

2023–25 BIENNIAL REPORT

October 2025

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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 MyWiChildCare, 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 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-Designee Jeff Pertl, 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 (DECE)
- Division of Family and Economic Security (DFES)
- Division of Management Services (DMS)
- Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP)
- Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS)

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

Succeeding portions of this report provide detail about the internal structure of the five divisions and their programmatic accomplishments during the 2023-25 biennium.

Position Utilization

As of June 30, 2025, the department had 824.4 authorized full-time- equivalent (FTE) positions, including permanent and project positions in both the classified and unclassified service. Twenty-two individuals were working in part-time positions, representing 14.4 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 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 comprised of five bureaus:

- Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA)
- Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR)
- Bureau of Operations and Planning (BOP)
- Bureau of YoungStar (BOY)
- (Bureau of) Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA)

Division Overview & Administrator's Office

The Division of Early Care and Education Administrator's Office is committed to the vision of increasing access to high-quality, affordable child care for families across the State of Wisconsin. The administration of services that promotes this vision lives within DECE across five bureaus that support programming surrounding child care licensing, quality, subsidy, and program integrity efforts. DECE also supported the visioning and administration of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), child care subsidy authorization services for Milwaukee County residents, and most recently responsible for creating and administering innovative programs (e.g., Child Care Counts, etc.) in response to COVID-19 pandemic via time-limited funding sources (CRRSA, ARPA Stabilization, etc.).

Accomplishments

- The department received a \$30 million, three-year Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal in December 2020. In 2023, DCF received a no-cost extension, with the grant period ultimately ending in December 2024. The grant focused on strengthening early childhood systems across Wisconsin and was based on the 2021-23 strategic plan developed by DCF, agency partners, and additional stakeholders. More information about the initiatives below can be found in the [PDG Closure Report](#). Some of the key activities included:
 - Completion of a Statewide Birth to Five Needs Assessment
 - [Development of a PDG Birth to Five Statewide Strategic Plan](#)
 - Launching Dream Up!, a strategic supply-building program that assisted communities in developing plans to address child care needs in their communities. Selected communities received \$75,000 in implementation funding upon approval of their strategic plan. Due to the popularity of the program, the department contributed additional ARPA funding and 37 communities participated. Regulated child care programs in the Dream Up! communities were eligible to participate in business trainings and

receive \$5,000 stipends upon approval of their business plans. First Children's Finance was DCF's vendor for this project

- Development of a statewide Early Childhood Health Consultation program for child care providers, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin School of Human Ecology
- Integration of Head Start program data into DCF's data system
- Partnering with the Department of Health Services on expanding lead remediation efforts in child care programs
- Supporting the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board's work with Family Resource Centers, including the development of an accreditation process and website development
- COVID-19 Child Care Resources - The Department of Children and Families (DCF) compiled resources to help essential workers, providers, and families navigate the child care landscape during the COVID-19 crisis. Additional information about the initiatives below can be found in the [Early Care and Education Programs Funded by DCF's ARPA CCDBG Awards Closure Report](#).
 - Continued the Child Care Counts payment program which provided direct payments to child care providers. This program has supported necessary operational, quality, and workforce expenses for over 5,700 child care providers statewide. Through the Child Care Counts payment programs, over \$893 million in COVID-19 related funds have been distributed. 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.
 - DECE contracted with WECA to provide funding for [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®](#) Wisconsin, which offers scholarships to early childhood educators to make credit-based education more affordable, improve teacher compensation, and increase early childhood educator retention.
 - DCF contracted with WECA to support the development and expansion of the [Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network \(WEESN\)](#). The program brings together family and center-based child care providers to

share knowledge, pool resources, and leverage economies of scale in purchasing, allowing programs to save time and money.

- The Provider Assistance for Licensing (PAL) program, funded by ARPA and administered by WECA, supported prospective or newly licensed child care providers in northern and western Wisconsin. PAL assisted with costs of start-up and sustainability, connected providers to available services, and increases public awareness of the benefits of licensed child care.
- Over \$20 million in federal funding was allocated to support partnerships between businesses and regulated child care providers through the purchase of child care slots for employees through the [Partner Up!](#) grant program.
- DCF contracted with the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH) to build an infrastructure for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC). Healthy Minds Healthy Children (HMHC), an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program, was developed including an IECMHC Registry. IECMHC improves child social and emotional skills and child-adult relationships, increases provider-family collaboration, reduces/prevents preschool suspensions and expulsions, and reduces provider stress, burnout, and turnover. Healthy Minds Healthy Children provides the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of child care programs and support healthy social and emotional development for children. With less than a year of active implementation, HMHC impacted 2,045 children in child care settings and an additional 1,509 adults who attended community level consultation events. Additionally, HMHC distributed 153 Social and Emotional Kits to Early Care Educators.
- DECE has partnered with the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB) to provide funding to Family Resource Centers (FRCs) throughout the state. The funded FRCs provide programming and services designed to strengthen families and build family protective factors, including professional development trainings for child care providers and parent cafes for parents and caregivers.
- 53206 Early Care and Education Initiative
 - The department continues to provide needed financial and professional development supports to the early care and education (ECE) workforce in the 53206 ZIP code to create movement in increasing [YoungStar](#) ratings

of child care programs. This program serves over 30 child care programs in Milwaukee County, with a growing number of programs and staff enrolled in this program.

Bureau of Operations and Planning

The Bureau of Operations and Planning (BOP) exercises overall administration of division-wide activities including IT services; data sourcing, policy and program communications; customer and stakeholder communication/training; contract management and support; and project management functions. The bureau also leads the division in the completion of federal and state reporting requirements.

Accomplishments

- Completion of the FFY 2025-2027 [Child Care Development Fund State Plan](#) for federal approval.

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 child care background unit, and five regional licensing offices throughout the state.

Accomplishments

- [2023 Annual Report: Child Care Licensing and Certification Activity](#)
- In the 2023-2025 Biennial Budget, BECR received \$1,421,300 to transition child care licensing and certification applications from paper-based to an online process. The bureau built an online application process through the Child Care Provider Portal. Initial applications for new child care providers went live February 2025 and renewal applications for existing programs went live August 2025. The online applications are significantly streamlined and easier for child care providers to complete and quicker and more efficient for licensing staff to process.
- DCF has redesigned child care programs' compliance and violation history available on the public [Child Care Finder](#) website. BECR reviewed federal guidance and solicited feedback from providers and parents. The updated website will show all met and not met rules monitored at each licensing visit instead of only displaying violations. To assist families with interpreting the

results, the website will have easy-to-understand rule descriptions and icons to flag serious and repeat violations. The Child Care Finder changes will go live in late fall 2025.

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 families with low-income 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, the [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. BCCSA includes two sections: Wisconsin Shares Policy and Program Integrity.

The Wisconsin Shares Policy section 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 technical assistance and policy guidance is provided to local agency staff, regional operations staff, child care providers, and families.

The Program Integrity section oversees the audit and investigation of referrals and red flags alleging Wisconsin Shares violations and potential fraud, waste, and abuse of subsidy funds.

