the seven systemic factors for state child welfare system functioning. Information is presented for each item that are part of the seven systemic factors. For each of the systemic factors, there is a description of what the factor is, a description of available and most current data to demonstrate functioning and a summary of initiatives to address each systemic factor. Some of the systemic factors are described as individual items and some are combined such as the service array systemic factor.

Management Information System (Item 19)

How well is the statewide information system functioning to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months has been) in foster care?

According to established policy and practice, every family and child involved with DCF has detailed case information captured in Wisconsin's eWiSACWIS system. Wisconsin's public-facing out-of-home care dashboard displays this information - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/dashboard/ohc>. Standards for data entry are articulated in the Wisconsin Child Welfare Worker Portal - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal>. The Wisconsin SACWIS system, known as eWiSACWIS, provides child welfare case management functionality for statewide OHC and adoption services. A user guide specifics how dashboards are used to track activities in the child welfare system - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/ewisacwis/cw-yj-reports-guide.pdf>.

All 72 Wisconsin counties, selected state agencies, and other external partners use the application statewide. The system supports programs promoting conditions that keep children safe, strengthen families, and provide a permanent and nurturing family home for children. Over the next year Wisconsin will continue to focus on elements required to come into compliance with CCWIS rule. Wisconsin has a robust Management Information System (MIS) to build the CCWIS system on.

DCF documents timeliness of services through the use of the access and IA case review dashboards - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/reports> that speak to whether certain decisions in access -screening, response time, danger threats, and IA -danger threats, safety assessment, maltreatment decision, case disposition- were consistent with standards.

Available Data or Information that Demonstrates System Functioning

Users of the eWiSACWIS system must undergo a security clearance that includes a signed confidentiality agreement. Once it is established that their specific child welfare functions require access, the individual is eligible to access and enter data into the system. There are 11 federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin. All tribes have the option of using the system, but not all of them currently choose to use that option. In most cases, tribes have read-only access and

are able to enter case notes. With the exception of one tribe piloting data entry, county workers enter all information into eWiSACWIS for tribal children under county court order.

In the case of private child-placing agencies that issue foster care licenses, a state-approved contractor enters their applicable licensing information into the system. This information relates to the licensing process and can include background checks, home studies, or other important information.

Through the eWiSACWIS system, Wisconsin adheres to CPS practice standards for data entry timeliness and casework process requirements. The system has built-in reminders and other edit/check functionality based on the creation of certain required documents that remind workers and supervisors of work that needs to be documented and approved. An example of a timeliness reminder is the six-month reminder for periodic reviews. DCF has developed several such reminders and tools to improve child welfare system functioning.

The eWiSACWIS application includes a reporting platform called eWReports, in which analytics staff create a wide variety of reports regarding child welfare and youth justice activity. An issue tracker function allows for local users to continually identify issues requiring attention that are then addressed by the analytics team. Over 200 operational level reports support the monitoring of state and local program, fiscal, and management activities. These reports include summary and detailed information related to critical child welfare service activity and practice requirements, such as CPS referrals, CPS initial assessment decisions, and OHC placement, including client characteristics and location of services/placement, etc. Other reports in development track certain child well-being data, such as medical and dental information, education data, and mental health screenings. Additional reports are used to support local and state level fiscal management and payment activities and to manage provider-related responsibilities such as licensing and foster home rate setting. For more information about DCF eWReports, please visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/knowledgeweb/reports>.

Wisconsin's eWiSACWIS database can identify the status, demographics, locations, and goals for the placement of all children in OHC.

DCF has a history of AFCARS data reports that are compliant with federal standards. The following excerpt from a 2016 review by the Federal ACF of Wisconsin's eWiSACWIS system shows a strong foundation for current practice.

"The team met with staff from six counties via conference call and conducted in-person interviews with staff from two counties.

Observations

During our review, we made the following observations:

In general, eWiSACWIS is well integrated into the state's child welfare practice model. Staff reported daily use of eWiSACWIS and the system's reports to manage child welfare related tasks. In particular, we confirmed the consistent exchange of financial data in the eight

counties reviewed – all counties automatically uploaded eWiSACWIS financial data to the county financial systems, which returned check numbers and issuance dates.

eWiSACWIS supports the counties' preference for multiple reviews of financial data prior to issuing payments. eWiSACWIS generates three consecutive batch runs the last three business days of each month as well as a preliminary and final check runs on the first two business days of the following month

County staff use a variety of manual process to validate financial data, invoices, and preliminary check registers before payments are generated. Financial staff report discovered errors to the responsible staff for correction.”

Brief Assessment on Progress to Date

While the 2018 CFSR noted the Management Information System as an area needing improvement, DCF stakeholders provided positive feedback on efforts to date and have been very engaged in providing feedback and ongoing planning to comply with the CCWIS rule. DCF has engaged in extensive stakeholder engagement over the last several years to solicit feedback and develop communication channels with eWiSACWIS users. Generally, feedback is very positive with users noting the extensive functionality available, including over 200 reports and dashboards. In addition, counties report the ease of sharing data across counties for families that may live and be served in different counties. DCF is committed to balancing software updates across three main channels: addressing user feedback to improve efficiency and reflect best practice; meeting regulatory requirements such as CCWIS and Family First; and modernizing eWiSACWIS to reduce maintenance, improve security, and position DCF for innovation.

Initiatives to Address

- A child welfare data warehouse, referred to as dWiSACWIS, includes data related to CPS Access and Initial Assessment casework, caseload demographic and case history information, OHC placements, pre-finalized adoptions, OHC providers, Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Round 3 outcome measures, child and adolescent needs and strengths (CANS) information, and Title IV-E eligibility and claiming data and reports. Technical enhancements to the data warehouse have included the automation of data repository naming conventions, development of an audit tracking report to support statewide implementation, and evaluation of data management and design documentation tools. The data warehouse also includes a report design platform, which has allowed DCF to enhance its reporting capabilities. The data warehouse reports include embedded charts and figures and allow DCF to run some reports for specific geographic regions on demand.
- Continued expansion of data available within eWiSACWIS from both eWiSACWIS and from other administrative data and information gathering systems, such as child educational and medical information from other state agencies, and from the Child

Welfare CQI case record reviews. To further supplement and advance use of the above technical and reporting functionality, DCF has implemented interactive dashboards which are available to the public via the DCF website. These same dashboards are available to eWiSACWIS users with additional data to promote the use of the dashboards at the local child welfare agency levels to further analyze, monitor, and support data-driven decision-making. The public facing child welfare dashboards can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/reports>.

- Ongoing stakeholder engagement continues to be a focus area, with DCF staff engaging with counties and Tribes, both directly and through groups such as the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) and the Inter-Tribal Child Welfare Directors group. DCF's Bureau of Regional Operations provides a regional forum where child welfare policies and supports are discussed at least quarterly with child welfare directors. As part of its strategic transformation initiative, DCF created an Infrastructure and Workforce Support team that is connected to DCF's child welfare transformation efforts described at the beginning of this plan. This team works to directly engage with system users on training and workflow optimization. Another team was formed to update Wisconsin's child welfare permanency plan or written case plan in federal terms. More specifics on this team's efforts focused on improving the plan are detailed in the following section under Item 20. The permanency plan review consisted of an eight-month project including 36 interviews and workshops with social workers, attorneys, parents, and judges. Their recommendations will be presented mid-2021. Finally, established in the winter of 2019, Wisconsin's eWiSACWIS Data Quality Committee (eWDQC) provides advisement for decision-making of CCWIS data quality requirements and legacy eWiSACWIS child welfare information system data. The eWDQC serves as the advising body to DCF in addressing data quality plan requirements pursuant to 45 C.F.R. § 1355.52 (d)(5) and is a partnership between the Title IV-E State Agency (DCF) and WCHSA.
- All tribes in Wisconsin have a read only access to eWiSACWIS. This access is granted via state-tribal contracts. With read only access, tribes are able to search for cases in the state-wide system that involve their children and read case information such as permanency plans, placement information, safety plans, case notes, etc. They also have the ability to enter a case note but cannot create any other work in the system. Currently, DCF is working with one tribe to pilot their ability to create casework in eWiSACWIS, for Tribal Court cases. The intent of this pilot is to address any unintended consequences that may arise in order to **offer a smooth process for other tribes that may also want similar access**.

DCF is not a party to the 161 agreements and cannot speak to the details of their contents. Since each agreement is negotiated between each tribe and county, contents can vary. They do typically address a financial agreement between the two parties regarding the payment for children who are under the jurisdiction of a Tribal Court. Some may also address case practice protocols and procedures.

- DCF has begun exploring the best way to support tribal access to CCWIS, understanding tribes will have two separate set of needs, one for WICWA/ICWA cases and the other for Tribal Court cases. Discussions with the Intertribal Child Welfare Committee have explored what aspects of the system could best support their monitoring of Circuit Court cases where ICWA and WICWA apply. For Tribal Court cases, tribes may have their own electronic case management system while others may choose to utilize the state system. As sovereign nations, each tribe will make their own decision on whether or not to access a state-run system while considering the best way to protect the confidentiality and data sovereignty. DCF will continue discussions with the ICW Committee, focusing on how to best support their needs and protect any concerns.
- Additional activities to implement and comply with CCWIS are continuing. In addition to the feedback described above, DCF developed and is implementing a comprehensive data quality plan. This plan is monitored and updated in consultation with the data quality committee as identified above; comprised of internal and external stakeholders from across Wisconsin. Recommendations in the data quality plan include policy, practice, and software changes to improve the capture, consistency, and analysis of data in eWiSACWIS.

Case Review System (Items 20-24)

For this systemic factor, following Item 20 which addresses data, and initiatives to address, data for 21-24 are provided next followed by the initiatives to address items 21-24 that are found at the end of the case review section. This is to reflect that many initiatives address more than one systemic factor. A brief strengths and challenges for the case review system follows at the end of the case review section.

WRITTEN CASE PLAN (ITEM 20)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent and includes the required provisions?

Available Data or Information that Demonstrates System Functioning

Wisconsin has a robust and comprehensive process in place for developing a case plan for families in the child welfare system that receive services in OHC. In Wisconsin, the case plan is called a permanency plan. Specific details of this process can be found in Wisconsin's Ongoing Standards at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/ongoing-services-standards.pdf>.

CPS intervention standards are also used to assess safety and in-home case planning. These standards are available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>.

Detailed guidance has been developed for assuring that written case plans for tribal children meet Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA) guidelines. To view the WICWA desk aid, please visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/2536.pdf>.

The Foster Parent Handbook provides critical information on how foster parents are engaged in developing the case plan. The handbook is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/handbook>.

Data or Information on Wisconsin's Performance

This systemic factor was found to be an area needing improvement in the 2018 CFSSR. Efforts have focused on improving the permanency plan through an in-depth analysis of the written case plan was conducted that demonstrated Wisconsin was adhering to all federal standards.

How does the state track compliance with requirements?

The following list provides information about how the state tracks that case plans are developed jointly with parents so that they include following provisions:

- 1) The child is placed in the least restrictive setting—in a placement that is in close proximity to the parents' home when it is in their best interest.
 - a. This is documented within the permanency plan and is updated every six months.

- 2) Visits with children placed out of state occur at least every 12 months.
 - a. This data can be collected from the Caseworker contacts Dashboard within eWISACWIS

- 3) Documentation of the steps taken to make and finalize adoptive or OPPLA placements when the child can't return home.
 - a. This information is also documented in the permanency plan and recorded in the produce this information from eWISACWIS system. Annual data is provided on page 33 of this report.

Also, WI standards stipulate that case plans must be completed no later than 60 days from the transition staffing. The state tracks this provision through an eWISACWIS tickler indicating a case plan is due and when and if it's past due and how long.

Stakeholder feedback

Challenges identified by birth parent interviews during the 2018 CFSR noted that goals could be made clearer to help achieve permanency in a timelier way. Feedback from others who use the permanency plan collected through the CFSR and other more recent efforts focused on strategic planning have voiced concerns about efficiency of the process, a desire to make the process more trauma-informed and user-friendly for all audiences.

As a result of this feedback, a key area of focus of Wisconsin's child welfare transformation is to allow more time for workers to spend time with families and less time documenting and completing necessary paperwork.

Initiatives to Address

DCF understands that this improvement must be done within existing federal and state regulations and policy. To that end, a regulatory crosswalk has been created that identifies how all existing federal and state regulations and policies are captured in the permanency plan process and in the permanency plan application. This process confirmed that DCF is in full compliance with all requirements relative to the permanency plan. One exception is the ongoing work to meet FFPSA requirements related to FFPSA that is expected to be complete by the end FFY 2021.

DCF, in partnership with CGI, launched an effort to improve the perm plan process. Human Centered Design was the method used to incorporate robust stakeholder feedback. The process incorporated mapping of the "as is" process for the perm plan, as described in Item 19, interviews and surveys were conducted with more than 36 individuals across the state representing urban, rural, and tribal populations. Interviews were held with all levels of child welfare staff and leadership, judicial and legal officials, adoptive and foster parents, and foster youth to identify how the process currently works, pain points, areas working well and recommendations for improvement. A resulting Vision Book encompasses information above and provides an overview of the permanency plan process from start to completion and a

summary of key personas involved in the process in the child welfare system. A summary of the vision book is available at the following link - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cqi-cfsr/pdf/report/apsr22attchmnt2.pdf>.

Discussions are underway about how to delineate, refine, articulate, and prioritize more specific, concrete recommendations for consideration by DCF with a timeline of mid-2021.

Recommendations are being discussed with counties, tribes, and with DCF's lived experience workgroup. The regulatory crosswalk will serve as guardrails to the process of further defining and prioritizing recommendations in the following areas:

1. Incorporate the Model for Practice philosophy to perm planning activities and modify the perm plan template to better meet the needs of multiple user types. The Model for Practice emphasizes culturally competent, trauma-informed and strengths-based principles and use of language.
2. Improve worker interface and efficiency when updating or viewing perm plan information in eWiSACWIS. This covers a large number of CGI Vision Book recommendations.
3. Improve the perm plan process and experience as it relates to Indian children and families.
4. Improve process by adding data elements to eWiSACWIS.
5. Refresh and improve worker training pertaining to the perm plan.

The Tailored Court Order project that is part of Wisconsin's PIP and described in Section 3 may also result in changes in how the written case plan/permanency plan is laid out; key changes may include increased clarification and understanding of court-ordered conditions so that permanency is achieved in a timelier way.

PERIODIC REVIEW (ITEM 21)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every six months?

DCF works closely with CCIP to assess, measure and address Item 21 as they relate to processes that occur in the court system but impact child welfare families. Efforts are underway to better track and assess timeliness.

Data or Information Demonstrating Functioning

This area of performance was found to be an area needing improvement in the 2018 CFSR due to the timeliness of periodic reviews. Data currently available shows that of children and youth in care on December 31, 2020, there were 5,392 children that had been in care for at least 6 months and 4,162 children that had been in care for at least one year. Of the children in care for at least one year, 74% had hearings that occurred within a year of the child's removal, or within a year of the child's last hearing. Of the children that had been in care for six months, 51% had hearings or reviews within six months of their removal, or within six months of their last hearing or review.

Tracking timeliness has been a focus of DCF and CCIP to continue to improve performance. To accomplish this, DCF has certain reminder functions within the eWiSACWIS system to help ensure that the required periodic reviews are completed on time. In addition to automated reminders, workers can enter ticklers into the system and set up reminders of upcoming due dates for permanency reviews. The information system can show workers tasks as lists or in calendar view. The system also color codes information by type of task, as well as reflecting whether the task was completed on time. Supervisors have an option to view their caseworkers' workloads as a tool for ensuring compliance.

DCF provides workers with the DCF Ongoing Services Standards, which provide extensive information regarding how an agency can conform to this requirement. Specifically, the Standards require caseworkers to participate in training on the permanency statutes under Section 48.38 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

In Wisconsin, over half of the jurisdictions utilized an administrative panel for some or all the six-month reviews. In the other counties, a court commissioner or a judge conducts the six-month review, without distinguishing between the periodic (six-month) review or an annual permanency hearing. If it is conducted by a judicial officer on the record, the court record event is a Permanency Hearing regardless of the time interval.

CCIP and DCF have worked together to develop and promote the awareness of the following resources and policies to ensure that all case review standards are met.

DCF created a Guide for Permanency Plan Administrative Review Panel Members as a resource to the community members who sit on a county agency's administrative permanency panel review. The guide provides information about permanency planning, the permanency plan document, permanency goals, and a checklist regarding determinations that must be made by panel members. Feedback on the guide was provided by CCIP, judicial committees, and other stakeholders. In FY 22, DCF is updating this guide as part of the 2020 Program Improvement Plan. This PIP initiative also includes work on developing a report that more consistently tracks 6-month review timeliness. The report will be rolled out in FY 2022 along with the updated administrative review panel training. More specific information on this PIP initiative is detailed in the following section, plan for improvement.

PERMANENCY HEARINGS (ITEM 22)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

Data or Information Demonstrating Performance

This area of performance was found to be a strength during Wisconsin's 2018 CFSR. CCIP has worked to obtain data related to the timeliness of Permanency Reviews and Hearings in

Wisconsin. Practice varies around the state as to whether the court or an administrative panel conduct the six-month permanency review, while the court always hears the 12-month review. It is important to note that when the court reviews the permanency plan, the court record event reflects that a Permanency Hearing occurred without distinguishing whether it was a six-month review or a 12-month hearing.

In FFYs 2012-2020, CCIP contracted with the University of Wisconsin’s Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) to assist with third-party matching of juvenile court records from the Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP), the judicial branch’s automated system, and data from eWisACWIS to enable CCIP to report on five timeliness measures required under the federal Court Improvement Program grant, including the time to the first permanency hearing and the time to subsequent permanency hearings. IRP achieved a 93-94 percent match rate between the cases in CCAP and eWisACWIS.

Most recently, IRP generated reports on the five timeliness measures for children who achieved a permanent placement (i.e., reunification, adoption, or guardianship). The table below illustrates that a Permanency Hearing occurred no later than 12 months from the date of the child's removal and within 12 months from the date of the previous Permanency Hearing in almost all the of cases (92%-98%), with slight improvements demonstrated for calendar year 2019.

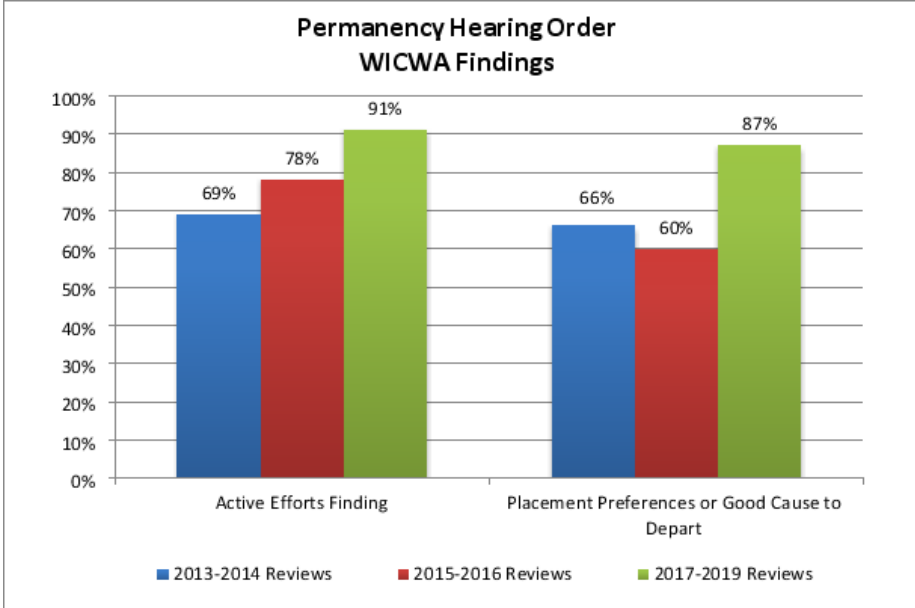
Table: CCIP Performance Measures by Thresholds for Cohort Children

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Children having first permanency hearing within 12 months of removal	93.3%	92.6%	92.7%	93.0%	94.3%
Children having second permanency hearing within 12 months of previous permanency hearing	98.0%	97.4%	98.1%	98.2%	98.2%

For calendar year 2020, data shows that:

- 94.3% of Permanency Hearings were held within 12 months of removal.
- 98.4% of the Second Permanency Hearings were held within 12 months of the First Permanency Hearing; and,
- the time to First Permanency Hearing from removal was 220 mean days.

In addition, data on whether the required WICWA findings (i.e., active efforts and placement preferences) are made on Permanency Hearing Orders is captured as part of the WICWA CQI reviews conducted in 2013-2019. As illustrated in the graph below, there has been an increase in the documentation of the WICWA findings on the Permanency Hearing Orders. The most recent information available on these reviews follows below.



TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS (ITEM 23)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?

Data or Information to Demonstrate System Functioning

This area of practice was found to be an area needing improvement in the 2018 CFSR largely due to performance related to required timelines. The primary source of data to track efforts in Wisconsin is the Termination of Parental Rights Timeliness Project. This is a joint, data-driven project with the Children's Court Improvement Program, the University of Wisconsin, Institute for Research on Poverty and DCF that focuses on TPR timeliness. Efforts are focused on improving a specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome. This project has resulted in CCIP and DCF developing and providing best practice protocols, statutory recommendations, tools, training, and peer support to improve the timeliness to adoption through faster resolution of termination of parental rights (TPR) cases. This effort is also focused on attorneys, caseworkers and judicial officers so they improve their knowledge and skills and improve practice and oversight to ensure that concurrent planning is meaningful, effective, and actively engaged in earlier so that permanency can be achieved more quickly if reunification is not in the child's best interests.

To identify solutions that are evidence-based and not founded solely on anecdotal information, data from the court and child welfare statewide automated case management systems (i.e., CCAP and eWiSACWIS) was analyzed to identify factors that have a correlation with timeliness of TPR and adoption. The notable findings from the first report produced by IRP include:

- Moving from filing a TPR Petition to having a TPR Order ranges from 29 days to 239 days.
- Moving from a TPR Order to a Finalized Adoption ranges from 103 days to 386 days.
- Characteristics associated with time to setting adoption as a permanency goal:
 - Children with longer times tend to have more child welfare workers, more judicial officers, and more court cases involving the same child. Youth justice involvement is also associated with longer times to adoption.
 - Older children, African American children, and American Indian children that are identified as tribal members have longer times to achieve TPR/adoption.
 - Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment score does not have an impact on timeliness except for those children with highest CANS scores (50+), who show longer times to setting an adoption goal.
 - Previous removals and time in previous out-of-home placements are not strongly associated. If adoption was a permanency goal in the previous removal, time to permanency was shorter in the current removal.

- ASFA exceptions that are recorded are associated with longer times. Alternative permanency plan goals besides adoption and reunification were associated with longer times.
- Characteristics associated with time from adoption goal to final adoption:
 - Longer times for children with more case workers, more judicial officers, four or more total court cases, and if the child has a youth justice case.
 - Longest times for children aged 4-6, oldest and youngest children have short times.
 - African American, American Indian, and Hispanic children have longer times to adoption as well as WICWA cases.
 - Times to adoption lengthen as CANS scores get higher.
 - No notable relationship between previous removals and time to adoption.
 - When ASFA exceptions are recorded, it takes longer to move to adoption as do those with reunification or other goals previously listed on the permanency plan. Time to adoption is short for cases with adoption listed as the current permanency goal, rather than as a concurrent or proposed goal.

The CCIP then entered into an additional contract with IRP in FY 2019 to assist with the data exploration and analysis for additional time intervals and characteristics including:

- Time between date of removal and date TPR petition is filed;
- Time between date TPR petition is filed and date counsel is appointed for the parents;
- Timeliness of the underlying CHIPS case;
- Whether parents had counsel during the CHIPS case;
- Whether a jury trial was scheduled or held during the TPR case;
- Whether an adoptive resource was identified for the child before the TPR petition was filed;
- Whether the TPR case was appealed;
- Number of voluntary TPRs and involuntary TPRs; and
- Whether the same judge was on both CHIPS and TPR case.

While the additional information collected by IRP did provide DCF and CCIP with further insight into potential areas of delay for TPR cases, this information did not provide sufficient statistical correlation between any specific practice or policy that could be shown to delay nor hasten time to the identified TPR timeliness outcomes. IRP also provided updated data from their initial report, which did not show significant changes amongst those counties with the lengthier times to the TPR measures.

In response to the additional IRP data analysis and updated statewide timeliness information, in 2020 DCF and CCIP developed an online survey regarding TPR practice amongst various county-level child welfare agency, legal, and judicial stakeholders. This survey was distributed to 16 counties, which were split into two groups: those with the longest times to TPR timeliness measures and those which were higher performing in the same measures. DCF and CCIP also

took care to include counties with varying characteristics such as geographic location, population size, number of judges hearing child welfare matters, and which legal office prosecutes TPR cases (e.g., the District Attorney, Corporation Counsel or other), amongst other factors. Those counties with the lengthiest times were also provided with data templates containing county-specific data measures in comparison to statewide averages. A total of 352 surveys were completed.

Currently, the CCIP and DCF TPR Timeliness Implementation Workgroup continues to work in collaboration to review the findings of the survey and identify recurring themes and trends, as well as those areas that warrant further exploration to determine best practices for timeliness and areas of delay.

It is anticipated that the information gathered from the survey analysis will further be used to conduct focus groups and specialized case file reviews to examine the practices that both expedite and delay timeliness. Using the reports produced by IRP, the survey results, focus groups, and/or file reviews in both counties that are performing well in achieving TPR outcomes and counties that have the longest timeframes, the Workgroup will develop a response to improve TPR timeliness amongst the eight counties with longer times to TPR measures, as well as more broadly statewide. An overview of the protocol yet to be completed is provided below.

Lowest timeframe / well-performing counties to learn from:

1. Conduct targeted focus groups or interviews to learn more about practices that have been identified as having a potential positive impact on timeliness and any lessons learned in the implementation of those practices.
2. Compile survey feedback into a report to identify best practices and develop suggestions to share with other counties.

Highest timeframe counties/ counties performing at the lowest level:

1. Contact counties to arrange focus groups with each stakeholder group.
2. Schedule and conduct stakeholder focus groups in each county; done jointly with CCIP and DCF.
3. Compile focus group feedback.
4. If needed, conduct additional county data and analysis (e.g., file reviews) after receiving focus group insight.
5. Compile data and further analysis into a report to share with each county.
6. Present focus group feedback, data, and suggestions from counties with the lowest timeframes from TPR Petition to TPR Order. Offer technical assistance from CCIP and DCF.
7. Schedule three-month follow-up to learn about any changes that have been made.
8. Prepare quarterly data reports for each county to highlight positive improvements and/or areas that need improvement.

The following data is from a variety of sources, including the Institute for Research on Poverty, CCAP statistical reports, and DCF.

*Table: TPR Timeliness from Most Recent Removal (mean number of days)**

	Time to TPR Petition Filing	Time to TPR Order
2015	654	840
2016	590	799
2017	668	871
2018	682	877
2019	711	899

**The data sample includes children with adoption as a permanency goal anytime in 2006-2019, leaving out-of-home care in 2019. Note: The federal standard of 15 months for TPR filing is equivalent to 450 days from removal.

Table: TPR Timeliness from Most Recent Removal by Thresholds

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1. Time to TPR petition					
Children with TPR petition filed within 15 months of removal	32.5%	35.8%	27.1%	25.8%	23.3%
Children with TPR petition filed within 24 months of removal	58.4%	68.2%	59.0%	54.5%	47.3%
2. Time to TPR order					
Children with TPR order within 15 months of removal	10.7%	13.2%	8.8%	9.1%	8.7%
Children with TPR order within 24 months of removal	29.5%	29.7%	27%	28.8%	24.8%

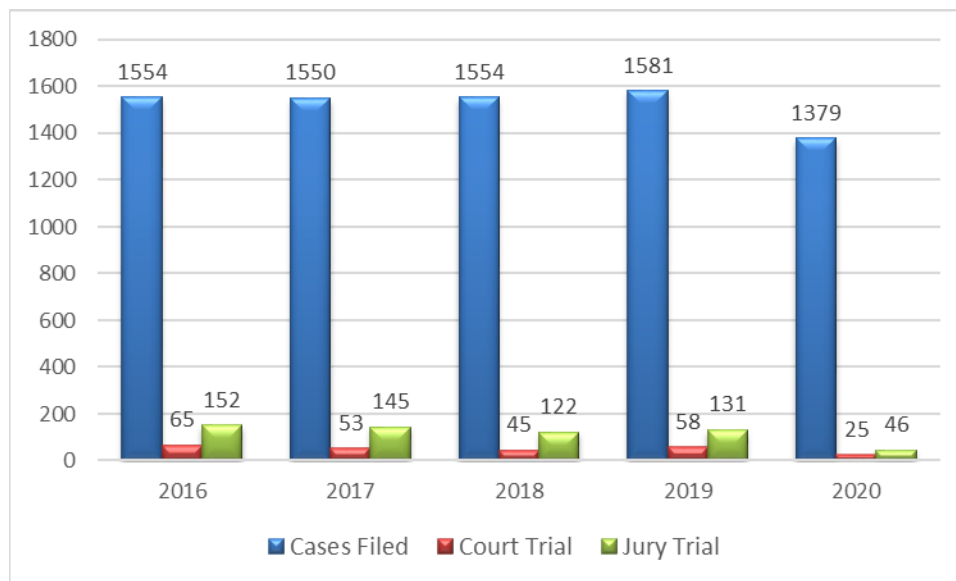
Looking at separate cohorts of children and IRP data

*Figure: TPR Timeliness using Median Number of Days (Wisconsin Data from Institute for Research on Poverty)**

	Number of Days
Removal to TPR Filing	622
Filing of Order	140
Removal to TPR Order	648

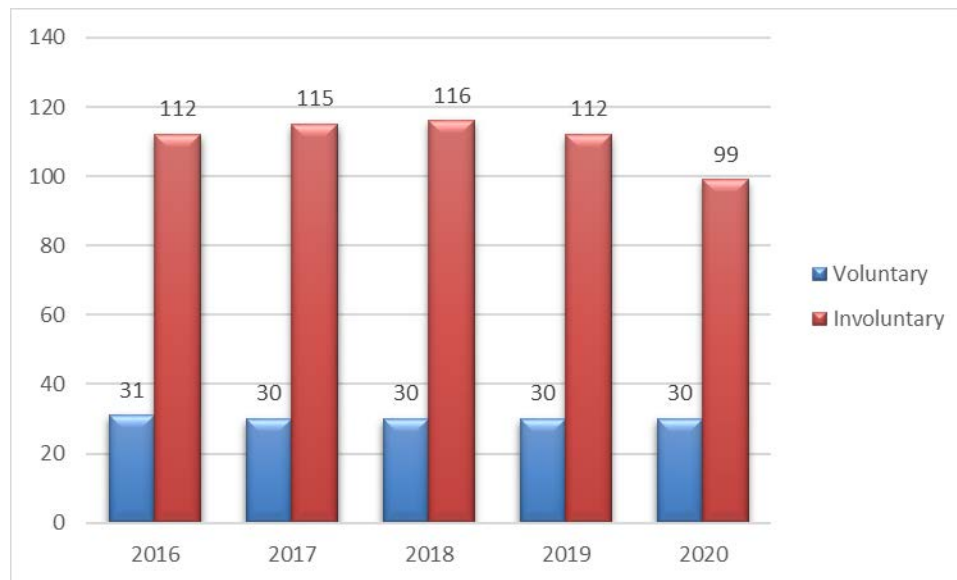
*The data sample includes children with adoption as a permanency goal anytime in 2006-2019, leaving out-of-home care in 2019. Note: The federal standard of 15 months for TPR filing is equivalent to 450 days from removal.

*Figure: TPR Caseload Summary Statewide (CCAP Statistical Reports)**



*Includes both child welfare and private TPR cases.

*Figure: Median Age at TPR Disposition (CCAP Statistical Reports)**



*Includes both child welfare and private TPR cases. Data is measuring the median length of time between TPR and disposition.

Adoption and Safe Families Act Wisconsin Data

ASFA exceptions were filed timely 95 percent of the time (3,412 of 3,583 cases) and TPR referrals were filed 91 percent of the time (70 of 77 cases).

Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA) Data

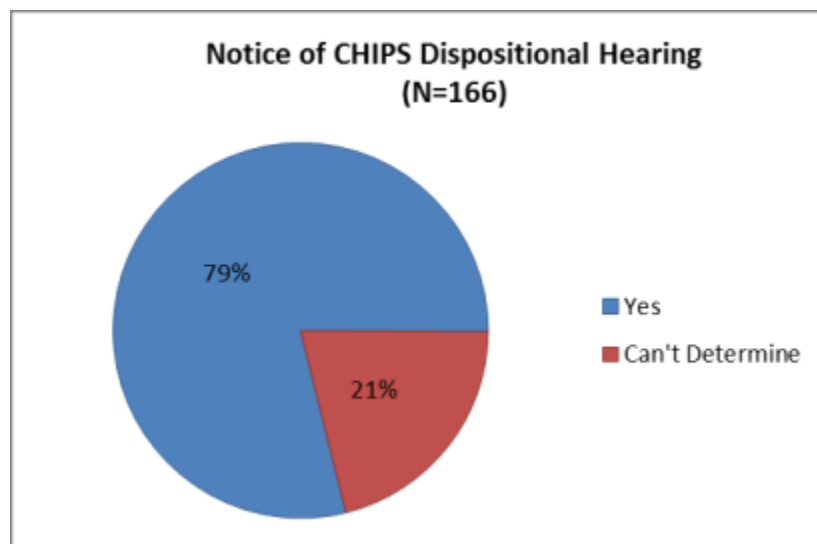
An additional source of data is the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA) Continuous Quality Improvement Project through CCIP. The WICWA Continuous Quality Improvement project measures compliance with key WICWA requirements in both voluntary and involuntary TPR cases to prevent unnecessary permanency and case delays, motions to invalidate the proceeding, and appeals. In 2013-2014, the eight counties with the greatest number of circuit court cases subject to WICWA were reviewed jointly by CCIP and DCF. In 2015-2016, court file reviews were conducted by CCIP in 12 additional counties that had a minimum number of WICWA cases that had a threshold number of WICWA cases. In 2017-2019, the second round of onsite reviews occurred in Shawano, Milwaukee, Bayfield, Jackson, Brown, Forest, Vilas, and Burnett counties. The result of these reviews was included in Wisconsin’s 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan. The planned court file reviews in additional counties with a threshold number of WICWA cases was delayed in 2020 due to the pandemic and will be completed in calendar year 2021; with a third round of onsite reviews in the eight driver counties beginning later in the year. Data compiled from these reviews will be shared in DCF’s next annual report.

