

2019-21 BIENNIAL REPORT

October 2021



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

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Introduction – Agency Description

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) works in partnership with local governments, tribes, health-and-social-services agencies, private and non-profit providers, and concerned individuals to protect and promote the well-being of children, families, and communities through:

Supervising the statewide child welfare system to protect children at risk of neglect or abuse, and to make permanency plans for the care and placement of children who have suffered it.

Directly managing child protective services in Milwaukee County.

Regulating the health and safety of child care by licensing child care providers statewide, certifying qualifying Milwaukee providers, and supervising the certification of non-Milwaukee providers through counties and tribes.

Encouraging improvements in the quality of child care statewide through the YoungStar quality rating program and financial assistance to child care workers to attend professional development training.

Administering the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program for low-income parents, including maintaining computer systems, establishing payment rates and statewide policies for MyWICildCare, and providing funding under contracts with counties, consortia, and tribes for local eligibility and authorization workers outside Milwaukee County.

Supporting county services to establish paternity and child support orders, including maintaining statewide computer and financial systems to maintain accurate case records and disburse support payments promptly.

Administering Wisconsin Works (W-2) and other employment programs to promote self-sufficiency among parents and young adults.

Provision and coordination of services that help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency and social adjustment upon their arrival to the U.S.

Overseeing community-based juvenile justice services and associated Youth Aids to counties.

Vision Statement

Our vision is that:

All Wisconsin children and youth are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities

To reach our goal, we are focused on reducing racial and ethnic disparities in our programs and services, focusing on five key priorities:

- Systematically increasing access to quality early care and education programs that support the needs of children and families statewide
- Putting families in the center of successful child support and good-paying jobs programs
- Safely transforming the child welfare and youth justice system to dramatically increase the proportion of children supported in their homes and communities
- Dedicating additional resources to support vulnerable and historically underserved youth, specifically teenage girls, kids with complex care needs, and youth transitioning out of the foster care system
- Fostering a workplace where agency staff feel engaged, valued, and connected to our vision

Structure

The department is headed by Secretary Emilie Amundson, who is appointed by Governor Tony Evers.

The secretary administers the department with the assistance of an appointed deputy secretary, assistant secretary, and administrators for the department's divisions:

- Division of Early Care and Education
- Division of Family and Economic Security
- Division of Management Services
- Division of Safety and Permanence
- Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services

The secretary also appoints the general counsel, legislative advisor, senior manager, inspector general, and Office of Urban Development director. The Secretary's Office also includes the tribal relations director, communications director, and the Office of

Budget and Policy.

Succeeding portions of this report provide additional detail about the internal structure of the five divisions and their programmatic accomplishments during the 2019-21 biennium.

Position Utilization

As of June 30, 2021, the department had 802.41 authorized full-time- equivalent (FTE) positions, including permanent and project positions in both the classified and unclassified service. 21 individuals were working in part-time positions, representing 13.25 FTE.

Attached Statutory Councils and Boards

There are three statutory councils attached to the department: The Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse, which advises the secretary and the legislature on matters of domestic abuse policy; the Rate Regulation Advisory Committee, which advises the department on rate setting issues for residential care centers, group homes, and child welfare agencies; and funding the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council, which advises the department on Milwaukee County child welfare issues. In addition, the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board is attached to the department for limited administrative purposes. It has typically published its own, separate biennial report.

Division of Early Care and Education

The Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) is broken up into five bureaus the Bureau of Operations and Planning (BOP), Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR), Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BECCSA), Bureau of YoungStar (BOY), and the Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA).

DECE Administrator's Office

The Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) houses Child Care Licensing and Certification, Milwaukee County Child Care Administration, the YoungStar Program, Wisconsin Shares, Operations and Planning, and Program Integrity. DECE aims to provide access to affordable, high-quality child care and early education experiences, to enhance our children's development, and to support their families in work and parenting roles.

Bureau of Operations and Planning

The Bureau of Operations and Planning (BOP) exercises overall administration of division-wide activities including the following: IT services; policy and program communications; customer and stakeholder communication/training; contract management and support; and quality assurance functions. The bureau was created 2014 as part of a division reorganization.

Bureau of Early Care Regulation

The Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR) is responsible for the licensing and regulation of child care in Wisconsin. The bureau regulates family and group child care centers and day camps, monitors public school operated child care programs, regulates certified programs in Milwaukee County, and conducts background checks on all licensees, household members, and employees of licensed and certified child care programs. The bureau has a central office, a caregiver background unit, and five regional licensing offices throughout the state.

Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration

The Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA) oversees the statewide implementation of the [Wisconsin Shares](#) program. This program helps low-income families with the cost of child care while they are working or preparing to enter the workforce. Wisconsin Shares is implemented at the local level by 71 counties and nine tribes. In Milwaukee County, [Milwaukee Early Care Administration](#) (MECA) provides direct services for child care authorizations, and the Department of Health Services, Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MILES), determines financial and non-financial eligibility.

The BCCSA includes two sections:

- Wisconsin Shares Policy
- Program Integrity

The Wisconsin Shares policy team includes one section manager and eight policy analysts. The team maintains the accuracy of the [Wisconsin Shares Handbook](#) and remains informed of the Child Care Development Fund and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families regulations as these are the federal funding sources for the program. The team works with the Wisconsin statutes and administrative codes that regulate the program.

The team also staffs the Child Care Help Desk where we provide technical assistance and policy guidance to local agency staff, regional operations staff, child care providers and families.

The Program Integrity section has two units; one based in Madison and another based in Milwaukee.

Bureau of YoungStar

The Bureau of YoungStar (BOY) oversees the department's quality initiatives, most importantly [YoungStar](#), Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System. The bureau also supports the [Preschool Development Grant \(PDG\)](#) through established relationships with contract partners.

Milwaukee Early Care Administration

On January 1, 2010, the State assumed responsibility for the administration of Milwaukee County's Wisconsin Shares program. Authorization for child care subsidies and certain program integrity activities are provided by the Bureau of Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA). The department contracts with the Department of Health Services for basic eligibility determination for Milwaukee County residents applying for Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy assistance.

Accomplishments

- The department was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal, totaling \$30 million over the next three years. The [PDG B-5 Renewal Grant](#) is based on the [strategic plan](#) developed by DCF, the Department of Public Instruction, and other partners, and includes feedback and guidance from the department's early care and education stakeholders. The grant is focused on some of the following activities:
 - Attracting and retaining early childhood education professionals
 - Empowering families to make the best choices for their children
 - Building regional networks of support
 - Increasing overall quality of early childhood programs
 - Completion of a Needs Assessment
 - Development of a systemic and sustainable structure
 - [Development of a PDG Birth to Five Statewide Strategic Plan](#)