Accomplishments

- The Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program continues to provide monthly payments for approximately 35,000 children and 17,000 families across the state. Additional Wisconsin Shares statistics are available on [DCF's website](#).
- The [2024 Market Rate Survey](#) indicated that 50 percent of the child care slots while the 2025 Market Rate Survey indicated that 41 percent of the child care slots in the state are considered affordable for families participating in the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program. This Market Rate Survey data was used to present the need for increased Wisconsin Shares Subsidy rates in the 2025–2027 biennial budget.
- Wisconsin Shares successfully implemented the payment of subsidy benefits on an enrollment basis rather than hourly and began paying provider registration fees on October 1, 2023.

- Wisconsin Shares increased income limits to at or below 200% FPL, and updated copayment methodology for families above 200% FPL to increase copayment by \$1 for every \$5 increase in income.
- The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Estimator was developed to assist families in estimating the amount of Wisconsin Shares Subsidy that they may receive without having to go through the entire eligibility process.
- The Wisconsin Shares Subsidy program is continuing to simplify the child care program, increase participation, and ensure compliance with federal regulations.
- Program Integrity randomly samples and audits Child Care Counts recipients. Program Integrity have audited 1,540 child care providers and reviewed a total awarded amount of over \$25 million.
- In SFY 2023-25, Child Care Program Integrity received over 4,437 referrals from red flag reports and the program integrity fraud mailbox. Program Integrity also established over \$1.4 million in child care provider overpayments over this period.

Bureau of YoungStar

The Bureau of YoungStar (BOY) oversees the YoungStar program, a five-star quality rating system for child care providers in Wisconsin. The program is designed to help parents choose quality care and assist providers in improving their services. This program operates in coordination with BOY and the current contracted vendor, Shine Early Learning - the contracted portion of the program is called YoungStar Connect.

In addition to the YoungStar program, BOY also oversees contracts that provide vital training, technical assistance, and other supports to the early education field. The work done in BOY is critically important – especially in areas like child care and early childhood development – because contracts are the mechanism through which state policy becomes real-world impact.

Over the biennium, DCF's Bureau of YoungStar (BOY), in collaboration with our division and statewide partners, made significant strides in strengthening Wisconsin's early care and education (ECE) system through expanded services, quality supports, and innovative initiatives. BOY oversees the majority of the division's contracts with community organizations including Shine Early Learning, Wisconsin Early Care Association (WECA), Thriving Wisconsin and Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs), The Wisconsin Registry, Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health and others.

Accomplishments

- YoungStar reached 3,953 participating providers—its highest since 2016. Over 76 percent of Milwaukee County providers engaged with coaching and onsite ratings, a first in program history.
- YoungStar Quality Adjustments distributed over \$30 million in quality incentive payments to child care programs (approx. \$10.2M in SFY24, \$20M in SFY25).
- YoungStar Connect delivered over 1,700 hours of free training and launched a three-part preventive safety training series in partnership with the Bureau of Early Care Regulation.
- DECE and the Bureau of YoungStar launched the YoungStar Analysis and Update Project aimed at improving YoungStar for families, children, and providers. Over the biennium the project engaged over 1,500 stakeholders, including parents, providers, legislators, and advocacy groups, through surveys and listening sessions to inform continuous system improvements. The project's next phase will be drafting program design options and a second round of engagement with the community.
- The Child Care Foundational Training (CCFT) initiative expanded capacity with 144 statewide trainers. 6,981 individuals completed CCFT courses using \$1.39 million in direct subsidies, increasing access to essential licensing coursework.
- Free Registry access was launched in November 2023, removing financial barriers to participation and documentation for the workforce.
- Child Care Resource & Referral agencies provide resources and referrals to families, providers, and communities, training to child care providers, and data collection.
- The CCR&Rs supported 8,092 child care referrals, positively impacting 6,452 families and 10,317 children.
- The CCR&R network collectively delivered 1,234 trainings for providers, reaching 9,958 individuals.
- CCR&Rs provided 24,003 instances of technical assistance to 13,232 providers.
- The Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESN) is a program of WECA that DECE funds. The program launched an Enhanced Coaching Model that served approximately 2,700 providers and 160 WEESN+ programs, following a full redesign of their training curriculum. Coaches now receive

continuous scenario-based training, attend statewide meetings, and support providers through direct engagement and open office hours.

- WEESN also has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)—originating from ARPA funding and now sustained via state contracts—that offers crisis support, emotional well-being training, and household access for ECE staff across member programs.
- BOY staff contributed to numerous division-wide efforts (see COVID-19 section above), including key roles in:
 - The Child Care Counts Program
 - REWARD and TEACH programs funded by ARPA
 - Healthy Minds Healthy Children (HMHC), an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program
 - Provider Assistance for Licensing Program (PAL)

Milwaukee Early Care Administration

The Bureau of Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) administers the Wisconsin Shares program in Milwaukee County. MECA provides direct service to almost 60 percent of the state's Wisconsin Shares population to address child care authorization needs and monitors client program integrity for the program. In addition, the department contracts with the Department of Health Services for eligibility determination for Milwaukee County residents applying for Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy assistance.

Accomplishments

- Maintained virtual service accessibility for families requesting child care authorization services, which includes video and phone appointments which parents can self-select based on their availability.
- Increased stakeholder engagement and participation in community outreach events intended to educate families and stakeholders about the Wisconsin Shares program in Milwaukee County, including eligibility and authorization practices.
- Implemented and trained agency staff on practice and process that supported multiple Wisconsin Shares policy changes during this biennium.
- Focused on internal process improvement by establishing agency worker SMART Goals, incorporating QA incentives, and supporting topic-focused training as needed.

Division of Family and Economic Security

The Division of Family and Economic Security (DFES) is comprised of four Bureaus:

- Bureau of Working Families (BWF)
- Bureau of Analytics and Research (BAR)
- Bureau of Child Support (BCS)
- Bureau of Refugee Programs (BRP)

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 (CSBG); Skills Enhancement Program; Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), Civil Legal Services; Literacy and GED Services programs provided by Wisconsin Literacy; Targeted services through the Wisconsin Chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of America; the Homeless Case Management Services (HCMS) grant program; Wisconsin Community Services (WCS) community building workshops; and Pillars.

Wisconsin Works

Wisconsin Works (W-2) is Wisconsin's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for parents with low-income. 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 2023, W-2 participants obtained 6,610 jobs. In calendar year 2024, W-2 participants obtained 6,097 jobs. From January 2025 through September 2025, W-2 participants obtained 3,633 jobs.
- In calendar year 2023, 630 W-2 participants earned a vocational training certificate. In calendar year 2024, 463 W-2 participants earned a vocational training certificate. From January 2025 through June 2025, 197 W-2 participants earned a vocational training certificate.
- From January 2023 to December 2024, the total caseload decreased from 5,862 to 5,834 W-2 participants. From January 2023 to December 2024, the number of paid W-2 participants decreased from 4,687 to 4,685.

- In calendar year 2023, 115 W-2 participants were determined eligible for disability payments (SSI or SSDI). In calendar year 2024, 159 W-2 participants were determined eligible for disability payments. From January 2025 through September 2025, 95 W-2 participants were determined eligible for disability payments.

Emergency Assistance

BWF administers the Emergency Assistance (EA) program, which provides a payment and a connection to resources for families facing a setback due to a housing emergency, including impending homelessness and domestic violence, natural disaster, fire, or an energy crisis.