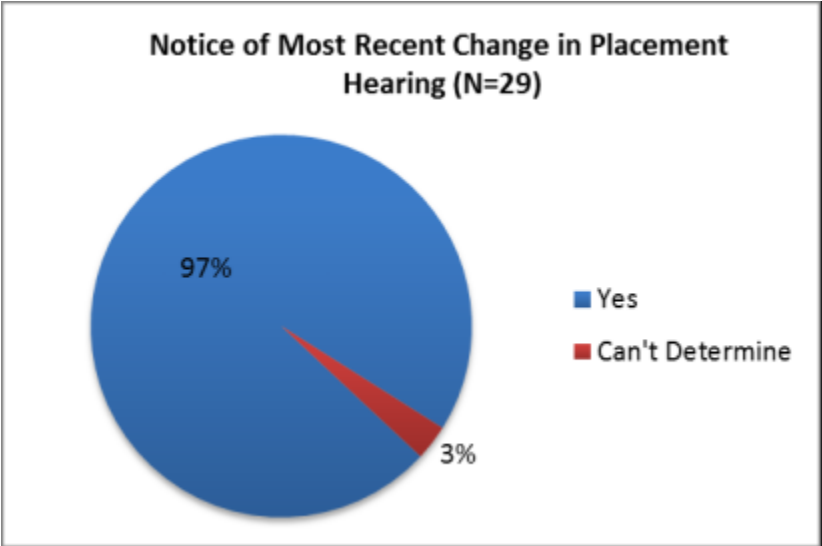
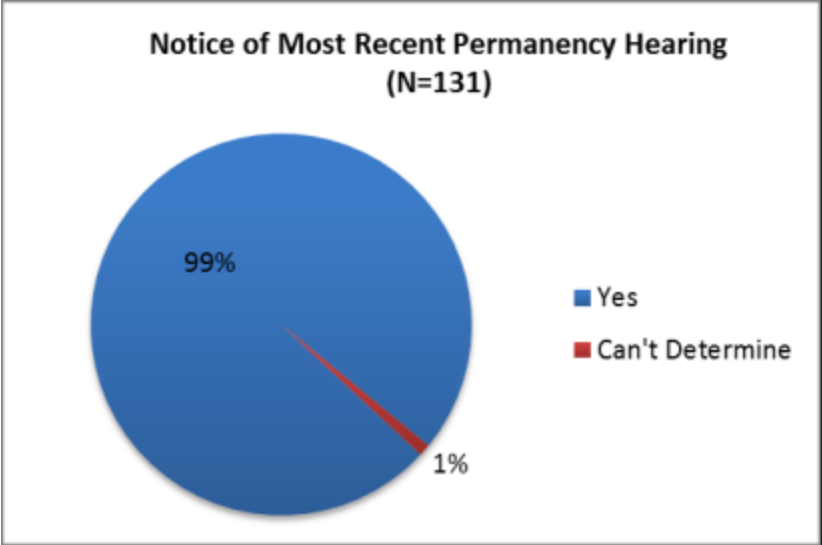
NOTICE OF HEARINGS AND REVIEWS TO CAREGIVERS (ITEM 24)

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing with respect to the child?

Data or Information Demonstrating System Performance

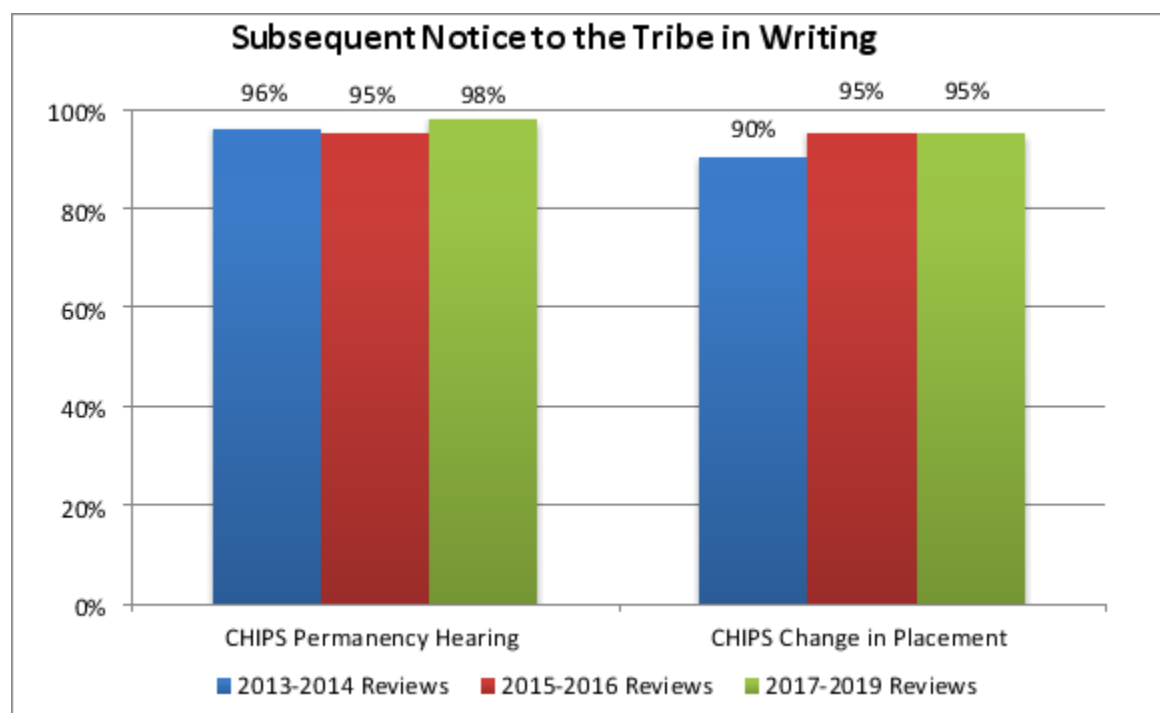
This area of practice was found to be an area needing improvement in the 2018 CFSR. DCF was able to demonstrate that hearing notice was sent to caregivers 100% of the time, however, the review could not confirm consistent participation. DCF tracks data in coordination with CCIP and is focused on joint efforts to address this systemic factor. Notice of hearings to caregivers is documented for individual cases in the Circuit Court Access Program (CCAP) but is not available in the aggregate. The most recent data available for this item is from CCIP. Further, DCF has developed tools and training with CCIP available through their e-learning about the importance of parent engagement in court proceedings. A manual review of 180 circuit court cases was conducted for children placed in foster care or with a relative in child in need of protection or services (CHIPS) cases from six counties: Dodge, Dunn, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Wood. The sample counties include representation from all five regions of the state, plus Milwaukee County. There were 30 cases reviewed from each county: 15 cases filed in 2016 and 15 counties filed in 2017. The counties (for each of the five regions) and the cases were selected randomly using an online randomization program. The results from the court file review are provided below. Note that “Can’t Determine” means that it was not possible to determine whether the caregiver received notice from the documentation contained in court file. It is important to note that notice may have been provided in these cases, but not documented in the court file. Collateral sources, such as the child welfare agencies and prosecutor’s case files, were not examined as part of this review.





In addition, data related to notice to parents and tribes are available based on file reviews conducted as part of the WICWA CQI project. Under WICWA, notice of subsequent hearings in a case must be provided to the parents and tribe in writing through mail, personal delivery, or fax. As illustrated in the following chart, providing notice of hearing in writing is an area that continues to be a strength for permanency hearings and change in placement hearings.

Figure: Notice of Post-Disposition Hearings for WICWA



Case Review System (Items 20-24) Brief Assessment on Progress to Date

DCF has worked extensively with the CCIP, judicial and legal stakeholders, and other stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses in the case review system. This collaboration continues to focus on collecting data on processes and stakeholder feedback to help identify and improve areas of practice. DCF will continue to use this feedback as it further shapes future initiatives and supports for the case review system identified in Wisconsin’s PIP, the CFSP Plan for Enacting the State Vision and in future DCF strategic planning.

Initiatives to Address Case Review Systemic Factors

There are several initiatives in place to address this area of practice including efforts that foster ongoing collaborative efforts, specific projects, resources, and training.

Ongoing Collaborations and Collaborative Leadership Teams/Workgroups

- DCF and CCIP work together to respond to legislative changes that affect child welfare and local court systems. In the last year, this included coordination of efforts related to codification and implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, which Wisconsin deferred implementation until October 2021. DCF and CCIP formed a workgroup to develop legislation regarding the Act’s Qualified Residential Treatment Program procedures. DCF and CCIP are planning multiple trainings on the Act, including sessions at the Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts for judicial officers, attorneys, agency representatives, and other stakeholders. DCF and CCIP maintain

regular contact regarding legislative committees and proposals to determine potential impacts on the child welfare system and to provide information as necessary.

- CCIP and DCF collaborated on the “Adoption Call to Action”. Initially, CCIP and DCF representatives attended the January 2020 Adoption Call to Action Summit in Washington, D.C. After reviewing the Wisconsin data, CCIP and DCF decided to focus on children who were post-TPR and awaiting adoption since we already have a separate initiative related to TPR timeliness. DCF created a post-TPR consultation with their contracted public adoption agencies that involved a formalized process and a consistent case review process to assist with adoption finalization. The Adoption Call to Action project also involves an educational component of creating an adoption process guide explaining each step of the public adoption process (www.wicourts.gov/courts/programs/docs/publicadoptguide.pdf), a post-TPR permanency hearing checklist (www.wicourts.gov/courts/programs/docs/permanency10.pdf), and providing TPR appeal clarification. Since the CHIPS case is transferred post-TPR to a public adoption agency, sometimes there is a lack of communication regarding the TPR appeal. The Office of Legal Counsel at DCF provided statutory authority as well as an explanation that DCF, as guardian of the child, should be receiving notice of any TPR appeals and may be contacting county prosecutor’s offices for additional information so the adoption can be finalized. CCIP and DCF representatives also presented information about Wisconsin’s Adoption Call to Action project during the October 6, 2020, Capacity Building Center for States Adoption Call to Action presentation on agency and court collaboration.
- The long-standing Judicial Engagement Team (JET) program focuses on supporting children to remain safely in their homes, timely exits to permanency, full consideration of well-being, and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). CCIP provides court-focused resources that support best practice implementation with the goal of safe reduction of the number of children in OHC. The JET initiative began with three pilot counties in 2015, starting as an initiative of Casey Family Programs. The initiative was expanded to five additional counties in 2018. In 2020, one additional county was added to the initiative. Outagamie County is our most recent addition to the initiative, and they hit the ground running despite beginning this effort during COVID. Outagamie County has focused on improving time to permanence by analyzing the reasons of delays and continuances within the CHIPS case pre and post disposition. Each county is led by a mentor judge from the original three counties as well as a CCIP representative to provide resources and technical assistance.
- The Juvenile Clerks Workgroup managed by CCIP is made up of experienced juvenile clerks throughout the state, CCIP staff, a CCAP representative, and an Office of Court Operations representative. The workgroup creates and modifies the Juvenile Model Recordkeeping Procedures, CCAP codes, and circuit court forms as a result of statutory changes, issues brought to CCIP’s attention, and requests received from various stakeholders. Juvenile clerks have been trained on new court record event codes in

CCAP to better monitor the timeliness of the six-month permanency reviews that are conducted by administrative panels in some counties. Juvenile clerks are also directed to enter a court record event in the child's case via CCAP indicating each time a six-month administrative panel review occurs, as well as when the review summary is filed with the court. The Juvenile Clerks Workgroup provides advice on ways to improve the thoroughness of the court's findings at hearings and on written orders, accuracy of data entry in CCAP, and notice to all parties.

Legal and Child Welfare Projects

- Joint initiatives with DCF, such as the Tailored Dispositional Orders Project as part of the PIP (see below) and the TPR Timeliness Project described under Item 23, are examples of ways DCF and CCIP are working together to address the case review items. The Tailored Dispositional Orders Project will also address timely permanency and other aspects of the case review system related to timeliness and quality of hearings.
- Wisconsin has a PIP strategy to develop dashboards to better measure and track the timeliness of six-month permanency reviews as well as improve the quality of administrative review panels utilized in Wisconsin are described in Section 3, project approach.
- CCIP has an ongoing collaboration with DCF about updates to standards such as the Ongoing Standards – CCIP has worked with DCF to identify and articulate comprehensive requirements for the six- and 12-month court reviews, how requirements are documented in the permanency plan, how to comply with timeliness requirements for the Adoption and Safe Families Act, and other areas of legal practice important for child welfare policies.

Resources

- Two judicial checklists were developed with input from DCF staff and other stakeholders to make Permanency Hearings more meaningful and improve the quality of the discussion. The Permanency Hearing Judicial Checklist (<https://www.wicourts.gov/courts/programs/docs/permanency2.pdf>) was updated in 2021 and is for the court and parties for 6-month and 12-month reviews conducted by the court. The Post-TPR Permanency Hearing Judicial Checklist (<https://www.wicourts.gov/courts/programs/docs/permanency10.pdf>) is for children who are waiting to be adopted after termination of parental rights have occurred; it was created in 2021.
- Development of resources such as Circuit Court Form JD-1700, Notice of Permanency Hearing, to provide notice and advisement. This form is available at www.wicourts.gov/formdisplay/JD-1700.pdf?formNumber=JD-1700&formType=Form&formatId=2&language=en. DCF has a guide and form available for the child's physical custodian to provide written comments at Permanency Reviews, Permanency Hearings, and other court hearings. This is available at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/doc/2474.docx>.

Training

- The CCIP E-Learning Project, a web-based, self-directed training program that addresses Wisconsin Statutes, case law, and best practices, was released in early FFY 2014. The CCIP E-Learning Project is intended to be a tool that judges, court commissioners, attorneys, caseworkers/social workers, and other individuals can access at any time to obtain information on conducting key court hearings in child welfare cases, including statutory requirements, applicable case law, and recommended best practices. The overall goal of the project is to improve the quality of hearings in CHIPS, termination of parental rights, and adoption proceedings. There is a learning activity specifically related to Permanency Hearings available at http://wicciptraining.com/Content/permanency_latest/story_html5.html. Between December 1, 2015 and April 18, 2021, there have been 25,590 unique visitors (IP addresses), with 64,539-page views, on the CCIP E-Learning Activity website. In 2021, there were 4,550 visitors with 13,348-page views.

Quality Assurance System (Item 25)

How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures?

Data or Information Demonstrating Performance and Initiatives to Address

This systemic factor was found to be an area needing improvement in the 2018 CFSP. A need to more clearly demonstrate a feedback loop with local counties was identified. Collaboration and ongoing communication with counties are key priorities of DCF. Initiatives supporting this feedback loop are described in this section. In addition, Section 3 describes the feedback look as it relates to specific DCF objectives.

Wisconsin's approach to CQI is articulated in the following mission statement.

Wisconsin is committed to a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system that supports the assessment and improvement of child welfare practice, processes, and outcomes at the state and local level. Wisconsin DCF fulfills this mission by providing resources, tools, and processes to build and sustain CQI at the state and local level.

Current Review Instrument/State Efforts to Conduct Case Reviews

Case Reviews

As part of the new Child Welfare CQI System, case reviews play a different role from the way in which quality improvement or assurance activities were carried out previously. One major shift is in how data from multiple sources are considered as part of the quality improvement process, rather than simply operating from a single conclusion, source of information, or judgement upon which to act. DCF conducted several rounds of case reviews related to CPS Access, Initial Assessment, and Ongoing Services.

In the last FFY, DCF has continued their efforts on conducting ongoing case reviews required as part of the PIP Monitoring plan, which was approved by the CB in April 2019. As of this report, DCF completed the PIP Baseline and submitted three additional report periods (DCF's PIP Monitoring Plan requires progress reports are submitted quarterly). To date, DCF has achieved the minimum improvement goals in six of the ten items. Each year, DCF reviews a minimum of 65 cases randomly selected from across the state which includes 40 foster care (i.e. out-of-home care) cases and 25 in-home cases.

DCF has a dedicated unit for conducting case reviews and is well-positioned for conducting a state case review. The team consists of a supervisor, three full-time staff, one part-time staff and two additional full-time contracted staff. The team adopted the Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) in 2015 and is well versed in the review instructions and applicability. To date, the team

has conducted approximately one thousand reviews with the OSRI. The goal is to replicate the case review process used for the PIP Monitored cases and apply it to the Round 4. To prepare, DCF has reviewed Technical Bulletins 12 and 13, and are in the process of determining the impacts of the changes from Round 3 and Round 4 to determine if conducting a state case review is feasible. At this time, the primary issue is obtaining the minimum number of cases per Item (33 according to Technical Bulletin 13 when states opt to review 65 cases). DCF will work to determine if a state-led review process is the most appropriate approach closer to the anticipated CFSR 4 review year for Wisconsin. If this is the selected approach, DCF will work with the Children's Bureau in identifying strategies to reach this number (e.g. stratified samples).

In addition to the Ongoing case reviews required as part of the PIP Monitoring Plan, DCF has continued to review a random, stratified sample of CPS Reports (Access) and Initial Assessment. The Access and Initial Assessment Case Record Review Instruments are based on Wisconsin's Child Welfare [Access and Initial Assessment Standards](#), and [Safety Intervention Standards](#) which specify the requirements necessary to perform child protective services in the state of Wisconsin. These CQI Case Record Review tools can be found in the Appendix D of each respective report. An example of the Access Quality Management Plan is attached.

Initial reports related to the results of Wisconsin's case record reviews can be viewed at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cqireports>. DCF has a stringent quality management plan that includes strict reviewer prerequisites, training, double-blind and secondary reviews, and regular reviewer check-in meetings. The quality management plans can be found in the appendices of each respective report. In the last year, there has not been any new Certified Peer Reviewers recruited, but DCF continues to apply the quality management plan. At a minimum, quality assurance occurs on 20 percent of all reviews conducted (Access, Initial Assessment, and Ongoing Services). When there are inconsistencies in reviews, updates to instructions and communication with reviewers occurs. DCF developed a supplement to the OSRI Instructions that includes additional information in applying the OSRI to Wisconsin. This includes identifying items such as: where to identify information in eWISACWIS, how to apply policy in Items 1 and 17, and identifying feedback from Secondary Oversight from the Children's Bureau.

In addition to the case reviews use as a mechanism to understand and address program and practice improvements over the last five years, DCF has several additional tools to measure, assure, and identify ways to improve the child welfare system.

DCF continues to use the CFSR tool, which was adopted by the state in 2015. CFSR findings are used to assist in the development of key outcomes to be reviewed and inform improvement projects such as the PDSA Collaborative, which focuses on improving caseworker contacts with children and parents (Items 14 and 15) and is described in Section 3.

How CQI Supports Feedback Loops and is Used to Revise Approaches and Measure Progress in Achieving Goals

DCF's CQI system has initiatives that systemically and comprehensively support a feedback loop with counties and other stakeholders. Efforts described in this section include using performance data to identify trends and consider how to adjust policies, programs and services.

CQI Advisory Committee

This committee is comprised of DCF staff and county leaders with the purpose of continual information sharing about all aspects of the child welfare service delivery system and working towards an overarching goal of gathering continual feedback to inform improved practices. This committee is used to formulate CQI guidance related to data analysis and key takeaways. For example, the CQI Advisory Committee provided feedback on the initial assessment case review process and will assist in determining what which key outcomes to review. This committee is routinely brought into discussions about areas of DCF practice to ensure a strong feedback loop with counties. In addition, the CQI Advisory Committee provides oversight and support to Applied Learning Committees and the Systems Change Review process described below.

Applied Learning Communities

In 2019, DCF partnered with WCWPDS to offer a unique approach to professional development, called Applied Learning Communities (ALC's). More information is available at <https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development-unit/applied-learning-communities-alcs/>.

ALC learners self-select to participate on agency teams and enroll in a regional learning cohort. The outcomes of ALCs are two-fold. First, for participating agency teams to engage in a facilitated study on how to increase alignment between written policy expectations and implementation in practice. Second, to help policymakers understand what works and what gets in the way. The ALCs are conducted in regions throughout the state and meetings occur throughout the year. The focus in 2019 was to study the Child Protective Services (CPS) practice requirements for the Case Transition Process outlined in the CPS Safety and Ongoing Standards. A 2019 Annual Agency Stakeholder's Annual Report was generated and details key findings and considerations for continued improvement. DCF received these recommendations in early 2020 and made revisions to policy as a result.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, ALCs in 2020 were modified to meet emerging training needs. The content focus in 2020 was on the use of virtual contacts in child welfare practice. The 2020 Annual Stakeholder's Report highlights details of participation and key learnings.

Systems Change Review

An ad hoc workgroup of the CQI Advisory Committee, called the Safety Action Workgroup, was established to focus on assessing aggregate information learned from the Systems Change Review process. This is the process in which DCF conducts practice reviews on serious incidents. In 2020, the Safety Action Workgroup met several times to aggregate, analyze, and prioritize three years of case review data. This work concluded with the identification of one readily actionable local-level improvement opportunity and two systems-level practice and program improvement opportunities. The workgroup's findings and identified work and improvement opportunities were presented to the Child Welfare CQI Advisory Committee; the local-level improvement opportunity was approved to be piloted and the committee will continue to evaluate the systems-level considerations to determine what system changes may warrant further action.

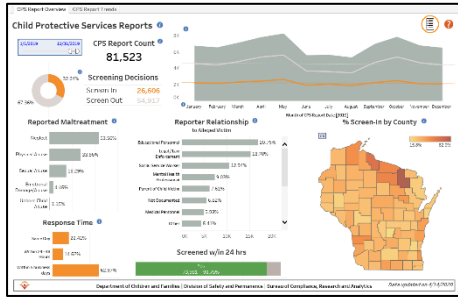
Additional Systemic Quality Improvement Initiatives

In addition to the case review system, DCF uses data on a regular basis to assess, provide to the public, request feedback, and analyze for implications to policy and practice to improve the child welfare system. This is consistent with an overall data-driven decision-making process for child welfare programs and policies. Section 3 includes information on feedback loops as they relate to the specific CFSP and PIP objectives concerning adjusting approaches, soliciting feedback, and measuring progress. Additional mechanisms used to support feedback loops in achieving goals include the following examples.

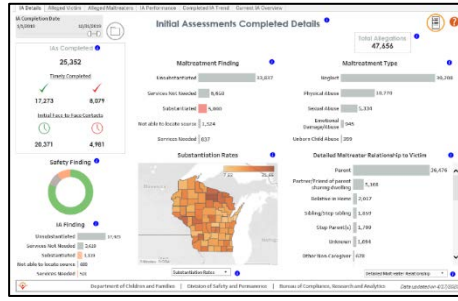
Performance Dashboards

In addition to data that are available, a wide range of child welfare dashboards provide information as a key component of DCF's child welfare CQI system. They are visual reports showing statewide and local agency child welfare performance summary data. DCF launched several new dashboards in January 2020; these dashboards are updated daily and allow for nimble, real-time reporting. County staff are encouraged to regularly review performance in all areas of child welfare practice. Examples of the breadth of data available in our dashboards are shown on the following page. For links to all dashboards, please visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/reports>.

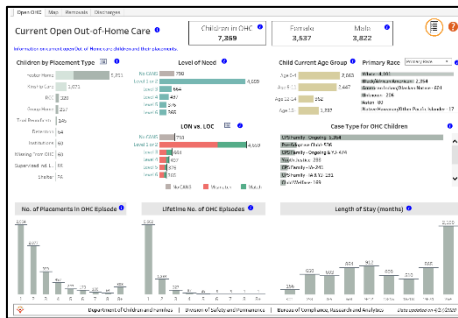
Child Protective Services Reports



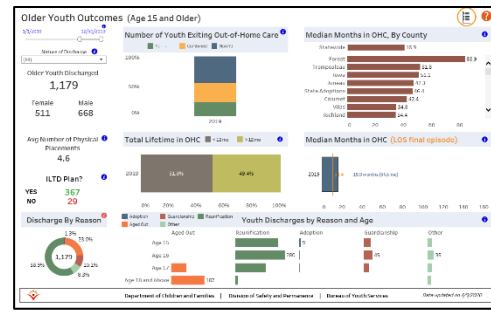
Initial Assessment



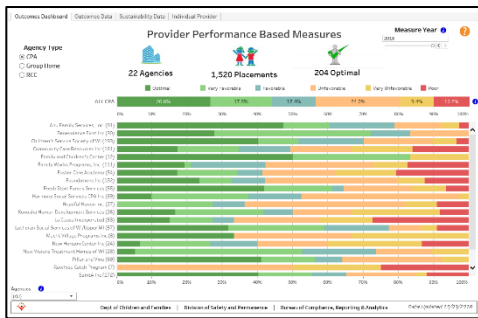
Out of Home Care



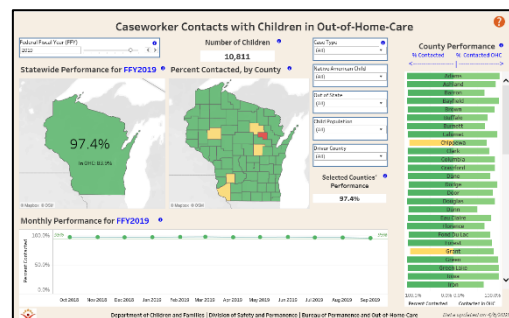
Older Youth Outcomes



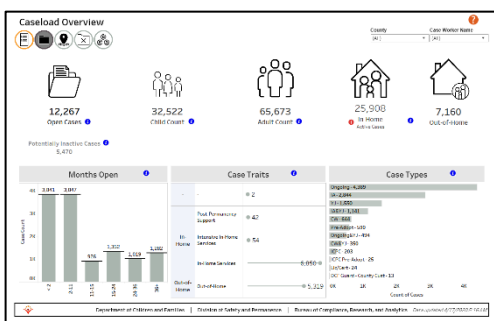
Provider Performance Based Measures



Caseworker Contacts



Worker Dashboard



Training System (Initial, Ongoing and Foster Parent Training, Items 26-28)

Training System Overview – the following section describes the state’s overall training system and is broken into the state response for initial (item 26), ongoing (Item 27) and foster and adoptive training (Item 28).

DCF has a robust child welfare training system that provides high quality, uniform training statewide. DCF contracts with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS), which is housed in the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s School of Social Work, to provide job-specific professional development opportunities for over 10,515 state, county, tribal, and private agency child welfare workers and over 8,084 foster parents throughout the state of Wisconsin. The contract is primarily funded by DCF with some funding provided by county child and tribal welfare agencies. WCWPDS subcontracts with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to develop, deliver, and support all required foundational and special topics training for child welfare workers and supervisors in Milwaukee, and for foster parents statewide. The WCWPDS delivers training in locations throughout the state to ensure training is accessible to workers and foster parents.

The WCWPDS provides a continuum of services intended to facilitate and sustain positive change and support improved outcomes within Wisconsin’s child welfare system. Those services include education, training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, coaching, project management, organizational effectiveness and development, research and evaluation, parent voice, and research to practice.

Data or Information to Demonstrate Overall System Functioning (Items 26-28)

This report uses data from the training system’s Learning Management System, WCWPDS Online, with crossover data collected through the State of Wisconsin’s eWISACWIS database. WCWPDS Online is based in Cornerstone’s proprietary Learning Management System, which tracks certifications and compliance for state of Wisconsin child welfare workers. The report includes data collected from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 (SFY 2020). Additional data is provided with respect to areas of training described under initiatives.

2020 Data Figure:

FY2020 by the numbers

16,142	Total trainees
1049	Total professional development opportunities provided
539	Case-worker professional-development opportunities provided
9219	Case-worker trainees
510	Foster-parent professional-development opportunities provided
6923	Foster-parent trainees

Initiatives to Address Overall Training System Functioning

- DCF contracts with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System to assure that the state is responsive and provides access to training needs throughout the state.
- Level one training evaluations cover the helpfulness of the training, applicability of the job, how learning will be applied for all trainings offered. Efforts are underway to make this evaluation more comprehensive.
- In the last year, WCWPDS conducted a survey of all child welfare supervisor that have had staff enrolled in the foundation training over the last 3-5 years to determine whether foundation training are meeting the needs of the workforce, and how supervisors felt the staff aptitude and knowledge changed. The results of the survey are now attached in a PDF.

Recent enhancements to the training system include:

- Began working on a New Worker Training Model to:
 - Improve the learning experience for our workforce;
 - Better prepare our workforce to meet the challenges of the position and serve families;
 - Improve worker retention; and,
 - Improve the consistency of the learning experience for new workers across the state

DCF believes this new worker model will provide important benefits and address areas of overall concern related to the 2018 CFSR particularly documentation of compliance.

Additional enhancements include the following:

- Dedicated staff to organizational development and statewide process improvement projects including evaluation components;
- Quarterly compliance reports being sent to counties and private providers to inform them of staff compliance with DCF foundation and ongoing training requirements;
- Development of compliance reporting for foster parent licensure and provision of those reports to DCF staff to address with providers;
- Initiation of cohorts of Applied Learning Communities to support local implementation of policy and practice;
- Development and roll out of data in supervision training to encourage child welfare supervisors to utilize data as part of their staff development and system enhancement processes;
- Continued enhancement of the statewide calendaring system;
- Development of more flexible learning alternatives including synchronous and asynchronous learning modality platforms;
- Enhanced coordination of Organizational Effectiveness (OE) activities with CQI processes;
- Initiation of a Parent Supporting Parents initiative to include lived experience in WI child welfare practice; and,

- Development of a Plan Do Study Act process as part of the Wisconsin PIP to assist counties with improving the quality of caseworker visits. This effort is being coordinated by the CQI Advisory Committee.

INITIAL TRAINING INITIATIVES (ITEM 26)

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions?

This area was rated an area needing improvement in 2018 CFSR. Compliance data did not show that all workers were completing initial training requirements in a timely manner. DCF is working on addressing issues related to documentation of required training as part of the state PIP. Wisconsin's initial training has several components to meet the needs of new workers including pre-service training, basic intake, and foundation training. These areas of focus are described below and information about compliance is provided for each area.

1. Pre-Service Training

Administrative rules require new child protective services caseworkers and supervisors to complete the caseworker pre-service training as part of their initial development. The web-based pre-service training offered by the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS), combined with the agency-specific orientation plan that may include job shadowing, agency orientation and other related activities, introduces new caseworkers to the basic skills and knowledge they need to carry out their child protective services responsibilities. Because the pre-service training is web-based, all new caseworkers can begin the training immediately upon hire and the system tracks their completion.

To assure that the modules are consistent with state policies, initiatives, and standards, DCF staff review and update the modules as new state policies, initiatives, and standards are released. Additionally, staff review each module on a three-year cycle to include updated research and best practice guidance.

Prior to being assigned as a primary worker in the statewide automated child welfare system, eWisACWIS, caseworkers must complete, or be exempted from, the pre-service training that consists of 14 modules:

- Introduction to Child Protective Services
- Engaging in Child Protective Services
- Safety
- Co-Occurring Considerations
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Access
- Court
- Initial Assessment

- Ongoing Services
- Trauma
- Placement
- Confirming Safe Environments
- Permanence
- Guide to Standards

These modules can be viewed at <https://wcpds.wisc.edu/>.

Pre-Service Compliance and Data

To support supervisors and agencies with onboarding their new access, initial assessment, and ongoing child protective services staff and ensure those staff meet their training requirements, WCWPDS reaches out to new caseworkers to share the Welcome Packet and Professional Development Plan and introduce the new caseworker to WCWPDS. The Welcome Packet identifies the pre-service, foundation, and ongoing training requirements and provides information on training policies, procedures, registration, and the Learning Management System (WCWPDS Online). Compliance with the pre-service training requirement for FY2020 is as follows: of the 407 CPS workers who started during that time period, 326 workers completed (81%), 75 workers were in progress of completing (18%), and 6 workers did not complete the requirement (1%).

2. Foundation Training

Administrative rules require new child protective services caseworkers who have access, investigation/initial assessment, and ongoing child protectives services responsibilities to complete, unless exempted with county approval, 15 days (90 hours) of caseworker foundation training within their initial two years of employment. Dependent upon job function, new caseworkers are required to complete from 9 to 11 days of training on topics related to engaging families, safety assessment, ICWA/WICWA, and placement. The additional 4 to 6 days of training are chosen from a menu of foundational training courses that are designed to meet job-specific competencies.

The foundation training curricula provides the bedrock of knowledge, awareness, skill development, and values for child welfare staff. The foundation training is evidence-informed and heavily focuses on skill development and application; multiple opportunities for practice are integrated into each skill-focused foundation training session. Foundation training is provided in eight locations around the state throughout the year, with multiple offerings throughout the year in Milwaukee, making the training accessible to caseworkers in all counties across the state.

The required foundation courses include:

- Engaging to Build Trusting Relationships (2 days);
- Supporting Change Through Engagement (2 days);
- Case Practice with American Indian Tribes (2 days);

- Placement (2 days);
- Safety in Child Protective Services – Present Danger (1 day); and,
- Safety in Child Protective Services – Impending Danger (2 days) (not required for Access workers)

The menu option foundation courses include:

- Trauma Informed Practice (2 days);
- In the Best Interest of the Child: Making the Most of Family Interaction (2 days);
- Access (1 day);
- Initial Assessment (3 days);
- Ongoing Case Planning (2 days); and,
- Concurrent Permanency Planning (2 days).

Foundation Training Compliance and Data

Like pre-service trainings, DCF staff review and update foundation courses as new state policies, initiatives, and standards are released, thereby ensuring that the courses are consistent with state policies, initiatives, and standards. Additionally, staff review each course on a three-year cycle to include updated research and best practice guidance as well as enhanced skill application.

The training rule is written to require those with the primary job functions of access, investigation/initial assessment, and ongoing child protective services to complete foundation training. Some workers have multiple child protective services responsibilities; others have both child protective services and other child welfare, or human services related responsibilities (such as youth justice, children’s long-term support, foster care, after hours). Caseworkers with primary foster care, after hours, youth justice, and children’s long-term support responsibilities are not required to complete foundation training based upon the requirements within the training rule, even if they have some access, investigation/initial assessment, and ongoing child protective services responsibilities.

The most recent cohort for which DCF has complete foundation training data includes those new child welfare workers who started their employment in FY 2018 and had until FY2020 to complete their two-year training requirements. Of the 152 workers within that cohort, overall compliance with the training rule, including all 90 hours as well as the required course offerings, was 45.4% with the remaining 54.6% meeting some but not all of the requirements. For the workers who were able to complete the requirements, it took them an average of 13 months to complete all 90 training hours.

As part of the 2020 PIP, DCF is working with WCWPDS on processes to better track completion of foundation training for all caseworkers with primary job functions of access, initial assessment, and ongoing child protective services. Part of this effort includes WCWPDS following up about DCF 43 training rule. For example, as of January 2018, WCWPDS sends quarterly reports outlining worker compliance to each county human services supervisor in

Wisconsin. These reports outline the compliance level for each supervisor's direct reports and what courses a given worker still needs to take to comply with the training requirement.

3. Basic Intake Training

DCF and WCWPDS continue to take on a significantly larger role in the youth justice arena; this is the direct result of oversight for the community-based Youth Justice system transferring from the Department of Corrections (DOC) to DCF in January 2016. As a result, Basic Intake Training is a responsibility of WCWPDS, and the training system works closely with DCF to continue and refine the development and delivery of this professional development service.

Wisconsin Statutes require that any county staff that provide intake services under either of these chapters must successfully complete 30 hours of Basic Intake Training. The format for providing the required 30 hours of training is through an 18-hour face-to-face training in which participants learn about relevant statutes, court processes, youth engagement, adolescent brain development, trauma, and family dynamics. The initial 18 hours are followed up approximately six weeks later with a 12-hour practical application component. Participants involved in this interactive component learn how to best match services to the individuals and families they are dealing with. The new philosophy for this training is to help learners understand not only what they *can* do but also what should they do and how should they do it.

Because county on-call workers perform custody intake, part of intake services, most child welfare social workers in the state are required to complete this training. As part of completing this requirement, the worker must achieve a score of 70 percent or higher on an exam taken at the end of the 30 hours; after doing so, they receive a certificate of completion. Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, 425 individuals completed the Basic Intake Worker Training.

ONGOING TRAINING (ITEM 27)

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?

Data or Information to Demonstrate Functioning and Initiatives to Address Training Systemic Factor

This area of practice was found to be an area needing improvement in the 2018 CFSR due to reporting issues that Wisconsin is addressing through the PIP. The current ongoing training system builds upon the knowledge, awareness, skill development, and values included in foundation training by providing in-depth knowledge, awareness, values, and skill development training around a specific child welfare topic. Different forms of input gathering help shape the suite of special skills and training topics available to caseworkers statewide. These include, but are not limited to, direct feedback from training participants by way of course evaluations, the statewide training needs flash survey, DCF defined priorities, and feedback provided at regional supervisor meetings. Trainers with specific expertise in the specialized topic areas facilitate many of the ongoing training courses.