- Child Care Background Check Requirements
 - Completion of new Caregiver Background Check process to come into compliance with Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) regulations.
 - Included the completion of approximately 70,000 individual FBI fingerprint-based checks on all child care staff.
 - Worked with our Bureau of Information Technology (BITS) partners to automate the FBI fingerprint-based check and other health and safety related background checks on all child care related staff.
- [2019 Licensing Annual Report](#)
- Updates to [child care rules](#) outlined in DCF 13, DCF 202, DCF 250, DCF 251, and DCF 252 which were effective as of April 1, 2020.
- COVID-19 Child Care Resources - The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has compiled resources to help essential workers, providers, and families navigate the child care landscape during the COVID-19 crisis.
 - DECE developed, in partnership with the DCF BITS and Finance teams the Child Care Counts payment programs to provide direct payments to child care providers, the early care and education (ECE) workforce, and essential workers throughout the pandemic. Through the Child Care Counts payment programs, over \$300,000,000 in COVID-19 related funds have been distributed, with additional funding rounds yet to take place. DCF developed a [Child Care Counts Payments Dashboard](#) to provide payment data for all funding recipients for each round of the program.
 - DECE developed a Workforce Retention and Recognition Stipend program and contracted with [Wisconsin Early Childhood Association](#) (WECA) to disseminate Workforce Retention and Recognition stipends using the existing [REWARD](#) Stipend Program system. These stipends were made available through the federal [Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act \(CRRSA\) of 2021](#) and \$10 Million in funds are being directed to support child care professionals through the Workforce Retention and Recognition Stipend Program.
 - DECE also developed a Technology Access Program to support quality, access, and affordability in Wisconsin's child care programs by supplying the child care workforce with technology to continue their professional development and grow their businesses.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic DECE worked to develop an [interactive map](#) where the public can go to find specific available child care providers. During SFY22 DECE is continuing to automate this process to provide real-time child care availability details to families across the state.
- 53206 Early Care and Education Initiative
 - Using resources provided in the previous budget, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) continues to provide needed financial and professional development supports to the early care and education (ECE) workforce in 53206 to create movement in increasing [YoungStar](#) ratings of child care programs. Access to community supports are intended to facilitate a supportive environment for first-time entry into higher education.
- Completion of the FFY 2022-2024 [Child Care Development Fund State Plan](#) for federal approval.
- The Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program continues to provide payments for approximately 52,000 children and 28,000 families across the state. Additional Wisconsin Shares statistics are available on [DCF's website](#).
- Program Integrity Efforts
 - In 2020, DCF received 1,401 referrals from red flag reports and the child care fraud mailbox. After initial screening, referrals that are determined to be unsubstantiated and not warranting further investigation are closed. If the referral identifies an error that is correctable with technical assistance, technical assistance is provided verbally, or a technical assistance letter is mailed to the provider. A formal investigation is recommended if screening uncovers additional violations by the provider, a history of noncompliance, and/or indications of fraud or overpayment. In 2020, DCF screened 635 provider referrals and completed 185 formal investigations (29% of referrals). Of the provider formal investigations, 105 resulted in no overpayment, 54 resulted in overpayment only, seven resulted in overpayment and stipulation that the provider would follow program rules, and 19 resulted in provider permanent suspension from the Wisconsin Shares program. In 2020, the department and local agencies established a total of \$42,738.88 in client overpayment claims for agency error. In 2020, the department and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional provider violations, including agency error.

Division of Family and Economic Security

The Division of Family and Economic Security (DFES) has four bureaus: the Bureau of Working Families (BWF), the Bureau of Child Support (BCS), the Bureau of Refugee Programs (BRP), and the Bureau of Analytics and Research (BAR).

Bureau of Working Families

The Bureau of Working Families (BWF) is responsible for administering the Wisconsin Works (W-2), Emergency Assistance, and Job Access Loan programs; the Transform Milwaukee Jobs program; the Transitional Jobs program; the Community Services Block Grant; Wisconsin Skills Enhancement program; Civil Legal Services; Literacy and GED Services, and programs through the Wisconsin Chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of America.

Program: Wisconsin Works

Wisconsin Works (W-2) is Wisconsin's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for low-income parents. W-2 is a work-based program designed to assist parents with children to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. In addition, the W-2 program assists parents with disabilities to apply for either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) as a means of providing economic stability for their families.

Accomplishments

- In calendar year 2019, W-2 participants obtained 5,816 jobs. In calendar year 2020, W-2 participants obtained 4,989 jobs. From January 2021 through September 2021, W-2 participants obtained 3,692 jobs.
- In calendar year 2019, 89 W-2 participants earned a vocational training certificate. In calendar year 2020, 21 W-2 participants earned a vocational training certificate. From January 2021 through June 2021, 11 W-2 participants earned a vocational training certificate.
- From January 2019 to December 2020, the total caseload increased from 7,340 to 8,534 W-2 participants. From January 2019 to December 2020, the number of paid W-2 participants increased from 5,673 to 7,161.
- In calendar year 2019, 172 W-2 participants were determined eligible for disability payments (SSI or SSDI). In calendar year 2020, 209 W-2 participants were determined eligible for disability payments. From January 2021 through September 2021, 134 W-2 participants were determined eligible for disability payments.

- During calendar year 2020, BWF was able to rapidly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by creating policy adjustments to increase the ease of access for applicants and participants impacted by the Safer At Home order.

Program: Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program

BWF administers the Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ) program, which is a transitional employment program to assist low-income adults in Milwaukee County who are not eligible for the W-2 program because they are not custodial parents. The goals of the TMJ program are to: 1) transition individuals into stable unsubsidized employment; 2) increase child support payments; 3) support family reunification plans by enhancing parental capabilities and long-term child safety; and 4) transition former foster youth into independent living.

Accomplishments

- In calendar year 2019, 492 TMJ participants entered subsidized employment through the TMJ program. In calendar year 2020, 546 TMJ participants entered subsidized employment. From January 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021, 254 participants entered subsidized employment.
- In calendar year 2019, 495 TMJ participants successfully obtained unsubsidized jobs after completing their programs. In calendar year 2020, 419 TMJ participants entered unsubsidized employment. From January 2021 through September 2021, 422 TMJ participants found unsubsidized employment.
- Over 288 businesses and organizations participated as worksites. Number and types of TMJ worksites include:
 - 257 for-profits;
 - 28 non-profits; and,
 - 3 government entities.
- During Calendar year 2020, DCF expanded the definition of out-of-home care (e.g., foster care, kinship care, independent living facilities, residential care centers, group homes) under a Chapter 48 or Chapter 938 court order (Child in Need of Protection or Services orders (CHIPS)) to also include Juvenile in need of Protection or Services orders (JIPS), or Juvenile Delinquency orders. This has allowed access for participants in need of services who were not previously served by the program.

Program: Transitional Jobs Program

BWF administers the Transitional Jobs (TJ) program which is a transitional employment program to assist low-income adults in certain Wisconsin counties who are not eligible for the W-2 program because they are not custodial parents. The goals of the TJ program are to: 1) transition individuals into stable unsubsidized employment; 2) increase child support payments; 3) support family reunification plans by enhancing parental capabilities and long-term child safety; and 4) help former foster youth live independently through stable unsubsidized employment.

Accomplishments

- In calendar year 2019, 167 TJ participants entered subsidized employment through the TJ program. In calendar year 2020, 143 TJ participants entered subsidized employment. From January 2021 through June 2021, 53 TJ participants entered subsidized employment.
- In calendar year 2019, 100 TJ participants successfully obtained unsubsidized jobs after completing their programs. In calendar year 2020, 111 TJ participants entered unsubsidized employment. From January 2021 through September 2021, 123 TJ participants found unsubsidized employment.
- Over 154 businesses and organizations participated as worksites. Number and types of TJ worksites include:
 - 118 for-profits;
 - 31 non-profits; and,
 - 5 government entities.

During calendar year 2020, DCF issued a Request for Proposals for three new regions beginning January 1, 2021. Through the RFP process, DCF selected an existing TJ agency to provide services for the Urban South region, serving Kenosha County, and the Urban Bay Region serving Brown, Outagamie, Winnebago, Marinette, and Oconto counties. DCF selected a new agency to provide services in the Rural Midwest Region serving Barron, Dunn, Chippewa, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce counties.