Accomplishments

- Effective April 1, 2024, EA benefit amounts were increased for the first time since 2009, to better align the program with the increased financial needs, particularly in housing, and reduce barriers to applicants in need.
- In the first 12 months after the Emergency Assistance (EA) benefit increase (April 2024 – March 2025), EA applications increased 22 percent from the same period one year prior, from 25,203 to 30,636.
- The EA approval rate also increased by 9 percentage points (from 14% to 23%).
- The number of families served by EA almost doubled, increasing from 3,586 in April 2023 – March 2024 to 7,080 in April 2024 – March 2025.

Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program

BWF administers the Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ) program, which is a transitional employment program to assist adults with low-income 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.
- 4) Transition former foster youth into independent living.

Accomplishments¹

- From July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, 605 participants were enrolled in the Transform Milwaukee jobs Program. Of that, 496 were placed in subsidized employment, and 238 were placed in unsubsidized employment.
- From July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, 603 participants were enrolled in the Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program. 521 were placed in subsidized employment, and 279 were placed in unsubsidized employment.
- Over 455 businesses and organizations participated as program partners and worksites. The number and types of TMJ Job placements include:
 - 428 for-profits;
 - 64 non-profits; and,
 - 3 government entities.
- During calendar year 2024, orientation hours were extended to allow participants to complete short-term training to assist with finding positions that match their career goals.

Transitional Jobs Program

BWF administers the Transitional Jobs (TJ) program which is a transitional employment program to assist adults with low-income 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 the same as the Transform Milwaukee Jobs program, which are listed above.

Accomplishments

- From July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, 883 participants were enrolled in the Transitional Jobs Program. Of these participants, 124 were placed in subsidized employment, and 459 were placed in unsubsidized employment.²
- From July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, 978 participants were enrolled in the Transitional Jobs Program. Of these participants, 120 were placed in subsidized employment, and 584 were placed in unsubsidized employment.
- Over 800 businesses and organizations participated as worksites. Number and types of TJ work placements:

¹ For background, TMJ and TJ participants can be placed in more than one employment while enrolled. Participants may also be enrolled and eligible but may not find employment.

- 606 for-profits;
- 220 non-profits; and,
- 10 government entities.
- During calendar year 2024, orientation hours were extended to allow participants to complete short-term training to assist with finding positions that match their career goals.

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 percent of CSBG funds be distributed by formula to 16 community action agencies and two 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 2023, CSBG agencies served 219,081 low-income individuals in 110,412 families. This included 42,742 children, 20,737 people with disabilities, 20,747 seniors, 3,149 veterans and active military persons, and 8,087 people who lacked health insurance.
- In 2022, CSBG agencies served 226,936 low-income individuals in 115,691 families. This included 51,534 children, 25,788 people with disabilities, 21,418 seniors, 6,648 people who lacked healthcare, and 3,589 veterans and active military persons.
- In 2022 and 2023, CSBG agencies helped:
 - 206,653 low-income households with housing insecurity. This includes outcomes such as obtaining and maintaining housing, avoiding eviction or foreclosure, and reducing energy burden.

- 715,400 in the health and social/behavior development domain. This includes outcomes such as increasing nutrition skills, improving physical or mental health, and living independently.
- 14,557 outcomes were obtained in the income and asset building domain. This includes outcomes such as maintaining a budget, opening a savings account, increasing assets and net worth, and improving financial well-being.
- 14,528 individuals reaching their educational goals. This includes outcomes such as improved literacy skills, school readiness and obtaining additional education and diplomas.
- 2,216 people obtaining and maintaining a job, increasing income, and obtaining benefits.
- CSBG agencies mobilized thousands of volunteers. In 2022 and 2023, these volunteers gave 717,246 hours of their time to assist people in need in their communities.
- CSBG agencies are centrally located to serve their communities and for maximum impact they partnered with 1,199 non-profits, 1,175 for-profits, 324 faith-based organizations, and 219 school districts.

Skills Enhancement Program

The Skills Enhancement Program (SEP) provides General Purpose Revenue grants of approximately \$20,833 per year to 11 community action agencies across the state. Additionally, based on the SFY23-25 biennial budget that was passed on July 5, 2023, an additional \$500,000 of TANF funds each year has been provided to the program (this funding did not renew for SFY26-27). These funds are 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 percent 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 2024 and 2025, 384 SEP participants were served statewide. Of 130 participants who exited the program, 73 percent obtained new jobs and increased their wages by an average of \$23,165.50 per year. Eighty-six percent of

those obtaining new jobs now have access to employer-sponsored health insurance.

- 2024 data is still under review by the Office of Community Services (OCS) and cannot be reported on at this time.

Jobs for America's Graduates

The Wisconsin Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program supports keeping Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligible at-risk youth in school through graduation and to provide supportive services to assist participants with transitioning to work, military, and/or post-secondary education. Forward Service Corporation (FSC) administers the program and must follow the National JAG Model Components and their associated standards to each contracted school which include mastering 37 Core Employability Skills Competencies delivered in the classroom; remediation assistance to meet graduation requirements and address learning loss; promote student leadership through the JAG Career Association; support students in overcoming challenges outside of the classroom; assist students in securing part-time employment while in school; and provide 12 months of follow-up services to ensure college and employment success. The JAG program has a total one million dollars of TANF funds to be spent annually.

Accomplishments

- In SFY 2024 and 2025, there were 1,187 youth served; of these youth served, 938 were enrolled students and 249 were follow-up graduates.
- In SFY 2024 and 2025, there was an average 98 percent graduation rate amongst all Wisconsin JAG participants.
- 78 percent of graduates are in training or post-secondary education, full-time employment or the military.
- The average JAG high school students hourly wage is \$12.48.
- In SFY 2025 JAG had 159 engaged employers and in SFY 2024, there were 106 engaged employers.

Civil Legal Services

The 2023-2025 biennial budget allocated \$1 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for grants to support civil legal services for individuals and families with low-income, with a special focus on victims of domestic violence and sexual assault (DVSA). In state fiscal years 2024 and 2025, 11 legal service providers and domestic violence shelters that are partnering with legal service providers received

grants ranging from \$15,000 to \$50,000. The Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation (WisTAF) acted as the lead agency to administer these grants.

Accomplishments

- In state fiscal years 2024 and 2025, DVSA grantees reported that they helped 1,288 low-income domestic abuse and sexual assaulted survivors. The most common areas of law where civil legal services were provided in this program are family law, guardianship, public benefit, and victim rights. DVSA helped clients receive or recover more than \$2.0 million as a result of legal services provided through this program.
- In state fiscal years 2024 and 2025, the grantees provided civil legal services ranging from limited advice to representation in civil litigations to 1,588 low-income domestic abuse and sexual assault survivors in 58 Wisconsin counties.
- The outcomes of each case not only affect the individuals receiving legal help, but they also affect the Wisconsin court system, which runs more effectively and efficiently when legal professionals are available to expedite cases. They affect local resources such as homeless shelters and police and rescue personnel, by removing people from dangerous situations and providing the legal help they need to become independent. They affect local economies, allowing employees who had previously missed workdays due to abuse to keep regular work schedules, benefiting the employer as well as the employee.