In addition to the ongoing training opportunities provided for access, initial assessment, and ongoing child protective services staff, courses specifically designed for foster care coordinators are offered regularly. These include DCF 56 Training: New Licensors (DCF 56 outlines the licensing requirements for foster homes), SAFE Structured Analysis Family Evaluation Training, and Foster Parent Foundation Training of Content.

In addition to the training requirements already listed, state licensing rules require licensed social workers to complete four hours of Ethics and Boundaries training during each two-year licensing period. Based upon county-identified priority, the WCWPDS develops and delivers a new Ethics and Boundaries training topic to caseworkers and supervisors every two years. WCWPDS provides over 60 sessions of Ethics and Boundaries training to caseworkers and supervisors around the state each licensing period.

In order to meet the in-time learning needs of caseworkers and decrease workers' time outside of the office, WCWPDS and DCF developed the following web-based learning courses: Understanding Child Sex Trafficking in Wisconsin, Transition to Adulthood, Safety Overview for Non-CPS Staff, Confirming Safe Environments, Alternative Response Orientation, and CANS Tool Training and Certification. Caseworkers can complete these web-based courses via WCWPDS Online; this allows for ease of access and tracking on their training transcripts. The collection of available online trainings continues to grow with new web-based courses developed each year. Descriptions about the web-based courses are available via <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/web-based-courses/>.

In addition to the training provided by the WCWPDS, caseworkers and supervisors can attend training offered by other organizations and apply it to their ongoing training requirements. As

part of this process, caseworkers and supervisors are then required to enter these sessions into WCWPDS Online as an external training so that their PDS Online transcript captures all their completed training hours. In-service/ongoing training hour requirements cannot be exempted by a county agency, so these outside trainings cannot supersede those training requirements.

Special Skills and Topics/In-Service Training Compliance and Data

Based upon WCWPDS Online completion reports, all caseworkers with the primary job functions of access, investigation/initial assessment, and ongoing child protective services are not in 100 percent compliance with their 30-hours of required in-service/ongoing training. Caseworkers with other child welfare primary job functions, such as foster care and after-hours, are not required to complete ongoing training per the training rule (DCF 43) unless they are also licensed by the state as social workers, and not all counties require their child welfare staff to be licensed social workers.

DCF and WCWPDS have taken several steps to improve training completion and documentation. For example, in response to the 2018 CFSR and included in the 2020 PIP, WCWPDS improved the training compliance documentation system for trainings it offers. It is now working to ameliorate the issue of non-WCWPDS trainings being underreported because many are not currently included in the database that WCWPDS uses to complete compliance training reports.

Additionally, as it does for initial training requirements, WCWPDS sends quarterly reports to each county human services supervisor in Wisconsin outlining worker compliance with ongoing training requirements and what courses the worker needs to complete to comply with the requirement. As previously noted, the hope is that this process increases completion and compliance rates. WCWPDS is also working on additional means of improving compliance documentation. The most recent compliance data for the ongoing training component indicates that of the 793 workers who were required to complete the 30 hours of ongoing training, 338 completed (43%) and 455 did not complete (57%). The next two-year timeframe for workers to complete their ongoing requirements ended on February 28, 2021. DCF and WCWPDS will collect and review this data to determine if efforts to improve compliance have been effective.

Tribal Training

Wisconsin is committed to ensuring that it meets the training needs of Indian Child Welfare (ICW) caseworkers in the state's 11 federally recognized tribes. As sovereign nations, each tribe is responsible for establishing training requirements for its staff. As a result, there are no state training requirements for ICW caseworkers unless the caseworker is a social worker certified by the state of Wisconsin. However, ICW caseworkers have job responsibilities or training needs that can be addressed through WCWPDS. To identify these training needs, the Intertribal Child Welfare Steering Committee made up of all 11 ICW directors, meets with a representative of WCWPDS every other month. Together, the group develops a list of training topics and the tribes vote on which topics to focus on each year. There are typically three identified training topics offered to tribal staff each year.

Supervisor Training

Administrative rule requires that new child protective services supervisors, unless exempted, complete the caseworker pre-service and foundation training as part of their initial training. They must complete the caseworker pre-service training before providing direct supervision to a child protective services caseworker and must also complete 15 days of the caseworker foundation training within 12 months of hire. In addition, child protective services supervisors, like their staff, are required to complete 30-hours of in-service (special skills and topics/ongoing) training related to their professional responsibilities during each two-year state licensing period.

In addition to offering caseworker pre-service, foundation, and ongoing training, as described in previous sections, WCWPDS offers annual supervisor foundation and supervisor-specific ongoing training topics. The supervisor foundation training focuses on both child welfare specific supervision issues and basic elements of effective supervision. While new supervisors are required to complete the caseworker foundation training, they are not required to complete supervisor foundation training.

The supervisor foundation training is continually developed and has been offered statewide on a regular basis since July 2017. The supervisor foundation training series includes:

- Stepping Up to Supervision: Supervisor Orientation (1 day) – pre-requisite to attend any of the foundation courses; offered monthly;
- Supervisor Foundation - Administrative Supervision: Supervisor as Manager (2 days);
- Supervisor Foundation - Educational Supervision: Supervisor as Coach (2 days);
- Supervisor Foundation - Supportive Supervision: Supervisor as Team Leader (2 days); and,
- Supervisor Foundation - Clinical Supervision: Supervisor as Critical Thinker (2 days).

The following training and partnership efforts are several special initiatives that DCF works with WCWPDS on.

Organizational Effectiveness

Description

Organizational Effectiveness (OE) is a systemic and systematic approach to organizational improvement. DCF instituted this process as part of its response to the 2010 CFSR in 2011. DCF, in conjunction with WCWPDS, adopted the American Public Human Services Association's DAPIM™ model for continuous improvement. It is not an initiative or a single event or program; it is a way to provide system support to county human/social service agencies interested in solving a concrete problem or implementing a change related to child welfare.

The seven-day, team-based experience is facilitated by skilled and seasoned professionals from WCWPDS and spans four months. Organizational Effectiveness services are offered on a range of issues organizations involved in public child welfare typically experience. These include:

- Policy Alignment;
- Performance Management;
- Leadership Development;

- Translating Mission, Vision, Values into Practice;
- Employee Engagement;
- Organizational Structure/Work Process/Job Design;
- Strategic Planning;
- Implementation Support;
- Capacity Building; and,
- Program Improvement.

The OE process looks at areas that need to be improved and makes a conscious effort to stratify task work (structures, polices, procedures, processes and methods) with relational items (culture, values, trust, politics, communication, teamwork and collaboration). Through the development of a Desired Future State (DFS), a team defines what it wants the identified area to look and feel like when the OE process is completed. The team then implements the model by listing strengths and gaps, prioritizing gaps, defining root causes, and developing workable remedies. They also stratify remedies according to quick-wins and mid- and long-term fixes (see DAPIM model).

Objectives

Organizational Effectiveness seeks to strengthen county organizations by improving performance, performance capacity, and outcomes for the children, youth, and families served by the agency. It builds capacity by taking a systematic (step-by-step approach) with a goal of impacting the entire system systemically (staff, client, and community). This is accomplished by having teams develop the ability to reflect on, process, and learn tools to put into application.

Data

OE projects have been completed in 32 more counties. Areas addressed include reduction in OHC costs, redesign of crisis on-call, employee retention and recruitment, integration of children's long-term care waiver, redesign of child welfare service delivery system, implementing and integrating trauma-informed care, integrating child welfare and behavioral health, developing more comprehensive youth services, integrating child welfare and juvenile justice services, building agency morale and developing trust-based relationships.

Storyboards were created for some counties that had completed OE in prior years and are available on the WCWPDS website at <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/organizational-effectiveness.htm>. The purpose of sharing these storyboards was to share the projects that counties have worked on including DFS, priority gaps, root causes, remedies, and recommendations made by the OE facilitation team.

Annually, the Organizational Effectiveness process is provided to six to eight new counties based on identified need and length of time required for each project. The WCWPDS staff assigned to this project make efforts to develop differing programming levels depending on topics to be addressed and county need. The original seven-day format has worked very well for many counties, but some agencies have been unable to participate due to the significant time commitment required by their staff. DCF and WCWPDS hope that by offering differing levels, it will be possible to offer this OE process to more county agencies throughout the state. In

addition to county-level trainings, it should be noted that WCWPDS staff worked with the Wisconsin County Human Service Association (WCHSA) on an OE project intended to assist WCHSA with developing processes and protocols for decision-making among their diverse membership.

Critical Incident Review

As of 2016, DCF contracts with Collaborative Safety, LLC, to provide training and support in implementing a new review protocol to evaluate and address systemic factors affecting child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities based on a safety science approach. The *Developing Champions for Change: A Scientific Approach to the Review of Critical Incidents* Training Institute is a four-day training institute designed to provide a formal skill set to professionals in the area of organizational safety and quality assurance in child welfare.

The *Developing Champions for Change Training Institute* is comprised of four courses:

- *Introduction to Human Factors and Systems Safety (Day 1)*
This course provides a framework of system safety and is designed to engage participants with a comprehensive and holistic introduction to human factors and system safety. Contrasting models and approaches are presented to give participants an increased command of relevant scientific literature.
- *Human Factors Debriefing (Day 2)*
This course examines the child welfare system and those who interact within it. Participants leave with the ability to independently use Human Factors principles in their workplace. They will understand the human contribution to success and failure as well as how to build systems that promote safe decisions and actions of the people who work within them.
- *Accident Analysis (Day 3)*
The course is designed to give participants the skillsets to independently analyze critical incidents common in the child welfare system. Participants leave with practical tools to use in their analysis, including skills specific to report writing. Participants will be able to take the results from the accident analysis and generate findings and conclusions that will strategically support systemic change.
- *Implementation and System Change (Day 4)*
This course focuses on leveraging the skillsets provided in the first three courses for system change. Participants will learn to analyze findings for underlying systemic themes. The course then provides insight on how to develop effective recommendations and provide meaningful feedback to the organization regarding system improvements and valuable learning opportunities.

Conferences

DCF works collaboratively with the WCWPDS and the University of Wisconsin-Madison to plan, deliver, and support several conferences. These include the:

- Public Child Welfare Conference;
- Statewide Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts;
- Youth Services Conference; and,
- Adoption Conference

Public Child Welfare Conference

The Public Child Welfare Conference targets agency directors, managers, and supervisors and is held every other year. Themes vary for each conference, but have the common thread of supporting statewide initiatives, county needs, and state and national trends. The conference historically reaches 500 state child welfare leaders.

Statewide Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts

The Statewide Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts targets circuit court and tribal court judges, tribal chairpersons, circuit court commissioners that hear juvenile cases, district attorneys, corporate counsels, tribal attorneys, private bar attorneys that represent parents and youth, and guardians ad litem. Participant composition is designed to bring together county, state, and tribal leaders from multidisciplinary backgrounds to contribute to a dialogue and developing pragmatic approaches to their work serving youth. Presentations and workshops are subsequently aimed at solutions-based approaches for serving youth in the child welfare and youth justice systems. The conference provides substantive training in a multi-disciplinary setting on topics that impact child welfare, legal and judicial practice to improve safety, permanence, and well-being outcomes for Wisconsin's children and families. Conference capacity is generally 500 participants.

Youth Services Conference

The Youth Services Conference targets independent living coordinators, social workers working with older youth and youth as they age out of care, Bureau of Youth Services grantees, congregate care providers, and youth justice workers and providers. The conference addresses issues relevant to the wide range of youth currently or formerly served in OHC, with topics focusing on supporting youth while they are in care, as well as in their transition to independence. Conference capacity grew from 150 the first year to 300 participants the second year and to 600 participants in 2019. Applications for Continuing Education and Judicial Education credits are available. Social workers can also receive Continuing Education Hours. The UW-Madison Division of Continuing Studies is an approved continuing education provider through the Association of Social Work Boards.

Adoption Services Conference

Wisconsin's Adoption Conference targets social workers from public and private agencies, adoption workers, Public Adoption Program workers, and private child placement agencies. The focus of this conference is to improve services and supports for Wisconsin adoption workers. Capacity for this event is generally 250 participants.

FOSTER PARENT TRAINING (ITEM 28)

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?

Data or Information to Demonstrate System Functioning and Initiatives to Address

This area of practice was found to be an Area Needing Improvement in the 2018 CFSR. Efforts continue to address the reporting of compliance noted in this process. Foster parents reported access to a wide range of training options in the CFSR, these training option and Wisconsin's level system are described in this section.

Required Training by Level of Care Certification

		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Pre-Placement Curriculum	Foster Care Overview	Pre-Placement: 6 hours	Pre-Placement: 6 hours	Pre-Placement: 36 hours	Pre-Placement: 36 hours
	Expectations of Foster Care				
	Caring for Children in Foster Care				
	Developing and Maintaining Family Connections				
	Foster Family Self-Care				
Foundation Curriculum	Permanency	Initial Licensing: Not Required	Initial Licensing: 30 hours (to be done in first licensing period)		
	Cultural Dynamics				
	Child Abuse and Neglect				
	Effects of Maltreatment on Development				
	Attachment				
	Separation and Placement				
	Importance of Family Connections				
	Guidance and Positive Discipline				
	Access to Resources				
				Plus 4 hours of Child-Specific Training	
Various curriculums	Crisis Management	Not Required	Topics Not Required	Initial Licensing: 24 hours	Initial Licensing: 24 hours
	Sexuality and Sexual Development				
	Sexual Abuse				
	Effects of Maltreatment and Trauma on Child Development				
	Building Life Skills				
	Building Birth Family Connections				
	Other Topics Required by Licensing Agency				
	Ongoing: Not Required	Ongoing: 10 hours each year of licensure beyond the initial licensing period	Ongoing: 18 hours each year of licensure beyond the initial licensing period	Ongoing: 24 hours each year of licensure beyond the initial licensing period	

Pre-Placement Training

DCF contracts with WCWPDS for the curriculum development and maintenance for the Pre-Placement training and the Foundation curriculum and for the development of various ongoing trainings. Additionally, WCWPDS conducts Train the Trainer sessions of the Foundation curriculum for foster care coordinators from county and private child placing agencies. Private child placing agencies generally license foster homes with a Level of Care of 3 or 4 and conduct their own training of the required curriculum for their licensed foster homes. Private child placing agencies receive financial support to implement training as an included item in their administrative rates for foster care placements.

In addition to the trainings conducted through WCWPDS, DCF has other resources to support foster parent training. Per its contract with DCF, the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center is required to provide up to six webinar trainings a year for foster parents. These webinar trainings have an interactive capacity to give foster parents an opportunity to ask questions and provide input during the training. County agencies also provide foster parent training that is financially supported using Title IV-E pass through funding. Forty-eight counties utilized pass-through funding in CY2020 to support additional foster parent training. County agencies can access this funding for mileage reimbursement, child care, materials costs, and other allowable costs related to the provision of foster parent training. This can be used for pre-placement, if provided face-to-face, and foundation training to support attendance at the training and ongoing trainings. DCF also provides financial support to the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association for a spring and a fall conference for foster and adoptive parents.

As previously mentioned, the WCWPDS subcontracts with UW-Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership (MCWPDS- Milwaukee) to oversee and deliver training to county, tribal and DMCPD-licensed foster families licensed at Levels 1 and 2. Increasingly, private Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) licensing families at Levels 3 and 4 have the option to send families to MCWPDS-Milwaukee sponsored trainings as well.

The foster care licensing agency reviews foster care providers' training compliance during the licensing period and at time of renewal. If a foster parent is not in compliance with the licensing regulations, he/she may request an exception. The DCF Exceptions Panel must approve any request for an exception or waiver to pre-placement or initial licensing training at all Levels of Care certification. However, the licensing agency may grant an exception or a waiver for ongoing training at any level. The table below lists the exceptions the DCF Exceptions Panel and licensing agencies granted for foster parent training since 2011, when the training requirements went into effect. Exceptions are time-limited and may include additional conditions. It is important to note that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to shift many trainings from in-person to virtual, there was an increase in exceptions and waivers approved in 2020.

Waiver Exception Information

WAIVER/EXCEPTION DESCRIPTION	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
56.13(4)(a) 2. LEVEL 2 Initial Licensing	135	71	79	54	52	21	32	21	1	0
56.13(4)(a) 3. LEVEL 2 Ongoing	43	37	22	25	15	21	7	10	4	1
56.13(4)(b) LEVEL 2 Child-Specific Pre- Placement	2	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
56.13(5)(b) 1. LEVEL 3 Pre-Placement	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	6	0	0
56.13(5)(b) 2. LEVEL 3 Initial Licensing	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
56.13(5)(b) 3. LEVEL 3 Ongoing	7	6	5	3	6	17	8	7	0	6
56.13(6)(b) 3. LEVEL 4 Ongoing	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	5	0	0

Pre-Placement

Foster parents can complete all pre-placement requirement for Levels 1 and 2 and six hours of the pre-placement training requirement for Levels 3 and 4 by completing the online course at <https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/Pre-Placement.htm>. Some efforts to make this training more accessible include in-person sessions and a combination of online and in-person options. An in-person pre-placement series, specifically adapted to relative caregivers, is offered in Milwaukee, and the pre-placement transcript is available in Spanish.

Foster Parent Foundation Training

Number of participants at Foster Parent Foundation Trainings

The report pulls the number of seats taken between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. This pertains to instructor-led trainings.

Foster Parent Foundation Training	Total Participants
Foster Parent Foundation Module 1: Partners in Permanency	703
Foster Parent Foundation Module 2: Cultural Dynamics in Placement	612
Foster Parent Foundation Module 3: Maintaining Family Connectedness	650
Foster Parent Foundation Module 4a: Dynamics of Abuse and Neglect Part 1	676
Foster Parent Foundation Module 4b: Dynamics of Abuse and Neglect Part 2	671
Foster Parent Foundation Module 5: Impact of Maltreatment on Child Development	625
Foster Parent Foundation Module 6: Attachment	569
Foster Parent Foundation Module 7: Separation and Placement	529
Foster Parent Foundation Module 8: Guidance and Positive Discipline	567
Foster Parent Foundation Module 9: Effects of Fostering on the Family	527

Foster parents who completed TIP

The report captures foster parents who registered for and attended the Trauma Informed Parenting trainings offered between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

Trauma Informed Parenting (T.I.P)	Total Participants
Trauma Informed Parenting (T.I.P)	75
Fostering Traumatized Kids Series	4

WCWPDS-Milwaukee, in close collaboration with DCF, also develops and delivers “Training of Content” (TOC) sessions to prepare trainers offering the Initial Licensing/Foundation modules through county, CPAs, or tribes. TOC sessions are offered at least annually and more often after curriculum revisions.

Initial Licensing

Foster parents licensed at Level 2 and above must complete initial licensing training. Administrative Rule (DCF 56) specifies the topics that must be covered, all of which are covered by the “Wisconsin Foundation Training for Foster Parents” curriculum that WCWPDS-Milwaukee offers throughout the state. The Foundation curriculum has also been translated into Spanish and Spanish-speaking trainers provide the training when the need arises.

Initial Licensing Levels 2-4 Compliance

This data set consists of foster parents with an initial licensure date between 2019 and 2020 and their fulfillment of Initial Licensing requirements prior to 2021.

Ongoing Foster Parent Training Requirements

Foster parents are required to complete ongoing training in each licensing period that follows the initial period. The training completed should be based on a plan created for each family that reflects its needs and the needs of children in its care. Ongoing training requirements vary by Level of Care certification and can be satisfied in several ways through WCWPDS- Madison and WCWPDS- Milwaukee, community agencies, educational institutions, and web-based sources. Options for ongoing training include face-to-face consultation with professionals with expertise about specific topics; video, audio, and web-based presentations and resources; support groups; adult education courses; books and periodicals; television and radio presentations; mentor family consultations; and conferences, workshops, seminars, and webinars. Books, periodicals, web-based and broadcast materials can only account for a maximum of 20 percent of the total required hours.

More detailed descriptions of all foster parent trainings can be found at <https://wcpds.wisc.edu/>.

Ongoing Foster Parent Training Compliance Level 2-4

This data set below consists of foster parents with an initial licensure prior to 2018 and their ongoing training requirements they registered for or completed prior to 2021. It consists of data for foster parents with an initial licensure date before June 20, 2017, and the Ongoing training they registered for or completed between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020.

Level 2 Foster Parents

	Foster parents who completed 10 hours of training	Foster parents who did not complete 10 hours of training
BOS (893)	448 / 50%	445 / 50%
Milwaukee (198)	85 / 43%	113 / 57%
Total (1,091)	533 / 49%	558 / 51%

Level 3 Foster Parents

	Foster parents who completed 18 hours of training	Foster parents who did not complete 18 hours of training
BOS (131)	56 / 43%	75 / 57%
Milwaukee (139)	60 / 43%	79 / 57%
Total (270)	116 / 43%	154 / 57%

Level 4 Foster Parents

	Foster parents who completed 24 hours of training	Foster parents who did not complete 24 hours of training
BOS (124)	61 / 49%	63 / 51%
Milwaukee (27)	7 / 26%	20 / 74%
Total (151)	68 / 45%	83 / 55%

Assessing Foster Parent Training Needs

In 2017, University of Wisconsin-Madison Survey Center collaborated with DCF to develop a survey about the training system. The purpose was to identify the training needs, strengths, and challenges Wisconsin foster parents and use that information to inform departmental strategic planning experience. The survey was sent via email to 5,031 licensed foster parents in Wisconsin on September 22, 2017. About 1,400 foster parents submitted a response, which is a 28 percent response rate. Collectively, responses informed decisions about new ongoing training curriculum development and which topics from the current offerings to provide in 2018 and beyond.

Like efforts to better document and track child welfare agencies' training completion and compliance, DCF is working with WCWPDS-Madison to determine more effective ways of tracking foster parents' training completion.

Brief Assessment of Progress Toward Outcomes for Items 26-28

Stakeholder comments during the 2018 CFSR for initial and ongoing training note that though available trainings are robust and comprehensive, more options would be helpful –particularly in rural areas of the state. As noted, DCF is working with the WCWPDS to address issues related to compliance with training requirements and tracking. In addition, the new worker training model and other areas of focus for the training system described in this section will help improve training options and recording in the future.

Service Array Systemic Factor (Items 29-30)

How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that a comprehensive array of services is available in all jurisdictions throughout the state and that services are individualized to meet the needs of children and families (Item 30).

Overview

Wisconsin has a state-supervised, county-administered service delivery system; the exception is Milwaukee County, which is state-administered through DCF's Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services. The state-supervised, county-administered structure offers many benefits, including the ability for local jurisdictions to develop and deliver services tailored to meet the needs of children and families. This includes, but is not limited to, tailoring culturally specific services and supports for non-English speaking populations, tribal populations, and different races and ethnicities represented in the state.

A key goal of Wisconsin's service model is to keep children and youth safely in their own home, family, tribe, and community whenever possible. As such, services and supports are designed to work with children, youth, and families to expand healthy connections to supports and individuals in their communities and tribes and bolster resiliency in families to help them thrive. Wisconsin strengthened and reissued its Child Welfare Model for Practice in 2016. This was possible through a collaborative partnership with tribes, counties, and other stakeholders and by abiding by the guiding principle that services be based on trust, engagement, accountability, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, workforce support, and family-centered practices. The Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice is the compass which guides the state's child welfare work and decision-making. Especially over the past year, DCF has increased its emphasis on developing a continuum of services for families serving children in their home, children in out-of-home care placements, supports for children who will be served in the QRTP settings, and supports needed when children transition out of a QRTP setting. These collective efforts will help strengthen the statewide service array.

Wisconsin conformity with service array standards both frames and is reinforced by required state policies and practices, DCF-delivered programs and supports, DCF collaborations with stakeholders to meet service array needs, and referrals to other providers' key statewide efforts.

Data or Information to Address System Functioning

The 2018 CFSR found this area of practice to be an area needing improvement. Waiting lists for services, particularly related to mental health and AODA were noted. Wisconsin's PIP is focused on developing a better overall assessment for children and families to address this area of practice and continues to work with the Department of Health Services (DHS) to address how to better connect families to key resources. Related to individualizing services, a finding was that more

flexible funding was needed to support families. DCF now offers the targeted safety services program statewide as a critical resource to provide flexible funding to families that help them meet their child welfare goals. This is part of Wisconsin's Program Improvement Plan.

Additional data on this area of performance can also be found in the case review and administrative data related to well-being outcomes can be found in the Assessment of Progress Toward Outcomes section related to permanency 2 and well-being outcomes 1, on pages 35-45. Key assessment data are available related by way of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS). In Wisconsin, children in OHC must undergo a CANS evaluation and the tool requires that goals be developed any identified need(s). Progress on and/or completion of these goals must be tracked as part of the case planning and service provision processes. A worker must complete the CANS within 30 days of an out-of-home placement and every six months thereafter while the child is in OHC; re-assessment must occur sooner if the child's placement changes. In these ways, the CANS is a valuable tool to customize services for all families in OHC. Dashboards provide valuable information about youth needs and services that help workers to develop plans that meet families' needs.

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment process and tool is used to:

- Identify the needs and strengths of the child.
- Determine the ability of the provider to meet the child's needs.
- Evaluate the stability of the placement.
- Individualize the needs of services for children in OHC. (Item 30)

How DCF Supports Plan Development to Ensure Access to the Service Array

DCF provides training, technical assistance, and support to help supervisors and caseworkers follow DCF standards; these are described below.

The Ongoing Services Standards, available via <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/ongoing-services-standards.pdf>, details requirements related to assessing service needs, when services should be provided, and how they may address issues regarding a child's safety, permanence, and well-being.

The Ongoing Services Standards also include requirements that relate to service array; specifically, that the child welfare caseworker gather and document information pertaining to child and caregiver needs and strengths, develop a case plan to identify goals and corresponding services needs that support safe case closure, and routinely monitor goal achievement to ensure adequate service provision and desired change. This must be done within six months after development of the initial case plan and every six months thereafter.

The CPS Safety Intervention Standards, available via <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>, detail policy and provide additional guidance to workers on how to assess the safety of children who are living in their familial homes or have been placed in OHC, as well show to provide services. The standards address situations where a child welfare caseworker must determine whether a child can safely remain in his or her familial home or must be removed from the home for safety reasons.

They further provide guidance with respect to measures that may allow a child to remain in his or her familial home, such as developing a protective plan or in-home safety plan that identifies services that will control for or manage threats to safety. Additional guidance includes how services may be used to manage impending danger threats as part of an in-home or out-of-home safety plan.

In addition, DCF staff developed a Foster Parent Handbook, available via <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/handbook>, to provide critical information to foster parents and children in care about training services and supports.

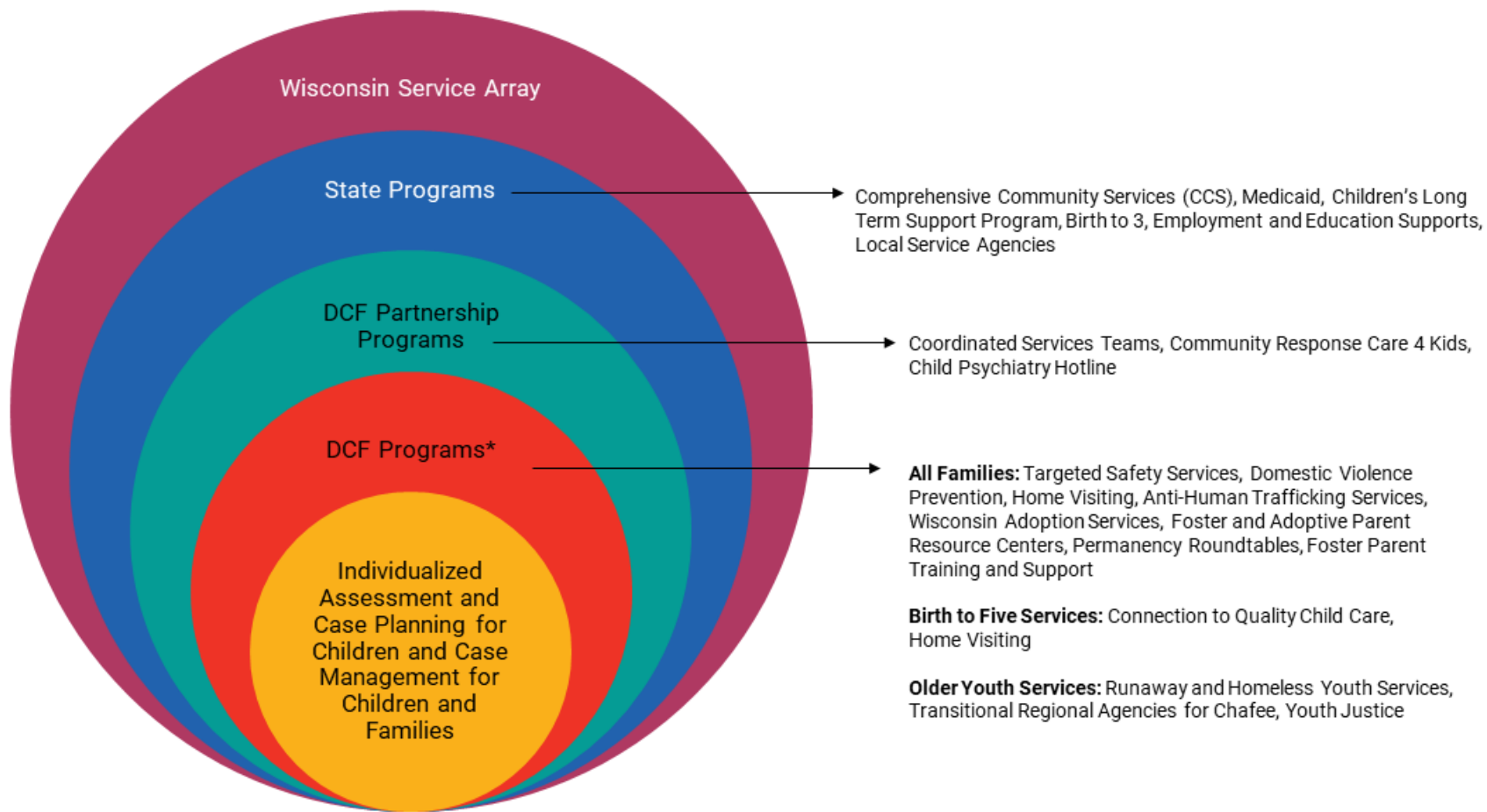
Required expectations spelled out in standards related to meeting the service needs of families include the following.

- Evaluating the existing safety plan developed during initial assessment/investigation.
- Ensuring child safety through continuous assessment, oversight, and adjustment of safety plans.
- Engaging families in the case planning process that identifies underlying needs and directs services to address threats to child safety.
- Measuring progress related to establishing parent/caregiver protective capacities and eliminating safety related issues.
- Achieving stability for all in-home child protective services cases.
- Promoting well-being of children in in-home and OHC cases.

Individualized planning and services are used to determine service needs and supports. DCF meets the service array needs of child welfare families through:

- Individualized case planning and case management and direct service provision through DCF administered programs.
- DCF collaborations with other state agencies to meet needs; and,
- Referral and follow up with other state agency and local programs that meet identified family needs.

The diagram on the following page depicts the different DCF efforts in coordination with counties to provide a statewide service array, DCF partnership efforts, and other agency services that make up Wisconsin's Child Welfare Services Array



Service Array and Wisconsin Tribes

Wisconsin is home to 11 federally recognized tribes. Wisconsin passed the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act Law (WICWA) and has developed specific guidance for how child welfare agencies must comply with WICWA as well as guidance around “active efforts” to identify tribal heritage. These documents are critical resources for counties and tribes in assuring culturally competent service delivery to Wisconsin’s tribal populations. Key resources include:

- WICWA Desk Aid - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/2536.pdf>
- Active Effort guide - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/464.pdf>

Service Array and Wisconsin Prevention Plan

This model highlights the service array for all families in the child welfare system. As part of more detailed planning for implementation of the Family First Prevention and Services Act, DCF has further articulated an in-home services model for implementation through the five-year prevention plan. This model will build on the current service array including a broader foundation of supports available to families including high quality, early care and education, housing, employment, health care, community resources and supports. The model is in the process of identifying integrated services models that are evidence-based.



In-Home Model -
APSR.pptx

DCF continually works to better understand and assess the needs of children, youth, and families; this is a cornerstone of its strategic planning efforts related to the in-home continuum of services. This is also a Program Improvement Plan initiative to further individualize services for children and families being served in their homes. DCF is in the process of defining a more comprehensive and systematic process for assessing and meeting the needs of families that are served in-home. Additional programs focused on the service array are the Care4Kids program that provides comprehensive, coordinated care for children and youth in foster care and is tailored to each child’s individualized needs. Other programs to meet the service array include automation of Foster Care State Medicaid certification for children in out-of-home care; the Children’s Behavioral Health Project, which encourages appropriate utilization of psychotropic medications for Medicaid children and youth; and the use of Coordinated Service Teams to coordinate care for children and youth in multiple systems of care.

The Birth to Five section of this plan also provides information on child abuse prevention grants, the Birth to 3 Program, and efforts to ensure family connections to quality child care and home visiting services.

Summary of Progress Toward Outcomes for Items 29 and 30

Items 29 and 30 were also found to be an “Area Needing Improvement” during the 2018 CFSR. DCF has worked to gather feedback over the last several years to determine what is working well and what gaps exist in the state’s service array. Counties and other stakeholders noted that home Safety Services program, home visiting, and the Trauma Project are helpful initiatives that meet the needs of families. However, it was identified both through CFSR and other stakeholder interviews that access to mental health services, dental care, alcohol and drug treatment, and other supports for families is an ongoing challenge. In addition, stakeholders identify the need for more preventive services, whether available in- or out-of-home, so that fewer children enter the child welfare system. As previously described, DCF’s strategic vision uses the FFPSA as a tool and includes including workgroups tasked with defining a more responsive service continuum. These efforts are more fully described in the collaboration section (section 1) and updates to Wisconsin’s approach in section 3.

Agency Responsiveness (Items 31-32)

How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?

ITEM 31

The 2018 CFSR concluded that Items 31 and 32 were a strength. This is due to extensive collaboration that is a hallmark of DCF policymaking and program development. Wisconsin’s strategic child welfare transformation described also contributes to a strong performance with agency responsiveness. Data or information regarding performance and initiatives that address Item 31 are described in detail in the Collaboration section of this plan beginning on page 10.

ITEM 32 - COORDINATION OF CFSP SERVICES WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

Data or Information to Demonstrate Performance and Initiatives to Address

In addition to child welfare, DCF administers key federal programs that serve children and families. These include Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy, the Wisconsin Works (W-2) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, and child support. Co-location of these programs in the department promotes collaboration and alignment. In addition, DCF works closely with other state programs to ensure eligible individuals’ access to key benefits such as Medicaid. To support collaborative efforts, DCF has spearheaded and launched data exchanges designed to improve information available about, and services provided to, families in the child welfare system and other state systems. The individualized planning for child welfare families and the use of the CANS for children in OHC (described in Item 29) are the primary way that families are identified as eligible for, and subsequently connected to, appropriate programs and services.

The Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program provides child care subsidies to low-income working parents. The Wisconsin Shares program is connected to the YoungStar quality rating and improvement system. Parents receive higher rates of reimbursement for choosing higher quality programs as determined through a star level system using research-based criteria to determine the child care provider's level of quality. To further support the use of high-quality programs, DCF established a policy that requires foster parents to use child care rated as three stars or higher, as determined by a scale of 1-5, with 3-5 stars being established as high-quality. Exceptions to this policy include extenuating circumstances such as lack of availability or emergency child care needs that make such a choice impossible.

Access to Work Support Benefits

The Wisconsin Works (W-2) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program provides support to working families. Information on programs that a family may be eligible for are provided to families that receive in-home services. In addition, when a child is temporarily absent from the home due to being in an OHC placement, Wisconsin policy is that the family can secure a W-2 benefit for up to six months under the Temporary Absence Policy. For both in-home and OHC cases, DCF works with agencies administering services to ensure information is provided to families that are eligible.