Program: Community Services Block Grant

The purpose of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is to empower people and communities to overcome the effects of poverty and to support their progress toward greater self-sufficiency. Federal and State statutes mandate that at least 90% of CSBG funds be distributed by formula to 16 Community Action Agencies and 2 statewide agencies that focus on serving special populations. Each of the agencies is a not-for-

profit corporation that provides direct services to low-income individuals, families, and communities within specific geographic areas. Direct services provided by these agencies include employment and training; adult literacy; financial literacy; housing assistance; small business development; transportation assistance; affordable housing development; parenting and family support; emergency food and clothing; energy assistance; weatherization; and special projects for child and youth development. Each agency conducts a community needs assessment every three years and tailors programming to the specific needs of its service area.

Accomplishments

- In 2018, CSBG agencies served 140,939 low-income individuals in 91,500 families. This included 44,502 children, 64,701 people with disabilities, 27,833 seniors, and 69,469 people who lacked health insurance.
- In 2019, CSBG agencies served 140,527 low-income individuals in 67,739 families. This included 45,780 children, 19,080 people with disabilities, 14,619 seniors, and 8,186 people who lacked health insurance.
- In these two years, CSBG agencies helped 233 low-income households buy their own homes; assisted 1,780 low-income people start their own businesses; provided emergency shelter to 3,548 people who were experiencing homelessness; helped 2,406 unemployed individuals obtain jobs; constructed, rehabbed, and/or weatherized 32,295 units of affordable housing; and assisted 402 adults to earn high school equivalency/GEDs and 735 individuals to earn post-secondary certificates or diplomas. The agencies also provided emergency food, clothing, and financial assistance to thousands more individuals who were experiencing financial distress.
- CSBG agencies mobilized thousands of volunteers. In 2018 and 2019, these volunteers gave 1,482,413 hours of their time to assist people in need in their communities.

Program: Skills Enhancement Program

The Skills Enhancement Program provides grants of approximately \$20,833 per year to 12 Community Action Agencies across the state to assist low-income, working individuals to obtain the skills needed to compete for living wage jobs. The program assists with tuition, books, and training-related transportation and child care costs that participants could not otherwise afford. To be eligible, individuals must work at least 20 hours per week and have incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines.

They must pursue training for occupations that pay a living wage and typically offer employer-sponsored health coverage.

Accomplishments

- In state fiscal years 2019 and 2020, 85 Skills Enhancement Program participants were served statewide . Of these, 56 obtained new jobs and increased their wages by an average of \$19,502 per year. Seventy-five percent of those obtaining new jobs now have access to employer-sponsored health insurance.

Program: Civil Legal Services

The 2019-2021 biennial budget allocated \$1 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for grants to support civil legal services for low-income individuals and families, with a special focus on victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. In state fiscal years 2020 and 2021, 14 legal service providers and domestic violence shelters that are partnering with legal service providers received grants ranging from \$15,000-\$50,000. The Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation (WisTAF) acted as the lead agency to administer these grants.

Accomplishments

- In state fiscal years 2020 and 2021, the grantees provided civil legal services ranging from limited advice to representation in civil litigations to 1,644 low-income domestic abuse and sexual assault survivors in 60 Wisconsin counties.
- Over these two years, the grantees identified 2,099 outcomes, 84% of which were related to receiving representation in litigation about a family matter; obtaining child custody or visitation rights; or obtaining, preserving, or increasing child support.

Program: Literacy and GED Services

The 2019-2021 biennial budget allocated \$433,200 in TANF funds to support literacy and General Education Development (GED)/High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) services for very low-income adults. DCF contracted with Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., a statewide member organization for literacy and GED services providers, which distributed the funds to 14 literacy services providers and 22 GED services providers throughout the state. The program's main impact has been to connect GED and literacy services providers with W-2 agencies to encourage referrals for W-2 participants and other TANF-eligible adults to education services that will increase their employability.

Accomplishments

- A total of 7,652 TANF-eligible students received GED/HSED instruction and 2,551 received literacy instruction through this program in state fiscal years 2020 and 2021.
- In state fiscal years 2020 and 2021, 748 students served through this program successfully completed the GED/HSED and 415 literacy students served through this program improved their reading skills by one or more grade levels.

Program: Boys and Girls Club of America

The 2019-2021 biennial budget allocated \$2,675,000 in TANF funds annually to the Wisconsin Chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of America to fund programs that improve social, academic, and employment skills of youth. Funds were provided to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee who then provided funding for other clubs throughout Wisconsin. The grants included funds to operate the Be GREAT: Graduate program in 17 locations, and the Wisconsin After 3 program in 32 locations. The Be GREAT: Graduate program is a comprehensive, targeted dropout prevention intervention designed to enhance youth's engagement with learning by providing consistent support to develop the academic, emotional and social skills necessary to achieve academic success. Wisconsin After 3 focuses on improving fluency in reading, math, and career preparation.

Accomplishments

- Annually, over 500 unduplicated TANF-eligible students were served in the Be GREAT: Graduate program and over 3,000 unduplicated TANF-eligible students were served in the Wisconsin After 3 program.
- In 2020, due to the pandemic, many clubs were not able to be open to serve participants. DCF worked with Boys and Girls clubs to identify alternate activities to be offered in lieu of in-person programs. A variety of alternative methods were utilized to continue to provide services to participants including contact via email, Facebook contacts and group chats, phone calls, group text messages, mailed communications, online courses, virtual tutoring and mentoring, distribution of high-yield learning kits, and distribution of care packages.

Other: Improved Automated Systems

As part of administering the many programs and services listed above, BWF works independently and in partnership with other state agencies to develop and maintain complex automated systems, including the CARES Worker Web (CWW) eligibility

system, CARES Work Programs case management subsystem, the ACCESS public facing web portal to apply for benefits and manage program participation, and the Wisconsin Work Programs (WWP) case management system. BWF also works to develop and maintain data warehouses and reporting systems that support complex data analytics and data access for BWF decision making and program reporting requirements.

BWF is committed to modernizing the existing application systems as well as the data infrastructure to ensure that: 1) end users are using the most current technology to help program participants obtain unsubsidized employment so that more parents are earning a wage to support their families; 2) that participant data is available quickly and in a format conducive to DCF's data driven, decision making culture; and 3) the public and program participants have the ability to apply for our programs at any time and can easily access information regarding their participation in W-2.

BWF has focused most of its automated systems improvements projects on disabling the legacy CARES case management mainframe system and updating the existing online application CWW and creating new web-based online applications. BWF has also completed a modernization of the infrastructure that it uses to store W-2 data. The W-2 data warehouse is able to store more information than the previous iteration. It also allows better linkages to other information sources and is designed to support complex data analytics to support decision making for BWF work programs.

Accomplishments

- During this time period, BWF continued its large-scale, multi-year modernization project that moves legacy CARES Work Programs automation to the existing CWW web-based system or to WWP. Since Phase 1 of WWP was implemented in 2019, the application has improved the quality of data gathered during the case management processes resulting in better informed interventions and services to parents and families.
- BWF faced the complex challenge of businesses and government offices closing in late March 2020 as a result of COVID-19. By the end of April 2020, we were able to provide a way for potential applicants to request our services through the ACCESS public web portal that was already being used by FoodShare, Healthcare and Child Care. By October 2020, we were able to fully support in ACCESS a comprehensive and integrated TANF application and the ability to schedule an online appointment with the W-2 agency. We also expanded the ability to accept a completed Emergency Assistance (EA) application. Within the first year of ACCESS being available to request and apply for TANF services over 60% of the

W-2 agency's first contact with an applicant was made through the ACCESS system.