Literacy and GED Services

The 2023-2025 biennial budget allocated \$718,800.00 in TANF funds to support literacy and General Education Development (GED)/High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) services for adults with low-income. DCF contracted with Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., a statewide member organization for literacy and GED services providers, which distributed the funds to 14 literacy service providers and 29 GED service 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

- In 2024, on average at any given time 1,502 people were receiving GED/HSED instruction. A total of 657 participants earned their GED/HSED as a result of this instruction.
- In 2025, the average of people receiving GED/HSED instruction increased to 1,549 with there being a total of 655 people earning their GED/HSED.

- In 2024, there were an average of 313 people receiving Literacy Instruction, with 155 of them making literacy gains, which is defined by improving their reading skills by one or more grade levels. In 2025, an average of 367 people received literacy services with a total of 261 people making literacy gains.

Boys and Girls Club of America

The 2023-2025 biennial budget allocated \$10,614,000.00 in TANF funds to the Wisconsin Chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of America. This included an additional \$5,000,000 increase from previous budgets to year one of the budget. Funds provided to the Boys and Girls Clubs support programs that improve social, academic, and employment skills of youth. Funding was provided to the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley who acted as the fiscal agent and provided funding to other clubs throughout Wisconsin. The grants included funds to operate the Be GREAT: Graduate program in 19 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, 718 unduplicated TANF-eligible students were served in the Be GREAT: Graduate program and over 3,605 unduplicated TANF-eligible students were served in the Wisconsin After 3 program.
- Boys and Girls Clubs utilizes a variety of tools and strategies to reach their goals and adjusts programs periodically to maximize effectiveness. In 2023, Boys and Girls Clubs was able to add 15 additional learning objectives to the Wisconsin After 3 program including sessions such as Power Hour, NBA Math Hoops, Career Launch, DIY STEM and Brain Gain.
- 91 percent of participants were able to demonstrate improved math fluency
- Of those tested in the Career Launch Program 81 percent demonstrated enhanced career readiness.
- 94 percent of participants in the Be Great: Graduate program graduated on time.

Homeless Case Management Services Grant

The Homeless Case Management Services (HCMS) grant program was created through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program and through Wisconsin Act 59 (statute §16.3085). As such, all funding provided via the grant is

subject to TANF rules and regulations. The grant centers on providing families experiencing homelessness intensive case management services across four focus areas: financial management, employment, ensuring school continuation for children, and enrolling unemployed or underemployed parents in W-2 or the Food Share employment and training program (FSET).

Accomplishments

- In SFY 2024, HCMS served 463 households and a total of 1,222 individuals of which 692 were children. The following number of individuals were referred to or enrolled in the following:
 - 171 – Wisconsin Works
 - 163 - Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy
 - 198 – FSET
 - 87 – Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
 - 661 – other employment or training programs
- Of the 692 children served, 420 received services to ensure continuation of school enrollment or to promote regular school attendance.
- In SFY 2025, HCMS served 524 households and a total of 1,476 individuals of which 832 were children. The following number of individuals were referred to or enrolled in the following:
 - 128 – Wisconsin Works
 - 137 – Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy
 - 131 – FSET
 - 72 – Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
 - 616 – other employment or training programs
- Of the 832 children served, 603 received services to ensure continuation of school enrollment or to promote regular school attendance.

Pillars

Pillars provides shelter, support, and solutions to address housing needs in Outagamie, Winnebago and Calumet counties through emergency shelter funding provided by the department (statute §49.139). Pillars meets needs all along the housing continuum by providing services related to health, employment, education, housing resources, and a place of welcome and respite.

Accomplishments

- From October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, Pillars served a total of 558 clients – 422 adults and 136 children. They provided 26,713 nights of sleep. From October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, Pillars served 582 clients – 429 adults and 153 children. They provided 27,113 nights of sleep.
- Their diversion/prevention program, which finds creative solutions and provides case management and financial assistance to keep individuals and families in their homes, served 142 adults and 165 children from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. This program succeeds more than 90 percent of the time in avoiding shelter stays for households served.

Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.

Wisconsin Statute §49.175(1)(w) grants a payment of \$400,000 each fiscal year to Wisconsin Community Services for the community building workshop, and the planning and implementation of a capacity building initiative.

Community Building is an intense interpersonal group process and experience that promotes social and emotional learning and improves or builds on the core competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making skills in participants. The Community Building Workshop (CBW), as developed by M. Scott Peck, M.D. and offered by the nonprofit Community Building Institute (CBI), is a three-day, small group process that teaches communication skills. The process is highly experiential and designed to create an atmosphere of unusual safety for participants to work "below the surface" and experience a deep emotional connection with one another.

The larger goals of the Community Building Milwaukee (CBM) initiative are to: increase engagement of fathers in the lives of their families; reduce risk for youth who are aging out of the foster care system; reduce the number of youth and adults being incarcerated; reduce violence amongst youth; reduce rates of adult and youth recidivism; increase employment in targeted populations; reduce costs of incarceration; and increase trust, coordination and cooperation between local programs and agencies.

Accomplishments

- WCS Community Building Milwaukee (CBM) provided online community and in-person Building Skills Trainings (CBSTs) to W-2, TANF and other priority groups such as reentry and group home participants. The one and three-day online CBST is based on the original three-day in-person Community Building Workshop (CBW) format and was created due to the Covid crisis. WCS now offers workshops in both the on-line and in-person formats.

- In 2023 and 2024
 - WCS expanded the network of certified facilitators to 162
 - Conducted eight public community building workshops
 - Held 21 facilitator workshops with senior facilitators
 - Offered two 5-day Facilitator trainings
 - Integrated CBW into eight new programs

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 506,891 cases³ statewide and processing almost \$1 billion in child support and spousal support payments annually.

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.

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.

³ Of the 508,761 cases, 171,438 of them receive payment processing-only services, amounting to over \$232 million in child support and spousal support payments annually.

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) 2024 and collects 4.4 percent more in total payments on cases with arrears compared to the national average.
- During FFY 2024, 25,769 child support orders were established.
- During FFY 2024, Wisconsin's child-support collections were \$850,165,652.
- Of the almost \$1 billion annually receipted for child-support cases, 98 percent is disbursed to families.
- In FFY 2024, the national average cost-effectiveness for child-support collections was \$4.22 collected for every dollar spent. Wisconsin's cost-effectiveness, \$5.47 per dollar spent, is better than the national average.

State Disbursement Unit

The number of calls handled by Conduent, the child support state disbursement unit contractor, in CY 2024 were 39,000.

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 81,000 logins from child support customers each week.

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 the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), which enables the state to draw down up to \$2 million in federal participation rates (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 program was launched in April 2019 and ran to March 31, 2024, NCP participants have since been enrolled in ELEVATE in Brown, Kenosha, Marathon, Racine, and Wood counties beginning in January 2020.
- In 2024, DCF pursued and received a new 1115 waiver from OCSE, to continue and expand the ELEVATE program. This enables the state to draw down up to \$2 million in additional federal participation rates (FFP). The core services from the previous iteration of ELEVATE will be maintained, while the current iteration expands these services to include additional supports, such as education and apprenticeship. Since the beginning of ELEVATE, over 2,400 individuals and their associated family systems have been served through the project and 4,100 new employments have been reported by those enrolled.
- The program is again being evaluated by the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP). IRP recently released evaluation results of ELEVATE's first waiver to support the broader implementation and scalability of the program. All five Wisconsin demonstration counties have expressed an interest in continuing to pursue the objectives of ELEVATE and a willingness to share their gained expertise to aid other Wisconsin counties newly undertaking similar efforts to overcome the challenges of implementation.