Access to Medicaid

DCF works closely with DHS to assure children and families in the child welfare system have access to physical, behavior, and dental health care through Medicaid. This includes the Care4Kids program. Both planning with families that receive in-home services and use of the CANS tool with children in OHC help workers and families identify healthcare needs. To support these efforts, DCF and DHS collaborated to link the eWiSACWIS and Wisconsin Medicaid enrollment system and facilitate immediate enrollment in Medicaid when a child enters OHC. This policy is described in a memo available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2015-21i.pdf>.

Access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program

As part of a family's individualized case plan, it is determined if the family is eligible for SNAP or the WIC program, both programs are administered at the state level by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Access to Birth to 3

As required by federal law, all children substantiated for child maltreatment who are age birth to three are referred to Wisconsin's program for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C which is called the Birth to 3 Program in Wisconsin. Local counties and tribes work with their local county-based Birth to 3 system to assure that children who are eligible for Birth to 3 have access to programs and services to meet their needs.

Improving Access to Education

DCF works with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to implement key elements of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). DCF and DPI leadership issued joint guidance to promote best

practices around school stability. This guidance named core factors that should be considered, such as student and parent preferences, student safety and educational needs, in addition to supplemental considerations such as how many schools the student has attended, meaningful relationships with staff and peers at a school, transportation time to school, and what schools a child's sibling(s) attends.

Access to Employment Services and Supports

DCF also works regularly with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), the state's administrative home for workforce initiatives and workforce development boards, on efforts related to youth employment initiatives. DCF collaborates with DWD by serving on inter-departmental workgroups focused on promoting employment. DCF also redesigned the Independent Living Program to better connect youth in the Independent Living Program to regional employment services. As a result, three of the state's current regional contracts for Independent Living are coordinated by regional Workforce Development Boards that are strengthening connections to critical employment and skill building opportunities for youth and young adults.

Technological Connections to Promote Service Access

In addition to the education portal described earlier in this section, DCF has also spearheaded several data exchanges to better identify information about child welfare families in other state systems and to improve services and coordination with other state systems. DCF has established data sharing agreements with the Department of Health Services (DHS) to share data on immunizations and Medicaid certification and develop a joint data warehouse.

A significant investment of DCF technological resources allowed DCF to bring together data previously housed in "separate silos" in a DCF enterprise data warehouse called "LIFT," which stands for Longitudinal Information of Family Touchpoints.

Funding for this effort came from the Wisconsin Race to The Top Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC), a federal grant that ended in December 2016. One of the major RTTT-ELC projects was to create an Early Childhood Integrated Data System, or ECIDS, to connect data from three participating state agencies. For DCF to participate in the ECIDS, it was critical to integrate DCF data.

LIFT is working on several program views, a Distinct Count Dashboard, and the capability for overview reports. The Distinct Count Dashboard will allow viewers to look at participation information by one or more combinations of programs. For example, a researcher could look at how many children under the age of five are participating in two or more DCF programs. The programs included in LIFT are child welfare Initial Assessment, child welfare OHC, Wisconsin's TANF program - Wisconsin Works (W2), and Wisconsin's CCDBG child care program- Wisconsin Shares. Having access to de-identified information about children receiving services from multiple DCF program areas allows DCF program managers to make data-driven policy decisions. An automated link between child welfare and the Birth to 3 program providing information between the two programs is another example of using technology to improve performance.

Brief Assessment of Progress Toward Outcomes

Stakeholders note that DCF's strong partnerships contribute to an inclusive and collaborative child welfare infrastructure that listens and incorporates the feedback of multiple stakeholders through multiple avenues. DCF's strong partnerships with other state agencies facilitates coordination around families' access to benefits and services.

Foster and Adoptive Recruitment Systemic Factor (Items 33-36)

For this systemic factor, items 33, 34, and 36 are described. Item 35 is considered Wisconsin's foster and adoptive parent recruitment program and separately attached.

STANDARDS APPLIED EQUALLY (ITEM 33)

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?

Evidence or Information to Demonstrate Performance and Initiatives to Address Foster and Adoptive Recruitment Systemic Factor

This area of practice was found to be a strength in Wisconsin's 2018 CFSR. Under Wisconsin Statutes, DCF is responsible for the development of administrative rules related to licensure of OHC placements for children. DCF currently licenses child placing agencies (DCF 54), group foster homes (DCF 57), shelter care (DCF 59), and residential care centers (DCF 52). DCF staff evaluate these agencies at least twice a year to ensure compliance with licensing rules. Licensing staff also investigate all complaints of rule violations and take appropriate action as necessary. Additional visits are conducted based on complaints/other concerns, or technical assistance.

Foster homes are licensed and monitored by a county, tribe, or private child placing agency according to DCF 56 (foster homes). Individuals must pass background checks, physical checks of the home, and complete an assessment process with the licensing agency in order to become a licensed foster home. DCF OHC staff are responsible for training licensing staff across the state, providing technical assistance, and reviewing licensing situations as requested.

DCF developed the standards for the administrative code for all licenses using national standards, the Child Welfare League of America standards, federal laws, state law including Chapter 48, stakeholder feedback, and legislative input. These administrative codes are minimum standards that each licensed facility must follow. The state always encourages providers to operate above the minimum standards.

OHC facilities may only be licensed under rules promulgated by DCF. Complete foster home licensing requirements are listed in Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter [DCF 56](#). Foster home licensing standards apply equally to all potential foster homes, regardless of the provider's relationship to the child. Foster home licenses are issued as regular licenses with an expiration date of no later than two years from date of issuance. Probationary licenses are not issued.

Exceptions may be made to requirements in Ch. DCF 56 if there is a plan in place to meet the intent of the requirement or a plan to come into compliance with the code is made with the foster home. As an alternative to compliance, an agency may require the licensee to meet certain conditions within a specified time period; this must include the requirement for which an exception has been granted. No agency, including DCF, can grant an exception to a requirement in the rule that is also a

statutory requirement (e.g. building code regulations). All exceptions, whether granted by the licensing agency or DCF, need to be documented on the license of the foster home. The exception shall remain in effect only if the conditions under which the exception was granted remain, but no longer than two years from the date on which the exception was granted. Like exceptions, DCF has incorporated non-safety related waivers into Ch. DCF 56 for relatives who seek licensure.

Regarding foster care, a county, tribe, private child placing agency, or the DCF Exceptions Panel may grant exceptions or waivers to certain aspects of the licensing rules if the exception is not contrary to the health, safety, and welfare of a child. DCF has issued an annotated version of the licensing rule that describes situations in which an exception or waiver may be appropriate. This results in uniform application of the licensing standards.

Under Wisconsin Stat. ch. 48 and Wisconsin Admin. Code s. DCF 56.10, a foster parent may appeal the decision of a licensing agency to deny or revoke the foster home license to the State Division of Hearings and Appeals (a state agency external to DCF). This appeal process provides added accountability to assure that a licensing agency appropriately applies licensing standards.

Once the base licensing standards are applied to all applicants for foster care, all foster parents are designated a Level of Care Certification 1-5 during the foster care licensing process. This Certification is based on meeting the following:

- Qualifications
- Training
- Foster parent references
- Foster parent experience

Each of the five Level of Care Certifications has a specified number of training hours, personal references, knowledge, and experience requirements. Foster parents must comply with the training requirements in accordance with their Level of Care certification. Training requirements fall into three categories: pre-placement, initial licensing, and ongoing. The training requirements are explained in depth in Item 28 of this document. The five Levels of Care are:

Level of Care	Description
Level 1: Child-Specific Foster home	Pre-existing relationship with child relative and non-relative; minimal training required.
Level 2: Basic Foster Home	Requires additional training and positive references. General foster care.
Level 3: Moderate Treatment Foster Home	Provides treatment service levels for children with more significant needs. Must meet additional training and experience requirements.
Level 4: Specialized Treatment Foster Home	Provides treatment service levels for children with more significant needs. Must meet additional training and experience requirements.
Level 5: Exceptional Treatment Foster Home	Provides skilled staffing in addition to foster parents for children with significant needs (i.e. medically fragile or those who will continue into long-term adult services).

The Level of Care certification does not necessarily need to match the Level of Need of a child placed in the home. The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool will help determine the type of service provision needed to support a placement at a lower assessed level for a child.

The CANS tool is described in Section 2 and is used to comprehensively address the needs of children.

To ensure that all licensors receive adequate training and support on licensing requirements, DCF holds quarterly trainings pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 56, the administrative rule for foster homes. Attendance at the training is mandated for licensors in the State of Wisconsin. All training participants are provided a copy of Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 56, as well as all the resources and forms required to license a home. The two-day training covers all aspects of rule, policy, and guidance, which ensures consistent application across counties and private child placing agencies. In addition to the in-person Ch. DCF 56 training, the department has created, in partnership with WCWPDS, an online Foster Care Coordinator Pre-Service training. This training is a required prerequisite to the Wis. Admin Code ch. DCF 56 training and foster care coordinators complete this training prior to licensing a foster home.

Since October 1, 2016, DCF requires the use of the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) home study as the standard assessment tool for all foster care licenses and adoption approvals. Use of the SAFE home study assessment requires that anyone who will administer, approve, and supervise the SAFE home study attend mandatory training. The required SAFE trainings include two-day Initial SAFE Training and SAFE Supervisors Training. Additionally, supervisors and caseworkers may attend an optional SAFE Booster Training. There are also quarterly SAFE Technical Assistance (TA) conference calls, which supervisors and caseworkers may participate in if additional TA is needed. DCF has supported all costs of this training for all foster care and

adoption staff statewide and will continue to do so as funds are available. Trainings are held quarterly to support the need.

To monitor licensing agencies' processes and practices throughout the state, DCF holds regular meetings for Foster Care Coordinators so the latter can receive updates, clarifications, and technical assistance from state policy staff. DCF also holds monthly teleconferences to keep workers up to date on policies or guidance that impact the licensing process. Coordinators are also given time to seek assistance on licensing scenarios or barriers that they are facing. Regional and statewide meetings take place so that coordinators can have face-to-face learning opportunities that provide a consistent message on rules, policies, and guidance.

DCF also has several reports that monitor compliance with licensing. These reports are used by DCF and can be used at the local level by agency staff. The reports, and some notable statistics are included below.

- PM04A100 - Level of Care Monitoring: provides information to better manage the timely provision of conversions of court-ordered Kinship Care (COKC) providers to licensed foster parents.
- PM04A103 - Licensing Timeliness Report: provides information related to licensing decisions and the timeliness of those decisions. Contains information regarding all decisions for initial and renewal license applications that are due within the reporting period. The report also contains information regarding licenses that are revoked, closed, or expired within the reporting period.
 - In calendar year 2020 there were 2,627 licensing decisions made.
 - 66% of the 2,627 licensing decisions were made timely.
 - 30 licensing decisions were over 30 days overdue; all other overdue licensing decisions were completed within 30 days of the date they were due.
 - Of the 2,627 license applications, 2,476 licenses were issued, 21 denied, 127 application withdrawn, and 12 revoked.
- ADHOC501 Federal Waiver – Non-Safety Licensing Standards: provides a list of the number of exceptions or waivers granted by Ch. DCF 56 code citations for the reporting period.
 - In calendar year 2020 there were 2,581 exceptions or waivers granted for foster care licensure.
 - Of those granted exceptions the most common exception is to Ch. DCF 56.09(2)(b) Supervision of children which allows both foster parents to work outside of the foster home. This was granted 1,400 times.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS (ITEM 34)

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements, and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children?

Data or Information Demonstrating Performance and Initiatives to Address Background Check Systemic Factor

This area of practice was found to be a strength in Wisconsin's 2018 CFSR. Wisconsin complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances that relate to licensing or approving foster and adoptive placements. Licensing agencies must conduct background checks before licensing foster and adoptive parents. The background checks have different expiration dates. The background checks must be done on foster parents, any residents of the home who are 10 or older and are non-client residents, and any employees who will have regular, direct contact with a foster child. For a child under 18 years old, the licensing agency is not required to obtain further information if the child's background information disclosure does not indicate an offense that would be a bar. Comparable convictions from other states or U.S. jurisdictions are treated the same as if they were in Wisconsin.

Foster home licensing agencies conduct background checks at initial and re-licensure. There are six required types of background checks:

- Adam Walsh (FBI)
- Adam Walsh Child Protective Services (CPS)
- Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Caregiver or Integrated Background Information System (IBIS) Check
- Reverse Address Sex Offender registry check
- Local Law Enforcement Checks

Following is a resource developed for foster care coordinators regarding each type of background check:

Background Checks

Module 4: Licensing Process

Type of Check	Timeframe	What is checked?	How do you do it?	Expiration	Resources
Adam Walsh: FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)	Initial Licensure: Required for prospective foster and adoptive parents who are caring for children from the public child welfare system. It does not apply to adoptive families seeking domestic or international adoptions unless the child qualifies for Adoption Assistance.	Check of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records; not all arrests or convictions are reported to the FBI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency must have an account with the WI Dept. of Justice (DOJ). DOJ will provide fingerprint cards once agency has an approved policy on record with DOJ regarding consent and records management. Or the agency may have the applicant complete an electronic capture of their fingerprints for submission. Agency must obtain a signed consent, previously approved by DOJ, from each applicant and submit with the completed fingerprint card. Results will be sent through the agencies on-line account. Results must be scanned into eWISACWIS. 	This check is valid as long as the foster or adoptive parent is continually licensed. If there is a break in licensure, the applicant must be re-fingerprinted and the checks completed before a license can be renewed.	DCF Memo Series 2007-16: Adam Walsh Requirements State Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Info Memo 2008-03i: Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act Questions and Answers
Adam Walsh: Child Protective Services (CPS) Checks	Initial Licensure: Required for prospective foster and adoptive parents.	Check of Child Protective Service records in each county or state the person has lived in for the last 5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency requests records from each county/state the applicant has lived in for the last five years. It is not enough to just check eWISACWIS records, as those records only go back to when each county agency or DMCP (Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services) began using eWISACWIS - typically only back through 2001. DMCP and county agencies are required to comply with requests for CPS records for the purposes of foster care licensing. To complete checks outside of WI there is a resource created with each state's process – the State Child Abuse and Neglect Registry. Results must be scanned into eWISACWIS 	4 years, although many licensing agencies complete this at each re-licensing period.	

Type of Check	Timeframe	What is checked?	How do you do it?	Expiration	Resources
WI Dept. of Justice (DOJ) and Caregiver	Initial Licensure: Required for prospective foster and adoptive parents.	Check of arrests and convictions submitted to WI DOJ, not all local arrests and convictions are submitted to DOJ. This is a name-based check.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant completes the Background Information Disclosure form or BID. • The agency completes the Single or Multiple Name based check form for each applicant. • Agency submits request to DOJ. • DOJ results will be sent through the agencies online account. • Results must be scanned into eWISACWIS. 	4 years, although many licensing agencies complete this at each re-licensing period.	Forms: Background Information Disclosure form DCF-F-2978 WI Criminal History Single Name Record Request form DJ-LE-250 WI Criminal History Single Name Record Request form DJ-LE-250A
IBIS or Caregiver	Initial Licensure: Required for prospective foster and adoptive parents.	Check of entity records for persons who have been denied, revoked, or otherwise prohibited from working with children or vulnerable populations. <i>Note: this does not check child abuse and neglect records in WI.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant completes the Background Information Disclosure form or BID. • The agency completes the Single or Multiple Name based check form for each applicant. • Agency submits request to DOJ. • DOJ will automatically send the request to review the Children’s Licensing Denial System. • The agency will receive notification from the Department of Health Services whether or not the name submitted is included in the system. This is known as the IBIS letter. • Results must be scanned into eWISACWIS. 	4 years, although many licensing agencies complete this at each re-licensing period.	Forms: Background Information Disclosure form DCF-F-2978 WI Criminal History Single Name Record Request form DJ-LE-250 WI Criminal History Single Name Record Request form DJ-LE-250A

Type of Check	Timeframe	What is checked?	How do you do it?	Expiration	Resources
Reverse Address Sex Offender Registry Check	Initial Licensure and Relicensure: Required for prospective foster and adoptive parents.	The database checks nationwide sex offenders. This check indicates where registered sex offenders have reported to authorities they are living. This is an address check, not a name-based check. Sometimes people are not forthcoming about who lives in their home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sexual Offender Registry Check shall be done on the Wisconsin DOC website: http://offender.doc.state.wi.us/public/ Agencies shall use the “Geographical Search” function and check all address within a 1 mile radius. Agencies shall use the “List” view when checking the results and ensure that no address on the list matches the provider’s address. Agencies shall print and save the entire list in the provider file, and scan the entire list into eWISACWIS. 	2 years or the end of the licensing period, whichever occurs first. Must be completed at each licensing renewal.	DSP Numbered Memo Series 2015-01 : Reverse Sex Offender Checks
Local Law Enforcement Checks	Initial Licensure: Required for prospective foster and adoptive parents.	Due to the fact that not all local contact with law enforcement is reported to DOJ, agencies must run local checks to determine the complete understanding of the background. This is done through CCAP (Consolidated Court Automation Programs) and checks with local law enforcement agencies where the applicant has lived for at least the last five years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCAP checks are run through this website: http://wcca.wicourts.gov/index.xsl, which contains most records handled through Wisconsin Circuit Courts. Local law enforcement agency checks are completed by contacting each law enforcement agency in the city where the person has lived. Some law enforcement agencies have specific processes for requesting such information. 	4 years, although many licensing agencies complete this at each re-licensing period.	

Section [48.685](#) of the Wisconsin Statutes and [section DCF 56.055](#) and chapter [DCF 12](#) of Wisconsin Administrative Code set forth criminal history and child abuse record search requirements, including barred crimes and other offenses that prohibit licensing a person as a foster parent, allowing a person to live in a foster home, or employing a person as a caregiver. Some offenses are a permanent bar, some are a bar for five years with rehabilitation approval, and some are a bar unless the person obtains rehabilitation approval. The procedures for obtaining rehabilitation approval are in chapter DCF 12 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

To receive a rehabilitation review, the applicant must submit a Rehabilitation Review Application Packet. The applicant may submit the application packet to the foster home licensing agency, if they are seeking regulatory approval for foster care only. If the applicant is seeking regulatory approval for foster care and adoption through the Public Adoption program, or the applicant is seeking foster home licensure from the DMCPs, DCF must complete the Rehabilitation Review.

The agency will appoint a rehabilitation review panel once the application and all requested documents are received. The application will be denied if all requested documents are not provided within 90 days of the receipt of the rehabilitation review application. The panel may also request information from other agencies or people who are familiar with the applicant.

A rehabilitation review meeting will be scheduled after the panel receives all requested information. The applicant will receive notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting by mail. The applicant is not required to appear at the rehabilitation review meeting, but it is recommended that the applicant appears in person or via phone. At this meeting, the applicant will have the opportunity to answer questions from the panel. The applicant must provide convincing evidence that the applicant has been rehabilitated.

The panel will decide whether the applicant is present at the meeting or not. If the panel decides it does not have enough information to make a decision, it may defer a final decision for up to six months. The applicant will receive the panel's decision in the mail. The panel's decision may be a rehabilitation approval, denial, or deferral.

In addition to the crimes and offenses listed in the statute, section 48.685 (5m) of the Wisconsin Statutes provides that the licensing agency must review the circumstances of convictions of any offense that is not barred by the statute to determine if the crime is substantially related to the care of a foster child. Section [DCF 12.06](#) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code provides factors for the licensing agency to consider in determining whether a crime is substantially related. Rehabilitation approval is not available for crimes that are substantially related.

A licensing agency must make a reasonable effort to contact the potential licensee to obtain further information if any of the following apply:

- The statute specifically requires a determination on whether the circumstances of certain convictions are substantially related to the care of a foster child. If a person was convicted of any of the following crimes less than five years before the background

check, the licensing agency must obtain a copy of the criminal complaint and judgement of conviction and make the substantially related determination:

940.19(1)	Misdemeanor battery
940.195	Battery to an unborn child
940.20	Battery, special circumstances
941.30	Reckless endangerment
942.08	Invasion of privacy
947.01(1)	Disorderly conduct
947.013	Harassment

- If the DOJ criminal history indicates a charge of a crime that would be a bar, but does not clearly indicate whether there was a conviction, the person was found not guilty, or the charge was dropped or dismissed, the licensing agency must make reasonable efforts to determine the final disposition of the charge.
- If the person’s background information disclosure indicates a charge or conviction of a barred crime but the DOJ criminal history does not include the charge or conviction, the licensing agency must make every reasonable effort to contact the clerk of courts to obtain a copy of the complaint and the final disposition.
- A military discharge was other than “honorable.”

All background checks must be scanned into the eWiSACWIS system and all results of the background checks must be documented in the home study report the agency completes. Any conviction or finding must be mitigated in the home study if the person is licensed.

Wisconsin contracts for Title IV-E determination services which reviews all placements and associated necessary licensing requirements, including background checks, for foster care and treatment foster care. This third-party check allows for ongoing quality assurance of licensing determinations as related to background checks. In addition, eWiSACWIS functionality was enhanced to include electronic records of background check results. DSP staff meet monthly with the contractor to review any compliance issues. If a problem is noted, the contractor works with the foster care licensing agency to obtain the necessary information. In the rare circumstances that issues arise that are not resolved with the local agency and the contractor, DSP OHC staff will engage in corrective action planning with the agency to ensure they comply with the background check rules and regulations. Additionally, DSP runs a monthly check of all OHC providers with the Sex Offender Registry in Wisconsin and if there are any matches found, DSP OHC staff work with the local agency to identify a resolution.

ITEM 35 – FOSTER AND ADOPTION RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN

Please see separately attached recruitment plan.

ITEM 36 - INTERSTATE COMPACT FOR THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN (ICPC)

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide?

This area of practice was found to be an area needing improvement in the 2018 CFSR. This was due to reporting issues related to the completion of timely home studies that DCF continues to work on described below. DSP is responsible for processing requests for the placement of children across state lines under the Interstate Compact of the Placement of Children (ICPC) and Wisconsin law. The proposed ICPC section, Wis. Stat. s. 48.99, has been codified into Wisconsin Statute, but will not be effective until 35 states codify it into their statutes, which hasn't happened yet. Accordingly, there are two references in statute - Wis. Stat. s. 48.988 is the current ICPC section and Wis. Stat. s. 48.99 is the new, but not active, section. The Wisconsin ICPC specialists work with other states as well as Wisconsin's local agencies to process incoming and outgoing requests.

Data or Information to Demonstrate Performance and Initiatives to Address ICPC Systemic Factor

The Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) is responsible for processing requests for the placement of children across state lines under the Interstate Compact of the Placement of Children (ICPC) and Wisconsin law pursuant to Wis. Stat. § [48.988](#). A new ICPC statute was passed pursuant to Wis. Stat. § [48.99](#). This updated statute was codified in state statute in 2020 as part of overall federal ICPC requirements. It will not go into effect until 35 states codify the new provisions in their state statutes. The Wisconsin ICPC specialists work with other states as well as Wisconsin's local agencies to process incoming and outgoing requests.

Wisconsin was one of the six original states to pilot the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) beginning in November 2013 and continued beyond the pilot with NEICE in 2015. Wisconsin has since used the NEICE Web-based Case Management System. The NEICE system is now used by 38 states, allowing quicker transmission to those states. NEICE 2.0 is projected to be released in 2021 and will also have additional reports built into their system providing both National and State specific data.

From 2015 to 2019, eWiSACWIS enhancements completely changed Wisconsin's process for requesting placements under the ICPC. Under the new process, local agencies are required to submit any outgoing ICPC requests through eWiSACWIS (except for private adoption agencies that do not have access to eWiSACWIS). The local agency is only able to electronically submit the request if all necessary information and required documentation is included. The system now requires information regarding the participants in the request, helps the worker determine the ICPC regulation type, gathers information regarding the proposed placement resource, and requires all documentation specific to the type of request. Requiring this information prior to submitting the request to the Wisconsin ICPC office has helped local agencies understand what they need for a request and reduced the time ICPC specialists spend explaining ICPC requirements to workers. The ICPC specialists use the same functionality to upload incoming ICPC requests into eWiSACWIS for assignment and review by Wisconsin local agencies. The system now allows for all ICPC information to be in one place, which improves communication between the local agencies and the Wisconsin ICPC specialists.

In order to support local agencies in preparing outgoing ICPC requests and responding to incoming ICPC requests, policy and procedures for ICPC were documented more thoroughly in [Wisconsin's Ongoing Services Standards](#) in June 2017. Online training and other supporting materials were developed in 2018. These resources will allow local workers to quickly access the information they need about the ICPC to facilitate timely placement of children in and out of Wisconsin.

Brief Assessment of Progress Toward Outcomes for Systemic Factor (Items 33-36)

Items 33 and 34 were found to be a strength during the 2018 CFSR; this is due to comprehensive standards being in place and followed to assure compliance.

Item 35 was found to be an "Area Needing Improvement" during the 2018 CFSR. However, DCF data over time shows that DCF foster parents' races and ethnicities are increasingly matching the race and ethnicity of children in the OHC system as shown in the foster and adoptive parent recruitment plan separately attached to this document. In addition, recent efforts to recruit tribal foster parents have been very successful - more than doubling the number of tribal foster parents, which is also noted in the separately attached plan. DCF will continue to build on overall efforts to recruit and support foster parents as described in the attached plan.

Item 36 was found to be an "Area Needing Improvement" because DCF's ability to track the timeliness home studies was found to be insufficient. In 2019, an eWiSACWIS enhancement included fields that could capture data relating to home study requirements, such as the date the home study request was sent, and the due date required to meet the Safe & Timely Act. While the data was being collected in eWiSACWIS, DCF didn't have a mechanism to properly track cases without going into each case to review timeliness. To address this, DCF created the ICPC Referral and Tracking Report that allows ICPC staff to monitor timeliness and follow up on overdue home studies with local agencies.

In addition, DCF's role as a leader in the NIECE system has been recognized nationally and by stakeholders. Please refer to specific item descriptions for initiatives to address each of the items.

3. Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision

DCF's plan for enacting the state's vision is encompassed in the child welfare transformation described in the collaboration section.

Wisconsin has not adjusted the goals and strategies identified in the FY 2021 APSR. These goals continue to reflect work toward Wisconsin's child welfare transformation and work toward meeting FFPSA requirements. Goals and objectives are responsive to the 2018 CFSR, encompass current PIP objectives, and are based on the data and information provided on child welfare outcomes and systemic factors described in Section 2 of this APSR.

The 2022 APSR provides an update on five overall goals:

1. To improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of safety services.
2. To improve the quality and effectiveness of permanency services for children and families.
3. To engage children and families in more effective and meaningful ways.
4. To improve access to services and supports for youth and families by building community capacity.
5. To assure a healthy, stable, inclusive, and strong child welfare system and infrastructure that improves the safety, well-being, and permanency of families.

For each goal, strategies are articulated that are designed to move DCF toward meeting the overall goal. For each of the strategies, DCF notes the corresponding CFSR performance outcome and systemic factors being addressed as well as the rationale for selecting the objective. Information is also provided about activities that will be undertaken, staff training and technical assistance, and implementation supports needed to pursue strategies as well as feedback loops. Please note that for PIP specific strategies, more specific updates will be provided as part of the July 15, 2021 submission of the second six-month report.

For each goal, strategies are articulated that are designed to move DCF toward meeting the overall goal. For each of the strategies, DCF notes the corresponding CFSR performance outcome and systemic factors being addressed as well as the rationale for selecting the objective. Information is also provided about activities that will be undertaken, staff training and technical assistance, and implementation supports needed to pursue strategies as well as feedback loops. Please note that for PIP specific strategies, more specific updates will be incorporated in Wisconsin's PIP reporting process. The state does not anticipate the need for any children's bureau assistance in the FY 2022 APSR.

Goal 1: Improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of safety services for children and families.

Objective 1.1 To improve safety supports for children being served in the home (Name has changed from Safety Services to Targeted Safety Services) (Addresses Items 2, 3 and 12, 29 and 30). (2020 PIP)

Rationale: Children and families identified as unsafe in the child welfare system have specific needs that must be met in order to avoid further engagement in the child welfare system. These needs include identification of specific needs that must be addressed to assure child and family safety and well-being and access to services to meet those needs.

In the last year, DCF was involved in the following activities:

- DCF issued an RFP for new and returning counties for the Targeted Safety Services (TSS) program. There are currently 66 counties and two tribal child welfare agencies participating in this program.
- All counties and tribes that applied for funding received support. DCF has not encouraged
- Counties receive regular peer support opportunities and technical assistance based on identified needs.
- Counties report that the assistance with concrete and support for addressing needs for their families has been of invaluable assistance in helping achieve child welfare goals.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- Training and technical assistance will be provided as articulated in the PIP. DCF will work with the Professional Development System to provide appropriate training at the county level to support implementation and ongoing efforts.
- Assistance includes formal training as well as less formal peer support opportunities. In the last year, the program has expanded from calls every other month (bi-monthly) to now offering monthly support. The format alternates between formal training and technical assistance that has been offered since the program began, and peer support calls added this year to provide more time for information sharing and peer support.

Measures of Progress:

- Regular reports are created and reviewed to evaluate the services provided to children and families.
- DCF will use the six-month reports required by the PIP to document numbers of new programs, number of counties participating, and fidelity to the program model. During the PIP two-year time frame DCF will identify and measure more specific outcomes.
- Outcomes to date include services to 480 individuals to meet needs.

Implementation Supports:

- Possible IT upgrades and assistance to new counties that may need help developing and implementing policies.
- DCF will reissue the RFP in the summer of 2021. It will be open to all counties and tribes to continue to participate as well as to new counties or tribes. DCF does not anticipate any challenges to continued successful implementation of this initiative.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF will continue provide regular updates about evolving issues, data and trends, as well as, request feedback from several advisory committees including the Wisconsin County Human Services Association Policy Advisory Council (WCHSA PAC), the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Council, and, DCF's Bureau of Regional Operations.

*Objective 1.2: Enhance use of technology to promote timely initiation of safety investigations.
(2020 PIP)*

Rationale: The timeliness of initial investigations is critically important. Technology is available to track timeliness and share data with counties and their staff to ensure they meet federal and state required timelines.

Ongoing activities to meet this objective include:

- DCF continues to use its initial assessment timeliness dashboard to track performance on this indicator.
- Counties with performance below standards are identified and assisted to improve performance.
- Quarterly calls are held with participating counties for technical assistance around identified issues.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- Existing staff and supervisors are trained on use of the dashboard. As new child welfare staff are hired, they will be provided support in how to use these tools.
- Technical assistance materials are being prepared in calendar year 2021 to highlight and share best practices of counties that are performing well.

Measures of Progress:

- DCF will analyze trends in data shared through dashboards.
- Reports will be included in PIP status reports.

Implementation Supports

- DCF will provide continued technical support for the platform that supports DCF dashboards.
- DCF does not anticipate any challenges with continuing to focus on this PIP item.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF's Bureau of Regional Operations works with counties that are performing below expectations by providing information about performance and technical assistance on how to improve performance.
- DCF's Bureau of Compliance, Research and Analytics (BCRA) displays dashboards for public viewing and monitors statewide performance and trends.

Goal 2: To improve the quality and effectiveness of permanency services for children and families.

Objective 2.1 To develop a tailored dispositional orders and conditions for return project for timely permanence. (Items 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 21 and 23). 2020 PIP

Rationale: DCF worked with the Children's Court Improvement Project (CCIP) to develop a strategy that addresses concerns with the current court report and dispositional order, which contain the conditions for return and rules of supervision. It has been found that these may not be tailored to each parent and are not based on the specific circumstances and behaviors that must occur for the child to be returned home safely. This project will address how to improve this report and processes and supports relevant to it.

In the last year, DCF has been engaged in the following activities:

- Three pilot counties were selected: Barron, Manitowoc and Waukesha counties.
- A kickoff meeting was held in January 2021 with key judicial, legal, and child welfare stakeholders from the three pilot counties.
- Each county has been provided with two multi-disciplinary trainings. The first training focused on Child Safety Decision-Making and Tailored Dispositional Orders. The second training focused on Family Engagement for judges, attorneys, and caseworkers both inside and outside the courtroom. A third training is currently being developed based on emerging needs identified by the project.
- After the first training, the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) led each county through a facilitated discussion to work together on identifying strengths and areas for improvement, then planning action steps to implement within this project.
- Each county is developing an action plan about how to improve the development of tailored court orders in their county.
- CCIP and DCF have created resources to assist each county with implementation. These resources include examples of tailored conditions for return, a caseworker desk guide with questions to consider when drafting conditions for return, and a SMART goal analysis handout. County teams indicate the resources created have been helpful in ongoing efforts.
- Additional resources were created for the Family Engagement training such as a judicial bench card with engagement questions to ask stakeholders at various CHIPS hearings.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- See training and resources described above.
- DCF and CCIP are communicating with sites on a regular basis to identify additional technical assistance or support needs.

Measures of Progress:

- DCF will use the six-month PIP reports to work with CCIP on identification of policies, procedures and court documents that need to be adjusted.

Implementation Supports:

- Possible eWiSACWIS changes and changes to the Circuit Court Access Program (CCAP), the state's electronic courts record program, may be needed.
- Other technical changes may be deemed necessary for DCF and/or court forms and processes.
- DCF does not anticipate challenges in year 2 efforts to implement this initiative.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF will continue to request feedback and provide updates about the progress on this initiative with the Wisconsin County Human Services Association, Policy Advisory Council (WCHSA PAC), the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Council, the Judicial Workgroup (that initially focused on effective court orders for youth but now has an expanded scope), and the Judicial Committee on Child Welfare. These cross-sector bodies work directly with county, legal and judicial stakeholders across the state and have provided important feedback about how to support each county in their efforts.

Objective 2.3: To implement claiming procedures for legal fees using IV-E Funding (Items 5,6, 22, 23, 24)

Rationale: Research shows that quality legal representation leads to better outcomes for families. Greater availability of legal counsel and support for child welfare families will lead to improved outcomes for families. Some counties in Wisconsin already use this benefit.

Activities in the last year and continuing activities:

- DCF coordinated with the Children's Court Improvement Project to identify the required changes necessary to implement the new federal requirements of ACYF-CB-PI-20-09.
- These changes were presented to representatives from local county agencies and their corresponding clerk of courts offices across the state for the opportunity to receive feedback.
- An updated application and program instruction were published.
- Changes to the Wisconsin's finance accounting system were implemented to collect new child count data elements. DCF will measure the use of this benefit and outcomes for children and families.

Measures of Progress:

- Use of IV-E Reimbursement and number of children served by counties.
- Continue to expand program implementation across the state.
- Over time, DCF will examine how to document improvements in child and family outcomes.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- The application process details what processes and costs are allowable. DCF staff are available for follow up questions.
- DCF hosted three virtual trainings regarding the CY21 program changes.

Implementation Supports:

- Technical assistance will be provided to counties around eligible costs for reimbursement.
- DCF's current technology supports the use of the benefit.

Feedback Loops:

- Information and updates about the use of this benefit are discussed at WCHSA PAC, Wisconsin County Human Services Financial Managers Association (WHSFMA) and through DCF's Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) Financial Managers Regional meetings.
- DCF will continue to inform these advisory groups about the use of this benefit and related issues.

Goal 3: Engaging children and families in more effective and meaningful ways.

*Objective 3.1: To expand Family Find and Engagement (FFE) statewide. (Items 7, 9, 10, 11)
2020 PIP*

Rationale: Due to lack of knowledge and consistent application of family engagement techniques by caseworkers, family members and important adults are not always informed about or provided the opportunities to remain connected with, be considered placements for, or reviewed as permanent homes for children living in out-of-home care. Family Find and Engagement is a research-based approach to finding and engaging more relatives.

