DATE: 6 October 2016

TO: Bryn Martyna

FROM: Lonnie Berger, Kristen Slack, Yonah Drazen, Emma Kahle

RE: Summary of responses to juvenile justice survey

This memorandum has been prepared in response to a request by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) to summarize responses from juvenile justice system workers on the current services and policies within juvenile justice in Wisconsin. We have analyzed the data. Our description and analysis of the survey is below.

About the survey
This survey was administered in the late spring and summer of 2016 to a wide range of juvenile justice system stakeholders, statewide: agency staff, attorneys, judges, law enforcement, service providers, families, and youth. In total, there were 293 responses. About 26% of respondents identified as county or tribal agency supervisors or directors, and about the same number, 24% identified as agency case workers. The remaining respondents mostly described themselves as prosecutors (9%), defense attorneys (7%), school personnel (8%), and service providers (7%). A small number of judges, out-of-home care providers, and law enforcement and corrections personnel, each consisting of about 2% of the survey, also responded. Less than 2% respondents identified themselves as youth or family members. About 10% of the sample had "other roles," such as volunteers, researchers, or advocates. Finally, about 30% of all respondents reported all of their job is juvenile justice related, another 10% reported it was more than half, and about 15% of respondents said half. 42% of the respondents said that less than half of their job was related to juvenile justice.

Responses came from 61 counties around Wisconsin, and responses were concentrated in more populous counties. Responders from Dane county constituted about 16% of the sample, and Milwaukee 15%. Winnebago county accounted for about 5% of responses with Sheboygan another 4%. Each of the remaining counties had just a few responses from each, with most counties having 3 or fewer respondents each.

Respondents answered eight questions in an open-ended survey, asking for feedback on various aspects of the juvenile justice system. To analyze the data, we identified common themes from the responses provided and summarized them by question. This section consists of our question-by-question summaries. For a listing of all of the common themes by question, see **Table 1** at the end of this document.

Question #1: What do you believe should be the outcomes the community-based juvenile justice system should seek to achieve?

The most common response was reducing recidivism and associated goals (e.g., fewer crimes, less delinquent behavior). A number of respondents also reported that diverting youth from the juvenile justice system was an important goal. In addition, several respondents suggested that preventing youth from experiencing criminal justice system involvement as adults is an important goal. Serving youths with an eye toward rehabilitation was another broad theme that emerged from this question. Respondents suggested educational success, skill building and employment, and effective mental health service provision as goals. Some respondents suggested what might be thought of "process goals" for improving the juvenile justice system itself; some of these broad goals included increasing the rate of evidence based practices, responding to the over-representation of youths of color in juvenile justice, and placing youths as close to their homes as possible. Finally, respondents discussed community safety and youth accountability as goals.

Question #2: How should the system measure success?

The most common response to how the system should measure success, reported by about half of all respondents, was to focus on recidivism, defined by such outcomes as future arrests, re-referrals to juvenile justice, and reincarceration. Some respondents also discussed how measuring recidivism can be challenging, and that it is important to consider different types of improvement as "successes." Another theme that emerged from this section was measuring how well youth are situated in their community. Education, employment, and family support were ways this theme showed. Education measurements mostly included high school graduation and school attendance. For employment, respondents suggested measuring whether juveniles had jobs or the skills to get a job. Family outcomes included how families are functioning, and whether youth felt supported by their families. Another area respondents suggested measuring is consumer satisfaction: do youth and families feel their needs were met? Respondents also suggested measuring how many youth were placed in their communities or with their families, as well as the rate of evidence based practices in use. A number of respondents discussed measurements that aren't a direct reflection of the juvenile justice system, such as safer communities. Finally, there were a few suggestions that a statewide tool to measure and standardize outcomes would help in this regard.

Question #3: What specific ideas do you have for how to best serve youth and families who come into contact with the community-based juvenile justice system?

Here, respondents primarily focused on treatment and family-oriented services. There was particular emphasis on comprehensive assessment, paying attention to the functioning of the entire family, and parent accountability. Respondents discussed the need to include evidence-based practices. Another common sentiment was that youths in the juvenile justice system may have trauma histories and that interventions should be administered remembering that juveniles are still children. For service providers,

respondents emphasized the need for mental health services, mentoring, cross-system collaboration, and delivery of these services with regard to funding constraints. Respondents discussed that they themselves may need better training and supervision in order to effectively fill their roles.

Question #4: What are the areas within the community-based juvenile justice system that are in most urgent need of DCF's attention?

A large number of respondents from all corners of the state cited a critical lack of placement resources. The most common suggestion by respondents as to urgent needs was the lack of necessary services for youth in such areas as mental health, substance use treatment, and in trauma informed care. Responses in this category alluded to what seemed to be a noticeable increase in the proportion of system-involved youth with mental health and substance use issues. Limited placement options, including foster homes, treatment facilities, therapeutic secure facilities, and detention facilities, were also mentioned. In addition, workers noted that maintaining youth in the community would be more feasible with more robust services, such as Wraparound and mentoring. A number of comments included concerns about the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the system. Respondents noted a number of problems with staffing and workload, highlighting that juvenile justice workers who are saddled with too heavy a documentation (paperwork) load have a difficult time meeting service goals. Finally, a number of workers indicated that the state needed a centralized computer tool that offers data tracking, assessment tools, and inter-agency coordination.

Question #5: What barriers do you see to achieving the best possible outcomes for youth and families who came into contact with the community-based juvenile justice system?