Children First

The Children First (CF) 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 2024, BCS contracted with 11 counties agencies to operate a CF program in 12 counties. CF agencies expended \$449,000 to assist approximately 561 Children First participants in obtaining employment.

Safe Access for Victims' Economic Security (SAVES) Demonstration

DCF and participating child support agencies (CSAs) – in Brown, Kenosha, and St. Croix counties – continued this project, which began in September 2022 and is part of the SAVES demonstration in 12 states. The project's goal is to increase access to child support for victims of domestic abuse and their children. The participating CSAs trained child support workers to identify safety concerns and offer potentially safer options for parents to navigate paternity establishment, child support orders, and enforcement – with the objective of keeping both parents active in the child support program. They piloted new ways of doing business, created materials to communicate these options more clearly, and shared what they learned with other county and state child support programs, human service programs, domestic violence service providers, law enforcement, and court/judicial partners.

Child Support Modernization (CSM) Project

DCF has a long-term goal of modernizing the child support program and the Kids Information Data System (KIDS), the case and financial management system 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 the development phase. The project successfully completed the following goals:

Accomplishments:

- Negotiated the Project Management Office (PMO) services contract;
- Submitted and received Federal approval of the PMO contract;
- Successfully onboarded the PMO contractor staff;
- Collaboratively worked with PMO to review and approve required project deliverables;
- Negotiated the Quality Assurance (QA) services contract;
- Submitted and received Federal approval of the QA contract;
- Successfully onboarded the QA contractor staff;
- Collaboratively worked with QA to review and approve required project deliverables;
- Negotiated the Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) services contract;
- Submitted and received Federal approval of the IV&V contract;
- Successfully onboarded the IV&V contractor staff;
- Negotiated the Design, Development and Implementation contract;
- Updated the Statement of Work to reflect any changes made in negotiations;
- Submitted and received Federal approval of the DDI contract;
- Requested and received the Delaware source code;
- Successfully onboarded the DDI contractor staff;
- Began working on integrating the DDI donor schedule into the Master Project schedule;
- Began working with DDI on reviewing and approving their required project deliverables;
- Began Requirement Validation sessions;
- DDI contractor placed on a Corrective Action Plan;
- Initiated the THRIVE User Advisory Committee;

- Continued organizational change management to create awareness, desire and knowledge of the project status and goals.

Child Support Online Services

Enhancements to the Child Support Online Services (CSOS) application continue. In 2023, we added automated address validation. When a participant adds or updates their address, we automatically validate it against U.S. Postal Services addresses. The system asks the user if they really mean what they typed, if they mistype the details.

LIFT Wisconsin

Approximately 70,000 Dane County residents have civil legal problems that cause financial instability and reduce earnings, not quite half of those residents have child support cases. LIFT Wisconsin intends to empower citizens to identify and clear up civil legal problems on their own, or with streamlined help from trusted professionals. The work requested has been submitted to LIFT Wisconsin for the purpose of supporting the work of their mission by attempting to use public data to help people efficiently resolve civil legal problems, using grant funds to develop software. The LIFT Wisconsin team is attempting to engage several state departments and has resources available to start development.

The final LIFT Wisconsin product will be beneficial for those Dane County Child Support participants (and subsequently, participants outside Dane County) with arrears and other financial obligations tracked by the State of Wisconsin. LIFT Wisconsin's development of the Legal Tune-up application will provide the user with an easy to use cross-services platform to access information and generate court filings.

This project was implemented in September 2023.

E-Filing Interface with Wisconsin Court System

In 2023, DCF completed a multi-year, multimillion-dollar interface between wiKIDS and the Wisconsin Courts System, CCAP. This allows child support agency staff to electronically file court documents, saving considerable time by no longer needing to re-enter case information. After initial implementation there have been several enhancements, including the ability to do a mass change of attorney whenever a child support attorney retires or moves on.

Bankruptcy Processing and History

The Bankruptcy Abuse and Prevention Act of 2005 was signed on April 20, 2005, becoming Public Law 109-8, effective October 17, 2005. This law requires additional changes to our current KIDS bankruptcy processing because the system is inadequate and inaccurate. Despite the age of the request, it has been confirmed that these changes are still required. There is no automated processing to reset case status and

workable status when bankruptcy ends. KIDS cannot maintain a history of bankruptcy episodes.

This project, completed in June 2023, updated the bankruptcy process in KIDS to be automated according to the Bankruptcy Abuse and Prevention Act of 2005.

Bureau of Analytics and Research

The Bureau of Analytics and Research (BAR) manages statewide data analytics, reporting, and data stewardship 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. 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 work to modernize operational reports in response to case management system releases and enhancements. Specifically, the BAR team has delivered substantive reporting assets in support of the ongoing development of BWF's WWP case management system, including recent enhancements that track worker contacts with W-2 participants and the deployment of supportive services tracking functionality. BAR also supports the Bureau of Refugee Programs through the automation of their federal reports.
- BAR led DFES efforts to ensure compliance with TANF provisions included in the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) of 2023; the first of the new data and reporting requirements took effect in the Spring of 2025. BAR successfully launched its first-ever data engagement effort, aimed at building data knowledge to ensure data-driven decision making at the State and local level.

Bureau of Refugee Programs

The Bureau of Refugee Programs (BRP) was established to ensure the provision and coordination of services that help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency and social adjustment upon their arrival to the U.S. by responsibly administering refugee programs in partnership with our contractors. Contracted partner agencies provide direct services and supportive resources, including health screenings, English as a Second Language instruction, case management, job development, mental health screening, citizenship classes, cultural orientation, and services for specific subgroups such as older refugees with specific needs. With funding from the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, BRP also administers the Refugee Cash Assistance program and Refugee Medical Assistance program. Refugee Cash Assistance offers income support

to refugees for up to four months after arrival and Refugee Medical Assistance provides eligible refugees with a basic level of health care when they do not qualify for Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus.

Accomplishments

- As of September 25, 2025, 1,059 newly eligible refugees and other eligible immigrants enrolled in BRP resettlement programs in Wisconsin. This made-up 20 percent of the total caseload of 5,241 eligible people served. Below is a breakdown of how many eligible refugees were served by refugee programs in Wisconsin during FFY 25. Most people were served by multiple programs.