- In January 2021, BWF modernized EA eligibility determination by replacing the legacy Emergency Assistance Tracking System (EATS) with WWP system. This change allowed automation to: 1) more fully support EA policy; 2) allow more efficient worker processing; and 3) improve data collection.
- Phase 2 of the WWP project, released in June 2021, included a web-based employability plan and participation tracking system. These new tools give program participants better information to guide them in their efforts to gain work experience and training and provides the department and contractors with enhanced participation data collection.

Bureau of Child Support

The Bureau of Child Support (BCS) operates under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act and administers the state's child support program in collaboration with 71 county child support agencies. In addition, BCS supports the work of nine tribal child support agencies operating in Wisconsin.

The child support program operates within a complex system of legal procedures to establish paternity and obligations for support and collect payments for these obligations. It delivers services to families on more than 505,832 cases¹ statewide and processing over \$1 billion in child support and spousal support payments annually.

Program: Child Support

BCS provides policy guidance and financial assistance to county child support agencies, which help custodial parents obtain court orders for financial and medical support for their children. Specifically, the program provides several types of services, including:

- locating noncustodial parents;
- establishing paternity;
- establishing child support orders;
- reviewing and modifying child support orders
- collecting and distributing child support payments; and,
- establishing and enforcing medical support.

¹ Of the 505,832 cases, 159,977 of them receive payment processing-only services, amounting to over \$284 million in child support and spousal support payments annually.

Families may request these services on their own, or if they receive public assistance, they are referred to the child support program. County child support agencies accept the requests and referrals in KIDS, an automated computer system maintained by BCS, to manage their caseloads and interface with parent location resources.

Paternity and child support orders are established through the county courts. Effective tools for enforcing child support obligations are income withholding orders and intercepting federal and state income tax refunds.

BCS oversees the Support Collections Trust Fund (SCTF), which receipts electronic funds transfer files and paper checks and prepares payments for disbursement. Most disbursements are electronic and primarily loaded to debit cards issued to the custodial parents, and some by direct deposit to the custodial parent's bank account.

Accomplishments

- Nationally, Wisconsin is ranked 5th in current child support collected for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020, and collects 7.8% more in total payments on cases with arrears compared to the national average.
- During FFY 2020, 25,978 child support orders were established.
- During FFY 2020, Wisconsin's child-support collections were \$1,013,543,057.
- Almost 100% of the \$1 billion annually on child-support cases is disbursed to families within two business days.
- In FFY 2020, the national average cost-effectiveness for child-support collections was about \$5.51 collected for every dollar spent. Wisconsin's cost-effectiveness, an estimated \$7.16 per dollar spent, is better than the national norm.

State Disbursement Unit

The number of calls handled by the child support state disbursement unit contractor Conduent in CY2020 were 50,100.

The amount of information available to child support customers on their cases continues to increase through improvements to the Child Support Online Services website. The site now receives over 80,800 web visits from child support customers each week.

Program: Supporting Parents Supporting Kids/Five County Demonstration Project

- Following Wisconsin's successful completion of the CSPED pilot project – made possible via a \$2.4 million federal grant, titled Supporting Parents Support Kids (SPSK) and implemented in Brown and Kenosha counties from 2012-2018 – the

Five County Demonstration Project (FCDP) was launched in April 2019. FCDP is an expansion and evolution of the CSPED model and was implemented in five Wisconsin counties under the name of ELEVATE (Empowering Lives through Education, Vocational Assessment, Training, and Employment).

- Through SPSK, 1,428 non-custodial parents (NCPs) were recruited in Brown and Kenosha counties. The final CSPED evaluation results showed that a significant culture shift occurred through the duration of the project, which had a positive impact on both the child support agencies (CSAs) and the NCPs' perception of child support. NCPs felt an increased sense of responsibility for their children. Ten-year projections show that the model is likely to have long-term gains in terms of the program's cost-benefit ratio. The evaluation also showed that the barriers to employment and child support compliance faced by NCPs are significant and include incarceration and major or severe depression.
- Wisconsin requested and was granted a Section 1115 waiver from OCSE, which enables the state to draw down up to \$2 million in FFP to grant to the five counties implementing the project. A project workgroup developed a transparent application process to identify the three new counties that would incorporate ELEVATE into their CSA operations. The new program was launched in April 2019 and new NCP participants have since been enrolled in ELEVATE in Brown, Kenosha, Marathon, Racine, and Wood counties beginning in January 2020. BCS hopes to serve 2,000 NCPs through ELEVATE and the program is again being evaluated by the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP).

Program: Children First

- The Children First program provides employment services to noncustodial parents to promote the emotional and financial responsibility that noncustodial parents (NCP) have for their children. An NCP who is unemployed or underemployed and is not meeting their child support obligation may be ordered to participate in the program by a court under an action to create or modify a support order or in a contempt of court proceeding to enforce a child support order.
- For calendar year 2021, BCS contracted with 10 counties and two W-2 agencies to operate a CF program in 16 counties. During 2020, courts ordered 1,475 parents owing support to participate in Children First. Of those persons, 753 participants successfully completed the 16-week program and another 310 parents became consistent in making their child support payments.

Child Support Modernization (CSM) Project

DCF has a long-term goal of modernizing the child support program and the case and financial management system, the Kids Information Data System (KIDS), that supports the program. The KIDS mainframe-based system is more than 25 years old and, during that time, has been enhanced and supplemented with ancillary systems.

The age and architecture of KIDS constrains program performance and limits DCF's ability to maintain and significantly enhance the system. The limitations of the mainframe-based system on DCF's ability to modernize the child support program will only grow more challenging if left unaddressed. To proactively address these limitations and modernize the child support program, DCF initiated the Child Support Modernization (CSM) Project in 2019.

The vision of CSM is to expand the ability of state and partner agencies to provide efficient and quality service to customers while ensuring that children and families receive financial and medical support.

To accomplish this, the child support program will incorporate national best practices, utilize modern technology and business intelligence, and re-engineer its business processes to meet the ongoing needs of the child support program.

The CSM Project is currently in its planning phase. The goals of the planning phase are to:

- Identify a cost-effective modernization solution that best meets the child support program's business and technical needs;
- Secure funding for the next phase of the project, which is the design; development, and implementation (DDI) phase;
- Select a DDI vendor;
- Identify detailed solution requirements; and,
- Continue organizational change management activities to create awareness, desire, and knowledge of the project.

Accomplishments:

- Established a project planning team with a project director, project manager, organizational change manager, and a modernization business lead.
- Developed and issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for modernization planning services.
- Selected Maximus as the modernization planning vendor.
- Prepared and submitted a Planning Advanced Planning Document to the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to secure federal funding for the planning phase.

- Completed a Needs Assessment Report that will be included a Feasibility Study to demonstrate the urgent need for a modernized child support system.
- Documented business and stakeholder requirements for a modernized system.
- Developed and issued a Request for Information (RFI) to gather information about vendor modernization solutions.
- Held demonstrations of vendor modernization solutions and modernized systems from other states.
- Established a Change Agent Network comprised of state and child support agency partners to share project information.