Activities in the last year and continuing activities include:

- DCF issued a memo addressing the process and requirements for expansion of FFE. It is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2019-08i.pdf>.
- Statewide expansion of Family Find and Engagement took place from 2018 to 2020. This included developing resources and training for counties.
- The Family Find and Engagement approach
- Counties report that this has been a valuable resource for identifying family members. Wisconsin continues to have a high rate of placement with relatives.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- The remaining area of focus is a revamped training for statewide availability as part of Wisconsin's PIP.
- Ongoing support and training will be provided as identified.

Measures of Progress:

- DCF will use the six-month PIP reporting to update the CB on measures established that include number of programs, number of new counties participating and other possible activities.
- Counties report that this approach has been a helpful resource in identifying more family members.

Implementation Supports:

- eWiSACWIS upgrades will be needed related to identifying relative connections including a genogram.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF sought regular feedback and worked closely with the WCHSA PAC and the Foster Parent Advisory Council to develop and roll out this program statewide.

Objective 3.2 To improve the quality of caseworker engagement with families through use of improvement science and rapid-cycle change (e.g., Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles) (Addresses 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14 and 15 and service array). 2020 PIP

Rationale: The quality of caseworker visits was identified as an area of concern in the state CFSR process in 2018. DCF learned from extensive stakeholder outreach that there is a lack of training and inconsistencies in knowledge and standards around what constitutes a quality contact and how to document such a contact exist. Thus, caseworkers are not always aware of the characteristics and goals to achieve when attempting a quality contact. This more systematic, data-informed approach will address quality as well as better engagement in caseworker engagement with children and families.

Activities in the last year and continuing activities include:

- A Quality Engagement Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) toolbox was created for agency staff to select tools and resources to improve the quality of caseworker engagement. This has been posted online for agency staff to utilize.
- Quality Engagement PDSA innovation zones were identified, and initial implementation of this effort has started. There are nine participating counties are operating as innovation zones. All nine counties have been trained and are actively incorporating the PDSA process.

- Experiences of each county were analyzed and shared with other peers to share lessons learned. These will be shared as round 2 counties begin work on their PDSAs.
- DCF and counties identified and are beginning to implement improvements learned through innovation zones and CQI analysis.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- An online training was created and tool kit was created.
- Technical Assistance will continue to be provided by the WCWPDS and DCF.

Measures of Progress:

- DCF will use the six-month reports through the PIP period to report on the development of resources, participation in training and improvements to caseworker visits related to this initiative.

Implementation Supports:

- Development of training and technical assistance to support practice.
- DCF anticipates sharing learning -including what is working well and challenges -in the first round of quality caseworker PDSAs in the fall of 2021.
- Round 2 counties will be identified also in that time frame.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF will continue to work with the CQI Advisory Committee to provide updates and secure feedback from local county members about lessons learned, practice changes, challenges, and successes.
- Information and successes and challenges will be shared by PDS with all counties for both round 1 and round 2 of this collaborative

Objective 3.4: To establish a parent voice model through parent mentoring and leadership development called Parents Supporting Parents Model. (Items 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 29 and 30 and Service Array) – 2020 PIP

Rationale: The CFSR findings showed that Wisconsin needs to more systematically and effectively engage families, particularly fathers. Feedback from the Wisconsin birthparent stakeholder group held during the Wisconsin CFSR reflected inconsistency in the level of involvement of parents. They also described being distrustful of or intimidated by the child welfare system as well as not being well-informed about how the process works. Wisconsin's parent voice model is based on an evidence-based parent partner model from Iowa shown to more effectively engage parents in the child welfare system.

Activities:

- As of June 2021, DCF is in the early implementation stages of this model in in three counties.

Measures of Progress:

- DCF will use the six-month PIP reports to identify progress toward program outcomes.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- DCF and PDS will continue to identify and provide training and technical assistance needed to implement program.
- A statewide training was provided for all counties. All three counties are analyzing the community needs for peer mentors and identifying training and support specific to their county through Wisconsin's PDS and other resources.
- The first implementing county has hired their parent partner and has worked with the WCWPDS to provide training to this staff person. Hiring is underway with the two remaining counties.
- DCF consults as needed with Iowa and an evaluation partner on model adaptation and implementation to fidelity.

Implementation Supports:

- DCF has an implementation workgroup that is supporting initial implementation efforts. In 2021, this will be broadened to a more cross-sector advisory group to oversee efforts and ensure connection of parent voice across child welfare and other systems.
- DCF does not anticipate any challenges with year 2 implementation efforts.

Feedback Loops:

- Implementation teams will be an ongoing source of feedback for this effort as well as sharing updates with the WCHSA PAC and other DCF partners.
- Lead staff is sharing lessons learned with DCF's child welfare transformation team.
- The cross-sector advisory group, formed in 2021, will provide additional opportunity for requesting feedback and incorporating lessons learned into program design.
- The DCF lived experience position will connect with this program and help share lessons learned with other DCF programs and stakeholders.
- Initial feedback from a pilot county is that the parent peer supporters have been excellent and helpful resource during court proceedings.

Objective 3.5: Increase support and engagement for relative caregivers. Addresses 4, 5, 6, (8?) 9, 10 and 11 (P 1, WB 1) 2020 PIP

Rationale: Wisconsin's CFSR found that the state performs well in identifying and using relative caregivers for placing children. DCF is committed to strengthening performance in this area of practice including providing more support and training for relative caregivers to help them become better prepared to support children in their care and improve permanency outcomes.

In the last year, DCF was involved in the following activities and considers the objective as being met:

- Support for a relative caregiver workgroup launched in 2019 to advise the department on specific needs, challenges, and what additional supports will help relatives care for their children.
- Two web-based curricula were developed.
- Tip sheets for relative caregivers focused on access to health care, educational advocacy, and parenting children with severe behaviors were developed.
- A web-based portal was developed that assists with accessing services such as Medicaid, child care, educational assistance, and other services.
- As of September, 2020, there were 2,715 unique visits to the portal.
- A relative caregiver conference was hosted by DCF that included more than 300 relatives who were brought together to discuss issues with each other, receive training and provide critical input to DCF.
- Due to the success of this effort, DCF applied for refunding of the kin navigator program and will continue involvement in the following activities.
- See annual report in Attachment 1 for more details.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- Activities noted above include web-based curricula, tip sheets and other support materials.
- Relative caregiver support groups have been an active and supportive peer support resource for this effort.
- DCF will work with WCWPDS and relative stakeholders on developing these materials.

Measures of Progress:

- DCF has successfully completed this objective as part of the PIP.
- See also Kinship Navigator in Attachment B with other data collected on this initiative.

Implementation Supports:

- This will include technical support required to develop web-based portal and other online resources described above.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF has a very engaged relative caregiver workgroup that helped shape resources described under activities.
- This workgroup will also be tapped to identify a more comprehensive and effective continuum of services to better serve more children in their homes as DCF further articulates the details of the child welfare system strategic plan.

Objective 3.6 To further strengthen and build youth voice and engagement through state and local Youth Advisory Councils and Youth Leadership Teams.

Rationale: DCF has established a strong youth voice infrastructure. Strengthening the support of current youth voice initiatives and expanding opportunity to others at-risk of entering formal

systems is critical to ensuring sustained and meaningful input from those the child welfare or youth justice system may touch.

Ongoing activities include DCF efforts to:

- Support youth involvement and their adult supporters through training and technical assistance.
- Develop and provide resources that help to more fully engage youth in these advisory groups.
- Find new ways to solicit youth feedback as DCF develops its strategic plan through identification of key issues to address and effective strategies.
- Provide information and support for youth to access opportunities to provide input on policies and practices, including participating in Jim Casey and federal virtual roundtables in 2020, and will continue to support participation in future activities.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- DCF staff will continue to work with the different youth advisory groups to support the development of advocacy efforts they are interested in and assist with their own personal leadership development.
- DCF will identify and provide training and technical assistance, including the development of additional resources, to support the regional Youth Advisory Councils, the Youth Leadership Teams, and child welfare/youth justice professionals.

Measures of Progress:

- Participation in engagement efforts includes the statewide Youth Advisory Council, composed of a board (president, vice-president, secretary, etc.) and a maximum of two youth from each of the seven Independent Living Regions across the state. The Youth Advisory Council meets roughly five times a year. In addition to the statewide Youth Advisory Council, there are seven regional Youth Advisory Councils across the state that meet monthly. Given the pandemic, the Youth Leadership Teams have been meeting collectively as one group rather than as four separate regions; this occurs approximately every other month. All meetings are held virtually over Zoom.
- Documentation of youth advisory/advocacy opportunities that shape legislation or DCF policy, e.g., testifying at legislative meetings, contributing to policy drafts, reviewing grant applications, participating in program design sessions, providing “change presentations” to targeted stakeholders, consulting on resource development, and speaking on panels.
- These youth were consulted around impacts of COVID-19 and helped to shape the state response around providing resources and supports to youth.

- DCF will continue to use youth evaluations to document what is working, areas of improvement, and future items of interest.

Implementation Supports:

- To be determined based on emerging needs and priorities identified by the group.

Feedback Loops:

- Generating feedback and engaging youth is a critical component of this objective. Those activities are described with respect to the project work under “activities.”
- The Youth Advisory Council and Youth Leadership Teams will also be tapped for feedback relating to the details of shaping a more effective youth service delivery system as DCF further articulates the details of the child welfare system strategic plan.

Objective 3.7: Assess the timeliness of six-month Permanency Reviews and improve the quality of administrative review panels conducting permanency reviews. (Items 4, 5, 21) 2020 PIP

Rationale: A finding in the 2018 CFSR was that six-month permanency reviews were not conducted in a timely way. Another identified need was to improve the quality and consistency of Wisconsin’s administrative review panels as an option for counties to conduct six-month reviews.

Activities:

In the last year DCF examined data and reporting mechanisms for establishing a dashboard. DCF also began work with WCWPDS to support development and resources to improve the quality and consistency of administrative review panels. In the next year, DCF will:

- Complete the process of examining data to develop a tool to better assess the timeliness of the 60-day Permanency Plan and six-month permanency review/hearing.
- This analysis included looking at all OHC data and establishing the best mechanisms for displaying and tracking the data.
- Design a new reporting mechanism planned to be operational in the summer of 2021.
- Complete developing a training and resource to promote consistency in administrative review panels.

Training:

- DCF will finalize training and resources to support a more consistent role for administrative review panel members.

- Technical materials will be developed for the support of improving administrative review panel practices.

Measures:

- When the six-month timeliness dashboard is completed in 2021, it will be used as a more consistent way to measure timeliness of these reviews.
- As part of the PIP process, more specific measures will be developed around gauging the quality and consistency of administrative review panels.
- More specific information will be reported through Wisconsin's PIP.

Implementation Supports:

- Technology updates will be identified to support this new level of reporting that will include updates to the eWiSACWIS system.
- A quarterly review process will be established by DCF that will deploy Bureau of Regional Operations staff to provide ongoing technical assistance around performance issues once the dashboard is completed.
- Training described above will be important for implementation.
- DCF does not see any challenges in implementing these activities as planned in the second year of the PIP.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF will make this dashboard public when completed.
- Dashboard information and processes created will be shared with DCF stakeholders such as the WCHSA PAC, different judicial stakeholder groups, and others that may be identified through the PIP process.

Goal 4: Improve access to services and supports for youth and families by building community capacity.

Objective 4.1. Better understand the landscape for prevention services through assessing the current array of prevention services for children and families in the child welfare system. (Items 1, 12, 17, 18, 29 and 30)

Rationale: This strategy will provide DCF with the data necessary to strengthen prevention services throughout the state. There are a wide range of partners and projects or initiatives in Wisconsin aimed at the prevention of child abuse and neglect. This has led to considerable variance across counties in what services are available. Because Wisconsin is primarily a locally administered service system, our state lacks a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the full spectrum of prevention and early intervention activities across the state. The results of the prevention and early intervention scan will help DCF and key prevention partners and providers identify opportunities for collaboration and other strategies to create a robust continuum of programs and services to prevent child abuse and neglect and, for some families, entry into the child welfare system.

Key Activities:

- Work planning documents were developed by UW to identify options, parameters, and methods for developing the scan.
- These resources were shared with stakeholders and DCF to inform project design and implementation.
- The process of information gathering included key informant interviews, formal sources, experiential information (surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.), and promising practice case studies.
- Initial findings have been identified and shared and the final report is being completed.
- Based on the scan findings, needs and opportunities will be identified to strengthen the prevention continuum in Wisconsin. DCF, with stakeholder input, will develop and implement a plan to disseminate the scan findings.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- These needs may emerge as findings are considered.

Measures of Progress:

- A prevention scan report will be completed and shared with stakeholders in the summer of 2021.
- The report will include data on the availability of prevention services across the state, the accessibility of available services, as well as an analysis of needs and opportunities for strengthening the prevention continuum for future program and policy decisions.

Implementation Supports:

- Findings may lead to upgrades to information systems and possibly other implementation supports.

Feedback Loops:

- Efforts to engage and inform stakeholders are described under the project activities.

Objective 4.2. Improve understanding of educational outcomes and needs through continuing work on Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) Educational Research Project. (Item 16)

Rationale: It is important to understand trends and issues related to the educational outcomes of children in out-of-home care. Overall findings from the IRP study are that children in out-of-home care and children who age-out of the system have poorer educational outcomes than their peers who do not have OHC experience. There is a need to identify barriers to high school graduation so that targeted interventions can be utilized to improve educational outcomes.

Key Activities:

- DCF contracted with IRP to complete a study in 2018 related to the impact of credit transfer issues on high school graduation for youth aging out of foster care.
- DCF has identified areas to continue improving that were identified in the report and identified by youth through ongoing communication with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Challenging issues identified include multiple school changes, credit transfers, educational challenges, truancy, and other barriers to high school graduation.
- In addition to this report, DCF continues to actively collaborate with the Department of Public Instruction on this topic and other issues that interfere with educational success. This partnership is focused on meeting the goals of Every Student Succeeds Act, including building bridges between child welfare and educational institutions around educational stability for children in OHC. For more information on these efforts, please visit <https://dpi.wi.gov/foster-care>.
- An example of this work includes the development of an education portal to promote better coordination and information sharing between schools and child welfare agencies. This portal provides information on supports for educational stability, resources for accessing education, opportunities for youth leadership, points of contact for youth including how to access DCF's Transitional Resource Agencies (TRA) available through Chafee funding, and other critical resources to support educational success for youth. The portal is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/essa>.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- Targeted technical assistance has been provided to counties and Local Education Agencies (LEA) for youth in OHC.
- Targeted technical assistance is expected to be expanded in the next year.

Measures of Progress:

- DCF and DPI are identifying ways to better gauge progress. An agreed upon measure or set of measures is expected to be finalized by the first quarter of 2022.

Implementation Supports:

- DCF will work with DPI to analyze and share appropriate and necessary feedback from youth, schools, and child welfare agencies and data to inform future policy and practice changes.

Feedback Loops:

- DCF continues to hear from youth who have aged out of care and older youth in foster about educational barriers, such as credit transfer, that pose significant barriers to educational achievement and timely graduation.
- The Youth Advisory Council and Youth Leadership Teams across the state (also described in the collaboration section) will continue to be supported by DCF as a forum for feedback from youth. It will be critical for youth with lived experience to have the opportunity to consider the research findings, DCF and DPI partnership efforts, and help identify implications and possible changes to policy and practice that best address the issues.

Objective 4.3. Better understand needs and services of youth and families in child welfare system (Item 12, 13 and Service Array) 2020 PIP

Rationale: It is critical to understand comprehensive needs of child welfare population to better address needs of the child welfare population.

Activities:

- In the last year, DCF extensively researched assessment models to determine the best fit with Wisconsin's child welfare system. This information was shared with stakeholders for feedback and consideration.
- DCF is in the process of determining more specifically how families will be assessed when they are in home-like settings as part of the PIP.
- The in-home workgroup is in the process of identifying 3-5 key strategies or areas where Wisconsin can strengthen assessment and service planning practices throughout the life of a case in order to support the child welfare workforce in preventing a child or youth's removal from their family home.

Staff Training and Technical Assistance:

- Training needs will be identified in summer 2021 when decisions are made about the model or process that will be used.

Implementation Supports:

- Will be determined based on recommendations made.
- DCF is not anticipating any challenges to implementing this assessment process in the second year of the PIP.

Measures of Progress:

- Will be determined when process is selected and reported on as part of Wisconsin's second year of the 2020 PIP.

Feedback Loops:

- A county stakeholder group formed to assist DCF with ongoing feedback as part of the child welfare transformation initiative has provided ongoing feedback and assistance to DCF in working toward this objective. This feedback is an identified strength of the project that has led to a collaborative approach to this initiative.

Goal 5: The safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families is improved assuring a healthy, stable, inclusive, and strong child welfare system.

Objective 5.1: *To establish an overall vision and strategies to transform the child welfare system to support a more robust in-home infrastructure, and infrastructure and workforce through a comprehensive strategic planning process (Items 29-30/Service Array; 31-32 – Agency Responsiveness, 25-Quality Assurance)*

Rationale and Activities:

DCF has continued to shape the child welfare transformation vision over the last year. Please see the beginning of the collaboration section for a wide range of activities this year and planned activities for next year related to child welfare transformation efforts. This description encompasses the rationale, activities, implementation supports, measures of progress, and feedback loops.

Objective 5.2 To assess workload and caseload for the state child welfare system through collaboration with counties and tribes to complete a workload study to better understand system needs and direct future planning efforts. (Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30)

Rationale: Because of Wisconsin's sharp rise in caseload size, workload responsibilities on child welfare workers has increased significantly. Based on the feedback from stakeholders prior to, during, and after the CFSR, this increased workload and caseloads on child welfare workers is a major root cause of weaknesses in case practice items. DCF's current approach is to obtain information about caseworkers, supervisors, case aides, and other child welfare staff's existing workload and caseloads. This information-gathering will help inform decision-making and planning at both county and state levels.

Key Activities:

- A competitive bid resulted in a contract awarded to ICF Incorporated.
- An oversight committee comprising DCF staff and nine other agencies from across the state was created. This committee met regularly in 2019 to oversee ICF's work on the study design.
- DCF and our county oversight committee are reviewing and discussing a preliminary draft of the findings and developing a staffing tool based on the work/time study that counties can use to determine optimal staffing based on their circumstances.

Measures of Progress:

- Survey design was completed in early 2020.
- The workload study timeline was affected by the COVID-19 public health emergency. ICF has created options for next steps that DCF is currently considering.
- Analysis of the workload study to determine patterns, findings, and possible adjustments to improve performance and system outcomes.

- DCF and our county oversight committee are reviewing and discussing a preliminary draft of the findings and developing a staffing tool based on the work/time study that counties can use to determine optimal staffing based on their circumstances.

Technical Assistance:

- DCF does not anticipate the need for any further technical assistance.

Implementation Supports

- These will be defined based on the new timeline established for planning.

Feedback Loop:

- DCF worked extensively with counties and tribes to shape the purpose, parameters, and design of the study.
- Once it is completed, DCF will work closely with counties, tribes, and other child welfare stakeholders to analyze findings and determine the best approach to effectively respond to findings through policy, program, training, or other improvements.

Objective 5: Assure child welfare staff are prepared through an improved training monitoring system. Added for alignment with the 2020 PIP (Training and Management Information System Systemic Factors)

Rationale: In the 2018 CFPSR, state tracking of training requirements was found to be an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

Activities:

- Successes include modifications to the information system have been made to better track data on worker training to assure that workers complete required training.
- Analysis includes reviewing county performance reports to determine where performance is on track, improving or needing attention and providing assistance to counties about how to meet requirements.
- Performance on training compliance is being shared and reviewed at quarterly steering committees.

Training:

- WCWPDS and DCF use compliance information analyzed in county reports to work with counties to reinforce understanding about and compliance with training requirements. This is occurring through the quarterly PDS steering committees.

Measures:

- DCF will use the PIP process to provide updates on improvements related to workforce training compliance performance.

Implementation Supports:

- Enhancements were made to the eWiSACWIS and WCWPDS system for nightly transfer of data to support this activity.
- DCF is on track to successfully implement PIP objectives in year 2 of the PIP.

Feedback Loops:

- See “activities” for description of sharing feedback at PDS quarterly Steering Committee and “training” for ongoing information sharing about performance and requirements with counties.

4. Quality Assurance System

See Quality Assurance Systemic Factor beginning on page 67.

5. Update on the Service Description

The following section describes how DCF uses specific federal funding streams to support the state child welfare system in alignment with federal rules and policies and DCF’s strategic plan.

Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program

IV-B, Subpart 1 - Homeless and Runaway Youth Funding

The goal of the Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program is to prevent and reduce the number of youths experiencing homelessness in Wisconsin by ensuring that youth and their families have the services and supports that they need. The target population of the RHY Program is youth and young adults ages 12-21 that have run away, are at-risk of running away, who are homeless, or who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. DCF recognizes the needs of RHY program participants are varied, and as such has identified outcomes that respond to the unique needs of different subsets of the RHY population. All programs effectively demonstrate the capacity to implement a holistic RHY Program that targets the following RHY Program Outcomes.

PROMOTE SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING

Youth are supported and stabilized so that whenever possible, youth stay connected with their families. Youth can live in safe, stable, and affordable housing and have access to a range of housing options as they transition to adulthood.

Programs must provide these services:

- *Runaway youth*
Youth in crisis are stabilized and remain with family or are stabilized to reunify with family as soon as possible. Whenever possible, youth must be stabilized through formal

options such as shelter or host homes. When not possible, the program will work with the youth to identify stable and potentially sustainable housing options.

- *Homeless youth with families*
Coordinate with local Continuum of Care as well as McKinney-Vento and other service providers who can meet presenting needs.
- *Unaccompanied homeless youth*
Youth in crisis are stabilized through formal options when consent can be obtained. When consent cannot be obtained or youth are not willing to utilize formal options, the program will work with the youth to identify stable and potentially sustainable housing options.

If a program provides housing, it must demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to a Housing First approach along with an understanding of the developmental, social, and legal needs of young people.

In 2019-2020, DCF developed a detailed plan for additional funding provided to support ending youth homelessness through the state budget. DCF staff engaged in a comprehensive analysis of effective services for youth identified as homeless or runaway, with an emphasis on effective rural programming. This analysis included a review of the literature pertaining to RHY service delivery (including aftercare), consent, and use of informal supports (including respite); a review of service delivery methods in other states; and listening sessions throughout the state with youth, family, like kin, and other informal supports. As a result of this analysis, DCF determined that there was enough demand and evidence of efficacy to expand positive connections, academic support, training and employment, housing, and social/emotional support (PATHS) efforts, ensuring service provision in both northern and southern Wisconsin. PATHS is a comprehensive housing-first program model serving youth transitioning from foster care who are at imminent risk of homelessness or currently homeless. Priority is given to the highest need, most vulnerable young adults with the most risk factors and fewest protective factors. Enrollees are provided comprehensive, targeted wraparound services that include a youth-driven assessment, an individualized plan and intensive and holistic case management.

An RFP was issued at the end of 2020 and two grants were successfully awarded. The provider in the northern part of the state is serving youth through a scattered site housing model in nine rural counties, with the provider in the southern part of the state serving youth through a scattered site housing model in Milwaukee County. DCF will continue to provide support and technical assistance as grant activities progress.

Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries

DSP has a limited role in international adoptions. Parents adopting children internationally can access services through their county department of human services, through their private insurance, and through the Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Support (WiAPS) programs.

WiAPS offers resources, training, education, and information about how to access needed services for adoptive families. These are supported through IV-B, subpart 2 funds in Wisconsin. More information is available at <https://wisapsp.org/>.

Services for Children under the age of 5

Wisconsin continues to follow Wisconsin's Act 181, "Best Outcomes for Children" legislation, which went into effect in 2012 and provides for better case planning to reduce the length of time that children under the age of five in foster care are without a permanent family. The act establishes procedures regarding concurrent planning and requires that the child welfare agency determine whether concurrent planning should be used in a particular case. In addition, in certain cases, the agency must engage in concurrent planning unless the court orders the agency to do otherwise.

DCF will continue birth to five efforts it has been engaged in over the past five years and use its strategic planning process to provide more of a focus on the continuum of services for that age group. The agency recognizes the critical window of opportunity during children's early years for healthy brain development and how investment in those years supports the state's goal to reduce children in OHC and ensure more children are served in their family home. These efforts therefore align with the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act that requires states to expand information relating to health care coordination and oversight for children in foster care. This section describes Wisconsin's planned efforts over the next year to reduce the length of time children under the age of five are in foster care without a permanent family and how DCF's work helps meet the developmental needs of children under the age of five who receive services under the Title IV-B or IV-E programs. The chart below reflects recent data for this population. This population will continue to be a focus in the future.

Table: Demographics of Children aged 0-5 in OHC

Child Sex	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Female	1,338	1,432	1,524	1,651	1,629	1,522	1,496
Male	1,428	1,465	1,539	1,739	1,719	1,627	1,576
Child Primary Race	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Black/African American	1,012	991	983	1,092	1,038	990	941
White	1,476	1,607	1,773	1,942	1,903	1,742	1,737
American Indian/Alaskan Native	195	228	227	267	291	262	231
Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	32	27	35	40	47	46	40
Other	52	44	45	49	69	109	123
Child Hispanic	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Yes	294	275	298	307	313	319	322
No	2,408	2,569	2,711	3,030	2,971	2,728	2,632
Unknown	65	53	54	53	64	102	118
Total	2,767	2,897	3,063	3,390	3,348	3,149	3,072

Activities Targeted to Addressing the Developmental Needs of Young Children in Out-of-Home Care or Adoptive Families

To address the developmental needs of children under the age of five, who receive services under the Title IV-B or IV-E programs, Initial Assessment and Ongoing staff receive two days of training on the effect maltreatment has on child development. Participants actively explore the

developmental needs of infants, children, and toddlers and the consequences of child abuse and neglect in children from birth to adolescence. They then use that information to establish a framework to recognize potential developmental problems early, thereby enhancing their ability to develop appropriate family service plans.

Wisconsin's Foster Parent training also addresses the developmental needs of children.

The foster parent pre-placement training includes:

- An Overview of Foster Parenting
- Expectations of Foster Parents
- Caring for Children in Foster Care (including the developmental needs of infants, children and adolescents)
- Developing and Maintaining Family Connections
- Foster Family Self Care

The foster parent Foundation training includes:

- Attachment
- Cultural Dynamics in Placement
- Dynamics of Abuse and Neglect: Contributing Factors
- Dynamics of Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Indicators
- Effects of Fostering on the Family
- Guidance and Positive Discipline
- Impact of Trauma on Child Development
- Maintaining Family Connectedness
- Overview of Children's Court System
- Partners in Permanence
- Separation and Placement

Adoptive Parent Training

DCF continues to follow Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 51.10, implemented in 2018, which requires that adoptive parents receive at least 16 hours of training. These training topics are relevant to the needs of young children and help the child transition to the adoptive home. Some of the content covered includes:

- grief and loss;
- previous abuse and neglect;
- impact of trauma;
- understanding the child's culture;
- how trauma affects the normal stages of development for young children; and,
- additional adoption competencies outlined in Administrative Rule.

Improving Support for Foster and Adoptive Parents

The department will continue to support efforts that strengthen critical linkages between the success of children served within the child welfare system and the supports provided to those who care for them to ensure that the children's developmental needs are met. DCF has worked

throughout the past year to better support foster families and improve the foster care system to better meet all children's developmental needs in several ways. These include increased foster care reimbursement, continued work with and by the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, revisions to training for foster families, and changes to licensing code. Additionally, DCF uses the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths tool (CANS) to identify cases where a foster parent has a Level of Care Certification lower than the child's assessed level of need. In those instances, a plan of support and/or services is put in place to support the placement of that specific child with that provider. Per policy, the CANS assessment must be done upon change of placement and every six months by the case manager and entered in to eWiSACWIS.

Additionally, in April 2018, the governor signed 2017 Wisconsin Act 260 into law as part of the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care legislative package. This act provided \$400,000 in funding to DCF in SFY 2020 and again in SFY 2021 to finance grants to county agencies, non-profit organizations, and tribal agencies that support foster parents and normalcy activities for children in out-of-home care. Qualifying expenses under the grant may include incentives for the support and retention of foster parents. This grant opportunity will continue in SFY 2022. More about this grant can be found in DSP Info Memo Series 2020-22i, available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2020-22i.pdf>.

Collaboration with Early Care and Education and Other Family Support programs to connect to Quality Early Learning, Family Support and Prevention Services

Early Care and Education

There is ample and growing evidence that quality early learning improves the social, emotional, physical, and academic outcomes of children - particularly for those affected by trauma and poverty. DCF has focused on ensuring that coordination and collaboration is supported through working closely with the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) within DCF. For example, the strategic child welfare transformation planning efforts are focused on building a stronger partnership to best serve families with young children. Examples of coordination in the last year described in this report that will continue in FY 2022 include coordination with broader early childhood system planning, tracking of children in OHC and the child care quality rating system, YoungStar and connections to Wisconsin's Head Start program.

Early Childhood System Building Grants

DSP staff continued to work with the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) on the Preschool Development Grant, which the department received in 2019. This seeks to further develop and implement a successful model for birth to five children and focuses on improving quality child care availability and an array of supports for children and families, including those connected to the child welfare system. As part of a collaboration between child welfare programs and early childhood programs at DCF, information was shared between programs on the process and data derived from the recently completed statewide home visiting needs

assessment for the DCF's federal Maternal Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting grant called Family Foundations Home Visiting (FFHV).

DCF is considering possible partnership to secure more consistent resources and supports for families being served in the child welfare system that may be possible through American Rescue Plan Act funding. Overall collaborative efforts also include ongoing participation in the Early Childhood Advisory Council, referenced in the collaboration section.

Coordination with YoungStar

DCF also continues to make a concerted effort to connect children in OHC with quality early learning experiences. Key efforts were launched in Milwaukee and statewide to strengthen the connections between the child welfare and child care divisions in the department and the services that support children and families.

In the next year, DCF will continue its efforts to maintain a high proportion of children in out-of-home care being matched with high quality options using Wisconsin's Child Care Quality Rating System. YoungStar uses a 5-star rating system with the level 5 as the highest level of quality; overall, 3-5 stars are considered elevated quality and a desirable goal for placement of children. Wisconsin instituted a policy with child welfare agencies that children in OHC should only be placed in higher quality setting programs, namely those that are rated 3-5 stars. In addition, DCF created capacity through the Geographic Placement Resources (GPRS) to map high quality centers around where parents live. As a result of its efforts, Wisconsin has maintained a high level of children in OHC programs in higher quality programs. For children OHC also in Wisconsin Shares, the percentage of children attending 3-5 Star rated providers increased from 56.8 percent to 79.3 percent over the last six years.

Coordination with Head Start

DCF will also continue its collaborative work the Department of Public Instruction's Head Start Collaboration Office to coordinate and identify more specific opportunities to increase the enrollment of children in OHC in Head Start programs. Recent research underscores that this program provides important benefits to children in the child welfare system, which can be seen at <https://www.childtrends.org/news-release/new-research-shows-early-head-start-plays-a-key-role-in-reducing-child-maltreatment>. DCF staff from DSP and the Division of Early Care and Education jointly presented at the Wisconsin Head Start Association conference in 2020 to discuss efforts to improve early care and education with a focus on children served through the child welfare system.

Coordination with Home Visiting – Family Foundations Home Visiting Program

In addition to connecting with early childhood work described above, home visiting has been connected more comprehensively to DCF's child welfare transformation work. This includes discussion and planning about how to better connect families in our child welfare system to the home visiting program as part of a more robust array of home-like services.

DCF contracts with city and county health and human services departments, tribal organizations, and non-profit agencies to provide evidence-based home visiting services; in Wisconsin, this is called Family Foundations Home Visiting (FFHV). These contracts specify the number of families to be served and other service-related requirements. DCF supports and monitors the contracted agencies to ensure high-quality services are available for families. Services are targeted toward families facing multiple life stressors such as poverty, substance use, domestic violence, history of child maltreatment, and low education levels. The program prioritizes prenatal enrollment, with a goal of 75 percent of enrolled families to be prenatal enrollment.

Contracted agencies select evidence-based home visiting models that they feel best meet their communities' needs. Currently, agencies use one or more of the following: Early Head Start (EHS), Healthy Families America (HFA), Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP). Each model has guidelines that programs follow to ensure that they implement the models with fidelity. Additionally, all models include some type of individualized goal plan that the home visitor and the client develop together to guide the work with the client.

The state provides funding to support contracted program staff training and technical assistance. Specifically, Wisconsin has been developing in-state model expertise to deliver technical assistance resources for contracted agencies using the HFA and PAT models. These in-state resources (such as in-state trainers) help to reduce training costs and travel burden on the contracted agencies and allow for more timely trainings. The state also continues to improve its training offerings to home visiting program supervisors and staff members.

Home visiting programs serve many of Wisconsin's most vulnerable families. Contracted agency managers and staff members report it can be hard to support and work with families facing multiple challenges such as housing instability, substance abuse, mental health issues, and domestic violence. The professional development system, Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health, and external evaluators with University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee work with DCF on several initiatives to support contracted agencies' work with families. Contracted agencies regularly participate in quality improvement projects to improve their processes and outcomes with families.

Collaboration with Birth to 3 Program

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Health Services' (DHS) Bureau of Children's Services collaborated to automate CAPTA referrals from Child Protective Services to the Birth to 3 Program. This change was made in recognition of the heightened vulnerability of children with disabilities face and the potential benefits that children with substantiated cases of abuse and neglect can receive from participating in Birth to 3 Programs. The automated CAPTA referrals to the Birth to 3 Program went live on October 31, 2019. A memo describing the automation can be viewed at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2019-33i.pdf>. DCF is also

coordinating with the Birth to 3 Program to review data, referrals, consent for services, screening, and enrollment in Birth to 3. This will help determine patterns and if potential next steps to improve screening and referral practices to best serve families.

Connection to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation to Support Families

The work of developing a system of IECMH Consultation in Wisconsin was initially supported by a technical assistance grant from the Center of Excellence at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This grant has since ended but the work is continuing under the facilitation and sponsorship of the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health Collective Impact Infant Toddler Policy group. The Infant Toddler Policy group is a collaborative group representing multiple state agencies, systems, and organizations. Between 2017 and 2020, this group established a universal model framework for a system of IECMH Consultation informed by existing evidence-based models in other states; adopted a set of national competencies for IECMH Consultants; developed a set of core communication documents to communicate what consultation is to key stakeholders; and began outreach to pre-service and in-service partners to build career pathways and support in Wisconsin to build and sustain an IECMH Consultation workforce. Most recently, in early 2020, the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council voted to adopt IECMH Consultation as a recommendation to put forth to the governor for consideration in the next biennium.

DCF will continue efforts to develop more infant mental health consultation support for families in the child welfare system. This will be done primarily through participating in the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health's Children's Mental Health Collective Impact Infant Toddler Policy Group. Thus far, the group's work has focused on building a model and framework for a system of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC). The vision is to develop a structure that can be universally resourced to all systems where children and families are, such as child welfare (including foster and adoptive care), home visiting, early care and education (including public pre-k), early intervention, and the medical field. The goal is to create an IECMH Consultation system in Wisconsin where consultants help adults support the healthy growth and development of children in their care, preventing expulsion from early care and education settings, increasing stability of placement for children in out of home care, nurturing young learners, and keeping their parents at work.