Program	People Served
Afghan Immigration-Related Legal Services (AIRLS)	237
Afghan Refugee Health Promotion (ARHP)	402
Afghan Refugee Support Services (ARSS)	446
Refugee Health Promotion (RHP)	1,571
Refugee Medical Screening (RMS)	1,225
Refugee School Impact (RSI)	849
Refugee Support Services – Employment & Employability (RSS-E&E)	1,000
Refugee Support Services – English as a Second Language (RSS-ESL)	1,215
Refugee Support Services – Other Services (RSS-OS)	2,058
Refugee Youth Mentoring (RYM)	116
Services to Older Refugees (SOR)	47

Division of Management Services

The Division of Management Services is comprised of the Administrator's Office four bureaus, and one section:

- Agency Operations Section (Agency Ops)
- Bureau of Information Technology Services (BITS)
- Bureau of Finance (BOF)
- Bureau of Performance Management (BPM)
- Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO)

Division 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 2023 – 2025 reporting period, DMS was responsible for implementation of a global space strategy to consolidate DCF office space for a functional hybrid workplace that will sustain productivity and agency performance, support staff, demonstrate fiscal responsibility with taxpayer dollars, and provide economic benefits across Wisconsin. In 2024, DMS focused on consolidation efforts for executing a five-regional hub model that corresponds to the broad service areas supported by DCF programs and partners while considering the needs of employees and stakeholders. DMS evaluated data to assess space usage and needs to inform surrendering legacy sites, while ensuring continued high quality department services and processes in a hybrid environment. DMS also began renovating the Milwaukee Office to optimize space layout for hybrid work and address privacy, safety, and the needs of employees and work units within the building.

Other ongoing efforts to operationalize the hybrid work model and refine it through continuous improvement include integrating hybrid work into the DCF culture through resources, training, and communication, ensuring DCF's technology meets the needs of a hybrid workforce, continued measurements and metrics to monitor hybrid work productivity and impact, and continued monitoring of feedback as needed for continuous improvement efforts. All areas in DMS have supported these efforts 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 Department of Health Services 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 SO 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, hosts new leader orientation sessions, and facilitates regional meetings for local agency staff. BRO monitors compliance by contractor agencies with federal and state civil rights requirements.

Accomplishments

- Continued the 2021-2023 Triennial Monitoring process for child support agencies. Worked with the Bureau of Child Support to issue corrective action plans addressing agency performance concerns, provided technical assistance to understand performance issues, and tracked improvements.
- Continued the Triennial Child Welfare Onsite Visit Monitoring process with counties. In partnership with the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP), BRO launched new program metrics and engaged with agencies about practice changes.
- Monitored local child care administrative agencies (counties and tribes) and supported DECE child care subsidy policy changes and initiatives.
- Implemented W-2 monitoring initiative in partnership with the Bureau of Working Families, participated in the development and review of two request for proposal (RFP) application processes, and co-led the transition planning workgroup.
- Facilitated a stakeholder workgroup which drafted, issued and trained agencies about Administrative Rule DCF 1: Fees for Child Welfare and Community-Based Youth Justice Services.

- Provided intensive technical assistance and ongoing support to multiple counties through staff changes and acute staffing shortages.
- In collaboration with the DCF tribal liaison and finance staff, facilitated a statewide meeting and provided monthly fiscal technical assistance sessions for Tribal fiscal staff.
- Provided multiple Civil Rights trainings for department contractors.

Bureau of Finance

The Bureau of Finance (BOF) is responsible for accounting and financial reporting for all funds administered by the department (approximately \$1.5 billion annually). BOF coordinates all DCF expenditures and provides procurement and contract services, collection services for public assistance 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

- Issued 1,800 contracts with grantees and service providers (including local governments, tribes, and both for-profit and non-profit entities).
- The Public Assistance Collections Section (PACS) recovered over \$10.3 million in overpayments from parents receiving Wisconsin FoodShare, W-2, or Wisconsin Shares child care benefits, and from Wisconsin Shares providers.
- In 2024, PACS along with their partners in the Bureau of Information Technology Services, moved claim management and payment posting functionality from the mainframe-based CARES system to the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS). The transition modernized technical functionality and created efficiency in workflows. It provides a single platform to manage and track all benefit investigations, overpayment claims, and collections. Since the implementation, over 4,000 claims have been established using the new functionality.
- Reviewed and responded to 605 reports from partner agencies and completed 13 fiscal reviews of sub-recipients of federal funds.
- Collected approximately \$830,000 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).
- Assisted in the reconciliation of the Partner Up program.

- Processed over \$1.2 billion in payments to DCF partners through the SPARC subrecipient reporting and payment system.

Bureau of Information Technology Services

The Bureau of Information Technology Services (BITS) is the primary full-service IT provider and strategic partner for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) program areas.

BITS maintains a goal of providing technical and operational excellence generates solutions that are innovative, reliable, and secure as we keep pace with the Department's need for advancing technology. The responsibility of enterprise-wide, flexible, and adaptive information technology services and support is met with a commitment to professionalism and continuous improvement. BITS strives to deliver efficient, strategic technology results by staying abreast of technology trends and maintaining alignment with multiple business partners.

Accomplishments

BITS completed many major projects and software upgrades to meet business partner objectives, including:

Child Care Systems

- Enhanced the child care provider portal to include provider text messaging and a provider dashboard.
- Continued the Child Care Counts and Stabilization programs. Continued transparent reporting for this program, in addition to providing data for auditing and long-term research.
- Enhanced the Online Licensing Application to include an Expression of Interest Application for potential new providers, streamlined the initial child care licensing process, and created an online renewal process for existing providers.
- Added eligibility data to the child care data warehouse, establishing a centralized source for integrated eligibility and authorization data and research.

Child Support Systems

- Continued the multi-year effort to modernize the Child Support program and the current automated child support system. The planning phase concluded with four contracts being issued. Work shifted to requirements and data validation with new vendors, as well as county, tribal, and federal partners.
- Updated the Child Support Online Services to include Spanish translation.

- Developed a series of research data sets, including participant matching, for ongoing program research.
- Coordinated with the child support program to support various audits (IRS, SSA, OCSS).

Child Welfare Systems

- Six major eWiSACWIS releases were implemented in October 2023, February 2024, June 2024, October 2024, February 2025, and June 2025.
- Released the Supporting Youth and Children (SYNC) portal for providers and completed the design for the new youth portal, Wisconsin Information and Support Portal (WiSP).
- Continued to build and refine the DSP data warehouse, including datasets such as youth justice and new dashboards.

Work Programs Systems

- Modernized the mainframe screens previously used to track W-2, Job Access Loan, and Emergency Assistance Fact Findings by converting them into the Wisconsin Work Programs (WWP) system.
- Initiated modernization efforts in payment issuance processes.
- Created a series of W-2 Report Performance (RP) reports to assist with ongoing program and performance monitoring.

Refugee Program Systems

- Developed encrypted data exchanges with the cloud vendor to build a data warehouse for research and federal reporting.

Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS)

- Deployed Phase 2 of the BRITS System, including a data warehouse and reports.

DMS Finance Systems

- Ongoing enhancements were made to improve and automate workflows, while reducing data duplication.
- Researched modern solutions for managing constituent communication and the contracting lifecycle.

DCF Wide IT Initiatives

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

- Led the creation of a DCF artificial intelligence (AI) foundation team to address the complexity of introducing AI technologies. In addition to IT expertise on security, data, and technologies, the group included legal, risk, procurement, and policy. DCF also serves as the data sub-group lead for the Interagency AI workgroup.
- Developed a BITS Portfolio dashboard to increase transparency and communication on the various DCF IT projects.
- Continued to refine the content in the DCF data catalog, including data steward sign-off and report certification.
- Developed proactive web application security scanning to strengthen DCF's cybersecurity position.
- Continued planning for migrating all DCF IT systems to the state's new external identity management system, MyWisconsin ID, including a how-to guide for development teams.
- Continued to refine hybrid work technology needs including hardware onboarding, remote device management, and performance needs of collaborative tools such as Zoom or Teams.
- Completed the server Windows 2012 update.