Other: System Improvements / Upgrades

Enhancements to the Child Support Online Services (CSOS) application were put into production in November 2019. This project improved the participant experience/navigation using mobile-technology and allows participants to use smart phones to login to their specific cases to see all disbursements/receipts as well as receive an activation key by text or email, instead of waiting 5-7 days for a letter from the U.S. Postal Service.

The first phase of the Unified Security project that provides more self-service options for child support agencies was implemented in September 2019. It includes:

- Assigning printers by worker;
- Allows agencies to enter some of their personal information; and,
- Enhanced lookup procedures to identify printers and printer assignments, etc.

This project is trying to create more self-services functionality and reduce cycle times for things the individual workers can perform themselves.

The Child Support program modernization efforts in Wisconsin included the creation and expansion of the data warehouse that utilizes child support data effectively to support the BCS policy and program goals.

Safe at Home Address Source Code

A Safe at Home address source code was added to KIDS by March 2021. This is part of a statewide confidential address program authorized under Wis. Stat. § 165.68 and is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Justice. This legislation was effective April 1, 2017. The program is for victims of actual or threatened domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, trafficking, or those who simply fear for their physical safety. Enrollment in Safe at Home allows participants to receive mail and use an

assigned address in lieu of their actual address. Actual address means a residential street address, school address, work address or any portion thereof. Safe at Home will forward mail from the assigned address to the participant's actual address at no charge to the individual. Once a participant has enrolled in the Safe at Home program, the assigned Safe at Home address must be entered in KIDS and all other addresses must be end dated. The Safe at Home address cannot be end dated if the participant is enrolled in the Safe at Home program. CSA's must enter Privacy Protection in KIDS for all participants enrolled in the Safe at Home program.

Administrative Paternity

Administrative paternity changes were made to KIDS and wiKIDS by March 2021. The department introduced legislation which allows for the administrative establishment of paternity for cases in which the genetic test results are 99% or higher. This legislation, Wisconsin Act 95, was signed by the governor on February 5, 2019. The law includes a delayed effective date of August 1, 2020.

The implementation of this legislation required that changes be made to the existing KIDS Vital Records interface. Parents must receive notice of the genetic test results and must be allowed 15 days to file an objection with the CSA. The results are not final until after 15 days have passed and the CSA has not received an objection from either parent. Both parents must be age 18 or older to establish paternity using the administrative paternity process.

Bureau of Analytics and Research

The Bureau of Analytics and Research (BAR) was established in the fall of 2020 and manages statewide data analytics and reporting on behalf of the Division of Family and Economic Security. BAR provides operational reporting, research, evaluation, and performance monitoring support to the program areas in DFES including, but not limited to, child support, Wisconsin Works (W-2), and refugee programs. Bureau staff coordinate with division and agency counterparts including information technology, performance management, and budget partners, in addition to meeting the needs of local agency partners across Wisconsin.

Accomplishments

- BAR continues its ongoing work to migrate and modernize operational reports in response to case management system releases and enhancements.
- The team has worked to uncover both racial/ethnic disparity and disproportionality across program areas, including Wisconsin Works and Child

Support. BAR has made significant progress in developing analytics to understand the impact of service delivery across historically marginalized groups.

- The team developed robust case W-2 management projections during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to anticipate the impact of caseload growth across Wisconsin.

Division of Management Services

Overview/Administrator's Office

The Division of Management Services (DMS) is responsible for providing department-wide business services and functional support to the Secretary's Office (SO), individual divisions, and DCF programs. These supportive infrastructure services include, but are not limited to, information technology services and application development, data management, metric development, program evaluation, contract administration and monitoring, payment-issuance and other accounting-related services, and programmatic compliance. Additionally, staff within the DMS Administrator's Office are responsible for facility management, staff change processes, forms, publications, management of DCF policies, and continuity-of-operations activities.

During the 2019 – 2021 reporting period, DMS was responsible for many logistical aspects for DCF's COVID-19 pandemic response, including shifting the majority of staff to remote work while continuing seamless services to children and families; ensuring safety measures were in place for field and in-office staff; complying with DOA, state and local pandemic guidelines; and providing support to pandemic-specific program initiatives. Since summer 2020, DMS has also led the logistical and project management efforts for DCF's hybrid workplace project, entitled Back to the Future. Over the past year, this project has developed into a sustainable initiative to transition DCF into a hybrid workplace that is reflective of staff preferences and flexibility, enhanced collaboration, cost savings, and a reduced physical footprint. All areas in DMS have supported this effort through IT equipment distribution, space moves and modifications, policy development, and evaluation of cost savings and other metrics.

Additional functional program-support services provided by DMS include leading the department's Continuous Improvement (CI) initiative, managing public assistance collections for both DCF and DHS programs, providing DCF's regional operations staff liaison services to local governments and program agencies, ongoing program performance evaluation for child protective services in Milwaukee County, and ad-hoc

assistance to the Secretary's Office and divisions on specific program, policy, legislative, and automation initiatives.

Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO)

The Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) provides support to DCF program divisions by overseeing contracts with local agencies administering DCF programs, including child care, child welfare, child support, and Wisconsin Works (W-2). BRO conducts program monitoring, provides technical assistance, reviews customer complaints about local - agency services, and facilitates regional meetings for local agency staff. BRO monitors compliance by contractor agencies with federal and state civil rights requirements.

Accomplishments:

- Completed child support agency monitoring, including monitoring local agencies on corrective action plans. BRO issued new child support agency monitoring instructions for the 2020-2022 monitoring cycle.
- Monitored documentation of child welfare caseworker contacts with children in out-of-home placements. Wisconsin exceeded the caseworker contact standard in Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2019 and 2020.
- Monitored local child care administrative agencies (counties and tribes), including monitoring those on corrective action plans. BRO issued updated monitoring instructions for child care.
- Completed monitoring of W-2 agencies in the balance of state, including implementing a new Program Policy Monitoring protocol for reviewing cases.
- Assisted local agencies in all DCF program areas to adapt their services due to the COVID-19 pandemic, modify their programs to deliver services virtually, and protect the health of clients and staff during face-to-face interactions.

Bureau of Finance (BOF)

The Bureau of Finance (BOF) is responsible for accounting and financial reporting for all funds administered by the department (approximately \$1.2 billion annually). BOF coordinates all DCF expenditures and provides procurement and contract services, collection services for public benefit programs, audit and review services, and financial consultation for the program divisions in order to promote fiscally-informed decisions and consistent financial policy and procedures. BOF also reviews and sets payment rates for child-placing agencies, group homes, and residential care centers.

Accomplishments

- Facilitated and supported COVID-19 funding relief programs:
 - Child Care Counts - 7 rounds of payments to WI Child Care Providers: \$191,000,000
 - Child Welfare Emergency payments to WI Counties: \$4,300,000
 - CSBG CARES Act Funding: \$3,500,000
 - Child Welfare Emergency Youth Aging-Out: \$285,000
- Issued 1,280 contracts with grantees and service providers (including local governments, tribes, and both for-profit and non-profit entities).
- The Public Assistance Collections Section recovered over \$34.8 million in overpayments from parents receiving Badger Care Medical Assistance, Wisconsin FoodShare, W-2, or Wisconsin Shares child care benefits, and from Wisconsin Shares providers.
- Continued work on second phase of Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS). This application facilitates the creation and tracking of fraud-investigation referrals for the Badger Care Medical Assistance, Wisconsin FoodShare, Wisconsin Shares, and W-2 programs. Over 50,651 referrals for investigation were created between 2019-2021 and totaling more than 261,577 since BRITS go-live in November 2016.
- Partnered with BITS and DSP to prepare Random Moment Time Sampling (RMTS) for Family First federal requirements: added search functionalities and linkage to eWiSACWIS child case information.
- Exceeded the Governor's 5% goal for Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) spending for the 13th consecutive year, with 14.3% in the 2019-2020 fiscal year and 22.15% in the 2020-2021 fiscal year.
- Reviewed and responded to 472 single audit reports from partner agencies, and completed 26 fiscal reviews of sub-recipients of federal funds.
- Collected approximately \$1.6 million as a result of audits and reviews (including unallowed profit or excess reserves from regulated non-profit providers, and disallowed costs from any provider type).
- Partnered with Bureau of Performance Management (BPM) and the Bureau of Information Technology Services (BITS) to support department contract administrators with development of policies, job aids, reports, systems, and training.