Respondents listed a variety of barriers they experience and witness in the juvenile justice system. Inadequate funding was most often reported as a barrier, followed by a lack of community resources such as limited service providers and lack of community placement options. Other commonly cited barriers were legal barriers, parental barriers, workforce issues, clients' lack of resources, lack of community support, disjointed and incompatible services, and a need for more mental health services. Less frequently cited, but still notable, were a lack of education around juvenile justice issues, poor quality of services, substance abuse, a mistrust of the system by clients, and racism. Respondents also discussed client- and family-related barriers such as parents or clients being uncooperative or missing appointments, as well as disrespecting agency policies. They reported some barriers in the legal system as well, in that direct service providers see courts as too punitive and focused on the individual rather than systems-focused. Finally, several respondents cited difficult work environments, including limited time and high administrative workloads that takes away from the time they can spend with their clients. Overall, however, the resounding theme was a lack of funding and resources for direct service providers to do their job well and for clients to access adequate resources to gain the help and support they need. Moreover, respondents from rural communities reported being particularly under-resourced and in need of additional funding.

Question #6: What are the existing best practices in use in Wisconsin?

Many respondents noted a lack of best practices being used in Wisconsin, or an uncertainty as to what best practices are. Indeed, the most common response to this item was to note the lack of evidence-based practices or best practices in use. Other common answers were trauma informed care and the use of evidence-based assessment tools and intervention materials (e.g., Carey guides). Respondents cited forms of practice they believed were effective, though not necessarily evidence-based. Such practices were described as holistic involvement with the family, wraparound services, motivational interviewing, a restorative justice and least restrictive approach, and using community-based services to support their

work and the client. Overall, responses suggest there is no consensus or standard best practice that is being implemented across the state, and that JJ service providers often do not even understand what qualifies something as "best practice."

Question #7: What additional training would help you do your job most effectively?

The most commonly identified need was for training on what exactly best practices are, and what qualifies as evidence-based practice. Second, service providers reported a need for training in mental health issues, the legal system, and how to work with substance abuse and addiction. Respondents also expressed wanting more training on how to collaborate across organizations and, more generally, across the state, how to work better with families, and how to identify currently available services at the county and state level. Another commonly voiced concern was that trainings too often are CPS focused and not JJ-specific. Service providers pointed out that JJ and CPS—while utilizing many of the same services— are very different in terms of client needs and worker skill sets, such that trainings should be available specifically for JJ work. Other less-commonly mentioned training needs were for motivational interviewing, how to communicate with difficult children, how to improve workforce morale and retention, restorative justice practices, and in general, how to educate other services (e.g., school, community members) about the juvenile justice population and how involved youth may need special services or be particularly vulnerable. Again, the most common themes were a need for training to teaches service providers how to engage in "best practices" and discover evidence-based practices, as well as the need for JJ-specific training on how to navigate the array of systems that their clients need.

Question #8: Do you have any other suggestions for DCF?

Responses to this item centered on key themes from preceding items, such as a need for more education and training, and greater emphasis on trauma-informed work. Increased implementation of trauma-informed care was mentioned most often, and sex offender training was the second most common (though far less frequent) response. Other responses also echoed themes from the preceding items, such as a need for workload and process reforms, additional funding, and increased JJ-specific material and training. Less common response included a focus more on prevention work, provision of more physical material (e.g., educational pamphlets, resource lists), increased mentoring services for JJ youth, and implementation of a state-wide summit for all JJ stakeholders in order to collaborate, educate, and train. Overall, service providers expressed a need for additional trauma-focused training and care, as well as more JJ-specific training and collaboration opportunities across service sectors and across the state.

Table 1: Summary of themes for each survey question

Question	Responses
What do you believe should be the outcomes the community-based juvenile justice system should seek to achieve?	Reducing recidivism Deferring youth away from the juvenile justice system Preventing youth from criminal justice involvement as adults Serving youth with a mindset of rehabilitation Educational success Skill building and employment Mental health service provision Increase the rate of evidence based practices Respond to the over-representation of youths of color Place youths as close to home as possible Community safety Youth accountability
How should the system measure success?	Measuring recidivism How well are youths situated in their community Education Employment Family support High school graduation School attendance Consumer satisfaction Statewide tool to measure and standardize outcomes
What specific ideas do you have for how to best serve youth and families who come into contact with the community-based juvenile justice system?	Comprehensive assessment (paying attention to entire family and parents) Inclusion of evidence-based practices Being mindful of trauma histories of youth Mental health services Mentoring Cross-system collaboration Better training and supervision for workers in the field
What are the areas within the community-based juvenile justice system that are in most urgent need of DCF's attention?	Mental health Substance use treatment Trauma-informed care Lack of placement resources Work on how to keep youth in the community Disproportionate representation of youths of color Staffing and workload Centralized computer and data-tracking system
What barriers do you see to achieving the best possible outcomes for youth and families who came into contact with the community-based juvenile justice system?	Funding Lack of community resources Legal barriers Parental barriers Workforce issues Lack of community support Disjointed services Lack of mental health services Lack of knowledge around juvenile justice issues Poor quality services Substance abuse Mistrust of the JJ system by clients Racism
What are the existing best practices in use in Wisconsin?	Absence of best practices Uncertain what best practices are

	Trauma informed care Evidence-based tools and materials (e.g., Carey guides, CBT) Holistic involvement with youth and family Wraparound services Motivational interviewing Restorative justice Community-based services
What additional training would help you do your job most effectively?	Training on what evidence-based practice is and how to implement them Mental health issues Legal system How to work with substance abuse and addiction How to collaborate across organizations and the state How to work better with families JJ-specific trainings, create distinct trainings from CPS Training on existing services that are available at state and county levels Motivational interviewing How to communicate with difficult children How to improve workforce morale and retention Restorative justice training
Do you have any other suggestions for DCF?	More education, training, and implementation with trauma work Sex offender training Workforce changes More funding More JJ-specific material and training Focus on prevention work More physical material (e.g., educational pamphlets, resource lists) More mentoring services State-wide summit for JJ stakeholders to collaborate