Bureau of Performance Management

The Bureau of Performance Management (BPM) provides collaborative assistance to DCF divisions in support of the department's mission and vision. BPM staff support the development and maintenance of agency performance metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), and sponsor forums for DCF's staff and management to support data-driven solutions. Through collaboration with staff, BPM supports the department's efforts to increase performance management and program enhancement at all levels. BPM collaborates with the department's contract administrators, in coordination with the Bureau of Finance, to ensure contracts are developed and monitored with performance outcomes in mind. To support program enhancement 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 enhancing child welfare practice by conducting Targeted Case Reviews for the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) and county-specific Access case reviews.

In addition, BPM staff prepare the Independent Monitoring Report (IMR) for the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS).

Accomplishments

- Updated the Anywhere Wisconsin dashboard tool that provides data on where in Wisconsin DCF employees are located. With this dashboard, DCF can show in which counties and legislative districts DCF employees are located. The dashboard shows the statewide employment impact of the department's Anywhere Wisconsin hiring initiative, allowing more individuals from all corners of the state to have employment opportunities with the department.
- Developed a space usage analysis allowing DCF facilities management and leadership to make data-driven decisions regarding space usage and needs with a goal to right-size the physical footprint of the department.
- Completed eight county-specific Access case reviews (630 Child Protective Service reports reviewed) and provided results to county management and leadership.
- Conducted three targeted case reviews (TCR) which are ad-hoc, time-limited, reviews that focuses on specific practice areas tied to the department's child welfare strategic initiative, Putting Families First.
- Continued its responsibilities related to the independent and objective reporting related to DMCPS child welfare practice. All reports were completed timely and with validity. Results were presented publicly, on a semi-annual basis, to the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council (MCWPC).
- Completed three ad hoc case reviews specific to contract administration efforts of the child welfare case management case agencies, which helped promote child safety and permanency.
- Supported the department's Contract Administration Program assisting contract administrators in all aspects of their roles. This included developing technical solutions, creating training and resources, providing forums for communication and feedback, and targeted technical assistance.
- Coordinated and managed the department's data governance program, including the coordination of data sharing requests.
- Conducted a Wisconsin Shares audit analysis to enhance understanding of program referrals and investigation outcomes. The data analysis was used to

inform DCF leadership on various aspects of the referral process and backlog as well as analysis of the audit history of past years.

- Provided an analysis of the child care Market Rate Survey results and the Total Cost of Care to inform DCF leadership and child care stakeholders on the cost of quality child care and the buying power of Wisconsin Shares.
- Facilitated three DCF Leadership Foundation training sessions annually, supporting the growth and enhancing the skills of emerging DCF leaders in project management, continuous improvement and strategic planning.
- In collaboration with the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE), provided data analysis of the YoungStar program, and researched the child care rating systems of other states.
- In collaboration with the Division of Family and Economic Security (DFES), facilitated the update of the division strategic plan as well as supported DMCPs with its strategic plan.
- Continue to support DMS strategic planning and annual work plans.

Division of Safety and Permanence

The Division of Safety & Permanence (DSP) is comprised of four bureaus:

- Bureau of Youth Services
- Bureau of Safety and Well-Being
- Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care
- Bureau of Compliance and Research Analytics

Division Overview & Administrator's Office

The Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) is responsible for overseeing the statewide child welfare and community-based youth justice systems. The purpose of Wisconsin's child welfare system is to keep children safe and support families to provide safe, permanent, and nurturing homes for their children. The vision for Wisconsin's youth justice system is to serve each youth, individually, within the context of his or her family and culture, to acquire the tools to thrive in adulthood, while protecting public safety. DSP also oversees state domestic violence and home visiting 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.

In addition to providing overall leadership and coordinating communication efforts for the division, the Administrator's Office (AO) is responsible for oversight of eWiSACWIS (WI's state child welfare data system), tracking state and federal legislative issues, leading child welfare strategic planning efforts and major federally-required projects (including preparation for the 2026 Children and Family Services Review (CFSR)), and expanding lived experience efforts statewide. The Administrator's Office is also responsible for working with tribes in Wisconsin to address tribal child welfare issues, including implementation of the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA).

Accomplishments

- Submitted, and received approval of, Wisconsin's 2025-2029 Children and Family Services Plan.
- Continued focus on collaborative efforts to achieve the meaningful engagement of families, youth, partner agencies, counties and tribes all working toward shared goals for improving the child welfare system and providing child and family safety, permanency and well-being outcomes. Some of the ways in which DSP assures collaboration include:
 - Securing feedback and ongoing input from counties, tribes and other external partner organizations on DCF's Putting Families First strategic

planning process, including agency strengths, areas needing improvement, goals and objectives.

- Coordinating, facilitating and/or participating in standing bi-monthly meetings with the Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Committee and with a subset of county directors through the Wisconsin County Human Services Association's Policy Advisory Committee (WCHSA PAC).
 - Engaging individuals, youth and families who are involved or have experience with the child welfare system in policy development and decision-making, including hosting a Lived Experience Summit.
 - Spearheading external partner groups comprised of agency staff at different levels and specializations and receiving critical advice, feedback and comment from tribal members on the specifics of the state's continued efforts to outline and implement its Putting Families First vision and meet key requirements of FFPSA.
 - Collaborating with judges and other legal external partners, including participation on the Wisconsin Commission on Children, Families and the Courts which focuses on improving the court processing of child abuse and neglect cases.
 - Soliciting input on federal and state plans and reviews, in part by sharing relevant federal, state and administrative data regarding child welfare system trends and issues, to prioritize data-driven decision-making.
- On June 4, 2024, John Elliott, the Secretary's Office, and other division administrators, attended the annual DCF tribal consultation meeting. Approximately 55 people were in attendance, with 33 of those attendees being from 9 Tribal Nations and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC).
 - On April 23, 2024, DSP hosted the inaugural 2024 Secretary's Putting Families First Awards. The ceremony recognized outstanding child welfare professionals, parents with lived experience and community partners who are doing transformational work throughout the state to Put Families First. The awards were presented during a celebration at the State Capitol as part of Wisconsin's proclaimed month-long recognition of Family Strengthening Month.
 - Issued one-time Putting Families First funding for local and tribal agencies to be used to cover the costs of formal and informal supports and resources provided to children, youth and their families who are being served by local child protective service and youth justice systems prior to or to prevent the need for ongoing

case management services or to expedite or stabilize a child or youth's reunification to their family home.

Bureau of Youth Services

The Bureau of Youth Services (BYS) is responsible for overseeing and supporting youth development initiatives and programs through oversight responsibility for the community-based youth justice (YJ) population in Wisconsin. The bureau also oversees the Federal Chafee Transition to Independence Program, the Educational and Training Vouchers Program (ETV), the Wisconsin Brighter Futures Initiative, the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) program, Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and other youth development efforts. The goal of the Bureau of Youth Services is to improve outcomes for youth in the child welfare and youth justice systems and other vulnerable youth. Specifically, the bureau supports service delivery systems that move youth towards academic success, safe and stable housing, employment, permanent connections with supportive adults, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Youth, in or at risk of entering the child welfare and a youth justice system, present unique and complex challenges. No matter which system "door" a youth enters, DCF strives to support a coordinated and comprehensive response to provide the support needed to fulfill its youth-driven vision that "all youth have the tools to thrive in adulthood."