IECMH Consultation is an evidence-based service provided by a professional consultant with mental health expertise and with the objective of building the capacity of adults in a child's life so they can best strengthen and support the child's social and emotional health and development. IECMH Consultation can address a range of risk factors related to while simultaneously increasing protective factors against child abuse and neglect. First and foremost, it is focused on children under the age of five, and especially children under one year of age, who are at greatest risk of maltreatment. Though IECMH consultants are licensed or licensed-eligible mental health clinicians, they do not provide direct mental health therapy to children, but they do have the professional capacity to recognize if and when a child shows

signs of mental health issues (a known risk factor for child abuse and neglect) and subsequently refer the child to mental health services. IECMH consultants can increase a parent's knowledge and understanding of their young child's social emotional development, recognizing what is typical and atypical, knowing how to respond to a child's challenging behaviors in supportive and nurturing ways, and increasing the quality of parent-child relationships. All of these constitute important protective factors against child abuse and neglect. Most importantly, nurturing these skills can lead to reduced parental stress levels that protect against the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Connection to Primary Prevention Programs

DCF provides prevention programs and services specifically focused on families with children pre-natal to five years of age. Through new child abuse and neglect prevention grants that began in January 2019 (one in each of the six DCF regions of the state) and on-going Connections Count grants in two counties, families with young children can access services such as, but not limited to New Baby Visits, Newborn Behavioral Observations, parent skill building and parent groups, basic needs and employment support services, family stabilization support, and home visiting services specifically targeting families with heightened risk of child abuse and neglect.

Coordination with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB) on Primary Prevention

The Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB) is the lead entity implementing the Period of PURPLE Crying® via four grantees. The Prevention Board has made funds available for DCF to integrate the Period of PURPLE Crying into the MIECHV funded home visiting programs (a statutory requirement for home visiting programs). For the past seven years, the Prevention Board has funded evidence-informed parent education programs through a competitive grant-making process. One of the programs funded is Triple P (Positive Parenting Program). The Prevention Board supports Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4, which include Stepping Stones and Teen, and are primary prevention focused. DCF was able to expand its evidence-informed parent education efforts including Triple P Level 5 using new DCF TANF funding dedicated to secondary prevention programs and services specifically focused on families with children pre-natal to five years of age.

The Prevention Board also coordinates building parent voice into community-based prevention programming and training. The Prevention Board will partner with DCF to share lessons learned as DCF develops their new Parents Supporting Parents family voice initiative; this is described in the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision. This ongoing partnership will assure that efforts are connected to existing programming.

Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths

Wisconsin Act 78 and Systems Change Review

CAPTA funds continue to support Wisconsin's efforts to track and prevent child maltreatment deaths. The 2009 Wisconsin Act 78 became effective on February 1, 2010, requiring the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to share information with the public in instances of child death, serious injury, and egregious incidents due to suspected or confirmed child maltreatment, as well as cases in which a child in out-of-home care placement is suspected to have committed suicide. Additionally, in 2016, Wisconsin developed a Systems Change Review (SCR) process to align with the Child Welfare Model for Practice.

Within Wisconsin's county-administered, state-supervised service model, Act 78 directs the local child welfare agency to notify DCF when there is suspicion that one of the following incidents have occurred. Key references from the Act are included below:

Child death or serious injury is defined as "an incident in which a child has died or been placed in serious or critical condition, as determined by a physician, as a result of any suspected abuse or neglect that has been reported under this section or in which a child who has been placed outside the home by a court order under this chapter or Ch. 938 is suspected to have committed suicide."

Egregious incident is defined as "an incident of suspected abuse or neglect...involving significant violence, torture, multiple victims, the use of inappropriate or cruel restraints, exposure of a child to a dangerous situation, or other similar, aggravated circumstances."

Once the local child welfare agency determines an incident likely meets the above threshold(s), Act 78 requires the local child welfare agency to submit specific case information to DCF within two working days. The specific information required is outlined in Wis. Stat. ss. 48.987 (7) (cr) (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e), (f). The information the local child welfare agency submits to DCF is transmitted via eWiSACWIS.

DCF's Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) has the primary responsibility to review and analyze these submissions. Specifically, DSP is responsible for the qualification and public notification of incidents, as well as determination and facilitation of review. In Wisconsin, there are two levels of review that can be assigned to an incident. One is a "Summary" review; the second is a "Practice Review."

Summary Review

All cases that qualify for public notification receive a Summary Review, which consists of reviewing the electronic case record. DCF communicates results of this review to the public through a "90 Day Summary."

Practice Review

Incidents that involve significant or current CPS intervention receive a level of review in addition to the Summary Review and are referred to as a Practice Review. When cases qualify for a

Practice Review, DSP is responsible for determining a method for review. In 2015, DCF adopted a new approach to analyzing cases qualifying for a Practice Review.

This method is formally referred to as the Systems Change Review process and is a methodical approach to analyzing cases assigned to a Practice Review. The steps of a Systems Change Review include:

- Review of the case record and development of key observations
- Interview of relevant staff (i.e., *Debriefing*)
- Discussion and analysis of system influences on key observations (i.e., *Mapping*)
- Documentation of contextual information and analysis to inform and understand key observations (i.e., *Second Story*)
- Scoring of documentation and conversion to data points (i.e., *Scoring*)
- Sharing of the score with local agency management
- Recommend program and practice improvements for the Wisconsin child welfare system

At the completion of the Systems Change Review, the public is notified in the form of a document referred to as the "6 Month Summary." DCF implemented the Systems Change Review on November 1, 2016, in the balance of the state and on June 1, 2018, in the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS). As part of this, DCF provides additional and detailed information and training to local child protective service agencies. Key findings and next steps in advancing the learnings from the Systems Change Review process are available on the DCF website at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/access-ia/pdf/a78-systemschangeresults.pdf>.

Additional information related to understanding and responding to child maltreatment can be found in the state's annual Child Abuse and Neglect Report, which can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/reports/pdf/can.pdf>.

Supplemental Appropriation for Disaster Relief

DCF awarded disaster relief funding to seven eligible counties in 2020. The activities undertaken included repair to human service buildings damaged by the disasters, assistance to families whose property were affected by the disasters, training to child welfare staff to better prepare for future disasters, and counseling and other supports needed as a result of disasters throughout the state. Support was also used to help support a critical fix to the state Geographic Placement Resources System (GPRS) that was impacted through the disaster in 2020.

Supplemental funding to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019-COVID 19 (CARES Act)-IV B, Part 1

CARES Act Funding

Title IV-B, Parts 1 is being distributed to counties to support activities related to COVID-19 prevention, preparation, and response. Examples of supported activities include supporting remote communications tools; training and technology; internal and interagency meetings regarding COVID-19 response; adapting required child welfare activities (home visits, assessments, case planning, etc.) during the pandemic; personal protective equipment use and procedures training; COVID-19-related data collection and organization, including contact tracing; and, staffing coverage due to COVID-19 related staff shortages.

MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program

Wisconsin's Promoting Safe and Stable Families program (PSSF) is administered by the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) and has four components - family preservation, family support, time limited-reunification services, and adoption promotion and support. Each of these components receives at least 20 percent of funds for service delivery. CARES Act funding support was added to the state's overall allocation for funding and supports the work described in this section.

Specific percentage of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds spent on Service Delivery

Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds are allocated to counties for the operation of local PSSF programs. Of the total PSSF funds, approximately 20 percent is used by DCF for state-level adoption promotion and support services activities, while approximately 5 percent is used by DCF for state operations, including training and technical assistance to counties and tribes. Approximately 10 percent of PSSF funds are used to support the statewide Wisconsin Trauma Project. The remaining 65 percent of PSSF funds are allocated to counties and tribes to fund support, preservation, and reunification programs. Local agencies are required to apply federal funding requirements for family support, preservation, and reunification services to meet PSSF spending requirements for those service areas.

Planning and service coordination amounts are described in the CFS 101 documents attached to this plan. Services in the first three components are primarily delivered by 70 county agencies. The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services and Menominee County do not receive annual PSSF allocations. In Menominee County, the tribal agency receives PSSF grant funds directly from the federal government and Milwaukee County does not receive an allocation because DCF operates the child welfare system. All of Menominee's PSSF funds go directly to the tribe, therefore the county does not apply/receive separate PSSF funds. Adoption promotion and support services to the counties are provided at the state level through the Public Adoption Program. A portion of the federal award is also used to fund regional or

statewide family preservation, family support, and time-limited activities, including funding programs for Wisconsin's 10 remaining tribes and DMCPs.

Service Decision-Making Process for Family Support Services

For the adoption promotion and support services portion of PSSF, funds are directed toward promoting and supporting adoption as a permanency outcome for children. The PSSF funds for adoption services are used in two ways - to support part of the public adoption program to finalize adoptions of children in OHC and to support the statewide Post Adoption Resource Centers (WI-APS) that provide resources and supports to adoptive families. The funds to the public adoption program are used to finance adoption caseworker staff salaries and recruitment activities for adoptive families.

For the PSSF funds allocated to counties, county agencies determine and report to DCF how funds are used including support to local organizations and agencies used and information that helps to track relevant outcomes for the use of these funds. This county-led use of PSSF funds ensures that family support services, as well as preservation and reunification services, are community-based and best able to meet the needs of children and families within Wisconsin's child welfare system. Under state policy for the PSSF program, local agencies are required to spend at least the minimum amount required for preservation, support, and reunification. To build on local collaboration and community-wide planning efforts, PSSF program service delivery involves various stakeholders within each county. Strong collaboration at the local level is critical to ensure that the populations at greatest risk of maltreatment are identified, supported, and served in a timely and effective manner. Strong coordination regarding training and direct service efforts at the community level further assists community stakeholders, including child welfare, law enforcement, education, and community-based providers, in identifying and targeting services to those with the greatest needs.

As DCF develops and implements new child welfare policies, standards, and procedures statewide (with the goal of improving safety, permanence, and the well-being of children and families), PSSF service providers are expected to coordinate services and target populations in ways that improve child welfare program outcomes. Counties are also encouraged to align PSSF program outcomes with other county or state initiatives to improve coordination of efforts. For example, counties use PSSF funds to better support local home visitation, child abuse prevention efforts, coordinated service teams, family resource centers, community response programs, or reunification services. Finally, counties are encouraged to align their PSSF funds with evidence-based programming or other promising approaches in the areas of home visiting, trauma-informed care, and youth development in an effort to create a better coordinated system of care for children and families who are most at-risk and in need of services. This coordination and collaboration will continue to guide the use of PSSF over the next year.

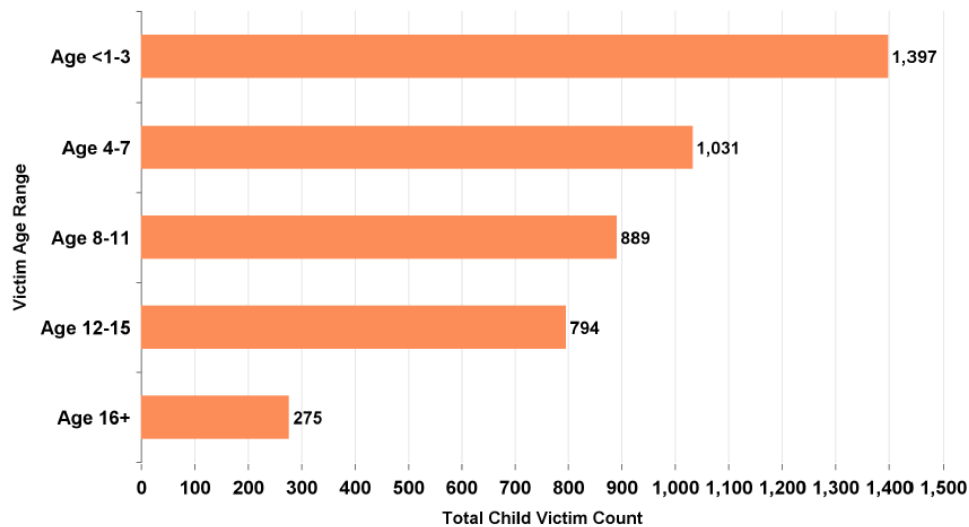
Examples of local PSSF programs in the last year include the following:

- Clark County used PSSF funds for financial assistance to families who are struggling financially to either provide transportation support, home improvement and maintenance materials, social connection and/or emotional support activities. In 2020, 34 families benefited from financial services and most of those families had children who were able to be supported and maintained in their home. Due to financial assistance, the county was able to purchase equipment to ensure safe sleep for an infant, baby gates in a home, supplies to organize and maintain cleanliness, and new beds and bedding for a family.
- Dane County used PSSF funds to support the community basing of Joining Forces for Families (JFF) staff that link other stakeholders in twenty-six geographic areas covering all of Dane County. Select JFF teams have created special programming to respond to local needs including parental support, eviction prevention, securing housing for families, and community family support activities. JFF provided resources to 1,612 families with 2,773 children to prevent eviction or place them in stable living situations. JFF continued to provide additional resource and continued support to 883 of those families.
- Fond du Lac County used PSSF funds for their Healing, Opportunities, Preservation, and Enrichment (HOPE) Program. The program provided services to twenty-three families and successfully met their goal of 75 percent of families not having a screened in Child Protective Services Report within six months of completing the program. The county was also able to increase the number of families reunified within 12 months by 28.1 percent.
- Sheboygan County used PSSF Funds for their Family Training Program. This program served 23 families whose children were able to remain in the home. Of the 28 families who had children placed in out-of-home care, 10 children from 5 families were reunified.
- Wood County used PSSF Funds to partner with a local agency to provide Family Support Services. This allowed the county to greatly increase the number of families served by 17.5 percent and develop programming to better meet the needs of the community. One program developed was the Adolescent Diversion Program, allowing the county to expand Family Preservation services to reach voluntary families.

Population at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

Under section 48.981(9) of the Wisconsin Statutes, DCF provides an annual report to the governor and the legislature on child abuse and neglect; this is called the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report. The report includes information about which populations are at the greatest risk of maltreatment, as identified by substantiated maltreatment claims. Each section of the report also includes information concerning identification and services to at-risk populations. The report can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/reports/pdf/can.pdf>. In 2019, children under age four accounted for 31.8 percent of victims and children under age eight accounted for 55.3 percent, as shown in the graph below.

Age Range of Unique Child Maltreatment Victims *
2019



* The total number of children included in this chart is slightly larger than the number of unique victims in Table 9 as some children were maltreated multiple times throughout the year, and belong in two age groups.

Section 5, services for Birth to Five beginning on page 132, describes how DCF and its partners identify, provide, and coordinate services to meet the needs of vulnerable children under the age of five, including both children in foster care and those served in-home or in a community-based setting. The increase in parental drug addiction and use is a growing concern and continues to frame many of these efforts. More information about DCF’s efforts focused on drug affected children is included in the CAPTA section of this report that begins on page 170. In addition, DCF continues to work with DHS on the Care4Kids program to identify and address the healthcare needs of children in out-of-home care. This collaboration includes providing and tracking services to young children including, but not limited to, information about childhood immunizations, health check periodicity timelines and utilization, developmental assessments, and comprehensive health assessments for children in OHC.

Emergency Funding for MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families

As part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (PI 21-04), additional PSSF funds were received by the state of Wisconsin. These supplemental PSSF funds will be awarded separately from the regular FY 2021 PSSF grant and therefore will be tracked and accounted for separately to ensure compliance with specific requirements and allowances. These funds will be used to supplement county services provided with PSSF funding. More details on these activities can be found in the PSSF section of the report beginning on page 142.

Kinship Navigator Funding

DCF employs a variety of activities focused on the Kinship Navigator Program, which was a successfully completed area of Wisconsin's approved 2020 PIP in 2021. Information about the relative caregiver workgroup are described in the Collaboration Section on page 10 that provides more information on continued support for relative caregivers and the relative caregiver advisory group. A detailed report from FY21 describes activities and is included as Attachment 1 to this report. DCF recently submitted an application to continue services under the current IV-B Kin Navigator program.

Monthly Caseworker Visits

DCF continues to follow the standards established in the 2006 Child and Family Services Improvement Act to report on monthly caseworker visits. DCF will report the updated number in December 2020 per plan instructions. In FFY2020, caseworker contact requirements remained consistent and were met for 97.01 percent of the children subject to this measure, which exceeds the federal regulation requirement of 95 percent. Of these contacts, 82.34 percent were made with the child in the placement location. DCF continues to monitor performance on this practice requirement and to provide statewide, regional, and local training and technical assistance to ensure compliance with this performance expectation.

The WCWPDS system includes training on standards and frequency of caseworker visits. A specific PIP initiative described in the approach section is on improving the timeliness and quality of caseworker visits through the quality caseworker PDSAs (described in Section 3). This approach uses the DCF CQI system to identify, support and disseminate best practices to improve the quality of caseworker visits and is currently focused on nine counties. Lessons learned through this process will be identified and shared with counties to improve caseworker practice. During COVID-19, DCF developed guidance around acceptable standards during the pandemic, these can be found at the following link- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/guidance>.

In the last FFY, monthly caseworker grant funds were used to support a worker caseload study described on pages 129-130. In developing this study, extensive outreach was conducted. Overall, it is believed that a more manageable and data driven caseload size will result in more time spent with families, and more time spent with families allows for more detailed discussions that support decision making and case outcomes. Child welfare workforce members that were interviewed as part of this study indicated that they wanted more time to spend with families and linked improving their ability to provide quality support and planning.

Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Activities

DCF no longer conducts a waiver demonstration program.

Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments

DCF intends to continue providing services that were provided last year in the coming FFY. Specifically, DCF plans to continue using these resources for the following activities:

Annual membership dues and conference participation, including:

- American Association for the Interstate Compact for the Protection of Children (AAICPC);
- National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) project; and
- Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA).

Participation of DCF staff in leadership meetings and conferences, including:

- Deputy compact administrator attending the annual ICAMA conference and board meeting;
- Deputy compact administrators attending the annual ICPC conference and board meeting; and,
- Adoption and interstate services section manager and supervisor attended the North American Council on Adoptable Children Conference.

Supporting program functions including:

- Support for the statewide Wisconsin Adoption Post Permanency Services (WiAPPS) to support post-guardianship placements.
- Funding LTE positions in DCF's adoption section to assist staff with the daily adoption program operations.
- Funding LTE positions to conduct quality assurance reviews of foster care and adoption cases.
- Funding Internet searches for the Family Find and Engagement programs.
- Funding county human service agencies to contract for services to complete foster care licensing for relatives.

Supporting DCF conferences and training

- DCF has an annual "Changing the Face of Adoption" conference for professionals that work in the area of adoption. Approximately 185 professionals attend the conference each year.
- Funded SAFE trainings for licensors and supervisors.
- Funded the ongoing statewide rollout of the Family Find and Engagement training.
- Funded the development of the new Pre-Adoptive Parent training.

Adoption Training Program

The Public Adoption Program recognizes that there are several options for families to receive adoption training and, when possible, gives credit when a family completes training through another avenue. This limits the number of required extra hours of training hours that a family

must complete while also allowing the Program to advise them on what training topics must still be covered.

Adoption Savings

In the next year, Wisconsin expects to continue the use of adoption savings funds to support the Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Support contract (previously known as the Post Adoption Resource Center) as well as the public adoptions service contracts. These activities are described in the previous section.

Challenges in Accessing/Spending Previous and Future Funds

The Wisconsin Legislature must now approve budget increases and this change may impact the feasibility of funding increases for contracts and DCF's ability to spending adoption savings. In FFY 2022, DCF does not have unspent funds to use from previous years.

Family First Prevention Services Act Grants

In the last year, DCF has made significant progress on the plan for child welfare system transformation. Family First Transition Act funding has been a critical resource to build a culture for change, information gathering for implementation, and support of leadership and planning to move forward. Priorities for FFPSA were focused on transforming the child welfare system to more of an emphasis on serving children in the home, identifying needed workforce and training improvements, and determining how to develop the Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP).

Efforts to more fully flesh out Wisconsin's strategic plan to focus on these priorities as well as support change management in county leadership were areas of focus. Wisconsin's spending plan on the child welfare transformation guiding principles and stakeholder feedback focused in the following areas:

- Prevention/In-Home Service Support- Projects focused on building the tools, infrastructure, and support for evidence-based programs to keep families safely in their homes.
- Workforce Support- Projects focused on giving the child welfare workforce the training, tools, and infrastructure to support their work.
- Lived Experience- Building the child welfare system's capacity to incorporate lived experience into our child welfare system policies and programs and addressing the racial inequities and disproportionality in our system.
- Implementation Support- Activities focused on ensuring the successful execution of FFPSA and our child welfare transformation initiative.

Prevention/In-Home and Workforce Support

In September of 2020, DCF issued a survey on Supporting Families In-Home, which aimed to increase understanding of key strategies used by counties and tribes to support in-home case management and service provision for families. In partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty and School of Social Work, the survey was developed and disseminated to child welfare caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators in 11 counties and one tribe known to use in-home planning and services, with corresponding decreases in out-of-home placement. Responses were analyzed by the UW-Madison School of Social Work.

This survey was one of several efforts last fall to collect a variety of information related to the division's planning for the Child Welfare Strategic Transformation efforts. Specifically, the input gathered from this survey has helped DCF focus key resources around development of recommendations and strategies related to both service provision and case management.

As part of our efforts to serve families in-home, DCF is also creating a training specifically for in-home safety service providers. Additional training for providers was identified by In-Home Safety Services Counties to ensure shared language and understanding around controlling danger threats on a protective or safety plan. These trainings are expected to be rolled out in 2021.

In addition, this funding has supported a survey of child welfare and youth justice workers to identify priorities for investment in training, practice, and process improvements as well as technology needs to maximize time workers spend with families. Results of the survey are helping DCF identify child welfare training processes and ways to improve casework ratios so workers can spend more time with families.

Elevation of Lived Experience

As described in the collaboration section, DCF hired a lived experience coordinator to more consistently and systematically elevate and leverage the voice of lived experience in all child welfare work. Prior to this position being hired, DCF worked with the Office of Children's Mental Health and their current lived-experience group to identify how to begin the process of effectively engage this important stakeholder in discussions related to child welfare services.

Implementation Support

Support was used to fund project management resources to assist with developing the child welfare transformation approach and strategies detailed in the collaboration section of this report (starting on page 10). Teams have focused on developing the in-home model, the workforce and infrastructure supports needed, and worked on meeting the requirements of the Qualified Residential Treatment Program. Support was used to gather information on a comprehensive change management initiative that was co-sponsored by Casey Family Programs. DCF is contracting with Root Learning to provide a comprehensive change

management approach that will support DCF, together with counties, to shift their focus towards policies, programs, and services focused on serving more children in their homes. Training will be provided to 200 individuals that will become trained in the overall approach. Learning maps created by Root Learning and facilitated training by DCF staff will be rolled out in 2021. The following information on DCF's website provide more detail on what has occurred to date - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first>

A communications position has been hired to bolster the work of DCF as it heightens regular communication about planning for FFPSA. This position will help continue to support key outreach efforts across the state consistent with the DCF change management approach. DCF recently hosted several town hall meetings to provide an update on the strategic planning process and provide information on the Qualified Residential Treatment Program development process in Wisconsin. The Town Halls can be viewed and downloaded by clicking the Town Hall Meeting link on <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first>. A frequently asked questions section is also available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/qtrp/faq>

The town halls had more than 1,000 participants representing child welfare workers, supervisors, and important child welfare partners. These events resulted in a 30% increase in traffic on DCF's website.

Family First Transition Certainty Grants – Not applicable

Wisconsin did not use funding to continue activities under previous waivers.

John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood

Chafee Program (Chafee) and Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program:

Wisconsin's Independent Living (IL) Program is designed to help system-involved youth age 14 and older develop crucial life skills and achieve outcomes like their non-system involved peers. The Positive Youth Development philosophy is embedded in all services available in the Chafee program. In addition to the IL supports young people receive while in out-of-home care (OHC), youth who exit OHC at age 18 or older, or after age 16 via an adoption or court-ordered guardianship, are supported by the program until age 21. The department also receives approximately \$700,000 in Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds annually to support youth in achieving their postsecondary goals. IL eligible youth can access this funding for five years or up to age 23, whichever occurs first. Services provided are in alignment with the requirements of the federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for the Successful Transition to Adulthood. This plan addresses both Sec. 477 (42 U.S.C. 677) (a) of the Social Security Act and Wisconsin's progress on the Children and Family Services Plan (CFSP) goals.

SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION

In 2016, the department intentionally shifted the use of Chafee funds from the county human services agencies to regional Transition Resource Agencies (TRAs) to provide eligible youth with continued support after exiting OHC. The implementation of the regional model was phased, with the last regional agency becoming operational January 2019. As a result of that final phase, all Wisconsin counties are served by a TRA; no counties currently operate on the prior service model. All TRAs are selected through a competitive procurement process and there is one TRA per Youth Services Region. Counties utilize their Child and Family Allocation to provide services to youth 14 and over while they are in OHC, while TRAs use Chafee funds to provide services at the regional level. Taken together, the efforts at both the county and regional levels, and the efforts DCF puts forth to support and oversee its partner agencies, ensure that there is a continuum of IL service provision for youth 14 to 21 (or 23 for ETV). Currently, no state funds support Wisconsin's IL program.

To ensure equity in youth accessing services, some Chafee dollars have historically been utilized to support tribes and the Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) in providing IL programming to their youth as well. In 2019, DJC elected to no longer receive Chafee funds from DCF starting in 2020, choosing to instead leverage other funding sources to serve its youth in OHC. Tribes currently receive funds through a direct allocation, rather than a competitive process. They submit an annual plan to the department that details how they identify the youth they intend to serve and the services they will provide. Each tribe completes a budget that identifies what is needed to fund their IL program; thus far DCF has been able to fully fund tribal requests for funding in addition to providing Chafee funds to the TRAs.

DESCRIPTION OF ELIGIBILITY, CONTINUUM OF SERVICES AND LINKAGES TO OTHER SERVICES

Wisconsin's IL and ETV programs provided services and supports to youth aged 14-21 years. Eligibility for Wisconsin's Chafee services while youth are in care includes the following:

- those youth who are in out-of-home care for at least 6 months any time after the age of 14, for as long as they remain in care; and
- those youth who turn 17.5 while in out-of-home care or who are 17.5 or older when they enter care are automatically eligible for as long as they remain in care.

Eligibility for Wisconsin's Chafee services after a youth exits from care and up to age 21 (23 for ETV) includes the following:

- those youth who are adopted after age 16 who not eligible for room and board supports;
- those youth who enter guardianship under Chapter 48 or long-term kinship care after age 16; and,
- those youth who exit court-ordered out-of-home care at age 18 or older, including youth justice youth living in and aging out of a court-ordered out-of-home care placement setting.

The assessments used by CW agencies to determine the level of life skills development are the Casey Life Skills Assessment and Daniel Memorial Assessment. The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment, required of all Wisconsin children in OHC, provides further information about the youth's level of overall functioning, impact of trauma, strengths, needs, and more. Many agencies will also use information from a youth's Special Education Transition Assessment (if they have one) to inform decisions around appropriate activities. Many Transition Resource Agencies also conduct assessments with young people to determine their IL needs and goals; these may include the Casey and Daniel Memorial, as well as others like job readiness assessments, self-assessments, etc. DCF's strategic planning committee focused on articulating a home-like continuum has reached out to youth to secure feedback on needs and resources that will assist them in more successful transitions to the community.

Services provided by the counties and tribes focus on promoting normalcy and providing youth with opportunities to learn skills associated with daily living, job readiness, interpersonal relationships, etc. Youth are also supported with obtaining employment and housing, identifying and pursuing education related goals, and remaining connected to caring adults and their communities for ongoing support. TRAs are a resource for tribal county workers serving youth in care, as TRA staff are responsible for being aware of and connected to community resources that may be assets to young people at any stage of IL eligibility. Youth being served by the county are also encouraged to become involved with the regional Youth Advisory Councils (YACs), which the TRAs coordinate.

Wisconsin currently permits extended foster care for youth 18-21 who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are still in high school. By default, the regional IL service model in many ways operates similarly to an extended care program by dedicating specific staff, funding, and supports in key independent living domains for young adults ages 18-21. It therefore allows youth eligible for extended care, but electing not to participate in it, to receive support through a type of community-based extension of care. In this arrangement, youth are no longer required to be connected to "the system" but they still receive similar supports, such as individual coaching/case management; support with job readiness and employment; connections to housing and financial assistance, when needed; access to the resources needed to pursue post-secondary educational goals; support and guidance with regard to health, well-being and relationships; and advocacy opportunities through regional YACs. Youth participation in any TRA service is voluntary and can be as robust or minimal as the youth chooses. At minimum, at age 17.5, the county-level caseworker, TRA IL coordinator, youth, and other supportive adults identified by the youth create the Independent Living Transition to Discharge (ILTD) plan and complete the required activities in the 90 days prior to a youth exiting OHC. This process is in line with the requirements defined in the federal Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 48.39 and 938.38. For youth who elect to remain in extended care, their ILTD is still started at age 17.5 and is updated as relevant as they continue their time in care.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

DCF's goal is for all youth to thrive in adulthood. Services to help youth meet this goal should be provided in a timely, flexible, coordinated, and developmentally appropriate way building on the strengths of youth, families, the community and cultural groups, and utilizing the expertise within the home, school, and community. Efforts aligned with these objectives are described throughout this report.

It is expected that the bulk of life-skills development occurs in the natural setting of the home, school, and community as foster parents and care providers create teachable moments in the home, encourage involvement in extracurricular activities, and meet with the youth and school counselor for career and college advising, etc. For youth in group and residential settings, life skills development should be provided by the group care provider or social worker, as agreed upon by the county agency, provider, youth, and other supportive adults as relevant.

For young people who never achieve permanence, it is critical that significant transition activities and supports are available to meet their individualized needs as they exit care and enter adulthood. These supports, at minimum, are started at time of transition when the TRA participates in the ILTD process and continue for as long as the youth wants to receive services from the TRA, up to age 21 (23 for ETV). Even if a young person does not choose to engage with a TRA immediately after leaving OHC, they have the option to do so later, so long as they engage prior to turning age 21 (prior to 23 for ETV). The TRAs work to remind young people of the services for which they qualify by engaging in creative outreach, such as checking in on a regular basis, leveraging social media platforms, providing birthday cards, and more.

The overarching goals of the Wisconsin CFCPSTA are outlined in the Youth Services Framework and include:

- **Connections:** Youth are connected to supportive adults and to their community. The youth defines what community means to them.
- **Education:** Every youth has a high school diploma or is on track to receive a high school diploma and has the support to pursue and complete post-secondary education, training, and employment that aligns with the youth's needs and goals.
- **Employment/Financial stability:** All youth have had at least one paid job opportunity before they turn 18 years old. Through training and employment opportunities, all youth have obtained the skills needed for employment that pays a living wage with benefits and a career path. Those that qualify for public assistance access those supports.
- **Health and Well-being:** Youth have the opportunity and support for their well-being in its many forms, including social, emotional, mental, intellectual, and physical.
- **Housing:** All youth are in safe, stable, and affordable housing and have access to a range of housing options.

Services and Outcomes Data

DCF collects and records data related to its IL program in three primary ways - service information documented in eWiSACWIS, TRAs' biannual data outcomes reporting, and National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey data. Specific to NYTD, DCF continues to survey all

17-year-olds eligible for the NYTD survey every year and administers the follow-up surveys to those same youth at ages 19 and 21. Staff work with its contracted partner, University of Wisconsin Survey Center, to maximize its outreach efforts directly to young people and the workers and supportive adults with whom they are connected in hopes of increasing youth participation. This includes direct outreach to the county and TRA workers who are most closely connected to many of the young people eligible for NYTD. Additionally, DCF staff actively revamp existing and create new NYTD resources and processes to support the state's efforts. In the past year, DCF unveiled outward-facing resources that include a revised NYTD overview presentation, a thorough FAQ document, and talking point documents for workers to assist their explanation of NYTD to their clients. Recent document development also includes internal process guidelines that guide DCF's timeline and processes for the different cohorts, as well as valuable templates to assist with outreach and follow-up. Together, these resources help to better educate DCF staff and partners on their role in the NYTD process and make the state's NYTD efforts more robust.

Has the state noted any challenges with the NYTD data collection and/or data entry processes that may warrant attention?

In late 2018, Wisconsin DCF designated its IL Coordinator as its new NYTD Coordinator. In that role, the IL Coordinator serves as the main liaison between the different entities involved with the NYTD process (county and contracted IL partners, contracted survey administrator, DCF eWiSACWIS and data reporting/analytics staff, etc) and works to craft and refine processes and guidelines and address areas needing improvement. Recent efforts include:

- Better identifying youth eligible for baseline cohort and/or follow-up cohorts by
 - making sure that eWiSACWIS system logic aligns with NYTD eligibility and state decision to survey all 17 y.o. who qualify;
 - working to differentiate between NYTD and IL eligibility since they are not 1-to-1 but oftentimes confused as such. This includes refining eWiSACWIS logic, tickler notifications, etc; and
 - refining follow-up cohorts since staff have found that sometimes youth complete the survey at age 17 but are ultimately determined to be ineligible for the survey (e.g. lag in placement data entry) and it is necessary to make sure they are not subsequently included in follow up survey cohorts
- Refining reporting procedures to identify eligible youth, track their participation, and submit data to the feds by
 - Having contracted survey administrator provide specific and robust feedback on current reporting processes directly to DCF data reporting/analytics staff. Currently, in the process of reviewing and possibly enhancing key reports, with the goal of consolidating duplicative reports and ensuring that the reports include the most important information for surveying youth
- Better leveraging partnerships to identify and contact eligible youth to encourage their participation
 - Continue contracting with UW-Survey Center to administer the survey; has established timelines and processes to conduct outreach to eligible youth and collect and report issues, participation status, etc
 - Developed processes and guidelines to better inform CWA and IL partners of NYTD, youth eligibility, and their unique role to help incentivize youth to

participate. DCF liaisons directly with CWA and IL partners to notify them of youth they used to/currently served who are eligible for the survey, in hopes program partner can connect with eligible youth and have them participate; these efforts supplement UW-Survey Center's efforts

- Most of these processes are defined internally. NYTD Coordinator also developed talking points, overview PPT, and FAQ document to educate partners: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/ys/nytd>

Some challenges persist, including:

- Difficulty connecting with youth eligible to take the survey as part of follow up cohorts. Even if the youth is eligible for regional IL services at age 19 and 21, they do not always choose to participate. Often, contact information is out-of-date, collateral contacts cannot be located, and/or prior CWA contacts are no longer in contact. UW-Survey Center uses many methods to locate and contact youth who are eligible for the survey, but DCF would welcome any suggestions on how to better ID and survey these youth who are tricky to locate
 - This is particularly true during the pandemic due to increase in housing instability. Participation has been impacted as a result
- Little discrepancies between eWiSACWIS logic and NYTD eligibility. Some of these are not obvious until after-the-fact and NYTD Coordinator works to address them both in regards to the specific situation and in more sustainable ways

Are findings routed back to the CQI advisory committee for review as part of the state's broader efforts to address programmatic or systemic issues?

if there were findings that required feedback and follow up related to providing guidance re: system functioning or broad program practice expectations, they could be brought to the CQI committee to provide such guidance and advice, so in that respect the answer could be "Yes, if necessary. Past practice at DCF is that findings from these types of reviews to date have generally been vetted with the state's CCWIS Data Quality Committee and or through involved of local agency staff and supervisors in the eWiSACWIS design and development processes that relate to corrections related to these findings.

DCF uses this collective information to identify areas to improve its oversight via continuous quality improvement measures and training and resource needs, as well as identify and address issues at the county, regional, and state levels. The three most common areas that youth identify as challenges on their NYTD surveys are related to employment, homelessness and housing stability, and access to health care. DCF continually evaluates opportunities to report and share NYTD data and information both internally and externally, including the potential of revamping the existing report for different audiences, and will cooperate in any national evaluation related to the objectives of the Chafee program.

The department has and will continue to partner with agencies at all levels of government and in the community, both in the public and private realms, to record, track, and share youth outcomes information to inform best next steps for its IL program, service providers, and target population.