Bureau of Information Technology Services (BITS)

The Bureau of Information Technology Services (BITS) provides information technology (IT) services for the department. The bureau's efforts are significantly directed by the needs of the divisional program areas expressed via the DCF Service-Level Agreement (SLA) project-identification and resource- allocation process.

Accomplishments

BITS completed a number of major projects and software upgrades to meet business partner objectives, including:

- Modernized Child Support Online Services (CSOS).
- The Child Care Counts applications and payments building of systems and processes to distribute over \$200 million to support childcare providers, as well as supports for parents and essential workers.
- Critical work for the CCAP E-filing Interface and Child Support Modernization (CSM).
- WWP Phase 2 released to production.
- BRITS Phase 1 enhancements released and development on Phase 2 functionality is progressing well and on schedule.
- Six major eWiSACWIS releases were implemented in October 2019, February 2020, June 2020, October 2020, February 2021, and June 2021.
- Desktop optimization for collaboration services, including implementation of services such as Zoom, Teams, and Cisco Remote Expressway, as well as the computing resources and off-loaders needed to enhance video conferencing for teleworking staff.

Child Care Systems

- Child Care Regulation Enhancements rollout of background checks for existing certified providers and remaining licensed providers.
- Responsiveness to COVID-19, including systems to distribute over \$200 million to support child care providers, as well as supports for parents and essential workers.
- Established paperless correspondence to child care providers, staff, and family child care household members in Provider Portal and iChildCare.
- Text Messaging available in child care for parents who want to know when their authorization worker has a message for them.

Child Support Systems

- Child Support Online Services (CSOS) Modernization including improved security and logging to prevent unauthorized access. This included adding Recaptcha.

- CSDW Dashboards: Developed 4 Tableau dashboards which, upon production release, will provide the user group with a fresh, new and modern view of their data through simple-to-understand data visualizations of the child support data while still allowing the end users to drill down into Webi reports which can provide them the detailed level data that they have become accustomed to accessing through BITS products.
- An in-house replacement for IBM Business Process Manager (BPM) was implemented.
- CCAP E-Filing Interface with KIDS-DocGen Subsystem & E-Filing Implementation.

Child Welfare Systems

- Six major eWiSACWIS releases were implemented in October 2019, February 2020, June 2020, October 2020, February 2021, and June 2021.
- The Geographic Placement Resource System (GPRS) application was decommissioned, and new interactive maps were incorporated into eWiSACWIS.
- Collibra Data Catalog: Collibra platform to serve as a central location to organize, manage, and connect data assets for DSP.

Work-Program Systems

- WPASS Phase 2 was moved to production in June 2021. This release including modernization of W-2 Plans and EA, meaning the individual standalone apps could be decommissioned.
- Federal Reporting Database (FRoD) Modernization.
- Emergency Assistance (EA) Modernization.

Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS)

- Phase 2 of the BRITS System was restarted and is progressing well after timeline for production roll-out was pushed back due to realized risks.

DMS Finance Systems

- Links between finance applications were established to reduce duplication of data and increase data quality. For example, the SPARC application, which allows subrecipients to report their program expenditures and receive electronic payments according to their DCF contract, is now able to pull contract data from SIMON, the contract administration system, to improve search and filter functionality on subrecipient contract information.

BITS also completed major technical upgrades and productivity improvements, including:

- Setup remote management server for zero & thin clients. This enabled zero & thin clients to be updated and managed while outside the DCF network.

- Reduce lease costs by migrating Coggs to DET Network and DCF Unified Communications phone systems.
- Deployed in-room video conferencing equipment to most DCF sites.
- Implemented Zoom.
- Implemented Teams, including updated the memory resources on all VDIs in the system to support the TEAMS rollout.
- Implemented Cisco Expressway for remote telephony.
- Transitioned all TAPFIN VMS contractors to the new vendor management system, Knowledge Services.
- Implemented Microsoft Cloud Management Gateway to manage laptops outside the DCF network.
- Created a configuration and software install that allowed DCF staff to assist DWD Unemployment Insurance.
- Work From Home interviews, evaluations, equipment preparation, and distribution to 657 DCF Staff.
- Migration to SharePoint 2016 for the External SharePoint sites.
- Completed and closed out Win2008 Server Upgrade Project.
- Initiated the SQL Server 2019 upgrade project built the 2019 DEV/POC Server and decommissioned remaining SQL 2012 server.
- Decommissioned KIDS BPM applications and Servers.
- Provided detailed security work to set up defense to bad actors.
- Encrypted many Google reCAPTCHA secret keys for web apps.
- Integrated SMARSH texting and service into telecom.

Bureau of Performance Management (BPM)

The Bureau of Performance Management (BPM) provides objective analysis of program and policy effectiveness and efficiency in support of the department's mission and vision. BPM staff support the development of performance metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and sponsor forums for DCF's staff and management to support data-driven solutions. BPM is responsible for growing the department's performance management maturity and integrating performance management at all levels of the department. At a staff-level, BPM has engaged the department's contract administrators, helping ensure contracts are developed and monitored with performance outcomes in mind. In an effort to support program improvement and efficiency, BPM leads the department's Continuous Improvement (CI) initiative, working closely with DOA's CI program, and supporting DCF's CI coordinators. Additionally, significant effort is placed on improving child welfare practice through quality reviews,

and through supporting the management of the Jeanine B. Settlement Agreement in Milwaukee County, which was concluded in September 2021.

Accomplishments

- Initiated a comprehensive plan to increase the Performance Management Maturity of the department through training, technical assistance, and by supporting mission-critical initiatives across all program areas.
- In collaboration with the Secretary's Office, BPM developed the Wage Analysis of Government Employees (WAGE) dashboard tool which helps make data-driven decisions in regard to equity and compensation. The launch of this tool, and collection of data, prompted the creation of a meaningful human resources' metric related to compensation, which BPM developed and maintains.
- Completed over 600 child welfare case reviews and produced publicly available dashboards which visualize the findings. These dashboards continue to be valuable for Wisconsin counties to better understand their performance.
- BPM continued its responsibilities related to the independent and objective reporting on Jeanine B. Settlement Agreement measures. All monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual reports were completed timely and with validity. Results were presented publicly, on a semi-annual basis, to the DMCPSP Partnership Council.
- Solidified and grew the department's Contract Administration Program in an effort to support contract administrators in all aspects of their role. This included developing technical solutions, creating training and resources, providing forums for communication and feedback, and targeted technical assistance.