Accomplishments

- Issued competitive Youth Justice Innovation Grants for county human service agencies to implement new evidence-informed practices or programs with short-term start-up funding from DCF. All proposed projects must serve the overall purpose of improving community-based youth justice services and should meet requirements of one of the following topic areas: reducing YJ referrals, pre-court diversion, or post-dispositional services.
- Conducted a National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Review in August of 2023 and received approval of a corresponding Program Improvement Plan.
- Enhanced the existing Independent Living to Discharge Plan (ILTD) template in eWiSACWIS; and developed a youth portal to provide young people direct, controlled access to information about themselves in eWiSACWIS.
- Continued development of the first statewide youth justice data system, including issuance annual public-facing reports on referrals to youth justice across the state and additional data tools for county youth justice professionals.
- Services funded with federal title IV-B dollars continue to provide supports to runaway and homeless youth to address educational and well-being needs.

- The Chafee program continues to support the Transitional Regional Agency structure to offer a range of educational, social and well-being initiatives designed to assist youth in successfully transitioning to adulthood across the state.

Bureau of Safety and Well-Being

The Bureau of Safety and Well Being (BSWB) develops and issues child protective services (CPS) policy standards and practice guidance to CPS agencies in Wisconsin. The bureau also manages child welfare and child abuse/neglect prevention services; monitors federal and state legislation related to child welfare; supports cross-system services that benefit children and youth in the child welfare system; 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, supporting 32 Local Implementing Agencies which now serve 40 counties and six tribes as of October 2024. 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). 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. DSP continues to explore expanding the program to support relatives and youth justice populations.
- Issued revised Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards in June of 2024 to streamline the Initial Assessment (IA) so the Child Protective Services (CPS) workforce is supported in spending more time working with families, and centering families and their voices in the IA process.
- Revised the safety decision-making process so it is easier for families to understand and for CPS professionals to implement.
- Clarified and supported child welfare (CPS/Youth Justice) case planning so families and child welfare professionals report plans meet their needs.

Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care

The Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care (BPOHC) 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. The purpose of these programs are to 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

- Hosted a KINspiration Summit in June of 2025 aimed at energizing, inspiring, and strengthening child welfare professionals' commitment to placing more Wisconsin children with relatives and like-kin.
- DCF continues to collaborate with DHS and support the possibility of Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) in Wisconsin to establish additional inpatient service options to benefit Medicaid-eligible youth even though the funding proposal was removed from Wisconsin's 2025 – 2027 Budget.
- Created a Supporting Youth and Children (SYNC) website that allows group care providers and private child placing agencies (CPAs) to access and respond to referrals of youth who require treatment interventions services.
- DCF implemented state legislation in January 2025 to include "like-kin" within the definition of a "relative." This initiative supported Wisconsin's ongoing Putting Families First approach to place children more easily with those who already know and love them and ensures those caregivers can receive financial support.
- Developed streamlined Wisconsin Chapter 56 Licensing Standards to eliminate non-safety related barriers to relative and non-relative foster care approvals to provide more placement options in a child's community.
- DCF drafted a proposed relative and like-kin foster home licensing rule for legislative review that aligns with Federal Model Licensing Standards and is anticipated to be promulgated in fall of 2025.
- 2021 Wisconsin Act 132 was signed into law by Governor Evers on February 4, 2022. The bill required the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) to reimburse expenses incurred by local child welfare agencies for subsidized

guardianship payments, effective January 1, 2022. DCF has fully implemented this requirement.

Bureau of Compliance and Research Analytics

The Bureau of Compliance, Research, & Analytics (BCRA) is responsible for the oversight and management of data reporting, analytics, program integrity, and compliance with title IV-E requirements. 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.

Accomplishments

- Wisconsin successfully completed a title IV-E review in June of 2024 and was found to be in substantial compliance.
- Continued efforts to develop, refine, 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 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 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. The team has also continued to focus on ways to maximize funding to support initiatives and programs that improve child welfare programs and services in Wisconsin.
- On April 29, 2025, DCF held a County Prevention Summit to discuss future plans for Wisconsin's 2026-2030 Five-Year Prevention Plan. Over 120 key partners from across the state, including county partners, lived experts, national experts, key supporters and Wisconsin state policy staff participated.
- Developed and submitted the annual CCWIS Data Quality Plan (DQP) and supplemental Biennial Data Quality Review (DQR) to the federal Administration for Children and Families. The DQP provides a single consistent document that identifies the quality, management, and governance structuring that supports the integrity of the eWiSACWIS system.

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services

The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services is comprised of two bureaus and four sections:

- Access Section
- Initial Assessment Bureau
- Ongoing Services Section
- Medical/Behavioral Health Services Section
- Quality Operations Bureau
- Professional Development Section

Division Overview

The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) responds to reports of abuse or neglect in Milwaukee County.

Access Section

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 Initial Assessment Bureau (IAB).

Initial Assessment Bureau

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 works to keep the child(ren) in their home safely, whenever possible. Where safety issues are present, or when a family is at risk of future CPS involvement, an IAS may assist the family with getting referred to or enrolled in home services intended to prevent the removal of children from the home.

If the IAS determines a child is not able to be maintained safely in their own home, the child will be removed from parental custody, placed with another protective caregiver including a relative or licensed foster parent, and a petition for protective services will likely be filed. In that event, a family will be referred to one of the two contracted ongoing services agencies for case management and service provision to assist them with resolving outstanding safety concerns and reunifying the child.

Ongoing Services

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.

Medical Behavioral Services

The Medical/Behavioral 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 Professional Development Section provides 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 as well as a formal statewide training curriculum. 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 (Division)

- DMCPs has continued to implement practices which complement the principles underlying the Family First Prevention Services Act by prioritizing the placement of children who can't be safely maintained in home with their relatives. More than 40% of children who are removed from parental custody are placed with a relative.
- Despite referral numbers increasing to near pre-pandemic levels, staff continue to prioritize seeing children who are the subject of referrals quickly and closing cases timely.
- More than 80% of children who are placed in out-of-home care are placed in family settings. DMCPs has partnered with Casey Family Programs to reduce its use of group care. Over the past 2 years, there has been a 15% reduction in the number of youth who are placed in group homes or residential care. There has also been a reduction in the number of youth who are placed out-of-state for residential care.
- DMCPs has actively worked to end ineffective service contracts and work to procure more needed services for families. Most recently, it successfully redesigned and procured its contract to provide services to families who need them to care for teens without having to come to child protective services to receive support.

- The number of children in out-of-home care continues to decline and children who are in out-of-home care continue to stay safe overall. Maltreatment in out-of-home care remains below the best practice standard.
- Staffing has improved over the last several years and caseloads are more aligned with national best practice standards.

Goals & Objectives Developed for 2023-25 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: Reduce the number of children who experience episodes of placements in group care settings.

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.

Goal: 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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