A current strength of the program is the number of young people continuing to receive services after exiting OHC. This is due in part to enhancements made to the transition process since regionalization began – namely, requiring collaboration between the county and regional-level workers, TRAs building rapport with young people prior to transition, and TRAs’ continued outreach efforts. The regional model provides a robust safety net option for young people leaving care to ease their transition to adulthood. An identified weakness continues to be the lack of available and affordable housing resources in the state, which increases the difficulty in ensuring young people with no credit or poor credit have access to stable, quality housing. This is a challenge even as material supports for housing (e.g. the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) housing vouchers) increase. For example, all TRAs have reached out to Public Housing Authorities in their service areas to establish the necessary MOU to refer youth for FYI vouchers and secure support but have had mixed results due to PHAs lack of capacity for interest. Even for those areas where FYI vouchers are now an option, the next step – identifying and securing a safe and affordable housing location – is an ongoing and considerable challenge. The lack of other resources, namely substance abuse and mental health services, is also a struggle in many parts of the state.

Overall, DCF continues to evaluate if the current regional service model and funding structure are the best option to ensure a continuum of IL services for eligible young people.

IV-E Foster Care Assistance After Age 18

Wisconsin passed legislation to extend foster care for youth who have not graduated from high school, who have an active IEP, and are full-time students. This legislation was effective August 2014. All costs related to the extended OHC placement for youth are paid for with state and county dollars, with matching IV-E funds as applicable. Life skills development and practice opportunities continue to be made available, with young people taking on increased responsibilities commensurate with their age and developmental abilities. Wisconsin has a small number of youth that are in the state extended foster care program. The regional IL structure offers a parallel service model that has a lot of similarities with supported extended care. DCF continues to encourage and support counties that have options to develop Supervised Independent Living (SIL) placements where youth can gradually transition from their time in care. In the past, DCF facilitated information sharing between counties that currently offer SIL and those that may want to; DCF staff continue to facilitate connections between these different county partners and educate them on the requirements and options associated with SIL, including how it may serve as an innovative “step-down” placement option for young people. In calendar year 2020, 13 counties had a placement using this program.

Coordination and Consultation with Public and Private Stakeholders

DCF’s efforts to best execute its IL program require collaboration at various levels of government, educational systems, and individuals in the youth’s life; these are documented throughout this plan. Of special note are the following collaborative efforts, many of which are ongoing:

1. DCF regularly convenes or attends gatherings with representatives from other divisions within DCF, as well as Wisconsin's other state agencies to share information about services available to the state's young people, including those eligible for IL. These interactions help DCF staff map resource availability and needs, youth services and uptake, and funding throughout the state to assess areas in which to partner, streamline services, and/or address system needs/gaps.
2. The regional TRAs are required to build pro-youth public/private networks of services, providers, and supports to respond to the needs of the youth living throughout the region who qualify for their services. As a result, regional partnerships in the areas of education, employment, housing, health, and social/emotional well-being continue to expand and strengthen. Taken together, these enhanced networks may provide IL-eligible youth with resources both while in care and after exiting care.
3. DCF staff hold monthly conference calls open to all TRA IL Coordinators and Youth Advisory Council advisors. These serve as an opportunity for DCF to offer direct updates to contracted partners, while also asking and responding to questions. Contracted partners also can network with each other, engage in peer learning, and troubleshoot difficult issues. DCF also invites subject matter experts (e.g. Department of Workforce Development, Department of Corrections, Department of Health Services, Covering Wisconsin, DCF tribal liaisons, and University of Wisconsin partners) to participate on the call to share out information that will help inform contracted partners' practices, and is trying to infuse more training opportunities into these regular calls.
4. DCF staff hold quarterly conference calls with staff in supervisory roles with the TRAs. The objective of these calls is similar to that of the monthly coordinator calls mentioned above in that they are meant to facilitate connections between agencies and offer opportunities to connect directly with DCF, but are different in that they are focused on higher-level programmatic considerations, input gathering, and decision-making.
5. DCF staff hold conference calls with tribal IL program staff at least quarterly. Like those provided with TRA staff, these calls are an opportunity for participants to hear from each other about recent updates, successes and challenges, best practices, and innovations, while also connecting with and receiving information directly from DCF.
6. DCF staff hold summits in each of the IL regions. DCF staff facilitate these meetings, but the intent is that they provide an opportunity for different individuals involved with IL service provision to receive updates directly from DCF, ask questions, troubleshoot issues, provide feedback, etc. The summits are held in each region at least once per year and are open to county, tribal, and regional staff providing IL services to youth in each region. All attendees are encouraged to provide input on the meeting content and structure to ensure that each summit is as valuable as possible for the given region and its unique considerations. In addition, the questions and conversations that have come up during these gatherings have informed DCF's work (including updates to eWiSACWIS).
7. DCF staff facilitate an annual TRA convening meeting in the fall to provide an opportunity for all TRA staff involved with the IL programs to meet in-person for a day of

information-sharing, networking, training, and case scenario discussions. This interagency gathering was borne out of TRA agencies' eagerness to interface with each other in-person more often. The two convening meetings so far have each built upon the existing monthly and quarterly phone calls for coordinators and supervisors, respectively, and, though supported by DCF, are largely TRA developed and driven. The hope is to continue this meeting each year.

8. Since the second half of 2019, DCF has been in regular contact with its HUD regional contact to identify the best way to introduce and have agency take-up on the federal FYI housing voucher initiative. As a result, DCF has been able to localize its outreach, information-gathering and sharing, and process structure while aligning with HUD and FYI voucher program expectations. This includes DCF releasing an agency info memo specific to the initiative, document development to support TRAs' outreach efforts, ongoing information-sharing with and gathering from TRAs, and continued collaboration and consultation with HUD. The latter includes, but is not limited to, DCF staff joining the HUD point of contact on a joint FYI voucher/Independent Living informational session to educate housing authorities and other partners on the initiative and how it operates given Wisconsin's child welfare and IL structure.
9. DCF contracts with the University of Wisconsin Survey Center to administer the NYTD Survey.
10. DCF hosts a biennial Youth Services Conference which brings together DCF staff, county agency staff, contracted providers, and community partners for two days of sessions focused on improving youth outcomes and rooted in the bureau's youth framework.
11. DCF hosts a biennial grantee meeting (alternating years with the Youth Services Conference), which includes at least one representative from each of the agencies contracted to provide services via DCF's Independent Living, Brighter Futures, Anti-Human Trafficking, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Initiatives. This is part of an intentional effort to better connect the bureau's service partners to each other to both strengthen and align the different providers our young people interact with, sometimes simultaneously or concurrently. This gathering was canceled in 2020 due to the health crisis but will resume in 2022.
12. In January 2021, DCF facilitated a virtual Learning Exchange for its different program grantees to discuss the challenge of engaging youth virtually during the health crisis. DCF coordinated this gathering in direct response to similar feedback across programs that connecting with youth and keeping them involved in services and events is especially hard when so many interactions need to be virtual. DCF staff created the space for grantees to connect and facilitated their conversation with the goal that participants discuss the challenge, innovative and successful responses, and help each other identify valuable resources and partnerships. Grantees came together for this peer learning opportunity and shared ideas, helpful tips, and specific resources to aid each other and further the shared goal of keeping connections with young people during this challenging time. DCF may offer future opportunities for peer learning if staff capacity and grantees' interest suggest it would be possible and valuable.

13. DCF staff facilitate the Foster Youth to College (FYC) advisory group that is made up of high school and postsecondary representatives, as well as DCF and Department of Public Instruction staff. This group works to identify the challenges youth formerly in out-of-home care face to enter and succeed in postsecondary programs and develop resources to increase positive outcomes. The group focuses on leveraging existing postsecondary supports to assist this population while also developing resources and creating training opportunities to increase the supports available to the youth. In 2020, DCF added a rotating youth member position to the group. The position is intended to demonstrate the varied postsecondary paths young adults with foster care experience take, inform the work of postsecondary representatives, and ensure resource development and training aligns with on-the-ground experiences.
14. DCF established a strategic plan with the Department of Public Instruction to implement the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which became effective December 2016. Members of each department meet monthly, at a minimum, and work to support the local education agencies and county/tribal child welfare agencies to improve educational outcomes for youth in out-of-home care. Joint research projects have been developed to support this work as well. More info is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/essa>.
15. DCF's most important stakeholders are the young people it serves. To this end, DCF staff support two youth councils, the Youth Advisory Council (young people with child welfare experience) and the Youth Leadership Teams (young people with youth justice experience), to ensure youth voice is represented in the bureau's, division's, and department's work. Additionally, staff are intentional and strategic about soliciting and including youth input on its initiatives. In recent years, for example, a young person served as a consultant when DCF revamped its ETV program structure. DCF also expects that the inclusion of youth voices grow at the county, tribal, and regional levels through the TRA. Due in part to DCF modeling the prioritization of youth input in its work, many agencies have individual youth, or their local Youth Advisory Councils advise key program elements like service structure, document development, outreach efforts, etc.
16. DCF intentionally creates other opportunities for youth input and empowerment as well. Some examples include sponsoring two Foster Club All-Star internship slots, youth attendance at the national IL/ETV Coordinator meeting, and youth participation in a 2020 HUD roundtable focused on the FYI voucher and the importance of housing supports for youth with foster care experience.

The Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council (W-YAC) is the primary youth stakeholder group that DCF consults with on issues related to OHC and CFCPSTA. Wisconsin encourages youth participation in the Wisconsin State Youth Advisory Council (YAC) consisting of young people currently or formerly in the foster care system. Subsidiary YAC groups, supported by Independent Living Transition Resource Agencies (TRAs), are also located in each of the seven Youth Services Regions across Wisconsin. Regional YACs meet monthly to influence policy change and to educate communities and DCF about youth experiences in foster care. Their

mission is reaching out to and advocating for young people currently in the foster care system. They do so through presentations, meetings with legislators, participating in trainings and events, coordinating their annual Hands Around the Capitol event (even virtually in 2020 and 2021), contributing to community campaigns and efforts, and participating in panels with different stakeholders. The state's YAC is also a Citizen Review Panel, so its work and efforts also overlap with the requirements of being a panel and allows for interactions with other panels in the state and even nationally. State YAC members chose to be led and governed by peer officers. The current YAC officer positions are president, vice president, historian, and secretary. Due to COVID, youth attendance has decreased in comparison to prior years when meetings were held in-person. However, compared to prior years, there is less turnover and the members that join the meetings are consistent with their attendance.

Taken together, key youth engagement opportunities include:

1. DCF coordinates six statewide YAC meetings per year, and TRAs coordinate at least one local council meeting each month.
2. YAC's continued service as a Wisconsin Citizen Review Panel under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Members attend the National Conference annually and have even participated on a panel to help educate other CRPs. YAC completes the annual report required of all CRPs, which includes recommendations to DCF.
3. DCF sponsors two Wisconsin foster youth alumni for participation in the Foster Club All-Star Internship. Interns may return to Wisconsin and become an active member of YAC (if not already), and serve as a mentor to peers regarding advocacy, outreach, and leadership. Past interns have assumed leadership roles in local YACs, participated at the DCF conference, and/or helped develop DCF's roadmap to independent living resources.
4. DCF helps YAC members plan and execute the annual Hands Around the Capitol event that occurs as part of National Foster Care Month in May.
5. YAC's continued engagement at the state and local level, including meetings with legislators, panels at conferences, and regular consultation regarding child welfare policy.

Coordination and Consultation with Tribes

Of the 11 federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin, five currently receive IL funding. They are the Bad River, Ho-Chunk, Lac Courte Oreilles, Menominee, and Red Cliff tribes. Except for Lac Courte Oreilles and Ho-Chunk, these tribes started their IL programs in 2018. DCF continues to offer this funding opportunity to other tribes in the state, should they also be interested in starting an IL program. This has been communicated at standing DCF/tribal directors' meetings, via DCF's tribal liaisons, and other opportunities. Four of the five tribes receiving IL funds have access to the eWISACWIS Independent Living page, enabling them to see service information entered by county and TRA providers for their youth. Like the TRAs, they also submit data outcome information to DCF twice a year.

During the 2020 public health crisis, tribal Independent Living programs were given the opportunity to amend their existing DCF Independent Living contracts and increase their funding by up to 20 percent. One of the five tribal Independent Living programs, Red Cliff, opted to receive these additional dollars to increase stability for IL eligible youth in their community.

Tribes receiving IL funds directly from DCF participate in training and receive one-on-one technical assistance from DCF, including support for new programs in developing policies and procedures, annual program visits, data outcome reporting, notifications of resources and culturally relevant trainings, and confirming youth eligibility for services. Tribes have discretion to tailor their IL programs according to their population needs, with some targeting their IL program towards younger youth who qualify for Chafee services and others focusing more on young people posed to exit care at age 18 or older.

Tribes also connect with each other via regular conference calls that DCF coordinates every two to three months. Additionally, DCF invites tribal representatives to its annual regional IL summits. As previously described, the department holds summits throughout the state to discuss policy/programming initiatives and issues and to provide technical assistance and consultation to agency IL coordinators; some tribes have elected to attend, providing a good opportunity for them to network with each other, if in the same area, as well as TRA and county partners.

Additionally, in 2018, DCF awarded an IL innovation grant to the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe to address barriers to driving and transportation for IL-eligible tribal youth. The Lac Courte Oreilles reservation is in northern Wisconsin where public transportation is not easily accessible and the cost of adding a youth to their insurance is unrealistic for many kinship providers. Under this grant, Lac Courte Oreilles subsidized the insurance cost for care providers, covered the cost of driver's education for youth, and taught basic car maintenance to youth. This grant opportunity was open to both counties and tribes, with awards being made in July of 2018 and extending through December 2019. The hope is that Lac Courte Oreilles, and other innovation grant recipients, can continue their efforts and share with their networks to scale up innovative practices.

Tribal youth in Wisconsin who are not able or choose not to access IL services directly through their tribe are able to receive services through the child welfare agency in their resident county while in out-of-home care, and through a regional TRA upon "aging out." Even if tribal youth do not engage with a TRA for IL services, they must work with the TRAs to receive ETV supports if they want to access that support since tribes do not allocate ETV funds. In 2020, DCF staff developed a process and information packet to assist tribal youth referrals to TRAs for IL and/or ETV supports. This has aided increased collaboration and information-sharing between TRAs and tribes.

Additionally, county agencies serving tribal children confirm collaborative efforts with local tribes. DCF is not aware of any tribes planning to apply directly to ACF for funds. All tribes, whether they receive funding directly from DCF or services from the county agency, are made

aware of IL policies and procedures, including eligibility through DCF's Policy and Informational Memo process.

Health Care Coordination for Youth Aging Out-of-Care

DCF, TRAs, counties, and tribes, in collaboration with the youth, their supportive adults, and other state and community agencies, as appropriate, work to facilitate youth access to high-quality and affordable healthcare. Some of the ways in which they do so are:

- Local child welfare agencies work with youth prior to their exit from care to ensure that the youth understands their medical needs, signs up for Badger Care Plus (Wisconsin's Medicaid), and understand how to recertify their enrollment each year. At minimum, these activities ensure a connection to health and are important steps of the ILTD planning process. TRA staff also work with their clients to ensure that they remain insured.
- DCF collaborated with DHS to ensure proper implementation of the provision of the Affordable Care Act relating to former foster youth. Youth will be able to sign up electronically, over the phone, or by filling out a paper enrollment form. Regional TRAs and local DHS entities are available to assist former foster youth in the process. DCF and DHS also established an agreement which allows all youth who aged out of care in another state and subsequently move to Wisconsin to receive health care coverage under this provision. The agencies continue to consult on how to better facilitate youth's continued enrollment.
- The Medicaid Care4Kids program provides coordinated and comprehensive physical, behavioral and dental care during the period a youth is in out-of-home care and for a year after a youth leaves care, thus providing continuity of care and the benefit of a health coordinator for youth who age out of care.

Additionally, in early 2021, DCF staff coordinated with Kids Matter, Inc., to offer a Power of Attorney for Healthcare (POAHC) overview to system partners, with the goal of educating adult supporters on the value of a POAHC, particularly for young people exiting care. Participants represented a diverse set of adult supporters who care for, assist, or otherwise support youth with out-of-home care experience, and included independent living coordinators, foster care coordinators, youth justice workers, tribal child welfare staff, and many others. Kids Matter, Inc., provided a thorough background of POAHC, why it is important – especially for youth coming from care – and the steps required to complete it. Their overview even included a walk-through of a POAHC sample form.

Chafee Division X Funding

In May 2020, DCF staff worked hard to implement options to support young people aging out of care during the health crisis and the child welfare agencies and service providers in place to meet the population's needs. Because Wisconsin's governor does not have the authority to put

a moratorium on youth aging out of care, the department had to operate within the existing child welfare processes and requirements. DCF elected to prioritize youth's housing needs; its overarching goal was to work with contracted partners to make targeted investments in youth's housing stability. As a result, DCF offered additional money in the form of a 20 percent contract increase to contracted Transition Resource Agencies and tribal IL programs. The foster care maintenance program (FMAP) increase included as part of the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* financed this effort. Additionally, DCF offered to reimburse counties for the cost of one-time payments to support maintaining youth in their previous placement home or incentivizing relatives or unlicensed caregivers to house young people. In all cases, DCF instructed partners to prioritize youth "aging out of care" between March and August 2020 and to use the funds to meet the costs of housing and other basic needs. Transition Resource Agencies did not expend their full contract increase and now have until the end of CY2021 to fully expend. Their priority is still recently aged out youth and their housing needs, but DCF did provide permission to TRAs near the end of CY2020 to broaden the applicable population to be other IL-eligible youth engaged in a TRA program who have been affected by the public health emergency.

Both <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/press/2020/covid/youth-aging-out.pdf> and <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2020-19i.pdf> include more information and guidance about this effort.

Looking ahead, Wisconsin plans to take a multi-pronged approach to comply with requirements, expend funds, and apply the flexibilities included as part of Division X of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021*. It will do so in ways that will be highly impactful for young people with child welfare experience and affected by the health crisis while best leveraging the state's existing partnerships and service model. Wisconsin's approach includes:

1. Utilizing the alternative definition of foster care permitted by the Program Instruction (PI) for the purpose of temporarily suspending aging out and permitting re-entry. Youth whose court-ordered placements end(ed) between January 27, 2020 and September 30, 2021, will receive direct financial assistance along with age-appropriate supervision and case management. Each youth who falls into this cohort will receive \$1,000/month in direct assistance for six months, totaling \$6,000 per youth. DCF's contracted Transition Resource Agencies, which already provide IL services to many of these youth, will provide these funds in ways that cause as little burden for the youth as possible while also aligning with their agency and fiscal procedures. Youth will complete a simple attestation of hardship to affirm the negative impact the health crisis has had on their well-being, stability, needs, etc. The Transition Resource Agencies will also provide the age-appropriate supervision and case management services, which are already included in their service models.
2. Providing additional funds to contracted Transition Resource Agencies, county partners, and tribal partners to collectively support IL-eligible youth needs up to age 23 (currently, the IL program serves youth only up to age 21 (except ETV, which is offered to age 23)). These partners already allocate IL services and/or funding for eligible youth; the

additional funds will give them the means to continue to be highly responsive to youth needs during the public health crisis, as defined and driven by the youth themselves. DCF will provide partners with funding and reporting guidance, including, but not limited to, direction about temporary program flexibilities and lists of highly recommended areas of focus. These lists prioritize the needs directly attributable to or more pronounced because of the public health crisis and are informed by the feedback DCF has heard from its Youth Advisory Council, IL clients, IL service providers, and other advocacy groups during the health crisis. Partners may also use funds to support staff and/or administrative costs related to the IL program and the increased provision of funding and supports.

3. Wisconsin's two Permanent Connections, Academics, Training and Employment, Housing, and Social and Emotional Well-being (PATHS) providers, which currently serve IL-eligible youth via runaway and homeless youth programming will be provided additional funding to support programming. Partners will use these funds to support youth's housing costs and cover the salary and fringe costs of new housing specialists and/or lived experience workers.
4. Use a small amount of funding to conduct a publicity campaign to connect with youth eligible for IL services in general and additional assistance during the health crisis more specifically. DCF's IL team will work with the department's Communications Office to provide information via multiple avenues, including, but not limited to, other service partners, DCF website, social media platforms, etc.

Education and Training Vouchers

Wisconsin's ETV Program eligibility requirements are:

- Education and training vouchers (ETV) will be available to all youth that exit out-of-home care at age 18 or older or those that exited care after age 16 due to adoption or guardianship for costs associated with postsecondary attendance and participation up to age 23, or for a maximum of five years.
- Continued eligibility is dependent on a recipient's enrollment in an accredited or pre-accredited postsecondary program and satisfactory academic progress toward the completion of that program.

Services, equipment, and other items beneficial to youth accessing and participating in higher education and training programs are regularly identified and incorporated into the ETV Program. When DCF transitioned to its regional IL model in 2016, it designated some ETV responsibilities to the newly contracted TRAs. They were responsible for allocating "local ETV funding," while DCF remained responsible for its DCF Scholarship using another portion of its state ETV allocation and targeting only a few ETV-eligible cost categories. Starting in 2019, DCF streamlined its ETV program to eliminate the DCF Scholarship and have TRAs responsible for ETV fund allocation. As a result, the agencies have the flexibility to provide eligible youth with ETV funds, now known in Wisconsin as Brighter Star, for the whole spectrum of qualifying

postsecondary needs. TRAs now serve as “one-stop-shops” for youth eligible for independent living services and supports. All youth eligible for independent living services until age 21 are also eligible for Brighter Star up to age 23, or a maximum of up to 5 years if they meet the school type and academic requirements. TRAs also collaborate with Wisconsin’s tribes to provide ETV funding to qualifying youth, whether those youth are being served via their tribe’s IL program or a TRA’s IL program.

In addition to the program criteria, defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Wisconsin instituted the following guidelines in 2018 and these remain in place:

- Brighter Star/ETV assistance will not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.
- Brighter Star may provide funding for any direct costs (e.g. tuition, books, and fees) associated with attending an institution of higher learning. Funds may also be used for the purchase of technical equipment or assistance to include, but not be limited to computers, books, and supplies associated with coursework.
- Local agencies may provide additional assistance or support necessary to mediate barriers that risk compromising successful completion of higher education; these include, but are not limited to tutoring, transportation, child care, housing, program entry testing, registration fees, equipment needs, and vocational training activities.
 - Brighter Star funds may not be used to pay for any degree beyond a bachelor’s, though DCF does hope to change it to include higher degrees soon.

The state method to ensure the total amount of educational assistance does not exceed the total cost of attendance and efforts to avoid duplication of benefits for this or other federal benefit programs is implemented through the Wisconsin’s larger independent living services model. Because of the steps taken in 2018 to streamline the state’s ETV program starting in 2019, a youth’s ETV eligibility and funding is more fully integrated with other IL supports and assistance. Its inclusion is therefore part of the TRA’s broader conversations with and service planning alongside the young people. This includes looking at and supporting their ETV and IL needs in full, including overall financial needs for school. Because the TRA IL coordinator works with the youth and is aware of the full spectrum of their IL and educational needs, the coordinator is familiar with young person’s postsecondary costs. They and/or their agency are in close connection with the youth and the schools themselves about cost of attendance, including any other forms of aid the youth may be receiving to avoid duplication or overpayment. Our contracted agencies provide funds directly to schools according to DCF guidelines, federal regulations regarding ETV funds, uniform guidelines, and other requirements as necessary. ETV funds should be applied as a last resort – after other educational aid has been applied. It may be applied prior to or instead of loans. In their role and through collaboration with youth, the TRAs are in a great position to maximize ETV funds that are flexible and responsive to youth needs. One result has been an uptick in ETV expenditures.

The integration of ETV in Wisconsin’s TRA service model was especially valuable during the health crisis since TRA staff had established relationships with the young people and familiarity

with their educational goals, needs, and challenges because of and separate from the effects of the pandemic. TRAs kept in regular contact with young people to identify and assess the pandemic's impact on their educational and employment goals. For many youth, this meant the TRAs helped them to pivot in crucial ways including, but not limited to, helping them communicate their different or increased needs to their postsecondary institution; identify and secure resources needed for remote learning (e.g. hotspots, laptops, internet); identify and access prosocial supports during a time of disruption and increased isolation; and ensure housing stability in the event that reduced dorm capacity, loss of income, or other occurrences endangered a youth's preexisting housing situation. For youth who chose to leave school due to the pandemic or struggled with virtual participation, TRA staff not only fulfilled the role of making sure youth had the equipment needed to stay or once again become enrolled in school, but also served in the key role of mentor, helping youth identify the root of their academic struggle and what resources, supports, or alternate academic setting may help them continue their educational pursuits.

State and local agencies partner with secondary and postsecondary institutions and each other to increase awareness of the educational challenges faced by youth aging out of out-of-home care and the Brighter Star through collaborations with DPI and local school districts.

Additional ETV Funding (Division X)

DCF will continue the current practice of having Transition Resource Agencies work directly with youth and postsecondary institutions to meet eligible youth's academic needs and costs. As with IL funds, DCF will provide these partners with funding and reporting guidance, including direction about temporary program flexibilities. The TRAs will work with eligible youth to identify needs up to the temporary maximum of \$12,000 per youth per academic year. DCF will continue to monitor ETV expenditures across the state to prevent overspending.

Chafee Training

- In 2019, DCF partnered with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System to create a training to assist workers in completing the credit check process and credit remediation.
- In 2019, DCF cooperated with the department's Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care to better incorporate IL considerations and training needs in trainings for foster care and other OHC providers.
- In 2020, DCF cooperated with the University of Wisconsin – Madison's Division of Continuing Studies to create a training for county and tribal CW agencies, foster parents, and contracted providers on the topic of creating the Independent Living Transition to Discharge Plan.
- In 2020, DCF again cooperated with the University of Wisconsin – Madison's Division of Continuing Studies to refresh its overview presentation to educate its partners on the importance of the NYTD survey. This was done at the same time as DCF staff updated or

created additional NYTD training resources for county and TRA partners, as mentioned previously in this report.

- DCF does not anticipate any specific training needs from the Children’s Bureau to support program activities.

6. Consultation and Coordination with Tribes

The Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA), passed in 2009, specifies the responsibilities of the state and counties regarding Indian children, as well as protections for Indian children under state court jurisdiction. The law can be found at <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/48/1/028>. DCF and the 11 federally recognized tribes headquartered in Wisconsin collaborate closely to make sure lines of communication remain open and share the goal of supporting the safety, health, and well-being of tribal children, families, and communities.

The 11 federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin are sovereign nations and therefore able to establish and administer tribal codes, policies, procedures, and programming related to child welfare. Because of their sovereignty, their codes, policies, and procedures may differ from state statute and policies – and from each other's. For example, some tribal codes and standards have a lower threshold than state statute to screen in cases for further assessment to allow for earlier intervention with their families; in these cases, the Tribe is solely responsible for managing the case. In other situations where county/DMCPS child welfare workers have primary case management responsibility, tribal child welfare workers may collaborate to advocate for an Indian child's best interests and ensure that tribal identification, tribal notification, and other requirements are followed in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and WICWA. County and DMCPS child welfare workers also collaborate with the tribal child welfare workers to identify and provide culturally appropriate and effective services and supports to Indian children and families involved in the child welfare system.

Relative to funding, DCF provides limited child and family service (child welfare, child care, domestic violence) funding directly to tribes through a consolidated Family Services Program with multiple funding streams. In addition to the Family Services Program funding, tribes may also receive funding to operate in-home safety services, Brighter Futures programming, Independent Living programming, and home visiting programs. All eleven tribes operate a kinship program. Menomonee Tribe directly oversees their own kinship program. They also have the option to receive TANF funding to operate the Kinship Care program and enter into a Title IV-E pass through agreement. Currently seven tribes have IV-E pass-through agreements with DCF and can submit quarterly administrative claims. The seven tribes include the following:

- Bad River
- Lac Courte Oreilles
- Lac du Flambeau
- Oneida
- Menominee
- Red Cliff
- Ho-Chunk

Process Used to Gather Input from Tribes

Consultation with Tribes

Wisconsin Executive Order #18 dictates each Wisconsin state government agency's consultation purpose with the tribes located within the state. In line with this order and in the spirit of collaboration, DCF is committed to maintaining positive government-to-government relationships with the tribal governments and their child welfare departments. To this end, and as directed by the federal Administration for Children and Families, DCF developed a policy

committing the department to good faith negotiations with tribes and tribal consortia on child and family-related issues. This was done in consultation with the Intertribal Child Welfare (ICW) Committee and can be found in informational memo 2015-03 at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/memos/2015-03i.pdf>

DCF has several ways in which it executes its policy to work alongside tribes. The primary method by which it does so is via annual consultation sessions where DCF leadership convenes with their tribal counterparts. Parties jointly develop the agenda and, broadly, focus on the addressing issues or concerns regarding department policies, implementation plans, services, and challenges. The annual consultation provides a venue for DCF to enhance our overall relationship with tribes and identify actions that will improve conditions of and services for American Indian children and families.

The 2020 in-person Tribal Consultation was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the DCF secretary did participate in a Tribal Leader call in June 2020. The child welfare administrator also hosted individual conference calls with any of the ICW directors interested in participating. An invitation for individual conference calls was extended to all tribal child welfare departments. Of the 11 federally recognized tribes, seven requested individual conference calls. The administrator met with the following tribes:

- Forest County Potawatomi
- Ho-Chunk
- Lac Courte Oreille
- Menominee
- Oneida
- Red Cliff
- St. Croix

Aside from annual consultation meetings, DCF staff also consult with Tribes via bimonthly ICW Committee meetings, which include the DCF tribal affairs specialist, tribal liaison, and child welfare managers as well as tribal child welfare directors and attorneys. The ICW directors or designee are also invited to participate and serve on committees and workgroups established by the DCF as projects and tasks require. Currently, tribal staff are involved in the department's ongoing strategic planning efforts.

The contact list for Tribal Officials is available at <http://witribes.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=19085&locid=57>

A list of ICW directors is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/wicwa/wifedrectribes.pdf>

Tribal Foster Parent Recruitment

In addition to the consultation opportunities described above, DCF initiated a tribal foster care recruitment campaign in 2017 with the intent to address the need for American Indian foster homes state-wide. Foster care coordinators from all 11 federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin were invited to assist in the development of campaign materials targeted to recruit American Indian foster homes. The tribes worked very closely with DCF on this campaign that is more fully described under the foster and adoptive recruitment section on pages 100-101. These meetings were halted in 2020 due to the pandemic but resumed in 2021 via virtual meetings.

Ongoing coordination and collaboration with tribes in the implementation and assessment of the CFSP/ APSR

The bi-monthly ICW Committee meetings are crucial to DCF's ongoing coordination and collaboration with tribes. This group broadly discusses child welfare-related issues, including but not limited to policy and procedure changes and development. The March 2020 meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic but moved to a virtual format for the rest of the year and remain virtual at this time. A current barrier to conducting these meeting include state and tribal travel and social distancing restrictions. DCF will continue to monitor and comply with each Tribe's travel restrictions as we move to in-person or hybrid meetings. When in-person meetings can resume, travel costs often create a barrier to tribal participation. To address this barrier, DCF will resume covering hotel costs and reimbursing other travel related costs.

In addition to the large group, DCF, tribal child welfare, and legal staff and professionals from related organizations (e.g., Children's Court Improvement Program) comprise the Tribal/State Child Welfare Policy & Law (PALS) Workgroup; this group meets upon request of the ICW Committee and focuses on policy and legal issues, including:

- Interpretation of and answers to questions related to ICWA and WICWA;
- The relationship between Wisconsin's infant relinquishment law and the Indian Child Welfare Act;
- Notification of tribes in voluntary child custody proceedings;
- The intersection of tribal authority to perform child welfare functions and county responsibility under state statute;
- Input on the DCF strategic planning process and issues related to FFPSA implementation
- Potential program and policy implementation or changes;
- Legislative updates;
- WICWA compliance;
- County compliance with state standards and policies;
- Independent living services; and
- Youth justice Issues.

Case Review System and WI Tribes

For Circuit Court cases, where WICWA and ICWA apply, the Tribe is a party to the case and maintains the right to participate at all reviews. County agencies should be extending an invitation to participate to the Indian child's tribe when ICWA/WICWA applies. If the review occurs at a court hearing, the Court must also send notice of the review to the Tribe. The Tribe does have the right to decide on their level of participation and that can vary, depending on the Tribe's availability and resources.

For Tribal Court cases, each tribe will have their own laws, policies, and procedures to guide their review system. As sovereign nations, they have the authority to develop a system that works best for their community. State and County agencies do not have a role in these reviews and have no regulatory authority over another sovereign.

Compliance with ICWA in Consultation with Tribes

The codification of the federal Indian Child Welfare Act into state statute was an important step to improving ICWA compliance in Wisconsin. After a four-year effort that included considerable discussion and negotiation, 2009 Wisconsin Act 94 passed unanimously in the Wisconsin Legislature, and codified the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA). The process of developing and passing the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act is shown in a following documentary video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCLUbS4FxWo>.

Following the codification of WICWA, DCF worked with WCWPDS to develop the “Case Practice with American Indian Tribes” training. This training reviews the reason and legislative intent of the Indian Child Welfare Act, how workers shall comply with WICWA, and important considerations related to tribal culture and working effectively with tribal families. The training was since updated to include eWISACWIS documentation and 2016 ICWA Regulation requirements. The re-designed curriculum was piloted in June 2018 with follow up training that same month.

DCF also collaborated with WCWPDS in 2016 to develop an online training resource for county workers that provides a basic understanding of ICWA elements such as active efforts, notification, and more, as well as direction on how to document such information in eWISACWIS. After being piloted in seven different counties and all 11 tribes, the training was finalized and published January 2018. It can be accessed anytime through WCWPDS online at https://media.wcwpds.wisc.edu/foundation/WICWA_Online_Resource/.

DCF also collaborated with WCWPDS in 2020 to revise several pre-service training modules. The revisions incorporate WICWA and cultural considerations into the online training new workers take upon entering the child welfare field. This will empower new workers to start their career with an understanding of the importance of partnering with tribes when working and Indian child.

In addition to these specific trainings, DCF staff also offer ongoing and as needed technical assistance and desk guides to aid workers’ efforts and compliance. These desk guides consist of the following:

- A Child Welfare Practitioner’s Guide for Meeting the WICWA Active Efforts Requirement - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/464.pdf>
- WICWA eWISACWIS Desk Aid - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/423.pdf>

DCF embarked on a new project in 2020 to review the current permanency plan, Wisconsin’s term for the written case plan. This project included input from tribal caseworkers, ICW directors, attorneys, and judges. A subcommittee was developed to review and recommend improved ICWA documentation within the permanency plan.

Chafee Foster Care and Independence Act/Educational and Training Vouchers (Tribal)

See the Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education and Training Vouchers Program Section prior to this section, pages 159-160 for information relating to Tribal consultation, eligibility for benefits and services, and ensuring fair and equitable treatment for American Indian youth under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act and ETV.

Exchange Copies of the APSR

DCF has informed the ICW Committee of the publication of our annual APSR. Members have been emailed a copy of this report.

Section D CAPTA Requirements and Updates

2022 Annual CAPTA Report

Substantive changes, if any, to state law or regulations that could affect the state's eligibility for the CAPTA State Grant

Legislation was passed in 2021 and that went into effect on May 23, 2021 related to good faith immunity. [2021 Wisconsin Act 41](#) updated state law to conform with the amendments to section 106(b)(2)(B)(vii) of CAPTA to provide immunity from civil and criminal liability for people who make good-faith child abuse or neglect reports or who provide information or assistance, including medical evaluations or consultations, in connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a good-faith report of child abuse or neglect.

Significant changes from the state's previously approved CAPTA plan

There have been no significant changes from the state's previously approved CAPTA plan in how the state proposes to use funds to support the 14 program areas enumerated in CAPTA.