Division of Safety and Permanence

The Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) directs the administration of relevant child welfare (including child protective services and community-based youth justice (YJ)) systems and monitors compliance with key state and federal policies and legislation. The division establishes a mission and vision for the child welfare system and oversees initiatives focused on improving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children. The vision for the youth justice system is to serve each youth, individually, within the context of their family and culture, to acquire the tools to thrive in adulthood, while protecting public safety. DSP also operates domestic violence services; the kinship care benefit program; adoption services including finalization of public adoptions, adoption assistance benefits, and adoption search; and licensing of child welfare service providers.

DSP Administrator's Office

The Administrator's Office (AO) oversees the operations of the division and directly administers high priority policies and programs that are cross-cutting across multiple DSP bureaus, DCF divisions and/or state agencies.

Accomplishments

- Launched a collaborative strategic planning effort that led to our child welfare transformation initiative. That effort helped us create the following future framework for our child welfare system:

Vision: 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.
- We then focused our child welfare transformation efforts on the following four key priority areas:
 - To strengthen local communities and build services to support families in their homes.
 - To keep children in family settings whenever possible.
 - To improve our group care system.
 - To support our workforce with solutions and improvements
- The strategic transformation has been driven in part by the Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA) as a tool to transform our child welfare system. DSP launched several projects to support the development and implementation of the above priorities and requirements under the federal FFPSA. Leadership and support was provided to DSP bureaus to achieve goals related to FFPSA such as identifying a home-like continuum of services for families and establishing an administrative rule for the certification and licensure of the Qualified Residential Treatment Program setting.
- The division successfully negotiated a Program Improvement Plan in response to the 2018 Child and Family Services Review process that concluded in 2018. A PIP was negotiated in 2020 that articulates child welfare initiatives focused on improving safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families. First year deliverables of the PIP have been successfully completed. The PIP time frame ends on May 31, 2022.
- The division launched, and is in the process of, an organizational effectiveness with Wisconsin's tribes to identify how to better collaborate between DCF,

counties and tribes in a manner that more effectively serves all Wisconsin families.

Bureau of Youth Services

The Bureau of Youth Services (BYS) is responsible for improving outcomes for youth in, previously involved in, and at risk of entering the child welfare and youth justice systems. These responsibilities include administering the federal Independent Living program for youth aging out of out-of-home care, the state Runaway and Homeless Youth and Brighter Futures programs, and programs serving youth who have experienced child sex trafficking. In 2016, the bureau became responsible for state supervision and fiscal administration of the community-based youth justice system. This includes state supervision of the counties' direct service work for youth on delinquency orders, and development of state infrastructure related to the community-based youth justice system.

The purpose of all programs under the direction of BYSS is to enable youth to thrive in adulthood.

Accomplishments

- In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, expanded funding for independent living services for youth who have aged out of foster care, including the provision of direct financial support to youth for the first time.
- Implemented the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI), a risk/need assessment tool. Phases 1, 2, and 3 were completed in the 2019-21 biennium, with Phase 4 scheduled for completion in FY 2021-22.
- Expanded the PATHS program to include a provider serving northern 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.
- Began development of the first statewide youth justice data system, including issuance of the first-ever report on referrals to youth justice across the state.

Bureau of Safety and Well-Being

The Bureau of Safety and Well-Being develops and issues child protective services (CPS) policy standards and practice guidance. The bureau supports several child abuse/neglect prevention programs and interventions for families at risk of entering the child welfare system and the development of cross-system supports and service approaches, such as those related to trauma-informed care, that benefit children and youth who are in or at risk of becoming involved in the child welfare system. The bureau

also manages family violence prevention and intervention programs and oversees child welfare staff and provider professional development activities.

Accomplishments

- Continued expansion of the Family Foundations Home Visiting program, which now serves 40 counties and six tribes as of July 2021. Programs provide evidence-based home visiting services to improve maternal and child health, prevent child abuse and neglect, encourage positive parenting, and promote child development and school readiness.
- Continued implementation and adaptation of the [Targeted Safety Services](#) funding (formerly In-Home Safety Services) that began in 2017 and in 2018 through expansion to 64 counties and 2 tribes. This effort helps keep children in families that have been reported to the child welfare system safe in their homes through comprehensive support and services.
- Implemented new a Parent Partner model called [Parents Supporting Parents](#) (PSP) in three counties in January 2021. The program is an evidence-based model aimed at empowering parents with lived child welfare experience as mentors to parents currently within the child welfare system. PSP follows Iowa's parent partner model and Wisconsin is becoming the third state to implement and evaluate this model. PSP cultivates the leadership of Wisconsin's parents who have lived experience in the child welfare system. This group of parents serves as a model of hope and sources of support for parents currently experiencing public child welfare. It is parents with lived experience that will help to shape services and systems to promote child safety, permanency, and family well-being.
- A five-year prevention plan was submitted to the Children's Bureau as part of Wisconsin's FFPSA requirements. The plan calls to support a constellation of existing support services to Wisconsin's families and will focus on three of Wisconsin's home visiting program evidence-based models, the Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America and Parents as Teachers.

Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care

The Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care is responsible for administering the state public-adoption program; providing policy guidance to counties on foster care, kinship care, and other out-of-home-care placements; and licensing and monitoring group homes, residential care centers for children and youth, child-placing agencies, and shelter care facilities for children and youth. It also administers the Interstate

Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), which regulates the safe placement of children across state lines. Programs promote the health, safety, and well-being of children and families in the child welfare system and achieve permanence for children placed in out-of-home care.

Accomplishments

- Preparation for successful implementation of FFPSA, including QRTPs, by October 1, 2021.
- Reorganization of resources to allow for an additional five staff to focus specifically on strategic priorities across the division. The group is supporting significant reform in kinship care and like-kin resources as well as understanding and planning for solutions for youth with complex needs.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, provided concrete resources and guidance to foster families, youth and congregate care providers.

Bureau of Compliance and Research Analytics

The Bureau of Compliance, Research, & Analytics (BCRA) manages statewide child welfare data analytics and reporting, Title IV-E program and policy and DSP's fiscal and budget compliance. In addition, bureau staff consult and coordinate with Budget, Finance, Information Technology, and the Bureau of Performance Management as needed and work with county, tribal and private agencies involved in the delivery of child welfare services. The bureau also has oversight and management of the data analytics and program integrity of DSP programs and policies related to child welfare and youth justice, to ensure compliance with federal Title IV-E and IV-B requirements, state fiscal and budget compliance, and the overall evaluation of child welfare operations and programs in Wisconsin.

Accomplishments

- Continuing efforts to develop and publish the annual Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN Report) and Out-of-Home Care (OHC) Reports. These two public-facing reports are published at the end of December of each calendar year for the prior year and contain a wealth of information. Links to these reports can be found on our [Child Welfare Reports & Dashboards](#) page.
- The team has worked to broaden and deepen our understanding of race and other demographic data, has made significant efforts to enhance the way race/ethnicity are categorized and analyzed, and developed in-depth analytics to evaluate disproportionality across the child welfare system.

- A number of enhancements to eWReports went live in 2020 making data more accessible.
- The Title IV-E team has been continuing their efforts in support of the strategic plan and implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The team has been working in partnership with the Division of Management Services to develop an interface between the Random Moment Time Study database and eWiSACWIS. Additionally, the team has continued to provide policy guidance and support in the areas of new worker training development, FFPSA prevention services, FFPSA congregate care requirements, rate regulation, and any/all IV-E related eWiSACWIS enhancements.
- Developed and submitted the CCWIS Data Quality Plan (DQP) and supplemental Biennial Data Quality Review (DQR) to ACF. The DQP provides a single consistent document that identifies the quality, management, and governance structuring that supports the integrity of the eWiSACWIS system.
- Developed robust analytics to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child welfare system.