How CAPTA Funds Used

In the last year, due to additional funding, DCF has been able to support the Parents Supporting Parents program. This initiative is part of Wisconsin's PIP and is shaped by the department's goal to comprehensively and systematically incorporate the voices of those who experienced the child welfare system. This initiative is further described in Section 3, approach part of this report.

Supplemental CAPTA Funding (American Rescue Plan)

DCF will use supplemental funding to support the purposes of the CAPTA act with an emphasis on plans of safe care.

Additional uses of CAPTA funds in FFY 2021 consistent with the purpose of CAPTA include the following.

Alternative Response (AR)

Alternative Response (AR) began as a pilot initiative in Wisconsin in 2010 that established a two-pathway response system for screened-in child protective services cases. Historically, in all CPS cases, CPS professionals make a maltreatment determination (whether child abuse and/or neglect occurred) and a maltreater determination (abuse or by whom). This pathway is called a Traditional Response (TR). With AR, there is a second pathway involving CPS cases with less severe allegations and concerns that are less likely to need collaboration with law enforcement or courts. This type of response allows the focus to be on the family and removes the substantiation finding (both maltreatment and maltreater). In either pathway, child safety remains paramount and is assessed to make decisions of whether a child needs protection. In 2020, DCF issued a memo informing local child welfare agencies of the department's decision not to expand the Alternative Response (AR) Pilot statewide.

Based on the results of a multiyear process and outcome evaluation and in combination with the learnings from the pilot counties, DCF determined that further expansion of the AR Pilot will not be advanced, and the current AR policy addendum will be phased out. As a critical next step, DCF will turn its focus to strengthening the current one-pathway system that promotes flexibility and emphasizes our state's CPS professionals' ability to carry out the following aspects of the IA process: (1) focusing on family engagement as a cornerstone to best assess and serve children and families; (2) supporting practice consistent with the Wisconsin Safety Model, particularly as families enter CPS ongoing services, and; (3) continuing to elevate the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice.

Wisconsin Act 78 and Systems Change Review

CAPTA funds continue to support the Wisconsin Systems Change Review process that is detailed in the "Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths" section of the APSR on page 140.

Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice

CAPTA Funds are used to support the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System and its role in implementing the Child Welfare Model for Practice; this is described in Section 3, Wisconsin's Vision and is also available at <https://dcfweb/childwelfare/practice-model>.

Multi-Disciplinary Outreach, Consultation, and Coordination

In addition to the initiatives listed on the following pages, review the collaboration section that begins on page 10 for additional information about DCF's many collaborations over the last year.

CPS and Law Enforcement Agencies

DCF continues to be a member of the Wisconsin Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (WIDEC) and the DEC Steering Committee. WIDEC is a multidisciplinary partnership that assists communities in assessing service needs, coordinating efforts, and keeping children safe and free from exposure to dangerous drug environments. Efforts are focused on assisting with training development and sharing resources. DEC efforts in Wisconsin exist on three levels - county/tribal, state, and national. As a member of the DEC Steering Committee, DCF collaborates with partners from local, state, and federal agencies, including child protective services, sheriff and police departments, district attorney offices, prevention services, law enforcement, health departments, American Family Children's Hospital, the WI Department of Justice, WI Department of Health Services, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The WIDEC supports DEC programs to better serve the children in Wisconsin by expanding DEC programs, offering basic DEC training, and providing an annual DEC conference. In addition to serving as a Steering Committee member, DCF allocates CAPTA funding to support the conference each year. The DEC Steering Committee organizes the statewide conference where local DEC programs are formally recognized. National and state experts are brought in to educate Wisconsin on current issues and promising practices.

CPS and Child Abuse Prevention

DCF serves as a member of the Child Abuse Prevention Month workgroup; this is in partnership with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board and the Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin program through Children's Hospital.

Together for Children Conference

CAPTA funding continues to support the Together for Children Conference, the annual Wisconsin child abuse and neglect prevention conference. The conference, which DCF regularly sponsors and helps plan, strives to improve prevention, treatment, investigation, and prosecution of child abuse and neglect by providing training that addresses emerging issues and increases the knowledge and skills of attendees. The 33rd annual conference was scheduled for April 2020 but had to be rescheduled due to COVID-19. A virtual conference was held in April 2021 that featured presentations related Wisconsin's strategic transformation of the child welfare system and coordination efforts between primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. More information is available at <https://childrenswi.org/-/media/chwlibrary/files/childrens-and-the-community/pcaw/together-for-children-brochure.pdf>.

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month

DCF coordinates with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board on activities related to Child Abuse Prevention month. The month provides an opportunity to acknowledge the collective efforts of families, caregivers, communities, and agencies to prevent child maltreatment. This included work on a virtual tool kit, available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/prevention/pdf/preventabusemonth.pdf>, that provided resources for counties, ideas of how to promote this month, and local strategies to address prevention. A governor's proclamation recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention month was also issued.

CPS and Domestic Abuse Programs

There is a well-established overlap between domestic abuse and the maltreatment of children both in the literature and in practice experience in Wisconsin. Since 2018, DCF supported development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between counties and domestic abuse programs to permanently elevate collaboration between child protective services agencies and domestic abuse programs. Eight counties have completed this initiative since 2018: Adams, Dunn, Lacrosse, Outagamie, Portage, Rock, Washington, and Wood counties.

Each county created year-long calendars to implement the specific tasks and deliverables identified in the MOU's. Some of the common elements in each MOU include:

- Commitment to cross-training, with specific training topics identified;

- Identification of a process and hierarchy of persons to be involved in “conflict resolution” situations between the agencies;
- Process for reporting of child abuse and neglect by the domestic abuse agency;
- Joint referral protocols between the agencies;
- Clear and specific recognition of relevant confidentiality laws and requirements, how they will affect collaborative work, and how potential problems may be addressed; and,
- Plan for sustaining the on-going relationship, including the identification of agency liaisons or an on-going committee.

Thus far, participating agencies’ feedback is overwhelmingly positive. They state that working relationships are stronger as a result and that they follow the MOU. DCF continues to encourage other counties to create a similar MOU specific to their community’s needs and collaborative relationships. To help with the process, DCF has created a resource guide on the creation of an MOU.

CPS and Health Care Professionals

The Department of Children and Families also uses CAPTA funding to support the Wisconsin Child Abuse Network (WI CAN), an inter-disciplinary public-private partnership formed in 2009 and dedicated to improving the accuracy of child abuse investigations. It is led by representatives of The Medical College of Wisconsin; Child Advocacy Centers of Wisconsin; Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin; the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault; the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board; and the Departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Justice.

WI CAN works to improve interagency responses to child maltreatment through ongoing education and a web-based peer review network. It connects professionals statewide to medical expertise to improve access to medical input in child maltreatment investigations.

The WI CAN Educational Series consists of statewide, web-based lectures and case-based discussions on various topics related to child maltreatment delivered and led by subject matter experts. The target audience consists of physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, other allied health professionals, law enforcement officials, social workers, and attorneys. The goal of the educational series is to help health care professionals improve their recognition of child maltreatment and management of cases when child maltreatment is a concern. Webinars are held on the third Friday of each month. Throughout 2020, DCF will continue to support the effort through the WI CAN Educational Series. WI-CAN established a website, which can be viewed at <http://www.wichildabusenetwork.org/>.

Support for Legal Preparation and Representation

DCF is using IV-E funding for this effort, information on DCF efforts can be found on page 117 of this report.

CPS and Tribal Child Welfare Agencies

Tribal coordination efforts are described in several places of this report, the most detailed description is in the Tribal Section that begins on page 166.

CPS and the Judicial System

Please see the Collaboration Section for an update on DCF's collaborative efforts with the judicial system starting on pages 19-20 as well as the case review system descriptions for Items 21-24 beginning on page 52.

Citizen Review Panels

Citizen Review Panels are also supported through Wisconsin's CAPTA. They are described in detail in the collaboration section on pages 18-19 and a link is provided for all reports.

Update on the state's continued efforts to support and address the needs of substance-exposed infants

The following section describes the efforts to support and address the needs of infants born that are identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Information follows about how the state is following requirements of CAPTA that were included as amendments to the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). These efforts include:

- Any changes made to policy or practice and/or lessons learned from implementation of plans of safe care.
- Information on the current monitoring processes for plans of safe care to determine whether and in what manner local entities provide referrals to and delivery of appropriate services for substance-exposed and affected family members and caregivers.
- Processes for ongoing monitoring of the plans of safe care.
- Challenges in implementing the provisions of CARA and any technical assistance the state has determined is needed to remove or mediate those challenges.

OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND PRACTICE

Effective June 25, 2004, DCF issued an addendum, "Assessing the Safety of Drug Affected Infants," to the Child Protective Services Standards. This policy required Wisconsin CPS agencies to develop a plan of safe care for an infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms. The policy includes procedural instructions, directing CPS agencies to screen in these reports for child welfare services rather than child protective services cases, unless the report is accompanied by allegations of abuse or neglect. The policy also references section 46.238 of Wis. Stats., which states the county department shall offer to provide appropriate services and treatment to the child and the child's mother. In compliance with federal laws, DCF has policies and procedures in place to address the needs of drug-affected infants. In April 2014, 2013 Wisconsin Act 260 was enacted, bringing state statutes in compliance with CAPTA requirements regarding the evaluation of infants for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) and the requirement that CPS agencies offer to provide, or

make arrangements for, the provisions of those services and treatment to the infant and the infant's mother.

The legislation requires a physician to evaluate an infant if there is a serious risk that an infant has FASD. If FASD is diagnosed, the physician is required to report that diagnosis to the CPS agency. In addition, Wis. Stat. s.146.0255 requires health care providers of substance-exposed infants to notify CPS of the infants' condition. The CPS agency is required to offer, provide, or arrange for the provision of services and treatment for the infant and the infant's mother.

The Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards and Safety Intervention Standards issued by DCF include requirements and guidance regarding CPS agencies' responsibility for the development, monitoring, and follow-up of a plan of safe care (safety plan) for a drug-affected infant or an infant with FASD known to the child welfare system. At this time, DCF has not identified any technical assistance required to improve practice and implementation to address the needs of drug affected infants.

Wisconsin's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (eWiSACWIS) allows for data collection related to the monitoring of the safe plan of care for families involved in the state child welfare system. eWiSACWIS allows agencies and the state to gather information documented in the case record (i.e. Access/Intake Report and Safety Plan) as to the reason why the case is open and service type categories identified for the families (within the safe plan of care).

In addition, two recent executive orders relate to this important issue. The first, Governor's Executive Order #214 issued in September 2016, mandated the formation of a Governor's Task Force on Opioid Abuse and the formation of Steering Committees by several state agencies. Soon thereafter, Governor's Executive Order #273 on January 19, 2018, directed DCF to improve documentation in the eWiSACWIS system about substance use issues in child welfare cases.

Related to Executive Order #273, in a memorandum dated February 20, 2018, DCF informed local child welfare agencies of the changes that had been made to eWiSACWIS to improve documentation of substance use issues in child welfare cases. When removing a child from the home, one or more of 16 unique reasons for the child's removal from the home are required to be documented in eWiSACWIS, which are much like the descriptions chosen when adding maltreatment allegations. Prior to the changes, caregiver substance use was not included as reference values to be selected to describe the result(s) of or condition(s) associated with an allegation of maltreatment. The expectations set forth in the memorandum have been incorporated into the Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards and Safety Intervention Standards issued by DCF

Maltreatment descriptions provide further information about allegations and can help convey the underlying challenges for families. Using this information, DCF updated the description reference values that can be documented as part of the Descriptions page to both enhance and streamline this list of values to improve the availability and quality of the resulting data. In

addition, two new descriptions better capture the influence of alcohol and drug use in relationship to an allegation of maltreatment. These added descriptions include Caregiver Alcohol Abuse and Caregiver Drug Abuse. Lack of Medical Care was also added to encompass multiple aspects of medical neglect as a description of a result of the neglect of a child or infant.

The removal reasons are documented in eWiSACWIS at the point of a child's placement in out-of-home care and are specific to the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) required data elements and cannot be altered. In order to assist agencies with the selection of these reasons, definitions are now provided in eWiSACWIS under the resources flare on the removal address and reasons page and on our Child Welfare Worker Portal at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/ongoing/ohc>. DCF strongly encourages child welfare staff to select the main maltreatment allegation (i.e. neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse) and, where applicable, also select the underlying factor(s) that may have contributed to the child's removal (i.e. caretaker alcohol abuse, caretaker drug abuse, inadequate housing, incarceration of caretaker(s)).

UPDATES TO PRACTICE

Two recent pieces of state legislation passed in April 2018, 2017 Act 261 and 2017 Act 262, provide additional supports to address the issue of substance use disorder. Specifically, these bills direct and provide funding to DCF to establish opioid-related training for child welfare workers, provide grants for youth prevention programs, and provide grants for Family Drug Treatment Courts. DCF has implemented these efforts.

In addition, a project in 2019 incorporated what was previously an addendum regarding procedures and practices pertaining to drug-affected infants into DCF's child welfare standards. As a part of this project, an effort was made to eliminate language perceived to be ambiguous and to clarify state expectations around the handling of these cases. DCF continues to consider additional changes to its child welfare standards. DCF also collaborated with the University of Wisconsin's Child Welfare Professional Development System to develop an online training addressing the critical intersect between alcohol and other substance use disorders and child welfare. This training went live in 2020 and is available at the following link - <https://wcpds.wisc.edu/web-based-courses/substance-use-in-child-welfare/>

MONITORING PLANS OF SAFE CARE

As a county-administered state, monitoring of processes of plans of safe care continues to be a function that county agencies perform consistent with policy and training support from the state. This function includes determining whether and in what manner local entities provide referrals to, and delivery of, appropriate services for substance-exposed infants and affected family members and caregivers.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

As noted throughout this report, the ability to prescribe policy can be challenging. This is especially true in a county-administered, state-supervised state like Wisconsin where responses rely even more heavily on individual county, community, family, and child circumstances. Given these challenges, DCF continues to prioritize high-quality and comprehensive collaboration with its systems partners and stakeholders, especially those related to the voices of those with lived experience. The newly hired lived experience coordinator will be an important resource for improving collaboration in this work.

Use of CQI

Wisconsin completes regular case record reviews related to child protective services practices, including those related to substance exposed infants, and uses the results of these reviews to analyze case practice trends. This analysis is used by DSP to inform discussions related practice improvement with the state's Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory Committee and other key system partners.

CHILDREN'S BUREAU (CB) SITE VISIT

The state has not participated in a Children's Bureau site visit regarding the development of plans of safe care for infants born and identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Supplemental CAPTA Funding – American Rescue Plan

DCF will deploy new CAPTA resources to support ongoing efforts related to plans of safe care and other areas of CAPTA programming that align with Wisconsin's child welfare transformation.

CAPTA Contact Information

Wisconsin State CAPTA Coordinator:

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Section E - Targeted plans with the 2022 APSR

See below for transmittal of plans within APSR and those provided as separate documents and included in the June 30, 2020, transmittal e-mail. For copies of these documents, please submit a request to DCFCFSR@wisconsin.gov.

Health Care Oversight Plan

This is separately attached PDF document sent with APSR transmittal e-mail. Please note that there are no changes or updates to the HCOP. DCF and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) closely collaborate to improve the quality, access, and timeliness of health care services to children and youth in OHC through the implementation of a Medicaid medical home service delivery model called Care4Kids. As a result of COVID, DHS provided a wide range of specific guidance on how to access telehealth. DHS allowed for all covered services on or after March 1, 2020, to be provided via telehealth if functionally equivalent to face-to-face. More information is available at:

https://www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/WIPortal/content/html/news/telehealth_resources.html.spage.

Foster and Adoptive Training Update

- Separately attached to the transmittal email.

Disaster Plan Update

- There are no updates to the state disaster plan as submitted in the 2020-2024 CFSP. Wisconsin was operating under a federal disaster declaration in FY 2021, however, did not update the plan during this time frame. Earlier in this report on page 144, efforts supported by federal disaster relief are described.

Training Plan

- Separately attached to this transmittal email.

Section F: Statistical and Supporting Information

CAPTA Annual Data Report Items

This section provides annual updates to the CAPTA Annual State Report as required in the 2022 APSR instructions.

Child Welfare Workforce Data

Table 40

<i>Target Group</i>	<i>Primary Employees</i>	<i>All Employees</i>
Child Protective Services (CPS)	1589	4482
Child Welfare	530	763
Youth Justice (YJ)	604	1159
2020 Worker Total	2,723	6,404

Table 41

<i>Function</i>	<i>Primary Employees</i>	<i>All Employees</i>
CPS Access	135	1477
CPS Initial Assessment	444	1128
CPS Ongoing	745	1409
CPS Supervisor	265	468
Foster Care Coordinator	264	497
Case Aide/Management	266	266
YJ Worker	521	892
YJ Supervisor	83	267
2020 Worker Total	2,723*	6,404*

*These numbers are based on projections informed by data collected by the WCWPDS Online Learning Management System. Not all staff represented are assigned to child welfare related functions as an FTE, particularly in medium and smaller sized counties; in these jurisdictions some or all of child welfare staff also perform other human or social service functions not specific to child welfare. Individual workers may also provide more than one function within the child welfare service array.

Information on Child Protective Services Workforce

Wisconsin is a state-supervised, county-operated child welfare system for all counties other than Milwaukee where the state administers the child welfare system through the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services. As a result, the processes to recruit, hire, and make case assignments are based on agency specific human resource policies and procedures. The

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services must follow the process outlined by the Wisconsin Office of State Employee Relations.

Wisconsin child welfare workers are not required to have a social work degree and have degrees from a variety of fields. To have the title "Social Worker" in Wisconsin, staff must hold a valid certification through the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services.

As in the past, Wisconsin does not track statewide data on the supervisor to worker ratio, staff turnover or vacancy rates, or caseload size for the balance of the state outside of Milwaukee County. As a county-administered state, there are no statutory requirements and CPS Practice Standards do not include requirements or guidance regarding the agencies' staff ratios, caseloads, or other workload management. Within the county-administered child welfare system, the size, and population of each county impacts the local agency's staffing needs and caseload ratios.

Duties for the local child welfare workforce also vary based on the needs of the agency and community. For example, in a smaller county, the supervisors, social worker, caseworker, and/or other paraprofessional staff are likely to have other child welfare program responsibilities in addition to CPS duties. Workers in a larger county may be assigned to one specific function within the local agency, rather than assume responsibilities across the entire scope of child welfare and/or human service areas.

In the state-operated Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services, the supervisor to worker ratio is 1 to 6, and the targeted caseload for ongoing services caseworker staff is no more than 15 children in OHC and 8 families receiving intensive in-home services.

Demographic Information of the Workforce

WCWPDS collects a wide range of information for the workforce which includes the information in the screenshot on the following page.

Qualtrics Form Data

Are you required to complete Basic Intake Worker training?: No	Do you perform after hours/on-call duties that require you to attend child welfare training?: No
Birth to Three: Yes	CLTS: Yes
CPS Access: No	CPS Initial Assessment: No
CPS On-going: No	CPS Supervisor/Manager (Access, Initial Assessment, On-going): Yes
Foster Care Coordinator: No	Foster Care Supervisor/Manager: No
Home Visitor Supervisor: No	Home Visitor Worker: No
ICW: No	Support Staff: No
Youth Justice Supervisor/Manager: Yes	Youth Justice Worker: No
Kinship Care Coordinator: No	4E Stipend Program: No
Certified Licensed SW in WI: Yes	Employer Name: Crawford County Health & Human Services
Highest Education Level: Bachelors	Highest Social Work Degree: BSW
Sex: Male	Year of Birth: 1971
Form Filled - dropdown: Yes	Are you a Pre-Adoptive Parent?: No

DCF, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin, has collected additional information about the child welfare workforce. As previously mentioned, DCF has collected this additional workforce data using flash surveys. For example, the Child Welfare and Youth Justice Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Workforce Surveys cover a wide range of topics pertaining to case workers and supervisors in Wisconsin. Survey responses go to centralized database managed by University of Wisconsin-Madison Survey Center (UWSC), where they are aggregated and kept confidential.

These flash surveys are intended to be very brief. They are designed to gauge:

- Workforce knowledge of specific issues or topics
- Professional needs and challenges
- Strengths and gaps in practice and policy areas

The purpose of these flash surveys was to identify:

- Strengths and challenges faced by the child welfare/youth justice workforce in Wisconsin
- Ensure this information is representative of the workforce as a whole

The input and feedback helped DCF:

- Identify and refine priorities
- Influence policy development and implementation efforts
- Provide input into developing other initiatives to improve the child welfare system.

DCF worked with the Wisconsin Counties Human Services Association to form a worker recruitment and retention work group in 2016. The workgroup used survey results to frame its focus, which resulted in the following state-wide efforts to improve worker recruitment/retention:

- Development of a realistic job preview video
- State-wide recruitment site
- Supervisors/leadership development
- Training and partnering with universities on internships

You can find the flash survey results at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cqi-cfsr/pdf/surveys/cps-itl-rpt.pdf>.

An additional survey on training needs was administered in 2015. The results incorporated information from 837 workers and 179 supervisors as well as Tribal leadership. DCF and partners have used this survey to set up a training agenda that is responsive to Wisconsin's child welfare workforce needs. The final report on the findings from this survey can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cqi-cfsr/pdf/surveys/cpstraining-rpt.pdf>.

Youth Justice Transfer

The CAPTA Amendments of 2003 require states, to the extent possible, to collect information on children under the care of the state child protective services (CPS) system who are transferred to the custody of the state youth justice system. In Wisconsin, under the supervision of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), county human service departments and DMCPs operate the Child Protective Services (CPS) program. County human service departments also typically operate community-based youth justice programs, although some youth justice programs are attached to courts. In most counties, child welfare workers carry a mix of CPS and youth justice cases. Beginning in January 2016, the state supervision of the youth justice system was divided in that DCF is now responsible for oversight of the community-based youth justice system. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) retained responsibility for juvenile correctional facilities and aftercare programs for juvenile offenders.

Wisconsin counties are required to use the eWiSACWIS system to record all activity for child protective services cases. DCF is in the process of developing a youth-specific case management system which will be used for collecting and tracking all youth system activity including the data that derives from the Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI). Currently counties are required to record youth intake and referrals with eWiSACWIS. DCF is in the process of moving toward a system that will track all youth justice program activity. The only youth justice placements counties are required to record in eWiSACWIS are non-secure placements in settings where the placements are subject to federal Title IV-E and AFCARS reporting requirements.

For a child to transfer from the custody of the state child protection system to the custody of the state youth justice correctional system, the child would have to be placed in a juvenile

correctional facility after having a history of out-of-home placements in an open CPS case. Most of the children transferred to the DOC have patterns of delinquency and youth justice-related services at the county level before being transferred from the county agency to juvenile correctional facilities.

To calculate an estimated number of children under the care of the CPS system who transferred into the custody of the state youth justice system, eWiSACWIS records for Calendar Year 2020 were queried to identify children who were placed in a juvenile correctional facility (using the service ending reason in eWiSACWIS) after having been in out-of-home placement in an open CPS family case. This method used for the prior CFSP annual update identified 13 children meeting the transfer criteria.

Education Training Voucher

As per APSR PI, please see Children's Bureau Attachment D on page 188 of this report.

Adoption Disruptions and Dissolutions

There were 23 international adoptions were finalized in fiscal year 2020. Data for Federal Fiscal Year 2020 of disruptions and dissolutions follows.

Between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, six internationally adopted children entered OHC. Of these six children, no adoptions dissolved.

Country of Birth	Number of children
India	1
Guatemala	1
Russia	2
Haiti	1
Ethiopia	1
Adoption Agency	
Unknown	6
Reason for disruption	
Delinquency/Runaway	
Aggression and violence towards family	1
Parents Unwilling/Unable	3
Mental Health/Substance Abuse Treatment	2
Plans for the child	
Reunification	3
Reunified	1
Age Out (OPPLA)	
Guardianship	2 *Concurrent Goal
Adoption	2

There were six disrupted international adoptions in federal fiscal year 2020:

- The first disruption occurred on November 26, 2019, when the child entered a residential care facility to address behaviors and mental health needs that the parent could not address in the home. This child was adopted at the age of 5 from India through an unknown agency. The child has since reunified.
- The second disruption occurred on December 16, 2019, after the child became physically and verbally aggressive toward the mother. The police were called, and the child was removed from the home and placed into a residential care facility. The child was adopted from Guatemala at 14 months from an unknown agency. Upon discharge from the residential care facility, the plan for the child is reunification.
- The third disruption occurred on January 30, 2020, after the joint passing of the child's mother and father. The child was adopted at 18 months from an unknown agency in

Russia. The child is now placed with a new prospective adoptive family, and the plan for the child is adoption.

- The fourth disruption occurred on March 9, 2020, after completion of a 30-day assessment at a residential care facility and a subsequent recommendation for ongoing treatment at the residential care facility. The child was adopted at 2 years old from an unknown agency in Russia. The plan for the child is reunification.
- The fifth disruption occurred on April 3, 2020, at the request of the adoptive parents, due to their unwillingness to continue caring for the child in the home. The child was adopted from Haiti at an unknown age from an unknown agency. The plan for this child is adoption with a concurrent goal of guardianship.
- The sixth disruption occurred on August 17, 2020, after the child's mother refused to allow the child to return home. What prompted this disruption is not disclosed further. The child was adopted at age 7 from an unidentified agency in Ethiopia. The plan for the child is reunification with a concurrent goal of guardianship.

Monthly Caseworker Visits

As per APSR 2021 Program Instruction, DCF will provide this data to the Children's Bureau as required on December 16, 2021.

Section G: Financial Information

Payment Limitations – Title IV-B, Subpart 1:

In FY 2019, Wisconsin did not spend any IV-B subpart 1 funds on child care, foster care maintenance or adoption assistance.

Child Care: \$0

Foster Care Maintenance: \$0

Adoption Assistance: \$0

Non-Federal funds that were expended for foster care maintenance payments in Wisconsin were not used to match title IV-B subpart 1 funds in FY 2005. In FY 2019, Wisconsin did not expend any non-federal funds for foster care maintenance payments that were used to match title IV-B subpart 1 funds, and thus did not exceed the amount of FY 2005 level. Other allocated state and local funds are used for matching purposes. Wisconsin plans to spend less than ten percent of title IV-B, subpart 1 Federal funds for administrative costs (section 424(e) of the Act) in FY 2020.

Payment Limitations – Title IV-B, Subpart 2

Each of the four service categories of PSSF - family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services - had a minimum of 20 percent of the total title IV-B subpart 2 funds allocated to provide services in each category. The amounts allocated to each service category are specified in the CFS-101, Part II. Wisconsin plans to spend less than 10 percent of federal funds for both PSSF and monthly caseworker visits under title IV-B, subpart 2 for administrative costs in FY 2020.

Wisconsin's accounting and reporting procedures and processes do not support the classification of child welfare costs financed with state and local county funds into categories that align with subpart 2 programs for a complete comparison of state and local share spending for subpart 2 programs when comparing FY 2019 costs to the FY 1992 base year.

The Community Aids program in Wisconsin was established in 1980 and provided state and federal funding to counties to use for social, mental health, alcohol/drug abuse, disability, and child welfare services. These funds were distributed to counties in the form of one general unrestricted block grant that could be used for any local social service and child welfare activities. Such services included, at each county's discretion, subpart 2-type services.

As part of the creation of the new Department of Children and Families in 2008, the Community Aids GPR funds were divided into two separate allocations. DCF was provided with \$28,959,400 GPR for child welfare services and the Department of Health Services was allocated GPR for local social services, AODA, developmental disabilities, and mental health services.

In 2020, counties reported spending a total of \$188.7 million on child abuse and neglect services and services for children and families. These expenditures were supported by \$99.9 million in state general purpose revenue fund and federal IV-E, IV-B, and SSBG funds for the

Children and Families Allocation to counties to support local child welfare costs. The balance, \$88.8 million, is local funding. This increase in expenditures from 1992 to 2020 was greater than the change in federal funds received for child welfare services, resulting in the state/local share accounting for a greater proportion of the total expenditures. The portion of these state and local funds used for IV-B subpart 2 services is estimated to be at least \$3.1 million.

Wisconsin does assure that subpart 2 funds provided to the state will not be, and have not been, used to supplant federal or non-federal funds for existing services and activities which promote the purposes of subpart 2.

Wisconsin also funds family support services through programs administered by the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board. Those programs are summarized below.

Table 44: Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board Programs (SFY 2020)

Program	Category of Service	Funding	Geographic Distribution	Target Group
Community Based Programs	Prevention/Support Services			
a. Evidence-informed Parent Education	Prevention/Support Services	\$900,000	5 funded programs; 3 partner programs; 2 start-up programs 23 counties	Universal
b. Abusive head trauma prevention	Prevention/Support Services	\$172,000	4 programs in 3 counties	Universal (for all new births)
c. Child Sexual Abuse Prevention	Prevention/Support Services	\$200,000	Statewide	Professionals
d. Newborn home visits	Prevention/Support Services	\$75,000	1 program in 1 county	Universal (for all new births)
Professional Development		\$90,000	26 certified trainers and	Professionals

			parent co-presenters	
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Table 45: General data for Community Based Prevention Programs from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Program	# Caregivers	# Families	# Children	# Professionals
Parent Education	535	523	11,67	144
Parent Education (one-time)	1,566	N/A	2,074	N/A
Abusive Head Trauma	7,932	5,470		181
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention				334
Protective Factors				134
Totals	10,033	5,933	3,241	793

Summary of caregivers who participated in Parent Education:

Race/ethnicity: 47% white, 19% African American, 14% Hispanic/Latino, 6% American Indian, 4% Asian, 7% multi-racial, and 5% did not respond or selected preferred not to answer

Summary of caregivers who participated in Parent Education (for parents who participated in a one-time event):

Race/ethnicity: 37% white, 10% African American, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 7% American Indian, 1% Asian, 1% multi-racial, and 34% did not respond or selected preferred not to answer

State Match Requirement

The Title IV-B program requires a 25% state match for Subpart 1 and 2 funds. The Chafee program requires a 20% match for the CCFCIP and ETV funds. No match is required for CAPTA funds.

Attachment 1 – Kin Navigator Annual Report

Type	Resource	Detail
Information and Referral	<i>Kinship Navigator Portal</i>	Wisconsin successfully launched the Wisconsin Kinship Navigator Portal on January 15, 2020 . The portal is a resource for any relative caregiver throughout Wisconsin, regardless of if they have any involvement with the child welfare system. Caregivers are asked a series of questions to assist in understanding their caregiving situation and are then provided information about resources and eligibility for state-sponsored services based on their specific situation. As of September, 2020 , there have been 2,715 unique visits to the portal.
	<i>Kinship Navigator Portal Enhancements</i>	Wisconsin is working with United Way – 211 Wisconsin to enhance the Kinship Navigator Portal by providing caregivers with information specific to their local community. A partnership with 211 Wisconsin will ensure that the Kinship Navigator Portal has accurate, localized information about community resources and services that may be available to caregivers. The Relative Caregiver Guided search is scheduled to go live in 2021.
	<i>Informational Print Materials</i>	Wisconsin has developed and issued six (6) “KinFACTS Information Guides” to help caregivers answer questions about service availability; topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Support, • Child Care Options, • Education, • Healthcare Coverage, • Legal Resources, and • Permanency Options. The final versions of each of the above KinFACTS Information Guides can be accessed on the Wisconsin Kinship Navigator Portal and have been accessed 312 times as of September, 2020 . A booklet of all KinFACTS Information Guides was printed and made available to caregivers via local agencies who serve relatives.
Caregiver Education	<i>Kinship Navigator Training for Relative Caregivers</i>	On January 22, 2020 , Wisconsin launched the web-based Kinship Navigator Training for Relative Caregivers . This training is available to caregivers through the Kinship Navigator Portal, on various pages of DCF’s general website, and through the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) website. The purpose of the training is to normalize relative caregiver’s complex feelings about caregiving and support them through challenges they may face in that role. In addition, the training introduces the Wisconsin Kinship Navigator Portal , and provides caregivers with information about how to access services and supports.
	<i>Families Like Mine: Wisconsin</i>	On September 14-18, 2020 , Wisconsin held the 2 nd Annual <i>Families Like Mine: Wisconsin Relative Caregivers for Children</i>

	<p><i>Relative Caregivers for Children Conference</i></p>	<p><i>Conference.</i> This conference was held virtually and was held free-of-charge to any relative caregiver in Wisconsin.</p> <p>Post-conference surveys indicate that 79% of respondents were "<i>extremely satisfied</i>" with the conference.</p> <p>Currently, Wisconsin is in the process of planning the <i>3rd Annual Families Like Mine: Wisconsin Relative Caregivers for Children Conference</i>. This conference will also be held free-of-charge for any relative caregiver in Wisconsin and is currently planned for July 2021.</p> <p><i>**Due to COVID-19, a decision was made to hold the conferences in a virtual manner, to ensure the safety of all attendees and staff.**</i></p>
<p>Caregiver Support</p>	<p><i>Relative Caregiver Support Groups</i></p>	<p>Wisconsin has continued to fund Relative Caregiver Support Groups throughout the state during FFY2020. During the second funding period (October 1, 2019- September 20, 2020, twenty (20) agencies received funding to support a total of twenty-two (22) groups; maintaining fourteen (14) already established groups and starting an additional eight (8) groups. Agencies that received funding were county agencies (12) and private agencies (8); three of the county agencies partnered with their local tribe to provide support groups and to maximize the funding they received. These groups met a total of 120 times and provided support to 1,024 relative caregivers and children.</p> <p><i>**While COVID-19 has made it difficult for agencies to continue to hold support groups in the same manner, agencies have been thinking creatively in order to ensure the caregivers in their community continue to receive support. Agencies have continued to provide outreach to families via phone and video, and many have developed "family fun" activity packages and ideas to support families through this unprecedented time. A few of the agencies (2) that planned to begin new groups this year have been unable to do so because of agency constraints around COVID-19. All other agencies have continued to provide support in other ways.**</i></p>
<p>Caseworker Education</p>	<p><i>Kinship Navigator Training for Caseworkers</i></p>	<p>On January 22, 2020, Wisconsin launched the web-based Kinship Navigator Training for Caseworkers. This training is available to caseworkers on various pages of DCF's general website, and through the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) website. The purpose of the training is to highlight the importance of relative caregivers, to underscore the unique perspectives that relative caregivers provide, and to emphasize the complex emotions and challenges they may face. In addition, the training introduces the Wisconsin Kinship Navigator Portal, and provides</p>

		caseworkers with information about how to access services and supports for families they are working with.
Outreach and Evaluation	<i>Relative Caregiver Stakeholder Group</i>	<p>The Relative Caregiver Stakeholder Group is made up of twenty-two (22) relative caregivers from various regions in Wisconsin. The relative caregivers bring various types of caregiving experience to the group; some caregivers are working within the child welfare system, while others are caregiving on a more informal basis.</p> <p>This group meets virtually on a bi-monthly basis to review Kinship Navigator Program development, and to provide guidance to DCF on future projects and policy updates in order to better serve the relative caregiver population.</p> <p><i>**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this group was unable to meet in-person, since January 2020, however, those meetings were still held in videoconference format. **</i></p>
	<i>State System Stakeholder Group</i>	<p>The Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Committee continues to advise the development of the Kinship Navigator Program from a state-systems perspective. This group meets on a quarterly basis, and is provided with Kinship Navigator updates.</p> <p><i>**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this group was unable to meet in-person in during 2020, however, they were provided with kinship navigator project updates during meetings held via videoconference. **</i></p>

**Children's Bureau Attachment D – Annual Reporting of Education
and Training Vouchers**

Annual Reporting of Education and Training Vouchers Awarded

Name of State/Tribe:

Wisconsin

	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
<u>Final Number</u> : 2019-2020 School Year (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020)	173	74
2020-2021 School Year* (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021)	158	63