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services

The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) responds to reports of abuse or neglect in Milwaukee County. Referrals of abuse and neglect come into the Access Section through 414-220-SAFE. The Access Section is responsible for receiving and documenting the child abuse and neglect reports. The Access supervisor decides based upon the information provided in the Access document whether the case should be screened in and forwarded to the Initial Assessment Bureau (IAB).

The assigned Initial Assessment Specialist (IAS) conducts a comprehensive assessment in compliance with the Wisconsin Initial Assessment Standards. The IAS engages the child and family and endeavors to keep the child(ren) in their home safely, whenever possible.

If the Initial Assessment Bureau determines the child(ren) are not able to be maintained safely in their own home, a petition is filed, and the case is transferred to one of the two contracted ongoing services agencies. A CPS case manager is assigned to the case and services provided to the child(ren) and family in hopes of safely reunifying the child(ren).

The Ongoing Services Section provides oversight and consultation to the contracted ongoing services agencies to ensure compliance with state policy. The Ongoing Services Section is involved monitoring and evaluating performance of the contract

agencies. In addition, the Ongoing Services Section provides oversight and consultation for the DMCPs contracted out-of-home care providers which include assessment/stabilization centers, group homes, residential care centers and child placing agencies.

The Medical Health Services Section consults with internal and external partners to bring best practices to bear in all cases where there is a health alert. The section provides medical expertise to DMCPs IAS staff and ongoing services case managers in cases where there are identified medical concerns.

The Training Section provides our new hires in the Initial Assessment Bureau and Access Section with the requisite training and knowledge to equip them to perform their job duties. The intensive training is accomplished over approximately five months. The trainees engage in “shadowing” the training mentor as well as senior Initial Assessment Bureau staff. Formal classroom curriculum is provided by the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development Partnership System (WCWPDS).

The Quality Operations Bureau provides fiscal, research, contracting and administrative oversight to DMCPs. The bureau provides valuable fiscal and case trend data as well as sophisticated analysis of many aspects of our work.

Accomplishments:

Workers Culture and Climate:

- A federal Children’s Bureau grant was received by DMCPs to improve staff retention and work culture. Milwaukee is one of eight sites in the country to participate in the five-year grant to strengthen the child welfare workforce and improve worker retention. Redesign of our hiring sequence and improvements to screening and selection criteria has resulted in a consistent flow of qualified candidates into our four times a year hiring pool.
- Expanded the pool of interns and IV-E students from local colleges and universities.
- Training of Initial Assessment Bureau staff has been redesigned such that new hires complete their initial training within a five-month time period. This has taken the pressure off our current “case carrying” IAS staff.
- Updates to the DCF telework policy have resulted in staff having maximum flexibility to complete their work and balance their lives; nearly three quarters of DMCPs staff now primarily telework. Both Access and Initial Assessment Bureau have staff who operate twenty-four hours a day.
- DMCPs has implemented a Safe Space Pods pilot to begin having more direct conversations about race and equity in the work we do. The pilot is in response to an ask from staff to develop an opportunity to have these conversations.

Service Sections and Initial Assessment Bureau:

- The Access and Initial Assessment areas both responded successfully to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Access section responds timely to reports of child abuse and neglect at an average of about 95%; the large majority of calls are not going to the answering services, rather, are being answered by DMCPs Access staff. Access staff also created a protocol for assessing COVID-19 risk within homes to help prepare and keep IAS staff safe when responding to referrals.
- The Initial Assessment Bureau implemented safety protocols, including use of PPE and contact tracing among staff, to provide as much assurance of safety as possible while staff continued to see children in their family homes.
- The Initial Assessment Bureau has dramatically reduced the number of overdue cases, which are those that are not completed and approved within sixty days of the date of referral.
- Maltreatment in out of home care has remained very low at about 14 percent, well under the state average.
- Continued to provide timely initial contacts in response to reports of child maltreatment, even throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Ongoing Services Section worked collaboratively with DSP to ensure continuation of services for families served by the contracted case management agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Case management providers continue to see their children in out-of-home care; currently nearly 97% of contacts occur timely.
- The medical unit has been fully staffed with three nurses, which has allowed them to provide more robust services to our families in Initial Assessment and coordinate closely with the nurses in the ongoing services agencies.
- DMCPs was released from the consent decree governing its work since 2002 by a federal judge who found that the state had substantially complied with the goals of the settlement agreement, based in part on the recommendation of the plaintiff Children's Rights.
- Despite a declining census of children in out-of-home care, and a number of challenges related to the pandemic, more than 86% of children in out-of-home care have experienced three or fewer placements in the last three years of care. Many children are achieving permanency well before that three-year mark as well.
- The Ongoing Services Section successfully completed the first procurement in nearly a decade for ongoing and in home case management services - the largest contract held by the division and a critical piece of the child welfare system in Milwaukee.

Quality Operations Bureau:

- Has been actively engaged in developing and assessing data about DMCPs

operations and services to assist in making progress in implementing the Family First Prevention and Services Act. A scorecard was created to measure DMCPs progress on implementing the Act.

- Redesigned the performance monitoring metrics for case management contracts and created data forecasting models to help predict workflow during the pandemic and beyond.
- Successfully assisted with transitioning all staff to telework during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensured that critical office work, such as fax collection, fleet maintenance, mail processing, and security, continued throughout that time.
- Along with other DMCPs sections, purchased and provided critical PPE to staff and child welfare providers to ensure that children could be provided services safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Developed a procurement for early prevention services in Milwaukee County based on community feedback provided during a Request for Information proposal.

Goals & Objectives Developed for 2021-23 Biennial Budget

PROGRAM 1: CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Goal: Achieve permanency for children in out-of-home care.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of children who transition from an out-of-home care placement within 12 months to a permanent family setting.

Goal: Reduce the revictimization of children.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of children with a substantiated report of maltreatment who are not revictimized within 12 months of substantiation.

Goal: Provide timely initial contacts for reports of child maltreatment.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of all initial contact visits during the month that were completed or attempted timely.

Goal: Contact children in out-of-home care on a monthly basis.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of children in out-of-home care who were visited by their caseworker in the month.

Goal: Provide stability for Milwaukee children in out-of-home care.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of children in Milwaukee who experience three or fewer out-of-home care placements in their current episode of care.

PROGRAM 2: ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Goal: Participants in the department's employment programs obtain employment.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of individuals served by the department's employment programs who started a job in the past 12 months.

Objective/Activity: Engage Wisconsin Works (W-2) participants in employment activities.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of participants receiving a cash grant under the W-2 employment program who are engaged full-time in federally qualifying activities such as work experience, job search, and education and training.

Goal: Increase the quality of child care programs.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of child care programs participating in the state's child care quality rating and improvement system (YoungStar) that are rated as high quality (3-, 4- or 5-star quality level).

Goal: Connect families receiving child care subsidies under the Wisconsin Shares program with high-quality child care programs.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of children receiving subsidized child care under Wisconsin Shares who are attending high-quality child care providers (3-, 4- or 5-star quality level as rated by YoungStar).

Goal: Establish child support court orders.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of child support cases with a court order established.

Goal: Increase the payment of current child support.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of child support paid in the month that it is due.

Goal: Increase the payment of past child support.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of child support cases with unpaid debt balances (past child support or arrears) that have a collection during the federal fiscal year.



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

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